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

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### DR. CHARLES HOUSTON SPEAKS ON HIGH ALTITUDE PHYSIOLOGY

This is just a summary--if you're thinking of going to altitude, consult your personal physician. Use this article as a guide to asking questions. It is not medical advice.

Dr. Charles Houston spoke before a large and receptive audience at Sibley Hospital early one Friday morning. Dr. Houston had been invited to speak about his specialty, high altitude physiology.

Dr. Houston began by being introduced by long time friend and MS member Andy Kauffman, who gave a complete resume of Dr. Houston's climbing achievements as well as his accomplishments in discovering and describing the complexities of high altitude physiology. Andy's description of Dr. Houston as being "one of the greatest" mountaineers evoked a modest protestation that "If you get there early enough nobody can say you're not the greatest."

To catch the audience's attention, Dr. Houston gave some statistical evidence that mountain sickness is more prevalent than widely thought. A survey of 4,000 skiers at 8,000-9,500 feet of elevation in Colorado (i.e., at almost any ski resort out West) revealed that fully 17% suffered three or more symptoms of acute mountain sickness! Further, he described a 1/1000 to 1/5000 chance of death among that group.

Dr. Houston described various kinds of acute mountain sickness: AMS (acute mountain sickness, which includes headache, nausea, shortness of breath and usually resolves itself within a few days), HAPE (high altitude pulmonary edema, which includes AMS symptoms plus a pink, frothy sputum and requires immediate descent) and HACE (high altitude cerebral edema, which includes dizziness, lack of orientation, reduced motor skills, stumbling, and also requires immediate descent). There are other manifestations, but these were not the focus of the lecture.

In describing the development of AMS, Dr. Houston stressed that there are four major contributing factors, all of which are synergistic in their contribution to development of the disease. These four factors are hypothermia (getting cold), hypoglycemia (eating too little), hypoxia (getting too little oxygen) and dehydration (lack of water). Of these, three factors can easily be managed preventively using common sense, and the fourth, hypoxia, is managed by changes in body function through acclimatization.

Several studies were described in which various tests proved that the foremost limiting body function in terms of acclimatization at altitude is the lungs. The heart is fully capable of adjusting and has

built in capacity to accommodate the additional work load placed on it. The lungs, however, must undergo several adjustments before they adapt. Dr. Houston indicated that further study is required before the lung's adaptation process and limits are understood.

In terms of AMS prevention, Dr. Houston had the following to say. First, it is imperative to take your time while going to altitude. The body takes time to adjust, and without adjusting, you run increased risk of developing HAPE and/or HACE. You must avoid strenuous exertion at first, until your body adjusts. He suggested that "climbing/packing high, sleeping low" is a good formula for getting adjusted. Dr. Houston also suggested that each person adjusts differently, and each person adjusts differently each time they go to altitude. Water intake is imperative, at least 5-6 quarts each day, and he suggested that a reduced salt intake would help as well. Dr. Houston recommended eating small amounts of food frequently. And finally, he said that Diamox appears to be helpful in acclimatization.

This brought up discussion about various drugs. Dr. Houston said that Diamox is the only drug in use at the present time that has only beneficial effects on acclimatization. Decadron, or dexamethasone, has been used in the past but should not be used any more. There is no physiological evidence that Decadron works, and it produces a euphoric feeling that occasionally becomes psychotic. Diamox, on the other hand, aids in the efficiency of carbon dioxide exchange. Because of this, it also prevents Cheyne-Stokes breathing while at rest, thus producing better sleep patterns. Dr. Houston's personal dosage for Diamox is 250 mg. in the morning, at lunch, and in the

evening for the first two days upon arrival at altitude, two dosages of 250 mg. on the third day, and none thereafter.

When asked about the use of Lasix (a diuretic) in the treatment of edema, Dr. Houston cautioned that its management is difficult without proper facilities, and could lead to hypodermic shock in a HAPE/HACE victim. Morphine, properly administered, is considered acceptable for treating HAPE/HACE, as is administering supplemental oxygen. Dr. Houston said, however, that the best and simplest treatment for HAPE/HACE is **immediate descent**. 3,000 feet of descent should suffice, but sometimes more is needed.

