



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

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July 1994

### STUART HAMMET HURT IN FALL

Stuart Hammet, MS member, was injured on April 2 in a fall from the top of the Aid Box at Great Falls. Stuart and his brother-in-law were practicing simulated lead climbing with a top rope. In the confusion of switching between lead climbing and top rope anchors and belays, Stuart was hooked into the wrong system and fell to the rock below the corner crack. He bounced once on his back and landed face down below. After a 25-minute wait for rescuers to arrive, it took 35 minutes to evacuate him on a back board to the parking lot then send him to Fairfax Hospital by helicopter. He fractured the L1 and L4 vertebrae in his lower back. The L1 vertebrae was repaired with surgery, but in consideration of future problems, the L4 vertebrae was left to heal on its own which requires six weeks of bed rest flat on his back. He was at Fairfax for two weeks and is currently undergoing rehabilitation therapy at a facility at 2015 East West Highway in Silver Spring. On the phone, Stuart sounded upbeat as usual and said he is expected to go home at the end of May and hopes for a nearly full recovery within a year with rehabilitation and healing of nerve tissues. He is equipped with a laptop computer and is considering writing an account of his thoughts about the accident and the rescue.

Stuart has been a volunteer with MS on the Bull Run Committee and with the Access Fund on legal issues. He is an attorney practicing real estate law with an Upper Marlboro, Maryland firm and lives in Upper Marlboro with his wife and two children.

### SMITHSONIAN SERIES ON MOUNTAINS

The Smithsonian Institution presented an 8-week series in winter 1994, "On the Roof of the World: The Lure of the Mountains." In the series, mountain climbers, scientists, and Asian studies scholars described the "remote mountain cultures, the role of mountains in the search for enlightenment, and the

challenges faced by explorers and scientists in a forbidding and dangerous landscape." The series was moderated and coordinated by Benjamin Read and Randy Starrett. Benjamin Read is a writer and climbing guide in Jackson Hole, Wyoming who has climbed in Russia and many other ranges in the world. Randy Starrett is a partner with the law firm of Bromley, Greene, and Walsh in Washington, D.C., and was the first non-Soviet to receive the Order of the Snow Leopard for his ascents of the four 7,000 meter peaks in Central Asia in the Tian Shan and Pamir regions.

Andy Kauffman and John Thackray presented the opening lecture and slide show. Andy Kauffman, MS member, is co-author of *K-2: The 1939 Tragedy*, and member of the U.S. expedition that made the first ascent of Gasherbrum #1 in the Karakorum Range. John Thackray is the book review editor for the *American Alpine Club Journal*.

Barry Bishop presented a later program on the diverse cultures in the high mountain valleys of western Nepal. Barry Bishop is Vice President for Research and Exploration of the National Geographic Society, a member of the first U.S. expedition to Mt. Everest, and author of *Karnali Under Stress*.

Michael Kennedy, publisher of *Climbing* magazine and member of four expeditions to the Himalayas, presented a program on the challenges and sensations of climbing in the high Himalayas.

Other programs included presentations by individuals from the Smithsonian Institution, the U.S. Defense Mapping Agency, the Woodlands Mountain Institute in Franklin, West Virginia, and the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, Nepal.

### CLIMBING GYMS & SLIDE SHOWS by Jeanette Helfrich

Washington's first major climbing gym, SportRock, held its grand opening on April 22-23. SportRock was started by Dan Hague and Doug Cosby with the substantial backing of many local climbers as investors. SportRock is located on Southlawn off Gude

Drive in Rockville between a gymnastics gym and an indoor driving range! RadWall of San Francisco designed the climbing walls which include 30' lead walls, top rope walls, bouldering, and a children's wall featuring special cartoon holds. It also includes a well-stocked retail shop, lockers, and a lounge with refreshment machines. Seminars on training and technique are included in membership. A women's training night is offered on Monday nights focusing on tips on training and techniques by staff and guest climbers. The bright, clean and airy atmosphere and attentive, friendly staff is a welcome change from other gyms in the area. To join, call Dan or Doug at 301-762-5111.

