



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

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Film Festival Review

by Tom Isaacson

The Third Annual Washington Mountain Film Festival, held March 15, 1990, was the most successful of the three festivals held so far. Festival Chairman Jeffrey Levy and the many club members who assisted in various aspects of organizing and running the festival deserve much credit for a job well done.

I managed not to get deeply involved in planning the event. As a result, I had seen only one of the films prior. Seeing films for the first time on a movie screen is much more striking than pre-viewing them on the television set in my living room.

Despite some initial concerns regarding attendance, I am told that we sold about 340 tickets. Ticket sales probably would have been somewhat better had we not experienced the seemingly inevitable problems with publicity mailings by some of the retailer-supporters. I am not sure why this has been such a problem over the years, but some aspect of these mailings must be a lot more difficult than would appear to an outside observer. In

any event, the festival produced a small profit for the club. Making money is not the primary purpose of the film festival, but it is certainly a welcome source of additional revenue.

The five films shown represented a good balance among the various forms of climbing: one rock jock film, one big wall, one alpine trickster and two Himalayan films. The selection included one each from the United States and Germany and three from France -- representative of the distribution of mountain film efforts these days.

"The Sprinter of Everest" (1989), which opened the festival, showcased our special guest Marc Batard. Marc gave a brief introduction in French -- translated by PATC/MS member Anne Baron -- outlining the achievement that is the focus of this film. Marc's solo ascent of Mt. Everest via the South Col route in less than 24 hours is surely one of the more remarkable mountaineering accomplishments in recent years. The film, which was made on a very low budget, does not do complete justice to that accomplishment.

It begins with a close-up of Marc

and a brief narration reminiscent of the opening scene of the Superman television show. Whatever it may have lacked in style, the opening sequence at least is honest. This film lives or dies as a testimonial in praise of Marc's achievement. It is unabashedly self-promoting and, on those narrow terms, is a success. As an artistic statement beyond the bare historical documentation it is a disappointment.

After the obligatory scenes in Kathmandu and the stop at a shrine for a spiritual fill-up, Marc heads off to Everest base camp. There are a variety of people at base camp whose connection to Marc's climb is unclear.

Marc heads up the mountain and turns back just below the Hillary Step -- perhaps 15 minutes from the summit. After this return to base camp I assumed he had completed his effort and that the reference to his "ascent" of Everest was just a slight exaggeration. It did not occur to me that he would try again. The tension and surprise created by his second (and successful) attempt is the most dramatic portion of the film.

Because of the speed at which

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Marc climbed, there was no opportunity for a cameraman to film his ascent. The only "action" footage consists of his departures from and returns to base camp and some self-portraits filmed on the summit. The extensive coverage of Marc's sponsor -- Paris Match -- did not do much for me. Most people accept the fact that such climbs require some commercial sponsorship, but why highlight it?

The club was certainly honored by Marc's appearance both at the monthly PATC/MS meeting on Wednesday and at the film festival itself. His unassuming manner made him a popular attraction during an intermission question-and-answer session.

"The Dark Glow of the Mountain" is an hour-long interview and portrait of Reinhold Messner, one of the best mountaineers of our time and one of the sports' best self-promoters. I thoroughly enjoyed this film and found it much more engaging than the Chris Bonington portrait which was shown at the Second Festival. Whereas the Bonington film portrayed Chris as essentially the same person we've come to know through his many books, the Messner portrait had an emotional depth and range I have not found in Messner's books (not that I've read all of them).

The film includes a hilarious scene of Messner calmly answering the interviewer's questions while a sherpa gives him a vigorous and animated head massage. The film also takes us through a wrenching discussion of Messner's brother's death.

"Dark Glow" centers on Messner and Hans Kammerlander's tra-

verse of Gasherbrum I and II. This was a significant mountaineering achievement, but there was very little action footage of their successful climb. Our version of the film had already been translated, which was probably fortunate given the amount of dialogue -- or was it monologue? -- it contained.

"Seo" is another in a line of French films depicting the visit of some hot-shot to a foreign culture for a little climbing and showing off. The success of these films depends on both the artistry of the climbing and the cultural interaction. Of last year's film, "Nomads" failed on both counts and "Piliers" was very strong on the former and largely ignored the latter (though not the ladder). "Seo" was quite good in both respects.

