

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

1718 N Street, N.W. Washington DC 20036

Volume 37, Number 2

February 1982

### CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Well, here I am. The new chairman of the Mountaineering Section. Boy, am I in the middle of a real mess!

The members who attended the December meeting and read through the January Up Rope should realize something major has happened. They might also realize that the issue was lost in the conflict between the personalities of the people involved. What has happened is not the way this issue should have been presented. For the past two months I have been discussing this issue with the people involved and just about anybody that knows anything about the situation. My work has not been very rewarding. My problem is that I do not see the issue as black and white, but in many shades of gray. I had hopes that there would be the realization that people do have disagreements and that this disagreement could be resolved just like any other. I am frustrated, but still optimistic.

My concern is that this issue and the resulting aftermath has divided and threatened the section. The section as a group can and has accomplished a lot. Much more than one individual could have (even though it is usually only one person who has the dedication to do the work in the section's name). The most recent example of such an occurrence is in dealing with VOF about Bull Run Mountain. Working as an individual, no one

person could have been able to represent the climbing community and been able to work with VOF to gain access to the cliffs. The section did. The section has done a lot in the past, too. It worked on the Seneca Rocks management plan and was effective in maintaining the area's character by persuading the Forest Service to alter its plans. The section worked on the Yosemite master plan. This allowed local climbers to have an input into an area that is not in their backyard but still used by them. It has also supported local groups who have a common interest with the section. The organization who owns Greenland Gap, a nature conservancy - I believe, asked for our support in blocking the plans for a proposed interstate going through the gap. Even though denied access to the cliffs at that time, the section was supportive of

### PREVIEW OF FEBRUARY'S MEETING

Vern Clevenger will be the guest speaker for the February meeting. His presentation, "West Meets East: A Nepalese Experience", will include slides from his trips to India and Nepal.

## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER (Continued)

their efforts. Also, Greenland Gap is now open for climbing. There might be a connection.

The point of my rambling is that the Mountaineering Section has the record and reputation for representing the Washington area's climbing community. I would hate to see its programs and future efforts hurt. A powerful voice for the climbing community could be damaged or lost.

As the new chairman, I have several projects and activities I would like to see the Mountaineering Section take on. I will need help to do them -- from everyone! -- the members and non-members who make-up the area's climbing community. That is, I hope the projects will be of enough interest to the climbing community that there will be support from everyone. Two immediate projects concerning Seneca Rocks have been started. The first is constructing or rebuilding the West Face trail. This trail is a mess, too steep, eroded, and devegetated. (Ed. - see page 5.) The other is acquiring a stokes litter for the Gendarme. The old stokes is old, well used, and as Markwell says, "It's just a matter of time before a double

whammy happens and more than one stokes will be needed in a hurry!" I would also like to continue the section's interest in Bull Run Mountain. This is a very popular climbing area that is local to D.C., has been climbed since the 1930's, and closed to the public by VOF. The section's present permission system for using the area (probably the best of a bad situation) and the VOF management plan for Bull Run, I find distressing. To my knowledge, only the section's climbing trips are allowed there. I would rather see the area open to the public. The VOF management does not recognize climbing as an activity in that area. I cannot help but feel our rights to climb there are fragile. Another area of concern is Carderock. The area does have problems with erosion, and the section has been approached to check out feasible options for correcting the problems. I must admit these are old ideas, but they are being carried out.

New ideas on what the section should get into will be welcomed. Naturally, I have some thoughts on this, too. I would like to reactivate the

(continued p.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 Patti Lemon, c/o MRC, Inc., 3413-1/2 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007. Deadline is the 20th of each month. Subscriptions for MS members are included in the dues. The annual subscription price for non-members 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

Chairman	
James Eakin	598-6047
Vice Chairman	
Charlie Dorian	362-7523
Secretary	
Patti Lemon	762-4769
Treasurer	
Ed Cummings	332-6100

## UP ROPE STAFF

Editor	
Patti Lemon	762-4769
Circulation Manager	
Joe Farness	265-5877

## 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.

## SAVING MINNEWASKA -- ONE MAN'S OPINION

After a heated debate, those members present at the PATC-MS December meeting voted not to make a contribution to whatever group was fighting to "Save Minnewaska". As I was absent from the meeting, I would like to cast my vote in favor of \$100 to the Appalachian Mountain Club directed to its Minnewaska battle.