Lynn Hill gave a slide show to celebrate the opening of SportRock on February 5, 1994, drawing about 300 people. Lynn highlighted her early climbing career and ended with her recent remarkable feat of free-climbing "The Nose" on El Capitan in Yosemite. If not before this climb, she has certainly now secured her place in climbing history and fame. Poised and calm at the show, she signed dozens of posters for fans, never tiring of climbing chit-chat. Lynn lives in southern France where she bought a house in the Luberon. Washington's SportFocus magazine recently published an interview of Lynn written by former UPROPE editor, Elizabeth Lee, entitled "Queen of the Hill."

There's nothing like a little competition to improve climbing gym facilities. The City of Rockville's climbing gym is undertaking some improvements to its rather short, concrete block climbing walls. Sharing a warehouse with theater props, the gym initially suffered from uneven management under the City of Rockville. Eventually a few plastic holds and plywood walls were installed, but the City varnished the plywood! The current management by Baltimore's Clipper City gym improved the situation but it remains the stepchild of the Baltimore facility. The improvements being made include installing plywood over the concrete block and texturizing the plywood. By coincidence, SportRock and the City of Rockville gym are located within a mile of each other. Word has it that the organizers of SportRock would have preferred a Tysons Corner location but only Rockville seemed to have buildings of the requisite height and size.

Top climber Paul Piana gave a very entertaining slide show on April 6 at the Cathedral School co-sponsored by MS and St. Alban's Voyageur Program. With the inclusion of slides from Galen Rowell, the show was pictorially near perfect with the exception of an annoying exit sign which could not be re-directed. After the slides were finished and the lights turned up, Paul recounted his chilling tale about how he and Todd Skinner almost didn't survive to celebrate their sensational feat of free climbing the Salathe Wall on El Capitan: how, after finally succeeding on the climb, they tied their anchor to a boulder at the top of the climb used thousands of times before, how the

boulder slid and toppled down the cliff and nearly crushed Paul's legs and Todd's ribs, how they were saved by a shredded rope and a back-up Friend in a nearby crack, how they endured the long and painful descent, how they finally managed to convince someone to drive them to the medical clinic, and how the clinic nearly refused to treat them at night and without insurance.

## MEMBER NEWS AND MISCELLANY

by Jeanette Helfrich

The Cathedral Crank sponsored by the Voyageur Program at St. Alban's School on April 9 drew lots of MS entrants: Dan Hague (winning 2nd in men's elite); Jeanette Helfrich (2nd in women's elite); Madeleine Carter (2nd in women's recreational); Alex Tait, John Yanson, Dave Godwin, and Demian Larry. Volunteer belayers included Dusty Wissmath and John Rayner. Thanks, Syl Mathis, for another meticulously organized and fun climbing contest.

Madeleine Carter has opened an office in Bethesda for her new film company, Carter Productions. She and Alec Graham moved back to D.C. from Boston and are renovating an old house in Cabin John, Maryland. For non-climbing recreation, they heartily recommend the 10th Mountain Division Ski Trail near Aspen and Vail, Colorado.

Tom Isaacson vacationed with his family in Siena, Italy in April following his mother's untimely death on December 25, 1993.

Tom Kawecki and wife Sue Bennett, a cardiologist with NIH and the University of Maryland in Baltimore, moved into a new house on Stockton Road in Silver Spring. They are expecting a baby in April.

Jeanette Helfrich won second in her age category (don't ask) at the Phoenix Bouldering Competition on April 16, and hopes to organize other area climbers to attend next year. She also adds her recommendation to the climbing at Red Rocks, Nevada which offers climbing of every type — trad, sport, big wall, friction, overhanging, and cracks in cold or hot weather. Convenient amenities include a major airport (Las Vegas), quick access to climbing areas (30 minutes), easy approaches, cheap food and lodging, friendly climbers, and evening entertainment (if you like that sort of glitz). In contrast, John Rayner and Jeanette later climbed in Yosemite, which, while aesthetic, beautiful, and historically interesting, is an intimidating place for moderate climbers. They did, however, enjoy some pitches on "Serenity Crack" and "Sons of Yesterday".

Don and Linda McIntyre tried to revitalize the Blue Ridge chapter of the American Alpine Club by sending out invitations to the 93 local AAC members in April to attend a dinner meeting at their house. With only six responses, they determined that, unfortunately, there is still no interest in having an active local AAC section.

