



FOUNDED BY
JAN AND HERB CONN

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

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The Mountaineer's Tale

A vision dark upon my mind
But slowly comes to life so clear,
Reminding me of days unkind,
Spent living as a mountaineer.

Of many climbs it could be shown
I've held my ground as death rode near.
But those events will go unknown
By any other mountaineer.

Within these lines I'll briefly tell
A single tale of pain and fear,
One great ascent through wintry hell,
The triumph of this mountaineer.

I. A Higher Calling

Exalted blood of climbers past,
With spirits born to pioneer,
Traditions strong and nobly cast
Are pulsing through this mountaineer.

A vintage line of gentlemen —
And not some horde of gadgeteers,
Whose battles with that wretched Ken
Annoy us peaceful mountaineers.

That fetid cur who plucks their bolts,
As Gollum would his pimply rear,
They pray Ken gets a million volts
Or else becomes a mountaineer.

Their ethics feuds are grist for fools.
I gladly pull and step on gear
And love a climb which has no rules
Confining any mountaineer.

The bars at which their bods are built
Serve salad greens instead of beer.
Along this climb they'd quickly wilt,
Unlike a mighty mountaineer.

No lycra e'er these legs have clad.
The boastful touch of bayadere
And pomp of that obnoxious fad
Ill suits a stoic mountaineer.

I contemplate the heights sublime
Across another hemisphere.
The Gunks, The New and Utah lime
Are practice for this mountaineer.

The mountains boldly summon you
Away from young rock engineers
Whose chisels, glue and beta spew
Are worthless to us mountaineers.

II. Getting Started

We organize a peerless team
With only those whose sole career
Devoted to the routes supreme
And passions of a mountaineer.

A sponsor must support our goal;
And you can be our financier.
Ten grand will keep us off the dole
And underwrite a mountaineer.

A virgin peak receives our nod,
My patrons want a route premier.
For money spent on climbs well trod
Is wasted on a mountaineer.

As we arrive in Kathmandu
Some tyrant guards detain our gear
And claim another grand is due —
A fortune to a mountaineer.

Persistence pays and off we go.
But porter strikes revive our fears
We'll never cross this glacial flow,
A rubicon for mountaineers.

With wage increases we survive
This latest threat to profiteer,
On endless treks with yaks to drive;
Whose stench affronts a mountaineer.

The poison of Nepal's cuisine
Infests the Western junketeer.
Unholy wars by pests unseen
Declared upon this mountaineer.

A hearty retch upon the snow
And constant runs that won't cohere.
Such gastric chaos to and fro
Will never stop this mountaineer.

We set up camp to acclimate
And gaze upon our next frontiers
Past icy fields that decimate
The hopes of many mountaineers.

The bodies strewn around the base
Remind us of the bombardiers
That lurk about this hostile place
And threaten naive mountaineers.

The dead do not foretell our course.
The fallen never interfere
With plans sent from the highest force,
Who makes a safer mountaineer.

For luck is bought with spinning wheel
And flags of prayer which commandeer
Immortal men to wisely kneel
In hopes they'll stay a mountaineer.

III. The Climb

With alpine speed we cannot fail.
Unburdened by a brigadier
Of martial mind who could derail
The talents of a mountaineer.

Our line avoids the snow cascades
That daily sweep this face so sheer.
An overhang above us shades
The plodding of this mountaineer.

That shield against a snowy slide
Presents a test still more severe,
The ramparts standing there could hide
The pitfalls to this mountaineer.

The verglass covers all the holds
And crampons barely help adhere.
A desperate battle soon unfolds —
This roof against a mountaineer.

A struggle fought for higher stakes
That precious few would volunteer
To see themselves just what it takes
To prosper as a mountaineer.

A storm confines us to our tent.
For five long days we're forced to hear
The God above us loudly vent
His message to a mountaineer.

Who dares set foot on sacred ground,
With eyes cast toward the stratosphere?
(A pious climber's often found
God's mercy toward a mountaineer.)

And suddenly the storm gives way
Permitting us to scale this tier.
And higher still to Him we pray
He'll tolerate this mountaineer.

The stress of climbing takes its grip
Upon this teammate once so dear;
Who'll break the solemn partnership
That bound him to this mountaineer.

A schemer full of tricks to spring
On me, deserving summiteer;
And grab himself the golden ring
That's due this seasoned mountaineer.

Some pills will help me fall asleep,
And others drain my body clear
Of toxins that would sickly seep
Into this healthy mountaineer.

Through biting winds our progress slacks.
We starve on thinning atmosphere
And stumble through the drifts that tax
A quickly fading mountaineer.

