



Up Rope

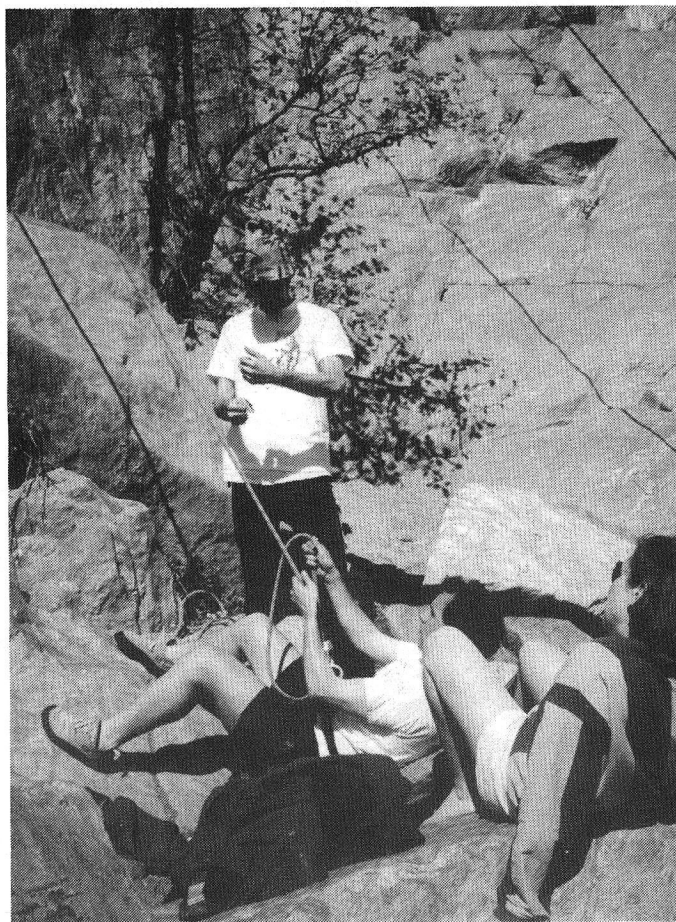
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HERB AND JAN CONN

June 1995

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

Spring Break in Great Falls



Dave Godwin demonstrating to beginner rock climbers the art of belaying.

Some people go to Florida for Spring Break, others go to the Caribbean, but not the Mountaineering Section of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club — it's Great Falls for us. The Mountaineering Section sprung into Spring with a heavily-attended beginners' top-

roping trip to Great Falls on Saturday, April 29th. After meeting at 8 a.m. sharp (read: most wandered in by about 8:30), we headed down to the Dihedrals area.

I managed to get three ropes in the rough vicinity of Pride (5.4), Prejudice (5.5) and the Lichen Wall (climbs from 5.4-5.7). Not having climbed there in quite a while, I ended up mixing and matching the routes, with the Lichen Wall finish starting on Prejudice, the Prejudice finish starting on Pride, and the Pride finish having an

interesting off-route start. All routes were set up following Mister Safe-T's Tips for Safe Climbing (read: back it up!) as written in the April Up Rope.

In the group were: Ken Amaditz, Kimberly Begonis, Kim Carr, Chris Dege, Henry Ferland, (continued on page 6)

FRIENDS OF SENECA

Organizing Fall Trail Work Schedule

If you're a Seneca Rocks climber, or simply want to help build the new access trails at Seneca, then plan on volunteering some time in late September or early October. The Friends of Seneca, a group of about eight devoted local climbers, have been putting in some long hours and lots of sweat equity to stop the erosion that's occurring on the West Face trails. As of late May, the work crews had just about finished building new steps in the area near Old Man's route. Anyone interested in helping out can call Tony Barnes at 304-567-2085.

SUMMER PLANS FOR MS MEMBERS

Demian Larry will be climbing and hanging around Chamonix, France, various parts of Switzerland and the Italian Dolomites.

Ozana Halik and Peter Hsi plan to try their hands at climbing the Northeast Ridge of Bugaboo Spire.

