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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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### Special April Program: Expedition Climbing in the Andes, by Marc Ritchie

The special spring program will feature Marc Ritchie on "Climbing in Peru," on Wednesday, April 11 at 8 pm, at the IADB auditorium (808 17th Street NW, Washington). Marc, a remarkable alpinist from North Conway, New Hampshire, has done extensive climbing in the Andes as well as in North America and the European Alps, including the North Face of the Eiger.

Because of the prominence of the guest speaker who also addressed the annual meeting of the American Alpine Club, last December, in Seattle, and the great local interest in expeditions and South America, the program will be presented at the IADB auditorium, courtesy of the Inter-American Development Bank.

Admission is free. Tell your friends about this outstanding event, especially those who might be interested in joining the Mountaineering Section.

### The 1983 Huascarán Expedition to Peru

by Ian Cruickshank\*

The objective on this trip was Huascarán, at 6768 meters, one of the world's most accessible mountains. Three of us—Tom Russell, Ed Cummings, and myself—had spent a frustrating freezing month in 1982 failing to get up Denali. Though we never discussed it, I think that in choosing Huascarán, we were out to even the score and to stay warm. Technically somewhat harder than McKinley, Huascarán in the Andean winter (our summer) enjoys a milder climate. Basecamp is 2500 meters higher than that of McKinley. Moreover, Tom and Ed, having climbed in Peru in 1980 and knew the ropes. We were joined by Dave Atkinson, who knows South America and speaks fluent Spanish, as a fourth Huascarán climber. Paul Torelli and Jack

(cont. p.3)

### SPECIAL NOTICE

Unless you have paid Section membership dues for 1984, this will be your last issue. Make check payable to Mountaineering Section, PATC, and send to MS Treasurer at the above address. Dues are \$15/year or \$15 + \$10/member for joint/family membership, \$10 non-residents and half price for young climbers (14-18 years).

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Seneca Rocks, WV  
May 28-30, 1983

John Christian and I hit the road for Seneca Rocks over Memorial Day weekend, and stayed in Arnold Wexler's cabin with him and Don Hubbard. The talk at dinner turned inevitably to the good old days of climbing, and the good new days, too. The talk continued on the rocks, as John was always generous with other climbers on route finding, climbing history and just plain old stories.

Saturday began under threatening skies that didn't deter a big crowd: a U of M student doing a survey said later he got over 140 responses from climbers. (Sample question: "Did the presence of other climbers on the rocks enhance or detract from your enjoyment?") We started on the east side that morning (it was warmer) and did a number of climbs, including Christian Delight. Waiting in line to do the Gendarme, we just missed some guys, who, instead of standing up at the end of the climb, decided they'd rather smoke some dope.

That night we treated to a visit from SR's finest, Buck Harper, who had stories about everyone from St. Paul to the gut who dynamited the Gendarme, end everything from football (good) to beer drinking (not so good). And then there was his bruise--the biggest that any of us had ever seen, and on a part that isn't usually on public display.

Sunday we got some drizzles, but still managed, among others, Breakneck (Jankowitz-Kamm), the last pitch of Windy Corner and the first pitch of Le Gourmet.

Monday--finally!--was warm, sunny enough for a burn and our enjoyment of the rocks was heightened by the fact that lots of folks had apparently gone home. We did Skyline that day, over Humphrey's Head and the Pine Tree route to the Cockscomb.

The trip back was as good as the climbing. With the sunroof open, Bach on the tape deck, and John's Saab somewhere in the turbo zone...you should have been there!

Bob Skinner

Alpine Film Awards: Kurt Diemberger received the "Grand Prix des Diablerets" last October for his film "Diamir: les envoûtés du Nanga Parbat" (i.e., Diamir: the spells of Nanga Parbat). At the 14th International Alpine Film Festival at Les Diablerets in Switzerland, 28 films from ten countries were entered.

Who's who at Seneca?

Seneca Rocks of West Virginia and several other nearby cliffs lie on land administered by the U.S. Forest Service in its Monongahela National Forest. Ralph Mumme is Forest Supervisor, with headquarters at Elkins WV (PO Box 1548, Sycamore Street, Elkins WV 26241; tel.: 304-636-1800.) The Potomac Ranger District is headed by Gerald Bremer, District Ranger, Route r, Box 240, Petersburg WV 26847; tel.: 304-257-4488. Director of Seneca Rocks Visitor Center is Ray Blum.