Hallucinations start to rage.
The greatest climbers persevere
On half their wits and then engage
The ego of a mountaineer.

A cry. A song. I know that voice.
Young Mallory in red chimere
Inviting me to soon rejoice
With angels and a mountaineer.

A peaceful place for quiet rest
To dream again of old Berkshire
And soar above the snowy crest,
Redeemer of this mountaineer.

Arise and climb, lest death await,
The shadow cast by life's veneer,
A victim of a mind sedate.
Let nothing stop this mountaineer.

At last the top, or so I guess.
The clouds deny my souvenir.
No lens can pierce this swirling mess
And illustrate a mountaineer.

A flag will mark our latest coup,
That other climbers may revere.
A banner bidding me adieu,
The quickly parting mountaineer.

No time to dwell, descend with speed.
For soon the light will disappear
And punish us who failed to heed
The warnings to a mountaineer.

As night arrives we grope ahead.
The whispers from the yesteryear
Are calling us to join the dead —
The future of a mountaineer.

The Arctic air has almost froze
The bravest soul, forever dear.
Find shelter soon or lose your toes,
The tariff on a mountaineer.

We'll spend another frigid night
Upon an open bed austere.
A bivy is a fearsome plight
To every sleepy mountaineer.

With frozen feet upon my lap
We share our mortal thoughts sincere.
Exchanging heat with body wrap
Resuscitates a mountaineer.

So far from summer's gentle breeze
A glimpse of light affords some cheer.
We struggle through an icy freeze
Enduring like a mountaineer.

At dawn we fast resume descent.
Another night is fatal here,
Since all our food and fuel are spent,
Imperiling a mountaineer.

A slip, and heaven quickly claims
A life still shy of thirty years.
A lad not skilled at deadly games
That daily test us mountaineers.

A tainted climb must still suffice.
Catastrophes could well besmear
A lesser task, but they're the price
Of making me a mountaineer.

IV. Heading Home

The climb is done, it's time to flee
A distant bell again rings clear.
Another challenge beckons me,
The endless searching mountaineer.

And if upon your own set course,
That blessed call you chance to hear;
Just answer soon with no remorse,
And so become a mountaineer.

Tom Isaacson

Christmas Party

Just a reminder, this year's Christmas Party will on Saturday December 11, starting at 6 PM at PATC headquarters. You don't have to be a member or even a climber join in the festivities, just bring a dish and bring yer (noncamming) friends

!Gym Membership for MS Members: Don't Hibernate This Winter

You don't need to trade in your stealth rubber for a pair of crampons this winter (unless, of course, you plan to climb some ice). The Clipper City Rock Gym in Baltimore and the

Rockville Climbing Gym will be open during the winter. In case you haven't been there recently, the Baltimore gym now has a 60 foot high lead climbing wall, in addition to the top-rope climbs. The Mountaineering Section has arranged a special deal with the owner that will allow members to climb at both gyms year round for less than \$10 per month. Call Dave Godwin (703/276-2291) for more details.

Swiss-French Alps

by Don McIntyre

In late July and early August, my wife Linda and I spent a terrific three weeks hiking and climbing in the Swiss and French Alps. The Alps are one of the finest climbing areas in the world. The Alps offer glacier travel, snow, rock and ice, and good mountaineering experiences. This was my wife's first trip and my fourth visit.

We began our adventure in Geneva where we rented a car and drove to the small town of Täsch, where you must park your car and ride a clog railway the final five miles to Zermatt and the Matterhorn. We stayed in the Bahnhof Hotel, which is run by a wonderful woman in her 70s — Frau Biner. Her family have all been professional mountain guides in the Zermatt region for generations and she is the absolute authority on routes and weather! Our first outing was to hike the Hohen Blummen which is an 18 km hike up to the base of the Zinalrothorn, over a pass, down to Zmutt, under the North Face of the Matterhorn, and return to Zermatt. This was a great hike and did a lot to get us ready for climbing!

The next morning we got up, ate a number of wonderful Swiss pastries, and hiked up to the Theodul Hut on the Swiss- Italian border. The hut system in Europe offers a number of advantages in that you don't need to take camping gear, tents or other heavy stuff. Plus, food is available at the huts along with a nice warm bed. Most climbs begin well before first light and require you to get up and leave usually by 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. We climbed the Breithorn (4164 meters) and returned to Zermatt to wait for better conditions on the Matterhorn. We had wanted to climb the Italian ridge, but the conditions were not good due to warm weather, wet snow (three feet new) and loose rock.

After two days, we decided to go over to the next valley and climb the Obergabelhorn and the Weisshorn. These climbs are done from the small town of Zinal where there is a very nice camping area with hot showers.

