

FOUNDED BY
JAN AND HERB CONN

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

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AT BASE CAMP

May 9, MS Meeting, PATC Headquarters. Charlie Dorian summarized business at the recent PATC Council Meeting. The acquisition of the Bear's Den property was raised but a motion to delay action until next month was passed. The Bear's Den property has been acquired by PATC. However, PATC is now negotiating with the Appalachian Trail Conference to purchase the land instead. If ATC buys Bear's Den, it would free PATC funds that could then be used for other land acquisition purposes, including the purchase of Bull Run for the Mountaineering Section.

Phil Paschall (Lands Committee) is taking preliminary steps towards the purchase of 20 acres of land on Bull Run Mountain. The property extends from the saddle to 100 yards from the high point (Peak Gams) and will extend "from the verge of the cliff to a bench of land"--in effect, our climbing area. We will also be given parking (along the road on the east side of the mountain), access to the property, and dipping rights to a spring nearby.

One benefactor, Elizabeth Vos, who has long been interested in the Bull Run climbing area, has contri-

Base Camp continued page 2

EQUIPMENT NOTES

Double Rope Technique

Climbing with double ropes, once considered a peculiar practice in the States, has recently become a popular technique, and for some good reasons. Double rope technique is safer, as it reduces potential falling distances when you're clipping into protection, there's always a backup rope if one is damaged, and there's the possibility of quick retreat via abseiling 150 feet at a time.

To illustrate the safety provided in protecting routes with double ropes, think in terms of fall distances. Any time you clip protection placed above your tie-in point, it's necessary to pull up slack to reach the clip. If the pro is placed at arm's length over your head, that's about six feet of slack. Using a single rope, you're facing an additional twelve foot lob if you pop before making the clip. With double ropes, however, you can avoid falling that extra distance by alternating the ropes used for clipping protection. In other words, if Rope A is clipped to your last piece, pull slack on Rope B for the next piece. If you fall before you clip Rope B, you'll be held by Rope A--the slack in

Equipment Notes continued page 3

PATC MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

Charlie Dorian, Chairman301/946-2373
Tom Russell, Vice Chairman301/869-8058
Bob Skinner, Secretary703/528-7371
Dave Atkinson, Treasurer301/654-1782

Training and Safety, John Teasdale301/262-9128
Climbing and Expeditions, Tom Russell.301/869-8058
Membership and Hospitality
Program and Entertainment,

Barbara Llewellyn301/871-6197
Publicity Roger Slakey701/556-0589
Nelson House, Marcy Logan202/332-6116
Carderock Conservation, Janet Young202/966-9091

UP ROPE STAFF

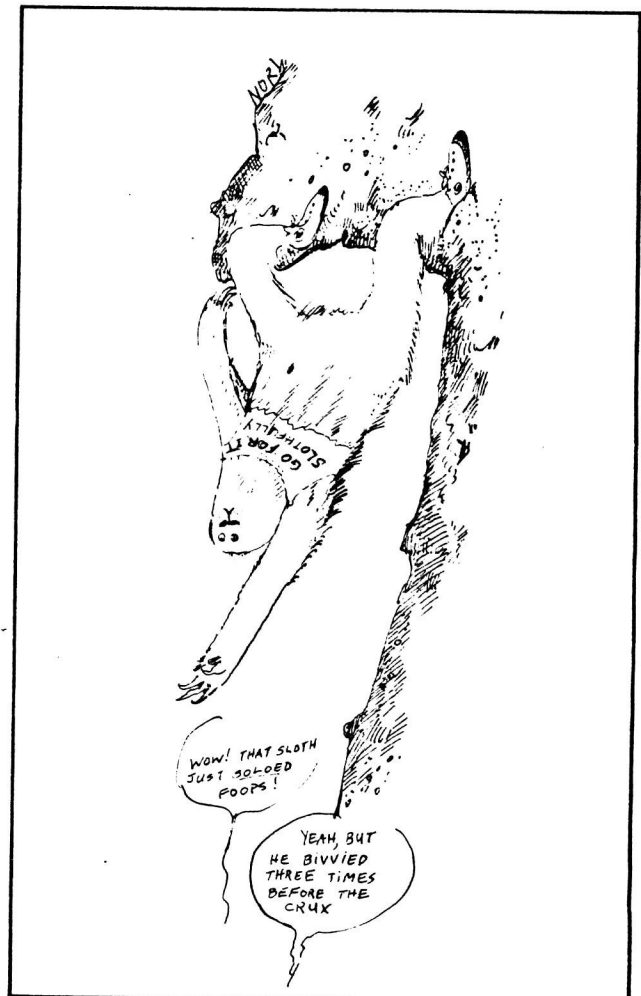
Joe Wagner, Editor202/966-6379
Editorial Staff
Nori Gessler703/524-2068
Stuart Pregnall202/338-6140