In the end, the things to remember are: Go slow, drink lots of water, and if you run into problems, descend.

Stuart Peggall

## TRIP REPORTS NEW ENGLAND AUGUST 24-SEPTEMBER 6, 1988

Now we know why they call this place New England--it's because of the English weather! Nearly a week of rain, fog, drizzle, mist and general yuck transformed climbing plans to hiking plans. Luckily, hiking up that way is pretty good, and we managed to walk around most of the biggest showers.

We spent a week at Acadia National Park on Mount Desert (pronounced "Du-Zuht'" by locals) Island. There, we hiked numerous loops cunningly put together by navigator Karen. Since all trails begin more or less from sea level, the vertical relief gained in a day add up, especially when you string together several peaks as we did.

Best hike of the week was the Bee Hive to the Bowl to Mount Champlain, descending via the Precipice Trail. Both the Bee Hive and Precipice Trails are fixed with iron ladders, especially the latter trail.

This makes for exciting "hiking," particularly when you're several hundred feet off the deck. We also recommend the Mounts Sargent/Penobscot trail, descending via the Deer Brook Trail to the Jordan Cliff Trail, and then down via that fixed route. It was on that trail that Karen asked "What's that bird?" and I looked up into the face of a bald eagle slowly flying by twenty five feet away. Yet another pleasant itinerary is to hike the Bubbles from Jordan Pond.

Some climbing was accomplished one afternoon. We managed to squeeze in Fear of Flying (5.9+) and a humbling return to Connecticut Crack (5.11), both on the southern end of Mt. Champlain. Signing into the register we found the names of Mark O'Connor and Gary Beil, who had preceded us by about a week!

From there we meandered over to North Conway, where we visited Ian Cruickshank and pattered about. We managed to blast up Mt. Washington in a little over two hours one morning, then back down in roughly the same time. We were pretty chuffed by that performance, especially as we still took the time necessary to enjoy it all.

That was about it for our summer trip. Others had much more successful outings--anyone care to share their experiences with UP ROPE's readers?

Stuart Pregnall

### **ANNAPOLIS ROCKS SEPTEMBER 11**

A large contingent of regulars and newcomers showed up to exercise their lats on the overhangs at Annapolis Rocks on a beautiful cool Sunday. With lots of ropes available, we rigged most climbs in the area, including Pine Tree Crack (5.10), Pine Tree Face (5.12), Faint's Roof (5.9), Ball's Up (5.9) and its Isaacson Variation (5.10),

Wobbler (5.9), Prow Face (5.7), The Prow (5.11), The Great Roof (5.??, still unclimbed) and a number of unnamed routes as well.

One incident took place that bears reporting and remembering. After a few people scaled a new climb about ten feet left of Faint's Roof, Tim Hood gave it a try. When Tim was about 15 feet off the ground, a very large right hand hold came off which nearly hit two belayers. Tim's belayer was pulled towards the 20" diameter rock. The other person was belaying another climber (the author) about to go for a new high hand hold on Faint's Roof. Needless to say, we abandoned that climb for the day and resolved to remember that this area definitely has loose rock and to take special care in climbing and belaying.

Joining us that day were Rich Cunningham, Toms Russell and Isaacson, Stuart Pregnall, Tim Hood, Ed Worrell, John Rayner, Don Holtzer, Jeff Kramer, Doug Craun, Kit Pollock, Sue Hartley, Guy Hunt, Andre Krevere, Jason Tempschin, newcomers Chris and Craig, and yours truly, Jeanette Helfrich.

### **NEW RIVER GORGE SEPTEMBER 29/30**

While a bunch of people ventured to Bellefonte, Karen and I returned to the New River for one last fling before our schedule disintegrated. As it turned out, rain on Sunday permitted only a day's climbing, but it was still worthwhile.

We met the usual gang, and everyone else from D.C. was down this past weekend as well, John Bercaw, Graham, Alex Karr, Deb Orse, Adam, Doug Cosby, and bunches of others whose names I can't remember or don't know. Finally, John Harlin and his wife were in for the weekend with guests from Germany, Niko and Liz.



