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

1718 N Street, N.W. Washington DC 20036

Volume 36, Number 2

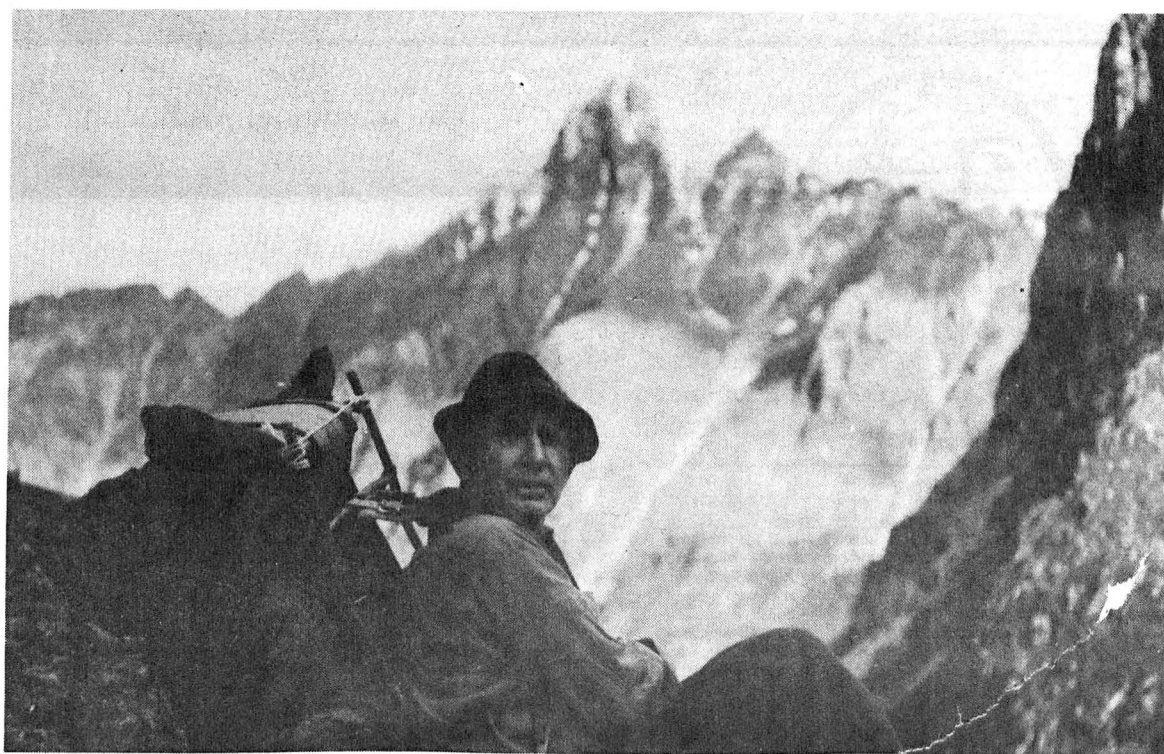
February 1981

Sterling B. Hendricks
1902-1981

He was a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the recipient of an impressive number of honorary degrees in addition to the standard academic diplomas in chemical engineering and other higher degrees majoring in chemistry. His citations included the President's Distinguished Civilian Service Award, the Rockefeller Public Service Award, the Washington Academy of Sciences Award, the Hillebrand

Prize of the Washington, D.C. Section of the American Chemical Society, the National Medal of Sciences, the Finson Award of the International Society of Photo-biology for his basic contributions to photo-periodicity in plant growth, and many other acclaims of equal merit. He was a member of the Committee on Research and Exploration of the National Geographic Society.

(continued)



Sterling in the Southern Logans, 1963 - photo by Arnold Wexler

Sterling B. Hendricks

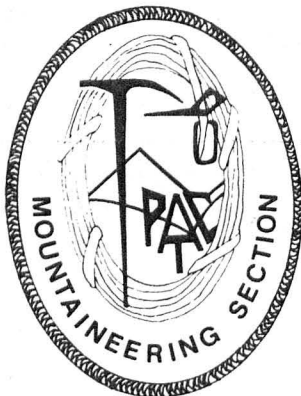
In addition he was an avid rock climber, skilled alpinist, and a pioneer in American mountaineering. These attainments were comparable with or even superior to--if possible--those in science.