From Zinal you hike up 5,000 feet to the hut and climb from there. I climbed the North Face of the Obergabelhorn, which is a steep ice face, 1500 feet high and rated TD- by European standards. My wife and I also climbed the Bishorn, but backed off the Weisshorn because of dangerous snow conditions on the connecting knife ridge.

The next stop was on the French, Italian and Swiss border area, near the Grand St. Bernard Pass — yes, like the dog. The hike to the hut to climb the Grand Combin is one of the more beautiful walks in the Alps. It is also one of the major sections of the famous Haute Route Ski Traverse from Chamonix to Zermatt. The climb of the Grand Combin was very interesting and fun as it combined rock, snow and ice with a falling serac finish. Ö Now it was time for climbing in Chamonix and the French Alps. Our goals included the Brenva Spur on Mt. Blanc, Grandes Jorasses, Aiguille Verte, Tour Ronde and several rock routes. These were to be interrupted with the proper amount of time spent in the wonderful bars of Chamonix — the Black Crow and Bar National, for sure.

As it turned out, I soloed the Aig. Verte by the Whymper route and also climbed the Grande Rocheuse. Several rock routes were also accomplished in the Aiguille du Plan area. We then went to Grindewald and the Eiger area. The weather had been quite warm so the snow and ice conditions were not good on the big faces. We did several good hikes in the area and eventually attempted a climb on the Schreckhorn, but picked a wrong ice ramp which left us looking at the main peak from the wrong side of a dropoff. Oh well. . . .

The trip ended with a boat ride on the Interlaken lakes, tours of local castles and two wine festivals. A great place to go for a summer trip.

A Short Romp Through The Red

by Tom Isaacson

Doug Cosby and I visited the Red River Gorge for three days in mid-September. Doug was anxious to return there — the scene of some of his best climbing efforts from two previous trips. I was enticed by rumors that it possessed the definitive 5.12a jug-haul. I found it but, alas, failed to flash.

The Red is definitely not everyone's cup of tea. The drive takes about nine hours (it's located about 50 miles east of Lexington, Kentucky, although the actual directions are considerably more circuitous [if not downright devious]). Fortunately, the New River Gorge is roughly mid-way to the Red, so there's a convenient stopping point just in case you need to do some more climbing.

The Red is also very rural. You might expect to find Jed Clampett there — before he struck black gold, Texas tea. Bring plenty of food, tapes for the car and something to read. Also, you better get along with your climbing partner. You won't be meeting a whole lot of other folks. Some climbers are rumored to carry guns in their packs, ostensibly as protection against locals. This, of course, amplifies the importance of maintaining good partner relations.

Enjoying the rock at the Red is also something of an acquired taste. It is, without question, steep. Not every route overhangs, but the vast majority do. Slab climbers will not like this place. The sandstone is also rather crumbly. As a result, many of the routes continue up until the rock deteriorates below minimal standards. The cold shuts are often located in the first band of poor rock. Fortunately, many routes have three or four cold shuts.

The holds predominately consist of pock-ets. In most cases the pockets are larger than finger size and can be gripped like ordinary in-cut edges. The larger pockets also present a variety of options, including side-pulls, underclings, etc. Some routes have widely-spaced pockets where the difficulty, like most routes at the New, is making the reach from one to the next. Other routes are entirely covered in pockets. There, the trick is to find the best one as quickly as possible. (Remember, it's steep). You'd think that the chalked holds are best,

but many of your predecessors on the route are just as clueless as you. Also, one climber is said to intentionally chalk up bad holds just to foil on-sight attempts. Oh joy!

The Red consists of an immense amount of rock. While I doubt it actually has 7000 miles of cliff, as some have said, it clearly is a lot bigger than the New. The cliffs are not continuous and, of course, only a tiny portion have been developed. Those are often very far (miles) apart, so that the Red really consists of some 7-10 smaller, well-spaced crags. We went to two crags each day, always driving from one to the other.

The Red has some truly spectacular routes. King Me (5.11b) gently overhangs for 30 meters of continuous climbing on excellent orange rock. It may be the best 5.11 I've ever done. I think it has 12 bolts. Twinkie (5.12a) and Phantasia (5.12d) go side-by-side up a huge wall that overhangs about 45 degrees. The most impressive walls are at Torrent Falls, which currently is closed to climbing. Some of those routes overhang by 100 feet. I'm not kidding.

The Red primarily consists of sport routes 5.10 and up. There are some very nice looking trad routes at moderate grades, so bring a rack if that's your bag. If you can lead 5.10 (or your partner can), you'll have enough routes to keep you happy for several days. If you can gather your gumption for a stab at 5.11, you're in for a real treat. Top roping at the Red looks to be a horrendous endeavor.