Tony and Holly Sanders will be trekking through two areas of Switzerland and staying at various Swiss Alpine Club huts. The two areas they'll hit are: the Bernese Oberland, and the Valais region, south of the Rhone river.

(Watch for Fall Slide Shows!)

TRAVERSING THE PRESIDENTIALS HUT-TO-HUT

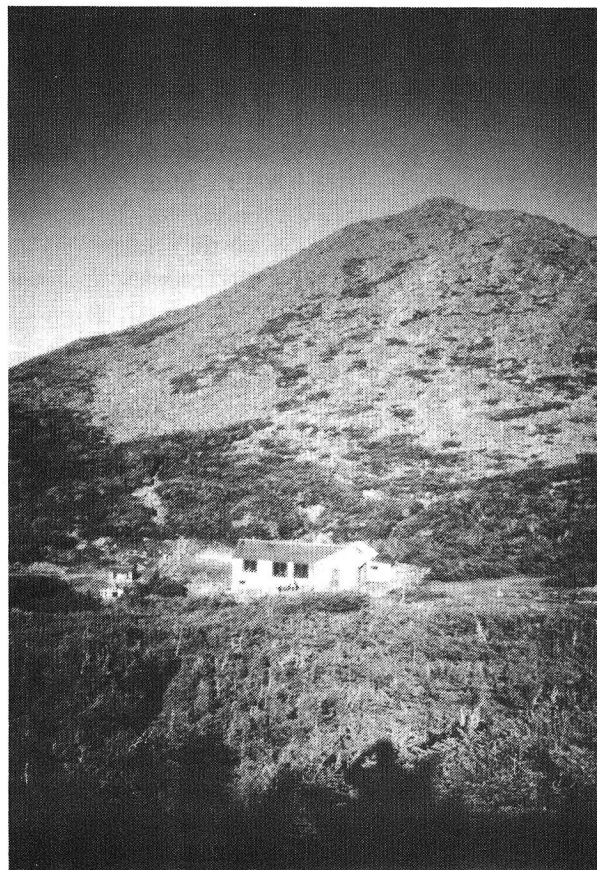
The visibility was 30 feet. The winds were 70 m.p.h. The temperature was 45 degrees (F). Pack covers were literally torn from our packs, and anything not covered with waterproof material became instantly soaked. We were huddled in front of a large pile of rocks at 5,380 feet above sea level, trying to take a picture, but the photographer was struggling just to stand up. These were not normal PATC hiking conditions, but this was not a normal PATC hike.

The above description typified the second day of the "Traverse of the Presidentials," a five-day, hut-to-hut backpacking trek through the Presidential Range of the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire, September 11-16, 1994.

Eleven PATC members gathered at Crawford Notch Hostel on Sunday, Sept. 10, to begin the adventure. Autumn was already arriving in the valleys, as many trees were yellow and red, and above treeline, the mountains had already received a few inches of (short-lived) snow. Our hike began on Monday at 1,200 ft, when we left Route 302 and began climbing the Webster Cliff Trail. This trail, and most of the trails we used, are part of the Appalachian Trail; this provided a nice tie to PATC, and allowed us to "experience" many AT thru-hikers (who were only about 340 miles from their destination of Mt. Katahdin at this point). The sky was full of clouds, but they were well above us, so when we reached Webster Cliff we had great views of Crawford Notch below. Monday was all climbing (over 3,000 feet in 6.4 miles), and we eventually met the clouds face-to-face; by the time we reached

Mizpah Springs Hut, it was almost lost in the mist.

Accommodations in all the huts were simple, yet great. Each hut had a dining room, kitchen, and bunk rooms (each sleeping from 10-30 people). The meals were all wonderful—all the food you could eat, served family style.



Dinner menus included soup, fresh bread, salad, vegetables, entree (depending on the day of the week, it was pizza or fish with rice or beef stroganov or chicken), and dessert. Breakfasts were always juice, oatmeal, granola, pancakes or eggs, bacon or ham, and fruit. The huts all sold hiker supplies—including space blankets, first-aid items, sleeping-bag liners, film, ear plugs (to ensure quiet sleep), and T-shirts unique to each hut. Each hut also had

indoor restrooms and running water (cold only).

