

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

Vol 44 no.6

December 1990

COLUMBUS DAY AT THE 'GUNKS

by Jeanette Helfrich, Trip Leader

You've heard a lot about 'Gunks weekends in recent issues of "Up-Rope", but this had to be one of the best ever. Although the climbs and the AMC campground were crowded, the pumpkins were on the vine, apples hung in the orchard, and the weather was the best I've ever seen at the 'Gunks. Most of us met at Bacchus on Saturday night for dinner, but otherwise we dispersed to climb up a storm. Climbers included Tom Haliki, Tom Kawecki, Doug Dupuie, Ali Abrishami, Subhash Lele, Steve from Gaithersburg, Mila Schwartz, Robert Molzon, Antoine Brezin and friend from NIH, Robert Fenichel and wife, Parker Hill, Gary Roan, John Rayner, and yours truly. Climbs scaled included Never-Never Land, Triangle, Son of Easy O, Modern Times, Directissima, Laurel, On Any Monday, Sente, Thin Slabs, Hi! Coroner, Hawk, and many others.

When you've done all the classics or waited too long for them, try climbing at the far end of the Trapps down by the Spring and Sleepy Hollow for lots of good,

uncrowded climbs. John Rayner and I recommend:

Airy Aria** (5.8)
Double Crack** (5.8)
The Nose (5.8+)
Fillipina (5.9-)
Bold-Ville II (5.8)
The Spring*** (5.10, corner)
The Winter** (5.11-)
The Fall (5.11-)
Four Seasons (5.10)
Blistered Toe (5.8)
Simple Suff*** (5.10-, corner)
Coprophagia (5.10-, face)
Wasp ** (5.9-)
Casablanca* (5.8, overhang)
All Thumbs (5.8, arete variation) and many more. Don't miss two great 5.10 climbs -- Vegetables and Tennish Anyone? -- on which you can easily set up a top-rope from a scramble on the left side. The guidebook states that Vegetables would be the most frequently climbed climb at the 'Gunks if it were at the Uberfall, and we believe it. It has a hard boulder start followed by continuously intricate crack and face moves capped off by a strenuous triple overhang that will take good pro.

FILM FESTIVAL TO BE HELD March 24

For the fourth wonderful year, the MS will present a film festival of the most current rock climbing and mountaineering films. This year we are moving the festival to a Sunday and expanding the screenings to both an afternoon and an evening program, doubling the number of films shown. A reception will be held at some point during the day. The festival will be held on March 24 in the Lisner Auditorium at George Washington University, Washington, D.C., at the G.W. Metro station on the Blue/Orange Lines. Tickets will be available for each flight of films separately, or combined for a lower price. The exact schedule and ticket prices of the festival and reception have not yet been established.

Jeffrey Levy will head the film festival steering committee again this year. Important positions on the committee are still open, and we welcome your efforts for every phase of staging the festival. To volunteer, or for more information, call Jeffrey Levy,

703-527-8331 home, 202-934-3889 office, or John Yanson, 202-667-4334 home. It's not too early to mark Sunday, March 24 on your calendar and tell your friends about it. The auditorium seats over 900 people; let's fill it up!

CHIMNEY ROCKS IN CATOCTIN STATE PARK

by Jeanette Helfrich

With its moderate to hard, short face climbs, Chimney Rocks in the Catoctin State Park may become a regular destination for the club. The climbs are on a series of broken 20 to 30 foot boulders somewhat below the Chimney Rocks proper at the summit. On the club trip on October 14, we set up at least 10 climbs in the 5.9 to 5.10 range on vertical and overhanging faces of quartz and other rock. Some of the climbs face South, but others are in inner chambers which could be chilly in winter.

Special thanks to Doug Dupuie, who has raised the standards of trip leadership to a new level -- he cleaned and brushed all the lichen off the climbs the day before a previous trip. Climbers included Tom Isaacson (whose ailing finger was not aided by the fingery climbs), Elizabeth Erskine, Stuart and Duncan Pregnall, James Eakin, Robert Molzon, Michael Mergj, Bill Hieronymous and friends from REI, John Rayner and yours truly. For dinner, we enjoyed Cincinnati and Texas chili at the Hard Times Cafe in Rockville.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF ANNAPURNA AND THE 8,000 METER DECADE

by Andrew John Kaufman

Once upon a time my late sister, who had a love-hate relationship with her favorite foreign country, France, and who on her death bed opted for burial in Neuilly (a Paris suburb) rather than America, told me that while the French have faults, putting on a good show was not one of them. Years of residence in France confirmed those words, but until last June I never appreciated the perfection with which Frenchmen can celebrate an occasion, especially one dear to my heart.