Bring a 60 meter rope to the Red. Some of the classic routes are very long. Also, be sure to bring a rope bag or a tarp. The Red will help you understand why they call it sandstone. I did a route called Sand (5.11d) that could also have been named The Beach. [Seinfeld fans might appreciate that.]

I'd recommend that you camp at the government campground near the Red. You can camp at Miguel's Pizza for a few bucks, but you don't get much more than a parcel of lawn for facilities. I highly recommend dinner at Miguel's. He's a real character and his sandwiches and pizza are surprisingly excellent. Besides, where else are you going to eat?

There is a small guidebook to the Red and a useful supplement appeared in *Rock & Ice* this Spring. Having at least one of them is

essential. If you need further information, especially on the rapidly changing access situation, check with the Climb Time gym in Lexington. It's a friendly, small place. Apart from info needs, you may visit it if you get bored at night or the weather is so awful you can't climb outside.

I can't comment much on the weather. I have it on reliable authority that it's appallingly humid in the Summer. It was nice, if rainy, during our trip. You can climb there in the rain. Remember, it's steep.

Meanwhile, back to our trip to the Red. Doug and I met Bob Rentka — of New River fame — who drove down from Pittsburgh. Bob was still recovering from knee surgery and didn't do much leading. That was fine with us, since it was helpful to have someone clean the routes on top rope. Remember, it's steep. My plan was to avoid super hard routes and stick to routes I felt I had a chance of flashing. I figured I'd get more routes in that way and could avoid getting pounded too early. I flashed six or seven 5.11s (up to 5.11d) and red-pointed a few more.

Doug flashed one 5.12b/c and red-pointed an impressive 5.12b called Sex Farm. It really is steep.

At the end of our third day (Saturday), we returned to the New (after a few driving adventures and a stop at Dairy Queen — which one member of our group thinks is a good source of food). We interrupted an Alps slide show at the apartment being given by Tom Halicki and Jeannette Helfrich. The next day we knocked off a bunch of routes at the New (much to my surprise, given the output of the previous three days) and tackled the second half of the long drive home.

The future of the Red is uncertain, but the potential is incredible. Some of the rock is off-limits to bolting, for now. The primary developer of routes at the Red, Porter Jarrard, is now in school at the University of Kentucky and may not be developing many new routes in the near future. Hopefully, one or more other locals will take up the task.

Book Reviews

by Stuart Peggall

Stories Off the Wall, John Roskelley The Mountaineers Books, Seattle, WA \$22.95, 1993, Hardcover, Illustrated, 223 pages.

Put simply, John Roskelley is to climbing as Rush Limbaugh is to politics. Despite that, I'd rather climb with Roskelley than listen to Limbaugh (I'd have a much higher chance of surviving the experience).

The third in Roskelley's series of climbing memoirs, Stories Off the Wall explores deeply into the motivation and emotion of America's self-styled climbing redneck. Divided into vignettes of his career over three decades, Roskelley proclaims *The World According to John*, subtitled *Take it or Leave Me Alone*. If you're empathetic toward others and are uncomfortable with intolerance, read something else. If John dislikes something (or someone), he says so. Clearly. Plainly. Bluntly. Roskelley.

On the old Camp 4 climbers: "out from the tattered remains of a khaki-colored World War II army bag would emerge a long-haired "person," some with the hygiene of a cockroach."

On mountaineers: "I also have gotten into the habit of writing in my address book the names and addresses of climbers at the top of the sport in pencil. It saves having to replace the book every few years."

On shelter: "Personally, I had never built a snow cave and the only one I had slept in was cold, cramped and dark. I was a tent man all the way."

On choosing partners: "I now use the Roskelley "shoelace test." If a prospective partner's shoelaces don't stay tied, I don't tie into a rope with him."

The writing style can be a bit overstated, but unlike John Long's tall tale lyricism, Roskelley seems to err on the blunt side. I'm not saying it's bad, but reading Stories Off the Wall can be a little like sharing a tent with a rudely flatulent partner—you have to get out for fresh air once in a while. Fortunately, the vignettes are just the right length to read a few and put the book aside

for a bit before diving back in.

Of course, being able to say outrageous things and getting away with it is testament to Roskelley's achievements over the years. First ascents of Trango Tower, Gaurishankar, Uli Biaho; new routes on Nanda Devi, K2, Tawoche; first alpine ascents; etc. These summits have had a price: toes, partners, time away from family. And the price appears to have been cumulative in Roskelley's view: "I can't think of one peak worth really putting my rear on the line for." However, don't count America's self-proclaimed climbing maverick out of the picture. I have a feeling he'll be back.

