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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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### Expeditions

#### Notes from The 1982 PATC DENALI EXPEDITION

By Thomas J. Russell

By June 15, 1982, all members of the 1982 Denali Expedition -- Jeff Brown, Ian Cruickshank, Ed Cummings, Tom Russell, and Ricky Todd -- had returned safely from Alaska after spending a little over a month on the mountain. This turned out to be one week longer than planned. All came home with a deep appreciation of what has been called "McKinley weather": more than half of the days on the mountain were spent not moving because of the bad weather.

When I return from one of these adventures, I always make notes about the trip: equipment, food, things that worked, things that didn't, and general information that I think would be useful in planning my next mountaineering trip. This time I decided to share these notes with others. They will be useful to anyone planning a Mt. McKinley Expedition or any other big mountain trips.

We arrived in Talkeetna noon, May 15, and by nine P.M. that evening we were on the Kahiltna Glacier at its Southeast fork. The next morning we began to move up the mountain, putting in camps at 8000, 10000, 11000, 14200, and finally at 17200 feet. We spent one storm day at Camp III, four at Camp IV, and 8 more at Camp V. Somewhere along the way to camp IV I developed viral bronchitis. After making a carry up the West Buttress to make a food cache at 16,400', I was advised by a medical team at Camp IV not to go any higher. With much disappointment, I returned to Base Camp and later to Talkeetna. Ian, Jeff, Ricky, and Ed moved up to Camp V and after several very stormy days at Camp V, mounted a summit attempt only to be turned back at about 18,400 ft by weather. After waiting several more days for clear weather they ran out of food and retreated to Kahiltna Base Camp. There they spent another five days waiting for clear skies and a turn to be flown back to Talkeetna. We all were disappointed about not reaching the summit, but are already planning a return trip -- perhaps next year.

"plastic" is definitely the way to go in mountaineering these days. Probably the best set of layers for maximum warmth would be: first a pair of polypropylene long Johns, then a pair of thick or expedition polypro top and bottoms; next a pile jacket and pile pants. On top of all this would be a wind shell made of Goretex (TM) fabric and as a final layer, an expedition weight down parka. We used some combinations of these layers with more traditional wool shirts and knickers. Dachstein mittens and Gore-

tex (TM) mitten shells provided adequate warmth for the hands. Footwear was a thin polypro or wool sock, a vapor barrier sock, a heavy wool sock, an inner boot, an outer boot, and then a fully insulated overboot. Most of us and others on the mountain used plastic mountaineering boots, either Koflach or Kastinger models. This combination worked well except for the Chouinard vapor barrier sock, which tended to wear out after several days. There is an Alveolite inner boot available for the Koflach and Kastinger boots that is supposed to be warmer than the felt version that we used. Headwear varied with individual, both wool and pile balaclavas were used. The rule of thumb in clothing is simple: if all of your clothing can't be worn at once for maximum warmth, then you have unnecessary clothing.

All of our sleeping bags were rated to 0°F or colder, and we enclosed them in a bivvy sack to keep them dry from the outside. To keep them from getting wet from the inside, we slept in vapor barrier liners. This worked well for the down bags. Less care was required for the fiber filled bag that was carried. All nights saw temperatures below zero and we were warm, even at temperatures in the -40°F range.

Snow saws and grain scoops, like the larger Ramer shovel, are a must for digging snow caves and for building snow walls around tents. Tents are always surrounded by snow walls to provide added protection against the wind. To cook out of the wind, a hole is usually dug for a kitchen. At Camp V (17,200') a snow cave is advisable because of the usual high winds.

The North Face tents were the MOST popular tent on McKinley. When we arrived at Camp IV in basin below the West Buttress, there were 22 tents in the vicinity and North Face had more than any other manufacturer by far: 11 of the VE-24's and one North Star. On several occasions our VE-24's easily shed a foot of snow and withstood winds estimated to be 50 MPH. At Camp V, the winds were brutal and on several days wind gusted over 75 MPH. The tents weathered this onslaught admirably. Don't forget a "pee" bottle: it's too cold to take midnight strolls to answer "Mother Nature's" call. A wisk broom is also handy to brush snow from clothing as you enter the tent.

