



FOUNDED BY
JAN AND HERB CONN

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

1718 N Street, N.W. Washington DC 20036

Volume 39

December 1985

Number 12

Term ends for officers, new elections in January

On January 8, the current term for the four Section officers will end and elections will be held. As of early December Stuart Pregnall and Pete Grant have agreed to serve again. Tom Russell completes two terms as chairman and vice chairman and Dave Atkinson ends three consecutive terms as treasurer. Also stepping down are Marcy Logan as Nelson House coordinator, John Teasdale, Training chairman, and Joe Wagner as Editor of UP ROPE.

Nominations--The committee, chaired by Clair Witt, reports that nominations have been opened and the following members have been named:

For Chairman	Stuart Pregnall
For Vice Chairman	Pete Grant
For Secretary	Selma Hanel
For Treasurer	Karen Roussell

Nominations remain open till January 8. Please make additional nominations to the members of the nominating committee. Nominees must be members in good standing of the Mountaineering Section, the candidate(s) for chairman must also be members of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club.

Honors go to Hubbard, Showacre, Scoredos and Wexler

The Section, on November 13, voted unanimously to bestow honorary membership on four members who during their long active climbing careers contributed much to the development of rock climbing and mountaineering, especially in the Washington area. The recipients are Don Hubbard, Jane Showacre, Chris Scoredos and Arnold Wexler.

Don Hubbard was very active in exploratory mountaineering with about 50 first ascents in the Canadian mountains. He designed and developed pitons (continued on page 3)

W. Virginia flood victims need help, members report on Seneca

On November 9, Erik and Gordon Swenson left for Seneca Rocks, West Virginia, intending to meet Tom Russell and other Section members for a weekend of climbing. They were the only members to actually get to Seneca and it took most of the day to do it. Following is their account of the trip and an update (continued on page 4)

PATC MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

UP ROPE STAFF

Chairman: Tom Russell 301-869-8058
 Vice Chairman: Stuart Pregnall 202-338-6140
 Secretary: Pete Grant 703-960-8033
 Treasurer: Dave Atkinson 301-301-2897

Training & Safety: John Teasdale 301-262-9128
 Climbing: Stuart Pregnall 202-338-6140
 Expeditions: Ed Cummings 301-933-1457
 Program & Entertain., Paul Torelli 301-299-8039
 Membership & Hospitality-vacant
 Conservation: Charlie Dorian 301-946-2373
 Publicity: Roger Slakey 701-556-0589
 Nelson House: Nori Gessler 701-524-2088
 Carderock Conserv., Janet Young 202-966-9091

Joe Wagner, Editor202/966-6379
 Editorial Staff
 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.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHIMNEY

There is no prescribed format for an editorial swan song and so at long last it's my turn to be creative. This ends my second term as editor of UP ROPE and when I went through the old issues I was amazed to find how many others have labored diligently to put out this newsletter (almost) every month. And while editors and their assistants did most of the writing, editing and typing it is clear that contributions from members, whether trip reports or expedition sagas, filled most of the pages. There is another group of members--at least until about 1983--who greatly helped to get UP ROPE in the mails and to you: the mailers and circulation manager. With the increased use of computer-generated mailing labels and first-class mailing and the change from subscription to membership that job was greatly cut down but it still needs being done.

It turns out that there have been six editors since I first took over from Sallie Greenwood in May 1972 and presumably each one gave the club's publication his or her personal touch: Maren Stewart, a first report on alpine streaking and its hazards, and thick issues. Stevie Smith, neat layouts and editorial variety. Vivian Goldberg, the first commercial equipment report and regular issues. Lyn Murphy, first coeditorship with Bill DeLano, more climbing and conservation articles and quite a few thick issues. Patti Lemon, a return to reports on meetings and cartoon humor "Hummel" with Janet and Harold. Pete Grant, cover photos, visual trickery (Santa Claus climbing a face and not a chimney?!) and more great photos.

