



FOUNDED BY
JAN AND HERB CONN

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

1718 N Street, N.W. Washington DC 20036

Vol. 40

JANUARY 1986

No. 1

AT BASE CAMP

Bull Run. Chairman Tom Russell reported that we have at last completed settlement on the purchase of the Bull Run property. The area has been closed to climbers for the past four or five years, with the owners of the land at the base of the cliffs requiring us to obtain written permission to climb there. If the owners cooperated by granting permission to climb, the gods usually didn't: Section trips have been plagued by notorious "Bull Run weather".

Now that we have easement to the rocks, we must build a trail and a parking lot. Information on worktrips will be published in future UpRopes.

January 12 is the proposed date of the signing ceremony with the owners. Afterwards, a wine and cheese party will be held to announce the acquisition of the easement.

West Virginia Flood Relief:

Barbara Llewellyn and Martha Hale spearheaded the Mountaineering Section's efforts to do our part for the flood victims of West Virginia. At John Markwell's suggestion, we adopted Pauline Huffman, who works in Buck Harper's General Store and was wiped out by the

NOMINATIONS

The nominations committee, chaired by Clair Witt reports the following members named for election:

Chairman: Stuart Pregnall

Vice Chairman: Pete Grant

Secretary: Selma Hanel

Joe Wagner

Treasurer: Karen Roussell

Nominations close on January 8. See December UpRope for duties of standing committees.

flood. Household items and money have been collected for her and her family.

Barbara said she and others would make a trip to West Virginia before Christmas with a carload of donated items. David Atkinson announced that he had received \$160 in contributions for Pauline. All contributions for Seneca relief are tax deductible. (A more complete report on W.VA flood relief will be published in the February issue of Up Rope.)

Tom suggests that those who are in the market for climbing gear might consider mail ordering it from John Markwell, whose business was hurt because of the flood. continued next page

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.

Eakin's Guide: 1000 copies of James Eakin's Climber's Guide to the Potomac Gorge have been sold and will be reprinted in the Spring. David Atkinson has just received the first check from PATC for out share of the first 1,000 guides. By happy accident, the sale of the guidebooks has also boosted sales of other PATC maps and publications. □

Pisgah National Forest, destination Table Rock near Linville Gorge. It should be noted that the following directions in Southern Rock by Chris Hall are correct, but the road has been closed recently. We decided to take a 'left fork' near the gate to see if it led around the gate. It was actually meant for a four-wheel drive vehicle. No blue Porsche could survive this terrain. Thank God the sky was clear and the ground had not been soaked by rain, otherwise we would have got stuck.

HANGING AROUND

Linville Gorge,
November 28 - December 1, 1985
By Gary Beil

Wednesday 5:00 pm
Just got home from work, to do some last minute packing for the trip. Last minute packing? I had not even begun to pack! Clouds were low and gray, and a light drizzle was falling. The outlook for the weekend was very bleak.

Wednesday 6:30 pm
Arrived at John Rainer's house, his car was already packed, and he was waiting patiently for my arrival. It was raining steadily as we started our journey.

Thursday 1:30 am
Several miles later we had entered the

Thursday 3:00 am
By this time we had decided to turn around, head back to the main road, stop to set up the tent and get some sleep before daylight arrived.

Thursday 9:00 am
Woke up. It's a wonder we got any sleep this morning due to the heavy traffic on this dirt backroad. The general area was crawling with hunters. Back on the main road we got new directions for our destination. It was only fifteen miles away. Everything looked familiar last night. The sun was shining.

Thursday 11:30 am
Arrived at Table Rock. No blue Porsche in the parking lot (where are you Pete Grant), only a brown Volvo

with Maryland plates. Wonder if it's someone we know.

John thought it would be appropriate, since it was Thanksgiving, that our first climb should be "Cold Turkey", a 5.8 climb. While on the climb, the wind suddenly increased and enveloped the peak with clouds, the ground could no longer be seen. For the last pitch we had to decide which wet overhanging chimney should be done. We opted for the harder variation. It looked like it could start raining any minute.

Thursday 1:00 pm

Had lunch and decided to hike along the ridge trail to check out the other climbing areas. Now I know why the trip leader mentioned in his proposed itinerary "Hiking into the Gorge".

Thursday 3:30 pm

We found the Prow, Amphitheater, with the Mummy Buttress directly across from us. The view was magnificent and very hard to describe, for the Gorge dropped a thousand feet below us and extended to the horizon. There was just enough time to get back to the parking lot and prepare supper before it got dark. After supper it started to rain.

Friday 9:00 am

Woke up to the sound of rain, had breakfast and listened to the weather forecaster predict rain, more rain, and even more rain. We decided to

proceed to Looking Glass Rock and at lease check out the area for further trips. But before leaving the Lincille area, we hiked to Linville Falls where John showed great style by climbing on wet rock to the first pool in the falls.

Driving with a broken speedometer, at an undetermined speed, for an undetermined distance, we decided to turn toward home and leave Looking Glass Rock for another day.