It started, I believe, as a modest effort to observe the 40th anniversary of the ascent of Annapurna, the first 8,000-meter peak ever to be scaled. It evolved rapidly into an invitation to bring together for the first and, I fear, last time, all the surviving summits of the world's 8,000-meter peaks, who in the 14 years from 1950 to 1964 had first trod the highest points on earth. Then came a final effort: to include, likewise, a large number of younger -- and no doubt superior -- men and women who in later years distinguished themselves in Himalayan expeditionary mountaineering, and raised standards to levels never dreamed of earlier.

This was not a gathering of rock climbers, ice specialists or other technicians. Rather, the vast majority of those present consisted of generalized mountaineers, seekers of achievement and adventure, who put to best use modest technical skills to attain their objectives, but whose devotion to hard work, perseverance and sheer willpower is

legendary.

There is no way to express one's gratitude to the French hosts who organized this affair. Somehow they managed to recreate the spirit and atmosphere which decades earlier had motivated people of a dozen or more nationalities, and these hosts thereby provided an opportunity for us all to revive the great adventures of our lives.

As we all know from Maurice Herzog's adventure story, Annapurna was the last major mountain adventure that combined alpinism with exploration into geographically unknown territory. It has its predecessors, notably the 1932 American ascent of Minya Konka (now Gongga-Shan), but after 1950 the world became too well known for any successor. Even if humans later climbed higher, they travelled into what was mostly mapped territory. Annapurna, by no means the first effort in Himalayan climbing, represented, however, the turning point for mountaineers in their efforts to reach summits of 8,000 meters or over. And thus it opened a new era.

No location for the gathering could have been better than Chamonix. The town sits at the foot of the Alps' highest mountain. Many participants in the festival, this writer included, received their early training among the difficult and often dangerous mountains of the area. Organizers and guests alike read like a Who's Who of mountaineering, even if many were greybeards. I shall not name them, as the list is long -- there are 14 major summits that surpass 8,000 meters, and at least one first-ascender for all but two of these

attended the festivities, with two exceptions: Nanga Parbat, reached solo by Herman Buhl, long since deceased; and Shishi Pangma, because the Chinese government, for arcane reasons, denied passports to the two summiters who had received invitations.

The festivities had a series of high points, but all of us surely agreed that our true altitude record was not merely mental, but physical as well. Somewhat to our dismay, the organizing committee had set aside the better part of a day for an ascent by cable car to just below the top of the Aiguille du Midi, well above 12,000 feet. There we had to descend an exposed (super-exposed for those who haven't been on steep slopes in several years) ridge to reach the famous Vallee Blanche (White Valley) from which, in theory, we should all race up the 13,900-foot Mont Blanc du Tacul. Weather was bearable, with scattered clouds and occasional mist, but, luckily for us all, snow conditions, typical of June, were abominable. Few if any, even from the younger generation, thought it worthwhile to climb within shouting distance of the Tacul's summit. The wiser and greyer heads opted to stumble down the ridge and at the same time issue words of encouragement to anyone within hearing. Most decided photography represented a better pastime than strenuous exertion.

But this was just where I wanted to be: down in front on a three-man rope, headed for the Vallee Blanche. Next behind me was 84-year-old Andre Roch, a grand old man of the Alps and Himalayas, and surely the outstanding mountaineer of his time.

Last came our anchor-man, speed climber Marc Batard, patiently following as we descended the ridge. Some 200 feet below our starting point we reached a snow platform where 20 or 30 stars of yesteryear and a sprinkling of moderns had come to a grinding halt. All climbing ceased, and the outing turned into prolonged mutual-admiration dialogue.

What an experience! Here was I on what I have long considered hallowed ground, at the very spot where I had last stood more than 20 years earlier; but now I shared a rope with a legendary figure who long before my time had selected the route that, years later, would lead us to Hidden Peak's summit. Behind him came a wizard of modern Alpine and Himalayan mountaineering, and on all sides stood a collection of the world's most famous amateur climbers and Alpine guides. Never before in my life have I felt so safe in the mountains. Should I slip, I had dozens of the most experienced mountaineers anywhere ready to check me; and, if I fell ill, there was the charming physician, Christine Janin, to cure me.