Everyone trooped up to Bubba, and Karen and I set our sights on the Headwall, where we planned to get back on the blunt arete just to the left of Perpetual Motion that we'd tried on our very first visit in a time far, far away. The day was perfect, the rock was better, and other than a grumpy wasp that stung Karen and the bumbling idiot she was climbing with, everything went really well. After deciding to place only one bolt (the rest is good small Friends and TCU's, but one TCU is kind of lousy) we had the pro scheme figured out. All that remained was to climb it. I struggled wimpily, and managed to keep it together long enough to reach the top in one push after a couple of falls. I declared it to be hard 5.11. Karen floated up, said "That's the best route we've ever done here. But it's only 5.11a, maybe only 5.10d." and we began a little discussion over who thought what. In the end, it's graded 5.11a. It's a truly fine route, a real classic, and it is the best one we've done there.

Next we turned to our other project, the large face just left of Great White Shark. The entry moves are puzzling and pumpy, off balance, and hard, with an overhang, a sideways mantle up to a finger pocket, then an overhanging seam to a stance. After that, a huge rolling face bulges up to the top. Picking a line up the face was difficult; green lichens grease many of the holds, and it didn't seem worth the effort to clean each hold. We'll look at it again next trip down. A little careful cleaning might produce minimal disturbance and another fantastic route.

To round off the day, Eric and Rick had found yet another quality route, and we were invited to tie in and join the fun. I belayed Eric (usually a short term and unnecessary commitment). But two days of hard climbing had taken their

toll, and Eric actually came on the rope at the crux! To make matters worse, a crucial hold high on the route proved problematic, since it had suicidal tendencies and threatened to jump off the cliff at any moment. As none of the protection nearby would have held a flea's weight, Eric was concerned about committing to it. After much discussion, Rick ran up top, rapped off and the Bosch took care of the protection issue. If the hold breaks off, there will be a much harder finish, but at least it will be safe. I followed Eric, and discovered that a crucial reach to a layback (very like the final crux move on Entropy) was beyond my span. I ended up lunging to the hold, hitting it, and immediately leaning back onto it, which left everyone on the ground speechless. Of course, that move burned up any reserve energy I might have had, and pretty soon I was off in space, trying to rush through another sequence higher up. After a quick shake out on a bucket, I made the sequence, and gained the top. Rick followed with a few more falls. Karen decided that since a) it was dark, and b) that the route was pretty reachy, she would forego a prolonged assault. We all packed up and were able to make it back to the cars just before night fell.

A few words of interest about the New River. First, the Interstate is now complete all the way to Beckley, so you can drive the entire distance from D.C. to the New River on four lane highways, most of which are posted at 65 mph. The WV State Police are thick and heavy on Route 19--beware (and no, I haven't been caught speeding). Take I-66 West to I-81 South (at Strasburg) to I-64 West (at Lexington) to where it joins up temporarily with I-77 North (at Beckley). About five miles along the way, take Route 19 North toward Summerville. This will



bring you to the New River from the opposite direction than the old way.

Next, there was a confrontation at gun point between some climbers and somebody else about a month and a half ago. It appears to have been a one time thing, not anything to get upset about in terms of climbers versus locals, but watch your behavior--don't offend anyone. The climbers were camped down at the turn-off for Bubba City (a popular area to camp in, if you like red dog slag, trash, and general squalor).

Finally, the New had its first accident and rescue (no big deal, everyone will be fine once the leg heals). The point to remember is that parts of the New River are pretty easy to get to for climbing, but pretty difficult to get out of for rescue purposes. The local rescue squad is not trained in vertical rescue techniques, and if there was a serious accident, it would be tough to get someone out quickly. So just be careful. It's a great place to climb, most of the routes are really well protected, and falling doesn't have to be dangerous. Watch out for the occasional loose rock, place each piece of protection as if your life depended on it (it does), and try not to get into a situation that you can't get out of.

## **BELLEFONTE QUARRY PA OCTOBER 1-2**

Republicans will love this place. It has everything to make you want to jump up and say the pledge. Gun nuts freely roam the place and the sound of gunfire frequently breaks the quiet. The local environment has been completely trashed, apparently in the name of some economic progress. The disregard for ethical standards has led to new highs (lows) in route creation and rock destruction. The route

names reflect all the homophobia of a John Birch meeting. If you are constitutionally unwilling to put with such offenses you may not want to climb here.