He is even featured in song and story among his intimate rock-climbing peers for his feats of skill on the cliffs of the Potomac River gorge. In fact, no one of his eminence and skills who came under the surveillance of the Conns, Jan and Herbie, could possibly escape Jan's guitar and Herbie's lyrics. As Herbie would probably describe the Strawberry Climber, "It is all for laughs, and laughs for all."

Do not get the idea for one moment that his efforts were largely confined to the show-case aspects of mountaineering. An example: During a pack-horse episode one of the horses caught one leg through a bridle loop while making a deep stream crossing. The situation made it impossible for the heavily laden pack animal to raise his head above the water. While others hung back anxiously wondering what to do or what could be done to the seemingly doomed animal, Sterling leaped into the freezing cold water with a drawn knife. He dove down among the thrashing steel-shod hooves to sever the bridle rein.

Sterling was involved in many primary ascents, in many ascents in mountain areas with difficult access, and in equipment evaluation on Mt. McKinley for the first United States mountaineering troops. Serious accidents do inevitably occur. On one such occasion, Sterling, who had suffered a cracked vertebra and a broken ball-and-socket shoulder joint, undertook to summon succor for his fallen and broken companions. This journey over incongenial terrain involved two rappels and required a large portion of two days and a night's bivouac on ice and snow with no food and pitifully inadequate clothing. He had left food and clothing behind so that others might survive.

His heroic dynamics were not always confined to his waking hours but sometimes even lapsed over into his dreams. In one dream a lynx entered his tent. Hendricks seized this uninvited, incongenial, and unwelcome intruder by the scruff of the neck and proceeded to hurl him out through the crawl-way entrance tunnel. In reality the beast turned out to be his tent mate Arnold Wexler. Sterling's action was auto-catalytic. Arnold, awakened and startled, protested vigorously. The more he protested, the

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.

Sterling B. Hendricks

greater Sterling's effort. The greater the effort, the louder the protest!

Certainly no one should develop an inferiority complex because he may feel incapable of emulating a Hendricks. Few indeed are those who can.

His active interest in both mountaineering and science continued to the end of his days, or at least until December 1980 at which time he attended the annual meeting of the American Alpine Club in Washington, D.C. At that blast-out he gave me an enthusiastic discussion of his application of my data and conclusions on surface reactivity, blood coagulation, heart disease, cholesterol, and cancer to his own current agriculture biochemical problems and publications.

In a mountaineering vein he got a hearty laugh at my fruitless efforts to outline and personally check mountaineering activities acceptable for individuals over 80 who might feel the urge to do something semi-dynamic. Such were my efforts this summer in the Battle Range of British Columbia that I aroused the attention only of youngsters under twelve years of age by the idea of flying kites as a distress signal. Apparently my ideas and efforts for the "Golden Years" were not sufficiently mature.

A person has difficulty in imagining Sterling being deactivated merely by a change in base from the definite here to the indefinite there. Namely, over the high pass out of the Valley of Storm into a new land of Sunshine where the wild cataracts leap in glory in their joyous escape from the frozen ice fields. Where the distant snow-capped peaks, the upland evergreen forests of white pine, firs, juniper, and cedars, and the lupine and Indian paint brush in the high alpine meadows all beckon as they whisper their secrets to the breezes which carries them the cosmos. Perhaps he may choose to tarry there for awhile, waiting for the rest of us to catch up, and then we can all stroll forward together again to adventures unlimited.

Don Hubbard



Note: Sterling's mountaineering accomplishments include fifty or more primary ascents and many more secondary ones of remote peaks in British Columbia and in Alaska. These accomplishments greatly expanded the pages of A Climber's Guide to the Interior Ranges of British Columbia. His second ascent of Mt. Sir Sanford received the most attention and was largely responsible for opening to mountaineering the now popular area of Faerie Meadow at the head of Swan Creek.