If the Aiguille du Midi was a physical and mental highlight, something else emerged from those glorious days that remains even more strongly engraved in my memory. Everywhere we went in Chamonix during our four-day stay we found ourselves surrounded by the world's outstanding climbers of their time and many of today's. Properly we might have expected displays of superiority, snobbery, even competition. Nothing of the kind! Whatever our achievements or limitations, we stood together as peers under the

sun. We had long since done our "thing": there was no need to crow. At one time or another we had shared the same feelings, the same perils, the same triumphs and defeats, above all the same adventures which had enriched us all. Here at last we were all united in our common love for the mountains, where we had spent the happiest days of our lives.

REI WALL OPEN TO PUBLIC

REI at Bailey's Crossroads has opened an artificial climbing wall for public use on Thursday and Friday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., and Saturday mornings from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. REI staffers will belay you, but you may use your own shoes and harness. You might consider calling REI first, at (301) 379-9400, to make a reservation, since there is room for only eight climbers at a time. The store is located at 3509 Carlin Springs Road, Bailey's Crossroads, VA, 22041. For further details, call Mark Nelson, REI's Public Outreach Director, at (301) 379-9400

YOSEMITE 1990

by Tom Isaacson

Pulling into the Upper Pines Campground at 12:30 a.m., I began to wonder whether taking a "long weekend" trip to Yosemite was such a good idea. Putting in a full day at the office, then flying across the country and driving across California can have that effect. I knew that Yosemite would be scorching in late July. However, a break in the work schedule and some enthusiastic prompting from Tom Kawecki got me out there, reservations and all.

The next day we got up and down Nutcracker's five easy pitches before the heat really set in. Then we drifted over to The Apron, where I found mixed success and failure. I added significantly to the number of falls held by the already-rickety bolts on Green Dragon (5.11b). Tom managed to find a lichen-covered 5.10 horror amidst one of the finest pieces of clean granite in the world. To his credit, he led it with a minimum of protection and whimpering.

I graciously agreed to accompany Tom on a long route the following day. Long rock routes can combine the best of cragging and mountaineering. More likely, however, they involve lots of rope handling, hanging belays, dehydration, aggravation, weather-watching, watch-checking, pack-wearing and assorted other impositions, all for the sake of a couple of good pitches of rock climbing. It's similar to low-budget mountaineering, without the glory. There is, however, something vaguely rewarding about climbing a feature that can be seen from more than 100 feet

away from the cliff.

Doing a route directly across the valley from El Capitan will never give you a great sense of achievement. Instead, we chose the East Buttress of Middle Cathedral because it came highly recommended and because some statistical principle told me that at least one of the "50 Classic Climbs" was bound to include some quality rock climbing.

I had been taking lots of Advil for some tendon problems, and had earlier mistaken that drug's stomach-wrenching side effects for dehydration. As a result, I decided to carry vast quantities of water on the East Butt. Maybe the climbing isn't so hard, but somehow the effects of carrying a full rack, double ropes, sneakers, food, rain gear, a camera and two liters of water up endless pitches of lay-backing and hard corners began to tax me. I half-heartedly tried to free-climb the 5.10c bolt ladder but soon discovered I lacked the stealth, stamina, fingers or inclination to succeed. My attempt did, however, serve as an excellent excuse to burden Mr. Kawecki with much of my load for that pitch. By-passing that crux still leaves more than 1,000 feet of fairly sustained climbing. I dropped my camera off the first rappel and complained a fair amount during the lengthy downclimb through the awesome (and ugly) gully between Middle and Higher Cathedral.

You may -- but probably don't -- want to do the East Butt of Middle Cathedral. It is deservedly considered a classic route of its type. It is a far superior outing to Royal Arches. I offer a few suggestions. First, we

encountered no loose rock, so you may want to reconsider the guidebook's admonition regarding helmets on this route. Since it was 95 degrees when we climbed, I really did not give the matter much thought. Second, on both the hike up to, and then off of, the East Butt, if you have any doubt -- keep going. The route starts quite high up the shoulder and ends well below the Kat Walk. Follow the cairns through the Kat Walk; they lead away from you, not toward you. This may seem obvious to you, sitting in your living room. Up on the cliff it just did not seem possible -- or so we wanted to believe -- that you had to hike that far up the Kat Walk just to reach the downclimb. Finally, leave lots of time for the descent; it is long and tricky, and requires two to four rappels.