Although most of the climbing in "Seo" didn't look any harder than 5.9, Catherine Destivelle added her own touches to make a more powerful artistic and athletic statement.

The climbing included a nice solo up a long vertical wall of buckets, a lead climb out a huge roof reminiscent of the Gunks and a solo traverse of an overhanging wall/crack which, to my cynical eye, looked all of four feet off the deck. Nevertheless, Catherine climbed with grace and power in her customary scanty attire. Like "E Pericoloso Sporgese", "Seo" went out of its way to show that male climbers, by contrast to the great Ms. Destivelle, are stupid, lazy and dirty, a point some people might find unnecessary.

Catherine's interaction with the locals was quite lighthearted, bordering on the disrespectful.

Her crew placed some totally unnecessary bolts on the cliffs, and she appeared to tread on an ancient burial ground. It is obviously difficult for any beautiful, rich French climber to visit Mali without seeming a tad condescending. On that score, Catherine didn't do too badly.

"Over the Edge" was a very pleasant surprise. It is a slightly disjointed look at an ascent of El Capitan somewhere near the Pacific Ocean Wall. The climbers maintained a spirited interaction throughout most of their climb. Randy Leavitt, an accomplished wall and free climber, played the role of the straight man while his partner (O.K., so I forget his name; I'm sorry, it was a long day) practiced his French lessons and bird calls. The best climbing scene consists of Leavitt's lead of the roof crack "Separate Reality", which is about three miles from El Capitan (at least it's in the same park) although the film made it seem halfway up El Cap.

Dave Schlutz's stunt fall off the top pitch ranks up there with Rick Sylvester's stunt in the James Bond film "For Your Eyes Only" in the annals of staged falls. I was gripped, and I had already seen the fall on an earlier viewing. The paraseil off the top of El Cap (it's illegal, by the way) added a fine finish to an endearing film.

"Trilogie Pour Un Homme Seul" depicts Christophe Profit's winter solo of the North Face of the Eiger, the Matterhorn and the Grand Jorasses in a day and a half. There was some spectacular footage of Profit galloping up two of those difficult faces. He did the Eiger at night, and there we are treated instead to a long

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falcon release project at the New has been successful over the past few years. Last summer, a subadult bird was spotted in the gorge. This year falcon watchers are hoping to see the falcon return (with a mate) and nest. If anyone sees what they think is a peregrine falcon (photos at the Visitor's Center), call the hotline: 304-636-1767 or 304-636-6487. If the falcons don't return this year, the falcon project will most likely release more chicks, so the hacking site at the Central Endless will be posted. Keep your eyes open!

We'll be back down again soon. Let us know if you're interested!

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR CLIMBERS

In response to a growing sense of frustration at inappropriate behavior among climbers, the AAC Access Committee and Mountain Tools have written a new brochure to be distributed around climbing areas. Climbing magazine has footed the bill to print 25,000 copies. The basic idea behind these so-called commandments is to try and minimize the environmental impact of our sport while retaining most of its current values and practices. In other words, they're a compromise.

For UP ROPE readers, here are the big ten:

1. Never disturb historically, archaeologically or environmentally sensitive areas.
2. Don't scar, chisel, glue holds onto, or otherwise deface the rock.
3. Don't place bolts near cracks or other natural protection.

4. Avoid using colored bolt hangers that contrast brightly with the rock.

5. Don't add fixed protection on established routes except to beef up questionable belay or rappel anchors.

6. Don't establish routes in heavy traffic areas such as campgrounds, or directly above public trails or roads

7. If you must leave slings at rappel stations or "back off" gear, use colors which blend in with the surrounding rock.

8. Don't throw anything -- rotten slings, trash, or even human waste -- off climbs; it's simple: everything you start up with comes off the climb with you, not before.

9. Accept responsibility even for the impact of other climbers on the mountain environment by removing rotten slings and garbage from climbs, bivvy areas and descent routes.