Some people may climb because it affords them a chance to get away from it all and spend some time in quiet enjoyment of natural splendor. Those climbers will probably find Bellefonte a bit too corrupted for their taste. For the rest of you, a trip to Bellefonte is a must.

A hearty group (Ms's. Carter, Helfrich, and Hartley, and Messrs. Tamisier, Kaweck, Cunningham, Rayner and your editor) enjoyed a pleasant fall Saturday at the height of the Bellefonte foliage season. We focussed on the Bellefonte classics in the Upper Quarry, leading White Lightning (5.7), Dismal World Left (5.6), Left Hand Eliminate (5.7) Barney Rubble (5.7) Bitter End (5.9), El Crackitan (5.9+/5.10a), Coleman is a Faggot (5.10) and The Flake (5.10+). We found the guidebook (Bellefonte Climbing Guide, Jim Bowers, 1987) ratings for difficulty, quality and protection basically accurate. Among those routes, El Crackitan and Coleman are super classic crack climbs not usually found in these parts. Each is about 120 feet long and can consume an incredible amount of protection and energy. El Crackitan starts as a thin fingers crack and widens to hand sized at the top. Coleman starts as an incipient hairline crack and grows to finger size. Both have cruxes near the bottom and have plenty of rest points along the way. Coleman seemed a lot harder to me. The crux is a well protected boulder problem on small pockets. It also has a nasty finish unless you have very thin fingers. Don't top rope these routes. Even if you haven't led much at 5.9/5.10, give them a try on the sharp end.

Bellefonte Quarry is actually a group of eight or so inactive quarries. I only saw the Upper and Lower Quarries. Both appeared to be near vertical at the bottom, easing to 70-75 degrees at the top. The rock is limestone, with which I have very little familiarity. It seemed that the stuff is much worse for smearing than granite. It is very slick when wet. The guidebook says that it is too soft to hold Friends in even slightly flared cracks, but we had no problems.

Other rock notes: There are very few quality 5.8 climbs, much to the distress of our group. Many bolts lack hangers and must be threaded with a wired nut.

Rich and Sue camped at the KOA campground several miles away, just north of Route 80. The rest of us camped in the quarry. This is an easy option and is better for your car.

On Sunday, Ken Andrasko and Julie showed up just in time for the rain. Apparently some poor orienteering and campsite selection gave them a long evening the night before. Jacques and I did two easier routes on the Lower Quarry while Tom K., Madeleine, John and Jeanette went to the Leopard Wall. John did Take Heart (5.9) and Tom led Casual Stances (5.9). Both seemed rather runout for the protection ratings of "PG." The Leopard Wall is thin face climbing with strange chunks of white rock imbedded in the gray limestone. Ken, Kit and Julie stayed through the rain while the rest of us hit the restaurants.

Miscellaneous: The town of Bellefonte is rather quaint and has a decent restaurant selection. We had a good dinner at the Gamble Mill Tavern, located next to the Uni-Mart, just across the river from Route 144. Take the first right hand turn across the river as you take Route 144 back into town from the quarries. The lunch at Bonfattos in the middle of town was

passable.

Getting there: Bellefonte is four hours from downtown D.C., assuming good traffic. Take Route 22/322 northwest from Harrisburg PA. At Pointers Mill, about 10 miles before State College, take Route 144 north. Follow that all the way through the town of Bellefonte. You'll pass a "Jesus Saves" church on the right and a Penn State Sub Shop on the left. Take the dirt road on the right immediately after the Cerro Brass Works. (You can miss it, drive slowly on your way out of Bellefonte.) Take the lousy dirt road to its end and park. The cliffs are straight up the quarry.

The guidebook is very helpful and fairly funny. Most of us can lend you a copy.

Tom Isaacson

## UP ROPE WORD PROCESSOR NEEDED

Yup, we need to start looking for someone to take over the fun filled challenge of typing copy for UP ROPE each month. I'm having a ball doing it, and hate to give it up, but between the AAC Access Committee and being a Contributing Editor to Climbing magazine, I'd hate for UP ROPE to suffer. Anyone with a decent word processing package and laser printer who has a few hours each month please get in touch with Stuart Pregnall.

