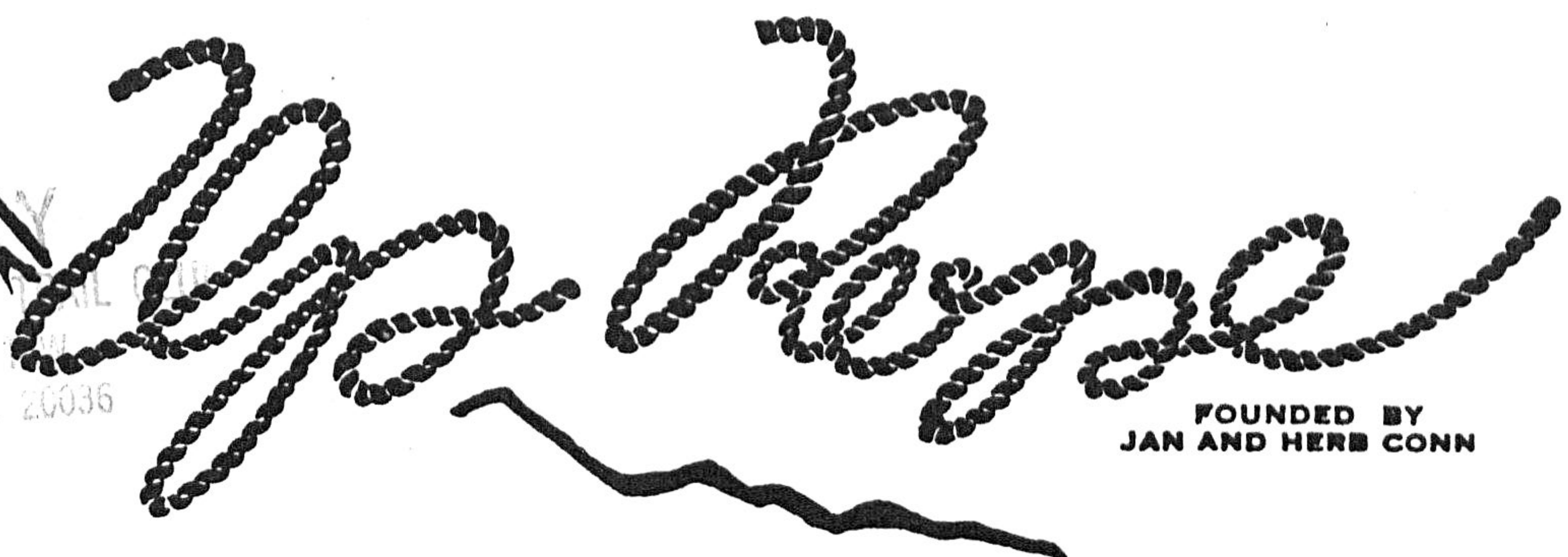




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## NEWS OF THE P.A.T.C. MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

1718 N Street, N.W. Washington DC 20036

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### HALF DOME HOW-TO

by Steve Singer

It's 4am in a nameless Columbian village in the Andes, and I have a half hour to kill before hitting the road for a breakfast of roast guinea pig promised at a campesino's hut and a meeting with village leaders at 7am. It somehow seems an appropriate time to fulfill my promise for a few words on Half Dome.