Although many issues have been raised, including water levels to sewage disposal, traffic, and roof tops, the crucial issue to my thinking is a legal technicality, namely "What process should be required in order to amend a conservation easement?"

As I understand the relevant facts, many years ago several environmental groups, including the New York Chapter of the AMC, donated money and successfully prodded the bureaucracy (PIPC) to acquire a conservation easement (CE) from the prior owners of the Lake Minne property. A CE is the preservationists most commonly used means to prevent commercial development of land with a high environmental value.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Lake Minne property is of high environmental value. Having skied, hiked and ice climbed on the acreage, I have seen the scenic beauty and rare environment the environmental groups thought they had preserved for future generations.

Unfortunately, the historic Grand Hotel Wildmere has become obsolete and unprofitable. The owners want to sell to Marriott, who wishes to replace the old hotel with a modern structure. Since the hotel is not likely to be very profitable, Marriott also wishes to build and sell condominiums. To help sell those condos, Marriott also wants to expand the existing golf course from 9 to 18 holes, and revive the Ski Minne area. However, expanding the golf course is in violation of the conservation easement. Their solution, get the

CE amended. So PIPC amends it. The rub with the AMC (and me) is where did the PIPC get the authority to amend a CE purchased with public funds and donations without being required to seek prior public approval. In other words, are CE's really worth the money the public pays to private land owners if subsequent owners can successfully request for a bureaucrat to abrogate the CE without restoring the public to an equivalent position vis-a-vis environmental preservation?

Marriot is offering a lot to get this CE amended to suit their purposes. It may be beneficial to the public in the long run, but that is not the problem. The method by which this is done should be subject to public scrutiny. This was not done in this case. Therefore, I wish to support the AMC in its law suit. I have sent a modest contribution to AMC, 5 Joy Street, Boston MA 02108, and earmarked it for the Minnewaska Legal Fund.

Most of the other issues are irrelevant to me. The most irrelevant issue is the PATC-MS power struggle. All power corrupts. Power to the people. The whole MS must share the responsibility for any breakdown within its decision-making process. I say forgive and forget, identify the issues and goals, and work together for the good of our mutual mountaineering interests.

Jeff Brown

## Editor's Note:

It is my belief that we all have the right to our own opinions. Even though I may disagree with Jeff with respect to a contribution, our friendship continues. We hope others will not permit differing opinions to have an adverse effect on established relationships. I feel it is time to pick up the pieces and begin working together again.

## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER (Continued)

section's search for property near Seneca. I would also like the section to be able to provide services like a mountaineering medicine course, instruction in aide climbing, ice climbing, cravase rescue, and rescues from a technical climbing situation. A real paranoia with me after Bull Run is losing our places to climb. I would like to see the section take any steps necessary to insure the public use of climbing areas. These name only a few and often vague activities for the section. I am open to suggestions for others.

I have tried to express my views on what I think the Mountaineering Section should be. Its purpose should be to take on and accomplish tasks of interest to the climbing community that an individual climber could not accomplish.

The present difficulties due to the Minnewaska issue I doubt will ever be forgotten. Not by me anyway. Speaking for myself, I can only say that I will not allow any issue to be presented as it was at the December meeting, and to the best of my ability I will not allow the Mountaineering Section to become the battle ground for personal attacks. With this in mind, I hope that all the members of the section and the rest of the climbing community will continue to support the Mountaineering Section.