Dusty Wissmath is back in D.C. working at REI in Bailey's Crossroads and is engaged to be married. Dusty moved out to his home state of Wyoming last year to work for a non-profit outdoors organization. Unfortunately, the organization had financial problems hinting at fraud and scandal! Horrors, does that happen outside Washington?

A creative way to do it — hikers on Old Rag, not expecting ice conditions on the Ridge Trail in early spring, were seen crossing ice runnels on their hands and knees pounding the ice with a rock in each hand. Haven't they heard of crampons and ice axes?

Paula and Phil Grant have bought a country house out in Purcellville for themselves, various animals and relatives, vacating the house in Stormville, New York. Paula reportedly has given up climbing in favor of becoming a pilot! A former body-builder, Paula was one of the up-and-coming climbers in the area known for intimidating mere mortals with her one-armed hangs.

Alex Tait, former MS chair, and wife Suzanne Borenzweig, bought a house on Sudbury Road in Silver Spring. Suzanne is a school teacher, and Alex is a cartographer with a studio on Capitol Hill.

Been wondering where the "brick" is from "The Brick" climb at Crescent Rocks? After it fell off (details?), it found a temporary home on Stuart Pregnall's mantelpiece.

John Yanson, former MS chair, is the organizer of a climbing competition at the Gay Games, an Olympic-style event being held in New York. About 40 men and 40 women have entered the competition from all over the world including the U.S., Canada, Australia, Norway, England, Germany and France. The contest will be held at the Interwall Climbing Gym in New Paltz, New York.

Christina Barros has traveled to Nepal three times recently to the Terai region to visit health posts, to interview health workers and develop training programs. She hopes to climb on future trips. She also recently been to Brazil, Turkey, and Pakistan. Where do we sign up for this job?

Jeff Kramer has traded in his criminal defense litigation in D.C. Superior Court for legal work with abused and neglected children [the other side of the coin?].

Elizabeth Lee has also been traveling to exotic places: La Paz and Santa Cruz in Bolivia, and to Jordan where she and others met with the King of Jordan concerning environmental issues.

Anne Baron and Rick Dotson traveled to Alaska in March for ice climbing, dog-mushing, snow-machining ("snow-mobiling" in the lower 48) in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Valdez. In a article in the Fairbanks newspaper, they were called those "wild Virginian" mountaineers up here to experience the cold. (But we know what real ice storms are!)

Tom Halicki and Elizabeth Erskine report that ice-climbing at Reiglesville, Pennsylvania was the best ever in 1994! They said that many climbs had formed

this year including "The Big Banana" (3 pitches, NEI V) Even in warmer years, this jewel of an area provides the closest reliable ice-climbing. The area is on the Delaware River north of Philadelphia about 4 hours from D.C.

The New River Gorge is expected to be an area of intense climbing activity again this year by area members. Stuart and Karen Pregnall have rented a townhouse in Fayetteville, West Virginia with other members in anticipation of many late Friday night arrivals. Stay tuned for New news.

John Rayner has been cranking in the climbing gyms in the San Francisco area including Twisters in Mountain View and Pacific Edge in Santa Cruz while he's been temporarily working at LORAL's Palo Alto location for most of the last month.

Rod Hansen, local climber and route setter at the Cathedral Crank and SpringStone, is marrying Barbara Culver on June 29. They are planning a month-long climbing honeymoon in southern France. Rod is also a builder and contractor in Virginia.

Diane Connelly, who gave up D.C. and the Department of Justice several years ago for a climbing road trip, surfaced at the Phoenix Bouldering Competition, winning 2nd in her age category. She now lives in Boulder and is an attorney for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund in Denver.

Please consider selling or lending some of your mountaineering gear to beginning mountaineers in MS - needed are ice axes, double boots, crampons, ice screws, Gore-Tex and other winter gear in good condition (we know some of you aren't using yours). Send description of gear including sizes to Pete Hsi, PATC-MS, 118 Park St., SE, Vienna VA 22180.

Jeanette Helfrich presented a slide show at the May meeting on climbing in Zermatt and Chamonix with MS members Ian Cruickshank, Ed Cummings and Charlie Dorian last July.

