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## NEWS OF THE P.A.T.C. MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

1718 N Street, N.W. Washington DC 20036

Vol. 29 No. 10

October 1974

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### At Base Camp

It is official. In the face of condemnation proceedings, we have agreed to sell our land at Seneca to the Forest Service. John Christian is chairman of the resurrected Land Acquisition Committee (see elsewhere in this issue). He needs people to help him in finding a new site.

At the September meeting, MS voted to give \$75 to the Gendarme at Seneca to replace stolen rescue equipment.

A Mountaineering Medicine course will be offered by Phil Cardin, M.D. in the Spring. Details will be available later.

#### PARTY

Bill and Doris Thomas invite all climbers to a party at their house Saturday, November 2 at 8:00 p.m. BYOL Everyone is welcome especially newcomers to our group. It will be a great opportunity to exchange tall tales about what you did while your second was asleep this past summer. The Thomases live at 5906 N. 19th St., Arlington, Va. Call them at 536-7948 or Ox6-2774.

#### LECTURE AND SLIDE SHOW

Peter Steal, M.D., author of Doctor on Everest will be giving a lecture and slide show in December. Dr. Steal was the physician for the International Everest Expedition in 1972. The exact date, time, and place has not been set yet. Information may be obtained when available at MS meetings or by calling PATC Headquarters.

## PATC MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

Chairman: Joe Jensen (301-539-0872 at work)  
Vice Chairman: Chuck Sproull (894-4463)  
Secretary: Joan Gardner (931-3668)  
Treasurer: John Birch (633-3668)

UP ROPE is the monthly newsletter of the Mountaineering Section of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) of Washington, D.C.

Editorial contributions, letters and comments are welcome. Send to Maren Stewart, 817 Hollins Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201. Subscriptions to UP ROPE for MS members is included in annual dues. Annual subscriptions for non-members is \$3.00. Send subscriptions and address changes to Circulation Manager, UP ROPE, PATC, 1718 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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TO OUR READERS: The Mountaineering Section and the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club are planning to have a joint membership by January 1975 so that all members of the MS will also be members of the PATC. During this transition period we have fallen far behind in keeping up with UP ROPE and MS renewal notices. From August of 1974 until January of 1975, previous UP ROPE subscribers and MS members will continue to receive copies of UP ROPE.

By January of 1975 MS members will be given the option of joining the PATC/MS or subscribing only to UP ROPE. The initial fee for joining the merged PATC/MS will be \$10.00 per year. This fee includes membership in the MS, the PATC, and an UP ROPE subscription. After January, all membership renewals will be handled by the PATC. If a reader wishes to subscribe only to UP ROPE the fee will be \$3.00 per year.

To clearly distinguish MS members from subscribers, the letters MS or M are being added to address plates to designate members; while the letters UR or S are being added to designate subscribers. If you find an error on your address plate during the coming months, please notify the UP ROPE Circulation Manager.

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## AT BASE CAMP (Continued from Page 1)

A RE-EXAMINATION OF POSSIBLE  
SITES FOR THE DAVID TEMPLETON MEMORIAL CABIN

Progress Report No. 1

By John Christian

Since our existing cabin site will be taken by the Forest Service, a re-examination of possible cabin sites in the vicinity of Seneca Rocks was undertaken recently by the writer. Joe Jensen, MS Chairman, proposed that new criteria for the site be: within a 15 minute drive of Mouth of Seneca or a 20 minute walk of the Rocks; accessible year around; and that the cabin should not be close to a major highway.

In brief, the writer spent three days in the area looking at about 1/3 of the possible sites, talking to about 1/3 of those owners and a realtor, and checking land status with the Forest

## AT BASE CAMP (Continued from Page 2)

Service in Elkins. Within the 15 minute drive contour there are many possible sites; unfortunately those owners talked to for the most part had no interest whatsoever in selling or could not because the land was tied up in settlement. Only two indicated they might be approached again. Another was interested in selling land which may later be the bottom of the proposed Seneca Lake. The realtor had two tracts which might yield a suitable cabin site.

The county assessor has been asked to verify or provide the latest owners (and addresses) of the land being examined (the USFS records are several years old and in several cases known to be in error). The remaining areas will be visited and the owners contacted in the near future. It will be necessary to have the Forest Service verify in writing that any final choices are not Priority I or otherwise subject to untenable restrictions.

