



FOUNDED BY  
JAN AND HERB CONN

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

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### AT BASE CAMP

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APRIL 9, 1986

The April 9 meeting was opened by Stuart Pregnall who gave updates on familiar topics before a discussion on trip leader guidelines. The April 1 lecture and slides and music given by John Harlin III was well received and donations collected contributed \$80 toward his cost. From "old news": a volunteer is needed to coordinate with PATC the site of the new trail at Bull Run. On 26 April, PATC will hold a reception with "the People of the Plains", our Bull Run neighbors. A second printing of the Great Falls Guidebook will occur. From "new news": John Christian recommended the book *Snow Sense*, published by the Alaska Avalanche Forecast Center as containing the most detailed tests for avalanches that he has seen. Andy Kauffman mentioned that the Italian climber Reinhold Messner will be in the U.S. next year, probably giving talks in New York and out West. Although

we would like him to come to Washington, it may be impractical to invite him due to his fee. Paul Torelli will look into possible co-sponsors. Pete Grant gave an update on Seneca. Parking is limited to the area by the Gendarme or on the side of the road (Rt. 33). Roy Gap parkers will be ticketed. Camping is behind the Gendarme, though with no water available. The Forest Service plans to install pit toilets and water, although they presently lack the funds. Wading in the river was necessary to cross the water near the site of the old bridge. A new one will be constructed in the area between the swimming hole and the Visitor's Center. A new trail for hikers will lead to the top and it is hoped that this may separate visitors from climbers. The climbers may follow a trail which will lead back to the old road, giving access to both peaks.

Copies of a proposed interim guideline for training and safety were handed out to those present at the meetings. To summarize a lengthy discussion, it was evident that the guidelines will not

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**UP ROPE**

Nori Gessler, Editor	703/524-2068
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satisfy all present due to a question of the fundamental club philosophy. Lead climbing represents a difficult subject when trying to obtain liability insurance; yet if the club were no longer to sponsor trips top lead climbing areas, it would seem to be defeating its function. As Andy Kauffman commented, the primary purpose of a mountaineering club is to educate, beginning with top roping, continuing with lead climbing and going on to mountaineering. If the club were to stop at a point along the way, it would be stopping the whole process. A special meeting on Wednesday, April 30 will be held to discuss these issues. The motion to accept these guidelines as interim ones was tabled. The members present, under the urging of Stuart Pregnall, did vote to rescind the current 1977 guidelines which were severely outdated. The business meeting complete, Tony Rickert showed slides of the Tetons--their beauty and diversity were well characterized by routes which required hiking, traversing ice slopes and ascending cliffs.

**SPECIAL MEETING**

April 30

Club president Stuart Pregnall called a special meeting to discuss several issues facing the club, including whether the club should continue to teach lead climbing; whether we should sponsor lead climbing trips; whether we should require members and non-members to sign release forms, and whether we should draft new safety guidelines.

Although many different opinions were aired, the consensus was that we should continue all club activities, or as Stuart Pregnall said, "teach and expose people to everything from Carderock to the Karakorum." General opinion was that club members and non-club members should sign a release form before participation in club activities, and some form of safety guidelines and statement of the club's philosophy should be drawn up.

Pregnall asked our legal counsel to draft a three part document that will address 1) release forms; 2) safety guidelines; 3) a statement of the club's philosophy to be distributed at May's Section meeting. Members will be invited to present written comments on the draft and the meeting will be opened for further discussion at June's meeting.

**HANGING AROUND****CAUDEY'S CASTLE**

March 29, 1986

We may now establish that there are benefits to rock climbing heretofore unknown to some mountaineers. One such bennie is the improve-

ment of our vocabulary. Aside from the more colorful words we hear when a climber takes a fall or gets his/her hair caught in a rappelling device, there is also the chance to learn real English--the kind that is documented in a standard dictionary. Tom Isaacson, while describing some aspect of lead climbing, came up with discombobulated. Yes, there really is such a word: I looked it up.

At Caudey's, Jacques and Tom teamed up to lead the standard route--an obvious crack that splits the face in half at the center of the main face. John Teasdale and John Rainer attempted other fractures on the same face but backed off as the climbing turned out to be harder and the rock much looser, than it had at first appeared. Other routes were then climbed, including a relatively easy inside corner to the summit. All three routes were three pitches long.

