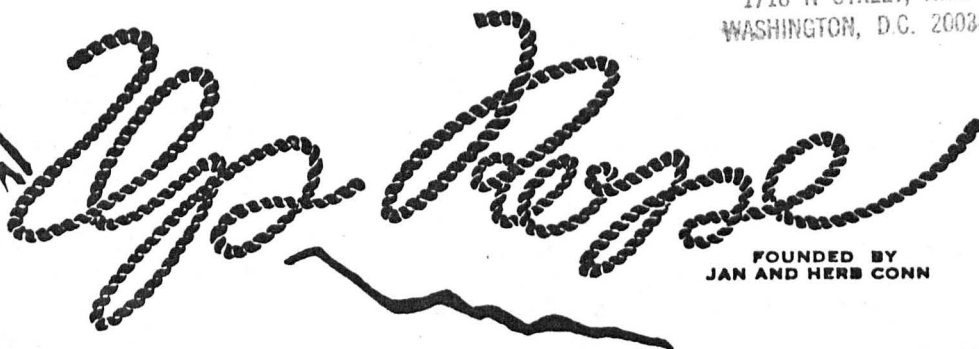




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NEWS OF THE P.A.T.C. MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

1718 N Street, N.W. Washington DC 20036

Volume 35, Number 1

January 1980

CIRQUE OF THE TOWERS

by Stan Halpin



Curt Mobley on Pingora - photo by James Eakin

A trip like this has as many beginnings as there are people involved. For me, it began in the summer of '78 in a tent in the Cascades. With no better way to pass the rainy days, I read the Bonney guide to the Wind River Range in Wyoming, noting with particular interest the comment about frequent afternoon thunderstorms. When you're sitting in a constant rain, afternoon thunderstorms (implying dry morn-

ings) sound good! Also intriguing was the apparent abundance of outfitters available to pack gear into camp.

Curt Mobley, Ann Kruse, James Eakin, and Linda Roubik were early recruits. Through the fall and winter, a series of letters and discussions led to the point where we had a place, a date, a pack outfit, and a full complement of climbers. Neil Arsenault, Betsy and Paul Guthrie, Jeff Grove, Ryan Pierson, and Vivian Mendenhall joined the earlier list.

Stan led this trip to the Wind River Range, July 19 to August 12, 1979.

(continued on next page)

CIRQUE OF THE TOWERS (continued)

Time limitations and rising gas prices cut into the number of vehicles available, and my van turned out to be the only one making the trip from the East. James, Linda, and I left Rockville at 8pm July 19 and drove straight through to Big Sandy Lodge, arriving midafternoon on the 21st. (No gas problems on the way, plenty of 24hr stations.) We unloaded the hundreds of pounds of cargo, left James zonked out in his tent, and drove to Rock Springs to pick up Jeff, Ryan, and Vivian, who flew in from D.C. via Denver. A four-hour round trip but trivial after the drive out! Curt and Ann rolled in from Seattle about 9:30pm.

Sunday morning was spent sorting gear. Curt, Ann, and James left about noon to walk to our camp at Lonesome Lake. Jeff, Vivian, and Ryan left later at a more leisurely pace to go part way in. Linda and I stayed to help the packers make up loads for the horses (total of 900 pounds), then hiked

to a nearby high spot for pictures. Monday morning the horses carried their loads in seven miles to the end of the easy trail. We all spent the next couple of days carrying loads over the steep, rocky trail from the equipment dump to our camp.

Wednesday finally saw the first climbing when Curt and James did the normal route on Pingora (5.4), and Linda and I carried light loads back from the equipment dump, taking the scenic route up the backside of Mitchell (Class 3 with some unprotected Class 5 thrown in as a reward for poor route finding).