## NEWS FROM THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

The severe winter in the White Mountains claimed more than its share of casualties in 1994. In March, two climbers were found frozen at the top of Pinnacle Gully. Two experienced climbers from New Jersey started late, having forgotten their rope at the Harvard Hut. By the time they topped out onto the Alpine Garden shelf, extreme cold and strong winds apparently made it impossible for them to retreat or continue. The North Conway mountain rescue squad, including MS member Ian Cruickshank, found the bodies later that night. Out of concern for their own safety in the severe conditions, however, the rescuers had to return the next day to remove the bodies. Earlier in the season, two climbers attempted a traverse of the Presidential Range and apparently ran out of food and water. One managed to continue to a hut and was eventually rescued. The incidents were widely reported in the Boston and area newspapers. Rick



Wilcox, owner of International Mountain Equipment, Inc. and spokesperson for the rescue group, had to stress repeatedly that the rescue group was a volunteer association of local climbers funded by donations and that such rescues were not performed with taxpayers' dollars. IME continues to lead climbing trips to Nepal, including an attempt on Mera Peak this fall. Call Rick to sign up.

The Access Fund's Climber's Rendezvous will be held as scheduled on September 23-24 at the Mr. Cranmore climbing wall in North Conway. In spite of the ski area's pending bankruptcy proceedings, the court has approved the contract with the Access Fund for the Rendezvous. All local climbers are invited.

## IMPRESSIONS OF THE PHOENIX BOULDERING COMPETITION

by Jeanette Helfrich

What to do when you find yourself in the middle of the desert after a business trip in a tiny rental car. Enter the Phoenix Bouldering Competition - what else? From suits to grunge — what delicious contrast is climbing. They were about 16, 17, and 18, male and moderate climbers. I'm female and not a bad climber for a certain age. We wandered with map in hand in 90 degree Arizona sunshine squinting at boulder fields in the distance trying to figure out where to climb and what to climb first. So much rock, there's a new place for the contest every year. Although never fond of bouldering, I passed some boulders and said "I can do that." So we piled up the points, doing short problems in turn. I moved on to longer, strenuous top-rope problems and thought, hey, bouldering wasn't such a bad idea after all. I eyed those tough bronzed women climbers from California and Arizona, and, of course, the winner Bobbi Bensman. Who would have thought I'd win anything, that they'd make us stand on graduated platforms and take our picture and hand us garbage bags of spanking-new gear, \$200 worth for 2nd place. At night in the dry campground, throngs of the 425 competitors drank, ate burritos, pondered the slides and weird theories of Peter Croft and his choice of heroic music, and listened to croaking acid rock from Eric's (Phoenix Rock Gym) band. Under a sky now crisp and cool, the Coyote micro-brew burned strong, smearing stars in the sky, bringing dreams of scorpions crawling out at night onto my chest daring me to move, there's no tent, no morning dew, just manzanita bushes and good clean dirt and me. Ya'll come next year.

## UPCOMING FOR 1994

Don McIntyre, our new expedition committee chairman, is collecting foreign climbing information from members. If you have good beta on far-off locales, please

give Don a call.

When you receive your renewal notices, please return your dues promptly. Regardless of what month you joined, renewals are collected at the same time for all members. New for this year is an entry for local access. Because access issues are the most important problem in climbing today, please consider giving a contribution — all moneys collected will be used in local access issues only.

Looking ahead, next winter will host the return of our world famous Mountain Film Festival. We now need volunteers in tasks such as screening the films, box office, and steering in general.

To volunteer for any of these activities, please call Pete Hsi at home.

### List of Officers and Committees for 1994:

Chair:	Peter Hsi	(703) 591-2540 H
Vice-Chair:	Dave Godwin	(703) 276-2291 H
Secretary:	Scott Pearson	(703) 938-0209 H
Treasurer:	Gary Shinnars	(202) 273-3738 W

### Standing Committees as Provided by Constitution:

Conservation and Access...