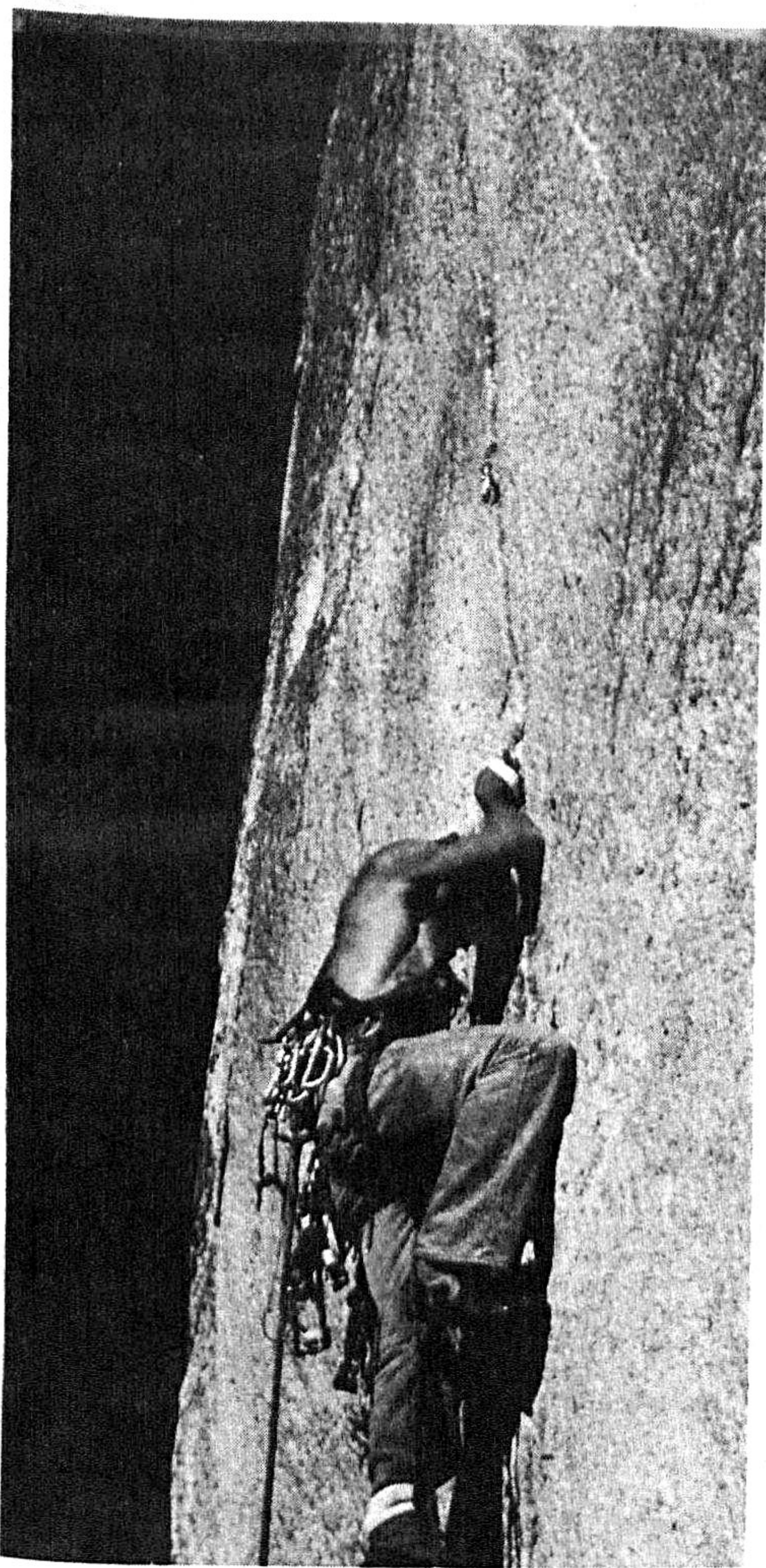
After all, I bring tidings of comfort and joy. My message is that this classic Grade VI route is open to a climber of mediocre abilities.

When I was growing up in southern California, we heard of marvels wrought in the valley by superman like Robbins, Frost, and Chouinard, but did not aspire to them. Now, however, with changed standards, techniques, and equipment, the wonders of the early '60s are within reach of the ordinary mortal.

Half Dome has been climbed in a day—so have El Cap and the Eiger (if you're in that league, you need read no further) and has been done free. The average climber will use three days and a lot of aid. The three days imply two sacks; the aid implies remarkably little: if you can place nuts for protection, quickly and with a minimum of fiddling, you can do aid fast enough to get up Half Dome in three days.

Brian Rennex and I carried a rack of about two of everything Chouinard makes up to an 11 hex and had more in the bag, which we never used. We did use almost everything on the double racks on one pitch or another, but always had plenty of gear. We also carried a selection of eight pitons and three Friends.

(continued on next page)



Steve Singer just below Big Sandy Ledge - photo by Brian Rennex



HALF DOME (continued)

The Friends were handy at times, but we could easily have done without. We never pounded a pin. Whether to take them or not depends on your sporting nature. I personally would have hated to get 22 pitches off the ground, hit the A-3, and found it would not go without a pin.

