

FOUNDED BY
JAN AND HERB CONN

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

1718 N Street, N.W. Washington DC 20036

VOLUME 37, NUMBER 8

SEPTEMBER 1982

Hanging Around

SINKS OF GANDY -- SENECA ROCKS

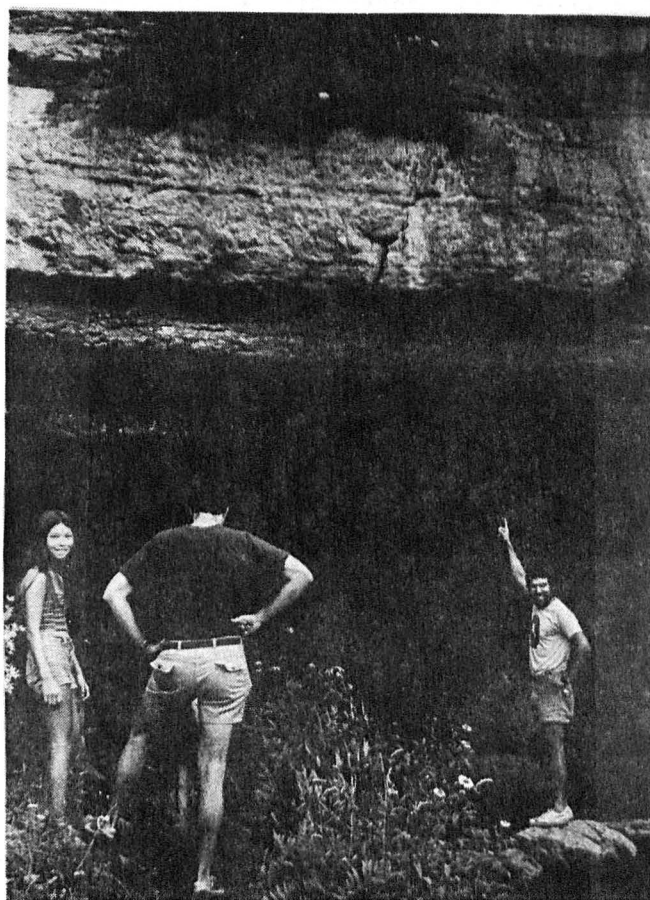
Aug 7 & 8

"Dark as a dungeon,
damp as the dew",
just about describes
the Sinks of Gandy too!
Twenty miles past
the Spruce Knob summit,
lies a lost river,
and I've been waiting to have done it.

Charlie and Nick
were in the intrepid crew,
with Cilla and Frank
and Pete and Helen too.
We walked up to the entrance
where the Gandy Creek disappears
into a big limestone cave mouth,
and swallowed down our fears.

Put our senakers on
and took our flashlights in hand,
said goodbye to the daylight
and waded out on the sand.

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Charlie Dorian at the entrance to Sinks of Gandy on Aug 7: "Take a good look at the sun -- it'll be a while before you see it again!". L. to R.: Helen Grant, Frank Otero, and Charlie Dorian. Missing from photo are Nicky Dorian, Cilla Holberton, and photographer Pete Grant.

ANNAPOLIS ROCKS

June 13

When I got up Sunday morning, it was drizzling in Alexandria. Soon the cancellation calls started coming in and I was informed that the rain was rather heavy up north; nevertheless, I loaded up the car and headed off to the meeting place. By the time I crossed Cabin John bridge, the drizzle had changed to a real downpour and it was obvious -- even to one as hard-headed as I -- that there would be no climbing today. Since it was only ten more minutes to Rockville, I drove on anyway, just in case someone else might show up.

Sure enough, there at the Safeway parking lot was Charley Dorian's blue station wagon. Charlie had been looking over the material he had received in his trip co-ordinator's packet and thought this might be a good time to check out some of the rarely visited climbing areas and update the approach route descriptions if needed. I agreed, and off we went.

First on the list was Boucher Rock. After much searching for the trailhead, (in pouring rain, mind you), ignoring a

few "NO TRESPASSING" signs, bushwacking through undergrowth, and even wading ankle deep in the murky waters of the Potomac, Boucher Rock was located. The cliffs turned out to be fairly good-sized, composed of the same type of rock as Carderock, but much less worn. The rock was basically sound. I found only two loose holds, and Charlie reported none during our scrambling spree. In all, Boucher Rock appeared to be suitable for a club outing, but not for a very large group -- it would be a bit crowded if more than a dozen climbers showed up.