Huascarán (cont.)

Smith were limited to two weeks only and would be with the group during the acclimatization period since the Huascarán climb was planned for the third week of the trip. It was Tom who took the initiative in proposing the trip and assumed most of the responsibility for its organization. He wrote the basic proposal in late 1982, complete with an elaborate list of equipment and supplies that was to justify in the following months a buying spree of what we all came to regard as "musts" for an expedition to Peru.

Climbing in Peru can be more like Alpine mountaineering than expeditionary. Burros transport one's gear to a base camp and local food is available and safe. So it was, that we were only 300 pounds overweight as we deposited some fourteen bulging olive drab seabags in front of the Eastern Airlines counter at National Airport on June 17th. Ed, being the smoothest talker in the group, and rendered positively eloquent by the refreshments at the farewell party generously thrown by Dave and wife, Martha Luz, snowed the Eastern folks. We tramped aboard with expedition packs as carry-ons and tons of our gear and freeze-dried food stored safely aboard free of extra charge.

In Lima it was Dave who came through. A few imperious words in his fluent Spanish and we breezed through Customs. A phone call and two Collectivos with drivers were waiting. Jack, Paul, and I were comfortable, if not calm, in our bright red 1968 Chevrolet Belaire. Tom, Ed, and Dave were loaded into a red Ford Fairlane of about the same vintage, as we took off for the town of Huaraz, some 400 km away from Lima in the Cordillera Blanca. Word was that the "Sendero Luminoso", left wing guerrillas, had been blowing up power stations and police offices and Peru was in a state of emergency. However, we saw no guerrillas and very few police.

The ride to Huaraz is definitely worth taking- once. Just north of Lima the highway follows the coastline with 1000 meter sand dunes which abut the Pacific. After we turned inland, we began to wind our way through the brush-covered foothills of the Andes which were spectacular rather than beautiful. THE Peruvian people are wonderful as individuals, but from a car window mostly you see a poor and often dirty landscape. After a 6 to 8 hour drive, we arrived in Huaraz a town of some 50,000. At an elevation of about 3000 meters, it is nestled like a Latin Chamonix surrounded by the Cordillera Blanca and near the foot of Huascarán. From our comfortable hotel, the government owned and operated Hotel Truista, we could sit on the terrace enjoying a Cerveza (beer) or a Pisco Sour (a famous local drink) and watch the clouds form and dissolve over the twin summits of our objective. Early one evening it even rained a little, an event that was almost unheard of for that time of year. The very clouds we could see were an exception for the Cordillera Blanca at this time of year. The cause, "El Niño", a warm offshore current. El Niño had created poor snow conditions all over the range. The local guides and officials

Huascarán (cont.)

with whom we talked were not enthusiastic about the climbing conditions all over the range. The higher summit of Huascarán had not been climbed and to the best of our knowledge was not climbed in 1983. Crevasses were not bridged and above the Garganta, the col between the twin summits of Huascarán, was reported to have waist deep unconsolidated snow. Several climbers had been killed.

We put aside any decision on our final objective. Huaraz is the staging point for most climbs done in the Cordillera Blanca and is filled with climbers from all over the world. We had planned to spend several days in Huaraz to acclimatize and to shop for gasoline and other supplies. The necessary and unnecessary shopping was enlivened by forays at the Huaraz bazaar. Dave was soon sporting a red brimmed gaucho, while Paul wore a broad brimmed floppy peasant hat and a hip length multicolored serapi (worn over shorts). Some the rest of us were wearing our bright colored running shorts and all of us our yellow or blue "1983 Huascarán Expedition" T-shirts. So incongruous was this group that we usually drew crowds of giggling locals.

The Quebrada Ishinca, our acclimatization valley, begins only a few kilometers down the main highway from Huaraz. CEASAR, our driver and constant companion when in Huaraz, provided us with a bumpy pick-up truck ride of 20 km to the village of Collon, where transferred our gear to backs of burros. A classic setting, next to a demolished Hacienda, we were watched by a crowd of silent but smiling kids who would shyly hold out a hand and say "Plata?", money. The hacienda, we learned, was damaged as a result of the revolution of 1968, when the estate was broken up and reapportioned to the campesinos.