About the sacks. We hauled the heavy one and Jumared with the light. This system seems general in the Valley now. In addition to the climbing rope and hauling rope, one should have a backline on the haul sack. The second can thus free the sack when its path diverges from his.

All those diagrams in Robbins and Chouinard make the hauling look easier than it is. They show the leader stepping lightly into a sling attached to his Jumar and imply the sack rising effortlessly.

On the first day, our sack contained four gallons of water (a gallon too much), plus food

and gear. The only way I could bring it up was to attach the hauling Jumar to my harness and lie back against it with all my weight while pushing up with my feet against the wall and pulling up on the rope leading to the sack with my free hand. I suspect we had a bad pulley, but hauling is still no joke. The only part of the climb that rivals it for hard work is the approach.

There are two ways to get to the Northwest Face: up the slabs from Mirror Lake, or the Vernal-Nevada Falls Trail. The slabs route is much shorter, but supposed to be hard to follow. Climbers return with tales of 5.4 friction, unroped with a 40lb pack. The Falls Trail is straightforward, but long — it says five hours in the book, but took us longer. Fill your bottles at a spring 100 yards off the trail toward the top of the uphill part marked by a large gray rock on which is written, "water."

(concluded on bottom of next page)



## 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.

## PATC MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

Chairwoman	
Martha Hale .....	762-4769
Vice Chairman	
Don McIntyre .....	536-6122
Secretary	
Charlie Dorian .....	362-7523
Treasurer	
Ian Cruickshank .....	484-5108

## UP ROPE STAFF

Editor	
Lin Murphy .....	533-8412
Circulation Manager	
Don Kocher .....	949-2239

## 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.



## Chairman's Corner

My definition of "mountain" has changed quite drastically since I left my home state of Texas. There was a time when I would call anything above 200 feet a mountain (but then you should remember that on the plains of Texas and New Mexico, a 200 foot-high lump can be a rather inspiring sight). Now, when talking to friends who have lived in the West, I hesitate sometimes to call the Appalachians "real" mountains. As with most experiences in life, our first mountains become small as we move on to bigger ones. Essentially, I think that should be the purpose of the Mountaineering Section of PATC — to provide a means by which people can gain more experience in all phases of mountaineering, and to share with each other an ever-growing appreciation for those outdoor experiences. I believe that we have a good opportunity for doing just that: Don McIntyre and others are organizing a June expedition in what we hope will become an annual event sponsored by the Section. Then too, Lin Murphy would like to see our weekend trips to the rocks expanded to include other major climbing areas in the East (Linville Gorge, Looking Glass, etc.), in addition to the

Gunks and Seneca Rocks.

There are many other phases of the MS that can contribute to our mountaineering experience and knowledge: training sessions to introduce people to climbing conducted by Rick Todd and Stan Halpin; weekend and day climbing trips scheduled by Don McIntyre; climbing news and notes in UP ROPE, edited by Lin Murphy and mailed by Don Kocher and his son Mike; an up-to-date membership list maintained by Secretary Charlie Dorian; keeping track of expenditures and finances by Treasurer Ian Cruickshank; interesting and informative programs for the meetings scheduled by Barbara Llewellyn; keeping track of conservation issues that concern us as mountaineers, by Sallie Greenwood, Lin Murphy, Vivian Mendenhall and others — just to name a few. I believe that the Section can offer a wide array of experiences from improving our rock climbing to increasing our mountaineering knowledge. I hope that each of you will take a active part in this year's activities.

Martha Hale

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### HALF DOME (concluded)

Start early the day before you mean to climb, and you can fix two pitches. This still leaves nine to do the first day to the bivi ledge, which brings me to an essential point: think about the last time you did nine pitches in a day, and add to the time it took you the time it will take to Jumar two pitches and rig nine hauling systems and Jumar lines. If you come out at more than 12 hours and are planning to climb in the spring or or fall, bring a headlamp. (Bring one anyway.) If you come out at more than 15 hours, try another climb.