Next we stopped at Carderock to see how the recent trail work was holding up in heavy rain. Oh yes, it had been pouring steadily for about three hours by then, and there was a considerable amount of surface runoff everywhere. In most places the erosion controls were effective. There were some spots, however, where the runoff had undercut the railroad ties and in one instance, the river bank had collapsed, displacing the timber, stakes, and all. This rain had certainly brought out into the open many of the weaknesses in the erosion control project, and it was a good thing too, 'cause it would have been difficult to

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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 Editor, Up Rope, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, 1718 N. Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Deadline is the 20th of each month. Subscriptions for MS members are included in the dues. 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 can join the MS by obtaining sponsorship from a current MS member. Send subscription and address changes to Mountaineering Section, P.A.T.C., 1718 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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 type of entertainment. Sunday trips to nearby climbing areas are sponsored on most weekends. Check the Climber's Calendar on back of this publication for scheduled trips. Weekend and longer trips are also scheduled periodically. Sunday trips are usually to areas where there are a complete range of top rope climbs; however, we ask that each participant has had some training or experience prior to the trip. Weekend trips are usually for lead climbers and experienced seconds only, and everyone is responsible for finding his or her own climbing partner.

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MINUTES - July 14, 1982

Vice Chairman Charlie Dorian presiding

Minutes from June Executive Committee meeting read; motion to approve minutes made, seconded, and passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Brief unofficial report (Janet Young was not present) of last Saturday's work at Carderock. Discussed problem of what should be done with area around Cripple's - no answers.

2. Seneca: Trail work coming along, but heavy rains have washed out, or partially washed out, water bars. Patti Lemon would like to schedule another work trip. Has been tentatively set for weekend of Aug 14-15.

3. John Teasdale will hold his Direct Aid Course the first week in October.

4. No update on First Aid Course, or more specifically, Mountaineering Medicine Course.

5. Auction: will still try for one later in the year.

6. Tom Russell suggested a Mountaineering Section tee shirt (like the ones made up for the Denali Expedition, without, of course, the Denali inscription) as a moneymaking idea.

7. Section received Kudos at Council meeting for work done at Carderock and Seneca.

8. Ad Hoc committee of past PATC presidents to investigate various sections (including Mountaineering and Ski) has not yet met. They plan to next week.

9. Another committee has been established by Bill Hutchinson to work over "excursion policies" (trail work, short trips, long trips). Looking into what policies other hiking/climbing clubs have.

10. Training: Don Barnett reports that recently he has been getting about 3-4 people per month in his beginning group, and about one in the intermediate. ("about one"??!!)

11. Calendar:

Jul 18: Great Falls, Paul Torelli

Aug 1: Big Devil's Stairs, Pete Grant

Aug 7-8: Seneca/Sinks of Gandy,

Charlie Dorian

Aug 14 (sat): Rocks State Park,

Bill Stem

Sep 4-6: 'Gunks

Sep 12: Old Rag,

Pete Grant

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

Newcomers were introduced: Jim Worth, Alejandro Garcia-Moreno, and John Teasdale's mother, wife and two sons. And Christopher John Thomas Atkinson.

October program will be the 1982 Denali Expedition.

Meeting adjourned.

Barbara Llewellyn
Acting Secretary

* I N T R O D U C I N G *

- a new Mountaineer -

Christopher John Thomas Atkinson

Born June 7, 1982
Weight 7 lbs, 11 oz
Height 22"



CARDEROCK CONSERVATION PROJECT UPDATE

August 20, 1982

MANY OF YOU ALREADY KNOW WHO WE ARE

If you have seen the June 10 update, or the July issue of UP ROPE, or better, helped on a work trip, you will already know who we are and can skip the following paragraph. The Carderock Conservation Committee is composed of members of the American Alpine Club, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, and "unaffiliated" climbers, hikers, and users of the Carderock area. We are working with the National Park Service to halt the erosion to the area brought about by rainfall, river flow, and heavy use by all of us who love this natural playground.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

WALKWAYS.

On June 18 and 19 John Christian lead a crew of some 10 climbers and others in the construction of two wooden walkways. One is located over the boggy area between the parking area and the top of the cliffs, and the other is in front of Jan's Face. Details about the trip can be found elsewhere in this issue. Feedback about how well they work is most welcome and can be addressed to either John Christian (986-1243) or Janet Young (966-9091).

RAINFALL EROSION.