A seven hour hike in shorts across cattle-specked hills and through a river gorge beneath towering cliffs brought us to a base camp at 4500 meters. We camped at the last flat area in the valley. Above towered a wall of ice which led the eye leftward to the triangle of Tocllaraju, as high as Denali but far more benign in the afternoon sun. For some of us 4500 meter was higher than we'd ever been. The following day was a rest day and was welcomed by all. We practiced crevasse rescue. The "victim" would dive into hole behind a rock. The second would self arrest or the hold the fall in the turf, while the rest of the group came up to help. This system greatly improved our confidence level, though one of the "victims" was nearly mangled being pulled out of the hole a bit too enthusiastically.

As our first training climb we picked Urus, at 5500 meters, a mountain popular on the local postcards. Starting directly in back of Base camp, you ascend 500 meters of tedious and horribly loose scree. A flat traverse over more boulders and scree leads to a rock and snow choked couloir breaching a rock band. Four of us reached the snow covered glacier above the couloir. Tom and Dave, simply not adjusting well to the altitude, decided to retreat to base camp. On the final few



hundered meters of the climb we wove through seracs, across snow bridges and over bulges with the just enough steepness to add challenge. On summiting we wearily slumped down on the tiny corniced summit platform. The incredible Smith, who professed absolutely no training in preparation for the trip, lit up a Galoise (a non-filtered French cigarette).

Back in Base camp, we saw across the valley floor, about 200 meters, the tents of Mark Richey, guide for International Mountain Equipment, Doug, his client, and Teresa, his girlfriend. We learned that Mark's plan was to do a training climb, Ishinca, and then try Tocllaraju (6032 meters). We decided that Ishinca offered us the best chance of getting all our group up high and acclimatized. Jack without Huascarán to look forward to, signed on to do the Tocllaraju climb with the Richey party.

While Mark and Doug, the next day, tackled Ishinca, we rested, ate and puttered about base camp. A favorite activity was the group pulse check, a non-scientific but interesting way to measure acclimatization. Our resting pulses ranged from a high of 99 to a low of 60 beats per minute and continued to slowly come down as our bodies adjusted to the altitude.

Saturday, June 26th, we moved camp to 5000 meters, by the snout of the west glacier of Ishinca. Jack and Teresa slogged along with us and helped set up camp beside a stark and lifeless tarn, then returned to base camp. On a recommendation from Mark, we set off at first light to follow his route up the North ridge. Hopes were high as there were only 500 meters to climb, but in the mountains "in the bag" are dirty words. Going well at first, Tom and Dave were eventually forced to stop and wait, while crampon problems bedevilled Paul. It was Carlos, our Peruvian guide and campwatcher, Ed, and I who belayed up the pourous 45 degree ice of the summit slope seven hours out of base camp. That evening on our return to Base camp, we could see three tiny dots, Mark, Doug, and Jack, high on the icy approach to the north col of Tocllaraju. Next morning, walking back to Collon we could see the three dots clearing the bergschrund of Tocllaraju. At the hotel two days later we were just finishing lunch and our third bottle of Peruvian wine when in staggered Jack. His thumbs up sign signalled victory and more wine. His group, having camped on the north col about 5300 meters, reached the summit "mushrooms" in six hours. Five pitches of sometimes vertical ice led to the summit ridge. Jack was delighted and we were envious.

Faced now with the decision about our final objective, we consulted local sources for information. The principal problem appeared to be the state of the glacier on Huascarán. Falling ice was making it necessary to move camp from below the ice fall at 4400 meters to the Garganta at 5800 meters in one long grunt. It was ultimately this factor, considering the state of our altitude adaption, which tipped the balance. Our new objective became Artesonraju, a peak of 6020 meters nearly 100 kilometers north of Huaraz in the Quebrada Santa Cruz. Our local sources assured us it was within our capabilities.

Huascarán (cont.)

Saturday, July 2nd, found us camped beside a beautiful stream at 4200 meters in the Quebrada Santa Cruz. Jack accompanied us as far as the last town, Cashapampa, and then, in the shaky hands of our sometimes tipsy driver Caesar, went off sightseeing. Paul, with another Peruvian friend and mountain guide, Alfredo, was off to bag a peak south of Huaraz, near the southern end of the Cordillera Blanca, Ruripampa, before returning home.