10. Know and follow local regulations on climbing and restrictions on bolting, motorized bolting and chalk. Then work to change unfair restrictions through the AAC Access Committee or local climber organizations.

Obviously, most of us will never face some of these commandments' edicts, but all of us can start carrying trash bags (yes, even to Great Falls and Carderock to pick up the idiotic touroid trash). Encourage (politely) other climbers to do so as well. Thanks.

Hueco Tanks

by Tom Halicki

In mid-March I allowed myself the luxury of a short trip to Hueco Tanks, in part to revisit the area since my initial trip

there in 1982, but equally to meet some Texas climbing friends. I was to meet an old friend and climbing partner, Jim Greene, at the El Paso airport. He was due to land within minutes of me, but the friendly skies being what they are, I arrived three hours late. Fortunately, so did he. Writing off any hope of climbing that day, we rented a car, shared our traditional bottle of scotch, cruised to the Tanks to get our campsite, then made it back to the airport to pick up two more friends.

Hueco tanks can be cold in the winter, as the next morning proved. Everyone was holding out to climb on the "front side", which harbors the two-pitch classic face climbs. But I didn't fly to Texas to climb in the shade on a cold morning, and insisted on sunny routes. So we compromised and headed to a sunny locale but for some reason climbed routes that were still in the shade. We did a few warm-up climbs, and then I led Creatures of the New Left (5.10) which, while somewhat easy for its grade, nonetheless required attention to protection. We also played on the imposing Biko Roof (5.12), which provided more humor than serious climbing. We finished the day with an easy 5.10- crack and headed for the campsite and illegal beer.

The next day brought us to the Pigs in Space buttress, the site of some great overhanging routes. I opted for the more vertical Pig Riders (5.10), which takes an aesthetic line up a corner of the buttress, and let someone else lead the strenuous Pigs to Pork (5.10). We also did King's Highway (an aesthetic 5.9) on the same buttress, then located After the Gold Rush in a narrow side canyon.

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With daylight running out, Jim and I left the others to the task of climbing while we strolled the park perimeter back to camp in a wonderful fading light.

The front side was unavoidable the next day. As you may have read in Rock and Ice, most of the Tanks' routes have been retro-bolted to make them safer playgrounds than Mike Head's original quarter-inch-bolt-lethal-run-out routes. As an example, our first route on the front was Window Pain (my favorite of this trip), whose current fourth clip used to be its first. We also did the classic Sea of Holes and All the Nasties. Sea of Holes was originally rated 5.10 but doesn't have a move over 5.8. However, it was notoriously unprotected and even with new bolts is still "sporting". The story I heard was that Head originally down-soloed this route "to see how far it would go". All the Nasties was also retro-bolted, but is still rated 5.10.

The next morning we headed for the Round Room, a hard-to-find room with walls of huecos. While it was an interesting phenomena, it seemed pointless to remain there long with such good climbing about. Since the grades had seemed relatively easy so far, we girded our loins and headed for 5.11 territory.

Shortly after having found it, as well as what may be the only quarter-inch bolt left in the park (which I refused to fall on, clip, or even lower off of), we whimpered back to the front side, duly put in our place, and climbed Malice in Bucketland and Hueco Syndrome. Malice used to be 5.10x but is now an elegant and well-protected 5.9+. It finishes on the equally elegant Busted

(5.9), the only route on which Head was caught bolting.

We were scheduled to fly home the following afternoon, giving us time to do one more route. I took some University of Houston climbers up Cakewalk Direct (5.10-), yet another superb route featuring the usual line of huecos leading through overhanging bulges. Then it was time to pack and catch the red-eye back to D.C. Even though I had climbed it before, I was disappointed this trip hadn't included Indecent Exposure, which is surely one of the nicest 5.9s in the world.

We had only one run-in with the infamous Ranger Bob, who stopped by our campsite that final day to point to the beer bottles on our table and remind us that alcohol wasn't allowed. It seems Ranger Bob has mellowed since days gone by, like the time he kicked one of our party, Rob, out of the park on a previous visit. Apparently when Rob was stopped for going 5mph over the speed limit, he made the mistake of getting out of the car clutching a beer.

