

# Up Rope

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HERB AND JAN CONN

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## 2004 MS CLUB OFFICIALS

### Chairman:

Andy Briton  
Gainesville, VA  
Tallandyb@aol.com

### Vice-Chair:

Theodore R Plasse  
plasset@erols.com

### Treasurer

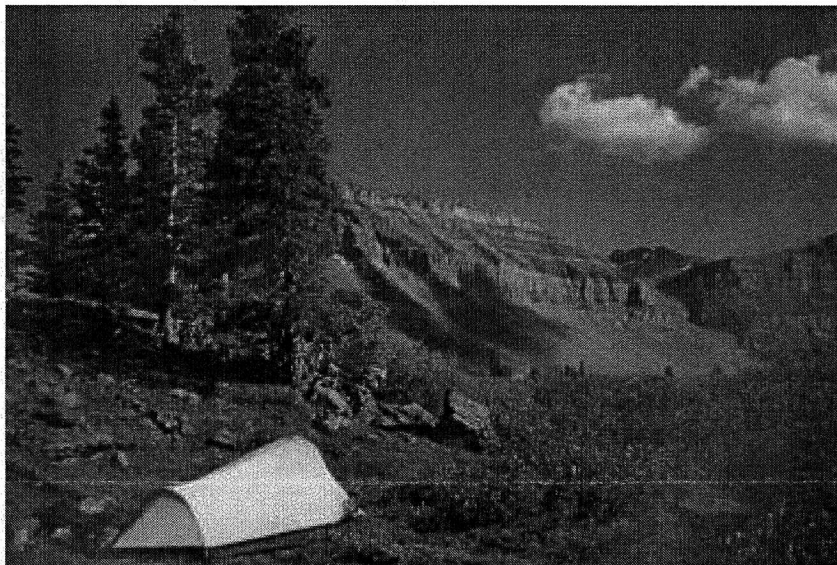
Dave Green  
(H) 703 536 5189  
(W) 202-366-9477  
dkgreenva@hotmail.com

### Secretary:

Charlotte Bonilla  
Csbonilla@aol.com  
301-951-8781

### Up Rope Editor in Chief:

Vincent Penoso  
P.O. Box 16377  
Alexandria, VA 22302  
vpenoso@comcast.net  
UpRope@comcast.net  
571-217-6575



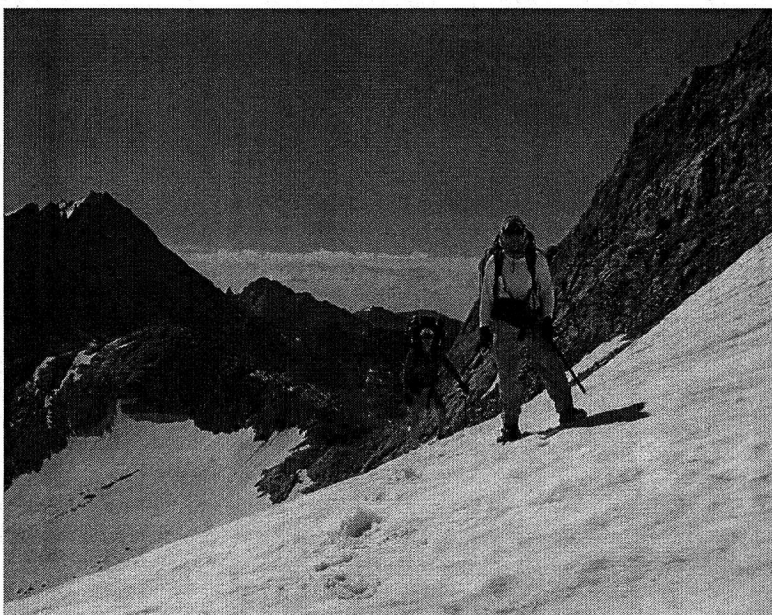
My campsite above dollar lake on the way to King's Peak Utah. P.2

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## ROCKFALL

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- Nominations for the 2005 year are in.
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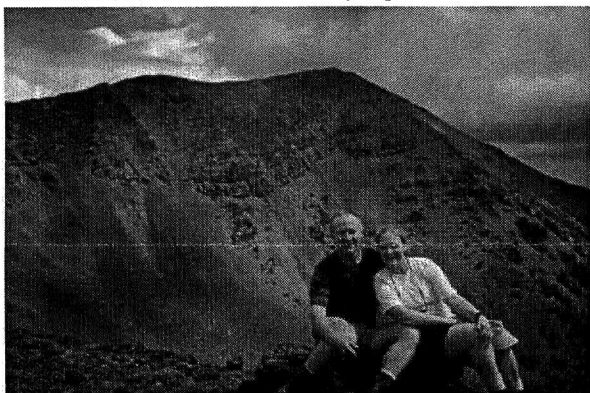
Daring push up Knapsack Couloir 12,500 feet Dave Greene, John Smith ;  
photo by Mack Muir. p. 9.

