



FOUNDED BY
JAN AND HERB CONN

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

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GUNKS CLIMBERS MEETING APRIL 16, 1988

At the first Climbers Meeting since last fall's controversy sparked encounter between new and old style climbers, the mood was much more subdued. According to Seward Weber, with whom I spoke after the meeting, the 100-plus attendees were much less heated in their arguments over climbing issues at the Gunks.

Briefly, Weber read the Preserve Board's resolution concerning climbing policies at the Gunks, which prohibits bolts, pitons, or other procedures that alter the face of the rock, and recommends the use of natural colored fixed slings and chalk. As there is little recourse for climbers except to comply with this regulation, there was little discussion over it. Weber attempted to generate some discussion over the replacement of existing pitons and bolts when deemed necessary, but was unable to get climbers to agree to any policy. Weber stated to me that the Preserve will not be responsible for replacing old fixed gear. "Climb at your own risk!" Local climbers in the past have taken it on themselves to replace gear on popular routes that require it to ensure safe climbing, such as on Never Never Land and Arrow.

There was also some discussion concerning climbing at Minnewaska State Park, and a petition was circulated urging the PIPC to allow climbing at the Park. The PIPC (Palisades Interstate Park Commission) is undergoing a master planning process for Minnewaska, and included in the plan will be camping (an urgent need in the area) and climbing itself. I have written PIPC for information about the Master Plan and asked that we be involved in it. Anyone interested in reviewing it please let me know.

Other information about camping is the news that the Preserve intends to replace the lock on the chain across the entrance to the old AMC area (now known as the Van Loven Cabin). In addition, the area will be available for reservation by groups for weekends. Anyone planning a weekend Section trip to the Gunks might therefore wish to contact the Preserve about reserving the area (the phone number is 914-255-0919). I am given to understand that simple reservation of the area does not prohibit others from using it, but does imply a sort of territorial dibs on camping.

TRIP REPORTS BULL RUN, APRIL 24, 1988

With a large number of no-shows, John Yanson, Michael Mergi and I represented the only club members at Bull Run. Unexpectedly brutal winds chilled what would have been a perfect day. We rigged many of the usual climbs with few successes--John on Charlie's Crack and Bull Run Overhang, Michael also on BRO and I on Brambling Man. We found a nice wind break near Snicker Snee and held an impromptu meeting of the club's tanning section. Afterwards I did the lower crux on Galactic Acid (many tries) but was too gassed to finish.

Tom Isaacson

GREAT FALLS, VA APRIL 30, 1988

We're getting mighty tired of cold weather, yes indeedy. The last day of April was supposed to be warmer and sunnier than it turned out, but the horde that descended upon the Aid Box shivered and shuddered up everything there except for the Strain, which didn't get rigged.

Let's see if memory can recall names (probably not): there were Jacques and two friends, Frederique et Olivier, Bill Fowkes made a rare appearance (and climbed well, too), Michael Mergi complained about foot pain (but is developing his footwork nicely), Doug Craun received some footwork instruction as well and dogged his way up Diagonal for the first time, Brad Cohen motored down from Baltimore and worked on perfecting his Lost Arrow technique, Stuart Rosenthal worked on Terrapin Station (hard for us shorter people!), Madeleine Carter and her friend Clair, Marshall Tucker, Harriet Seiner and her friend Rich came

down from Delaware and enjoyed themselves, Smith Wood tested his elbow and found that taking time off does wonders for tendonitis, and I'm sure I've forgotten a couple of names (abject apologies--give me slack next time you belay me!).

Apart from all the climbing successes that were enjoyed by the throng, there was one circumstance that reminded all of us for the need to be constantly vigilant about our safety equipment even when top roping. One of the two anchor ropes rigged on Lost Arrow was sawed through to the core, seriously weakening the anchor. If the rig hadn't been set up by one of the Section's more safety conscious members, it wouldn't, in all likelihood, have had a backup anchor. When the compromised anchor was discovered, it was taken down and another rope put in its place.

Examination of the causes of the rope's abrasion yielded the following points for future consideration. The rope was an old 11 mm dynamic rope, the sheath was fuzzy (as all old rope sheaths are), and it was placed over the edge at the top of Lost Arrow. The edge in that location isn't particularly sharp, but it is an edge. Repeated weighting of the anchor rope pulled the sheath back and forth across the edge, more so because the anchor was a dynamic rope rather than a static rope. The sheath wore through, and an accident could have happened if there hadn't been a backup anchor.

A few lessons can be learned here. One is that dynamic ropes really aren't suitable for anchors; the purpose of the anchor is to suspend the climbing rope and hold it in one location.