Tuesday, Sept. 12, was our chance to experience a typical day in the "Whites." After about 9 a.m., we were above treeline for good, hiking north on Crawford Path/AT, and exposed to the full effects of the weather. We did a lot of climbing (Mounts Pierce, Eisenhower and Monroe—totalling just over 2,000 feet in 5.2 miles), a lot of peering into the wind and fog, wondering where we were (an altimeter proved very useful), and very little picture-taking. When we finally arrived at Lakes of the Clouds Hut (5,050 feet), we were definitely ready for warm shelter and hot food.

What a difference one night can make! Wednesday morning was beautiful! Some of us were so thrilled with the clear views that we climbed back up Mt. Monroe before breakfast to enjoy the sunrise. After breakfast we all climbed (1,240 feet in 1.4 miles) up Mt. Washington (6,288 feet—highest point in the northeastern U.S.), and spent 2-3 hours enjoying the views (as well as the chili dogs, weather station, museum, cars, trains, etc.) on the summit. We descended due south to the headwall of

the famous Tuckerman Ravine, where we enjoyed a leisurely break in the sun, before finally heading back to the "Lakes" hut. Once there, some of the group still had sufficient energy for another climb up Mt. Monroe for the afternoon views.

Sept. 14 was our marathon day (over 3,000 feet of climbing in 7.2 miles). Amazingly, the weather was even better than Wednesday—numerous people told us during the day that

MISTER SAFE-T'S
TIAS FOR SAFE
CLIMBING



it was extremely rare to have two days in a row of such great weather. We hiked north on Gulfside Trail/AT, skirting west of the summit of Mt. Washington. We crossed Mt. Clay (5,533 feet) and descended to Sphinx Col (4,959 feet), before climbing up for a lunch stop on Monticello Lawn (high on the south slope of Mt. Jefferson). Next was the summit of Mt. Jefferson (5,715 feet), then down to Edmands Col (4,938 feet), then up again to Mt. Adams (5,799 feet). We finally arrived at Madison Hut just in time for dinner (6 p.m. sharp). Since the sky was clear, and the moon was full, a couple of us could not resist an after-dinner climb up Mt. Madison (5,366 feet) before calling it a day.

Friday morning brought the slow arrival of a storm front, but not before part of the group climbed Mt. Madison, and others did Mt. J.Q. Adams. We finally parted ways with the AT, as it heads southeast to Pinkham Notch, and we continued north, descending a trail called Airline (famous for a narrow section of ridge called "The Knifedge"). Our northern trailhead, on Hwy. 2, was 3.7 miles and 3,540 feet

below Madison Hut.

This trip can be summed up in one word—wonderful. It is a long, strenuous hike (28 miles and nearly 20,000 feet of elevation gain/loss). The trail is very rough in places (some would say many places); even though it was almost all on the AT, it is not like the AT in northern Virginia—in fact, often when thru-hikers learned we were from PATC they complimented us on the excellent condition of the AT in our area (thanks, Trail Overseers!). But, the group was great, the weather was beautiful, and the huts were fantastic. September seems like a perfect time to go, so if you're interested mark your calendars because another trip is being planned. For more information, and pictures, call Geoff Irons at (703)349-2399 (h) or (703)756-1302 (w).

—Geoff Irons

(Editor's note: Geoff will present a slide show on the Presidential range traverse at the upcoming June 14 meeting. Geoff's story originally appeared in the December issue of the *Potomac Appalachian*, PATC's own monthly newsletter.

Re: Helmets

Wear one. Okay? Next topic!

Well, I guess it's not quite as simple as that although many experienced climbers think it should be. I'm one of those climbers who wears a helmet sometimes and not others. Maybe I can shed some light on the subject.

Newcomers to the sport see many—if not most—experienced climbers climbing without helmets. What gives? Participants in other sports with the danger of head injury wear helmets consistently (kayakers for example). And for climbing, head injury from rock fall or climber fall is a very real possibility. Why, then, the lack of helmet wearing?