Here's a brief list of Section chairmen and UP ROPE editors since my last term:

<u>Chair</u>	<u>Editor</u>
Jan 1972 John Christian	May 1972 Joe Wagner
Jan 1973 Neil Arsenault	
Jan 1974 Joe Jensen	May 1974 Maren Stewart
Jan 1975 Sallie Greenwood	Jun 1975 Stevie Smith
Jan 1977 Margaret Wettling	Apr 1977 Vivian Goldberg-Prunier
Sep 1977 Stan Halpin (Sep-Dec acting)	Dec 1978 Bill DeLano) Lin Murphy) co-editors
Jan 1980 Martha Hale	Jan 1980 Lin Murphy
Jan 1982 James Eakin	Jan 1982 Patti Lemon
	Sep 1982 Pete Grant
Jan 1983 Joe Wagner	Sep 1983 Joe Wagner
Jan 1984 Charles Dorian	
Jan 1985 Tom Russell	
Jan 1986 ?	Jan 1986 Nori Gessler

I thank members and readers for their support and hope you will show the same fine spirit to the next editor and send her lots of copy. Good luck, Nori! Joe Wagner

Honors (cont. from p.1) (especially some of the first channel pitons) and piton hammers and, true to his very modest self, declined to serve when elected MS Chairman.

Jane Showacre was the first chairlady of the Mountaineering Section, and also, with Jan Conn, did the first all-women's ascent of Devils Tower in the 1950s. She was very active in exploratory mountaineering in the Canadian mountains.

Chris Scoredos was one of the prime climbers, starting in the 1930s in Colorado and was very active in exploratory mountaineering in the Canadian mountains. He was Chairman of the Section and Editor of UP ROPE. He is still active climbing and occasionally can be seen at Carderock offering instruction.

Arnold Wexler co-authored with Dick Leonard, a California climber, the first book on dynamic belaying, "Belaying the Leader." This was prior to nylon ropes when a fall statically held on manila ropes usually resulted in rope failure. He also developed a mathematical theory for dynamic belaying which was published as "Theory of Belaying" in the AAC Journal. He tested (at the NBS) mountaineering equipment developed by the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps for World War II. He was very active in exploratory mountaineering, having made about 50 first ascents in the Canadian mountains. Arnold was Chairman of the Mountaineering Section for several terms.

Most importantly, all four of these climbers had a sense of commitment to the Mountaineering Section over an extended period of time--on the order of 30 to 40 years each--during which they made sure new climbers were welcomed and made part of the Section, and on Sundays naturally offered instruction to newcomers and helped others, through dynamic belaying practice, while still maintaining their own time to climb and forge new routes on local cliffs and at Seneca Rocks.

Some Personal Memories

We younger (then) climbers learned a lot watching and coached by climbers such as these four. Don was infamous for collecting novices and letting us experience the joys of dynamic belaying (and rope burns) and the reality of being caught on a single waist loop (no harnesses back then). Some very deep potholes at a forgotten climbing area downstream from Cowhoof Rock was Don's favorite spot for practice. One had to be fast on belaying to keep the "leader" from bottoming out in the pothole!

From Arnold, who was always a very meticulous climber whether leading or not, I learned never to take anything for granted. When we were putting up "Prune" at Seneca I had clipped into the last of several ancient pitons leading up to the first crux. When Arnold came up he showed me what sort of "protection: it was: only an inch of the piton in the crack remained, the rest had rusted away.

We learned from Chris that Nature was not to be feared but was benevolent and friendly. This he demonstrated once by tapping a land turtle on the nose--which promptly bit the offending finger and held on, much to Chris' discomfort! A quick-thinking climber pried open the bestie's jaws with a piton to free his finger.