If you want a winter trip, try the Tanks. It's a great high desert environment and unlike any other area in the United States.

SPRINGSTONE 1990

This year's Springstone climbing competition will be a much larger event than last year's. A two-day event is planned for June 9th and 10th at REI's College Park location. In the absence of any cohesive community effort, REI has taken the lead in organizing the event, so it reflects REI's thinking (and

marketing focus) more than anyone else's. REI has asked other climbing shops, as well as manufacturers, to participate.

Locals Larry Geib, Steve Jones, Rod Hansen and Doug Cosby are all involved in the planning and construction of the event. Mark Nelson, of REI, has taken on the awesome responsibility (and headache) of trying to fill John Bremer's "Event Director" shoes from last year.

There will be four categories for climbers: elite and recreational classes for men and women. The entrance fee is \$35, and applications are available through any REI store or by calling 1-800-426-4840. The entry deadline is May 20th. The preliminaries will be held on Saturday, and finals on Sunday. A 60-foot wall is planned, complete with "features" to make it interesting.

If you don't feel up to climbing (though you should -- it's going to be FUN, especially in the recreational categories), REI needs wall and ground judges as well as a handful of belayers. If you're interested in volunteering, get in touch with Mark Nelson at REI (tel. 301-982-9681).

Miscellaneous

The park police appear to be aggressively checking cars in the Great Falls parking lot for invalid tags, etc. Some cars already have been ticketed. If you plan to climb at Great Falls, make sure your car's affairs are in order... Trivia time. In its 35-year history, Sports Illustrated has featured three climbers on its cover. A free Up Rope subscription goes to the first member who can name them all... Sue Hartley has returned to Washington after a

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six-month absence. It's good to regain one of our lost members... Jeanett Helfrich and Clair Ganz are now busy climbing in Nepal. We wish them luck for a safe return... The camping area at Seneca has now been built, complete with showers. We've come a long way from the days of Roy Gap Road camping... The Arts & Entertainment Channel on cable TV (Channel 27 in the District) has been showing climbing movies on its "Living Dangerously" program. They recently showed "Granite and Bamboo" and "Cloudwalker". The former is about Isabelle Patissier's climbs in France and on Hong Kong scaffolding. The latter is ostensibly about Jeff Lowe's and Mark Wilford's attempt at a new route on Broken Tooth. Since they didn't get far on it, most of the film is about base camp life and their earlier ascent of the Naked Edge.

Quick Draw Warnings

Tests by J.-F. Charlet have shown an alarmingly rapid loss of strength in quickdraws. After three seasons of use, their breaking strength had fallen by 60 percent, from 2200kg to 950kg.

The tests were carried out on 15 or so samples of all brands, none of which had sustained a previous fall. Neither material aging nor poor quality were to blame for the poor results. Rather, there were two causes: the initial strength tests were defective, and the shape of quickdraws is poorly thought out.

The initial UIAA tests were carried out by suspending a quickdraw between two parallel 10mm diameter rods, so that the

force was spread evenly across the cross-section of the quickdraw. But in use, a quickdraw is usually attached to two D-shaped carabiners, so that the force is greater on one side of the quickdraw than the other. When new quickdraws were tested between two carabiners, they were 25 to 30 percent weaker than their rated strength, depending on the orientation of the carabiners. If the gates were on opposite sides, the quickdraw lost 25 percent of its strength; if the gates were on the same side, it lost 30 percent. In other words, if the gates are on the same side of the quickdraw, a quickdraw rated 2200kg can fail at a force of 1500kg.

This effect is compounded when quickdraws are fallen on, as one side suffers more force than the other and the quickdraw weakens with increasing rapidity.

Until quickdraws are reshaped by the manufacturers (for both of the above cases, and perhaps for each brand of carabiner!), climbers are advised to:

- replace quickdraws about every two years;
- do without the advantages of quick draws (rigidity, placement of carabiners) and use rope slings instead.

Another problem has surfaced with quickdraws which have relatively tight loops. Motion of the climbing rope can cause the quickdraw to walk up the long side of the carabiner, notably towards the trigger. In such a position, if the loop is relatively tight, during a fall the quickdraw does not return to the bottom of the carabiner but angles away from it, causing great stress on it. In the extreme case, the quickdraw can slip along the trigger,

open the carabiner and escape from it. At least one accident of this type is known to have happened.