If the anchor stretches, then the climber falls further than necessary. Another point that should be taken home is that climbers should always examine their climbing ropes and anchors during the day to detect problems before they become serious. The last thing that should be said is that the common local practice of threading old tubular webbing over the anchor rope is a simple and effective means of adding a protective layer between the rock and the rope. It is much cheaper to discard an old piece of worn through webbing than to discard a worn through anchor. It's also safer!

Enough editorializing for this trip report. At the end of the day Brad and I, the two hangers on, stumbled out exhausted but pleased that we had each learned a little more and climbed a little harder.

Stuart Pregnall

ANNAPOLIS ROCK MAY 1, 1988

The trip coordinator was toeing the line, or maybe he was toe-ordinating something else, or maybe I should dispense with bad jokes about toes (you know, bad humor among climbers, especially alpinists!), but anyway, Ed didn't make it and a lot of others did and enjoyed a chilly May 1st at Annapolis Rocks.

Tom Isaacson, jaded with climbing the same old classics, conquered the "Tour de Tom," a detached and decapitated pinnacle (a knuckle?) between the Pine Tree and Faint's Roof areas, and claimed and proclaimed all within his reach, grasp, and probably imagination for the Queen of Spain. Her Royal Highness decreed that Tom should serve as Directorate of her new protectorate, and so thusly did he direct the

protection of new routes. The Queen further decreed that the Directorate should protect routes for the middle classes in his protectorate, and so thusly did Tom rate all within his reach 5.8. If he couldn't reach it, it was harder! (If anyone in the Section might know the origin of an old home made angle piton found under a small roof on this feature, the Editors would appreciate hearing about its history.)

We all had a fun day, Tom Kaweck and friends Doug and Helen, Jeanette Helfrich who came with good reports on John's wrist, Tom Russell making his 1988 climbing debut, Kit Pollock, Jeff Kramer, Donn Holtzer, John Yanson, John Bottanelli, Directorate Tom and myself, accompanied by the barking dog and joined later by a friend from the office, Pam Violante. Some routes were led, some top roped, some explored (ask Tom for directions to the Wall of Death, a major climbing adventure rivalled in scope and breadth only by the infamous Ilchester Rock!), and others were merely ignored. Jeanette shamed us all by remembering to bring a garbage bag and filling it with abandoned accouterments, garments of questionable heritage and prehistoric litter (rather, it was discarded by hominids of Neanderthal mentality).

Annapolis Rock deserves more attention. Even though some of the rock is loose, a little judicious cleaning would take care of that, and yield many more enjoyable routes. We'll be back, so come out next time and join in on the fun!

Stuart Pregnall

NEW RIVER GORGE MAY 7 & 8

Lots of things happened at the New this weekend. A bunch of D.C. climbers were down (but we were the only MS members, as most MS climbers were at the Gunks having a good time). We met up with the crew at the Pancake House and stoked up on carbs and caffeine, then mud wrestled the cars down to Bubba for a day's fun in the sun.

Eric finally red pointed The Cutting Edge (5.12b/c,**) after one small fall. We all followed with varying degrees of dogging. I wasn't climbing at all well and flubbed the crux more than Karen did; Rick cranked it with two falls. We then moved over to the next project: two new lines next to Dyno Pleas. We top roped them first to make sure they went, then fixed gear on one. Rick led it and I followed, 5.12a,* (no name yet). Karen was suffering from lack of sleep and didn't really give it much effort, and then Eric managed to find a harder way to climb the route (but why do it that way?). The usual clean up at the spring and Pizza Hut feast followed.

Next day Karen and I slept in (actually, I got all the gear sorted while she slept!) and didn't make it down to Bubba until late. We rapped and cleaned a line we'd spied on a previous visit, top roped it, fixed gear, and Karen dogged it out. She still has to go back for a red point, but it's called Fierce Face and is 5.11b**.

That was about all for that trip. We're going back soon (as everyone by now has figured out!), so join us for a weekend's fun at the New.

NEW RIVER GORGE MAY 14 & 15

Another New weekend, more new routes. Our project, Absolution Arete, suffered the first instance of route theft at the New River. Apparently, John Bercaw noticed the stunning line last weekend and jumped on it without asking around to see who had cleaned and been working on it. He fired in some pro, and tried to work it out himself, but failed. We arrived early Saturday to find his partner falling off the crux, and John perched successfully at the top. Needless to say, we were very disappointed (not only to have lost the route, but to find that John had "stolen" it). Too dejected to walk far, we climbed the nearby Team Machine (5.12a**) and Blunder and Frightening (5.10b*), then summoned some energy and wandered down to search out new rock. We couldn't crank a series of moves that we thought would go, so added to the growing list of New River moderates and put up Romper Room (5.7), the arete to the right of Dark Hollow on the Central Bridge Wall. Rob Turan, who had joined us by that time, offered the use of his showers in exchange for a ride home. We piled in the RX-7 and headed for hot water and food. By the way, the Golden Corral on Route 16 in Oak Hill offers a superior salad bar, and Pizza Hut has moved from Oak Hill out onto Route 19 past the shopping center.