We escaped the Yosemite heat on the third day by relocating to the cooler Tuolumne Meadows. After the previous day's exertions, we took an easier day, doing three climbs of two to three pitches each: Truck'n Drive (5.9), Needle Spoon (5.10) and Darth Vader's Revenge (5.10). Needle Spoon involves sustained smearing and cranking on tiny knobs on Pyniak's low-angle West face -- a Tuolumne classic. Your calves will give out long before your fingers. All of the 5.9 and 5.10 sections are well bolted but there is a long, unprotected 5.8 section atop the third pitch. Warning: ignore the guidebook's suggestion to downclimb Pyniak's Southwest face -- it is deadly. Rapping the Dike Route is much safer. Darth Vader's has been rebolted and offers outstanding climbing on clean, vertical knobs.

On the fourth day we returned to another "50 Classic" -- the North face of Fairview Dome. Because of the prevalent pattern of afternoon thunderstorms we wanted to get an early start so as not to get caught on this exposed 1,000-foot face. Rapping this route would be an expensive nightmare. At dawn a few clouds were already gathering -- usually a sign of trouble brewing. I gave Tom every opportunity to back down but he wanted to forge ahead. Since, as my climbing partners will uniformly attest, I am a disgustingly early riser, I earned the first lead, the crux 5.9 double cracks that are always wet. It's not an easy way to start the day, but at least it's not mountaineering. The rest of the route went easily. We travelled very light and made the summit before noon. As expected, an enormous bank of thunderstorms moved in, but missed us by a few miles to the North. We both napped on the summit and sauntered down the easy descent.

On the last day we quickly knocked off part of Sweet Jesus (5.9 r/x) and The Coming (a gift 5.10) and drove back to San Francisco. After four-and-a-half days of climbing 41 pitches, I still wondered whether this had been a good idea.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKS CANDIDATES

The annual election of officers will be held at the annual meeting on Wednesday, January 9, 1991. The Committee is soliciting your suggestions for members to nominate to be officers in 1991. The following tentative slate of officers has been nominated by the committee: Dusty Wissmath, Chairperson; Jeff Kramer, Vice Chairperson; Pete Hsi, Secretary; and Ron Sitrin, Treasurer. If you would like to suggest someone, or volunteer your own services, call a member of the Nominating Committee, who will be happy to hear from you: Tom Isaacson, 202-332-3710 home, 202-383-6558 office; Jeffrey Levy, 703-527-8331 home, 202-934-3889 office; John Yanson, 202-667-4334 home, 202-347-1511 office; or Jeanette Helfrich, 301-585-9119 home, 202-586-5267 office.



