



Up Hesse

FOUNDED BY
HERB AND JAN CONN

February 1995

Vol. 50 no. 1

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

MS ELECTS NEW OFFICERS:

Godwin succeeds Hsi

Dave Godwin is the Mountaineering Section's new Chairman. He and three other MS officers were elected to their one-year posts by voice vote at the January meeting. Scott Pearson is the new Vice Chairman. Demian Larry is Treasurer and Jim Southward is Secretary. Dave takes over as MS Chairman from Peter Hsi.

Dave plans to hold his first executive meeting on Feb. 6. Anyone interested in helping organize MS events or in heading an MS committee should contact Dave at 703-276-2291, or talk to him at the Feb. 8 meeting. MS committees include: Training/Safety, Newsletter, Expeditions, Publicity, Membership, Programs and Hospitality.

EL PICO DE ORIZABA EXPEDITION

An excellent Mexican adventure

Four Mountaineering Section climbers left Washington, D.C. on Christmas afternoon, bound for Mexico and the mountain-volcano summits of El Pico de Orizaba and Popocatepetl. The four team members: Jim "the pack with legs" Southward, Peter "let's get the hell off this ice!" Hsi, Bill "Reinhold" Fike, and Carl "the Gambler" Gugasain.

We achieved our primary goal—to reach the summit of El Pico de Orizaba (5,611 meters, 18,410 feet)—on Friday, Dec. 30, but our original peak-bagging plans to also climb Popocatepetl or "Popo" (5,456 meters, 17,930 feet), were changed by good old Mother Nature about a week prior to our departure. You may have seen TV coverage of

Popo's eruption, spewing ash, steam, rocks and who-knows-what-else.

Despite not being able to climb Popo, the expedition was considered a complete success



by all players. Read on to get the beta for this most-excellent Mexican climbing adventure—and be sure to catch the slide show scheduled for the Feb. 8 meeting at PATC/MS headquarters.

BOULDERING COMPETITION AT CLIPPER CITY

The Clipper City Rock Gym in Baltimore is sponsoring a somewhat-informal bouldering competition this month, with comp finals set for March 3rd. There will be three preliminary rounds (each held on a Friday), beginning Friday Feb. 3

and continuing through Feb. 10 and Feb. 17. The finals will be held Friday, March 3. Total cost for the prelims and finals: \$30 for gym members, \$35 for non-members. For more info, call Clipper City at: 410-467-9727.

Approach to Base Camp:

Our team left Mexico City for Tlachichuca. Tlachichuca is where the paved road ends and the four-wheel-drive road begins. It's also home to the Reyes family, which has been supporting climbers' needs for

years. Señor Reyes runs one of several four-wheel-drive taxi services to Piedra Grande (4260 meters, 14,000 feet) and operates a dormitory for climbers out of a converted soap-manufacturing building.

In order to acclimate properly and arrive at the Piedra Grande base camp as healthy as possible, we spent two days hiking in while covering about 10 miles. Two small Indian villages exist along the four-wheel-drive road to Piedra Grande: San Miguel Zoapan and Hidalgo (highest community in North America).

We arranged with Señor Reyes to be dropped off, one mile past the first town of San Miguel Zoapan. For the next two days and nights, we hiked through beautiful pine forests and slept under clear, star-filled skies. We saw local farmers harvesting their corn fields and shepherds herding their livestock to pasture.

Our acclimation game plan had us gaining 2,000 feet per day . . .

Our acclimation game-plan had us gaining 2,000 feet per day which translated to only three to four hours of hiking per day during the approach to base camp. Unfortunately, 2,000 feet per day is still an aggressive altitude gain schedule for most climbers. Therefore, to reduce the risk of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS),



Jim Southward and Peter Hsi on the summit of El Pico de Orizaba

three of the four climbers took 1,000 mg. of Diamox daily to suppress AMS symptoms. To acclimate naturally, schedule permitting, altitude gain should be limited to only 1,000 feet per day above 9,000 feet. Bill "Reinhold" Fike chose to go drug-free and amazed the rest of us with his natural acclimation ability. Most people heading to Piedra Grande took advantage of the four-wheel-drive service and rode directly to 14,000 feet; to do this you need to already be acclimated or risk AMS. On our way to high camp and on summit day, we passed several of the non-acclimated types in retreat, puking their guts out by the side of the trail. At Piedra Grande, we managed to snag the smaller of the two huts for our group. This worked well since the larger Octavio Alvarez hut holds up to 60 climbers and tends to be very noisy. We had noise problems in our own hut, however. We had hired a security person to watch our gear on summit day, but our

great plan backfired when his loud snoring kept us all awake; his snoring is even rumored to have had some part in the decision to establish high camp!