...at Carderock: Harold Goldstein and Janet Young

...at Mohonk Preserve (OPEN)

...at Nelson House: Tom Halicki (703) 548-3239 H

...at New River Gorge: Stuart Pregnall (703) 503-5852 H

...at Bull Run Mtn: Alex Tait (703) 349-5243 H

Expedition: Don McIntyre (703) 225-3617 H

Hospitality: (OPEN)

Membership: (OPEN)

Newsletter: Dan Hague (301) 585-5243 H

Tom Isaacson (202) 332-3710 H

Publicity: Demian Larry (703) 276-2851 H

Program: Demian Larry (703) 276-2851 H

Training/Safety: Rick Dotson (703) 257-9263 H

### Ad Hoc Committees:

Film Festival 94/95: Mary Keating (202) 244-3694 H

Demian Larry (703) 276-2851 H

History and Archives: Jeanette Helfrich (301) 434-1964 H

New Guidebooks: Alex Tait (703) 349-5243 H

Rep to PATC Council: (OPEN)

Special Programs: (OPEN)



## SPORTROCK IN THE NEWS

The Sportrock Climbing Center has been in the news of late as the local press discovers the unique facility.

The Washington Times featured the Center as the cover to its weekend section on June 23. The article was peppered with photographs (none of MS members!) and chronicled the experiences of reporter Jeffrey Staggs as he tried climbing for the first time. Except for a reference to "wooden inserts" in climbing shoes the article would be quite informative to the uninitiated.

Local climber Mel Banks was the the cover story to a Gazette (suburban paper) insrt on healthy "seniors". The cover photo pictured Mel atop a climb at Great Falls. Mel, in the associated article, attributed his climbing prowess to working out at Sportrock.

Co-founder Dan Hague was quoted in a Montgomery Journal article on troubled youth. Dan had been invited to a seminar at the American Day Treatment Center in Chevy Chase. The seminar leader is an advocate of physical activity as treatment for trouble youth. Sportrock expects to provide a challenging alternative for some of the ADT patients.

## DOG DAYS COOL DOWN CLIMBING COMP

Tired of greasy holds, ravenous insects and humidity you can cut with a knife? Sportrock offers up its first climbing comp August 6, 1994.

A comp in August?! YES! Sportrock is fully air conditioned and while recent temperatures have been approaching 100 degrees outside, Sportrock has been comfortably in the 70's.

The event is an Access Fund benefit with a significant share of the profit going directly to this worthwhile organization.

For more info or to register call Sportrock at 301-762-5111.