The main, acknowledged arguments against using a helmet are that it's hot, uncomfortable, inconvenient, and gives a false sense of security. The unacknowledged reason is that it is uncool. You look dork-like with the brain bucket, especially if no one else is wearing one.

So there's the rub, protecting the head versus comfort and coolness—which seem kind of inconsequential when talking about skull fractures and death.

We're talking risk-based choices here. I wouldn't ever advocate mandatory helmet wearing (as was suggested in the rec.climbing newsgroup on the Internet) because I don't want anyone restricting my freedom to pursue "risky" pastimes such as climbing.

There's a "continuum of risk" of head injury in climbing. The very-low-risk end of the spectrum includes top roping at areas with very little loose rock. At the other end is lead climbing in the mountains where there is

danger of rock, ice, and snow hitting the head and where a lead fall could land you on a ledge or rock.

When I am climbing (toproping) at Great Falls I don't wear a helmet and to see helmets on anyone other than a class of beginners is unusual. There is little loose rock and about the only worry is that some tourist will chuck something towards the river and hit you.

When I climb in the mountains of the Canadian Rockies or the Tetons I always always wear a helmet. The rock is loose. Your partner or plain old natural causes can initiate rocks falling. On lead in the mountains there are lots of ledges you can hit in a fall. The brain bucket is a definite advantage.

Given those two extremes, a lot of climbing occurs at crags that are in the middle of the spectrum. I wear a helmet if I figure a head injury could occur. If I figure the possibilities are slim, I don't wear a helmet. At Seneca I wear a helmet because there is a real danger of rockfall and lots of ledges. I don't wear a helmet at Franklin because, while there is some loose rock, the cliffs are short and the falls clean.

One last note, I took my first lead fall when I was 19 and a very inexperienced leader. It was at Cannon Mountain in New Hampshire and I was 40 feet up the first pitch. I had put a solid piece in at the 5.7 crux at about 20 feet. Then the climbing became easy, so in the next 20 feet I put only one small wired stopper in the rock.

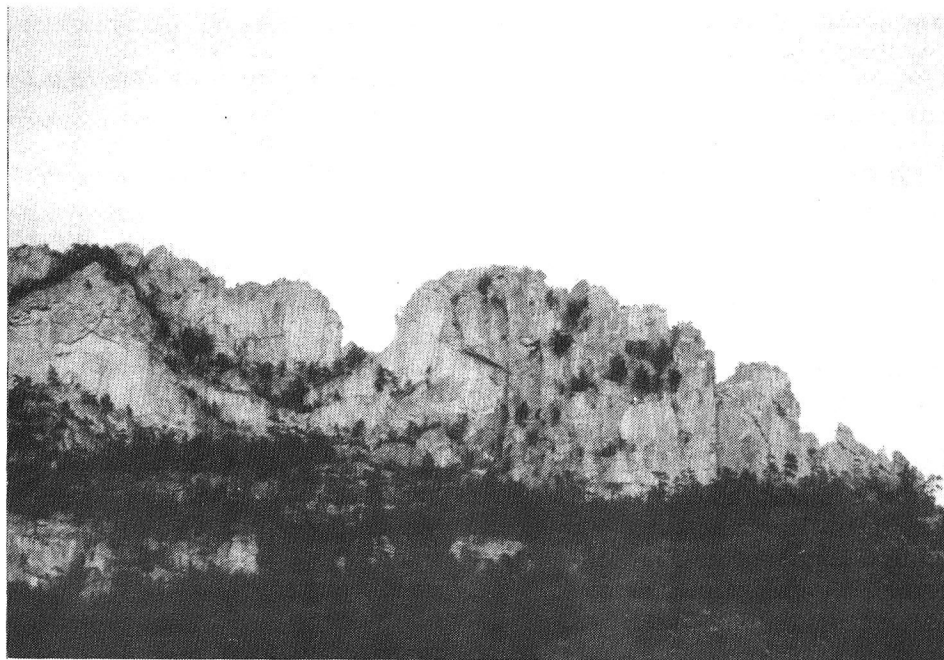
I was looking up to the next belay ledge when suddenly my feet skidded out and I started sliding down the rock. The angle was only about 75 degrees. I slid 10 feet before hitting a small ledge and tumbled backwards all the way down to the scree, about five feet from my belayer. My small

(continued on page 6)

SENECA ROCKS: A TRIP REPORT



It's been a while since my last weekend outing with the Mountaineering Section, so when Ozana Halik called me to go climbing at Seneca, I got busy packing. We joined a group of other MS members for an abbreviated weekend of climbing. (Sunday, May 14 was a rainout.)