(Cont'd on page 2)

### 1982 Denali Expedition Notes (Cont from front page)

Our Mt. Smith Armadillo sleds were the envy of Denali climbers. This sled has guide bars between the sled and your waist. There is a padded belt around your waist. We used skis and those guide bars made the sled more manageable for both uphill and downhill carries. We usually tried to carry as much as possible in our sleds rather than on our backs. There is a tendency to overload the sled. They end up top-heavy and would tip over. A distribution of the weight between the sled and your back is necessary going uphill to get enough traction between your climbing skins and the snow.

For several of us this was our first opportunity to ski Ramer skis and bindings. In addition, some of us are novice mountaineering skiers. The most difficult maneuver was getting boot and binding back onto ski after a fall while wearing a heavy pack and pulling a loaded sled. We used skis to our Camp III (11,000'). We elected to leave them at Camp III because of icy conditions higher on the mountain. Using skis while ferrying heavy loads on the lower mountain made this job much easier. I should note that many people were using "skinny" skis with success. We took avalanche "beepers", but for the West Buttress route they probably are not necessary. We did have one small avalanche at Camp III after about a foot of new snow. This site could be a little dangerous after very heavy snow fall.

No modern expedition goes very far without freeze-dried food and we were no exception. Mountain House freeze-dried food was used extensively. The only problem that we encountered was with the vegetables. I guess they fill them with gas; at high altitude this gas expands and the result is big veggy bags, difficult to pack and tear easily. We used MSR, Optimus 111B, and Phoebe stoves; all of them worked well. We estimated 8 oz of white gas per person per day. This was somewhat high, probably 4-6 oz is a better estimate. We underestimated the quantities of soup and drink mix -- Kool aid, hot cider, instant coffee, etc. -- that we would need. You must drink a lot of liquid every day to avoid dehydration. Dehydration can be a real killer at high altitudes. We tried to drink four liters of water per day, in addition to coffee, soup, etc. We took some booze, a little sip after a hard day of work was much appreciated.

For the West Buttress route, very little climbing hardware is needed. By this I mean ice screws, pickets, flukes, etc. Perhaps one of these per rope team would be wise in case a crevasse rescue is necessary. We carried an extra pair of crampons and an ice axe; which proved unnecessary. An extra rope is useful, though it is not necessary to carry any rope to be used as fixed rope. A fixed rope is useful on the upper part of the West Buttress, but one is usually in place and unofficially maintained by the guide services. A full body harness is recommended in case you fall into a crevasse. The West Buttress route appears benign and many people travel unroped. On a couple of occasions someone punched a leg into a crevasse but never anything serious. Carry wands -- 50 or so 4'-6' long. The route is wanded rather well but wands are needed for marking caches.

When you fly to Alaska, you will quickly discover, if you had not already, that it is a long way from D.C. We flew Western Airlines that had some super-discount fare. We had made arrangements to have our extra baggage transported at no extra cost. After some 15 hours of flying we arrived in Anchorage. From there you travel north to Talkeetna. This can be accomplished in several ways: the one that we selected was by Alaskan Railroad, with a round trip fare of some \$20. Be advised, however, that in May the train stops in Talkeetna only on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. I think in June it may stop every day, but you had better check. You should package gear in less than 50lb. packages to avoid overcharges. There was a three-bag limit and you are charged for extra ones and for any weighing more than 50 lbs. The train leaves Anchorage about 9:00 A.M. and arrives in Talkeetna at 1:00 P.M. This was a very nice and truly scenic ride. There was a Talkeetna car on the train and almost all of the passengers were climbers. There are buses and a limo. Advance notice is required to use the limo. It cost \$140 one way and can carry 6 to 8 people and all your expedition gear.

Talkeetna is a small town of some 400 people, one gas station, one grocery store, one hardware store, one liquor store, two bars, four restaurants, and three motels with some 6-10 rooms each which cost \$20 for a single for the night. Fuel, sleds, and some food (not of the freeze-dried variety) can be purchased here. I found the town very interesting and it is worth spending a day and night there. The

(cont on next page)



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 \$5. 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.

#### PATC MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

Chairman	James Eakin	587-6062
Vice Chairman	Charlie Dorian	362-7523
Secretary	Justine Carson	354-1389
Treasurer	Ed Cummings	332-6100

#### UP ROPE STAFF

Editor	Pete Grant	960-6033
Circulation Manager	Joe Farness	265-5877

1982 Denali Expedition  
(cont from page 2)

Fairview Inn bar is the center of activities in the evening and is a place to talk about climbs and hear about local folklore; both are abundant.