There are two suggestions to remedy this:

- one manufacturer proposes using a rubber band to keep the quickdraw in place;
- you can also substitute rope slings, sewn slings or less rigid quickdraws with larger loops.

Ice Screws

The UIAA safety committee conducted tests on commercially available ice screws. All tubular and semi-tubular ice screws, both screw-in and hammer-in (e.g., Snargs), were stronger than 1000kg and durable. None of the solid ice screws (e.g., Warthogs, corkscrews) was stronger than 600kg. Therefore, solid ice screws should be used only secondarily to a tubular ice screw at an intermediate belay point.

A reminder: the UIAA-suggested placement of ice screws for a belay has two screws placed 60cm to 80cm apart vertically, offset horizontally by about 10cm. The screws should be placed about 10 degrees uphill from normal. A Snarg-type ice piton can be placed rapidly as the upper piton.

Reports from "La Montagne", No. 3, 1989

by Charlie Dorian

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Cathedral Crank

by Tom Halicki

The 1990 Cathedral Crank came off as planned on April 7th, providing climbers with a pleasant transition to the spring season. In fact, the Crank was a real hoot and could foreshadow a trend toward informal competitions.

The event was held in St. Alban High School's basketball facility. There were six climbs -- two traverses (5.9 and 5.11) and four top-rope problems, ranging from 5.8 to 5.11. Each competitor was required to climb four routes, with one traverse mandatory. Points were assigned for each climb completed, varying from 80 for the 5.8 to 110 for the 5.11. A 20-point bonus was given for completing the route and points also were awarded for partial completion of a route. Competing involved some strategy, with all but the best climbers having to decide whether to climb within their limits and get sure points, or going for it. The hard guys just did the routes as a matter of routine.

The competition was not overly intense, as evidenced by the fact that this competitor took third in the Men's Recreational category despite his (typical) lackluster performance. Only 41 of the hoped for 50 competitors showed up, and I was the only PATC/MS member. Despite the attendance, the performances put in by the contestants were exciting to watch and the crowd, such as it was, was supportive and vocally appreciative. This was in no small part due to the presence of high school competitors and spectators, which I think made the event less competitive and more friendly.

The routes were quite fun. The traverses were actually one problem, a brick wall 50 to 60 feet high with glued-on natural holds. It was rated 5.9 done right to left and 5.11 done the reverse with some holds marked out of bounds. There were four permanent top-rope routes located on a wall in a corner of the gym made of plywood with modular holds. The left-most featured a short but sharp overhang followed by a "less than vertical" wall. The others were, in order, a simple vertical wall, a slight overhang followed by a vertical wall, and a vertical wall capped by a big roof that sloped off above. Holds were placed to make routes rated, from left to right, 5.8, 5.9, 5.11 and 5.10.

Competitors had six hours to complete their four routes, ample time to get the beta from those willing to throw themselves into the breach early on. And while shouting beta to a climber was not allowed, most climbers knew what the crux moves were before they left the ground, and that it was a question of not just 5.10 and 5.11 but 10d and 11c/d.

The top performance of the day was put in by Brian Kelleher, a 16 year-old who flashed all the routes and the reputedly 12a superfinal. He exhibited incredible form and technique for someone who has not been climbing very long. The mens' Junior competitors were impressive in general.

The results:

<u>Elite Men</u>	<u>Points</u>
Michael Taylor	490
Steve Jones	478
Adam Erlich	423

<u>Elite Women</u>	<u>Points</u>
Deb Orth	406

<u>Recreational Men</u>	<u>Points</u>
Michael Precure	450
Travis Jones	412
Tom Halicki	400

<u>Recreational Women</u>	<u>Points</u>
Bonnie Classen	325
Debra Wortham	311
Gale Richards	290

<u>Junior Men</u>	<u>Points</u>
Brian Kelleher	490
Collin Sellar	470
Oayk Gigebkije	467

<u>Junior Women</u>	<u>Points</u>
Nicole DiLucio	297
Ricky Walters	259

ICE CLIMBING TOUR, JANUARY 13-15, 1990

by L.D.M.