And from Jane I learned to believe in the capability of a small person to catch a 14-foot leader fall (pride had led me to where I shouldn't have been on Little Stony Man) and to do it without giving me so much as a bruised waist. John Christian

Now, we do have harnesses

The following may or may not seem like a product endorsement; nevertheless, it is interesting to note. Much has been speculated and documented about climbing gear and its useful life expectancy. I recently sent a Troll Whillans harness back to the manufacturer for testing. The harness had survived ten years of abrasion, falling, UV deterioration, etc. Its appearance seemed to be the only part that had suffered--it was tattered, battered and discolored. I was greatly interested to see if it would still meet its test strength, and sent it off to Troll. (cont. on next page)

Harness (cont.) I offer the following excerpt from their report:

"We have now tested the harness and we took it up to 2,000 kg. At that point the carabiner attached to the crotch disintegrated. There is no visual damage to the harness, i.e., it is still in the same condition as when you sent it to us."

The testing was not comprehensive, nor was it conclusive, but it did indicate that Whillans harness, even after ten years of use, was still capable of holding a considerable fall.

This is certainly not to say that any harness, nor even another Whillans, will last for ten years. It is fair to say, however, that I am very confident in my new Whillans. Like Ron Fawcett, I count on Troll where it counts.

W. Virginia flood (cont. from page 1) on future climbing at Seneca Rocks.

We left for Seneca early Saturday morning with assurance from Tom that AAA had no unfavorable reports from West Virginia. We now think that Tom actually talked to AA, but that is another story. We completely underestimated the awful devastation the floods had brought. Moorefield and Petersburg were in ruins. National Guardsmen were everywhere and roadblocks were set up to keep people out.

Between Moorefield and Petersburg we found the long, one-lane bridge over the South Fork of the Potomac gone, without a trace. From Petersburg we had to go north on Rt. 42 and west on Rt. 93 to Rt. 32 and come in through Canaan Valley because 11 miles of Rt. 55 north of the rocks were gone.

Seven hours later, after many detours, we arrived at Seneca. The good news was that the Gendarme and both stores were OK. The bad news included everything else. The Pavillion campsite and Roy Gap Road were under mud and water. The Visitor Center was filled with mud. The patio with the telescopes was under a pile of trees and the parking lot to the right was a lake. Much of Rt. 55 in town was undermined by water and only one lane was open in places. The climbers' bridge was gone. Up at the Valley View they were still serving food, bless 'em, but there had been no electricity for a week. They still managed to have cold beer on hand! After walking around town for an hour or so, we left via Rt. 33 east to Harrisonburg and up Rt. 81.

I talked to John Markwell two weeks later and he told me that for a while any climbers coming to Seneca should be totally self-contained as there is no place to camp and no potable water. A camper would be the best thing to take. He said that Park Service insurance would probably not allow us to work on the bridge and they would most likely contract the job out in the spring. He hasn't any information on the trails and hasn't been up to the rocks himself yet.

Losing the fall climbing season will be very hard on John's business but he is very grateful to have his home and store intact. He has just been able to plow out the road from his house. He tells me that the National Guard left last week.

If you have any climbing gear you have been thinking of purchasing, you might consider mail-ordering it from the Gendarme. It would certainly be sad to have this great store go under. Where else would we find a porch to sit on till midnight, drinking beer and telling lies?

The very latest news from Seneca comes from Martha Hale. She tells me that the town is overloaded with donations of food and clothes, but that household goods are needed most. She has also suggested that the Section set up a fund to handle donations of money from members and others interested in helping the people of Seneca Rocks. More about this at the December meeting.

Gordon Swenson

MS Donations

Money: Make check payable to Mountaineering Section PATC-Seneca Relief.

Goods: To Tom Russell's basement.

Coordinator: Barbara Llewellyn; tel.: 301-871-6197.

West Virginia Flood Disaster Relief Addresses

Seneca Rocks WV: Max Sites, Seneca Rocks Elementary School, Seneca Rocks WV 26884; tel.: 304-567-2640.

North Fork Riverton: Minister Alvin Huff; tel.: 304-567-2995.

Franklin WV and Pendleton County: Dennis Miller, Pendleton County Disaster Coordinator, Franklin WV 26807; tel.: 304-358-7911.

Petersburg WV: Rev. Ted Schultz, Grace Lutheran Church, Petersburg WV 26847; tel.: 304-257-1265.