The West Face of Seneca Rocks, West Virginia

Jim Southward, the trip coordinator, climbed with Rick Kneedler on "Triple S" (a stiff 5.8), Soler (5.7) and Pleasant Overhangs (5.7) on Friday, May 12. On Saturday, his friend Archie Sirianni and new MS member Peter Ro hit some other 5.8s and 5.9s.

"Dangerous Demo" Larry and Alex "Bivouac" Tait logged some flight time on "Marshall's Madness" (5.9). Our fearless and resident hardmen Dave Godwin and Scott Pearson climbed Prune (5.7), Crispy Critter (5.7), Traffic Jam (5.7) and West Pole (5.7).

Ozana and I did what some people might call "yo-yo" climbing: we would climb up one face, rap down the other side and climb back up. Some of our climbs included starting up Candy Corner (5.5) and ending on Skyline Traverse (5.3). We also hit Le Gourmet Direct (5.6). I don't remember what else we did except for roasting weenies, quaffing

beers, and exchanging the usual climber bravado around the campfire that night. Though the rain on Sunday morning ended notions of climbing for most of us, a good time was still had by all.

~Peter Hsi

LIFE ON THE ROCKS: A BEGINNERS EYE-VIEW OF CLIMBING

The debate was whether it was scarier to go up, or come down. "I love the ride down. I'm not afraid of falling, because I already am," said one. "Not me," said Charles Franklin. "When you're climbing, you at least have the illusion that you're in control. But coming down.....I guess you just have to have faith."

These questions, and the "What am I doing clinging to a rock face 50 feet in the air? classic were posed for the first time by a group of climbers who joined the Mountaineering Section's April 29th Group Climb. Some of the 15 who attended Dave Godwin's clinic at Great Falls were veterans of last year's climb, others were novices there to gain experience. At least half were getting their first real rock-climbing experience on Pride, Prejudice, and the face in between.

Dave gave a demonstration of proper technique for belaying, tying in, and general rope handling, while Wendy Jones acted as his example climber. (Those of you who attended last year's clinic will remember Wendy as the person whose glasses received some pretty impressive scratches at the Dihedrals. This year, Wendy decided against using that tricky nose-jam maneuver, and instead, gave the beginners a great act to follow).

Would you want to belay your boss? A contingent of EPA employees, organized by Sue Nogas, were a little surprised when their Deputy Division Director and veteran mountaineer

Matt Hale put in an appearance. Matt eschewed a harness and shoes, preferring to secure the rope around his torso, and climb in tennis shoes. Sue had invited him to show the group How It Is Done. One climber was heard to wonder, "What about his rib cage? That could do some damage."

harnesses.]

Matt and three friends together pioneered the West Face route up Alaska's Mt. Huntington (elev. 12,240 feet) back in 1965. Their first-ascent route, which involves severe snow and ice climbing with rock difficulty up to 5.9 and A2, is considered one of North America's 50 classic climbs.