Sunday was another frustrating day. We rapped a prospective new route but couldn't find much in the way of holds on it. We yanked the ropes and wandered down to another potential line. We managed to squeeze The Last Tango (5.11c**) in next to

Blackberry Blossom, finding it quite enjoyable and sporting three cruxes. A quick trip home, a bath for the dog, and sleep for the weary.

Stuart Pregnall

INTERMEDIATE LEAD TRAINING SHAWANGUNKS, NY MAY 7-8, 1988

Boy, do we know how to schedule! After three weeks of daily rains (according to one local climber) we arrived in New Paltz on Saturday morning with a wet ground but a clearing sky. By the time breakfast was over, the sun was shining full blast, filling everyone's heart with that feeling of Spring. By noon most of us had shed our long pants and shirts. Sunday was even better--downright hot. Only the rocks themselves gave the hint of the bad weather gone by: most climbs were still dripping from the run off.

This was one of the largest classes we have ever had--or plan to have in the future. Seven trainees and a like number of instructors descended upon the Uberfall like a battalion of paratroopers to take control of the Gunks. A short group lecture on safety was followed by a hands on session on tying off a fallen leader. The students were then paired with instructors and off they went to find out what lead climbing was all about.

Sunday morning the students were given a slightly longer lecture on leading techniques. Topics included setting up belay stances, placement of protection, etc. Again, off they went to practice their craft, this time playing the part of a leader.

All in all, it was a very successful weekend. Everyone had a good time, even yours truly, who found out that he ain't as much of a has been as he thought. Wait 'til I lost a few pounds of that extra fat around the waist...

Attendees: Brad Cohen, Doug Craun, Rich Cunningham, Knox Felker, Jeff Garland, Helen Grant, Pete Grant, Donn Holtzer, Jeff Kramer, Hal Kussick, Matt Lavington, Jim Martin, Kit Pollock, Eric Wasli, and John Yanson.

Pete Grant

TRAINING STATUS REPORT

During April and the first part of May, two intermediate and one basic training courses have been conducted. So far this year, 19 people have received basic training and 12 people have gone through intermediate training courses. Another basic course with 8 students was scheduled for May 8 (a report will be provided).

The schedule for the remainder of 1988:

Basic Training

June 12; July 17; August 20; September 17; October 15; and November 5 or 6. All basic courses still have openings.

Intermediate (Lead) Training

May 28-30 (full); July 2-4 (one opening); July 16-17 (one opening); September 3-5 (open); October 8-10 (open).

Basic courses are open to anyone--there are no prerequisites or equipment requirements. All students must sign a waiver liability release form (a parent or guardian must sign for those under 18).

We now have revised the intermediate (lead) training course prerequisites. Candidates MUST have taken OUR basic training course; they MUST have attended at least four top roping trips with active participation in both climbing and belaying; they MUST thoroughly know the basic knots: figure 8, bowline, and double overhand backup knots; they MUST be able to rappel without assistance; they MUST be familiar with their own harness and belay device; and they MUST BE ABLE TO CLIMB! By this we mean that 5.4 rated climbs should not test the limits or ability of the climber.

The title of the Intermediate Training course will be changed to Advanced Training to drive home the point that we are teaching techniques that build upon those learned in basic courses and top roping trips. There is simply no time to teach individuals how to tie in or to belay. Besides, it is a safety hazard to learn belaying while high up on a wall. If a person appears to be fumbling around with his or her own equipment, there will be no choice but to refuse further lead training and have that person practice top roping for the balance of the session. Our instructors are owed this courtesy and safety. They have to have confidence in their partners and be reasonably assured that "belay on" carries a definite promise and commitment by the person saying it.

Although it is possible to learn to lead at a modest level (say 5.2 or below), it just isn't fun after the first few climbs. If you cannot top rope just about any 5.4 at Carderock or Great Falls, you should hold off signing up for lead training for the time being. You'll get much

more out of the course when you do take it once you become more proficient in your technique. We want to teach you how to lead and second during the lead training--not how to climb.

Pete Grant
Training Coordinator

REI ANNOUNCEMENT

REI has announced that Debi Whitted, the College Park store manager, has been named the new manager for their San Diego store. The Mountaineering Section will miss having Debi's assistance and participation in MS activities.

Debi did write us to say that her assistant, Doug Braswell, will be taking over for her as the new College Park manager. In addition, Corky Wachter has been hired by REI to coordinate their community activity projects. Both Doug and Corky can be reached on 301-982-9681. The MS hopes that the tradition of cooperation the climbing community and REI established under Debi's management will continue under Doug's management and Corky's work.