The point is simple, but importantissimo: you've got to keep moving. Rope handling and hauling should be

automatic. Three ropes in a cramped belay stance can make a pretty mess. Each must be stacked where it will feed the next pitch. If you let one hang, it will sooner or later get caught.

I could write a lot more about the climb — Mel Banks and Gregg Hand gave us piles of information and tips, but this letter is already too long. It's a beautiful climb, mostly in the shade and therefore comfortable and without the dehydration problem of southern exposures. I wouldn't mind going back and trying the Direct....



## Chairman's Corner

Continuing a long-standing policy of procrastination, I managed to be too late in getting in my material for the January UP ROPE. I've used the extra time to think some more about our Section and the way it functions. When Margaret Wettling left D.C. in the summer of '77, that left me as Vice Chairman. Or Acting Chairman. I worried about my role, both the naming of it and the meaning of it. I studied both PATC's and the Section's Constitution and By Laws and soon learned that (1) it didn't matter whether I was Vice or Acting Chairman since neither position had any legitimate role as decision maker; (2) there was no mechanism for the Section to do anything except on the Chairman's say-so; and (3) more generally, there was little relation between the formal statement of how we operate in the Constitution and By Laws, members' perceptions of how we operate, and the reality of how things are done. My big project that fall was a push to amend the formal documents, both to bring them closer to our reality and to bring about a new way for the Section to operate. It didn't work. We continued with outdated By Laws and with all the authority vested in the Chairman. I have had very mixed feelings about that degree of authority over the last two years.

The role of an elected representative (i.e., the MS Chairman) has been extensively studied in laboratory and field experiments. My experience is a validation of the findings from those studies. The representative is generally somewhat conservative, slow to act, and then only when fairly sure that a consensus exists. With experience, he/she becomes more adept at understanding the mores and goals of the group and more willing to make decisions for which there is only implicit support. However, unless there is a formal channel for feedback from group members, major decisions will inevitably be slow in coming. (Remember the problem of what to do with the money in the Templeton fund? I eventually decided to turn it over

to PATC for use in land purchase/cabin construction in the Wolf Gap area. But it took many months to get to that point, and I still wasn't sure that it was either what the Section should do or wanted to so. And there was no effective way to find out.)

All in all, our current system works. But it is unnecessarily frustrating for the Chairman. At the election in December and again here I have tried to make the Chairman's role explicit, in large part because I hope that doing so may make that role less frustrating to Martha and succeeding Chairmen. And I still think the Constitution and By Laws ought to be changed to reflect reality. But its no major problem if they're not.

There are four main areas of responsibility for the Section: UP ROPE; Training, Trips; and Entertainment. Environmental concerns occasionally come to the fore, and other projects are always lurking in the background. The main reason the Section is a viable organization is because we have members willing and able to do the necessary jobs. Rick Todd has restructured the training program in a way which has both strengthened the instruction and helped to discourage those with only a passing interest. Despite a four-five year tenure Barbara Llewellyn continues to come up with an interesting blend of programs. Our trips program has not fared as well, but this is a fault of general lack of participation and no reflection on the hard work put in by Doug Howard, James Eakin, and Parker Hill. The Gutheries (environmental issues), Ian Cruickshank (Treasurer), Keith Pitman and Charlie Dorian (Secretaries). Martha Hale (Vice Chairman), Ryan Pierson, Vivian Mendenhall, Sallie Greenwood, and many others have been willing to pitch in and help. Without people like these the Section would not function, whatever is on paper as formal By Laws.

It's been fun. Martha, enjoy yourself. When in doubt, go for it!