## DISCOUNT GEAR PURCHASE

The Mountaineering Section will organize another discount gear purchase from International Mountain Equipment of North Conway, N.H. this fall. IME will give us 15% off their catalog prices for an order of \$3,000 or more. Tom Kawecky will again coordinate this effort--call him at 202-767-6997 (w) or 703-237-7227 (h) if you are interested in participating.

## EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

Come one, come all. This is where the real work (and fun) takes place. If you want to say something about how the MS is run, get in touch with Jeanette Helfrich (301-585-9119) or Rich Cunningham (202-332-7931) and come to the next Executive Meeting.

## FOR SALE

Titanium ice screws, \$20 each. Call Jon Dunn, 301-462-1839 (h) or 202-293-7963 (w).

Red wind pants, full side zips, Woman's size Medium. Call Karen Pregnall, 202-543-3988.

Sierra Designs Glacier 2-person mountain tent, A-frame design, very stable--state of the art before domes, \$100. Call Stuart Pregnall, 202-543-3988.

## FILM FESTIVAL

Organization of the 1989 Washington Film Festival has begun. People interested in being involved with this important event should contact Madeleine Carter (202-362-5036) or Ken Andrasko (202-337-0498).

## CARDEROCK WORK TRIP

There will be a Carderock work trip Sunday, November 6th from 9 AM until we're finished. We'll be working on more stone walls, moving dirt, and generally getting the area ready for winter and next Spring's flooding.

Harold Goldstein will need some help organizing the trip. Please call Harold at 966-9091 if you can offer some time phoning people.

## PATC ANNUAL DINNER

The PATC's Annual Dinner Meeting will be held the evening of November 18th, 1988. This is always a good time to see what the parent club is doing. Check with Headquarters for details.



## UP ROPE

Oct 12	Monthly Meeting	Slide Show: Pacific Northwest by Stuart Rosenthal and Tom Kawecki	
Oct 15	Spitzbergen/Purple Horse	???	???
Oct 16	Crescent Rocks	Jeanette Helfrich	301-585-9119
Oct 20	FALL SLIDE SHOW	GLENN PORZAK: MAKALU	7:30 pm, Red Cross, D.C. Chapter, 2025 E Street, N.W. \$3 donation.
Oct 22	Ilchester (Ellicott City, MD)	Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931
Oct 23	Sugarloaf	Tom Russell	301-869-8058
Oct 22/23	Gunks**	Stuart Pregnall	202-543-3988
Oct 22/23	Seneca	Tom Kawecki	703-237-7227
Oct 29	Great Falls	???	???
Oct 30	Caudey's Castle	???	???
Nov 2	Executive Meeting	Szechuan Restaurant, 615 I St. NW	
		Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931
Nov 5	Great Falls	Tom Isaacson	202-332-3710
Nov 6	Bull Run	Ken Andrasko	202-337-0498
Nov 6	Carderock Work Trip	Harold Goldstein	202-966-9091
Nov 9	Monthly Meeting	Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931
Nov 12	Great Falls	Madeleine Carter	202-362-5036
Nov 13	Crescent Rock	Stuart Pregnall	202-543-3988
Nov 11/13	New River	Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931
Nov 19	Great Falls	Tom Kawecki	703-237-7227
Nov 20	Carderock Work Trip	Harold Goldstein	202-966-9091
Nov 24/27	Stone Mountain/Linville Gorge, North Carolina	???	???
Nov 26	Annapolis Rock	???	???
Nov 27	Great Falls	???	???
Dec 2/4	American Alpine Club Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA	Stuart Pregnall	202-543-3988
Dec 7	Executive Meeting	Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931
Dec 10	Great Falls	Tom Isaacson	202-332-3710
Dec 11	Sugarloaf	Tom Kawecki	703-237-7227
Dec 14	Monthly Meeting	Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931
Jan 14/15	Loch Haven, PA ICE!	Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931
Jan 28/29	Riegelsville, PA Ice	Jeanette Helfrich	301-585-9119
Feb 11/13	Loch Haven, PA Ice	Rich Cunningham	202-332-7931

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.



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