EXECUTIVE MEETING INVITATION

This is just a reminder that the executive meetings are open to all members. We meet the first Wednesday of every month at someone's home and informally plod through the routine business of the club while enjoying a covered dish supper and a lot of climbing gossip. We'd like old and new members to join us. Just call Rich Cunningham (202-332-7931) or Jeanette Helfrich (301-585-9119) for information.

FOR SALE

One pair of Fire's, size 7, used, still usable, \$30. Call Stuart Pregnall, 202-543-3988.

BOOK REVIEWS

ANGELS OF LIGHT by Jeff Long
1987 \$18.95 298 pages Beech
Tree Books Illustrated
Hardcover

Oh, boy. Drugs, sex and murder in Yosemite Valley. Camp 4 gossip, even a little climbing action. Just what the Great Falls crag rats want to read.

Actually, Angels of Light is a pretty good story, a sort of whodunit and climbing novel mixed up together. In fact, it's a jolly amalgam of fact, fiction and pure fabrication, one that you can read quickly and enjoy and not have to think about. There aren't any weighty parables lurking beneath the pages, no nuances that need to be deciphered before literary understanding flashes on in the brain. It's just fun.

Some readers might find the constant abuse of language and women offensive, and others might shudder at the thought of all that wildness going on (sounded pretty mild compared to some tales!). But it's worth reading through just to get to the predictable end.

Briefly, a plane loaded with smuggled marijuana crashes in the high Sierra and is swallowed by a lake, hidden by the winter ice. Climbers find it, and a mad rush ensues as they retrieve the dope and make huge profits selling it back in the Bay area. Once grubby climbers are seen sporting Patagucci threads, shiny carabiners and new ropes. Sound familiar so far? It's loosely based on a true story up to this point. But something isn't right; people begin to die. Question is, are the deaths accidents, or are they murders?

There are also some interesting subplots going on, with women and men, and men and men, and between them the rocks they love. These threesomes get a little complicated, but it all works out. The characters and setting are well developed; Long clearly knows the Camp 4 scene. But if you think Angels is what you'll find on your next visit to Yosemite, don't take it for granite.

WALKING AUSTRIA'S ALPS by Jonathan Hurdle 1988 \$10.95
240 pages The Mountaineers
Softcover Illustrated

If you've ever daydreamed about one of those famous alpine walking tours where you wander hut to hut amongst fabulous scenery, but didn't know how to plan for it, BUY THIS BOOK.

Listing eleven separate multi day tours (some of which look pretty demanding), Walking Austria's Alps is a no nonsense guide on how to prepare for and enjoy such a tour. It also gives useful information about gear, weather, and other essentials, such as joining the Austrian Alpine Club (no big hassle, it just takes a few months processing time) and in the back there is a very handy little glossary of Austrian mountaineering terms.

So if you can't make it out onto the ED desperates in the Alps but still want an alpine holiday, maybe you should pick up this little book and leaf through it. You might just find yourself laughing at all the storm bound climbers from the comfort of your hut!

(By the way, The Mountaineers Books publish a few very handy travel guides like this one. If you're interetsed in knowing more about thier publications, or want to get a listing, call them: 1-800-553-4453, 8:30-5:00 PST.

Stuart Peggall

CLIMBERS CALENDAR

May 28	Great Falls	Pete Grant	703-960-6033
May 29	Carderock	Stuart Pregnall	202-543-3988
May 28/30	Gunks**	Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931
May 28/30	New River**	Stuart Rosenthal	703-527-5247
June 1	Executive Meeting	Tom Russell	301-869-8058
June 4	Camp Lewis	PATC HQ 7:30	
June 5	Bull Run	Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931
June 8	Monthly Meeting	Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931
June 11	Big Devil's Stairs	Tom Isaacson	202-332-3710
June 12	Old Rag	Michael Mergi	703-237-7248
June 18	Great Falls	Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931
June 19	Hermitage	Stuart Rosenthal	703-527-5247
June 25	Cow Hoof	Pete Grant	703-960-6033
June 26	White Oak Canyon	Stuart Pregnall	202-543-3988
July 2-4	Gunks**	Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931
July 2-4	New River**	Tom Kawecki	703-237-7227
July 6	Executive Meeting	Stuart Pregnall	202-543-3988
July 9	Great Falls	PATC HQ 7:30	
July 10	Bull Run	Donn Holtzer	301-656-4076
July 13	Monthly Meeting	Tom Isaacson	202-332-3710
July 16	Great Falls		
July 17	Annapolis Rock		

PLEASE NOTE: Call trip coordinators mid-week to make arrangements and contingency plans. In the absence of published trip leaders, call Rich Cunningham or Stuart Pregnall. Trips noted ** are to lead climbing areas. Please arrange for your own partners; the trip coordinator can help with arranging rides and other logistics.



Up Rope

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