Beyond Risk: Conversations with Climbers, Nicholas O'Connell The Mountaineers Books, Seattle, WA \$19.95, 1993, Hardcover, Illustrated, 300 pages.

This volume consists of interviews with several leading climbers, including the obvious, such as Messner, Bonington, and Cesen, and then some interesting choices, such as Droyer and Harding. In all, the total selection covers most of the climbing genres and keys on figures that have been responsible for significant advances or have long resumes. Of course, you could probably pick seventeen climbers to interview and have only a few names overlap.

The interviews are wide-ranging in their scope: obvious common themes tie them together, such as when and where the figures began climbing, accounts of significant climbs/routes/epics, and comments on changes/differences in the sport or particular genre. Because there is such variety among the climbers interviewed, I found that I skipped about quite a bit. Mountaineer types will gravitate immediately to the Messner and Voytek interviews, whilst those who love the Alps will read Cassin first. Rock jocks will find Croft and Hill to appease their hunger for more training tips.

I found that I was a little bothered by two recurring questions: many climbers were asked to describe their feelings toward the "D" words dying, death, danger, etc. (hence the title, I suppose), and some climbers had aspects of their personal lives exposed. I suppose both questions add to the interest level for the general reader, but I'm really not interested in whether or not

Jeff Lowe and Catherine Destivelle are romantically involved. With respect to the "death" thing, O'Connell tries to explain that he found in the course of these interviews that climbing is an expression of a "life wish" rather than a "death wish" type of activity.

For those readers not inclined to read or buy many of the fine autobiographies and biographies that have already been written by and about many of these climbers, Beyond Risk makes a nice addition to one's knowledge and library. Some of the current stars (Croft, Hill, e.g.) have not yet had the inclination or time to craft their memoirs, but they have been in the limelight enough to have been the subject of many magazine interviews. Others (Droyer and Gullich) have not had their writings translated, and unless Anne Baron is willing to tackle that task, it is unlikely that they will be.

A couple of minor nits to pick. It would have been nice to have a "further reading list" appended to each interview, and the B/W images scattered throughout the text have mixed quality. All in all, though, Beyond Risk is a reasonably good book.

The Ascent of Everest Lord John Hunt The Mountaineers Books, Seattle, WA \$18.95, 1993, Soft cover, Illustrated, 280 pages.

Forty years ago, Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay summited Mt. Everest. This achievement was the culmination of years of British exploration and effort. The Ascent of Everest, published shortly thereafter, became an immediate classic. It was reprinted many times to provide readers around the world an opportunity to relax in their armchairs, and through the page by page account of the assault build-up, place themselves atop the world's highest mountain.

This 40th anniversary reprint edition gives climbers an opportunity to savor that experience. Upon re-reading this magnificent story, I was struck by two thoughts: one, that when I had first read The Ascent of Everest I hadn't the background to fully appreciate what was accomplished in 1953; second, that Hunt's military structure to organizing and administering the expedition contributes to what is now a bland narrative style.

Compared to many of the solo and alpine ascents achieved in the past decade, and compared to the raw, often verbatim accounts of epic mountaineering, reading The Ascent of Everest might not place it among your favorite mountaineering books. But think back. Clothing was mostly cotton and wool, tents were canvas, boots were single-thickness leather, ice axes were 90 cm or longer, and pro was non-existent by modern standards. Even the oxygen gear carried was primitive, heavy, bulky and balky to operate. Food was poor, communications worse. There was even significant doubt in many people's minds that Everest could even be climbed—even with supplementary oxygen, was it too high for human survival? It is only when you place yourself in the 1950's does the magnificence of the effort truly emerge.

It is this lack of setting, perspective that is the only fault with this reprint. It is far too easy to pick up The Ascent of Everest and scoff after reading through it. What dolts! They had how many porters? They took how many months? They used how much oxygen? Huh, and on the walk-up route, no less! Like I said, if you don't place this in perspective, it's kind of hard to remember just how incredible the ascent was.

Should you buy this? Yes. Of course, if you're a collector, the 500 copy numbered, limited, hardcover edition offered by the Mount Everest Foundation, signed by the remaining team members, was the copy to get, but alas, they are all gone. So pick up this one, or scan the second hand bookshop shelves for an old hardcover. It's a great story.

Guide Books

by Stuart Peggall

There are a lot of guide books out there, and given the typical Washingtonian's proclivity for travel, I thought I'd mention a few new guides that are worth putting on your bookshelf.

First, Richard Rossiter's Boulder Select is a must. Nearly everyone travels through Denver at some point. Stop off and head to Boulder! The Select includes all the good routes, gets you to most of them with little trouble with decent maps, photos and topos, and is a bargain compared to buying Boulder North and Boulder South (not to mention the weight savings in your pack).