## ELECTION

The new Mountaineering Section officers will be elected at the general meeting, November 13. The candidates proposed by the nominating committee are listed below. Additional nominations for any office will be accepted from the floor at the October and November meetings. The newly elected officers will work with the outgoing officers through the January meeting.

Chairperson - Sallie Greenwood Tom McCrumm

Vice Chairman - Steve Williams Joe Nye

Treasurer - Greg Christopoulos

Secretary - Joan Gardiner

The nominating committee also recommends to the new officers, the following to fill appointed positions.

Training - Bob Ryan

Fund Raising and Parties - June Lehman

Programs - Barbara Llewellyn

Trip Coordinator - Joe Wagner

UP ROPE Editor - Maren Stewart

UP ROPE Business Manager - Joe Jensen

Art Director/Cartoonist/Court Jester - Nan Moran

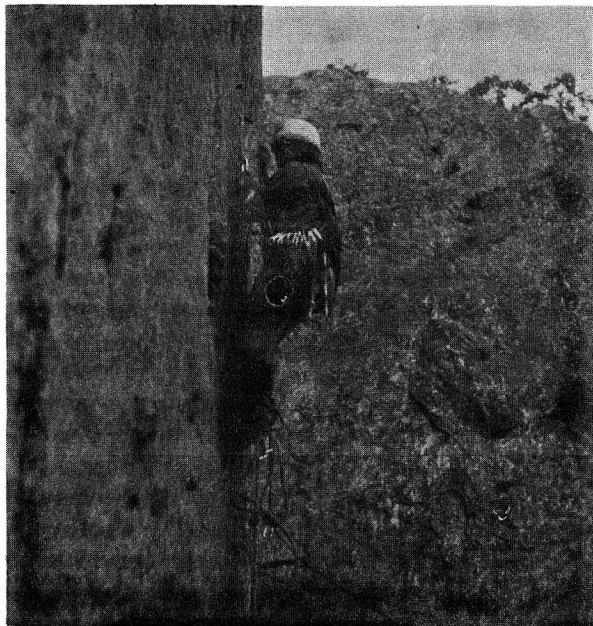
Cross Country Skiing - John Christian

Ice Climbing - Jon Larsen

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT

An amendment to the MS by-laws will be voted upon at the October meeting, to make the business meeting part of the regular club meetings on the second Wednesday of each month. This amendment was proposed at the September meeting. The effect would be to return the club to the practice in effect until about a year ago.

## Chairman's Corner



At the end of the September meeting, one of the new people, in introducing himself, stated that he had come because he had hoped to learn something about climbing. It occurred to me that for all the time we had spent on our meeting (by then over an hour), we had offered nothing at all for new people, and really, had spent very little time talking about climbing.

Now we have a proposed amendment to our by-laws that would return to our previous practice of having the business meeting as part of the general meetings. It was pointed out at the September meeting that we appear to have two business meetings each month, one on the first Wednesday, and

one on the first Wednesday, and one at the general meeting. I am to blame for this situation. I prepare the agenda for our meetings and, while the present by-laws specify that the business meeting be separate from the general meeting, I have felt that some issues were too important to be decided by a few members at a business meeting. It should be noted that some monthly business meetings have been well attended, and on such occasions, I have merely reported an outline of the business meeting at the general meeting.

Having a separate business meeting each month does tend to encourage a club that is governed by a minority, i.e., by the officers and those few members willing to attend two meetings a month. On the other hand, we want to make our meetings attractive. The Mountaineering Section's general meeting should be an occasion for meeting climbers and for learning about climbing. Not that issues like a new bridge at Seneca, or a climbing display at Great Falls are not part of climbing. But it is so easy for us to get bogged down on these topics, and the discussion at each meeting becomes a repeat of the last meeting.

I personally favor having a social-like, general meeting each month, and to relegate the section's business to a business meeting and when necessary, to committee meetings. This demands more from the section's officers. It also requires a membership, at least part of which is involved in more than a single meeting a month. Our experience during the past year, especially regarding planning, purchasing, and building our cabin, shows that we have many members who are willing to devote time to the section's interests. This experience also demonstrates that with committees, the section can function constructively. We do not have to be bogged down in repeated, endless discussions.

A separate business meeting, combined with active, working committees allows those who are interested in various aspects of the club's business to get actively involved. It also allows for a more attractive and efficient section.

Joe Jensen



## CLIMBING MT. ROBSON'S NEIGHBORS

John E. Bonine

"After climbing for three days we reached a piton. It was good to see some signs of civilization."

