

FOUNDED BY  
HERB AND JAN CONN

Newsletter of the Mountaineering Section of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club—March 1999

## North Carolina Climbing Thanksgiving Weekend, November 1998

—Pete Grant, trip leader

### The Start

Oooohhh!!! Aaahhh!!! If I could live this weekend over again, and had my choice of weather, I wouldn't want to change it at all—well, possibly a little less wind on Thursday. Our lucky streak (weatherwise) just continues on and on and on...

Wednesday evening the three of us (see listing at end) piled ourselves and gear into the car and headed down I-81 toward the Southeastern tip of Virginia and, eventually to North Carolina. Our first destination was Linville Gorge. We arrived in the outskirts of Boone, NC, which is a short distance from the gorge, at 2:00 a.m., found a peaceful place next to a state park and threw down our sleeping bags to catch a few hours of shuteye.

The next day greeted us with near freezing temperature and strong winds, so we bundled up in our winter clothing and headed out to Boone to try to find an open restaurant—remember, it was Thanksgiving and most establishments were closed. Finally, a McDonald's was spotted and we managed to get a bite to eat. Onward to the Gorge!

### Linville Gorge

Due partly to our late rising, extremely slow service at breakfast, and a longer than expected drive to Table Rock, we arrived at the parking lot about 11 a.m., and, by the time we had hiked into the gorge, it was past noon. (Table Rock parking lot is the best starting point for hiking into the East side of the gorge where the cliffs face Southwest providing exposure to the sun.) Being in a strange area, we decided not to tackle anything really hard for our first climb so we chose Bumblebee Buttress (5.8) to test out the rock.

## How Seneca's Breakneck Got its Name

—Joan Cardon

In the spring of 1954 Andy Kauffman, Phil Cardon and I established a new route up the face below the cockscomb on the West side of Seneca. As usual, I was third on the rope. Somewhat more than half way up there is a semi-detached flake open wider at its bottom directly to the right of the route. The flake had some small holds which I thought I could use to my advantage. I leaned back, bracing my head and neck against the flake and pushed off with my head, giving me leverage to reach the next face hold. I heard, then felt a pop and searing pain in my neck. I knew I had sustained a grievous injury. I couldn't look up or down, nor turn my head to either side, and was afraid I had broken a vertebrae. Andy and Phil couldn't pull me up so they did the next best thing: they described every hand and foot hold for my groping hands and feet. We took the exit route, crossing to the left below the Cockscomb instead of climbing it, so that we could descend as fast as possible and return to Washington to seek treatment. We were very relieved later to learn that I had only severe muscle strains which wouldn't interfere with my imminent marriage to Phil.

## Climber's Calendar

For additions and updates check our website at [http://www.patc.net/mtn\\_sect/](http://www.patc.net/mtn_sect/).  
Please contact trip leader if you plan to go on a trip! Submit new calendar items to Up Rope editor Alex Tait ([taite@erols.com](mailto:taite@erols.com)) and to webmaster Ron Alt ([altr@worldnet.att.net](mailto:altr@worldnet.att.net)).

### March 27th - 28th

#### Seneca Rocks, West Virginia (weather permitting)

Meeting time: Contact Trip Leader  
Meeting place: Contact Trip Leader  
Trip leader: Pete Grant, (h) 703-960-6033 (7-9:30pm) or e-mail (preferable)  
[grantpk@classic.msn.com](mailto:grantpk@classic.msn.com)

### April 10th - 11th

#### Moore's Wall, North Carolina

Claimed in one North Carolina climbing guide to be the best climbing area on the East Coast. Come see if they're correct (If it's cold, we'll switch to Sauratown or Pilot Mtn).  
Meeting time: Contact Trip Leader  
Meeting place: Contact Trip Leader  
Trip leader: Pete Grant, (h) 703-960-6033 (7-9:30pm) or e-mail (preferable)  
[grantpk@classic.msn.com](mailto:grantpk@classic.msn.com)

### April 25th (Sunday)

#### Rocks State Park, Maryland

Meeting time: Contact Trip Leader  
Meeting place: Contact Trip Leader  
Trip leader: Pete Grant, (h) 703-960-6033 (7-9:30pm) or e-mail (preferable)  
[grantpk@classic.msn.com](mailto:grantpk@classic.msn.com)

### May 2nd (Sunday)

#### Great Falls, Virginia

Come explore new routes for the guidebook. Visit an entirely new to the guide crag!  
Meeting time: 8am  
Meeting place: Great Falls Park, Virginia, Lower parking area (near climber's sign-in).  
Trip leader: Alex Tait, (h) 301-587-8085 or e-mail (preferable): [taite@erols.com](mailto:taite@erols.com)

(continued on page 3)

(Climber's Calendar continued on page 4)