We then settled into a routine of climbing and resting, both very pleasant. Life in camp was comfortable, even luxurious. Approximately 2/3 of the food was in the group stock. Neil did a good job supplying a variety of main courses and desserts from available freeze-dried foods. The rest of the food, and snacks, were individually supplied and ranged from more freeze-dried, to canned,

(concluded on page 4)



UP ROPE

UP ROPE is the monthly newsletter of the Mountaineering Section (MS) of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) of Washington, D.C. Climbing articles, letters, and comments are welcome and should be addressed to Lin Murphy, 2314 N. Harrison Street, Arlington, Va. 22205. Deadline is the 20th of each month. Subscriptions for MS members are included in the dues. The annual subscription price for nonmembers is \$4. Current PATC members interested in receiving UP ROPE may obtain a subscription at no charge. MS members must belong to PATC. Applicants for membership and PATC members can join the MS by obtaining sponsorship from a current MS member. Send subscription and address changes to Mountaineering Section-Secretary, 1718 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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MOUNTAINEERING SECTION ACTIVITIES

The MS holds meetings at PATC headquarters (1718 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.) the second Wednesday of each month except August. There is a brief business session followed by a slide show, film, or other form of entertainment. Sunday trips to nearby climbing areas and/or weekend trips to more distant areas are sponsored every weekend. Check the climber's calendar for scheduled trips.

Beginning and intermediate training are offered once a month. Anyone is welcome to participate in MS activities, although some restrictions may be placed on participation in club trips. The Sunday trips are usually to areas where there is a complete range of top rope climbs. However, we ask that you have some experience or training prior to the trip. The weekend trips are usually for lead climbers only, and you are expected to find your own climbing partner. For information on training, call Rick Todd, 431-2236.



Mt. Mitchell from NW
Wind River Range Wyoming
Aug '79

CIRQUE OF THE TOWERS (concluded)

to my own oven-dried chilis and stews, to the occasional fresh trout.

Curt and Ann started a 5.3 on the Plume, found themselves on loose rock (5.7-5.8 territory) and felt pleased to come out of the episode unscathed. Ryan, Vivian, and Jeff did a long traverse of the Warrior Ridge, while James soloed a snow gulley, and Linda and I did a simple 5.3 on Overhanging Tower, preceded and followed by desperate scrambling on steep loose scree. Curt, Ann, and Linda did the northeast ridge of Bollinger, and then Jeff and Linda did a 5.3 on Tiger Tower. James led me on what was supposed to be the classic route up the 1500ft north face of Mitchell (5.6), but, with his unerring instinct for harder ground, we managed a pitch of 5.7 and one of 5.8 along the way.

On Sunday the Guthries joined us. Neil had intended to come for the entire trip, but hurt his knee in a freak accident shortly before we left. We had hoped he might recover sufficiently for him to come in with Paul and Betsy, but no such luck.

The climbing and hiking continued, Jeff, Vivian, and Ryan getting in a thorough exploration of the area (always looking for that elusive fishing hole where the big ones live) in between their climbs. The rest of us were content to climb or rest.

Ann and Curt did the regular route on Pingora; Stan, James, and Ryan did Bollinger's; Ann and Linda did the Warrior Ridge Traverse; Jeff and Ryan climbed to Lizard's Head via the southwest slabs; and James and I did the Wolf's Head Traverse. This 12-14 pitch climb (5.6) is incredibly satisfying because of its length, the degree of commitment, the rough solid rock, and the intricacy of the route finding.

On August 1, Curt and Ann left

to return home. James went along for a ride up to the Tetons, where he was meeting a friend for a week's climbing. Paul, Betsy, and Vivian did Bollinger's, followed by Jeff, who got a late start and wound up solo. Thursday Jeff and Ryan had an easy (5.2) route on Block Tower turn into an epic due to very loose rock and a poor route description in the guide - they were back in camp about 12 midnight. Linda and I did the regular route on Pingora; Paul and Betsy did the Warrior Ridge Traverse; Jeff and Ryan did Pingora; Linda and I did the north face of Mitchell (avoiding the Eakin variations!); and Paul and Betsy did a third class route on Mitchell.

Jeff, Ryan, and Vivian went over to Texas Pass to spend a couple of days at Barren Lake, looking for (and finding) larger trout. Paul and Betsy did Pingora, while Linda and I had our own epic on a different route on Block Tower. On our way past Cirque Lake about 8:30pm we were greeted by a group of climbers from the Idaho Mountain Club who had enjoyed the show we put on and gave us some delicious chocolate cream pie as a reward.

Wednesday (August 8) we all carried a load out to the supply dump. Heavy rain in the afternoon. Thursday Jeff, Linda, and I walked out, the packers picked up the gear from the dump, we loaded the van, and met James at the climbers' ranch in Jackson Hole in time for dinner. Paul, Betsy, Vivian, and Ryan came out Friday, drove to Rock Springs Saturday, and flew back to Denver. Friday James and I saw Linda and Jeff off at the Jackson Hole airport (leaving for Tokyo via San Francisco, and for D.C. respectively) and started our drive back.