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

## High Points

### By Dave Greene

My daughter had an internship in Phoenix and I had boy scouts going to Philmont in New Mexico. It seemed like a good excuse for a western road trip to me. However, my 17-year old son had no interest in a family vacation and my wife swore off road trips in our 1980 unairconditioned van after our drive to Alaska, so I choose to go alone. I planned a full 6-week itinerary including a rendezvous with Mack Muir and John Smith to climb of Gannett Peak in Wyoming's Wind River Range and Granite Peak in Montana's Beartooth Mountains. These two peaks were the main remaining obstacles to my reaching the tops of all 50 State highpoints. For more information on others devoted to this goal, see <http://www.highpointers.org>. Mack and John detail our adventures in the Winds of Beartooths in accompanying articles and I describe the rest of my trip herein.



**Dave and daughter Emily**

My adventure started July 9<sup>th</sup> with visits to strategically placed relatives across the country -- a cousin in Charleston, West Virginia and a brother in St. Louis. At Mead State Park in Kansas, I spent the first of many nights in the bed in the back of my van. The next day I climbed the first State highpoint of the trip, Oklahoma's 4973-foot Black Mesa, and that night I arrived at Philmont. My scouts were in the middle of an 11-day Philmont backpacking trek and I made a clandestine visit requiring a 7-mile, 3000 vertical foot bushwhack from the State highway up 11,711-foot Mt. Philips. After a successful rendezvous and a night with the crew, I did another bushwhack back to the highway via a different route. I got back to the van just in time to shower in a torrential sleet and thunderstorm.

Then it was on to Flagstaff to meet my daughter for a week-end of backpacking and climbing Arizona's high point, Humphreys Peak. In April 2003, I climbed Humphreys as a day hike from the Snow Bowl Ski Area when most of route was covered in snow. This time we started south of Humphreys at Schultz Pass and discovered that in July there is no

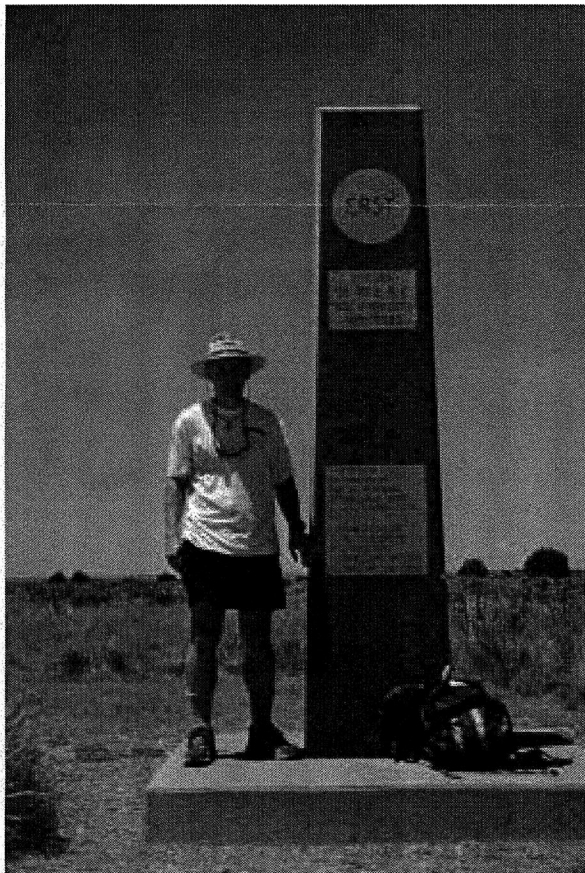
water in the springs and tanks. We didn't have enough for our planned trip, so we started asking for water from everyone we met. Fortunately there were some day hikers on their way out who had water to spare. We climbed the Weatherford Trail and camped at Doyle Saddle on a beautiful calm and clear night. I was up at 5 AM pushing for an early start, but my daughter didn't share my drive for the summit and decided to sleep in. We made Humphreys' summit ridge at 10 AM, but there was already lightening on the peak. We turned around and hiked out in sleet and rain through the Inner Basin and Lockett Meadow where we had a second vehicle placed. Last January on Kilimanjaro, we met a park ranger from Wupatki National Monument and we looked her up before driving to Phoenix.