About the time the long leads were finished, the temperature had risen to the extent that none of us wanted to spend another long climb on the main wall where the sun's force seemed to be concentrated. We then moved to the shorter wall on the West side of the rocks and did a couple of leads as well as top rope ascents to finish off the day.

Beer and pizza (more of the former than latter) was then enjoyed by the group: John Rainer, Jeannette Helfrich, Jacques Tamisiere, Tom Isaacson, John Teasdale, and yours truly, Pete Grant.

## SENECA ROCKS, WV

April 5 - 6

Participation was not the keyword on this first scheduled trip of the season to Seneca Rocks. Saturday morning only two of us, Helen and I, showed up at the local diner. After a leisurely breakfast, we headed out to the rocks under a mostly cloudy sky.

Neck Press was the first route done, under my lead. Traffic Jam fell next, with Helen on the sharp end of the rope. Pleasant Overhangs was attempted as our third try. Helen lead the first pitch. Then came my turn. I stepped out from the belay ledge, then looked down--a lump formed in my throat. "I ain't doin' this--not on our first lead climb of the season," I told Helen and got on Thais Face instead. We finished up on Thais Direct.

By that time the sky had become very, very dark so we headed back down to the car and then drove over to Nelson Gap Road. Just after parking at the old schoolhouse and hoisting our backpacks on, it finally started to rain. We got moderately wet and quite muddy hiking to the Nelson House.

Sunday morning the sun was peeking through the heavy cloud layer. It appeared to be clearing from the all-night rain and we expected to get a good day of climbing. After breakfast we parked at the Gendarme parking lot and grabbed our gear. At that moment the sky let loose and

we barely had time to tuck under the Gendarme from porch before the main downpour came.

In a few minutes, the rain eased up a bit and we managed to get back to the car and throw our climbing gear back in the trunk. Back to the Valley View and more coffee. Then it seemed to clear up. Back to the Gendarme. Back into our harnesses. The next thing I knew we were wading across the North Fork River heading to the rocks.

The rock was very wet down by South End, so we continued on farther up along the East wall. After passing the Gunsight Notch, the rocks seemed drier so we picked a likely looking crack, that seemed easy enough to do under the wet conditions. I couldn't figure out which climb we were on at the time, but later it turned out to be Rox Salt. I lead the first pitch (according to the guidebook, the climb ends here, but how were we supposed to know? We didn't even know what climb we were on, and anyway, the wall above looked interesting.) Helen took the lead on the second pitch. Then, about 30 feet up, it suddenly started raining again so she traversed to an easier climb to the right where a pine tree provided us with a rappel anchor and we called it a day.

Helen and Pete Grant

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#### AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB BLUE RIDGE SECTION NEWS

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At the first 1986 meeting of the Blue Ridge Section of the American Alpine Club, new

officers were elected for the coming year. The PATC Mountaineering Section well represented. Elected were: Snow Leopard Randy Starrett, Chairman; Ed Cummings, Vice Chairman; Tom Russell, Treasurer; and Stuart Pregnall, Secretary. Chairman Starrett is involved with an exchange of Soviet climbers coming to the U.S. in May. After a few days in the area, they to venture to Alaska to attempt a route on Denali. There is hope to be a reception at the Capitol for our visitors (and to help raise support funding for the exchange--we need approximately \$10,000). More on this later.

Afterwards, the meeting was treated to a tantalizing slide show given by Starrett on his and William Gardner's most recent trip to the Soviet Union.

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#### PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION VISITS PATC

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The President's Commission on Americans in the Outdoors came to PATC Headquarters April 16 to see what the Club does. The Mountaineering Section was represented by Selma Hanel, Tom Russell, Karen Roussell and Stuart Pregnall.

We placed ourselves within striking distance of the wine and cheese--a location from which the PCAO staff never strayed too far. Tantalized by our display of photographs, T-shirts, gear and guidebooks, several PCAO staff wandered our way and spent considerable time discussing issues facing mountaineering in the U.S. For our part, we found them to be rather well informed, open



boxed

mind ed and interested in our views on access, liability, back country permits, etc.

The PCAQ will be sending the Section more information on how we can voice our opinions as to how the future of the outdoors should be developed. As this information is forwarded to us, I will make it available to the membership.

