



FOUNDED BY  
JAN AND HERB CONN

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

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### YELLOWSTONE IN WINTER

#### February 13

I plug my ears with my fingers. James asks if the cabin pressure is bothering me. "No," I say, "I just don't want to hear the woman behind me retching into her airsick bag." It's been that kind of ride.

We miss the first approach to Jackson Hole in the foggy snow squall, bank, shoot up to 14,000 feet. The Grand, at 13,770, winks at us.

A stewardess warns us to "fasten seatbelts very snugly around the hips," and down we go again, for what the pilot dubs "a good ol' college try." We make it in, the last plane to do so for days, becoming the stuff of Jackson Hole folk legend. The plane explodes in relieved laughter and applause.

Valentine's Day: Karhu Ski Touring Center, Teton Village. The slate at the waxing hut reads, "green"—wishful thinking or deliberate deception. Temperature hovers at 31°, and we smear on violet, hoping not to have to go softer. We have a pleasant day touring the rolling hills outside Teton Village on newly groomed track. Refuel with Mexican food at the Million Dollar Cowboy Bar that night.

#### February 15

Heavy rain and nonstop shopping. Clara braves the icy slush to buy, among other things, a pair of hot fuchsia Lycra pants that reveal everything, including the pulse beating behind her knee. In the downpour I glumly follow Ed and Clara to a sad and smelly thrift shop. I purchase a pair of near-mint Galibier Super Guides for \$2.00. They even fit.

Snow King and Teton ski areas are closed because of rain, but unable to bear not skiing one more minute, some of us go to Snow King's bunny slope for telemark practice. We get wet and fall down a lot.

#### February 16

Barely make it out of Jackson Hole and on to Flagg Ranch in a heavy storm. Snowcoaches have to creep over Craig pass and are hours late. Paralyzed by the 24-hr bug and a megadose of Dramamine, I sleep the whole way to Yellowstone, mercifully unconscious of the reek of diesel fuel and the seasick sway of the tanklike cab.

The Haggglunder grinds on inexorable, for five hours. We feel like we've undergone some dreadful sort of kidney therapy at the end of the ride.

**PATC. MOUNTAINEERING SECTION**

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**UP ROPE**

Nori Gessler, Editor 703/524-2068

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.

**February 17**

We start off after blueberry pancakes to explore the Geyser basin in a light snowstorm. It's wild and steamy, like the land of the Niebelungen. The wind tastes of sulphur. We throw a snowball into a hot pool encrusted with lacy frills of algae. The snow hisses and vanishes. Morning Glory pool has a heart so blue that if you were to dip your hand in, it would come out dyed that same saturated ultramarine.

On the way to Biscuit Basin, we inadvertently cut a bison off from its buddies. I have a very bad moment when the shaggy prehistoric freight train trundles through the snow toward...me. Some eyes roll, but no one is gored.

**February 18**

The snowcoach lumbers uphill toward the Continental Divide. I get out and cinch down my anorak hood against the driving snow. We're a day's skiing from anything warm. I watch the snowcoach disappear in the blizzard with a certain nostaglic twinge. The seriousness of the place strikes me as Ed starts breaking trail through the heavy, wet snow toward the first of many fluorescent orange markers.

It's wild and beautiful up there. The trail drops down a steep canyon, silent except for the wind in the

trees. Henry calls for us to spread out. Our skis chatter on hard-pack--avalanche debris--and we peer upward at unstable slopes heavy with snow and hope that nothing slides. The seven of us alternate breaking trail, heavy going in this snow.

One of my leads traverses a tip-devouring slope--impossible to stay afloat in the knee-deep stuff. I forget my burning thighs and lungs as I jab a snowbridge with my pole and see dark water below. Wind blasts down the canyon, and we hear a coyote, or is it White Fang, Wolf of the North? Quick stop for chocolate, cheese, pepperoni, tea, lemon drops and we thrash on.