## Mountaineering in Kazakhstan: Redux

—PATC-MS member Matthew Lavington lived in Almaty, Kazakhstan and wrote about the climbing there in the previous issue of *Up Rope*. Due to typographical errors, negligent editing and other factors well within our control—but not our bleary-eyed awareness—we have the following addendum to the article

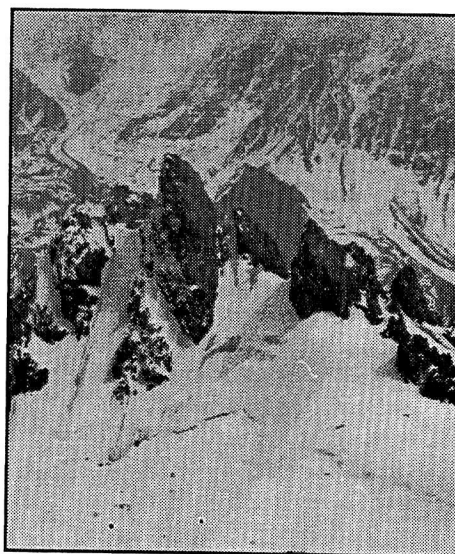
Please refer to the original story in the last *Up Rope* to follow these notes:

1. Correct title to Kazakhstan [not Russia, shame on this editor who has a day job as a cartographer!] to reflect accurate geographical location of Tien Shan.

2. Peak Komsomol rises to 14,206 feet above sea level

3. The article was written to highlight other venues and peaks not covered in Frith Maier's CA Trekking guide.

4. The Dimitry Glacier basin is the headwaters of the Levi Talgar river at the



Kazakhstan/ Kyrgyzstan frontier which is also further south of Peak Komsomol.

5. Peak Talgar is 16,460 ft. and services at the alpinist's camp ceased with the collapse of the Soviet era.

6. Big Almaty Lake is a good starting point for other 4000m peaks and one popular 3–5 day trek to Lake Issk Kul in Kirghistan.

## Annapolis Rocks: September 20th, 1998

—by Pete Grant, trip leader

"When will the heat wave end?" was the question on many of our minds as we plodded across the parking lot to meet our buddies inside McDonald's. The temperature was already around 70 degrees and humidity at 93%. Nevertheless, after a skimpy breakfast, the six of us piled into our cars with enthusiasm and headed out to the trailhead. In the trailhead parking lot we met up with Offie and the group, now seven strong, hiked up 45 minutes to the rocks. Soon after arrival, Ted arrived on the scene and the group was complete—all males.

Anyhow, the initial warm-up routes set up included the standard moderate routes on the "Pound of Obscure" wall and "Unknown". Also, a route that doesn't seem to be in Indy's guide pages—the West facing wall/arete just to the right of "Pound of Obscure". After doing a couple of the warmup routes, most of the group moved over the "Faint's Roof" to practice falling off and playing Peter Pan—unintentionally, of course (actually, one of us, the trip leader, managed to negotiate the roof/ceiling). Soon thereafter, "Nixon's Nose" was set up and everyone(?) made it up using various side routes to avoid the hard parts.

Mid-day, Ted rigged another climb on "Argo Rock": "The Battlefield", I think, which was done by a small group of us, then we moved over to "Black Crack" and finished the day by dancing around on this arm-pumper and its companion, "Illusion", just to its right.

By this time, it was 4:30 p.m. and the heat/humidity combo was taking its toll. We packed up and hiked back to the car for some ice-cold sodas.

### Participants:

David Lankshear, Offie Clark, Greg Christopulous, Ken Roberts, Joe Landrum, Bryan Ragan, Ted Plasse and yours truly, Pete Grant

## Great Falls, Maryland

November 15, 1998

—Pete Grant, trip leader

Somebody's watching over us—or are we just very lucky? Once again I get to start my trip report with "Gorgeous weather greeted the climbers...". It just occurred to me that we have not been rained out even once this year (before someone tries to correct me, no, we didn't get rained out on Labor day -- it was simply the climbers' decision to skip the third day of climbing because of a rainstorm during the previous night). It rained on our Little Stony Man trip, but we climbed nevertheless. So, the bottom line is that in 1998 we did not have to cancel a single trip due to adverse weather. Enough meteorological stuff!! On with the report.

Gorgeous weather greeted the climbers gathered together at the Great Falls parking lot for the day's activities. Our plan had been to climb at The Bulges; however, we let the sun's rays influence our decisions and headed on to Rocky Island instead. By the time we had rigged up a trio of ropes on The Knob, outer clothing had been shed and warm-up climbs were done by all. A tricky variation to one of the climbs (5.7-5.8 range) kept us busy until Ron Alt arrived and set up the Little Handhold That Isn't There (5.6) and its variation, No Holds Barred (5.9) were worked on by a number of us.