The nick-name, Strawberry, for Sterling is due to Bob Bates, and the pack-horse episode happened on one of Henry Hall's early trips.

THOSE QUALIFYING CLIMBS

January's UP ROPE contained a list of area rock routes called "qualifying climbs." Full membership in the MS used to require ascents of these routes. During 1945 and 1946 UP ROPE printed descriptions of these routes. For memory's sake Sterling Hendricks' climbs are reprinted below.

(continued on next page)

THOSE QUALIFYING CLIMBS (continued)Sterling's Corner, Bull Run

The northwest corner of the Throne of Zeus on Bull Run Mountain is a severe balance and arm climb on 90 degree rock known as Sterling's Corner. The climb starts in the gulley due west of the corner and leads directly to the summit of the throne. The main pitch on the corner is about 20 feet in height.

From the rocks at the foot of the cliff forming the western wall of the throne the climber may reach his hand onto pull holds close to the corner on the edge of a protruding rib five feet from the ground. By means of a semi-layback he then brings his feet unto an adequate ledge and raises his hands to higher holds. When the necessary elevation has been gained and the weight has been correctly balanced, he should reach his right hand around the corner to the left onto a high and prominent knob on the north wall of the throne. On this support the body is shifted around the corner. Altho there is nothing here that is properly termed a foothold, feet may still be used to advantage as the body is lifted upon the right handhold until one or two fingers of the left hand may be hooked over a tiny quartz nubbin three feet higher. Another strenuous arm pull follows until a foot can be placed upon the first knob, and the right hand finds a small hold near the left hand. An excellent hold may now be reached on the brow of the cliff and the pull to the top of the corner made.

Sterling's Corner was first climbed by Sterling Hendricks about 1933. Not as popular as Charlie's Crack and the Overhang, the climb has never been subjected to mass assault. Nevertheless, it has been climbed by perhaps a dozen people. This spring it was first descended, and first climbed by a woman, Jan Conn.

UP ROPE, May 2, 1945

Sterling's Crack, Carderock

"***The climb up this crack is partly on holds and partly layback, until an excellent hold is reached above the overhanging portion of this climb. Once on top of this hold the climber can rest and meditate on a technique for the upper third of the crack."

UP ROPE, Dec. 12, 1945

Sterling's Little Quartz Slab, Bull Run

Nearly a mile north of the Throne of Zeus section of Bull Run Mountains, and several hundred yards south of Peak Gambs is a 75-foot cliff topped by a table top rock. The climb begins directly below this table top in a tall inside corner that may be climbed by chimneying and easy scrambling up a crack. A more elegant approach, just pioneered this last winter, is by means of a tiny layback crack in a 135° V somewhat north of the usual approach. However, it is the upper section of the route that gives merit to the climb. At the top of the inside corner one traverses left, placing either the feet or the hands upon the "quartz slab"--a small quartz hold adhering to the vertical face of the cliff. Continuing, one may traverse to the skyline and up onto the table top, or one may climb directly up in the crack angling left from the quartz slab. Exposure makes this climb spectacular. Arm work and balance are required, altho the holds are large and substantial.

The "Slab" was first climbed by another of Sterling Hendrick's 1930 firsts. It has never been led, nor has it been climbed down. A second useful quartz slab came off of the climb early in its history.

UP ROPE, May 2, 1945

Sterling's North and South Twins, Carderock

Looking down from the top of the cliff onto the lowest portion of the Chris-Wex-Don traverse beyond its circuit, one has the North one of these twin cracks on his right hand and the South Twin on his left.

To reach the foot of these climbs one can scramble down past the cedar tree along the Chris-Wex-Don to the seam in the rock above the willow tree.

From this point, the climb up the North Twin is started a few feet to the left. By face work one is able to reach the obvious layback holds seen above and thereby reach the crack proper. The crack provides jamb holds for one hand and foot while the other hand and foot face roughosities.

The climb up the South Twin is begun to the right of the willow tree, using face holds where necessary to supplement those in the crack. One feels this necessity particularly at the small overhang two-thirds of the way up.