UP ROPE is published monthly, except during August, by and for members of the Mountaineering Section of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club of Washington, D.C., Editorial contributions are welcome and should be sent to Editor, Up Rope, Mountaineering Section, PATC, 1718 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 before the 20th of each month.

buted a large check for the property (preliminary appraisal: \$1,000 per acre). In addition, MS will start a fund drive to raise money to help acquire the property. Another source of funding for the land purchase is the David Templeton Memorial Fund, originally set up to buy and erect a cabin. The money (approximately \$4,000) is administered by PATC, but controlled by the Mountaineering Section. Joe Wagner proposed that purchase of land for Bull Run Mountain be approved, the David Templeton cabin fund be used for that purpose, and that a fund be established for the purchase of the land. The motion was seconded, and carried unanimously. Donations for the purchase of the Bull Run property can be sent to the David Templeton Memorial Fund, c/o Potomac Appalachian Trail Club Headquarters. These donations are tax deductible.

Referring to the Big Devil's Stairs April 8 climbing trip (see Hanging Around, next issue), Dorian said, "what could have been a tragic event made us look into the liability of trip leaders." A committee has been established to examine Section liability in the event of an accident involving young climbers (16 - 18 years old). The committee will report its findings in Up Rope in the near future.

After MS business, John Harmon presented a very entertaining slide show of his attempted ascent of Mt. Rainier. He also had some breathtaking shots of Mt. St. Helen after it erupted. □



Double Rope continued

Rope B won't affect your falling distance. Think about that next time you struggle to make a difficult clip.

Some people point to the added weight factor when using two ropes versus one. Since rope drag can be more efficiently managed with two ropes, you can reduce the number of slings and krabs you carry on your rack. Six carabiners and three slings equal one pound--and the weight difference between double ropes and a single rope is between 2 to 3 pounds. I've cut down on the number of slings I carry by about half.

The biggest drawback in using double ropes is rope management--twice the rope, twice the difficulty until you figure it out. Using the protection example above, after the leader has clipped Rope B into the protection above his head, the belayer must then take in Rope B while paying out slack on Rope A. Since Rope B is the active rope in this case, that's the one the belayer must pay attention to. This is complicated at first, but after the belayer has had some experience with the system, problems are minimal. One more word about belaying. If you use a sticht plate or other mechanical device, make sure its one made for double 9mm ropes. Some sticht plates have two holes, but one will fit an 11mm rope. A 9mm rope will slip if it comes under tension through this hole--so belayer beware.

Double ropes aren't for everyone, and they aren't necessary. But they do enable climbers to have an extra margin of safety that compensates for their occasional peculiarities. I've been using them for ten years now--I expect that I'll continue to for the next ten years. If you want to know more about using them, check out the last two Chouinard catalogs, or ask one of the MS members you see with those skinny ropes. We'll be glad to explain their mysteries to you. □

CARDEROCK CONSERVATION

Janet Young, Project Coordinator

We've had a very wet spring this year with the Potomac high and the ground at Carderock swampy for almost all of the last month. Both have made it difficult to work on erosion control this Spring. Work done last year is continuing to protect the bank but some damage in terms of dislodged ties, walkways, and dirt has occurred.