I left the van in Flagstaff and the following day flew from Phoenix to Los Angeles to meet my wife and son. After a week visiting friends and touring Los Angeles and San Diego, we flew back to Phoenix, met our daughter, and drove to the Grand Canyon. The family spent a few days together touring and hiking around the canyon and then they returned to Phoenix and I headed for Zion. There I attempted to climb Angles Landing, but aborted the metal chain protected route as another lightening storm approached.

After Zion, I planned to meet another friend to climb Kings Peak, Utah's highpoint in the High Uintas Mountains. My friend cancelled out, so I went solo. Instead of following the Interstate, I used my 35-year-old Forest Service maps to find the trailhead. It was a long rough trip over some roads that tested the old van and my patience. Upon arriving at the trailhead I knew I wouldn't be lonely. I couldn't even find a parking space and there were about 50 scouts in various groups staging for treks into Kings Peak. By the time I packed and ate lunch, I was the last to leave. The approach followed a well-worn pack trail along Henrys Fork with a gradual 7.5-mile ascent from 9000' to 10,500' at Dollar Lake. I made the trip without a break and passed nearly everyone. The lake is in a huge opened basin with only a few patches of trees. There was water everywhere and in many places horses had turned the trail into a quagmire. To the south was a mountain ridge with a notch that revealed pyramid-shaped Kings Peak. Camping wasn't permitted within 300 yards of Dollar Lake and to avoid the oncoming hoards, I climbed further up the basin and camped by a small stream and rock outcrop. Kings Peak was still visible through the notch to the southwest, but my guidebook discouraged the use of this steep boulder and scree slope. At 6 AM the next morning, I followed the guidebook recommendation to approach Kings Peak through Gunsight Pass to the south. A trail led up through the pass, but instead of following the trail back down into Painter Basin on the other side, I contoured around the back of the ridge. This route started as a pleasant walk through wild flower-covered meadows, but soon turned into a huge boulder field on a steep slope. I regretted taking this route, but pressed on until I finally reached the trail coming back out of Painter Basin. The trail led past the top of the notch to Anderson Pass.

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

From this pass, it was another 1800-foot boulder scramble to the 13,528-foot summit of Kings Peak. There was one scout group on the summit when I arrived at 11:30 AM and lots more on the way. A few sleet pellets were blowing around and the sky to the south looked ominous. I ate a quick lunch and started down after seeing some far off lightening. Before reaching the pass, the sky opened up and I was in the mist of a major sleet storm. Those who hadn't reached the summit turned around and joined me in a hasty retreat to lower ground. I waited out the storm at the notch on top of the sleep boulder and scree slope trying to decide whether to take this short cut back to camp. When several others started picking their way down, I followed. Instead of descending all the way into the boggy basin, I contoured around the upper slopes of the basin and got back to my camp at 3 PM. Not wanting to sit around in the mosquito-infested basin, I packed up and hiked out. It was an easy 8 miles downhill and I stopped midway to cook supper, saw two moose, and got back to the van just before dark.



Dave Greene, Black Mesa, Oklahoma

In the van I found evidence of an intruder. Peanuts in my gorp supply were eaten and there were little brown terds scattered around. My suspicions were confirmed during the night when I heard plastic rustling and a mouse ran across my bed. In the morning I did a thorough cleaning of the van, but didn't find the mouse. I also cleaned myself using my sun shower and drove on to Flaming Gorge. The next day I drove to Pinedale, Wyoming to await the arrival of Mack and John. Check out Mack's article for the details of our adventure in the Winds.

On returning from the Winds, I found more evidence of the intruder. He spent the week sampling the rest of my food supply and building a nest under my bed. This time I responded with peanut butter baited mousetraps. With Gannett Peak checked off, we decided to take a rest day in the Tetons. This consisted of a 5-mile hike with a 2000-foot climb from Lupine Meadows to Taggart Lake. The highlight was seeing a black bear that hung around for photos. We spent the night at a park campground and eat at the lodge that featured a large marina on waterless Colter Bay. The mouse succeeded in eating my peanut butter without getting caught.