Stan Halpin



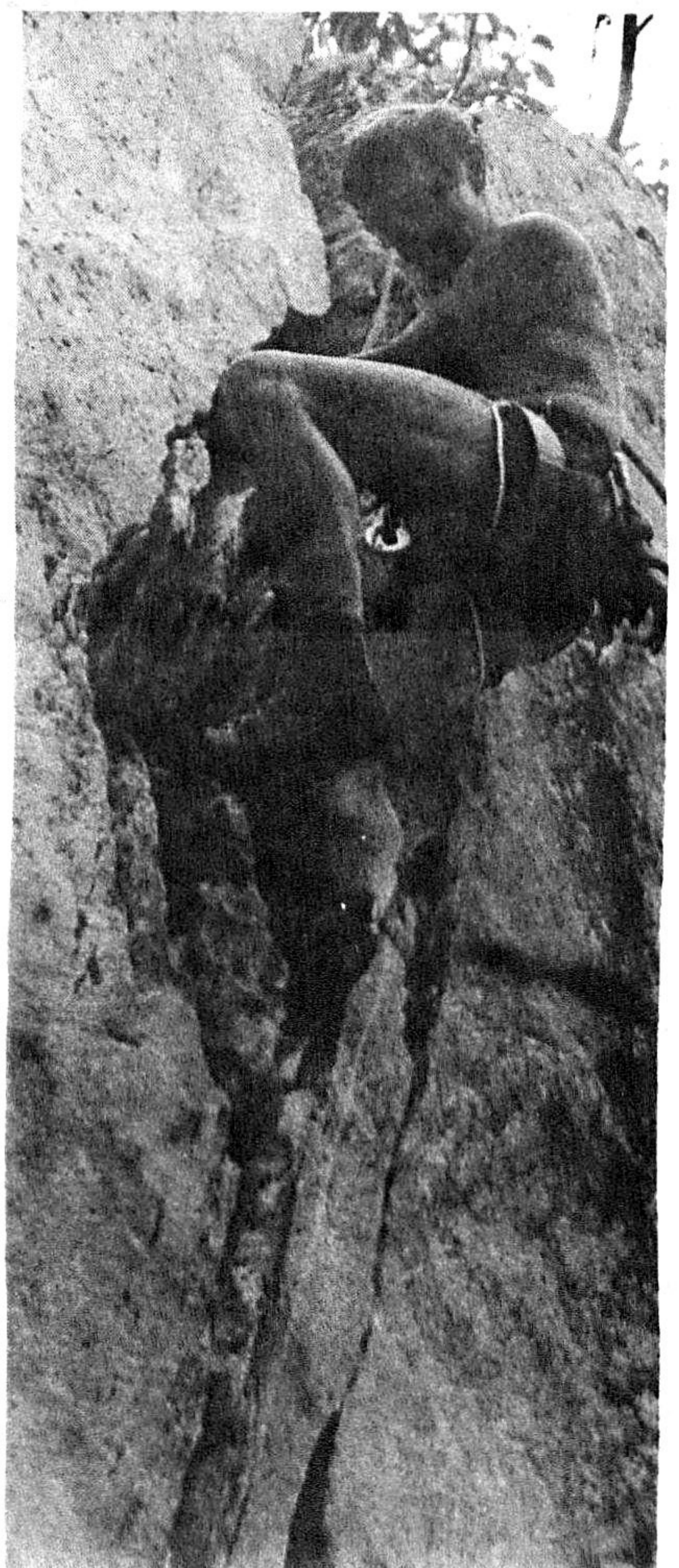
## THE CLOSING OF BULL RUN MOUNTAIN

In December, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) announced that Bull Run Mountain is temporarily closed to climbing and hiking.

VOF is a quasi-state agency, created by Virginia statute in 1966. Its Trustees are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the state legislature. VOF acquired its Bull Run Mountain property from the Natural Areas Council (NAC) last November under a contractual agreement. NAC (and its subsidiary, America the Beautiful Fund) is a tax-exempt organization that bought scattered mountain parcels during the 1960s. NAC's two major contributors were killed in 1966, and, as a consequence, its funding for land acquisition and maintenance dried up. It therefore looked for a permanent custodian to carry on its conservation work at Bull Run. In 1978 NAC entered a contract with VOF which provided that NAC would convey its holdings if VOF raised \$2,000,000. VOF met this condition, and NAC deeded over its Bull Run Mountain holdings.

VOF Director Tyson Van Auken explained that the closing was due to abuse of the area. Drinking parties litter, and vandalism has been reported. The area may be closed for up to two years to allow for the preparation of a master plan and more land acquisition. VOF wants to employ park rangers to prevent abuse. A long-range plan calls for Bull Run Mountain to be developed as a natural area, rather than a park.