James Eakin

## SNEAK PEAK UPCOMING

March 10th

Ron Greenberg will present

"Traveling Through the Andes or  
50 Reasons Not to Climb".

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Well, here goes. As this is my first editorship, I have lots of hopes, thoughts, and fears. First, I will try to continue to bring to Up Rope the high quality of standard that Lin achieved. Secondly, each month I would like to publish regular articles: summaries of the executive and business meetings; messages from James; budget reports from Ed; book reviews; reports from weekend trip leaders; preview of the coming month's meeting; and letters to the editor.

I am interested in receiving constructive criticisms and ideas for the continued success of Up Rope in terms of presenting any kind of valuable information to the membership and interested parties.

Speaking of the membership and interested parties, if your Up Rope was hand-addressed that means one of two things: (1) I have initiated the change of address procedure for you, or (2) I have found your name and address in the files passed onto me as being interested in the Mountaineering Section. In the next month or two, I will be updating the membership list (and publishing it in Up Rope), and updating the Up Rope address files. If you are interested in receiving Up Rope, either make sure your dues are paid, or make sure your subscription has been paid.

Please send ideas, address changes, letters, etc. to me by the 20th of the month at the following address. Also, please remember that I am only responsible for my own words and deeds.

Patti Lemon  
c/o MRC, Inc.  
3413-1/2 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20007



## EXECUTIVE MEETING - January 5, 1982

## SENECA

In attendance: Vivian Mendenhall, Ed Cummings, James Eakin, Dave Atkinson, Charlie Dorian, Patti Lemon.

## Topics discussed:

1. Climbing at Bull Run. Charlie will continue to put trips on the schedule about every six weeks.
2. Trail work at Seneca. Dave Atkinson is to contact Jerry Bremer with the National Forest Service to start things rolling. Funds for this potential project are to come from the Stannard Fund.
3. Conservation donation of \$100. Vivian Mendenhall was asked to form a committee to develop a list of names and descriptions of conservation groups for a possible donation.
4. Stokes litter for the Gendarme. James transferred this task to Charlie.
5. Nelson House. Ed reported that the Nelson House Fund contains approximately \$140.
6. Property at Seneca. James is reviving the search for property to purchase near Seneca Rocks, West Virginia.
7. Carderock. James reported that Lin Murphy and Janet Young are continuing work on erosion problem at Carderock.
8. Review of the trip schedule.

## JANUARY BUSINESS MEETING

January's meeting was cancelled due to snow. Hope to see you at the February meeting at the regular time and place.

On Friday, January 8th, on behalf of Dave Atkinson, I attended a meeting with Jerry Bremer and Ray Blum of the National Forest Service in Petersburg, West Virginia. The reason for this meeting was to discuss the possibilities of a new trail up the West side to Luncheon Ledge or refurbishing the existing trail. The issue of the condition of the existing trail and using the funds available from the Stannard Fund have been discussed in the past.

The Forest Service can provide a rough plan, some of the equipment, and some materials. We will have to supply the people power. Of course, it will take more work and more volunteer time to put in a new trail. The Forest Service would like work to begin in March when the ground thaws, and be completed by Memorial Day Weekend. The ideal working group size is five to seven people at one time.

At the February meeting, you will be given all available information to date about this project as further communication is continuing. If we are to provide this worthwhile service, the Mountaineering Section will have to be willing to make the commitment of volunteers and person hours. Expecting the Section to proceed with this activity, Dave has agreed to meet Ray on Saturday, February 27th at 9:00 AM at the Visitors Center. If you are interested, contact Dave after the 20th at 634-8314 (O) or 654-1784 (H).

Jerry and Ray are very enthusiastic about the M.S. undertaking this effort. In addition to Federal cuts in trail funds and CETA workers, they are interested in establishing a dialogue with the climbing community. There are other problems at Seneca besides the trails, and they hope to be able to talk with us about solving these problems in the future.