Work to halt loss of soil by runoff has involved three strategies: Construction of check dams, water bars, and stone walls. Check dams have been placed perpendicular to the water flow to prevent soil from being washed away. Water bars have been placed uphill of the check dams, and at an angle relative to the flow in order to divert runoff away from the trail. Many individuals, especially Mike Cheney, have contributed to this work. Some additional water bars should be placed on the trail in front of Meenahan's because water is still collecting at some of the check dams. This part of the work can probably be completed in one more work trip.

John Christian led a trip on July 10 in which a stone wall was constructed by the walk down area. Rocks were carried to the top of the cliff by other individuals the previous weekend, and then lowered by a pulley device held in place by climbing ropes (details about this in the next issue). The purpose of this wall? To prevent rainfall from carrying soil from the walkdown into the Potomac. The rocks are angled into the cliff, so that runoff is diverted back towards the cliff.

RIVER EROSION.

This is obviously the BIG PROBLEM. So far we have used railroad ties and fill dirt to stabilize the narrow bank by Cripple's. It appears to be an adequate temporary measure, as very little of the bank was washed away during the flooding that occurred to the area after a rainstorm on June 13. By the time you read this we will have had another work trip to begin work on stabilizing the bank downstream of Cripple's -- by Triple A. We plan to use a similar technique: construct a wall of railroad ties, sealed in plastic. Then the area between the present high point of the bank and this railroad tie barrier can be filled in with rocks and dirt. A more expansive or elaborate effort, however, will most likely be required to weather winter freeze/thaws and the annual high water each spring. We are presently working with the Park Service to develop a plan to do this. If you wish to contribute to these plans, you are most welcome to do so... Just give me a call.

REHABILITATION.

Once the bank is somewhat stabilized, and each rainfall no longer carries several cubic feet of soil into the river, we plan to increase the ground cover. Some of the exposed tree roots have already been covered with soil (in front of Green Bucket). The delineation of specific paths will encourage the existing ground cover to spread out. John Teasdale is coordinating the planting effort which will start in September. If anyone knows a possible source of plant or seed donations, or wishes to work on this project, give me or John a call.

Signs requesting people to stay on these trails and to keep pets under control have also been placed up top and down by the rocks. Posts were provided by the NPS and John Christian made the signs.

Any additional ideas for rehabilitation are very welcome.

WHAT YOU CAN DO.

Feedback is most welcome. If you think of a better way to help our climbing area please let us know. If you wish to help out, and I haven't called you, call me. Watch the bulletin board at Carderock -- I will be putting updates up regularly to announce work trips.

(please turn to page 7)

CARDEROCK BOARDWALK

=====

"I never thought I'd be nailing at Carderock!" was an apt pun by Hernando Vera as he and others drove 16-penny galvanized nails instead of pitons to assemble the boardwalks at Carderock the weekend of June 19-20. This project was the latest of an on-going program coordinated by the joint PATC-AAC (Blue Ridge Section) Carderock Conservation Committee to rehabilitate the Carderock climbing area. Janet Young (966-9091) is coordinating the volunteer efforts.

Under the direction of John Christian, 11 climbers (Bob Anderson, Bob Berger, Mike Cheney, Ute Christoph, Sally Greenwood, Larry Geib, Pete Grant, Marjorie Prochaska, Leo Slaggie, Hernando Vera, and Janet Young), and a few others who came to climb but stayed to help, built about 100 feet of boardwalk over the boggy area between the parking lot and the cliffs and about 40 feet more near Jan's Face.

The boardwalk is a very simple design; elevated enough to keep the major elements above any flooding and gently curved to minimize it's visual impact. It should keep the climbers out of the muck and preserve the adjacent natural areas from being torn up by new paths for quite a number of years as the boardwalk is constructed of pressure-treated lumber. The F. Bowie Smith & Son, Inc. very generously donated the lumber and the National Park Service provided the nails. As a finishing touch gravel will be placed to build up the approaches to the boardwalks.

John Christian

Right: John Christian checking out the boardwalk at Carderock August 20.
Photo by Pete Grant.

MISCELLANEOUS RAMBLINGS

- - - - -

"DANGERS OF CLIMBING"

There are many obvious dangers in this activity of ours, but one risk that many of us have overlooked is our legal liability under certain circumstances. For example, I got this bit from AAC News:

In February, 1982 two Seattle climbers attempted to climb Nooksack Tower on Mount Shuksan. Six days later, when they they had failed to return, a search was begun by the local officials. Later the two climbers walked out to their car and reported that they had been held down by bad weather. The climbers were billed for the rescue efforts to the tune of some \$3,245 which they refused to pay. Officials have stated that if the climbers don't pay up the bill will be turned over to the prosecutor's office.