High Camp:

Feeling particularly cocky after surviving their first night at 14,000 feet, Jim and Pete decided to establish high camp at 16,000 feet, just below the Jamapa Glacier. High camp clearly put them in a good strategic position for a summit bid, but not without risk. Sleeping at high altitude is difficult, AMS can be a factor as well as the energy sink of a 2,000 foot carry with 55-pound packs. Additionally, the most technical section on the mountain was an 800 foot ice field starting at 15,000 feet. Despite a low angle (25 to 30 degrees), the field was solid water ice; arresting a fall, especially with a heavy pack would have been interesting, to say the least. According to Jim, you couldn't buy training that good! How-

ever, Pete "lets get the hell off this ice!" Hsi had his own opinions. Climbing the ice field was tough but down-climbing the next day was the really scary part. Bill and Carl, after weighing the options decided to remain at base camp for a second night and go for the summit from Piedra Grande. To aid Bill's and Carl's acclimation, they used the climb-high/sleep-low strategy and day hiked to the 16,000 foot level with Jim and Pete, then returned to base camp at 14,000 feet. The high-camp team spent most of the afternoon securing camp and melting ice to meet their water needs.

Summit Day:

A classic alpine start under beautiful, clear, starlit skies got the high-camp team moving at 3:45 a.m., Friday morning. The 20-degree temperatures created perfect frozen snow for crampons. Winds were light. As they progressed up the trade route on the Jamapa Glacier,

the slope gradually increased from 25 degrees at the base to about 40 degrees near the summit. Jim and Pete witnessed a spectacular sunrise as they climbed near the crater rim. Shortly thereafter, the two were first to reach the summit at 8:20 a.m.

*Popocatepetl
could be seen
erupting 150
miles to the
west.*

The view from the summit was breath-taking. With the mountain rising from sea level to the east, they were treated with a dramatic feeling of height. Popocatepetl could be seen erupting 150 miles to the west. Unfortunately, the 30 knots of wind and 20 degree (F)

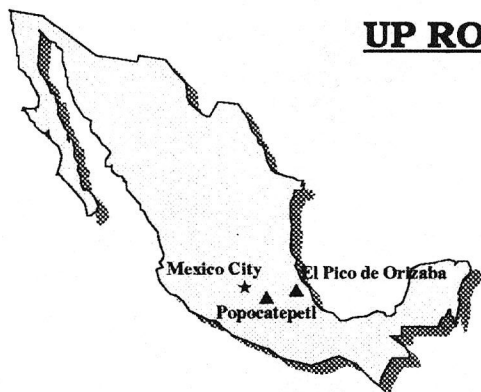
temperatures created a chill factor of minus-18 degrees (F) which was felt all the way to the bone. The obligatory summit photos were taken and chocolate bars eaten prior to making the descent.

Crevasse hazard on El Pico de Orizaba was evaluated as low, so both teams elected not to use ropes during the climb. Crevasses were limited to only the bergschrund, which was small and easily avoidable. Jim flagged the route for later parties and for the descent in the event bad weather rolled in.

The Base Camp team at Piedra Grande had a longer but similar summit day experience. Bill summited about noon and Carl set a personal altitude record of 17,200 feet.

By all accounts this expedition to El Pico de Orizaba was well worth the trip and is highly recommended for those wishing to get some high-altitude experience without excessive technical requirements.

—Jim Southward



UP ROPE BETA BOX:

Getting to Mexico's El Pico de Orizaba.

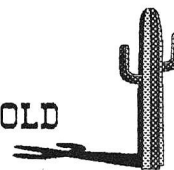
Continental Airlines flew us into Mexico City, via Houston, for a cheep \$340 round-trip. We stayed at and recommend the Best Western (BW) Hotel Ritz at 30 Madero Ave, conveniently located downtown near many of the tourist sights such as the National Palace and Cathedral. The Ritz has a good restaurant, hot showers and the all-important bar.

Connecting by bus from Mexico City (2250 meters, 7,350 feet) to Tlachichuca (2600 meters, 8,530 feet) was amazingly easy. A quick 36 peso cab ride from our hotel got us to the "Topo" bus terminal which handles all east-bound destinations. The Mexican buses were surprisingly modern and even had assigned seating. We took the "AU" (Autobuses Unidos) line to El Seco (26 pesos each) where we transferred to a local "ACOSA" bus for the final leg of our journey to Tlachichuca.