The next day we were off to the Beartooths. We took the scenic route through Yellowstone, Cody, Dead Indian Pass, and the Beartooth Scenic Highway. In Cody, we shopped at Sierra Trading Post and had lunch at Buffalo Bill's Irma Hotel. At Beartooth Pass, we climbed high enough to catch a glimpse of Granite Peak. The town of Red Lodge, Montana was over run by bikers, but we found a motel for the night. The mouse ignored the traps and my remaining food was now in mouse-proof containers. Check out John's article for the details of our trip in the Beartooths.

Being more comfortable with long approach hikes than the exposure of precipitous peaks, I must thank Mack and John for their assistance in getting me up and down Gannett and Granite Peaks. Both were the type of extended wilderness trips that I most enjoy. I've now climbed all the more difficult State highpoints, except for Idaho's Borah Peak, and have a goal to completing all 50. On the way home, I made good progress doing Harney Peak in South Dakota, Hawk-eye Point in Iowa, Hoosier High Point in Indiana, Campbell Hill in Ohio, Mount Davis in Pennsylvania, and Backbone Mountain in Maryland. On a recent trip to Denver, I also did Mount Sunflower in Kansas and Panorama Point in Nebraska. Twenty-four to go and no idea what happened to that mouse. Anyone up for Borah Peak next July?



## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

**Boulder, Colorado**  
**Land of the short approaches!!**  
**Marty Comiskey & Lee Jenkins**  
**September, 2004**

Last year, Lee and I climbed in the Grand Tetons, WY. As you know, finding rock climbing routes there means long approaches (2-6 hours and more), camping out on the longer approach treks, freeze dried food, etc. This summer, we opted for something a little more "civilized" – short approaches, sleeping in a motel, hot showers, eating out at nice restaurants, visiting several micro breweries and other niceties.

In August, we spent 10 days in Boulder, CO. and climbed in Boulder Canyon, the Flatirons and Eldorado Canyon. It was a great climbing trip. The weather was great, the climbing was even better and walking "downtown" Boulder at night eating at the various restaurants was a relaxing way to end each day.

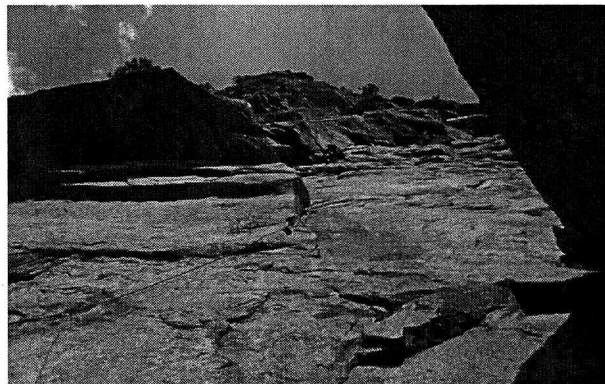
We stayed at the Boulder Mountain Lodge which was "okay" but a bit old and run down. The benefits of staying here are a kitchen; it's very quiet at night and located right in Boulder Canyon allowing for very short drives to the crags.

Of course, the trip had a few negative aspects. The trip started off badly when the airline lost Lee's luggage (we also had a small "mini epic" later in the week – more on that later). Here we were in Denver airport with only my "stuff." Lee had no harness, helmet, rope, etc. The airline promised to find his bag and deliver it to the motel.

We awoke the next day and Lee still had no luggage. We spent that first morning driving up Boulder Canyon checking out some of the climbing areas and just getting a feel for the area. We returned to the motel around lunch time and found Lee's bag in the room. We quickly geared up and headed back up the canyon to do our first route. We did a long two pitch route on Eagle Rock.