You are flown from Talkeetna to McKinley by Alaska's legendary bush pilots; either Jim Okeneck of K2 Aviation, Cliff Hudson of Hudson Air Service, or Doug Geeting and Lowell Thomas, Jr. of Talkeetna Air Taxi. The fare is \$220 for a round trip ticket. They don't run on a schedule and will get you in and out as the weather permits. They are all extremely competent. We selected K2 Aviation. Jim and his wife Julie are great people, enjoy their business, and take a personal interest in their clients. It isn't uncommon for them to put up climbers for an evening. It was refreshing to discover this approach to running a business. Many climbers put up tents on a baseball field next to the old airport in the center of Talkeetna. The airport now used is about a half mile away. K2 is building a small campground adjacent to this field and it will provide very nice tenting facilities complete with showers, picnic tables, etc.

Planning for a McKinley expedition probably should start the fall before a May trip (the usual climbing season is May and June). There is equipment to be purchased and it should be tested on winter camping trips. A lot of thought should go into the planning of equipment and food, for it is very easy to either over- or under-estimate what is needed. In getting a climbing team together, getting to know each other is extremely important. The maximum and minimum size of the expedition should be established. We started with 8, then went down to 6, back up to 7, then 8, back to 7, to 6 again, and went onto the mountain as a 5-member team.

Some manufacturers may be willing to sell you equipment at reduced rates: it's up to you to make the deal. The North Face, International Mountaineering Equipment, Alpine Research, and Mountain Smith companies helped equip us in exchange for slides of their products in sue and testimonial letters.

Tom Russell

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P.A.T.C. DENALI EXPEDITION SLIDE SHOW

Our very own Denali (Mount McKinley) Expedition members will present a slide show of their attempt at conquering the highest peak in North America after the regular monthly business meeting on Wednesday, November 10th. The meeting will begin at 8:00 P.M., and the slide show will follow after a short break.

\*\*\*\*\*  
And how about this for an encore: At the December meeting, Jack Smith of ABC TV will present a closed-circuit TV show of a Mount Everest ascent, filmed by the ABC crew. The video tape contains footage believed to be the highest pitches (at 18000' and up) ever to have been filmed or taped. It also contains extremely rare aerial film of Mount Everest and North Face of Kangchung.

Publications and Maps

"95 HIKES IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES,  
BANFF, KOOTENAY AND ASSINIBOINE PARKS

By Vicky Spring and Gordon King. Published in the US by the Mountaineers, 715 Pike St, Seattle, WA 98101, 1982. \$8.95 Paperback.

I've hiked a bit in the Canadian Rockies in going to and from climbing areas, so it was with a critical interest that I wandered through 95 Hikes..... The descriptions of the trails I had been on were as I recalled them and more (Oh, so I missed that beautiful tarn just off the trail!). Writing like this: "Tiny Bourgeau Lake, couched in a glacial basin, is a scenic showcase of high-country splendor--soaring rock walls, alpine meadows rife with a rainbow of delicate wildflowers, icy streams, and soft-needled larch trees" gets me interested in going back to the Canadian Rockies just to hike.

Each trail description starts with a summary of distance, time, elevation gain, highest elevation, best time of the year, and map reference. Then there is a brief subjective description accompanied by a good photo and a unique sketch map. The map is a view of the trail area from the air and to one side so the mountains appear more or less in profile, making it much easier to "read" than a topo.

I strongly recommend 95 Hikes.... for anyone interested in the Canadian Rockies.

John Christian

A CLIMBER'S GUIDE TO WASHINGTON ROCK

By Don Brooks with illustrations by David Whitelaw. Published in the US by the Mountaineers, 715 Pike St, Seattle, WA 98101, 1982. \$6.95 Paperback.

One of the reasons we climb is for the feeling of improvement and one method for measuring improvement is by comparison with an objective standard of difficulty. Guidebooks provide us with such a standard. WASHINGTON ROCK is oriented primarily toward fulfilling this function. A great deal of care has been taken in assembling route details and ratings. Each route is described by a Yosemite Decimal rating and hardware suggestions; for example, Dreamer (IV, 5.9; nuts to 3"), Narrow Arrow Overhang (III, 5.7, C3; 30 small nuts), and The Checkered Demon (V, 5.7, A3; 50 pitons and nuts from RUPP to 3", mostly Lost Arrows). Notice that these descriptions provide not only a description of the number and size of hardware but also of the style in which the climb should be done; i.e., Dreamer is climbed all free using only nuts for protection, Narrow Arrow Overhang requires aid but can be done using only nuts (why the "C" rather than the "A" designation), and the Checkered Demon is a conventional big wall aid route requiring pitons.