WESTERN CLIMBS:

PARADISE VALLEY, HUECO TANKS, COCHISE'S STRONGHOLD



Usually during a late October or early November climbing trip, while clenching chemical hand-warmers every two or three moves, trying to warm up my numb fingers, I resolve to pack away my climbing rack for the winter and only climb in the gyms until the temperature hits 60 degrees (F) again. This year, though, I was going to Tucson, Arizona on business in mid-November, so those camming units got another couple of weeks' use.

Former MS chairman, Peter Hsi, joined me for some fun in what the local radio stations, and probably all the real-estate agents and golf course owners, called "Paradise Valley." Armed with guide books and recommended routes from ex-Tucson-now-DC climber Bill Farrand, we first tackled some local climbing at Mount Lemmon.

MT. LEMMON

Climbing here was distinctly different from the common mid-Atlantic areas such as: New York's Shawangunks, West Virginia's Seneca Rocks and The New River Gorge. Instead of having a few long cliffs with lots of climbs and (usually) lots of people, Mt. Lemmon featured hundreds of

different areas with no more than a couple dozen climbs each. And since climbing first involved driving along the road until you saw or thought you were near your destination

started at the right spot. It took us only one time to figure out that it is better to follow the descriptions than the mile-markers quoted in the guide book.

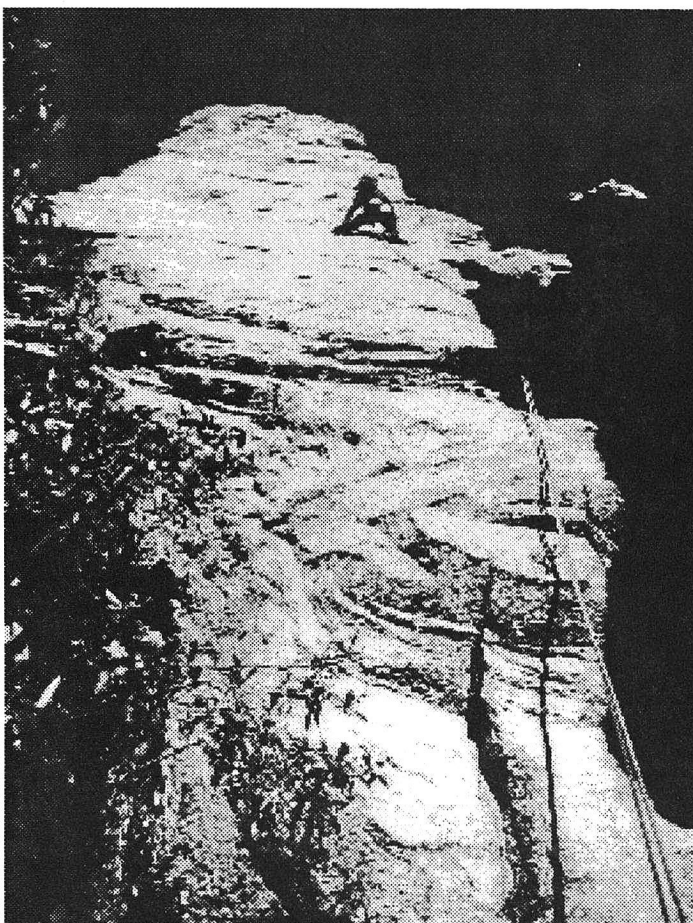
A couple notes if you're heading to Mt. Lemmon: It gets considerably colder on the mountain than in the city. This can be good during the hot weather; but during the colder times, you should pick some climbs at the lower elevations. A few good routes that we did, include: Chihuahua Power (5.9 sport); Rosie (5.10+ sport); Here and Gone (5.8 trad); and Hitchcock Pinnacle (5.7 or 5.8 trad, especially good if you want to impress all the tourists at the lookout 50 yards away).

HUECO TANKS

After waking up to snow one morning, we pushed on to Texas in search of warmer weather. Hueco Tanks is a world-famous area, just outside of El Paso,

and primarily known for its bouldering. (Pete and I actually did very little bouldering and instead opted to use those expensive ropes, camming devices and quick-draws.)

The rocks are in a state park with a \$2 per person per day entry fee, limited hours (they do lock the gate!), few in-park camp sites, and a requirement that all visitors sign in.



Dave Godwin on Chihuahua Power (5.9 Sport), Mt. Lemmon

rock, parking on the side of the road, and heading to it, this also helped to spread the climbers out. Some hikes were literally one minute from the car, but others could involve up to an hour of jumping around washes and skirting prickly pears. And if you were at the right altitude, Tucson's famous saguaro cacti. Of course, this assumes you

All of that is just a minor inconvenience for the great climbing found there.