Stuart Pregnall

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## REVIEWS

### HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

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#### MINI FRIENDS

There are several types of mini-Friends out on the market now, and Wild Country is planning to introduce their own this Spring. I have been given a couple of these toys to try out, and what follows are some general observations on their use.

First, I'm not sure which company made the two minis that I've used--they done have markings other than their sizes. I believe that they are either Metolius Mountain Products (makers of Sliders) or Canadian Alpine Manufacturing units.

Second, like Friends, these small units need to have some sort of sling attached to keep them from levering about in a crack. I've used doubled super tape tied with a ring bend, but I'd prefer a sewn sling to cut down on the bulk of the knot.

On recent climbing trips I've tried to find different placements for these devices and compare the relative security with other protection.

I have found that in shallow cracks they are reliable protection--but I haven't tried falling on them yet. They haven't rotated our of any placements yet, and they seem to be secure. Since they are the same size as wired nuts, I've tried placing the nuts in the same cracks. I've had mixed success. Flaring cracks don't seem to take nuts as readily as the spring loaded cams. On the other hand, I've found some placements where I've liked the look of the wired nut better than the min-Friend. So clearly, as with all protection, it seems that the success of these units will depend on each situation. Judgement is called for here.

As to the question of whether or not they will stay on my rack--on a recent trip to Little Stony Man, my belayer swears she heard me mutter, "Oh, thankyouthankyou-thankyou for these little things."

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## A GUIDE TO WASHINGTON DC'S

### ROCK CLIMBS

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How many times have you been asked for directions to one of the local climbing crags and discovered that you just could NOT remember how to get there. Joe Wagner had a list of directions compiled by MS members some unknown years ago. Joe said that for each Sunday climb listed in the UP-ROPE Climber's Calendar, there used to be an accompanying set of directions of how to find each area.

So here's most of the old list. The old list had a few comments on each place, which I have included. I have

omitted Great Falls, Purple Horse, etc., Carderock, Seneca Rocks, and the Shawangunks since they are extensively described by their own climbing guides. I am publishing this ROUGH draft now to get help. I have gotten some help from James Eakin, Nori Gessler, Stuart Pregnall, and Bill Smith, but I need more. I plan to make this list more comprehensive with more comments about the climbs, camp grounds, nearest hospital, emergency numbers, etc. and up-dated directions locating each climbing area. Please check out these places and see if the directions work. Some have been up-dated by checking maps and from what I can remember. I have not visited all of these places since I started compiling this list. Please inform me of errors and please make suggestions of what should be added and subtracted.

### 1. ANNAPOLIS ROCKS, MD

COMMENTS: A 10-ft free overhang, a 15-ft aid overhang, with plenty of moderate to hard top roped climbs, and leading for the bold. Good view. A 2-mile hike along the Appalachian Trail. From the rocks, follow a Blue blazed trail south to the spring.

DIRECTIONS: To reach Annapolis Rocks from Washington, DC, take I-495, the Beltway, to I-270, north to Frederick, MD. At Frederick, take I-70 west to the Myersville exit. Go north(right) toward Myersville. At a traffic light in the center of town turn right and follow the signs to US-40. At 40, turn left and go several miles to a camp ground and parking lot on the left on the top of an obvious ridge line. Park in the lot and walk right past an out-house and a sign showing trail system. Follow a portion of an old hard surfaced road to its dead end. Walk down the road cut for I-270 to the Appalachian Trail(AT). Turn right and follow the white blazed AT,

north, along a ridge line. The AT follows an old logging road. At about 2-miles the AT is intersected by a blue blazed trail leading left to a spring and to the top of Annapolis Rocks. There is usually a small sign up on a tree directing the hiker to the rocks.

### 2. BAKER ROCKS, WVA

COMMENTS: Lead climbing only. Mostly unexplored. Climbing and camping on Mr. Harper's property.

DIRECTIONS: From the beltway, take I-66 west I-81 South. Get off at the next exit(Strasburg). Go towards Strasburg on US-11. At the intersection of US-11 and US-55 take 55 to Moorefield, WVA. Turn left onto US-220 for 7-miles to Harper's Central Dairy on the right. Take a left just past dairy into lane, open gate beside quonset hut. Follow land to rocks.

### 3. BIG DEVILS STAIRS, VA

COMMENTS: Good hot weather climbing area-mostly shaded.