When I first read this filler quotation in the climbing guide it seemed amusing. But only after climbing for two weeks in the Canadian Rockies around Mount Robson did I understand the subtlety of the guidebook's joke. In that time I did not see more than one or two spots where a piton or a nut--or even a piece of sling--could be placed, much less remain long enough to "civilize" a climb.

During a self-imposed "rest-day" I also came across the following, exceedingly accurate, understatement:

"Certain formations . . . offer excellent rock by local standards. However, those who are familiar with the nature of bedrock in such areas as Yosemite, the Dolomites, Laurentians, Chamonix, or Shawangunks will need a serious readjustment of climbing practices and standards when on severe faces in the Rockies."

The uncivilized ridges of loose rubble required different practices and standards, to be sure. There was a lot of banter in camp about being able to rearrange your handholds to suit your taste. But the world of snow and ice, which predominate in the area, was nevertheless sufficient to convert this rock climber to a fledgling mountaineer.

The General Mountaineering Camp of the Alpine Club of Canada (A.C.C.) began on the second day of decent 1974 weather in the Robson area. It is said that there was a stretch of 15 years when Robson was not climbed at all due to bad weather. For a description of Robson's indecent weather see the cover article in the August 1974 issue of Summit magazine. The flight to Calgary, Alberta, was about the cost of flying to the Tetons. Buses or rental cars carry you another 300-plus miles to Jasper and the trail-head. The 14-mile hike in (and up) to camp at Robson Pass was strenuous, but completely repaid the effort with its spectacular scenery. The trail wound around the massive base of Robson itself, skirted thundering waterfalls, and then passed by placid Berg Lake. From Robson's slopes came the occasional rumble of unseen avalanches.

At camp each new arrival was greeted and invited to visit the "tea tent" for refreshment before picking out a tent for sleeping quarters. Then there was time to collapse before dinner. Some dipped their sore feet in the cold stream running through camp. Others became lazily acquainted with the cute "little grey birds" which ate mosquitos off your back. (One bird trotted up to my leg and looked alert as I pointed to a mosquito on my knee. In a flash the little grey bird jumped onto the knee, swallowed the bug, and defecated on my trousers. I never again felt the same about little grey birds.

Meanwhile, John Christian was wandering around with hammer and directional signs for the outdoor privies. One sign said "Women;" which seemed self-explanatory, as did another saying "Men." But I never got straight, after asking John two or three times, the purpose of the third: "Married Couples--Inquire Before Entering."

Camp was at 5400 feet, timberline at 6500 feet, and the peaks soared a mile-and-a-half above. The population of the camp was around 85 for Training Week and 120 the next week, probably twice what it ought to be. Meals were served in boundless quantity in a huge, double dining tent. Classes and climbs were posted for sign-up each day on a bulletin board. In the evening the "climbing committee," consisting of the professional and amateur "guides" (trip leaders) would apportion themselves and sometimes the prospective participants among the various climbs. Then the final lists would be re-posted with required equipment. Climbers would make their sandwich lunches for the next day, and wait for hot chocolate around the campfire. There was a certain style to the camp, which also manifested itself in the tea tent, serving hot tea to climbers as they returned from their daily activities. For the \$150 per week fee you were fed, tented, instructed, had to wash no dishes, and had your baggage carried in by horse. The climbs were always accompanied by a guide or responsible leader, but they were often quite willing to let others do the actual leading. The leader has to kick the steps in snow slopes, after all.

Last year everyone at Training Week was offered a relatively fixed routine of classes, leading to some disgruntlement among seasoned rock-climbers who found themselves tying knots in a meadow. This year each climber could choose each day from a broad range of basic and intermediate classes in rock, snow, and ice, ignoring those he didn't need. In so-called "Advanced Ice," for example, there was practice in step-cutting, team travel, belaying with ice-screws, crevasse jumping and crevasse rescue, with some demonstrations of more advanced skills. There was no time, however, for individual work on front-pointing with ice hammer in one hand and axe in the other. But not to worry, we were told. We wouldn't need such skills in our first season of climbing anyway.

The next day, doing my first climb, I found myself in the middle of a 400-foot ice slope with four others on the rope, belayed to a single ice screw, following our guide up a first ascent of the northwest face of 10,000-foot Lynx Mountain. Although steps were chopped in the seemingly straight-up ice, front points were not ignored. No, sir. (The same climb was repeated the next day by a party which included Martha Christian. They had four on the rope instead of five, and were belayed to double ice screws. It seems a more sensible approach. Someone once said, "There are old pilots and there are bold pilots, but there are no old, bold pilots.")