The descriptions written by Don Brooks are supplemented by an extensive set of drawings by David Whitelaw. These drawings include maps showing the relationship of the major rocks to roads and trails, route lines on the major rocks, and topographic sketches of individual routes. Most unique are the over 100 topos which show pitch by pitch detail of routes: belay points, physical features of the rock, ratings of various sections, bolts, fixed pins, hanging belays, rappel points, etc. This detail is designed to eliminate the guesswork and allow climbers to concentrate on overcoming the technical difficulties of the routes. As Don Brooks says in the Preface, "This guide gives more detail, allowing people to push their limits more fully." I think this guidebook succeeds admirably in achieving this objective.

(Cont'd on page 4)



PUBLICATIONS AND MAPS  
(cont from Page 3)

Given this plethora of detail, is there anything missing? Four items could be considered missing;

1) first ascent information (I agree with omitting this in principle but admit to being curious about a few routes).

2) description of the character as well as technical detail of routes, particularly the classic routes,

3) a few photographs showing the nature of the climbing on the major rocks, and

4) better detail for locating many of the Leavenworth routes.

This last point needs elaboration because I think it is the most serious problem with the guidebook. This book really does not serve to guide newcomers to locating most of the Leavenworth routes, particularly those on Castle and Midnight Rocks. The drawings do not provide sufficient detail of rock features, the route lines are too dense to interpret easily, and the written description is sparse. This book is definitely written for the local climber who is familiar with these rocks. The Darrington area has much better information for locating the routes but, then, this area has been developed only recently and such information still is needed by most local climbers.

I congratulate the authors on their restraint at not including in WASHINGTON ROCK many of the other fine rocks in the Washington state lowlands. While a catalogue of detail and standards may be desirable for the heavily used climbing areas, they should not be extended automatically to all rocks. Some areas should be left "uncharted" so climbers still can enjoy the pleasures of exploratory climbing, an art which has been traditionally a hallmark of Washington rockclimbing.

John Teasdale

Drawing by David Whitelaw, from  
WASHINGTON ROCK: A Climber's Guide,  
by Don Brooks, illustrated by  
David Whitelaw (The Mountaineers,  
May 1982)



ABOVE: Scilla Holberton seconding Arrow (5.8) at Shawangunks, N.Y. Photo by P. Grant.

1983 PERUVIAN EXPEDITION

The Iowa Mountaineers are sponsoring an expedition to Peru late June thru July, 1983. It will be their 9th major expedition to that country. Among the peaks to be attempted are Huascaran (22,200'), Huantsan (about 21,000'), and six other major peaks in the Rajucolta, where basecamp will be located.

The Iowa Mountaineers have extended an invitation to our members to participate. For details, write to: Iowa Mountaineers, P.O. Box 163, Iowa City, IA 52244; or phone John Ebert, 319-337-7163.

## From the Editor's Chimney

### UP ROPE GETS COMPUTERIZED!!

Well, not quite -- but its mailing list is now in the electronic age full blast. With these miracle machines one can add, delete, or change the mailing list quickly, and produce a new updated version at the flick of a switch.

There's just one thing wrong. The transfer of data from addressograph plates to computer memory was performed by an infallible human being, and errors crept in all over the place. It's the old story: Garbage in, Garbage out!

If you notice anything wrong with your mailing label, please drop a note to UP ROPE Circulation Manager, PATC Headquarters (address on page 2), or better yet, come to the monthly meeting and give the corrections to him or me there. Also, if you know anyone who is supposed to get UP ROPE but isn't, tell him/her to complain about it.

Ed

## 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 (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

## Hanging Around

MARYLAND HEIGHTS (HARPER'S FERRY), MD  
October 3, 1982

"Total mountaineering experience," said Charlie Dorian about our trip to Maryland Heights. In plain English, that means "lots of loose rock everywhere".

Seven climbers, accompanied by several friends who spent the day touring Harper's Ferry, gathered together at the base of the rather high cliffs of Maryland Heights, across the Potomac from town of Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. Being in unfamiliar territory, a scouting climb was initiated. Charlie led a pitch seconded by Gretschen and followed by John, while Joe took the lead on another climb. A number of loose boulders rained (??) on those below. After initial scouting, top ropes were set up and the rest of the day was spent trying various routes up them.