DIRECTIONS: To reach Big Devils Stairs, Virginia from Washington, DC take I-495 to I-66 west. Take the next exit for Warrenton(Rt. 29) and go through Warrenton, VA toward Sperryville, VA. Take US-211 to Washington, VA, taking care to turn off onto Business 211 which goes into the town. Where Business 211 turns sharply to the left in town, go right for about 100 yards and turn left at the first street. This street leads to VA secondary road Rt. 622(Harris Hollow Rd.). Follow 622 for 2.4-miles to Rt. 25. Park here. Begin hiking the the junction of 622 and 625 by walking along Rt. 622 for another 1.4-miles to the beginning of the Big Devils Stairs Trail marked by a sign and blue blazes.

#### 4. BOUCHER ROCKS, VA

COMMENTS: Along the Potomac, old area, closed for years, now owned by Fairfax City. Has crack climbs rarely found in the Potomac Gorge, some beautiful jams. Has a nice, continuously difficult face climb. Location of an inside corner climb.. "best climb in Potomac Gorge"...Bob Adams. Top rope anchors may be difficult to set up and long anchors are necessary.

DIRECTIONS: Beltway to Great Falls exit 13, east on Rte. 193, first left onto Balls Hill Rd, left again onto Live Oak Drive. After crossing Beltway, bear right and drive to dead end. Rocks are down dirt road and left, up river about 200 feet.

#### 5. BULL RUN MOUNTAIN, VA

COMMENTS: About 15 top rope climbs, some aid climbing and leading for those comfortable with little protection. Rocks sunny most of the day. Hot in summer. ACCESS PERMISSION THROUGH PATC-MS REQUIRED.

DIRECTIONS: From Washington, DC beltway, follow I-66 west to the exit for The Plains, VA. At the stop sign off the exit ramp, turn right. This road will lead to Rt. 55. At this intersection, turn right onto Rt. 55 and then take an immediate left onto an unmarked road. There is an Exxon gas station at the corner. Follow this road for a long block to an intersection with Rt. 601(Hopewell Rd.) Turn right onto Rt. 601. Exactly 3.5-miles from this intersection is "High Point" located on the right atop a bald hill. Past "High Point" is a logging road on the right. Take this logging road to the parking area(with locked gate) on the right. The trail ascends directly up to the ridge, where you bear left. About one quarter of a mile along the ridge you will see the rocks on the right.

#### 6. BUZZARD ROCKS, VA

COMMENTS: Laybacks, overhangs, and huge friction slabs at the top of a ridge. Mean climb to the base. Scenic area with two campgrounds.

DIRECTIONS: From Beltway, take I-66 west. Once in Front Royal, VA take VA-55 west and go 6-miles past Front Royal, turn left(Rt 610) at the town of Waterlick(note sign for Elizabeth Furnace). Go 3-miles to fish hatchery and park in a parking lot on left past hatchery. Follow trail uphill to top of the rocks.

#### 7. CAMP LEWIS, MD

COMMENTS: Not very many climbs and most are hard. Good winter climbing area. Some aid climbing.

DIRECTIONS: From the Beltway, take the Carderock exit at the Maryland side of the Cabin John Bridge. Bear right at the Carderock exit, left over the overpass, and immediately left again to get back on the GW Parkway in the opposite direction. Drive to the Cabin John Bridge, bearing right at the fork just before going under it, and park on the right at the first parking lot past the bridge. Cross the canal, walk under the bridge and turn left, following the bridge to the river. Walk up the river(right) 100-yards to the rocks.

#### 8. CAUDEY'S CASTLE, WVA

COMMENTS: Lead climbs on the river side, top rope climbs on the other. Lots of loose rock. Good swimming hole on Cacapon River. No good campsites nearby.

DIRECTIONS: From the Beltway, I-495, take either VA-7 or US-50 to Winchester, VA. Take US-522 north about 15-miles and go west on VA-127. Follow 127 into WVA to Blommery. Five miles further find sign marked "Caudey's Castle" on right and turn

left on dirt road on left. Park off the road and hike up dirt road to large open area one half mile up the road. A trail leads up to the left to the rocks.

#### 9. CHAMPE ROCKS, WVA

COMMENTS: Horrendous lead climbing. Mostly unexplored.

DIRECTIONS: From the Beltway, I-495, take I-66 to Gainesville, VA where you bear right onto VA-55 to Moorefield WVA. Turn left onto US-220 to Petersburg, and right onto WVA-4 and 28. Go 15-miles to rocks which are on the left (note historical road marker).