PATC maintains a trail and a cabin on Bull Run Mountain, MS members have been climbing there since at least 1935. (See PATC Bulletin articles by Gus Gambs in 1935 and Sterling Hendricks in 1945.) A wide range of technical difficulty makes the quartzite out-cropping attractive to both experienced and beginning climbers.



Continuing challenge of Charlie's Crack -  
Chris Scoredos in 1945; Ian Cruickshank in 1979



## Expeditions

### PERU - CORDILLERA BLANCA

I am currently organizing a club climbing trip to the world's highest tropical mountain range, the Cordillera Blanca of Peru. The Blancas are 120 miles in length, with over 40 major summits exceeding 6,000 meters (19,685'). Most summits are covered in overhanging cornices, and are approachable only after crossing deep crevasses and ascending deeply fluted couloirs of ice and snow.

The principal area where we will be climbing is, tentatively, the Laguna Parron region. The advantages of this area lie in its easy one-day access and also the number of varied climbs. Surrounding the Laguna Parron are Artesonraju (20,000'); Pyramide (19,300'); Chacaraju (20,050'); Pisco; and the Huandoy group (20,980'). The Huandoy group has been considered by many to be the most beautiful of the Blanca ranges.

The object of this trip is to select a group of PATC moun-

taineers who will, for the first time in the club's history, conduct an high-altitude, international expedition. Because of the the inherent dangers of high-altitude climbing, such as crevasses, high-angle ice, cornices, pulmonary edema, etc., this is not considered to be a trip for beginners. Intermediate ice and snow skills are an absolute requirement, as well as an advanced state of personal physical fitness by departure time. The planned departure date is June 26, with the return date approximately July 19 (three weeks). Total trip cost, excluding personal gear and clothing, is estimated to be \$1150 per person from Washington, D.C.

If you are interested in this trip, contact Stan Halpin (340-2593) or me (536-6122, 252-4152). PATC members will receive first consideration, so pay your dues and join! The team size will be limited to 12 members. The final date for selecting them will be late April April.

Don McIntyre

### MOUNTAIN NOTES

#### Alaska Climbing Rules - Two Views

Mountain magazine no. 69 urged its readers to lobby against Park Service regulation of climbing in Mt. McKinley National Park. It enclosed a post card to Sen. Gravel for convenient protest: "As a mountain climber I oppose the National Park Service control of Alaska's mountains."

However, in April, the American Alpine Club's Board of Directors voted unanimously to commend the Park Service on its McKinley Park climbing regulations. Essentially, the only requirement is prior registration with the Park Superintendent and checking out after the climb.

(Notes courtesy of  
Alpine Information)

Editor's note: A phone call to Sen. Gravel's office indicates a number of these cards have been received. Mountain has addressed its protest to Sen. Gravel apparently because of his opposition to Park Service regulation of Alaska lands. But Sen. Gravel opposes Park Service regulation because it generally precludes commercial development (e.g., downhill ski resorts). It is curious that some mountaineers are appealing to a man who wants to develop the wilderness. For example, Sen. Gravel has proposed Denali City (see Off Belay, Dec. '79), a private investor-created resort 30 miles northwest of Talkeetna — access via a new highway or by balloon. The Park Service is against it.



## From the Editor's Chimney

Carderock is washing away. Despite reasonable use by us, the uncertain combination of natural process and heavy use by increasing numbers of climbers, gawkers, outdoors groupies, and rule-breaking dog owners may soon deprive us of a significant portion of a remarkable rock climbing area.

Though we never littered or held large, noisy outings there, Bull Run Mountain has been closed. Despite reasonable use by us, Bull Run's new owners feel that abuse by some calls for denying access to all.

According to Off Belay and the Friends of the Shawangunks, Marriott's proposed development of Minnewaska poses a threat to the Gunks. Actually, the Trapps and the Near Trapps are (some say, "safely") on Mohonk Trust property. But remember, just last year the Trust narrowly averted a major threat to its existence by winning a property tax suit. Had the N.Y. state court decision gone the other way, the Trust and its capacity to insure climbers' access might have been jeopardized.