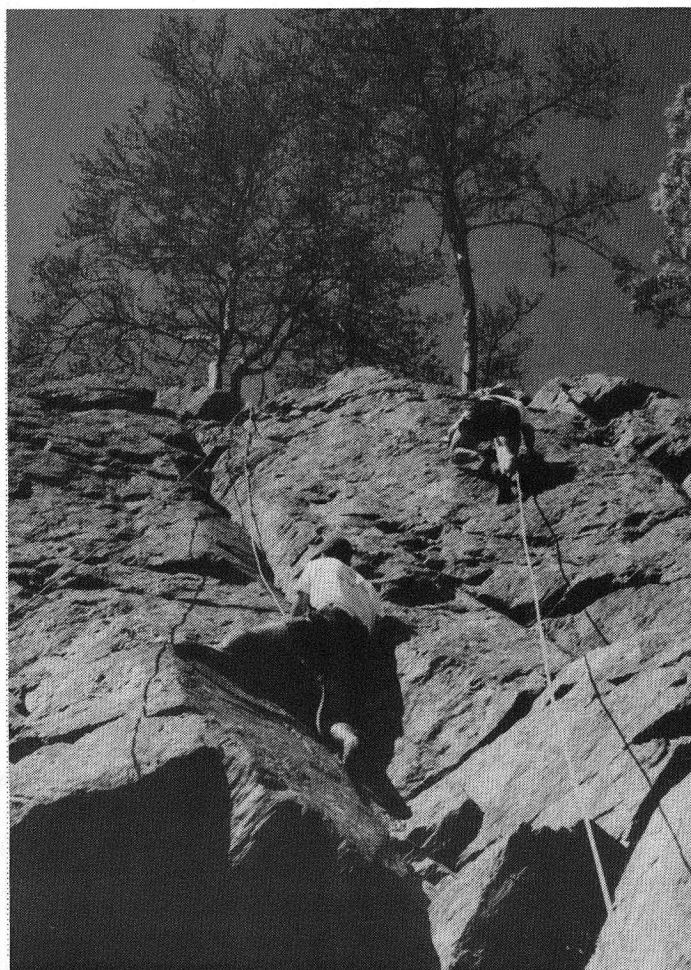
Sue got the rare treat of ascending one of the routes with a veteran climber on either side of her—Dave advising on the left and Matt assisting on the right. Despite the beta overload, Sueaced her climb and came down smiling.

Everyone groaned at the end of the day when Dave displayed "the importance of relying on your legs" by climbing one-handed. It just reminded everyone how much fun it can be—and how much you can learn—from watching a really good climber on a route you have tried, too. That didn't stop anyone from teasing Dave for being a show-off, nonetheless.

We never finally settled whether going up or down makes the exposure easier to handle, but all of it seemed a lot less scary after Dave's expert

instruction and the support and helpfulness of everyone in the group. It was a great way to introduce some new people to the sport, and alot of fun for everyone. Thanks, Dave!

~Holly Sanders



Beginner rock climbers conquering Dihedrals

Another replied, "I don't think he plans on falling." [Editor's note: Matt's pioneering climbing style shows just how much of an influence the advances in climbing gear have had over the last 30 years. MS members should always take full advantage of the latest safety equipment, including

(Spring Break continued from page 1)

Todd Fordon, Charles Franklin, Dave Godwin, Matt Hale (of Mt. Huntington fame), Jenny Hontz, Mike Huhn, Wendy Jones, Angela Kinsella, Susan Nogas, Peter Ro, and Holly and Tony Sanders (of Up Rope fame). Most had climbed at least once or twice before, and, luckily for me, a few had notable experience and shared the belay-slave duties for the initial climbing.

Wendy was the first volunteer (read: guinea pig) who worked through the difficult beginning of Pride and then cruised the rest of the Pride/Prejudice route with ease. Pete and Todd likewise worked up the Prejudice/Lichen Wall route. With their successes, the rest were inspired to give this climbing thing a try. And to my surprise, everyone without exception made it to the top on at least one of the routes. Next trip, we'll just have to put everyone on a more challenging route (read: Monkey Fingers, 5.12-).

Former chairmen Alex Tait and John Yanson joined us a bit later, setting up Rest in Peace (5.6), Executioner's Song (5.8), and Die-Hedral (5.10, rumored to be the name of Bruce Willis's fourth Die Hard movie). Matt Morrison joined them and dropped a line on Ender (5.11). Exhibiting the climbing proficiency that they must have learned as MS chairmen, Alex and John got a good workout on those climbs and left before I even put my shoes on!

