



Up Close

FOUNDED BY
HERB AND JAN CONN

Newsletter of the Mountaineering Section of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club—APRIL 1998

See it Now! **Everest IMAX** Film at Air & Space Museum

Go see David Breashears' spectacular 44-minute film of the successful, 1996 summiting of Everest by Ed Viesturs (without supplemental oxygen), Jamling Tenzing Norgay and Araceli Segarra. The IMAX film is shown every day at 6 PM at the Air & Space museum's Langley Theater. Tickets are \$5.50 for adults 21 and older and can be purchased up to two weeks in advance.

Believe me, it's great to watch and easily a bargain. The film includes about 90 seconds of footage on Everest's summit—quite a feat if you know what a massive amount of film had to be hauled to the top to get that precious minute-and-a-half. Don't forget to look for the bolted holds Araceli uses on the beautiful ocean-cliff route that introduces her to the IMAX audience. Buy your tickets early to avoid the crush. For more info, call: 202-357-1300.

—Tony Sanders

Denali's West Buttress: A Climber's Guide to Mount McKinley's Classic Route

by Colby Coombs, photos by Brad Washburn, published by
The Mountaineers, 1997

Reviewed by Jim Pasterczyk

Although there are a plethora of books already available on climbing in the Alaska Range and climbing Denali in particular, none has yet focused solely on the most popular route up Denali, the West Buttress, pioneered by Brad Washburn and his team in 1951.

This book fills several voids left by most of the other books devoted to routes on Denali, particularly for those who want to know every little detail about the entire expedition before leaving their armchair.

(continued on reverse)

Climber's Calendar

For schedule additions and updates please check our website at
http://patc.simplenet.com/mtn_sect/

April 8th (Wednesday)

MONTHLY MEETING of the Mountaineering Section

Meeting time: 7:30pm pizza, 8:00pm business meeting and slide show
Meeting place: PATC Headquarters, 118 Park St., SE, Vienna, VA
Contact MS Chairman: Tony Sanders (h) 202-362-3819

April 23rd–26th (Thu to Sun) & April 30th–May 1st (Thu to Sun)

SENECA ROCKS, WV: Spring Trail Work Weekends

Work weekends run by Friends of Seneca. Help build and maintain. Bring helmets, work gloves, food and lots of water and trail tools if you have them. Free campsite. Free Saturday evening meal. Work 2-days and get a t-shirt.

Meeting time: 8:30am

Meeting place: Seneca Rocks Visitor Center parking lot, Seneca Rocks, WV
Washington Area Contact: Bill Wright, (h) 703-860-3752, (w) 703-305-7792

April 25th (Saturday)

CARDEROCK, MD: Top roping Off the Beaten Path

For beginners and experts. Come explore the less traveled rocks at Carderock. We may haul a canoe and cross the river to rarely visited Vaso Island.

Meeting time: 9:00am

Meeting place: Carderock Recreation Area parking lot (farthest one north)
Trip leader: Alex Tait, (h) 301-587-8085 or (w) 301-588-7225

May 2nd (Saturday)

CARDEROCK, MD: Climb and Learn! Anchors and belaying info session

For beginners and experienced people alike. Come to learn more about anchors and belaying or to share your own expertise. Lots of top rope climbing included!

Meeting time: 8:00am

Meeting place: Carderock Recreation Area parking lot (farthest one north)
Trip Leader: Rick Dotson, (h) 703-319-9010

May 13th (Wednesday)

MONTHLY MEETING of the Mountaineering Section

Meeting time: 7:30pm pizza, 8:00pm business meeting and slide show
Meeting place: PATC Headquarters, 118 Park St., SE, Vienna, VA
Contact MS Chairman: Tony Sanders (h) 202-362-3819

June 10th (Wednesday)

MONTHLY MEETING of the Mountaineering Section

Meeting time: 7:30pm pizza, 8:00pm business meeting and slide show
Meeting place: PATC Headquarters, 118 Park St., SE, Vienna, VA
Contact MS Chairman: Tony Sanders (h) 202-362-3819

July 3rd–6th (Thursday–Sunday)

4th of July GUNKS TRIP: Lead climbing

Join the MS at one of the east's most popular climbing areas. Arrange your own partner or call trip leader for other climbers looking for partners.