This time we had a porter named Luciano, we called him "Lucky", to help move to Camp I at the base of the north glacier of Artesonraju. A group of Dartmouth climbers camped near us had just put two men on the summit (we learned much later that one was killed and the other seriously injured on Huascarán) and provided a route description. The peak is a three-sided pyramid and we would ascend the northeast flank just below the north ridge. It was a series of steep glacier buttresses separated by relatively flat areas—a set of stairs growing steeper with altitude. Near the top a 50 degree couloir bypassed the last vertical ice wall, then a couple of steep rope lengths up the east face led to the summit ridge. Intimidating but "doable", we decided.

The morning of Sunday, July 3rd, was uncharacteristically cool and blustery. Clouds scudded by the chisel-shaped summit of Artesonraju. Tom, reflecting this omen, was running a fever and losing his guts at both ends. A particularly violent case of "tourista" or something worse? In any case he was in terrible shape and Dave elected to stay with him, just in case. The survivors, Carlos, Ed, and I, with our porter, Lucky, made a four hour slog to move camp to a four-by-four meter slab, the only flat spot in sight. Below boulder strewn granite slabs and above a gray wall of glacier gave a sense of splendid isolation. Across the valley the spires of Alpamayo, Taillaraju, and Pukahirca looked in the setting sun as if someone had dumped a can of honey on the tops.

Four bodies in a VE-24 guarantees no sleep and so at 0200 we were astir. Carlos had come all the way from Lima in two days and had stomach cramps. Ed couldn't hold down any food. At 0400 were ready to ascend the ice ramp just behind camp. It turned out to be far steeper than it had appeared and, without ice screws, took an hour to ascend. Above, by the light of our lamps, all we could see were crevasses. For half an hour, amid snapping and creaking of the glacier and the whumps of settling snow bridges, we wandered about seeking a route. Ultimately we stopped and waited for the sun, and when we did find the route we had lost a precious hour.

For three hours we surmounted bulges, skirted ice walls, and crossed bridges, as the sun grew hotter. Not a breath of air provided relief as the surrounding peaks settled lower and lower behind us. On the ice steps we belayed up still-frozen and delightfully porous snow which positively sucked up pickets for protection. Between the steps we were fortunate to have the tracks of the Dartmouth group to follow. By 1130 am we were

Huascarán (cont.)

somewhere below the last couloir. Losing half an hour trying to locate the couloir by downclimbing, we were nervous as we found it hanging over a drop of a thousand meters. Halfway up the 50 to 60 degree chute, I was belaying Carlos when he broke a crampon strap. In trying to back down, incredibly, the second crampon came off. It required the better part of an hour for Ed and I to get Carlos safely out of the couloir. Of an obscure Italian manufacture, both crampons were irreparable as the center screws had fallen out. The summit, perhaps two rope-lengths away, was out. We had to get Carlos down. Occasionally rappelling, downclimbing, and lowering, we got off the mountain in reasonably orderly and dignified fashion. Far too exhausted to continue to base camp, we let Lucky brew us cup after cup of soup and hot chocolate. Above, the thin finger of Artesonraju was impassive, indifferent to our feeble efforts.

Back in base camp the next day, Tom was improving, if not well. Dave, rested and itching to climb, proposed "one more," a nearby peak of 5510 meters. Weakened by a fabulous meal of trout fresh from the local streams, not to mention a lot of Vodka provided by a group of British climbers camped next to us, Ed and I decided to go with him.

We were away early the next morning. The usual scree slope, worse than usual, then on to the glacier, again a lead pitch, and several pitches of steepening ice led to a 50 degree ice slope beneath the "summit" ridge, we thought. Ed may have been burned out, I know I was. We had no screws, no pickets, and the thought of pitch after pitch of downclimbing steep ice was more than we could handle. We retreated.

Tom was visibly improved that evening and was able to walk out the next day. We had sent down-valley for a horse just in case Tom needed a ride out. On our walk out we met an ascending campesino astride a small gray pony. An hour later in a cloud of dust the horseman returned and insisted that Tom ride. Tom demurred, not only feeling better, but correctly recognizing his limitations as a rider. Undaunted, the young Indian pursued us and eventually persuaded Tom to mount up. The horse gave him a dirty look. The saddle slid alarmingly to each side on the steep switchbacks. Ten minutes of this and Tom was back on foot, his stomach problems forgotten in the joy of walking.