Long Range Goals

What are our plans this year? First, we'd like to get all the rocks from on top of the cliffs down into the river and against the bank to support the railroad ties already in place. Then we can put additional dirt in, all of which will add support to the bank and act as a buffer against the river.

Secondly, we want to plant some indigenous shrubs or trees at the bank to retain soil. Mike Chaney is investigating which plants would be best to use. If there is anyone with a favorite and potentially generous nursery they think would be willing to make a tax-deductible donation to us, please let me know.

Work Trip June 9

Coming up early in June is our next work trip, when the ground should finally be dry. Bob Shimizu, a local caver and Carderock user, is arranging to get all his caving friends out that day and it would be great to have as many more folks as possible. As an inducement, Bob tells me that there will be food and soft drinks for all who come out to break rocks, shovel dirt and ferry rocks back and forth. At the end of the day, the local site of an end-of-day party will be revealed. To help defray the cost of the banquet(s) donations will be gratefully received. Please call Bob (698-0317) or myself (966-9091) for more information. We will provide all

tools, but if you have a wheelbarrow which can be used to carry rocks, please bring it.

We are close to completing work which should be able to resist the annual Potomac floods. If all of us continue to support this effort, we'll all be able to continue climbing at Carderock. □

NELSON HOUSE

May 19, 20. Marcy Logan rolled in at 7:00 a.m. with a jar of Maxwell House coffee in hand. Tom Russell and James Eakin cheered and threw their cups of tea over the porch railing. After James and Tom had satisfied their pathetic addictions, we started to work on the old house. Our scraping and painting disturbed the two blacksnakes who had been keeping the mouse and spider population down over the winter. Around mid-morning Mr. Nelson stopped by with a pithy literary allusion or two. My teetering on the ladder reminded him of the misadventures of "Darius Green and his Flying Machine" which he quoted in its entirety (you will remember Darius found that falling wasn't so bad--it was the landing that was unpleasant).

Gordon and Eric Swenson arrived later that morning. We finished painting the house and most of the trim by evening. Looked pretty good. Had dinner, listened to some good blues guitar and ghost stories on the front porch till late that night. Looking down the valley toward Nelson Rocks we were all astonished to see the eerie "Nelson Lights" suddenly appear. They flickered and danced over the cliffs for minutes, then just as suddenly, vanished.

Next morning the Swensons left early to climb Banana and the Gen-darme, both led by Eric. Marcy and Tom hiked up Spruce Knob and James and I had a good day of climbing.

June 23 and 24 is the next scheduled Nelson House worktrip. At that time, we plan to finish painting the trim, the front and back porches and fix the stove. Join us for one day or both. Bring your own roller, roller covers, pan and climbing gear.

We will spend Saturday night at the Nelson House and share in potluck suppers. For further information and reservations, call Marcy Logan at 202/332-6116. □

HANGING AROUND

Trip Leader Guidelines

The Mountaineering Section has not set any basic qualifications for persons who coordinate and/or lead day and weekend climbing trips in the general area between New York and South Carolina. Trip leaders are volunteers and every person who climbs, mainly on rock, and who participates in group activities does so at his or her own risk.

Before the Trip

Normally, the trip leader is the contact for people who want to sign up for the trip. He or she will inform about the location of the climbing area, directions, meeting place and time (if any) and will generally inquire about experience and equipment of climbers not known to the trip leader. If asked, he or she may assist (if practical) with car pools and riding arrangements and may advise on climbing partners.

Note: Climbers under 16 years of age, regardless of experience, must be accompanied by a responsible adult if they climb with the group and must carry permission from adult for medical treatment.

On the Rock.

Your main responsibility is to see that participating climbers use safe techniques and equipment to avoid serious accidents. You are expected to be familiar with the area where climbing activities are planned, to make appropriate contact (if practical, mandatory or desirable) with Park/Forest authority (without generally conceding that the authority has the legal right to regulate climbing) or private owners responsible for the climbing area. You should prepare a mental plan should an emergency make rescue and evacuation necessary.