To wrap it all up, the day was a success and fun was had by all. My thanks go out to the whole group, who encouraged each other and helped each other get to the top. Special thanks go to all the belayers and to Sue and Mike for staying late and sharing the sherpa duties.

For those who are just beginning climbing, I encourage you to join us on future top-roping trips.

It's a great way to meet other beginners and see if climbing is for you. And best of all, it's free (provided you get to the park before the rangers start collecting entrance fees).

And for those of you who are experienced climbers, I encourage you to lead some trips. Your efforts will be appreciated and will go a long way to promoting the sport. Even though you won't get to do much climbing, especially on big trips like this one, you'll actually learn a lot. The same tips you give beginners' to get up their first climb — good footwork, controlled movements, relaxing on the climb, positive attitude — will help reinforce your own technique as you strive for the next level.

—Dave Godwin

(Mr. Safe-T Continued from page 4)

wired stopper didn't hold and I had grounded out. (I think the protection pulled as I climbed up past it on lead). There were several lessons to be learned about placing adequate pro on easy rock and setting wireds so they don't pull, but I will focus on something else.

I fell 40 feet to the ground and suffered a dislocated shoulder; serious injury but I'm here to talk about it. I was wearing a helmet that my father insisted I buy when I started lead climbing.

I can't say for sure it saved my life, but that old Joe Brown helmet has a huge circular shatter mark in the fiberglass. It could have been my head.

—Mr. Safe-T
(a.k.a. Alex Tait)

WHY NOT JOIN THE PATC 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.

REMEMBERING MS MEMBER JOE FARNESS

Ian Cruickshank was an active member of the PATC/MS from about 1974 to 1982. Now living in North Conway, NH, Ian wrote to Up Rope recently about another active MS member, Joe Farness, who joined the MS in the late 1970s to begin his climbing career. (Take note, younger members, Joe began climbing when he was in his 40s.) Joe died late last year of cancer. He was 67. "Many of us climbed with him at Seneca Rocks, the 'Gunks and even the Dolomites. I think he saw in climbing some clues about life, and in his eight-year bicycle trip, seems to have learned something. He spent his last years up here, helping people, making friends, and, in dying, set an example of how it should be done."

As part of Joe's quest to "experience the world," he set off on a 50,000-mile, eight-year global journey on his 18-speed Fuji to live and travel in 61 countries throughout five continents. According to a report in the Conway Daily Sun, Joe was "the fifth person to complete the criteria of the Japan Adventure Cyclist Club." He is survived by a daughter, four grandchildren and two sisters.



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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 July 20.

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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
6/10	Great Falls, Virginia	Jim Southward (703) 684-6206	GF	beginners welcome
6/11	Great Falls, Virginia	Brian McCormick (703) 222-0397	GF	beginners welcome
6/14 Wed	Membership Meeting: program TBA	Climbers' Hotline (703) 242-3501	HQ 8:00 pm	food, drinks, slide show; all welcome
6/17 Sat	Great Falls, Virginia	Dave Godwin (703) 276-2291	GF	beginners welcome
6/24 & 6/25 Sat-Sun	Seneca Rocks, West Virginia lead climbing	Peter Hsi (703) 591-2540	TBA	please arrange for your own lead partner, or call Pete
7/5 Wed	Executive Committee Meeting (note date change from previous calendar)	Dave Godwin (703) 276-2291	GF 5:45 pm	look in climbers' sign-in for mtg spot; or see us at the pub at dark
7/12 Wed	Membership Meeting: program TBA	Climbers' Hotline (703) 242-3501	HQ 8:00 pm	food, drinks, slide show; all welcome
Dec 1995 or Jan 1996	Aconacagua, Argentina (6,950 m)	Jim Southward (703) 684-6206	TBA	start practicing those mountaineering skills!
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 once 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

GF	Great Falls National Park, Great Falls, Virginia
From I-495 in VA, exit #13 to Rte 193 west (Great Falls). About 4 miles and turn right at 1st light into park entrance. Sharp right after toll booth into lower parking lot. Late arrivals check at climbers' sign-in.	
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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