UP ROPE March 20, 1946

EXPEDITION PLANNING - REPORT FROM THE AAC ANNUAL MEETING WORKSHOP

Last Sunday December 7, Galen Rowell, Andy Harvard, Ad Carter, Arlene Blum, and Don McIntyre talked about planning expeditions in Latin America, India, Nepal, China, and Pakistan.

Andy Harvard has just returned from his expedition to Minyka Konka in China. He reported that Chinese officials are swamped with applications to climb. Their response is often erratic. Their price is always high, especially for the popular peaks. Jed Williamson, also on the Minyka Konka climb interjected, "The Chinese really want you to get your money's worth, worth," and advised, "Don't be frustrated or intimidated--they really want you to come."

The standard procedure is to go to Peking to negotiate a protocol, which details a high price for every service. (Figure \$150 a day in Tibet and \$60 in Peking and in other provinces: roughly 10 times what the Chinese pay.) The expedition pays for the trip before it gets to China. After the climb, there is a reconciliation of the amount deposited and what actually was bought.

Though there is a formal list of peaks available, Andy reported that the Chinese are flexible, noting a 1980 Mountain Travel reconnaissance of a peak not on the list.

Arlene Blum reviewed the classes of peaks in Nepal (see trekking mountain story next issue) and recommended writing trekking agencies such as Sherpa Coop or Mountain Travel for information and assistance. She gave the impression that there were fewer regulations and bureaucratic hurdles to climbing in India. She had just returned from leading a joint American-Indian expedition, which required no liaison officer. The general rule, however, is that both India and Nepal require liaison officers (government officials who accompany climbers) for attempts on major peaks.

Ad Carter, Nanda Devi 1936, expanded on Arlene's advice about agents. How else do you know whether there's butter in Kathmandu? By working through someone in the country, "maybe you can get the right price, rather than the Gringo price." Ad calculated that, even including the agent's fee, the price will be less than you would otherwise pay.

Galen Rowell echoed Arlene's and Ad's remarks. His Pakistani in-country agent was Walidi's Travel, which can help with customs and the government's long, detailed forms. File applications to climb in Pakistan through their embassy in D.C. and be philosophical: "You can't mount an expedition without breaking some of the (many) rules. The rules apply only to (are enforced against??) the bad guys."

Don McIntyre, who has led climbing trips for the past two summers to Peru, confirmed that there are not nearly so many government formalities in Latin America. In the Cordillera Blanca's Huascaran National Park you just sign in (but not out). But in Patagonia "some" (ask Don) permission is needed.*

Don emphasized light-weight travel. Take only the essentials because airlines flying to Latin America give no break on overweight freight. In addition, in-country freight rates are also very high. Fortunately, there's good tuna in cans and trout in lakes near the mountains. Stores in Huaraz charge high prices for doubtful mountaineering equipment. (But Kathmandu is famous for low prices on international-caliber gear.) Finally, Don grinned, "Take it with you, or it may disappear in the customs house."

The panel offered some more general remarks: A leader is someone who can break daily impasses. While an expedition is a team, it is not a sports team: members' weaknesses are covered not replaced. A successful team will coordinate its members' strengths and weaknesses. Basic relationships, e.g., financial responsibility, should be laid out at the beginning.

Finally, respect the feelings of the people who live there. Leave your U.S. expectations at home, and understand that hassels are part of the experience.

*For information on climbing rules abroad, write Expeditions Committee, AAC, 113 E. 90th St., NYC 10028.

ISLAND CLIMBERS NEED BOAT

As part of the Potomac Gorge Weekend, May 9 and 10, we will try to climb at Herzog Island. We need a rowboat or canoe to get there. If you can supply a boat, call Lin.

Publications

Many People Come, Looking, Looking, by Galen Rowell. The Mountaineers, 1980. 163 pp. \$30.

"...taking picture. Too many people. No good...Some people come, see. Good!"-- Dawa Tenzing, Thyangboche Monastery, Nepal.