(Obtain information on the location of the closest telephone: name, location, telephone or local ambulance service/rescue squad, hospital, physician and police department; name, location and phone number or the officer or private owner of the climbing area.)

Trip Leader continued page 5

Shawangunks

Tom Russell

May 5, 1984. "I can't believe this...I'm actually here in the Gunks and leading my first rock climb," I thought to myself as I started to make my first move up the climb named Northern Pillar.

When I first started climbing some years ago, I thought that it would be just top roping for me. On a top rope, it can be scary enough. My interest in rock climbing has come and gone over the years, but my love for mountaineering has grown steadily. I finally decided that to be a competent mountaineer, one must be able to lead on rock, ice, and snow and not expect others to do all the leading. When John Teasdale, climbing instructor for the Mountaineering Section was going to teach a lead climbing course at the Shawangunks, I decided to sign on. John's plan was simple--pair a student with an experienced lead climber and lead climb... you, the student, do the leading.

This experience of leading began when I loaded my gear into the Cummings and Witt station wagon. Ed, Clara and I (and dare I forget their dogs, Cedric and Edgar) began the 6 to 7 hour drive to the Gunks. I zipped up my sleeping bag near 2 a.m. Sleep was difficult--the kind of sleep that I have before every summit attempt that I have made... you feel that you never really sleep. I kept thinking of what John had said, "the way to learn to lead climb is to lead climb." I was afraid and worried about events of the coming day.

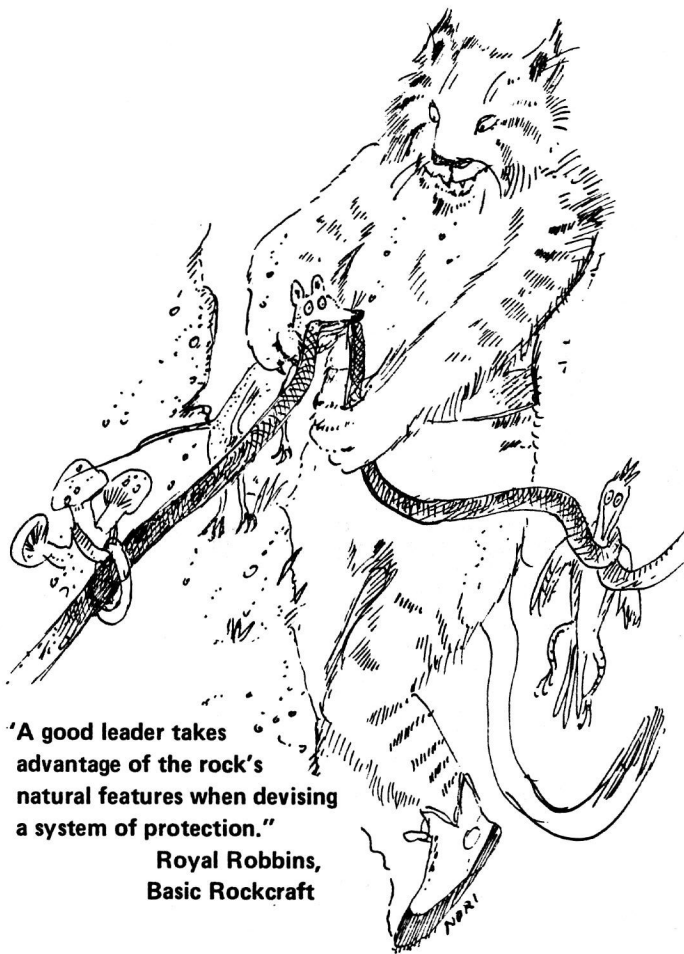
At noon the next day, Charlie Dorian and I were clanking down the Carriage Road--Charlie the teacher, I the student. As we walked, Charlie, realizing my apprehension, jokingly explained some of the unwritten rules of lead climbing in an attempt to make me relax. He explained, "leader carries rack, second carried rope, pack, and of course, follows at least one step behind the leader as they walk." Sure enough, I had the rack and Charlie was carrying the rope. We laughed and I said to Charlie, "Just remember that one step, 'cause I think you've been walking even with me."