DUTIES OF STANDING COMMITTEESTraining and Safety

1. Plan and organize basic, advanced and special training for members and nonmembers.
2. Maintain a pool of volunteer instructors and provide opportunities for training of new instructors.
3. Keep abreast of new techniques and equipment and inform membership.
4. Monitor safety of section climbing activities, update "Trip Leader Guidelines" when necessary, and keep membership informed about area hazards, faulty techniques and procedures, and equipment failures.
5. Serve as point of contact on matters of accidents and search and rescue.

Climbing and Expeditions

1. Plan and organize section climbing and related outdoor activities, assign leaders.
2. Obtain and maintain information about existing and new climbing areas, including directions, emergency facilities, local practices and restrictions.
3. Assist in the planning and organizing of section expeditions and camps, and in the selection of destination, site and leader.
4. Give out information to members about non-section climbing activities and opportunities, including maintain travel, camps and schools.

Program and Entertainment

1. Plan and prepare monthly section programs. Schedule at least three months in advance. Arrange for facilities and necessary equipment.
2. Plan and organize special events, incl. talks, visits, picnics.
3. Maintain a current roster of facilities for meetings, lecture, picnics etc. and keep a resource file of information on available films, speakers etc.

Up Rope

1. For duties of committee, see section VI, By-Laws.
2. Recognizing the independence of the editor in judgment and action from section leadership and membership, the editor shall feel obligated to include the following items because of the purpose of UP ROPE as a section newsletter:

With priority:

- (1) Calendar of climbing trips, meeting announcements and other program notes;
- (2) Minutes and reports of section and committee meetings;
- (3) Section announcements (such as nominations).

Highly desirable: (4) Trip reports; (5) News about members;
(6) Mountaineering events, incl. accidents.

3. The editor generally has freedom of selection of format, style, design and contents within the limits of the section budget.

Duties of Standing Committees (continued)Membership and Hospitality

1. To handle membership matters and to assist in verifying and updating the membership roster.
2. To recruit new members.
3. To make newcomers welcome to section activities and introduce new members to each other and to section members.
4. To assist in the preparation of information material for guests and interested climbers and to hand out such material at meetings and upon request.
5. Maintain contact with former members and friends of the section.

Conservation and Access

1. To maintain contact with officials and owners controlling access to local climbing areas.
2. To anticipate threats to access of such climbing areas, to warn the section and to recommend solutions.
3. To monitor the conservation behavior of section and members during section activities and recommend necessary actions.
4. To serve as point of contact for all conservation and access matters affecting mountaineers and keep the membership informed about developments.

Publicity

1. To publicize section and its activities in the Greater Washington area.
2. To prepare information about section and its activities for PATC outlets (publications, recording tape etc.).
3. To initiate and maintain contact with media and displayers (e.g., climbing stores), and to assist in the preparation, production and distribution of material for them.

(Adopted January 4, 1984)

Dues for 1986

Annual dues for next year are payable before January 1986 to avoid having your membership lapse, says David Atkinson, Section Treasurer.

To make it easier to get your money to the Section and to help you remember this important responsibility, a dues notice with a self-addressed return envelope was mailed to each member, late last month. The Treasurer reports that the response to this new way of collecting dues is encouraging and that checks are coming in now, practically every day.

Soviet climbing camps in 1986

The Soviet Mountaineering Committee has scheduled the following international climbing camps:

Caucasus: July 3-26; July 23-August 15; September 8-24.

Pamirs: July 7-31; July 28-August 21; July 10-August 8; July 12-August 10; and July 14-August 12.

North Face factory outlet

There is a North Face factory outlet near Reading, Pennsylvania, which offers outerwear, backpacks, tents and sleeping bags at substantial discounts from suggested retail prices. Dave Doolen, the manager, writes that many items are discontinued colors or have minor cosmetic flaws. The store also carries closeouts from other manufacturers. If you identify yourself as a member of the Mountaineering Section, a further discount will be offered. The store is located at Vanity Fair FO Complex, building A, 8th and Hill Streets in Wyomissing PA 19610 (next to Reading PA).