In summary, no new routes, no super-hard climbs, but a very enjoyable, satisfying trip for all. The only regret is that it could not have been shared by those who had hoped to come but were unable to - especially Neil and Doug and Mary Howard.

MS Membership

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January 1980

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January 1980

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(Home telephone number is listed first.)

Hanging Around

SUGARLOAF - December 9

There was blood on the rocks by the time we left the back (south) side of Sugarloaf this Sunday. (I remembered that side was particularly sharp, but I'd forgotten how sharp. Those purists who insisted on doing cracks as jamcracks bore the scars to prove it. There were even a few pathetic cries for tape, but alas, there was none of the right kind available.)

Only about four ropes were put up, but a number of variations were possible from those four. Everyone tried at least two or three, and Charlie wound up doing one or two more overhanging (what else is there at Sugarloaf?) cracks - rigged specifically to challenge him - that no one else tried. (My apologies: Ian did one of them.)

The four who had arrived late (having dallied over breakfast, they said) also left first. And unfortunately, we did not adjourn to Roy's as is (or was) customary. But thanks to the promised clouds holding off until midafternoon, most of us had a good day.

Ian Cruickshank, Bill De Lano, Charlie Ganote, Sallie Greenwood, Martha Hale, Kay Killgore, Lin Murphy, Paul Torelli, and Barbara Llewellyn (trip leader)

GREAT FALLS - December 16

We met to practice leader rescue. This was to be a follow-up on our practice sessions last spring (see UP ROPE, July-August, 1979). The session was originally set for Carderock, but moved to the Potomac gorge largely because, I believe, it offered greater climbing challenges to the session's participants.

The gorge has the advantages of fewer people and more realistic rock climbing settings. However,

rigging anchors with nuts takes more time than using the convenient trees at the base of Carderock. Considering both sites and what's needed to simulate a fall and tying off, I think the techniques we reviewed could be practiced in backyard trees.

We set up three top ropes and safety lines and read the tying off directions from copies of the AMC leader recovery training guide. Someone climbed up using a top rope, "fell," and immediately tied into the safety line. Then the belayer attempted to tie the climber off so that he could leave the belay to go for help. A more difficult procedure was getting back into the belay in order to lower the climber. To do this, we had to rig pulleys of prussiks and carabiners to take the tension off the rope.

Since no one knew exactly what to do, one could say that this kind of practice is necessary. However, since most people who practiced the technique managed to figure out a mostly workable manoeuvre, one could also remark that we all probably have some intuitive grasp of what to do and that, since it was a relatively warm December Sunday (cloudy, not much wind), it was better to climb than to try to interpret the AMC directions.

For my own part, after watching several attempts, I was satisfied that following the AMC directions word-by-word, in the quiet absence of alternative theories, will teach a safe tying-off technique. A shortened version of the AMC directions follows.

The practice session also taught us that a belayer should have at a minimum the following equipment in case he needs to tie off a climber: two prussiks of an appropriate length and three carabiners. Further, it demonstrated the necessity of a secure anchor set up in a way that the belayer can exit and re-enter easily without unrigging it.

(continued on next page)

Hanging Around

I suggest that these techniques be practiced informally during our regular Sunday climbing trips. And, If people want, we can arrange another practice session in the spring.

Later, Ian Cruickshank demonstrated a crevasse rescue, hauling Martha Hale up Armbuster. We had also planned to have prussiking-jumaring practice, but people preferred to climb. Trip participants were Charlie Ganote, Fred Batschelet, Sallie Greenwood, Barbara Llewellyn, Ian Cruickshank, John Birch, Ute Christoph, Martha Hale, Gail Blattenberger, and John Mahew and Lin Murphy (trip leader).

LEADER RECOVERY*

Tying off the leader

1. Wrap the belay rope around your leg three or four times to free your hands.
2. Put a prussik on the rope and clip it to a secure anchor.
3. Stretch the prussik loop tight, taking as much slack out of the system as possible. Ease the belay slowly, and let the prussik take the weight of the climber.
4. Ease the belay until you have enough slack in the rope between your belay and the prussik that you can tie a figure eight knot. Clip the figure eight into the anchor. Adjust it so that a minimum amount of slack exists between the knot and the prussik. Now, you may take the climber off belay.
5. Put another prussik on the climbing rope between the first prussik and the climber. Make sure it stays within easy reach. Clip a carabiner into this second prussik.