Saturday 2:30 am

Arrived home from a successful trip. Successful? Yes, because: 1) we determined North Carolina still exists south of Virginia and when looking down the Gorge it was hard to believe we were in North Carolina and not some place out West; 2) did one appropriate climb on Thanksgiving; 3) located all the climbing areas in Linville Gorge; 4) found a few new road cuts for John's up-and-coming climbing guide "Classic Roadcut Climbs of the East" which will be printed some time in the far future.

...But most important, I had become a little more familiar with the area, and the rocks are beckoning me back.

Highlights*

Nearly 2,000 feet from rim to river, North Carolina's Linville Gorge is the deepest canyon in the East. Because its flanks were too steep for early logging equipment, it became one of the

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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.

few remaining virgin forests along the Eastern Seaboard.

Timber cutters may have been repulsed by the rugged landscape, but climbers from throughout the South have made this one of the region's most popular rock climbing areas. Along the upper reaches of Jonas Ridge, 200 to 600 foot cliffs rise out of jungles of laurel, rhododendron, brambles and alder. Most popular among climbers and picnickers alike is Table Rock Mountain, which lifts into the Blue Ridge sky, providing views that extend east to the Piedmont and west to ridge after ridge of Appalachian mountains. The rock is a peculiar metamorphosed sandstone or quartzite that is universally steep, usually solid, and often crackless.

*From Climbing, August 1985, No. 91.

TROPICAL CLIMBING By David Atkinson

André Silva Ilha is an unassuming young man in his early 20's whose obsession is to "internationalize" Brazilian climbing. He is proud of the climbing opportunities his country offers, and eager to bring that climbing up to the standards of safety and expertise which he imagines apply in the United States, Europe and other areas of the world. He and his friends are most interested in knowing how their routes, techniques and grading system rank against those of other countries, particularly the U.S., and they very much want foreigners to come to Brazil and discover in particular the rare mix of urban and tropical climbing which Rio de Janeiro and its environs offer.

I found André through his first Mountain article in 1981. As one who had lived in Rio in the early 50's and traveled there regularly, I was certainly aware of the climbing possibilities around the city, but was never quite sure where to start

looking for a reliable partner. André's article was therefore a pleasant surprise. I wrote to him through Mountain and he immediately responded. We arranged to climb on my next trip to Rio.

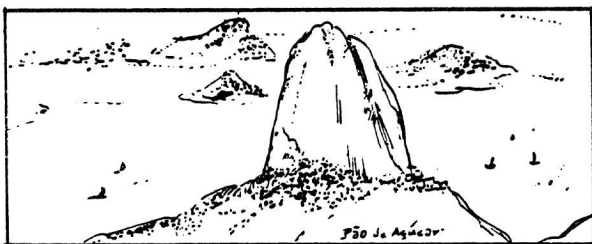
As will hardly be a surprise to anyone, very few people go to Rio de Janeiro with rock climbing foremost in their mind. For anyone the slightest bit inclined in that direction, however, the possibilities are immediately apparent. Paó de Açúcar, or Sugarloaf, at the entrance to Guanabara Bay: Dois Irmãos, the Two Brothers at the west end of Ipanema beach; Gavea Rock, a flat-topped mastodon looming behind the Borthers; Corcovado, with the Christ Statue atop, surveying the entire scene; these principal mountains offer rock faces ranging from between 500 to 1500 feet which are so accessible that one can easily get in an early morning swim, do a full day's climbing, and be back in time for an evening meal in Copacabana.

The climbing is virtually all friction. As André points out in his original article (which has been followed by a number of others both by and about him--most recently in Climbing magazine) there is not much use for chocks around Rio. I have not climbed in North Carolina, but from what I have been told, the rock of that state is very similar to that of Rio: long granite faces washed smooth by tropical rains, with none of the fractures and crack systems caused by freezing. Those few cracks which do exist are filled with dirt and luxuriant plants. So the climbers have installed large half-inch eye bolts every 10 to 40 feet, depending upon the degree of difficulty. Frankly, this protection system made me nervous because when belayer and climber meet, they both have to clip into the same bolt, with no back up support. These bolts looked bomb-proof, but I believe this is one feature of Brazilian climbing that

could be improved upon. Any climber going to Brazil should strongly consider taking along a bolt kit.

In one sense, climbing in Rio can best be described as "improbable", which is one of its most appealing characteristics. It is improbable to be walking among tourists with a day pack and rope, climb the stairs with them to the Paó de Açúcar, disappear over a wall and take a slightly different route to the top. Perhaps in Chamonix, but not Rio. It is improbable to be climbing to the beat of a samba band on the beach below you. That beat seems appropriate if you are lying on that beach, but somehow out of place--though not unpleasantly so--when you are trying to levitate yourself up a rather bare face of rock. And it is improbable to finish a climb and be greeted by one of the still finest cityscapes in the world. Perhaps that is the greatest pleasure of climbing in Rio: one of the most beautiful parts of the city is no longer off-limits. That you can claim some intimacy with what for so long was a dramatic but remote backdrop to trolley rides and walks along the beach. Certainly that can be said about beautiful mountains anywhere, but is especially true for one who grew up treating them as if they were unattainable and who was surrounded by people who felt the same way.