Your first impression is that Galen Rowell's latest work is a picture book of the Himalaya--large format with big, super photos that don't lose a human and earthly scale. Then you start to read. It's about climbing, but it's not an expedition book. Three expeditions--Nun (Ladakh, India), Thorungste (near Muktinath, Nepal), and Great Trango Tower (Pakistan)--are described, as well as a trip around the Annapurna massif and tourism's impact on local people and the ecosystem.

I read Galen's book with a sense of déjà partially vu. The middle chapters describe the Annapurna trek and the climb of Thorungste, the trek I took last August. The photos of deep, blue skies contrasting with white summits and green terraces were a revelation to one who had walked through these valleys during the monsoon.

On page 72, a big snow peak appears behind a ridge and the village Braga. I have almost the same picture, without the peak. And that peak is Chulu--it must be--what we tried to climb (to 18,500') without seeing. Page 72 is the best view I've had of it.

The most descriptive word I have for Galen's book is "true." His photos of the local people are not just remarkable portraits. That's the way they really look. And are: "Why are Manangbhots the most inhospitable and greedy of mountain peoples, while Sherpas are famous for generosity and selflessness?" True also are his notes of awful fellow travellers, who just visit to consume: "While he quietly watched a Buddhist service in the gumpa, a group of Europeans tromped in and loudly discussed what they saw, treating the living pilgrims as if they were objects in a museum."

Many People is personal, sensitive, and candid. "We make a mistake if we think that merely by being in a place we can put on, like a coat, the way of life there. We seem to hope that a night course in Zen and an air ticket to Asia will somehow put

us in touch with the earth again." It could be criticized as a book because it is not easily categorized. But then, neither are our experiences.

Many People is an excellent choice for someone who is about to visit Nepal. It prepares you for some unpleasant things you'll find, but shows a land and people you'll want to see anyway.

Exploring the Purcell Wilderness, by Edwards, Morrow, and Twomey. The Mountaineers, 1979. 103pp. paperback.

The Purcell Wilderness is a 60 by 225 mile oblong in B.C. just west of the Rocky Mountain Trench and the Columbia and Kootenay Rivers. This guide contains 43 trail descriptions and sketch maps and references to relevant topo maps and more detailed sources, e.g., Putnam's Interior Ranges.

Included are introductions to the area's flora, mammals, birds, fish, and insects and short chapters on winter use, history, and geography. In the section on place names, we read that our own Arnold Wexler named Cony Peak in 1947.

Cloud Walkers--Six Climbs on Major Canadian Peaks, by Paddy Sherman. The Mountaineers, 1979. 161pp. paperback. \$7.95

This is a very effective book that will acquaint you quickly with the famous peaks of Canada and with mountaineers who came from all over the world to climb them. In satisfying detail are accounts of the first ascents of Mt. Logan in the Yukon Territory and of Mt. Waddington in B.C.'s Coast Mountains. Sherman recounts how Henry Hall gave up his chance for Mt. Logan to take down a sick team mate and how the brilliant climbing of Fritz Wiessner won the final rock tower of Mt. Waddington, which had defeated the Mundays and Sierra Club rockclimbers from California.

The four other mountains are Fairweather, Slesse, Robson, and Howson. The Robson account may inspire you to read more about Conrad Kain. Sterling Hendricks and Don Hubbard were on the Howson climb, on which occurred the accident Don notes in his tribute to Sterling.

--reviewed by Lin Murphy

Publications

Fifty Classic Climbs of North America, by Steve Roper and Allen Steck. Sierra Club Books, \$16.95.

Lately we've seen a rather new category of book which I'll call the "100 finest." The best example to date is Gaston Rebuffa's The Mont Blanc Massif -- 100 finest routes. The format consists usually of a route description (could be a hike, a ski tour, or a climb), a history, equipment notes, and lots of beautiful pictures. Besides Rebuffa's work, memorable examples are a series by Walter Pause published in Germany and both Hard Rock and Classic Rock published in Britain.

The first, to my knowledge, of this genre on American mountaineering is Fifty Classic Climbs of North America by Steve Roper and Alan Steck. The size and format invite the inevitable comparison with Rebuffa, and by that standard the effort is not a complete success. On the other hand we've got to be deeply indebted to Roper and Steck for having produced an exciting, readable, and balanced presentation.