After several cervezas and fresh baked bread in Cashapampa, Ceasar arrived to drive our tired but happy group back to Huaraz for a last night before returning to Lima and the U.S. After hot showers, Tom, Ed, Dave and I were joined by our Peruvian friends, Carlos, Alfredo, Caesar, and Lucky for a farewell dinner.

*\*with comments by Dave Atkinson, Ed Cummings, Tom Russell, Jack Smith and Paul Torelli. Word processed by Tom Russell.*

Everest 1983/Andes of Peru: Thursday, April 19, 7:30 pm by Hudson Trail Outfitters and American Rivers Conservation Council, at Fine Arts Theater, Montgomery Community College, Rockville MD, \$3. [Contact: Jim Stuart, tel.: 301-840-0650.]

Seneca Rocks Campgrounds: The Forest Service is planning to build a 20-unit rock climbers' campground and a 100-unit family campground at Seneca Rocks.

Matterhorn Ownership: Matterhorn, Monte Rosa, Castor and Pollux and glaciers belong to all members of the Zermatt community, decided the Swiss Federal Court in Lausanne and was upheld by the highest court on 28 February.

Canadian Huts: After almost losing its huts to the National Parks, ten years ago, the Alpine Club of Canada has now been invited by the Park Service on taking over all mountain huts.

Exum Hut: Straddling the Lower Saddle on the Grand Teton, the hut was blown down in September. The Exum Climbing School plans to build a new one.

## Climber's Calendar

Apr 1	Leader's choice	Gary Beil	301-490-4826
Apr 4	Executive Committee	Tom Russell	301-869-8058
Apr 8	Big Devil's Stairs VA	Pete Grant	703-960-6033
Apr 11	<u>Climbing in Peru</u> , by Marc Ritchie (talk with slides) at Inter-American Development Bank, 808 17th St NW, at 8 pm		
Apr 15	Annapolis Rocks MD	Martha Hale	301-762-4769
Apr 22	Little Stoney Man VA	Tom Russell	301-869-8058
Apr 29	Buzzard Rocks VA	Joe Wagner	202-966-6379
May 2	Executive Committee	Martha Hale	301-762-4769
*May 5-6	Shawangunks-Lead Climbing Course	John Teasdale	301-262-9128
May 6	Bull Run VA	James Eakin	301-977-5811
May 9	Section Meeting-Program: <u>Rainier &amp; St Helen's</u> with aerial views by Jonathan Harmon, at PATC headquarters, 8 pm		
May 13	Baker Rocks WV	Pete Grant	703-960-6033
May 20	Old Rag VA	Charlie Dorian	301-946-2373
*May 26-28	Shawangunks NY	James Eakin	301-977-5811
**Jun 3	Basic Climbing Course	John Teasdale	301-262-9128
Jun 13	Section Meeting-Program: <u>From Lahul to Garhwal-Climbing in India</u> by Joe Wagner, at PATC headquarters, 8 pm.		

For program information call PATC tape 202-638-5306 during daytime; for trips call the listed leader or Tom Russell (301-869-8058). Day trips to top-rope or short multi-pitch climbing areas require no climbing partner. Weekend trips (identified by \*) are to lead climbing areas--please arrange for your own climbing partner(s) in advance. For instruction in basic and advanced climbing techniques, contact John Teasdale (301-262-9128). \*\* Basic Rock Climbing is a 4-part course: introduction to rock climbing at a nearby crag followed by additional instruction on 3 regularly scheduled Section Sunday climbs.

**MOUNTAINEERING SECTION**  
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club  
1718 N Street NW  
Washington DC 20036

Annual dues:  
Individual, \$15.00   
Family/joint membership   
\$15.00 + 10.00/member   
Non-resident, \$10.00

### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP/REINSTATEMENT

(Check one)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(If couple or family, give full name of all)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone-Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_  
(Persons under 21 years)

Member of PATC ? Yes

I wish to join/rejoin the PATC Mountaineering Section and will support its objectives.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Registered by Secretary on \_\_\_\_\_ Initial dues of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ received.