Patti

## NORTH FORK MOUNTAIN AT THIRTY BELOW

A group of PATC members consisting of Ian Cruickshank, Martha Hale, Charlie Dorian, Tom Russell, Patti Lemon and me, met at Roy Gap Road Friday night, January 15th. We planned a winter warmup hike to prepare for PATC's Denali Expedition this May. Bringing lots of extras for experimentation purposes, we loaded our packs to capacity (40-50 lbs.) and set out northward from Route 33 on Saturday morning.

At first the air temperature was 28°F (-2°C) with light snow and strong winds. The 10-mile hike over 2"-3" snow was relatively easy, so we killed some time photographing the scenery and each other. During the afternoon the temperature dropped dramatically as the winter's second Siberian Express rolled in. By 5:00 PM, it was 5°F (-15°C).

We staged a cookoff between the MSR and Optimus 111B. The MSR was more productive, but it required a bit more supervision to ensure its safe operation. Patti and Martha, not in training for Alaska, stayed wrapped up in their sleeping bags while we prepared the cup-of-soups and freeze-dried dinners.

A competition developed between us as to who would get cold feet first. The temps dropped to -5°F (-20°C), the conversation cooled, but none of us admitted to cold feet in our Makalus, Koflacs, or down booties. By 8:00 PM we retired. The winds huffed and puffed all night, but our campsite in a col was relatively calm.

I woke the following morning at 7:00 AM to find frost coating the tent walls. Any motion in the tent brought on a minor localized snowstorm. Patti was deeply buried in her 3-season bag wearing a down parka and all (Ed. - 7 layers at one point.) her clothes with my parka and down pants covering her bag. No one was cold, but we did push the limits of the equipment we brought.

I lit my Svea 123 using the mini pump and boiled most of the water for breakfast. We broke camp as quickly as possible warming ourselves in the morn-

ing light. A short hike to the ridge top brought us to our descent route down to Seneca along the pipeline right-of-way. It warmed to -15°F (-21°C) with a moderate 15 MPH wind for our descent -- a wind chill factor of -50°F.

Once down we retrieved our reluctant cars, and dined at the Valley View. We thought about the many lessons we had learned on this little overnight hike, not the least of which was not to underestimate the potential severity of West Virginia winters.

Jeff Brown

## NOTE FROM MARTHA

As the outgoing chairman, I would like to express my appreciation to those of you who took some time and effort to help with MS activities and projects. Specifically, I think we all owe a special THANKS to the following members: James Eakin (Vice Chairman); Charlie Dorian (Secretary); Ed Cummings (Treasurer); Don Kocher, Mike Kocher and Joe Farness (circulation of Up Rope); Lin Murphy (Editor of Up Rope); Stan Halpin and Don Barnett (Training); Barbara Llwellyn (Programs); Vivian Mendenhall and Sallie Greenwood (Conservation); and Pete Grant (Nelson House Porch Engineer).

## AN INVITATION ...

The members of the Mountaineering Section are invited each month to the Executive Meeting. This meeting is generally held the first Wednesday of the month in the home of one of the members. If you are interested in coming, please call James, Charlie, Ed, or myself for information on place and time of the meeting. We generally throw together a pot luck dinner, so you may be asked to bring something along to share. Hope to see you there.

## TYING THE KNOT

A nice place to get married, we thought would be Cedar City, a remote farming town in southwestern Utah. It is in a splendid region of mountains and desert, and also my sister lives there. But there was a disadvantage: it meant we had to arrange for a minister at a distance and on short notice. This was especially tricky because we needed someone who wouldn't mind holding the wedding outdoors, miles from town, nor using a ceremony we had partly written ourselves.

To our relief, the Presbyterian minister was willing to take us on. But this person was also just arriving in town, so we were not able to get together until the day of the wedding (October 6). Then who should it turn out to be but Margaret Balcom, MS old-timer and PATC life-member. Our pre-nuptial interview was spent in a quick rehearsal of the ceremony and a good deal of reminiscing about mutual acquaintances and outdoor memories.