Meeting time and place: call trip leader

Trip Leader: Rick Dotson, (h) 703-319-9010

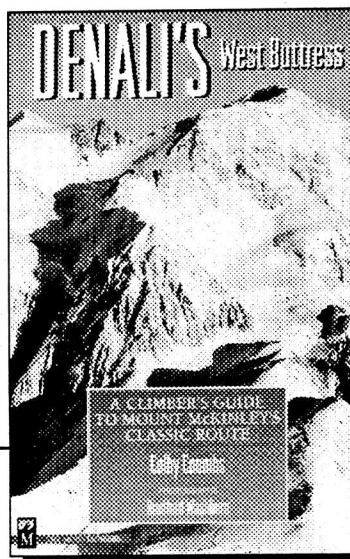
(Denali book review cont.)

Randall's "Mount McKinley Climber's Handbook" is probably the most useful single volume on equipment needs, travel procedures for sleds on glaciers, food needs, conditioning and basic camping skills needed to tackle Denali or any other expedition mountain.

Waterman's "High Alaska" gives the most route descriptions on the Alaskan big three of the

Kahiltna Glacier as well as first-ascent information and a good selection of photographs showing the routes. His "Surviving Denali" is the best all-around high mountain illness and accident analysis book on the market anywhere and excellent reading if you want to learn from others' mistakes instead of from your own.

Selters' "Glacier Travel and Crevasse Rescue" is the best technical book on roped glacier travel



and safety precautions. These books, as well as many others, maps, guide services, skiplane services, Anchorage-Talkeetna-DNP North Entrance ground transportation, and places to obtain last-minute equipment as well as all the food you would need are listed in Coombs' appendix. In addition, Coombs covers early exploration of the Denali massif, its pioneering climbs, the

history of the national park and the evolution of its alpine patrols and rescue facilities, as well as its geology, wildlife and glaciation. In addition to covering many other crucial aspects of an expedition to Denali, this book also has an excellent and comprehensive selection of Washburn photos showing the entire route in excruciating detail.

If one were going to Denali without a guide service or little experience in big mountaineering, this book would be required reading along with those others listed above. For someone with considerable experience already, Coombs' book would only be optional.

Having been there twice myself, I would recommend this book as the first volume someone without direct experience of Denali should consider reading.

Mr. Safe-T Returns! Today's Topic is...Ropes!

by Mr. Safe-T (a.k.a. Alex Tait, new Up Rope Editor)

What better topic for discussing safety and climbing, no? A rope is the essential climbing protection. Please remember these are just brief comments and reminders. Climbers should make themselves fully knowledgeable about all safety concerns. Show up for Rick Dotson's Climb&Learn trip to enhance your knowledge!

Which rope should I use? Most climbers have several ropes in the closet. From my experience I recommend the following (get ropes in 50m length). For top roping the best choice is a beefy 11mm rope that will stand up to abuse. For lead climbing at sport crags or short straight multi-pitch routes a 10.5mm rope (preferably with dry treatment) is a good choice. For mountaineering and long multi-pitch climbs (or climbs from which you must rappel), I use double 9mm dry ropes. Double rope lead climbing is more involved but well worth the reduced rope drag, safer clips (pulling only one rope leaves the other tighter to the belay) and longer rappels. Don't have money for all these ropes? The 10.5mm is the best buy for a do-everything rope.

When should I retire a rope? Sooner than you and your wallet think! The big enemy of ropes is ultraviolet radiation from the sun and a rope in heavy use outdoors should be retired after as little as a few months. Under "normal" usage (weekend warrior like me), I retire my lead rope after 2-3 years depending on the amount of use. I then deem it fit for top roping for an additional 2-3 years. After that, I cut it into quarters so I'm not tempted to use it for climbing. Don't climb on an old rope!

Proper rope care will lengthen the useful life of a rope. Keep the rope clean while using it and store it in a dry, dark, closet. *And remember practice safe climbing.*

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