Because it was a nice sunny spring weekend and because we had gotten a late start, we found that many of the choice climbs were taken. As we walked down the Carriage Road and kept finding the 5.2 climbs taken I told Charlie, "this doesn't look too good. We may have to wait until tomorrow to find a climb that I can lead. Maybe you should lead and I'll follow." "No, no, don't worry, we'll find something," Charlie said.

I had mentioned wanting to do a climb called Northern Pillar, a 5.2 and a classic...the first climb done in the Trapps by Hans Kraus and Susanne Simon in 1940. I had followed the first pitch on my first trip to the Gunks the year before. We found the climb and it too was occupied, but then a party was about to finish the second of its three pitches. Charlie said, "great, let's do it. They'll finish before we can overtake than." What an understatement that turned out to be.

Since I reminded Charlie that I was a physicist and knew all about vector quantities, we spent almost no time on how to place protection. Charlie and I exchanged climbing signals.

Gunks continued page 6



"A good leader takes advantage of the rock's natural features when devising a system of protection."

Royal Robbins,
Basic Rockcraft

Trip Leader continued

Share this information with your group. If a leader is unable to accompany the assigned trip he or she must find a substitute leader. Make certain a first aid kit is available. Find out if your fellow participants have special mountain rescue and medical skills.

You can help make the trip enjoyable and rewarding by greeting and introducing new members and guests to other members and answer questions.

Every climber is responsible for his or her own safety, including riggings, anchors and other equipment. Generally, beginners will need help, encouragement and counsel from more experienced climbers. Without assuming this responsibility, the trip leader can help and be aware of problems, correct them before they lead to accidents.

Prepare a list of all participants and an account of the trip and climbing activities, either personally or ask someone in the group to write it.

Help to keep the climbing area clean and encourage others to clean up and carry out trash.

After the Climb

Forward the trip report promptly to the Editor of Up Rope. Report accidents and problems (e.g., with land owners) to the Chairman of the Mountaineering Section.

Gunks continued

"On belay?"

"Belay on."

"Climbing!" And off I climbed. Charlie calmly told me, "Relax, take your time. You can do it... it's just a 5.2 and you've top roped and even followed harder routes than that." I was hardly a picture of grace or confidence as I inched my way up the climb. I hesitated on simple moves. If I had been following, I would have moved continuously. I went up, then downclimbed and complained of no place to put in pro. Again and again Charlie would patiently tell me, "take your time, look around. You'll find something." It took effort at times, but I did find a place that would take some kind of pro. Charlie also told me, "If you feel nervous, find a comfortable spot and put in pro." Clipping into an occasional pin, shoving a Friend or a hex into a horizontal crack, and a wedge here or there, I moved on to the short horizontal traverse to the pine tree, then up again, and at last to the first belay ledge. There I breathed numerous sighs of relief as I prepared to belay Charlie. Charlie followed, critiquing my placement: one or two not so good; most O.K.; even a couple of quite good were my grades.

I checked my watch. More than two hours had passed and we had only completed the first pitch. I offered to relinquish the lead, but Charlie declined. Deep down I realized that I was starting to relax just a bit and enjoy myself. "Climbing," I said to Charlie as I led out on the second pitch. "This pitch seems easier to protect and the climbing easier, maybe I'm relaxing," I thought. The climbing was more vertical than on the first pitch, but there were good foot and hand holds all the way. The lower part of the first pitch had some friction climbing. I was protecting frequently and started to worry about having enough pro for this 100-foot pitch, so I put in an intermediate belay on a narrow ledge and again brought Charlie up. This time I didn't offer the lead to Charlie and I was quickly off to climb up the last 20 feet and a short traverse to an inside corner and a large belay ledge. The inside corner was the route of the final pitch. It was wet. In fact, it was running with water. I informed Charlie who said encouragingly, "don't worry, just move cautiously and after this pitch you'll have led your first climb, Tom."