Ed and Henry pause to change leads after crossing a snowbridge. We hear a rifle shot and down slams a dead tree, only feet from where Henry stands. No need to dwell on visions of nightmare backcountry rescue. Later in the day we break through to the service road past Keplar Cascades. Our hardcore suggest continuing our heavy slog-ging, but the idea is ridiculed, and after visiting the cascades, we enjoy the freedom of kicking it out on the packed road. The road bridges Firehole River, where, far below, snowladen bison and elk stake out the thermals, trying to keep warm, like D.C. bag ladies. One more skinny snowbridge to negotiate, and then, hot baths, cold beer, warm supper, and bed.

**February 19**

Clara and Ed decide to do a long daytour to Fairy Falls. James and Tom go on a photo taking mission to Black Sands Basin. Henry and Susan tour the geyser basin as do Reen and I, although at a more leisurely pace. Waxing is a nightmare. I stop and scrape every fifteen minutes. At noon Reen and I turn back for lunch. I storm into the ski shop and demand a pair of waxless skis. After iterating my waxing failures, they convince me to try Special Blue. I am

well past Old Faithful Inn when I realize that Special Blue ain't getting it either.

In the afternoon the wind stops and the snow falls thick and wet. Coming back from Biscuit Basin everything ices up--my anorak, my hair, my knickers. It's hard to see more than three feet ahead. I sneak peeks at my compass and get back to Geyser Basin, no problem. Old Faithful erupts, ghostlike, in the whiteout as I pass.

#### February 20

Of course, the weather clears when we'll be wasting it on the ride back to Jackson Hole. First blue sky we've seen all trip. Back at Snow King Lodge I dash off to rent skis for some icy Eastern style downhill night skiing. Bash and crash my way down, in a careening mob of skiers. A boombox blasts top 40's, the skilift snarls and whines....ah, yes. Now I remember why I cross-country ski.

#### February 21

Home to my little Annie. Next year in Yellowstone, she'll have her own tiny Karhus and chase the bison and fall into the hot mudpots and toss her ski poles into Morning Glory Pool. On second thought....

Fellow Vacationers: Clara Witt and Ed Cummings; Henry and Susan McComus; Maureen and Nori Gessler; Tom Russell; and James Eakin, who did such a wonderful job organizing the trip.

#### CLASSIFIED

For sale: IBM Electronic Typewriter 85, 15.5K memory, good condition, can be used as a PC printer, many typing elements. \$550. Call Joe Wagner 202/966-6379.

#### MONONGAHELA NAT'L FOREST SERVICE OUTLINES NEW MANAGMENT PLAN

The Forest Service will be implementing the new Forest Plan in 1986. The first challenge facing the Forest Service is to recover from the November Flood. The Service has established the Cheat Ranger District at Parsons, WV, and by early summer hopes to open the Seneca Rocks Visitor's Center. Missing bridges will be replaced as soon as possible. Planning is already underway for the creation of new camping and picnicing areas in the vicinity of Seneca Rocks. The date for construction is not yet known.

In early February, members of the climbing community met with District Ranger Gerry Bremer for an informal discussion about the creation of a separate climber's campground at Seneca Rocks. Watch for a special report in April's Up Rope.

May 18 - 24. Rigging For Rescue. Invermere, B.C., Canada. A 7-day intensive technical ropework school. Many new and advanced techniques. Designed as the desirable background needed for anyone considering instructing others in rope rescue procedures. Fee: \$400 Canadian (approx. \$290 U.S.) Contact: Arnór Larson, director, Rigging for Rescue, Box 399, Invermere, B.C., Canada. VOA lKO. 604/342-6042

#### SENECA ROCKS FOOTBRIDGE REPLACED

In January, the Forest Service and volunteers replaced the Seneca Rocks footbridge that was destroyed in the Flood of '85 with a temporary structure.