It took me a couple of routes to get used to the type of climbing generally found. The rocks are named for the numerous pockets, or huecos, found everywhere. Often the trick was finding the pocket that had the best and sometimes bomber edge, rather than grabbing the smooth sloping hueco right next to it. Trusting your shoes was also imperative, since there weren't as many obvious edges but plenty of good smearing on the bottom of the bigger huecos.

Routes that we did, include: the classic trad routes, Cakewalk (5.6) and Uriah's Heap (5.7+); and various sport routes, including : Divine Wind (5.9); Hueco Syndrome (5.9 on the first pitch); Window Pane (5.10b/c, fantastic!); Alice in Bananaland (5.10-, mixed) ; and New Chautauqua (5.11b).

Not to be missed is the classic Malice in Bucketland (5.10-), a wonderful sport route with the first move taking you off a boulder and 15 feet off the deck. (It was our first route there.)

I found most of these ratings a bit soft, especially after I got used to the rock. Note that many of the sport routes and/or rappels require two ropes, so either lead on double-nine millimeters or have your partner trail a second rope.

COCHISE'S STRONGHOLD

We headed back to Arizona to go to this area that one Internet user proclaims is the best climbing in the entire state. Cochise is a somewhat-remote area featuring some good back-country climbing on nice rock. Although there didn't seem to be much in the way of

30 minutes up a wash to reach the Stronghold Dome, probably the closest climbing area there. This rudely reminded us of how out-of-shape we were. I was further reminded of this after falling on Beeline, a 5.8+, low-angle crack climb (Actually, it was more like sliding, which was even more embarrassing).

Despite the remoteness of Cochise, we spent that day climbing next to and in front of the only two other climbing parties we saw in the campground, evidence of the high quality of Beeline.

That night we rewarded ourselves with the traditional Thanksgiving feast: spaghetti and flavored rice. I imagine the other climbers had equally gluttonous repasts.

While at Cochise, we also did a couple of climbs down and to the left of Beeline. Both involved some crappie climbing out of chimneys and gullies to reach more pleasant rock. I also led Mangas Coloradas, a 5.11 sport route that had seven bolts: four in the first 40 feet or so, three in the last 40 feet or so,

and none in the 40 feet in-between. The last section involved some lay-backing off a thin flake/dike system. Not thin as in hard, but thin as in "Dang this thing is hollow. I sure hope it doesn't break apart while I'm climbing."

It didn't, which is why you've been able to read this report.

—Dave Godwin



Peter Hsi on Divine Wind (5.9 Sport), Hueco Tanks

tourist activities, the campground had its share of families and boy scouts that drive in, light a bonfire, and leave in a day or two. If you go climbing there, you will quickly get used to slinging, belaying from, and rappelling off of the ever-present chicken heads.

Our first day (Thanksgiving day), we huffed and puffed for

STARVED FOR CLIMBING NEWS?

Internet newsgroups fill the bill

If you are interested in reading more climbing news, and have a computer and modem at your disposal, try dialing up and browsing through the Internet newsgroup "rec.climbing." It's a computerized collection box for all kinds of e-mail postings by sport climbers and mountaineers.

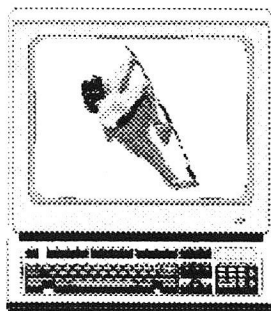
A lot of good information—as well as a lot of "junk mail"—gets posted to the newsgroup. Climbing topics galore are discussed in the newsgroup—in addition to the many requests for climbing beta for specific areas around the U.S. and Europe.

Some of the topics that were being discussed—or debated back and forth—in late January included: "How to take a lead fall." In another posting, under the heading, "See Dick Fall," one contributor wrote "In response to a number of articles surrounding the increase in stupid outdoor climbing accidents—I think the gyms are a large contributor."

That posting was just the start of a debate about out-

door-trained vs. gym-trained climbers.

Under the heading "Devil's Tower Rack," another climber wrote: "I am looking to climb Devil's Tower in spring,



Durrance Route. Would appreciate any recommendations on what to include in a rack."

Another asked for "basic boot/crampon/ice axe advice." Under the subject heading "Winter climbing on Mt. Washington," someone asked "Anybody know any good snow/mixed routes? No ice climbing this time."