It also has the grades, stars and pro ratings you need to plan a climbing trip. Rossiter gives you pertinent info, too, like special pro needs or tips to avoid getting into trouble on certain routes. (from Chockstone)

Next, Todd Swain's Red Rocks Select will get you out of that boring Las Vegas convention hall and onto some of the best rock climbing you've ever done. Red Rocks is a much more complicated area than most to get around in, and Swain's combination of photos and maps does a better job than Randy Faulk's guide did. When in doubt, follow someone! Swain also weighs in with grades, stars, pro ratings, and tips. Remember that the desert sandstone is a weird medium until you get used to it, and then you wonder if climbing on anything else is fun anymore. Swain gives you great beta on the local scene, too, which is necessary when confronted by Vegas's sensory overload. Red Rocks is climbable year-round (stay in or out of the sun, depending on the season). (from Chockstone)

In Southern California (or Socalia, as the new state is rumored to be called), either Joshua Tree Select or Joshua Tree Sport Climbs, both by Randy Vogel, will get you through a tour of the granite domes as opposed to a tour of MGM. Obviously, the Select version includes both sport and trad routes, and J Tree has loads of classic crack lines that take good pro. The Sport version has a fair number of upper end routes, but there adequate numbers of routes in the 5.9-5.11 ranges to keep most of us occupied for a reasonable short visit. Personally, if you're going for a one time visit, get the Select. Both guides include all the modern conveniences, and Vogel has provided reasonably clear maps to get you into and out of the intricate mazes of boulders, cliffs, trails and other hazards that guarantee at least one approach or descent epic. Joshua Tree, like Red Rocks, is climbable year-round, but since its altitude is higher, most climbers avoid it December-February, and the summer heat can be more than brutal. Vogel's guides also lead you to the best options for camping, motels, food, etc.. (from Chockstone)

Around the Bay region, climbers think of the Valley (that's Yosemite, not Napa) and Tuolumne Meadows as destinations. Both have "Select" guides to get you on the classic routes. The Valley version is by George Meyers, the Mead-

ows is penned by Don Reid. Both are excellent and provide adequate information to enjoy a brief stay in either area. If you're thinking of big walls, though, there is a Big Wall guide (Don Reid), and that would be worth buying if that is indeed your goal—it has all the pertinent beta you'll need, with clear annotated topos, gear lists, and other big wall-specific data. Just as a general note, the Valley can be a logistical nightmare because of the combination of crowds, concessionaires and the managers who try to referee the madness. (all three from Chockstone) North of California, Smith Rock is probably the best all around climbing area for combination of accessibility, grades, route quality, and amenities. The old xeroxed topos available from Red Point or Juniper Junction were sufficient to get you around the routes, but that's about all. Alan Watts' new guide (titled, appropriately enough, Smith Rock State Park Climber's Guide) is a comprehensive treatise on the area, including visitor guides to the local towns, extensive information on getting around the park, and really good route descriptions encompassing the whole park. Don't be put off by Watts' frequent comment "this route has improved considerably since numerous nubbins have popped off." Most of the routes are as solid as anything at Seneca. (Query: is that faint praise, or faint damnation?)

These are by no means the only good guide-books out there. They are just a handful of good guides to climbing areas near major transportation centers. There are so many guides available now that attempting to list them all would be prohibitive. Most major areas now have "select" versions for the impecunious visitor, and most minor areas at the very least have topo guides available. So there's no excuse. Traveling? Take your shoes and harness and go climbing!

Trip Report

by Stuart Pregnall

The Gunks, September 22/23/24

I know, I know, the Pregnalls are sport climbers and they don't place gear anymore. Besides, they have a kid and they can't do multipitch routes. Well, Mom and Dad came through and offered to play with Duncan for a weekend, so off we went.

Logistics: hell, we splurged. There's an eclec-

tic B&B called Ujjala's south of New Paltz that's worth the bucks. Frequented by climbers, musicians, artists, and people leading alternative life styles, Ujjala's comes complete with a huge but healthy gourmet breakfast, climbing wall in the barn, and a friendly home atmosphere. For evening food, we highly recommend The Main Course, which is located in the shopping center just past the Friendly's. The food was fabulous and reasonably priced, but the wait was 25 minutes. Plan accordingly.

Weather: rain on Saturday morning, mist on Saturday afternoon. Once we climbed out of the trees, we were on dry rock. Don't let the mist fool you. Sunday was glorious.