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REVIEWS  
HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

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Shawangunk Rock Climbing, by Richard DuMais, Chockstone Press, 1985. 119 pp, \$27.95

Reviewed by Stuart Pregnall

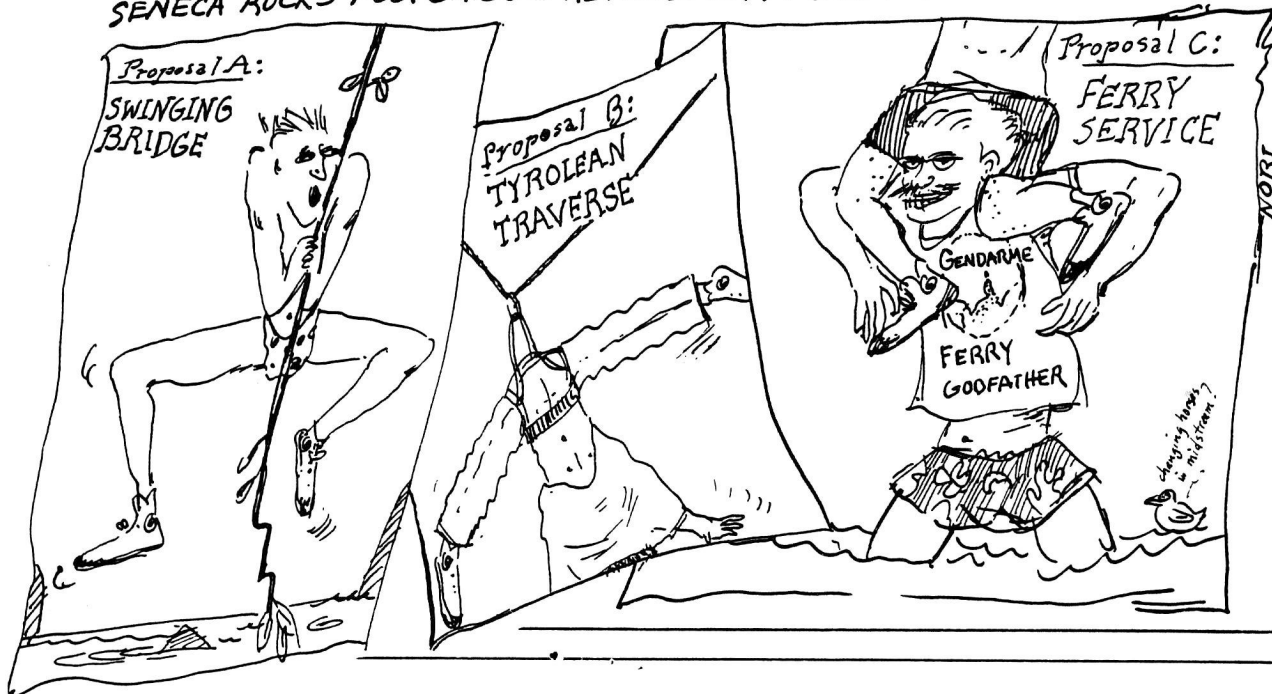
One October morning in 1977 I woke up in the Gunks. It was my first trip there; I didn't know what to expect. From my sleeping bag plopped down next to the car, I saw the dawn's autumn sun blazing forth on the Near Trapps, enriching the orange rock set amongst the fall foliage. So began a rock climbing romance that has been experience by so many others.

Shawangunk Rock Climbing, by Richard DuMais, captures the exciting essence of Gunks climbing. More so, it conveys, both in its fabulous photos and lucid prose, the special, mutual attraction between the Gunks and its courtesans. Climbing in the Gunks is often a courting ritual, and DuMais expresses this in terms that can be appreciated by both the hot rock jocks and the more staid fogies.

First, the photos. Magnificent. Except for a few we've seen before, DuMais has assembled a breathtaking display of new shots that are every bit as good as other recent rock concerts such as Jones' Rock Climbing in Britain. Encompassing both the moderate classics in the 5.5 range and the new creations of the latest pioneers in the 5.12 and 5.13 range, these are galvanizing photographs. They make you thirst for climbing these routes. Rippling arms stretching on overhangs, delicate footwork on the slabs, the exposure one can appreciate so much, all part of the Gunks experience. If you've climbed in the Gunks, you'll be able to place yourself in these pix. If you haven't, you'll want to. The photographers are to be credited, but the editing and production work are excellent as well. A big cheer to Chockstone for paying attention to details.