After a cold December, hopes were high for good ice on the Club's first ice climbing trip of 1990. In view of the opportunity provided by a three-day weekend, it was voted to scrap the original destination of Riegelsville. Instead, it was decided to make a tour of some of the more interesting sounding and unknown ice climbs described in Mike Pantelich's recent "Climbers' Guide to Ice In and Around Eastern Pennsylvania". What evolved was a meandering trip more or less due north from Harrisburg up to the Finger Lakes area and back.

The crampons made contact in Shikellamy State Park at Northumberland, Angel Falls near Hillsgrove, and at Montour Falls near Watkins Glen (not to

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MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club,
1718 N Street N.W.» Washington, D.C. 20036

CLIMBERS' CALENDER

Date	Area or event	Person to contact	Phone	Place
May 5-6*	New River Gorge, VA	Jeanette Helfrich	585-9119	TBA
May 9	Monthly Meeting	John Yanson	667-4334	HQ
May 12	Great Falls, VA	Dusty Wissmath	585-7610	GF
May 13	Annapolis Rocks, VA	John Yanson	667-4334	RR
May 20	Great Falls, VA	Don Holtzer	656-4076	GF
May 26-28**	Gunks, New Platz, NY	John Yanson	667-4334	TBA
June 9	SPRINGSTONE	Stuart Pregnall	543-3988	REI
June 17	Bull Run, VA	Jeffrey Levy	527-8331	AO
June 18	Great Falls, VA	Dusty Wissmath	585-7610	GF
June 25	Carderrock, MD	Jeff Kramer	532-3247	CD
June 26	Camp Lewis, MD	Tom Kaweck	767-6997	TBA

* **These trips are to lead climbing areas.** Please arrange for your own partners. The trip leaders can help with arranging rides and other logistics.

Note: Please call trip leaders in mid-week to make arrangements and contingency plans. In the absence of published trip leaders, call John Yanson, 667-4334; Jeffrey Levy, 527-8331; Ron Sitrin, 890-5243; or Dusty Wissmath, 585-7610.

****MEETING PLACES FOR CLIMBING TRIPS:****TBA = To Be Announced**

REI = Recreational Equipment Inc., 9801 Rhode Island Ave., College Park, MD. **DIR:** Exit I-495 at exit Rt. 1 south; immediate L. at light onto Edgemoor; R. at 4 - way stop on Rhode Island Ave.; L. into parking lot.

RR= Roy Rogers Restaurant, 465 N. Fredrick Rd. Gaithersburg, MD. **DIR:** Exit I-270 at exit Rt. 123 E. (Montgomery Village Ave.) ; R. on Rt. 355 S. (Fredrick Rd.) ; L. at second light.

TC= Tysons Corner, Hardee's Restaurant and Central Fidelity Bank Parking Lot, 8111 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA. **DIR:** Exit I-495 at Rt. 7 W. (Tysons Corners) ; L. at second light.

AO= Appalachian Outfitters, 2930 Chain Bridge Rd., Oakton, VA. **DIR:** Exit I-66 at exit 16 (Rt. 123 N.) L. just past the forth light (AO is on the left) into the bank parking lot.

GF= Great Falls National Park, 9200 Old Dominion Dr., Great Falls, VA. **DIR:** Exit I-495 at exit 13 (Rt. 193/ Great Falls) ; W. on Georgetown Pike about 4 miles; R. at light into park; hard right past ranger's booth into lower parking lot, see notes on car windshield for specific climbing area.

CD= Carderock Park, Potomac, MD. **DIR:** Exit I-495 at exit 41 (Carderock exit) ; W. on G-W Parkway about 1/2 mile; exit R. at Carderock exit ; L. across parkway ; R. at stop sign to last (third) parking lot..

HQ= Headquarters of PATC/MDS, 1718 N Street, N.W. , Washington, D.C. **DIR:** 1 block east on Conn. Ave. near DuPont Circle Metro Stop (Red Line).



1718 N Street, N.W.,
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