Routes: well, we had to relearn gear placement, so we "warmed up" on Jackie (5.5), still one of our favorite routes at the Gunks. Next, we went to do Something Interesting (5.8), but it was some kind of wet. So we did MF (5.9) instead, and found it exhilarating as usual. The first pitch is fabulous (most people rap off), the second has a super roof problem then wanders a while before petering out at the Grand Traverse Ledge. A romp then gets you to the trees. Sunday was crowded. We managed to grab a place in line on Arrow (5.8), one of the best two pitch outings anywhere, Directississima, aka Doubleississima, (5.10), now one of my favorite routes anywhere, and Son of Easy O (5.8), another of the great two pitch climbs. Doubleississima has a superb 5.8 opening pitch, a sustained 5.10 middle pitch leading through an overhanging wall to a small semi-rest stance below an intimidating roof that really does have huge holds, then a steep wall above that eventually relents to balancing up to the GT Ledge. We didn't do the last 5.8 pitch which is reportedly just as good as the first.

Notes and observations: Despite a lot of upkeep by local climbers, most of the fixed gear on the routes we did wasn't worth a hoot. Back it up! (The two bolts on Arrow were replaced a couple of years ago, and they are still good.) Also, perhaps I'm getting old and losing my sangfroid, but there seemed to be a lot more hollow-sounding rock this trip. Some of these areas involved where you placed gear, some of them involved where you climbed, and most of them involved both. So just be really careful and use your judgement. We noticed a lot of people

top-roping, which was annoying if you wanted to climb (or rap) a route that was taken. All of the high quality routes had multiple parties on them. This means you may have to wait to do a climb, and you need to be thoughtful about the parties above and below. The clods above you will certainly drop something on you, and don't be a clod dropping something on those below. Also, a lot of people are rappelling routes (there are a large number of fixed rap points now). Make sure you're clear below before launching your ten pound rope into some poor leader's face, and be aware of the countless small rocks that are poised on the ledges. Parts of the Gunks are getting Eiger-like from rockfall.

Finally, you really can't beat the Gunks for climbing fun. We noticed that there were huge numbers of people enjoying themselves on the many moderate classics, as opposed to the typical New River scene where there just aren't too many moderate routes. We gave ourselves wholeheartedly to the enjoyment of moderate routes: big holds, exposure, great lines, super climbing. In fact, Mom and Dad are on tap for another long weekend next Spring. See you there!

Hot Flashes

Rick Dotson flashed Bimbo Shrine (5.11b, but with a very hard move off the deck) and red-pointed Hard Core Female Thrash (5.11c). Rick also lead many of the trad routes at the Orchard Wall.

John Rayner lead a quartet of 5.10c routes: Muckraker, First Steps (flash), Passin-It and

Hygiene. He red-pointed Butcher Man (5.11a). JJeanette Helfrich completed long-standing projects by red-pointing Exoduster and Greenpiece (both 5.10b). She flashed Euronation (5.11) and red-pointed Butcher Man. Jeanette also lead many trad routes at the Gunks, including Apoplexy (5.9).

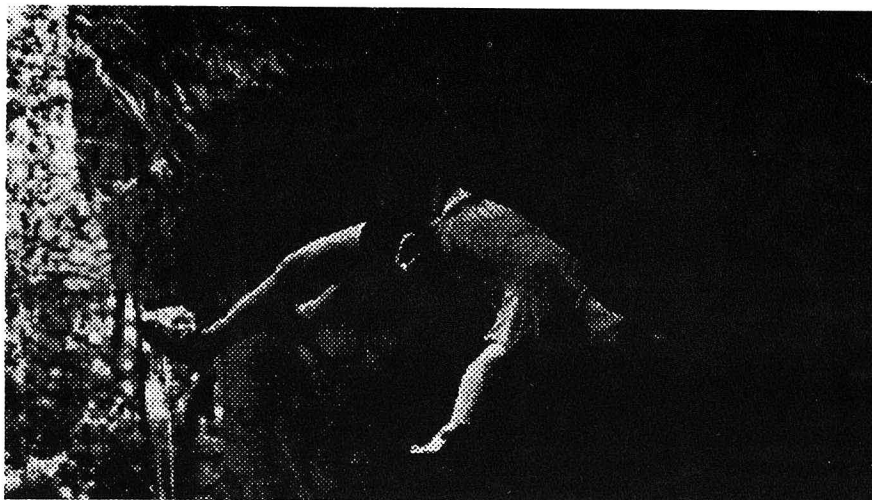
Tom Isaacson red-pointed Skull Poke (5.12c), Tobacco Road (5.12b) and seven climbs rated 5.12a (including Erotica, which is real hard for that grade). He also flashed Fearful Symmetry (5.11d). *FLASH!!! Tom sent Apollo Red (13a)!*

Elizabeth Erskine red-pointed S'more Energy (5.11c) and Mega Jug (5.11b).