In making their selections, they have chosen to emphasize "excellent climbing" over "history and appearance." Even so they succeed in placing the climbs neatly in the history of mountaineering in North America. There are nine climbs in Alaska and the Yukon, nine in western Canada, six in the Pacific Northwest, seven in Wyoming, four in Colorado, three in the Southwest, and twelve in California. One can, of course, argue with the choices (that's part of the fun of reading the book). For

example, as an Eastern climber, I would have liked to have seen the Whitney-Gilman on Cannon included in place of, say The Lost Arrow in Yosemite or The Lover's Leap at Tahquitz.

But on the whole there's a nice mix of relatively easy (e.g., Forbidden Peak in the Cascades, West Ridge - II, 5.2), moderate (lots of 5.6 to 5.8 and one-day climbs), and hard (Salathe Wall, Hummingbird Ridge on Logan) routes, and a balance between pure rock and mixed routes. For each climb there is a history of the early attempts and first ascent, a grade, a time, references, recommended maps, a very complete route description, recommended equipment, and remarks. There is a full route photo and one or more shots of climbers in action. The pictures are all black-and-white, some outstanding (three Willi Unsoeld shots taken in 1953 of a climber negotiating the Chockstone pitch on the North Ridge of the Grand), some mediocre. A few color shots would have brightened up the book considerably.

Nitpicking aside, I'm going to get myself a copy of this book. What a great feast over which to drool during the drab Washington winter. It's very readable as a climbing history, serves to introduce the Eastern climber to some of the beautiful opportunities that await him or her out West, and can even substitute for a guide book (Xerox the page, of course). Now I've got to get going on number one...

--reviewed by Ian Cruickshank

Meeting Report

January 14

Martha announced again 1981 MS officers; see masthead. Lin displayed forms to facilitate reporting club trips; James has copies. John Bremer presented his slides from Colorado, which showed climbing places all over the state and concentrated on Eldorado Canyon.

AMC INVITES ICE CLIMBERS

There are about 25 routes on the ice at Lake Willoughby. "The climbs range from moderate to impossible." Lake Willoughby climbers can stay at the AMC's new cabins, near Barton, Vermont. See Lin for the blurb or go directly to the source: Ken Query-(802) 626-9211.

JULY - AUGUST TREKS Kashmir Birding Trip combines 18 days of birding, an 8-day trek and sight-seeing in the Kashmir Valley. Landcost is \$975. Trans Himalayan Trek

includes a 17-day trail journey from Kashmir to Ladakh. Entire trip is 27 days. Landcost is \$1455. Lila Bishop is trip leader. (301)229-6799

Conservation Report

In a letter dated December 22, 1980, Virginia Outdoors Foundation director Tyson B. Van Auken reneged on his promise to allow MS to climb at Bull Run Mt. MS had patiently complied with all Mr. Van Auken's demands, which were written requests for each climbing trip to the rocks, liability waivers, and insurance. He explained, "This closing will remain in effect until the problems we inherited from the Natural Area Council are resolved."

Our Bull Run problems were discussed at a meeting of the PATC legal committee January 22, attended by PATC president Bill Hutchinson. Jeff Brown agreed to coordinate the committee's response to VOF's position.

In January the MS Executive Committee referred the proposal to contribute to the Shawangunks Legal Defense Fund to a committeeman for research and evaluation.

Climber's Calendar

February 8	Crescent Rocks	
15	Camp Lewis	
14, 15, 16	Seneca Rocks	
22	Old Rag	
March 1	Bull Run or Sugarloaf	
8	Annapolis Rocks	
15	Great Falls, MD	
21, 22	Shawangunks	
22	Echo Rock or Cow's Hoof	
May 9 & 10	Potomac Gorge Weekend	Lin Murphy (533-8412)
10	***MS PICNIC***	Carderock Pavilion

NOTE: All February climbs are subject to change to ice climbing or to cross-country skiing. For information on trips call the leader or James Eakin(598-6047). For ice climbing trips arranged on an impromptu basis call Stan Halpin, Don McIntyre (536-6122), or James Eakin.

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