Fortunately, there were those who were somewhat bolder, not the least of which is André Silva Ilha and his friends. If anyone is interested in a little tropical climbing to a Brazilian beat, they can be counted on to show you the way. His address is Rue Jardin Botánico, 616/603-B, Jardin Botánico, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. □



REVIEWS

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

Lightweight Tent Poles. Randy Heisey of the Penn's Woods Chapter, Adirondack Mountain Club, uses hollow graphite arrow shafts with a ferrule of aluminum tubing epoxied in place to produce very lightweight tent poles. Arrow shafts are available from Kinsey's Archery Products, Inc., 300 W. Main Street, Mount Joy, PA 17552 (653-1522).

GREAT FALLS AND CARDEROCK FEATURED

Climbing Magazine (December 1985) featured Great Falls and Carderock as one in a series of excerpts from John Harlin III's soon-to-be-published "Climber's Guide to North America". The article included good photos of fellow climbers and club members James Eakin, Stuart Pregnall, and John Gregory but a bum rap for the Potomac River. Although it does deserve its reputation as a "drowning machine", are area funseekers really going under at a rate of seven per day?

The Armchair Mountaineer,
David Reuthen and John Thorn, Editors.

Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, N.Y. 1984.

Reviewed by Stuart Pregnall

My first clue to the nature of *The Armchair Mountaineer* was on the fly leaf — The Armchair Library, including *The Armchair Quarterback* and *The Armchair Aviator*, and now this book.

Serious climbers need not apply. There aren't even any photographs! Assembled by two publishing house editors, this collection of mountaineering related prose fares poorly when compared to *Mirrors in the Cliffs* and *Games Climbers Play*, two relatively recent anthologies. Indeed, a quick glance down the title page will give you a clue to the editors' intents. They want to give the armchair mountaineer a climbing smorgasbord. But as with so many smorgasbords, there are some favorite dishes to sample, and yet other favorites are missing. When you're finished, you have the same sort of "Why did I eat/read all of that?" reaction.

The range of stories concerning the Golden Age in the Alps is rather good, including some pieces that aren't read often, but modern alpine climbing is virtually ignored. The Himalayan scene is well-represented throughout its history, but rock climbing isn't. And the fictional offerings are good, but again, some classics aren't mentioned.

here are confusing — sections from Piers Paul Read's *Alive* and Peter Mathiesson's *The Snow Leopard*, for example. They refer to events that take place in the mountains, but they certainly don't have a great deal to do with the sport of mountaineering.

The organization of *The Armchair Mountaineer* is also a little disconcerting. It's alphabetical, by author's name. Little attempt is made to place each piece in its proper perspective within the greater scope of the sport. The true armchair mountaineer might well become confused by the lack of a background onto which he can place different events. The reader jumps, for example, from Peter Habeler's *Everest Without Oxygen* to Warren Harding's *Reflections of a Broken-down Climber* to Heinrich Harrer's *The Tragedy of Toni Kurz*. Maybe this is the *People* magazine approach to anthologizing, and calls to mind the pithy comment from "The Big Chill" — "I spend my life editing articles to the length it takes to read during the average crap." These articles are perhaps a bit longer, but after all, they are meant to be read in an armchair.

Disaster and death also play a significant role, so much so that despite the editors' claim to the contrary, it becomes a recurring theme. There are four Eiger pieces, and a death in each. Seizing upon the dangerous and dramatic aspects of our sport makes for exciting reading, but there exists a lot of climbing literature that includes these characteristics without the morbid and sensationalistic overtones of fatalities.

On the plus side, this anthology does unearth some enjoyable pieces that haven't been given their due in recent years, especially with respect to some of the English writers. There is enough quality material presented here to encourage further reading for those who want it.

All in all, *The Armchair Mountaineer* is a near miss. Some more thought on selection and organization would have been helpful. As for the lack of photos, let's just observe that this is the first book on mountaineering, at least in recent years, that doesn't have a single photograph within its covers.

climbing, Dec 1985, No 93

EDITOR'S CHIMNEY



NORI GESSLER ASSUMES POSITION AS UPROPE EDITOR

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.

January and February rock climbs will be announced.
Ice climbing and cross country skiing will be organized on an impromptu basis, depending on weather, ice or snow. Call Stuart Pregnall at 202/338-6140 if interested.

- Jan 8 Annual Meeting, PATC HQ, 8 pm
 Election of officers for 1986 and other business
 Program: Climbing in the Alps & Himalaya
 Jacques Tamisiere
- Feb 6 Executive Committee Meeting
- Feb 13 Monthly Section Meeting, PATC HQ, 8 pm
 Business and Program (to be announced)



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