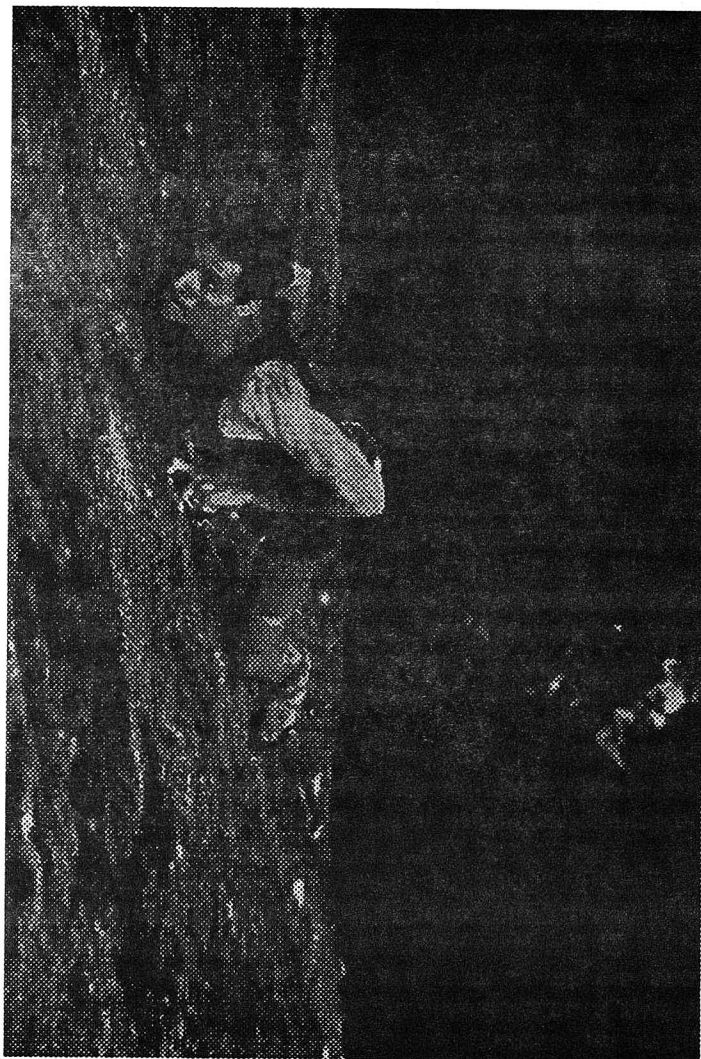
## BOBBI BENSMAN TO VISIT

While in the area for the World Cup comp at Baltimore, famed climber Bobbi Bensman will give a slide show entitled "Of Power and Grace".

The show will be held at the St. Albans auditorium on the evening of October 5. Mark you calenders

now. For more info on the show call Jeanette Helfrich at 301-434-1964.

Sportrock has arranged for Bobbi to give a clinic at the facility that same week. Rumor has it that this clinic will be for women only and will be resonably priced.



Dan Hague looking somewhat like a "Harlequin", 12b. What MS members can be seen on the ground?  
Photo Tom Isaacson.

# CLIMBERS' PICNIC

A "POT LUCK" PICNIC WITH SWIMMING AND VOLLEYBALL

WHEN: SATURDAY, AUGUST 6

1:30 PM 'till ?

WHERE: 2000 FLINT HILL RD

SEE MAP BELOW

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT

JAMES EAKIN: H (301) 949-3595 or W (301) 227-5050

ON THE DAY OF PICNIC (301) 598-6047

FROM ROCKVILLE:

EXIT RT 28 EAST TOWARD ROCKVILLE

LEFT AT LIGHT TO STAY ON RT 28

CROSS GEORGIA AVE, NOW ON NORBECK RD.

RIGHT ON LAYHILL RD

3RD RIGHT ON FLINT HILL RD

.2 MI ON LEFT.

FROM CONN. AVE EXIT OF I-495

NORTH ON CONNECTICUT AVE

TOWARD KENSINGTON

STAY LEFT AT KENSINGTON

TO STAY ON CONN. AVE.

CONN AVE ACROSS GEORGIA AVE

RIGHT ON BEL PRE RD.