The text plays a supporting role to the photos, yet would stand alone without the graphics as a thorough survey of the history, trends and personalities. Without playing favorites, DuMais treats each developmental period with an account of the leading pioneers, the routes they

SENECA ROCKS FOOTBRIDGE REPLACEMENT: BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD





climbed and something about their personalities. This is a nice touch, since many of the so-called oldtimers can still be seen prancing about on the rocks. Tribute is given to the Smiley family, without whom the Gunks may have had a very different history. And DuMais' prose is straightforward, clear and respectful. He has let the subject speak for itself, which is a credit to him and the area.

Climbers who frequent the Gunks will want to add this book to their shelves. Those of you who have never enjoyed the rock, the routes, the atmosphere--take a look at this book, buy it and start planning your trip. DuMais' efforts should be rewarded by creating the focal point for a new upsurge in activity.

Colorado High Routes, Louis W. Dawson II, The Mountaineers, Seattle. 240 pp, \$9.95, maps, photos.

Reviewed by Nori Gessler

If your next vacation includes skitouring in the Rockies, Colorado High Routes, a guide to the finest ski mountaineering routes in the country, should make your mouth water.

Louis Dawson has written a clear, concise description of over 95 cross-country routes in the Elk and Sawatch Mountains, from the gentlest beginner's day tour to such extreme classics as the descent of the north face of North Maroon Peak. Dawson also completely describes the Alfred Braun Hut System and the newly completed Tenth Mountain hut-to-hut system which follows the foothills of the Sawatch range from Aspen to Vail.

All routes list length, elevation, and directions to the trailhead, with appropriate topos with route overlays. An excellent and necessary feature is Dawson's avalanche notes for each route that evaluate the avalanche hazards which might exist. The author cautions that the information should be used only as a guideline, to be modified by the ski mountaineer's own experience and judgment.

An excellent collection of photographs captures some of the spectacular scenery between Aspen and Crested Butte, Taylor Park and Mt. Sopris. Appendices include useful names, addresses and telephone numbers for trip information, an excellent bibliography of avalanche, geology and general ski mountaineering literature, a list of routes grouped according to difficulty and a list of those recommended for overnight tours.

Aspen resident Dawson, an experience mountaineer and NOLS instructor, has skied the mountains he so thoroughly describes, on three-pin, alpine touring and downhill gear, for 19 years. His personal knowledge of these routes is often revealed in his suggestions for keeping on route: "At the big forest it is necessary to cross the creek again and find the old mule trail [...] If you miss the trail, there is a desperate bushwhack ahead."

Dawson's guide is a must for anyone contemplating a 5-hour day tour or an extended expedition in this challenging and beautiful region.

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## CLIMBER'S CALENDAR

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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.

02 Mar	Crescent Rocks, MD	Pete Grant 703/960-6033
05 Mar	Executive Committee Meeting	Stuart Pregnall 202/338-6140
09 Mar	Great Falls, VA	**
12 Mar	Monthly Section Meeting, PATC HQ, 8pm Lila Bishop, Trekking in Bhutan	
16 Mar	Wolf Rocks, MD	**
23 Mar	Annapolis Rocks, MD	Tom Russell 301/869-8058
30 Mar	Bull Run, VA	Stuart Pregnall 202/338-6140
02 Apr	Executive Committee Meeting	
6-7 Apr	Seneca Rocks, WV	Pete Grant 703/960-6033
06 Apr	Great Falls, VA/MD	**
09 Apr	Monthly Section Meeting, PATC HQ, 8pm John Bercaw, Climbing in Australia, Joshua Tree, Yosemite	
13 Apr	Little Stony Man	**
19-20 Apr	Stone Mountain, NC	Pete Grant
20 Apr	Sugarloaf, MD	**
27 Apr	Buzzard Rocks, VA	**

*Joe H. Wagner*

1718 N St NW  
Washington, D. C. 20036

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Joe H. Wagner  
4528 Windom Place, NW  
Washington DC 20016