One person responded: "The best route without any ice at all is Lionshead trail, a fairly easy route, depending on the weather." Another response

said: "Climb the Lion's Head out of Pinkham Notch. It is four miles steep and above the cirque is some great snow fields. Did it on New Years, great climb. Snow shoe and crampons only. Some 4th class scrambles if you look for 'em."

I have been planning a hiking trip in Switzerland for this July, and plan to include a few treks up to some specific Swiss Alpine Club huts. Unsure of the real beta for getting to some of the huts (which include crossing a glacier or two), I posted a request for info. About six readers who had been to the huts in question—including a few from Switzerland—posted helpful responses.

A word of caution: Tapping into an Internet newsgroup like rec.climbing to get some fresh news or beta, could be fun and useful. But remember, just like when you climb, you're the one who needs to double-check your own ropes and anchor. The same goes for advice. So, as with anything else, let's be careful out there, okay?

~Tony Sanders

UP ROPE BETA BOX:

Tapping into rec.climbing via America Online

The Internet newsgroup rec.climbing can be reached through either America Online, Compuserve or Prodigy. If you have an account with AOL, then simply use the "keyword" command (control-K) and type "internet." That will bring you to an Internet screen with a set of menu options that explain tapping into the Internet.

Another, perhaps quicker way to get to the rec.climbing newsgroup is to type the keyword "newsgroups." Next, selecting the "Add Newsgroups" option will give you a way to browse through a plethora of categories and topics. A faster way is to select the "Expert Add" option and type in rec.climbing. Next, choose "Read My Newsgroups" and you'll be on your way. See you there!

Up Rope, a

publication of the P.A.T.C. Mountaineering Section, is published bi-monthly and written by Mountaineering Section members who possess ordinary writing abilities. We're always looking for newsworthy items to print, regardless of subject so long as it's climbing or mountain related. Articles can be on trip reports, book reviews, gear reviews, good beta to climbs, red points -- heck, we don't care. To submit articles and photographs for Up Rope, please write with your favorite word processing program, and either send via Internet, or copy to a DOS diskette in plain ASCII text format, and mail to the literary editor, marked ATTN.: UP ROPE. The deadline for the next issue is March 11.

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Why not join the Mountaineering Section?

Check out these benefits:

Membership in the Mountaineering Section of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club costs only \$15 per year. Among the benefits:

- The opportunity to participate in organized climbing trips, ranging from occasional top-roping sessions at nearby crags to lead-climbing trips at areas such as West Virginia's New River Gorge or New York's Shawangunks.
- Access to Nelson House near Seneca Rocks, W.Va.
- Reduced annual membership fee to Clipper City Rock Gym and the City of Rockville's gym.
- Reduced ticket prices to various climber lectures and slide shows.
- Subscription to Up Rope, the fine climbing publication you're reading right now, chock-full of well written articles by MS members.



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Climbers' Calendar

Mountaineering Section of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
118 Park Street, SE; Vienna, Virginia 22180; Climbers' Hotline: (703) 242-3501

Date	Destination/Event	Point of Contact	Place & Time	Remarks
2/6 Mon	Executive Committee Meeting (please call for directions)	Dave Godwin (703) 524-8800	Dave's place 6:30 pm	come try Dave's (in)famous "home" cooking!
2/8 Wed	Membership Meeting: "Mexican adventure: Pico de Orizaba and Popocatepetl"	Climbers' Hotline (703) 242-3501	HQ 8:00 pm	food, drinks, slide show; all welcome
2/9 Thur	Lynn Hill slide show (tickets about \$8)	St. Albans School (202) 537-6435	====>	St. Albans School, DC
3/8 Wed	Membership Meeting program TBA	Climbers' Hotline (703) 242-3501	HQ 8:00 pm	food, drinks, 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

- * **General:** Please call the trip leader by mid-week to make arrangements and contingency plans.
Call the Climbers' Hotline (703/242-3501) for the latest additions and too-late-to-be-published events.
- * **Executive Committee Meetings:** Held first Wednesday of every odd-numbered month or by special arrangement. Everyone is invited.
- * **Membership Meetings:** Held second Wednesday of every month except August. Everyone is invited to attend.

RENDEZVOUS LOCATIONS

HQ PATC Headquarters, 118 Park St, Vienna, Virginia
From I-495 in VA, exit #11 to Rte 123 south (Vienna). Approximately 11 lights, left at Park St -OR- From I-66, exit at Nutley St north. Right at Rte 123.
Right at Park St. Building is on the left.

TBA To Be Arranged
Please call the Point of Contact for directions or the Climbers' Hotline for updates.



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