Margaret was a biophysicist with the Bureau of Standards here. She joined PATC in 1943, climbed a while with the MS (including Don Hubbard and the Wettlings) and devoted much time to other PATC activities. She took early retirement about six years ago, did seminary training, and joined the ministry. She has held posts throughout the country, and at present is taking interim positions in the Rocky Mountain region.

The wedding was held in Kolob Canyon, in Zion National Park, on a knoll overlooking vermillion cliffs and cottonwood-lined canyons. Music was provided during the ceremony by the wind and my two-year old nephew chanting "Cactus! Cactus!". We then repaired to my sister's house for champagne and other goodies.

Our backpacking trip in the Sierra Nevada (October 9-17) was noteworthy chiefly for the first heavy snow of the year, which arrived a month early. We did nothing more exciting than descending the east side of Bishop Pass through three feet of unconsolidated snow overlying precipitous talus and small

cliffs. We did not cheat by using the trail, since it was drifted even deeper. Carson City, Nevada was not involved, except as a misprint in the October issue of Up Rope.

Vivian Mendenall

## CASTLE FINN - December 20, 1981

Although an afternoon playing football left me barely able to walk up a small flight of stairs, it took little persuasion by Tom McKenna to induce Janet Young and me to join him for a day on the ice. Secretly I suspected (and hoped) there would be no ice.

We decided there was not much of a chance for good climbing yet at White Oak so we headed for Pennsylvania. (That was Tom's rationale, mine was to avoid even the slightest possibility of walking in.)

The first sight of the roadcut was promising, no ice at all. But we proceeded to the northeast side of the river, and there was one narrow (2-6 feet wide) band of ice reaching the full height of the rock and another equally narrow band about 25 feet high. The ice was relatively soft and thin so it made for an interesting day. We all scampered up and down both climbs several times with all kinds of tools for a definitely solid workout.

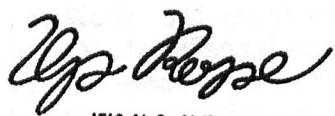
Ice is growing all along the cut, and with cooperation from the weather, Castle Finn should have excellent ice in a few weeks. In addition, some locals in a pickup wandered by after a morning of "far out sledding" during which a daughter of one of them was "almost decapitated". After the woman tried the longer of the two climbs (doesn't everyone always carry their mountaineering boots, crampons, ice ax and hammer, just in case?) they told us about Lewis Falls near Big Meadows in Shenandoah as a place to climb.

Harold Goldstein

## CLIMBER'S CALENDAR

Date	Place	Leader/Information
2/7	Bull Run	
2/10	!!! MOUNTAINEERING SECTION MEETING !!!	8:00 PM -- PATC
2/13-15	Gunks*	
2/14	Leader's Choice	
2/21	Sugar Loaf	
2/28	Harper's Ferry	
3/1	### EXECUTIVE MEETING ###	Call for information
3/7	Crescent Rocks	
3/10	!!! MOUNTAINEERING SECTION MEETING !!!	8:00 PM -- PATC
3/14	Cupid's Bower	
3/21	Sugar Loaf	B. Llewellyn 871-6197
3/28	Wolf Rock, MD	Ed Cummings 332-6100

For trip information, call the leader or Charlie Dorian (362-7523). Day trips are to top rope climbing areas. Weekend trips (designated \*) are to lead climbing areas -- please arrange for your own climbing partner. For ice climbing trips arranged on an impromptu basis, call Charlie or James Eakin (598-6047).



1718 N St N W  
Washington, D. C. 20036

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U. S. POSTAGE

PAID

WASHINGTON, D. C.  
PERMIT NO. 9615

DATED MATTER

LIBRARY PATC  
1718 N ST NW  
WASH DC 20036

P