#### 10. THE COVE, VA

COMMENTS: A privately owned campground with a lake for swimming. top rope climbs only.

DIRECTIONS: From the Beltway take US-50 to Winchester (or VA-7 to Winchester) and continue on US-50 for 11-miles to Gore, VA. Turn left on State Route 704 for 4.8-miles to State Route 683. Turn left for 1-mile to Rock Enon Boy Scout Camp. Continue through camp, turn left and proceed 1-mile to The Cove. The cliffs are on the opposite shore from the campsite and at the dammed up end of the lake.

#### 11. CRESCENT ROCKS, VA

COMMENTS:

The rocks face south and they make a good area for climbing in the winter. The area has a deserved reputation of being infested with Copperhead snakes and the most active climbing usually occurs between late fall and early spring. From very easy to extremely difficult climbs and usually done from a top rope.

DIRECTIONS: To reach Crescent Rocks, from Washington, take the Beltway toward Tysons Corner and take the Tysons Corner (Virginia Rt. 7) exit and follow Rt. 7 to Leesburg, VA (22-miles from Tysons). Avoid going into Leesburg business district by using the Leesburg bypass. Continue to follow Rt. 7 through Purcellville and Round Hill, VA. Several miles past Round Hill is Snickers Gap, a pass through the Blue Ridge Mountains. Turn right onto local 601. This turn is some 12-miles past Leesburg. There is a small parking area on the left at a large galvanized iron gate with a gravel road leading to a microwave tower. Park here and follow the gravel road to the microwave tower. Cut up the hill until you cross the AT. Turn left and follow it to the rocks on the left.

#### 12. EAGLE ROCK AND SMOKE HOLE VALLEY, WVA

COMMENTS: Eagle Rock is exploratory lead climbing on rather rotten rock. Gunks type rock along the road 1-mile north of Eagle Rock. There are both top rope and lead climbs. Mostly unexplored. Forest Service Campground 2-miles from Eagle Rock.

DIRECTIONS: From Beltway, take I-66 west to I-81 south. Get off at the next exit (Strasburg). Go towards Strasburg on Rt. 11. At the intersection of Rts. 11 and 55, take Rt. 55 to Moorefield, WVA. Turn left onto US-220 south and go 16-miles past Petersburg. Turn right onto paved road to rocks and campground.

#### 13. EDES FORT, WVA

COMMENTS: Mostly lead climbing on rather rotten rock. A good place to learn to lead. Hot in summer. Plenty of room for new routes. Camp



on private property. No outhouses. Good swimming in Cacapon River. Lots of gnats in summer. A mimeographed guide has been published by Larry Griffin(This is taken from the old list, I have no knowledge of this guide...can anyone help out).

**DIRECTIONS:** From the Beltway, take I-270 to I-70 to Hancock, MD. Get on Business US-40 through Hancock and at the far end of the town turn left onto US-522 S. At Berkeley Springs, WVA turn right onto WVA-9. Go 4-miles to Great Cacapon, WVA and turn left in town at the sign to Rock Ford Road. Go about 4-miles to a long, steep hill. Go 1-mile past some cabins and down an overgrown and sometimes rutted section to a small parking lot. Hike straight ahead 100 yards to the rocks.

#### 14. HARPER'S FERRY, MD

**COMMENTS:** A few lead climbs, some aid work, but no top rope climbs. The rock is extremely rotten and ugly. You must get permission from park officials in Harper's Ferry to climb. They can and will fine you for unauthorized. A climbing helmet is required by park officials.

**DIRECTIONS:** From the beltway, I-495, take I-270 toward Frederick, MD and then west on US-340 at Frederick. Just after entering WVA make a sharp right(note sign) to Harper's Ferry and visit the ranger. Head back east on US-340 until in Maryland, make a right just past a picnic area. In 100-ft go right on a road parallel to the canal and river. Just after going underneath the railroad tracks, park on the right at an old stone tavern. The climbs are just to the left of the train tunnel.

#### 15. THE HERMITAGE, PA

**COMMENTS:** Some leading, a lot of top rope climbs, and good bouldering 100 yards from a PATC cabin. Shady in

summer and can be muggy and buggy. Sheltered from the wind. Cabin sleeps 12.