As the 1980s begin we must become aware that it is not enough to "go for it." For climbers "protection" must mean two things. How short-sighted if it means only protecting a lead. The rocks and the moun-

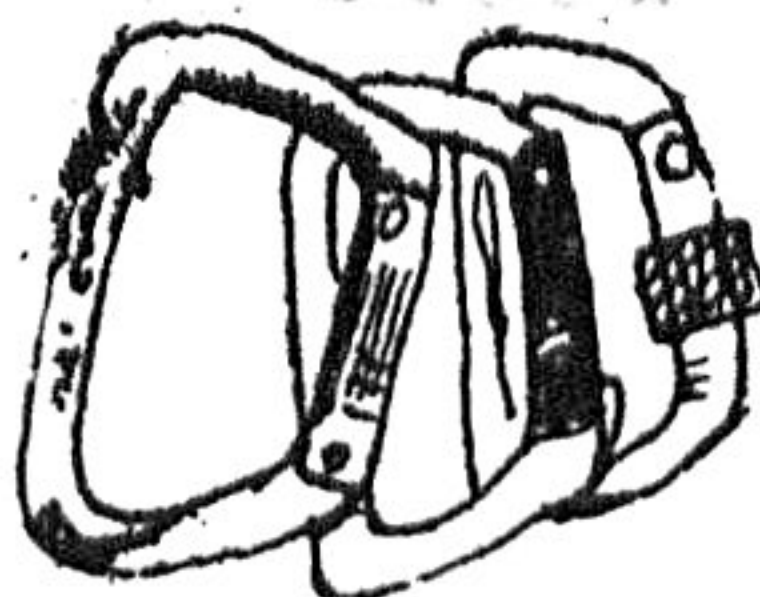
tains themselves need our protection. They are never safe, and our access to them can never be taken for granted. Self-interest demands that those who want to climb be conscious of events that threaten climbing areas — be they natural, economic, or political.

The MS supports the Mohonk Trust with an annual contribution. Perhaps the environmental lawsuit which the Friends of the Shawangunks will bring will also merit our support.

MS trip members have traditionally carried out trash left by local drinking parties on Bull Run Mountain. Now we must try to be a part of the master plan the new owners will develop.

Our offer to repair the trail to Carderock has been accepted. We need to research and develop a thoughtful position on climber access in case the Park Service decides to restrict use.

It's a delicate balance between use of a natural area and using it up. As users we can show our concern and commitment to conserve by trail maintenance, support for environmental action, and enlightened awareness. The Conservation and Use Committee welcomes your participation and ideas.





## Meeting Report

January 9

Sallie Greenwood has agreed to coordinate a Conservation and Use Committee. The first project is to respond to the closing of Bull Run Mountain. Our work trip to Carderock will be scheduled as soon as the Park Service makes materials available. Two MS work crews to White Oak Canyon have cleared the trail of trees blown down by last fall's storms. Only trees too big for PATC's bow saws remain.

Don McIntyre has offered to collect and disseminate news of expeditions. He will also be responsible for scheduling weekly climbing outings

and will try to coordinate nonscheduled trips.

Charlie Dorian is chief of a work team to wash PATC headquarters windows.

Tell Martha about mistakes in the membership list in the January UP ROPE. We'll try to print an addendum in March.

Bill De Lano moved to California to accept a new work assignment. His address: 10270 North Foothill Blvd., C-14, Cupertino, CA 95014. Bill was UP ROPE co-editor during 1979 and a great climbing partner.

Sallie Greenwood and Lin Murphy showed slides of their June and July trips to Mt. McKinley.

## Climber's Calendar

February 10	Carderock	Sue Neel(340-1522)
February 13	MS meeting - 8pm PATC Hd	Yerupajá - Don McIntyre
February 15	Photo contest due date	Submit entries to Stan Halpin(340-2593)
February 23-30	New Hampshire ski & climb	Ian Cruickshank(484-5108)
February 24	Sugarloaf	Ryan Pierson(921-2935)
March 2	Crescent Rocks <u>or</u> cross country skiing	Lin Murphy(533-8412)
March 12	MS meeting - 8pm PATC Hd	Ski Mountaineering - Ian Cruickshank
March 30	Camp Lewis	Barbara Llewellyn (871-6197)

For ice climbing trips arranged on an impromptu basis, call Stan Halpin (340-2593), Ian Cruickshank (484-5108), or James Eakin (598-6047).

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