6. Take the slack rope from the figure eight at the anchor and run

* AMC Boston Chapter, Beginner's Training Program - Leader Recovery

it through the second prussik. (This creates a pulley.) Pull slowly and steadily on the rope until the tension is off the first prussik and you can loosen it and slide it down near the anchor.

7. Slowly relax the tension on the rope you have been pulling and let the weight of the fallen climber shift to the figure eight at the anchor. Now the climber is held directly by the figure eight at the anchor. Leave both prussiks on the rope.

Getting back into the belay

1. Rig a pulley using the second prussik. This time, however, use the rope nearest you where it comes from your belay anchor.
2. Take the weight of the climber on the pulley.
3. Tighten up the first prussik and relax the pulley system to transfer the weight to the first prussik.
4. Put the climber on belay with leg wraps.
5. Untie the figure eight at the anchor and take the slack up in the belay.
6. Pull the pulley system again to relax the tension on the first prussik. Loosen the first prussik.
7. Relax the pulley system to transfer the climber's weight to the belay. Leave the system intact.
8. Pull both prussik knots within reach and keep them within reach while you lower the climber. If you must stop, you'll be ready to tie off again.

CARDEROCK - Fall 1979

Four MS women climbed the formidable Cripples last fall.

PHOTO CONTEST

theme: mountains, mountaineering, rock climbing

prizes: First prize is a high quality 11 x 14" print. The winning slide will be enlarged to a 16 x 20" print, which will be permanently hung in PATC headquarters. The two second prizes are 8 x 10" prints.

form of entry: 35mm slides; maximum five entries per person

entry due date: Give slides to Stan Halpin by February 15. They will be promptly returned.

eligibility: everyone

judges: a professional photographer and a picture editor

Meeting Report

December 12

We elected our officers for 1980. Martha Hale is Chairwoman; Don McIntyre is Vice Chairman. Charlie Dorian is Secretary, and Ian Cruickshank is Treasurer.

Treasurer Cruickshank reported that the \$409 received from Arlene Blum's slide/lecture helped us stay within our 1979 budget of \$2300. Our budget request for 1980 is \$2550.

We discussed removing the blowdown from the White Oak Canyon Trail. A clean-up trip is being planned.

The film "Go for It" was an hour and a half long. The distributor's catalog described it as an "action-packed experience, highlighting... high risk sports" and specifi-

cally listed mountain climbing. Yet the film included only several minutes of it: an aid route and a couple walking up unidentified snow.

WOMEN CLIMBERS

Arlene Blum of American Women's Himalayan Expeditions has proposed a six-woman joint Indian American expedition to the Gangotri glacier. The expedition would attempt to climb one or more of the six or seven thousand meter peaks in the area and explore the Gangotri to develop opportunities for future expeditions. The trip is proposed for May and June of 1980.

And, just so you can keep things straight, the all-woman 1980 Dhaulagiri climb led by Vera Komarkova is an American Women's Expedition effort.

Coming Event**Mountain Medicine Symposium**

Yosemite Institute will sponsor a four-day mountain medicine symposium in Yosemite National Park on March 23-26, 1980. The first three days of the session will cover "a wide variety of challenges and hazards that can

affect climbers...." The fourth day will focus on search and rescue techniques. The symposium will be directed by Dr. Charles Houston, leader of the 1938 and 1953 K2 expeditions. Write MMS4 - Dr. Charles Houston, Yosemite Institute, Yosemite, CA 95389.

Climber's Calendar

January 6	Great Falls	Don McIntyre(536-6122)
January 9	MS meeting 8pm PATC Hd	Mt. McKinley - Sallie & Lin
January 13	Carderock	Sue Neal(340-1522)
January 20	Sugarloaf	Martha Hale(762-4769)
January 27	Cupid's Bower	Stan Halpin(340-2593)
February 13	MS meeting 8pm PATC Hd	Yeropaja - Don McIntyre

For ice climbing trips arranged on an impromptu basis, call Stan Halpin (340-2593), Ian Cruickshank (484-5108), or James Eakin (598-6042).

For information on club trips, call the leader or Don McIntyre(536-6122)

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