Tom Halicki red-pointed (I think) Arm Forces (5.11c), Mega Jug and October Surprise (a way-hard 5.10d). He flashed Grit & Bear It (5.10d) and Air Apparent (5.11a). At the Gunks, he lead a 5.10 variation of Fat Stick.

Karen Pregnall flashed a 5.11 at Mt. Desert Isle (Maine). She also red-pointed Muckraker (5.10c) and top-roped (flashed?) Aesthetica (5.11c). SStuart Pregnall flashed the same 5.11 in Maine, as well as Under The Milky Way (5.11d), Air Apparent (5.11a) and Doubleissima (5.10 on the Gunks scale).

NOTE: The rest of you are free/encouraged to send in your best efforts to either Tom Isaacson or Dan Hague. It really doesn't matter how hard the route was or where it is located. As it happens, most of what gets reported here involves sport climbing at the New River Gorge. That results from the fact that that is where the authors of this column happen to climb.



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Climbers' Hotline: (703) 242-3501

Climber's Calendar November '93 - January '94

Date	Destination/Event	Point of Contact	Meeting Place	Remarks
11/6 Sat - 11/7 Sun	'Gunks, NY	Peter Hsi (703) 591-2540	TBA	Lead Trip: Arrange your partner or call for referral
11/10 Wed	Membership Meeting: Anne Baron on Trekking in Zaskar, India	Climber's Hotline	HQ	8 pm; food, drinks, and slide show; all welcome
11/13 Sat - 11/14 Sun	New River Gorge	Scott Pearson (703) 938-0209	TBA	Lead Trip: Arrange your partner or call for referral
11/21 Sun	Bull Run Mountain, VA	Alex Tait (202) 546-5131	TBA	
12/8 Wed	Membership Meeting: Don McIntyre on Climbing in the Alps	Climber's Hotline	HQ	8 pm; food, drinks, and slide show; all welcome
12/11 Sat	MS Christmas Party	Climber's Hotline	HQ	6 pm; pot-luck, all invited
1/5 Wed	Executive Committee Meeting (See NOTE 2 below)	TBA	TBA	7:30 pm; pot-luck dinner, all invited
1/12 Wed	Membership Meeting: Program TBA	Climber's Hotline	HQ	8 pm; food, drinks, and slide show; all welcome
1/15 Sat - 1/17 Mon	Adirondack Ice - Keene, NY	Anne Baron (703) 680-1229	TBA	Deposit required; beginner lessons -- must RSVP early
2/5 Sat	Crescent Rocks, VA	Peter Hsi (703) 591-2540	TBA	
2/9 Wed	Membership Meeting: Program TBA	Climber's Hotline	HQ	8 pm; food, drinks, and slide show; all welcome
Mid-Week	Climbing after work and other ad hoc adventures	Peter Hsi (703) 591-2540	TBA	Call early week for arrangements

- NOTE: Please call the trip leader by mid-week to make arrangements and contingency plans. Call the Climber's Hotline for the latest additions and too-late-to-be-published events -- (703) 242-3501.
- NOTE 2: Executive Committee Meetings are now held first Wednesdays of every odd-numbered month or by special arrangement; Membership Meetings are held second Wednesdays of every month except in August. Everyone is invited to these meetings.

Rendezvous Locations

Code	Location/Directions	Code	Location/Directions
HQ	PATC HQ, 118 Park St, Vienna Virginia From I-495 Virginia, exit #11 to Rt 123/Vienna; after approx 11 lights, left at Park St; building on the left behind Southern States --OR-- From I-66, exit at Nutley St north, right at Rt 123, right at Park St.	GF	Great Falls National Park, Great Falls Virginia From I-495 Virginia, exit #13 west to Rt 193/Great Falls, about 4 miles right at signal into park entrance; hard right past booth into lower parking lot. Late arrivals check at climber's sign-in board for specific climbing area.
RR	Roy Rodgers, 465 N Frederick Rd, Gaithersburg Maryland From I-270 north, exit at Rt 124 east (Montgomery Village Ave), right at next light to Rt 355, left at 2nd light and left into Roy Rodgers parking lot. Park in rear by large trees.	CR	Carderock Maryland From I-495 Maryland, exit #41 north (Clara Barton Pkwy), take first exit and overpass to Carderock entrance, turn right after entering park, go to last parking lot. Cliff is beyond restrooms.
AO	Appalachian Outfitters, 2830 Chain Bridge Rd, Oakton Va. From I-66, exit at Rt 123 to Vienna, left just past 4th light into Nationsbank parking lot.	TBA	To Be Arranged Please call the Point of Contact for directions or the Climber's Hotline for updates.

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