The climb had started with a 4:00 a.m. wake-up, a 4:30 breakfast, and a 5:00 departure. (Training days started with a more civilized 6:30 wake-up.) Part of Robson Glacier had to be crossed, then up to an idyllic alpine meadow where marmots whistled and mountain goats could be spotted on the rocks. We headed up the scree and snow at the base of the face (which included about 3500 feet of snow climbing) and the conversation naturally turned to a discussion of the various routes around the imposing ice slope above us. But that was not to be. After a stop to put on crampons and to down a quick snack, we headed directly for the ice. We worked quickly, for our guide was eager to get off the face before the sun hit it. A lead of sixty feet, flying chunks of ice as the guide hacked out a place for

an ice screw, a few minutes of peace as he screwed it in, then more ice missiles speeding by our heads (and occasionally scoring direct hits) as he cleared a couple of steps to stand in. That was our routine, repeated six or seven times. No one had suggested that we bring our helmets for this climb. After a while we suggested that our leader traverse a little. It helped. At each belay stance the four following climbers would wait for the new position to be readied, then unclip quickly in turn and climb to the new stance, while the leader moved on another sixty feet.

After the ice there was steep snow. We all moved together as a single roped team without belay stances. We had practiced self-arrests with the ice axe, but there was something quite sobering about the slope and exposure. It was difficult to believe that the self-arrest would be sufficient if one slipped. It was a long way down.

There was no resting and the pace was rapid. As we neared the summit the slope grew ever steeper, until finally we climbed over a tiny cornice and onto a gentle plateau leading to the top. We were all exhilarated. For most of us it was our first mountain. And it was a first ascent route. We couldn't have been more pleased.

Many of the peaks around Robson were climbed in the two weeks by one or several of the Washington crowd, including Lynx II, Torch, Extinguisher Tower, Ann Alice, Gendarme, Rearguard, Mumm and Resplendent. Jon Larson also did Whitehorn, a mountain of truly classic shape and style; Martha Christian completed her qualifying ascents for Senior Membership in the A.C.C., while John assisted in the instruction as a guide and got in some climbing too. Francis Soges and Bill Bookhout both had the opportunity to "play on the ice" of Robson Icefall, as well as climbing a number of respectable peaks.

My own two weeks were capped with a climb up Resplendent (which it truly was)--a sparkling white, 11,240-foot mountain with corniced summit and sensational exposure for the last several hundred feet. As I and three companions from Canada and England neared the summit, the compromises one makes in the big mountains became evident. To stay below the cornice fracture line we would have along a steep slope with a veneer of morning ice, dropping away to nothingness. In the fracture line itself the footing was good and we were unlikely to fall--but we also had to count on the mountain to take the same care with us. We chose the fracture line. There was a third choice: to forego the climb. But none of us suggested it. I reckon that means we will all be back.

# Climber's Calendar

- Oct. 5-6 Old Rag Joe Wagner 966-6379
- Oct. 9 Meeting 8:00 p.m. PATC Headquarters  
Program: Slide Show on Canadian Rockies by John Bonine
- Oct. 13 Training Bob Ryan 560-6044
- Oct 12-13 Shawangunks, N.Y. Sallie Greenwood 965-4087
- Oct. 20 Annapolis Rocks Sallie Greenwood 965-4087
- Oct. 27 Wolf Rocks John Fetvedt 869-5617
- Nov. 3 Little Stony Man John Bonine 338-6210 9130 A0
- Nov. 10 Training Bob Ryan 560-6044
- Nov. 13 Meeting 8:00 p.m. PATC Headquarters  
Election of Officers
- Dec. ? Lecture and Slide Show Man on High, Peter Steal, M.D.

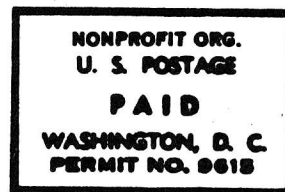
Always call trip leader or Sallie Greenwood (965-4087) before going on a trip. Some climbs are for experienced leaders and seconds only.

Mike Hill sent me a news clipping from the Washington Post. It tells of a new TV series this fall called "Sierra." The setting is Yosemite National Park. The actors took a course in the Yosemite mountain-climbing school and will portray rescues, searches, and climbs. The series has park rangers and professional mountain climbers as consultants.



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