And I thought that climbing was a cheap hobby (after getting your basic equipment, that is)!



Annapolis Rocks (cont from page 2)

detect these deficiencies without the rain before it may have been too late to apply corrective measures.

Next came a hike up the Billygoat Trail along the Maryland shore of the Potomac. Our objective was to find and evaluate the many climbing cliffs and areas which we had seen listed in guide books but had never personally tried out. Spitzbergen, The Bulge, Super Bulge, and many unnamed ones were among those investigated. In general, we found a good number of cliffs ranging from "super-easy" to nearly impossible. A larger climbing party would, however, have to be split up with some distance between groups as most cliffs had only a limited number of obvious lines up the faces.

We also managed to get a good view of the graffiti across the river that has been the subject of some discussion lately, but neither Charlie nor I got overly excited about its appearance. Its color matched that of the surrounding vegetation, and here and there it was getting obscured due to growing shrubbery. I personally was more shocked at another sight -- a paved roadway leading into the river near Echo Cliffs.

Now, it would be an exaggeration to call our Mather Gorge a wilderness area, but until now it has been a place of remoteness with minimal intrusion by man's noisy, smelly machinery, where a paddler or a hiker (and even a climber) could pursue his/her hobby in relative peace, away from the rat-race of the city. Even if the National Park Service built the road only to allow access by emergency vehicles, it is just a matter of time until other motorized watercraft find their way into the river. Once that

happens, the lower Potomac will no longer be the enjoyable bit of "wilderness" that we, the hikers, climbers, and paddlers have enjoyed for many years.

Pete Grant

* * * * *

Equipment Notes

OLD BOOT SAVER

When your old hiking and climbing boots need repair, Wayne Groves, who runs Tricks of the Trade with his wife, is the man to see. He can repair all kinds of footgear from running shoes to heavy boots. Besides resoling, he can replace the rand (the rubber side wall) on climbing shoes, replace scree collars and D-hooks, and do full heel counters to cover worn linings or to snug up a heel. They repair about 200 pair of hiking and climbing boots a year and they've been at it since 1975. They'll also do repairs on packs and make new straps, etc.

Wayne put new Galibier soles and rands on my Black Beauties and restored the suede uppers so they look like new for \$40. Most resoling jobs with Vibram Montagna or friction soles run around \$35 to \$40.

Tricks of the Trade is at 752-B Walker Road, Great Falls, Va. This is in the Village Center, the new shopping complex at Great Falls.

John Christian

Sinks of Gandy/Seneca Rocks
(cont fr Page 1)

Rounded the first bend
 where it grew very dark.
Oh, the water's cold --
 this is a lark?
Muddy, dark walls
 but the river's not too high,
we come to a choice:
 left? right? oh, sigh.
We try to the left --
 a dead end says this ain't the way
-- try to the right --
 arrows point the other way!

Sometimes the walls are wide,
 sometimes the roof is low.
Even when the water's deep,
 our course is with the flow.
Here and there a new dead end,
 here and there some mud,
until we come into the big room
 where the exit's through a flood!
I wade in once
 and get wet to the elbow;
will anyone else try??
 -- hell no!

Just when perhaps
 our composure's beginning to flap,
along comes a troop of Boy Scouts
 and they've got a map.
A dry exit you'll find,
 just back and to the right,
in the middle of a mudslide --
 so why all the fright?

We all go a lookin',
 looking round about,
when nobody finds the exit,
 back comes all the doubt.
Finally Cilla and Frank,
 plus some locals who know the score,
show us the muddiest looking hallway
 ever called a door.

Oh, sweet sunshine and flowers,
 butterflies and grass.
We all sit in the river
 to wash the mud out of our clothes.
(Ed. clothes?? Another word rhymes better)

Hardly two hours are over,
 plenty of daylight in which to climb.
I don't think I'll be a caver,
 not even for a rhyme.

Now my story's over,
 now my doggerell's through,
I hope I've entertained you
 with how my skin turned blue!

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That afternoon, Cilla and I went on her first lead climbing -- she followed Soler to the South Peak register just fine. (The South Peak is now decorated with an American Flag -- put up, I'm told, last July 4th. How long will it wave?) Pete, Helen, and Frank did Ecstasy Junior. Frank tried his hand at leading on Le Gourmet Direct Start and wound up taking his first leader fall, about a 20-footer.

Sunday, in between periods of light rain, Cilla led Eeyor's Tail, the Gendarme, and Gunsight to South Peak after only a minimal amount of instruction. Quite a credible performance! In the meanwhile, our trio of Pete, Helen, and Frank scurried up Thais, forced to slip and slide on wet rock during the last pitch.