This was the crux. Dry, I guess it was an O.K. route, but wet--Ugh. The pitch was only 30 or 40 feet, but every time I reached up, water ran down my shirt sleeve, and that water was cold. After a couple of moves to a comfortable resting place, I heard Charlie saying, "put in some pro, then rest." I looked around, and again Charlie said, "put in some pro. Remember the Friend." "Yes, yes, the Friend," I thought, and out came a #3 Friend. I spotted a nice vertical crack and the Friend was in. I rested for a minute or two and was ready to make the final moves to the top. One move could be done as a mantle. I started to mantle and nothing happened. I thought, "you're getting tired. Use your feet, dummy." A step up, balance, reach up, stand up...I looked around, and that's it. I had just finished my first lead climb and survived.

I tied in to belay Charlie and then checked the

time. We had done the second and third pitches in about two hours. The fact that we moved faster as we climbed, meant that I was finding pro placement easier as we climbed and was gaining confidence. I brought Charlie up and thanked him for his patience and coaching. We shook hands and started to walk back to the Uberfall. As we walked, I was already thinking about what climb I should lead next.

Buzzard Rocks

Joe Wagner

April 29, 1984. Satisfying climbing and weather that couldn't have been better seduced Tom Russell into stripping off his shirt, but insects had a field day and mild effects of sunburn were reported.

Getting there, the Section's first visit to Buzzard Rocks in over three years, was an entirely different story. To start with, it was Sunday morning after daylight savings time "sprang forward." Not on everybody's clock, however, judging by the difference between sign-ups and show-ups. One wellknown diplomat's lawyer even expected praise for appearing at the A.O. parking lot 15 minutes to...old time! But there they were: Pete Grant, Tom Russell, Gary Beil, Jimmy Wagner and his Dad, Mike Bandrowski, Bob Gasser, Ed Cummings and whippet Cedrick. Marcy Logan arrived at the rocks later.

The access to the rocks has changed; you pass the fish hatchery instead of parking there. That caused another problem in that the second car, using incomplete instructions and stopping for a late breakfast, unloaded about an hour later, but not before running into a state police roadblock in a side valley. (During a climb of Little El Cap--you have to tie two ropes together for top-rope belaying--two young locals walked past us, one armed with a pistol. Whether the police were looking for them or whether these bandits were bushwhacking peacefully, we didn't find out.

Among other accomplishments were some good, long top-rope climbs requiring a bit of friction technique as well as some shorter practice climbs around and between flakes. □

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

Beyond the Vertical, Layton Kor **Sierra Club Books, 1983**

Reviewed by Nori Gessler

In his foreword to *Beyond the Vertical*, Royal Robbins says that Layton Kor would be at home in "On the Road." Beat writer and sometime mountain climber Jack Kerouac could have been describing Kor when he wrote, "the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centerlight go pop and everybody goes, "Awwww!"

Layton Kor, legendary figure of the "Golden Age" of climbing, took Yosemite by storm in the 60's, made the first ascent of El Capitan's East Buttress and dozens of first ascents in Colorado's Eldorado Canyon. He pioneered routes on everything from the sandstone spires of the desert Southwest to the quartz-conglomerate of New York's Shawangunks. He completed many hard routes in the Italian, Swiss and French Alps, and in 1965, he added his prodigious talents to the ascent of the Eiger Directissima, in winter. This climb was a success and tragedy--a broken fixed rope sent John Harlin to his death from high on the face. In 1967, Wayne Goss and Kor put up the first winter ascent of the Diamond, on Longs Peak's east face. Some time after the Eiger climb, Kor turned from extreme climbing to religion.