About noontime, the sun had shifted enough to start thinking about The Bulges, our original goal. A short hop across the river bottom took the group to the Maryland side and, once again, a trio of climbs was rigged. Peg's Progress (5.4), Narrow Notch (5.6), and Great Falls Bulge (5.8) provided amusement and exercise for the group. Especially noteworthy is Great Falls Bulge as all who climbed it agreed that it's a wonderful route and recommended it for everyone to climb—or at least attempt.

### Participants:

Andy Britton, Padraic Collins, Melissa Stagnaro, Jeffrey Wright, David Lankshear, Ronald Reiter, Ron Alt, Doug Craun, Scott Atkins and Pete Grant

## North Carolina (continued)

Bumblebee Buttress is located at the Southern end of North Carolina Wall near the area known as The Amphitheater.

After two pitches, we suddenly found ourselves on a belay ledge with apparently nowhere to go—although we thought we were on route. The wall above appeared somewhat harder than 5.8 and had no visible protection, so we decided to traverse to a ledge about 100' to our right and to try to find a way up from there. The traverse turned out to be harder than it looked—a very delicate face requiring intricate footwork in conjunction with fingertip holds. The traverse would have been 5.8 under normal circumstances, but because of the howling wind, being clad in winter clothing, and carrying a backpack, it felt more like 5.9 to me.

Our "escape" route turned out to be still far short of the top. An additional problem now was that the time was about 4:00 p.m. and we had only about an hour of daylight remaining. From our position, we could not tell how many pitches remained to get to the top and to safety. In the meanwhile, the wind picked up so much that it became difficult to stand up in the open. Consequently, we decided to simul-climb the next pitch to save time. Nevertheless, by the time we reached the top, the sun had set and it was rapidly becoming dark. We bushwhacked our way to the ridge trail, reaching it just before it got too dark to see, and hiked back to the car in a faint moonlight.

After driving out of the park, we headed towards Stone Mountain State Park, finding a mom-and-pop restaurant that was still open at 9:00 p.m. Thanksgiving day. The restaurant was out of just about everything—no salad, no soup, no this, no that—but we didn't complain as we were thankful to find anything open!

### Stone Mountain

Friday morning, after having spent another night sleeping under the stars at roadside, we arrived at Stone Mountain. It was chilly so we dressed appropriately, not having any idea that such a beautiful warm day was awaiting us. Our first climb, a sort of a practice session to get accustomed to the unusual climbing at Stone Mountain, was an approach climb to the tree lined ledge from which many

of the climbs proper begin. We picked a likely looking route, which we later determined to be Father Knows Best (5.8), but bypassed the crux moves. The length of this route was about 80' with a couple of bolts and places for traditional protection making it an excellent introduction to the friction style of climbing that faced us for the rest of our stay there.

Our first "real" climb was Yardarm (5.8) which, although only moderate in difficulty, gave an excellent introduction to the runouts prevalent at Stone. I recommend this route for anyone visiting Stone Mountain for the first time; although maybe not for the first climb. For that, see the next climb below. As we progressed to the top of the first pitch, clothes were shed off and stowed away as the temperature rose. By noon, we were climbing without shirts.

The established classic at Stone is The Great Arch (5.5); however, it's also the most popular and often has a waiting line at its base. During the rappel off Yardarm, we noticed that no climbers were waiting to climb the Arch, so we took advantage of the situation and jumped on this usually crowded route.

The Great Arch is the recommended first climb for visitors to this great area featuring some of the best friction climbing in the East. Because of the unique type of climbing of Stone Mountain, we decided to remain there another day to gain full experience with the place.

The next day, the routes done were The Pulpit (5.8), Fantastic (5.9), and Mercury's Lead (5.9). All three routes were excellent, with Fantastic deserving a special mention as it had parts resembling more traditional routes such as those found in the Gunks. One tricky move involved pulling an overhanging bulge using actual hand holds. Now, folks, there ain't many hand holds on Stone Mountain, but Fantastic had several. It was a real treat!

### Sauratown Mountain

Our original intent had been to climb at Moore's Wall. After having spent the night under the stars and waking up with frost on our sleeping bags, we arrived at the parking lot early while it was still cool. There was a group of local climbers going bouldering on a small cliff next to Moore's Wall and they recommended

against climbing at Moore's this time of the year due to its Northern exposure. We heeded their advice and instead headed on down to nearby Sauratown Mountain, which faces South.

Sauratown Mountain is not listed in any guide book that we know of, and Rock 'N Road mentions it as a closed area. Recent postings on the internet (rec.climbing usenet newsgroup) indicate that the area has been reopened, provided that climbers behave, and I was even able to obtain some route drawings to the site. Sauratown has some of the nicest scenery in this part of the state and, provided access continues, could become a very popular climbing area. I certainly want to return there in the future. Because of our desire to get a mid-afternoon start back home, we did only two routes, one about 5.6 and another about 5.9, both of which were picked purely by sight; i.e., by looking at the wall and picking an interesting looking line. Both climbs had only a single move of the grade mentioned, the remainder being at least a grade easier.