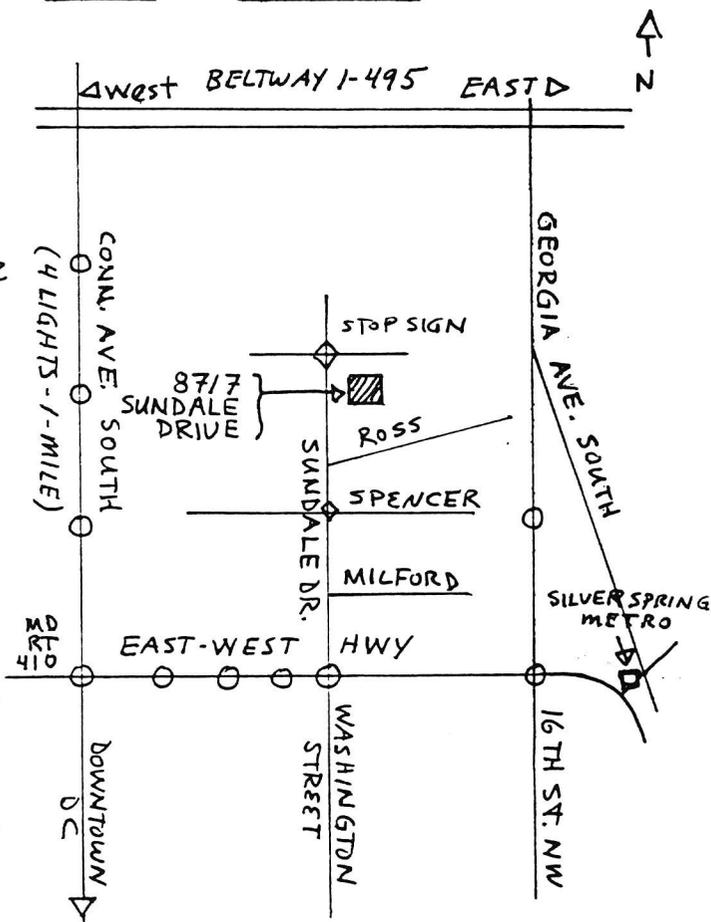
CLIMBERS HOLIDAY PARTY

You're Invited!
 Friday, December 14, 1990
 8:00 PM

bring a Friend
 (non-camming)
 or Spouse

DANCING ~ FOOD ~ DRINK

- sponsored by the Mountaineering Section of PATC
- at the home of Jeanette Helfrich & John Rayner
 8717 Sundale Drive
 Silver Spring, MD
- DRESS: Formal Lycra
- Please bring a Holiday Dish to share
- R.S.V.P. Jeanette or John
 301-585-9119 - home
 202-586-5267 - Jeanette office



MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

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

CLIMBERS' CALENDER

Date	Area or event	Contact	Phone	Place
Dec 2	The Bulges (Great Falls, MD)	John Yanson	202-667-4334	TBA
Dec 4	Rockville Wall, 7-10 PM			RCC
Dec 5	Excutive Committe Meeting	John Yanson	202-667-4334	TBA
Dec 9*	?! Mystery Tripnb !?	Stuart Pregnall	202-543-3988	TBA
Dec 12	Monthly Meeting	John Yanson	202-667-4334	HQ
Program: Jeanette Helfrich - Climbing in the Langtang Region of Nepal				
Dec 13**	Rockville Wall, 7-10 PM			RCC
Dec 16	Cresent Rocks	John Yanson	202-667-4334	TC
Dec 23	Cresent Rocks	Jeff Kramer	703-532-3247	TC
Dec 30	Carderock	Jeff Kramer	703-532-3247	CD
Jan 2	Excutive Committe Meeting	John Yanson	202-667-4334	HQ
Jan 6	IllchesterMD (afternoon trip)	Stuart Pregnall	202-543-3988	TBA
Jan 9	Monthly and Annual Meeting	John Yanson	202-667-4334	
1991 Officer Elections				
Program: Tim Hood - McKinley climbing slideshow				
Jan 12	Cresent Rocks	Tim Hood	703-830-3919	TC
Jan 19-21*	Rieglesville, PA or Adirondacks, NY (Ice)	Carter Mackley	703-892-4153	TBA
Feb 2-3*	Rieglesville, PA (Ice)	Jeanette Helfrich	301-585-9119	TBA
Feb 6	Excutive Committe Meeting	TBA		TBA
Feb 10*	?! Mystery Trip !?	Stuart Pregnall	202-543-3988	TBA
Feb 16-18*	North Conway, NH (Ice)	Tim Hood	703-830-3919	TBA
Feb 23-	Joshua Tree, CA	Matt Morley	703-533-7221	TBA
Mar 2*				
Future Events:				
Mar 24	4th Annual Washington Mountain Film Festival	Jeffery Levy	703-527-8331	
April ?	Moab, Utah	Stuart Pregnall	202-543-3988	

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

** As of November 14, PATC/ MS sessions on the Rockville Wall have been scheduled only through December 13, 1990. Stay tuned for more sessions in late December and/ or early 1991.

Note: Please call trip leaders in mid-week to make arrangements and contingency plans. In the absence of published trip leaders, call John Yanson (202-667-4334), Jeffrey Levy (202-527-8331), or Matt Morley (703-533-7221). If you have questions about scheduled or unscheduled events, call Matt Morley.

****MEETING PLACES FOR PATC/ MS TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES**

TBA = To Be Announced

RCC= Rockville Community Center, recreation building. By car, take I-270 north to exit 6A. Take Rt. 28 east (W. Montgomery Rd.) for 10 lights (don't miss the left turn off Viers Mill Rd.). Turn right onto Baltimore Edmonston Drive (an old mansion on the hill). Go up the hill, keeping the mansion on your right, then down the hill to the recreation building on your left. Alternatively, take the Red Line to the Rockville Metro Station, then walk east on Viers Mill Rd. to Edmonston Dr. (a 25 minute walk).

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.

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



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