In *Beyond the Vertical*, Kor's recounting of climbs such as the Diamond, Cleopatra's Needle, and the Eiger are supplemented by superb photographs culled from Kor's own slide collection and by 23 accounts written by his climbing partners. Kor's narration was based on taped interviews, and perhaps because of this, is sometimes uneven. During his climbing career, Kor rarely wrote about his climbs, caught up as he was, "in a whirlwind of physical and psychological energy demanding release...driven by motives that at the time [he] cared neither to analyse nor dwell on," and in *Beyond the Vertical*, he still doesn't. The book is best when Kor's partners remember him and the climbs they made together. Steve Roper describes what it was like to second Kor on the first ascent of El Cap's West Buttress:

"There I was, nervously affixed to a vast plate of granite by strings and spikes. Kor arrived at my hanging belay station bristling with an enormous rack of iron. Without pausing, he clambered over me as if I were a mere set of handholds and footholds. The iron rudely caressed my body; flailing limbs knocked my glasses askew. Seconds later, his feet treading my hair, he was driving a piton, asking for my remaining iron, and attaching the haul rope. I gazed at him in wonderment."

If Kor's prose in *Beyond the Vertical* is sometimes muffled, his intensity blazes in a series of letters he wrote to Roper and Denny when they were planning an ascent of the Nose of El Capitan:

"I really want to do that climb, man. I think it's the most beautiful thing in the world--white granite for hundreds and hundreds of feet. What could be finer than to spend our strength, minds and desire towards the greatest thing in the world--the Nose of El Capitan."

After the Salathe Wall in Yosemite, Kor began to reexamine his life, and although he never completely gave it up, he moved away from extreme climbing.

"Since that time of change, I have continued climbing, although it takes second place to my family and other priorities...Nevertheless, there are occasions when I cannot but help reminisce and reflect back to the earlier days when my climbing companions and I stood silently on the scree, shaded by the huge wall that loomed mightily above us while we carefully tied on the nylon rope, that bond of friendship and security that allowed us to climb upward into a world beyond the vertical."

For those of us who wonder if we could manage the intensity of refocusing such enormous energy from climbing to other priorities, we only have to look at the family portrait included as an end piece. Kor may reminisce, even with bittersweet irony, but he appears to have reconciled his life on his own terms. What more could a person ask of life? □

Alpine Club to Feature Eiger Thriller

Eiger Nordwand Tragodie, a movie judged the best technical climbing film in the 1983 Telluride Mountainfilm Festival is scheduled for Thursday, June 7, 7:30 p.m. in the conference room of the German embassy (4645 Reservoir Rd., N.W.). The program about the tragic climb of the Eiger north face is cosponsored by the Blue Ridge Section of the American Alpine Club and the German Cultural Association. Admission is free. □

CLIMBER'S CALENDAR

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

June 3	Basic Climbing Course	John Teasdale	301/262-9128
June 3	Sugarloaf Mt. (West)	Charlie Dorian	301/946-2373
June 6	Executive Committee	Joe Wagner	202/966-6379
June 10	Annapolis Rocks	Gary Beil	301/776-0391
June 13	<u>Section Meeting, PATC HQ, 8:00 p.m.</u> From Lahul to Garwhal, Climbing in India, Joe Wagner		
June 16	<u>Section Picnic/Swimming party</u> James Eakin Potluck dinner--bring one dish. Noon to ?, 2000 Flint Hill, Silver Spring, MD (East of Georgia Avenue, Norbeck Road (Rt. 28) (See map)		301/598-6047
June 17	Little Stony Man	Tom Russell	301/869-8058
June 23, 24	Nelson House Worktrip	Marcy Logan	202/332-6116
June 24	Sugarloaf Mt. (South)	Ed Cummings	301/933-1457
July 1	Wolf Gap	Joe Wagner	202/966-6379
July 8	Great Falls, VA	Bob Skinner	703/528-7371
July 11	<u>Section Meeting, PATC HQ, 8:00 p.m.</u> Program to be announced		
July 15	Sugarloaf (West)	Paul Torelli	301/299-8039
July 22	Annapolis Rocks	Martha Hale	301/782-4769
July 29, 30	Seneca Rocks*	James Eakin	301/977-5811



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

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