In addition to the excellent climbing at Sauratown Mountain, we saw several hang-gliders and para-sailors zoom by. Some were so close we were able to have a conversation with the aeronauts.

### Summary

All in all, it was a great trip. Too bad participation was so small. Next year, several more trips will be made to these, as well as some other climbing areas in North Carolina. Watch the Climber's Calendar.

### Participants:

Ron Alt, Steve Golob, Pete Grant

### GET INVOLVED!

Don't let Pete Grant steal all the glory! We need more MS members to get involved with the club. Here are some things you could do (contact chairman Ozana Halik: mrkayak2@aol.com, or by phone if you don't have e-mail: 703-242-0177).

1. Lead Trips!
2. Contribute articles to Up Rope.
3. Contribute material for the Resources Section of the website.
4. Volunteer for a post on the executive committee. We need someone to schedule monthly programs and special events, someone to help with the Newsletter!, etc.



## SECTION NOTES

### Election of 1999 Officers

New officer were elected this winter to fill one year posts. Condolences. . . er, congratulations! to the new officers:

Chairman—Ozana Halik  
Vice-Chair—Greg Christopolous  
Treasurer—Jim Pasterczyk  
Secretary—Alex Christopolous

Also, these are the active committees with their chairs (if you have any interest and some time and energy, please volunteer to help the Mountaineering Section, we can find a place for you!):

Up Rope—Alex Tait (Editor)  
Webmaster—Ron Alt

### PLEASE: Send Us Some Up Rope and Website Submissions!

We need to get more people writing and taking photos and sending their reports in for both the Up Rope newsletter and for the Section website. If you have any ideas for the website contact Ron Alt. If you have material for the Up Rope please send to Alex Tait by e-mail (tait@erols.com, just send text in body of e-mail with JPG photos attached) or snail mail (9307 Sudbury Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901).

### Great Falls Guidebook Update

Revisions and additions continue for the PATC-MS Great Falls Guidebook, Second Edition. Anyone with potential routes to add to the book please contact

Alex Tait (tait@erols.com or care of snail-mail to PATC Headquarters). We will be reviewing the revised text and making final additions this spring with publication to follow.

### MS Listerv Reminder

Any MS member can get timely email notices of upcoming MS events and climbing trips and have a forum for discussing climbing-related topics. All you need is an email program and to subscribe to the MS's listerv email server.

To become part of the email distribution list, send an email to: "mtn@lists.taxadmin.org" (don't include the quotation marks!) and type the word SUBSCRIBE in the SUBJECT line.

Any message you send to the address (mtn@lists.taxadmin.org) will be distributed to other MS members who also subscribe to the listerv. Make your subject line as descriptive as possible, to help users sort through the messages. Also, if you activate an automatic reply on your email (when you go on vacation), please unsubscribe from the listerv, otherwise it can cause problems for other users.

If you're unfamiliar with how listservs work, please email a message to either Ron Alt (altr@worldnet.att.net) or Tony Sanders (tsanders@ix.netcom.com), and we'll forward a copy of the help file to you! See you online!

## Climber's Calendar (continued)

### May 8th-9th

#### Looking Glass Rock, North Carolina

We will join up with Tom Fontaine for climbing at this spectacular cliff.

Meeting time: Contact Trip Leader

Meeting place: Contact Trip Leader

Trip leader: Pete Grant, (h) 703-960-6033 (7-9:30pm) or e-mail (preferable)  
grantpk@classic.msn.com

### May 23rd (Sunday)

#### Caudey's Castle, Virginia

Another rarely climbed area close to Washington, DC.

Meeting time: Contact Trip Leader

Meeting place: Contact Trip Leader

Trip leader: Pete Grant, (h) 703-960-6033 (7-9:30pm) or e-mail (preferable)  
grantpk@classic.msn.com

### May 29th - 31st (Memorial Day)

#### The Shawangunks, New York

The Annual Memorial Day Trek to the Climbing Mecca, the Gunks. Details TBA

Meeting time: Contact Trip Leader

Meeting place: Contact Trip Leader

Trip leader: Pete Grant, (h) 703-960-6033 (7-9:30pm) or e-mail (preferable)  
grantpk@classic.msn.com

Up Rope Editor  
Mountaineering Section  
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club  
118 Park St, SE  
Vienna, VA 22180

04/12/99 NO. VA.



P&DC 220 17:25 DCR #2



Jeanette Helfrich  
John Rayner  
3100 Powder Mill Rd.  
Adelphi MD 20783-1023

Please forward

20783+102A