Participants were: Gary Beil, Charlie Dorian, Joe Farness, John Fohrell, Pete Grant, Tom Russell, and Gretschen Schwartz.

Pete Grant

AID CLIMBING COURSE - Oct 2, 1982

Instructor: John Teasdale

Being an early riser, getting up at the crack of dawn on Saturday morning was no problem, especially since this was the day Mountaineering Section was to learn direct aid climbing. After a quick breakfast, I gathered up my climbing gear and pointed my VW towards Great Falls. I turned the steering wheel to the left but the little diesel insisted on going to the right -- directly into 7-11 parking lot and refused to budge until I went in bought myself a cup of black wake-up juice.

By 9:00 A.M., most of the students had arrived, and shortly thereafter, proceeded to Norris' Aid Box, our training area. The day was simply gorgeous -- one of the best so far this fall. Not a cloud in the sky, yet the temperature was comfortable, even in direct sun. John began the instruction by performing a lead climb totally on aid. He explained in detail how to place pieces and use the equipment as he climbed and demonstrated many of the various facets of direct aid. We even got a chance to see how to nail pitons where other forms of accessories appeared to be insecure.

Next came setting up a hanging belay, and finally, a lesson on seconding a pitch using mechanical ascenders (that's JUMARs in plain English). An unexpected display of big-wall climbing technique was provided by Don Barnett who set up a hanging bivouac shelter -- that's right, it looked just like a tent suspended in mid-air.

Remainder of the day was spent doing "hands on" training, putting into practice the skills we had just learned -- or at least introduced to.

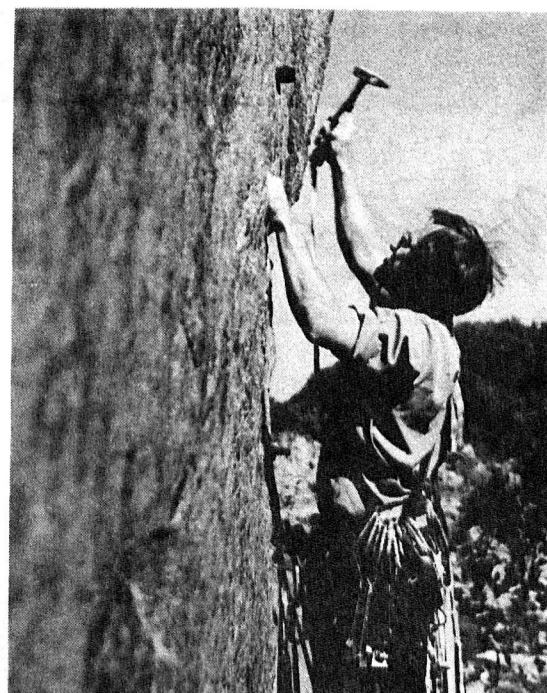
The course was truly outstanding. John's instruction was superb. He went into just the right amount of detail to get across the principles, yet kept the pace moving fast enough to retain the students' interest and attention. Well done, John, and thanks from all of us students.

### PARTICIPANTS:

John Teasdale, Instructor; and students: Justine Carson, Paul Torelli, George Merriam, Martha Hale, Don Barnett, Gary Beil, Charlie Dorian, Joe Farness, Martha Hale, and yours truly:

Pete Grant

AWA!!! Caught in the Act! John Teasdale nailing pitons at Great Falls, VA, during the Aid Climbing Course. Photo: P. Grant.



CLIMBER'S CALENDAR

November 7	Annapolis Rocks	Martha Hale	762-4769
November 10	Monthly Meeting	P.A.T.C. Headquarters	
November 14	Sugarloaf	Barbara Llewellyn	871-6197
Nov 11-14 (Vets Day)	* Linville Gorge, NC	Pete Grant	960-6033
Nov 20-21	Seneca Rocks Work Trip	James Eakin	598-6047
Nov 25-28	Southern Rocks	Charlie Dorian	362-7523
Dec 5	Cupid's Bower	Ptet Grant	960-6033
Dec 8	** Monthly Meeting	P.A.T.C. Hq & ABC Studio	

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

\* Designates a weekend (overnight) trip to a lead climbing area.

\*\* The December meeting is a special one for two reasons: first and foremost, we will elect 1983 officers; and second, for entertainment we will be treated to a special video tape of Mount Everest climb (See Page 3). Because of an extensive amount of hardware required to present the video tape, we will move to ABC studio after completing business portion of the meeting .... and be entertained in style!!

*Up Rope*

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