**DIRECTIONS:** Go north on I-270 toward Frederick, MD and take US-15 north to Thurmont and Emmitsburg. Turn left on MD-97 at the light in Emmitsburg, and continue to the PA state line where 97 becomes PA-16. At the west end of Rouzerville turn right onto hard surfaced Old Forge Road. Go 5.2-miles and pass Old Forge and at 5.5-miles turn left onto gravel Swift Run Road. Drive up the road to a sharp left turn in the road and park there. Follow the blue-blazed trail past top of cliffs on the left. The cabin is 0.2-miles down this trail.

#### 16. KLINE GAP, WVA

##### COMMENTS:

**DIRECTIONS:** Take US-50 through Winchester to US-93 at New Creek, WVA(60-miles past Winchester). Stay on 93 through Maysville, WVA to Maysville Road. Follow Maysville Rd (93 and 5) 3.8-miles to intersection (T) and turn right and go about a mile. Bear left at fork in the road(just past a quarry). Cross bridge and park. Walk through barnyard following overgrown road which parallels the stream.

#### 17. LITTLE STONY MAN, VA

**COMMENTS:** 80-ft to 150-ft cliffs, slightly rotten rock. Be sure and wear a helmet. Much exploring to be done. Mostly lead climbs, can be top roped with two ropes, some aid work. Hike in is 0.8-mile. Sunny in afternoon. Gorgeous view. Fee to enter Park.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Beltway, take I-66 west and exit onto US-211 to

Warrenton. Turn right at the far end of the business district and continue on 211 to Thornton Gap. Turn south onto Skyline Drive and go 7.6-miles to the Little Stony Man parking lot. Hike 0.6-miles on Appalachian Trail to the cliffs(don't turn left where the sign says 0.1-mile to Little Stony Man).

#### 18. OLD RAG MOUNTAIN, VA

COMMENTS: Climbs either terribly easy or terribly hard. The Ridge Trail up Old Rag has to be considered one of THE classic hikes of the Washington area. Fairly strenuous 8-mile circuit hike with gorgeous views. No water near the top.

DIRECTIONS: From the Beltway, take I-66 west through Gainesville, VA and US-211 west to Sperryville, VA. Turn left on US-522 south for 1-mile. Then right on VA-231 south about 8-miles and right onto state road 670 to Nethers. Enter parking lot about 2-miles past Nethers. The long way up is up the fire road straight ahead and the short but steep way is up the Blue-blazed trail to the left.

#### 19. SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN, MD

COMMENTS: A wide variety of climbs from easy to impossible, many involving overhangs. At times very crowded. Restrooms.

DIRECTIONS: To get to Sugarloaf from Washington, DC, drive on I-495, the Beltway, to I-270 north toward Frederick, Maryland. Take the Exit with the brown Sugarloaf sign to MD-109 toward Barnesville to the Comus Inn. At the Comus Inn there is another Sugarloaf sign at the intersection of MD-109 and MD-95. Turn right onto MD-95 and go approximately 3-miles to the base of Sugarloaf. A road winds its way past an intermediate parking lot and after about one and a half miles to a parking lot to near the top.

#### 20. ROCKS STATE PARK, MD

COMMENTS: Mostly ferocious climbs, some can be lead. Some aid climbing. Free. Rest rooms nearby. Usually very crowded and the rocks are written all over.

DIRECTIONS: From Washington Beltway, go north on I-95 or Balt. Wash. Parkway to Baltimore Beltway. Then east through harbor tunnel. Go north on I-95 (toll), then north(left) on MD-24 through Forest Hill and on to a notch in the rocks. Park 100 yards past the rocks.

#### 21. WHITE OAK CANYON, VA

COMMENTS: In Shenandoah Nat'l Park. Good ice climbing in cold winters. 80' high rocks by the upper(first) falls, a few good aid routes, a 5.9 jam and chimney, and other possibilities.

DIRECTIONS: From Beltway, take I-66 west and exit onto US-211 to Warrenton. Turn right at the far end of the business district and continue on 211 toward Thornton Gap. Turn south onto Skyline Drive and go just past Skyland to White Oak Canyon Parking area on the left. Walk down trail 1-miles to cliffs just past first falls.

#### 22. WOLF GAP, WVA

COMMENTS: Some lead climbing, but mostly moderate to hard top rope climbs. 2-mile hike to Big Schloss, 18-mile drive plus 2-mile hike to Devil's Garden. Small cabin(sleeps 3-5) and Forest Service Campground(with outhouses and pump). Absolutely beautiful in the fall.