Charlie Dorian

SENECA WORK TRIP - AUG 14-15

Another bash at the west side trail was held Saturday. We bashed at the rocks, turning some of them into steps, and we bashed after the swimming hole, turning ourselves into stuff sacks, bursting at the seams.

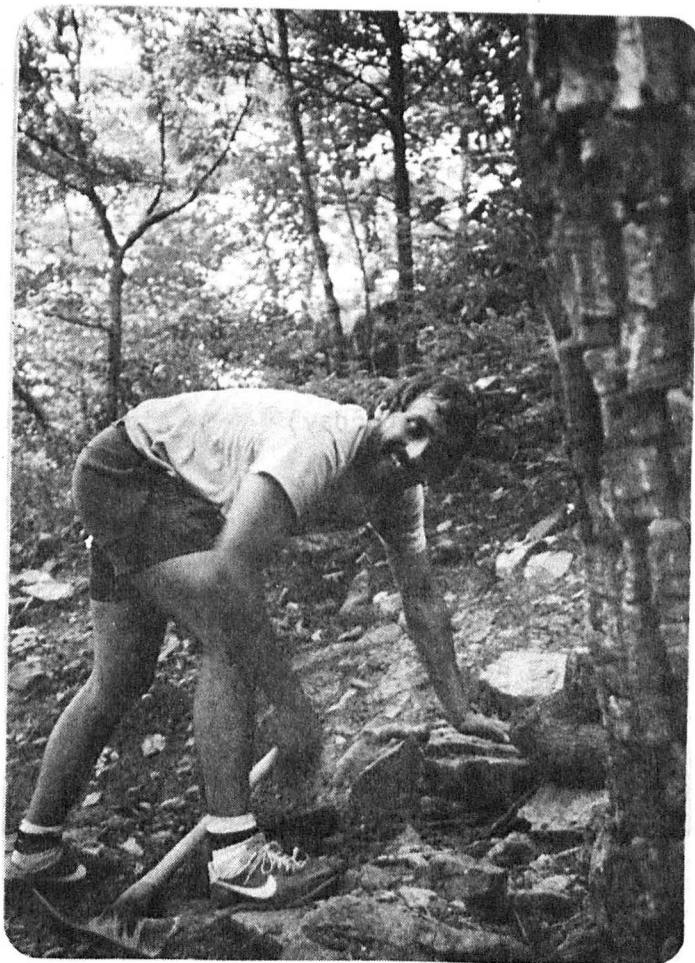
As feared, some of the previous good work is coming undone. Runoff is washing out dirt used to hold steps in place, so only the best placements and largest stones remain (which is, fortunately, most of them). We'll have to put in more water bars to keep the runoff away from the trail below.

Some of the steeper sections are real problems because of the rocks already in place. Ascending is usually negotiable, but descending proves to be impossible. You just can't put your heel in the same hole that was adequate for a toe going up. The AMC guide to trail building shows pictures of a lob "crib" used to anchor steps made of rubble. That may be needed here too!

In short, progress is continuous, but slow. Sometimes, a ten foot section takes four hours to build. Other groups, like the Pittsburgh Explorers, have started to pitch in. They've scheduled a second trip for October. Next time a trip is mentioned, why don't you help too?

Charlie Dorian

Some people sure are hard to please: At right, Pete Grant is asking John Christian when the hand rails are going to be built. Carderock, Aug 20, 1982.



Jeff Brown building steps - West side trail, Seneca Rocks, Aug 21, 1982.
Photo by Charlie Dorian.

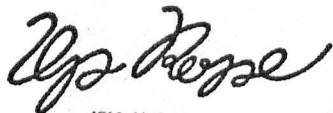


CLIMBER'S CALENDAR

September 4-6	* Shawangunks, NY	Martha Hale	762-4769
September 12	Old Rag, VA	Pete Grant	960-6033
September 19	Sugarloaf, MD	Greg Christopoulos	525-4061
September 26	Bull Run, VA	Charlie Dorian	362-7523
October 2 (saturday)	** Aid Climb Course	John Teasdale	262-9128
October 3	Harper's Ferry, MD	Pete Grant	960-6033
October 9-11	* Shawangunks, NY	Charlie Dorian	362-7523

For trip information, call the leader or Charlie Dorian (362-7523). Day trips are to top rope climbing areas. Weekend trips (designated by *) are to lead climbing areas -- please arrange for your own climbing partner.

** Location of aid climbing course to be announced.



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