LEFT ON LAYHILL RD

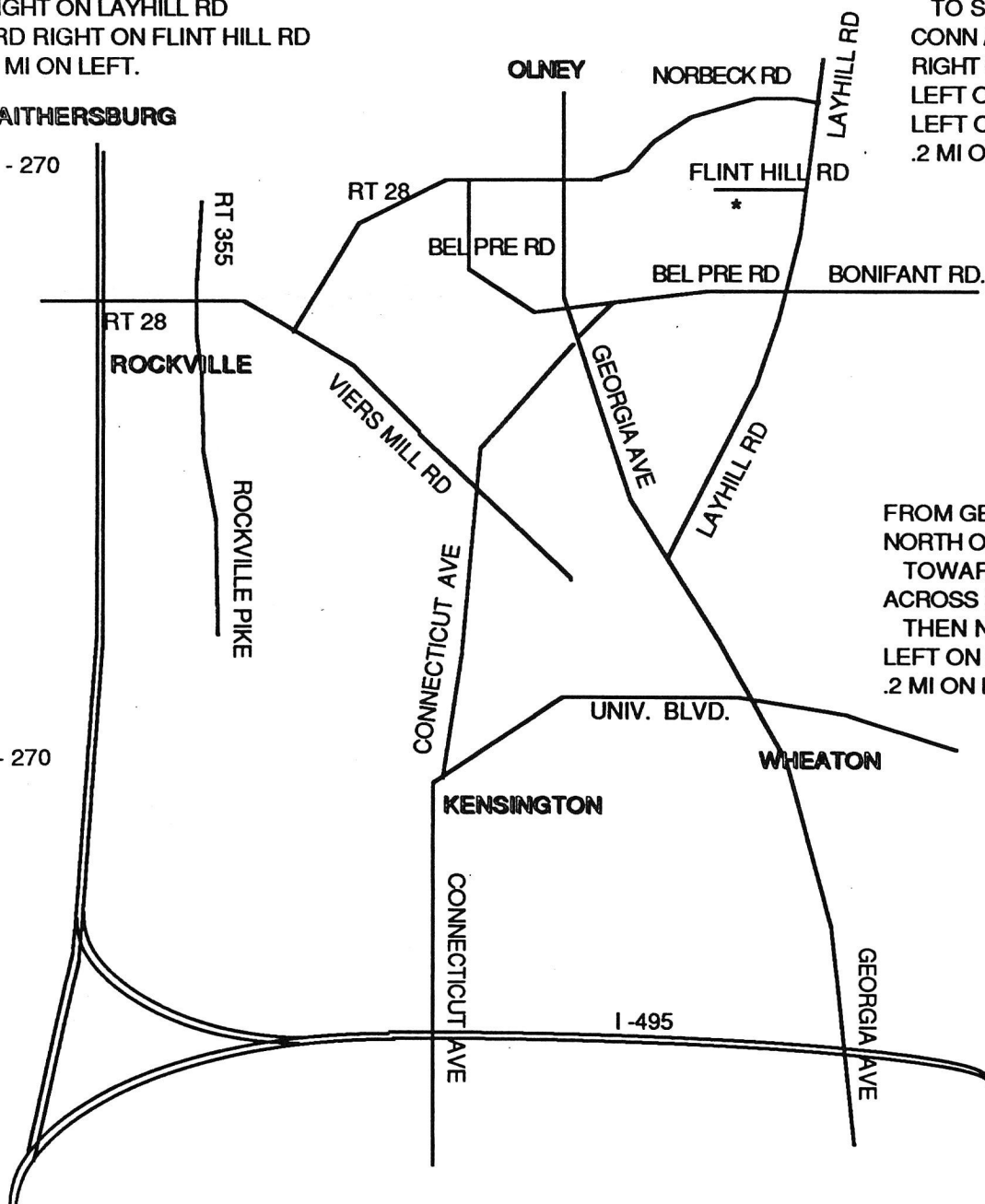
LEFT ON FLINT HILL RD

.2 MI ON LEFT

GAITHERSBURG

I - 270

I - 270



FROM GEORGIA AVE. EXIT I-495:

NORTH ON GEORGIA AVE

TOWARD WHEATON

ACROSS RANDOLPH RD,

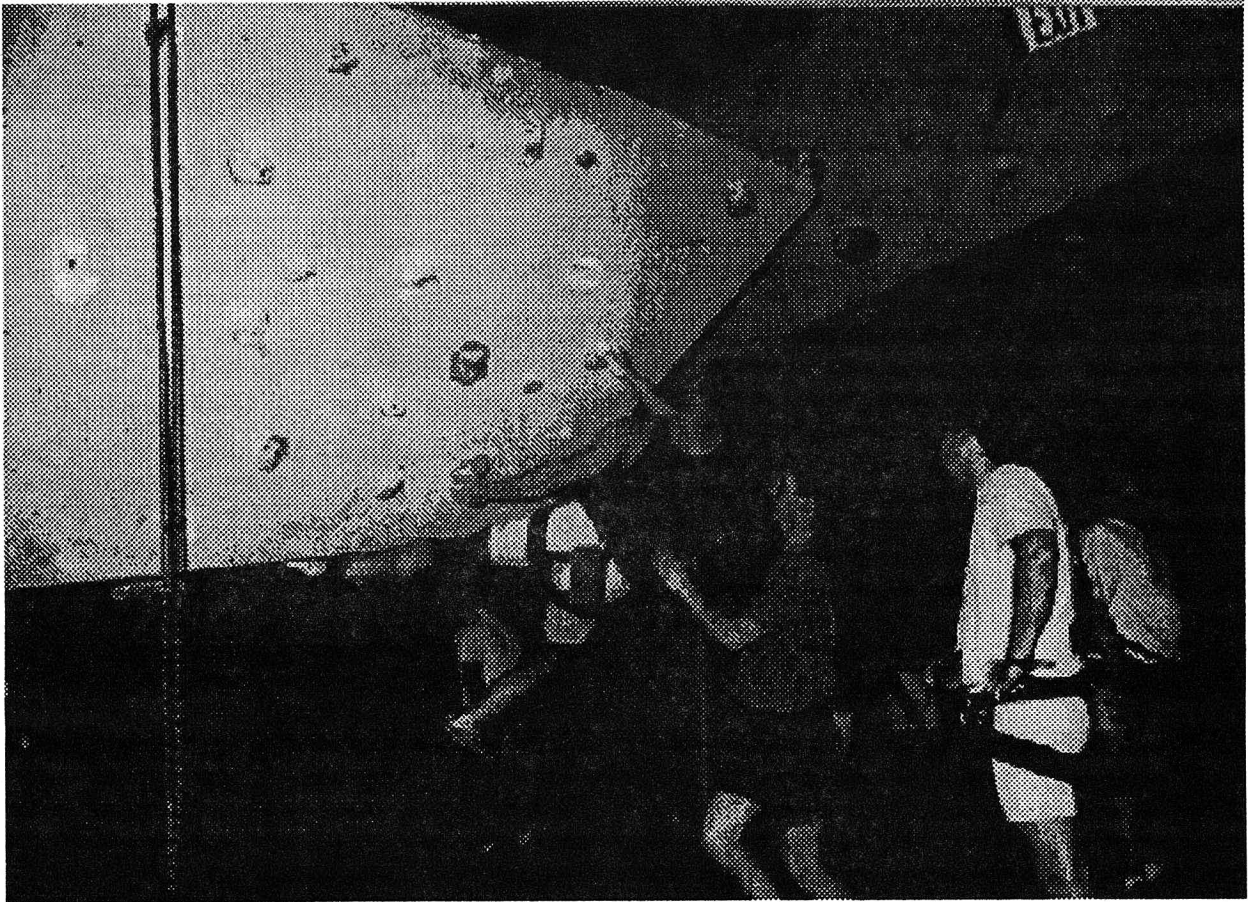
THEN NEXT RIGHT ON LAYHILL RD

LEFT ON FLINT HILL RD

.2 MI ON LEFT

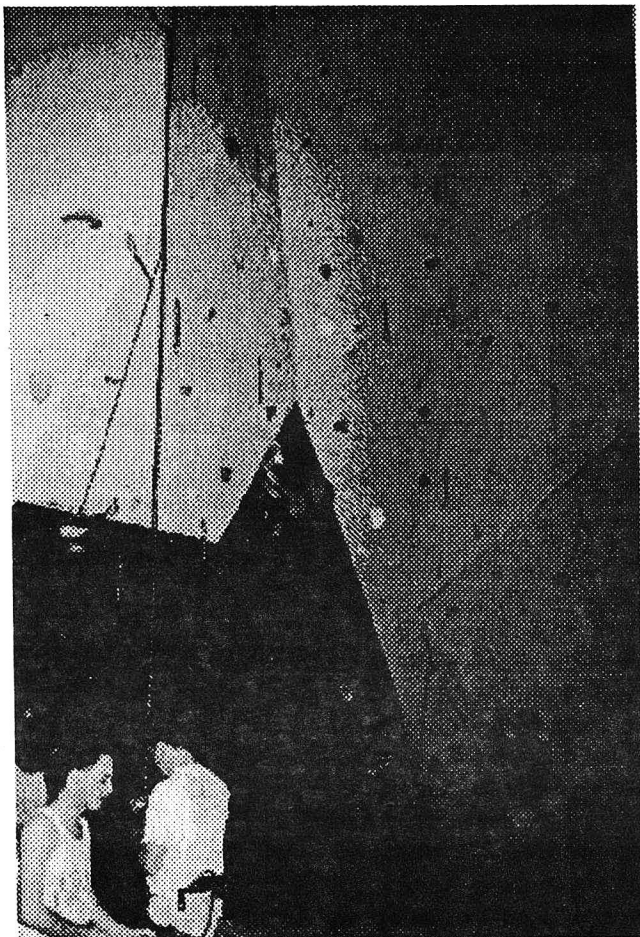
N

NOT TO SCALE



Doug Cosby teaches twist-locks at one of the weekly training sessions at Sportrock.





*MS MEMBER STUART PREGNALL LEADS OUT  
OF THE "BLACK HOLE" AT SPORTROCK.*



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