DIRECTIONS: From the beltway, I-495, take I-66 west to I-81 south. Take the first exit(Strasburg). Follow US-11 South through Strasburg to the south end of Woodstock. Turn right on VA-42. At sign for Columbia Furnace turn right and get on

### How do you know when nylon rope will snap and kill someone?

Five years or so ago, Navy ropes started snapping—and bodies started flying. Several seamen were killed.

The Navy had switched over from natural fiber ropes to nylon. Nylon ropes have advantages—they don't mildew or rot. On the down side, nylon ropes stretch a lot before they break, just like a rubber band, so when they break, they become catapults.

The Navy's problem is that there's no easy way to tell when a rope is ready to give way. A rope may look good even though its nylon fibers are so degraded they'll break

at 50 percent of the load they could handle when new.

So the Navy asked the Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory for help, and APL subcontracted part of the work to Homewood's mechanical engineering department—and John Winter, research associate in materials science at the School of Engineering.

The APL research, led by Wayne Bryden, has focused on microscopic, molecular changes in nylon as it degrades. They measure "scission"—the breaking up of nylon's polymer molecules—by counting electrons that are freed in the breakup and then trapped by metal

contaminants in the rope.

"It's pretty fancy work," Winter says.

His own approach is less fancy. "I forget about the details," he says, "and I treat the rope as a guitar string." He takes an old rope and a new rope—two guitar strings—and stretches them under an easy load beside one another. Then he plucks them and listens for differences in the sound.

He doesn't actually pluck them, however. He puts a small speaker on the rope, and high pitched sounds—like chirping birds—vibrate the ropes.

It turns out that new and degraded rope vibrate differ-

ently. ("Were I a musician and had a good ear," Winter says, "I could hear the difference.") A pair of accelerometers translate vibrations on the ropes into electrical signals.

Ultimately, the project should produce a black box through which Navy seamen would run their ropes from time to time. It would tell them whether the rope is safe or not. Winter says he's not far from being able to put together something to try out on board ship.

Unfortunately, the Navy has stopped work on the project—for the time being. "When they have a few more ropes break on them," Winter says, "they'll be back."

secondary road 717. Follow signs to parking area at top of ridge(117-miles).

### 22. WOLF ROCK, MD

COMMENTS: Fairly good view from the rocks which are situated on top of a small mountain. Climbs are 30-ft or less and are usually the one-move type. Plenty of crevasses to explore. Near a trail system. Outhouse at the rocks. You must get permission to climb a Wolf Rock. This can be done at the park visitors center.

DIRECTIONS: To get to Wolf Rock, Maryland, take I-495 and I-270 north toward Frederick, MD. In Frederick, take US-15 north to Thurmont, MD and toward Gettysburg, Pa. At Thurmont follow the signs to Cotoctin State Park. Park at Ranger HQ. From here, follow the trail and the signs to Wolf rock.

Tom Russell

## 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.

May 3 - 4	Lead Training	John Teasdale	301/262-9128
May 4	Annapolis Rocks	Nori Gessler	202/524-2068
May 7	Executive Committee Meeting		
May 10 - 11	Hermitage, PA	Tom Russell	301/869-8058
May 14	Monthly Section Meeting, PATC HQ	8:00	
	Bob Wells: Ice Climbing in the Cascades		
May 17	Sugarloaf, MD	Tom Russell	301/869-8058
May 18	Little Stony Man	Joe Wagner	202/966-6379
May 24 - 26	Shawangunks, NY	Stuart Pregnall	202/338-6140
May 31	Old Rag, VA	*	
June 1	Caudey's Castle, WV	Pete Grant	703/960-6033
June 7	Basic Climbing Course		
	Gordon Swenson		
June 7	Harper's Ferry, WV	*	
June 8	Bull Run, VA	*	
June 11	Monthly Section Meeting, PATC HQ	8:00	
	David Atkinson: Climbing in South America		
June 14	Vaso/Herzog Is, MD	*	
June 15	Annapolis Rocks, MD	*	
June 22	Great Falls, MD	*	
* MAY 31, JUNE	NELSON HOUSE LOOKTRIP	NORI GESSLER	203/524-2068

*Up Rope*

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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