On day two, we climbed the East Face Left route (5.7) on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Flatiron. The Flatirons are very distinct rock formations that are visible for miles anywhere in the Boulder area. They are ancient sea beds that have been "lifted" and then eroded over millions of years to a 1000 ft. 60 degree angle friction slab. It took us most of the day to approach, climb nine pitches and return to the car. We were told that the locals ride their bike from downtown to the crag, run up the trail, solo the standard route (bolted 5.2) and return to work all during their lunch hour!! Our next day of climbing saw us in famed Eldorado

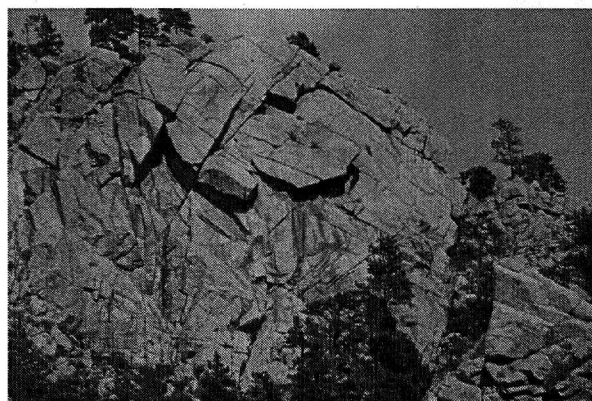
Canyon. The approaches were all short – in some cases, less than 1 minute! We were very taken with the



### Marty on Calypso

Bastille Crack – the most popular climb in the whole state – 800 feet of 90 degree crack climbing. The first pitch was difficult to protect – a fall here would put you into the ground. We looked at it for two days, but we passed on climbing it - maybe, next trip? We did do two climbs across the road, Wind Ridge (5.6/8) and Calypso (5.7), both local classics.

For several days, we climbed several routes in Boulder Canyon, including the Great Dihedral on Eagle Rock (5.5), the NE Face of Cobb Rock (5.7), Cozyhang (5.7), East Slab (5.6), and Left Edge (5.7) on the



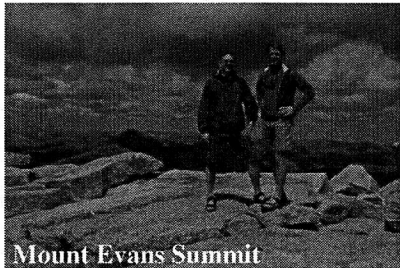
### The Dome

Dome, The standard route on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Elephant Butress (5.7+) and the Lost Flatiron (5.7) - all very nice varying in length from 1 to 3 pitches.



## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

(Boulder Continued from p.4)



Mount Evans Summit

In was on the Left Edge of the Dome that we experienced our little "mini epic." Lee was leading the second pitch when he yelled

down to me that the rope was stuck. He couldn't pull it up and I couldn't pull it down. We yelled back and forth for a while as we discussed a plan of action.

Lee pulled in all the slack; I broke down my anchor and preceded to self belay myself with a clove hitch and climbed up the 20 odd feet to the stuck rope. Somehow the rope got pinched against the rock by a cam that walked into the crack. I freed the rope and Lee put me on belay and brought me up to his anchor. The climbing wasn't particularly difficult (thank goodness), but I'd rather not do this again.

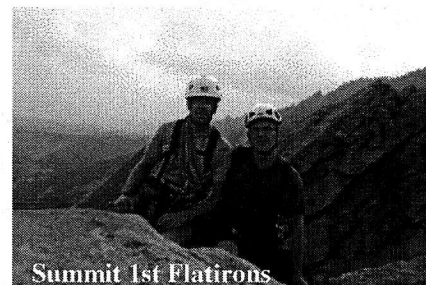
I think I mentioned that the weather was great. Climbing here in Washington DC you just can't imagine what it is like climbing in 70-80 degree weather with only 10-20 percent humidity. I don't think I really broke a sweat all week (except for those times when the climbing got scary!)

We did take a rest day during our stay. We drove to Golden, CO. and visited the American Alpine Club's office. Most of their space is set aside for their library which is most impressive. The librarian took us into the rare book room; a temperature and humidity controlled vault to show us some of their treasures. We looked at a book describing the animals and fauna of the Alps that was printed in 1490!! It was in remarkably good shape. We spent an hour or so just roaming the book aisles, pulling out and reading books that caught our interest. This would be a great destination on a rainy day.

As the weather was perfect, we left and continued on to Mt. Evans. This mountain supposedly has the highest road useable by automobiles in the continental US. We drove up to 14,100 feet – parked and hiked the last 150 feet to the summit. This is the highest I have ever been, and I did feel a little nausous because of the altitude.

The next day we did another climb in the Flatirons – this time we did the standard route on the 1<sup>st</sup> Flatiron (5.6R); similar to the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Flatiron with a shorter and better approach.

On our last day we only climbed a ½ day. We did the North Face Left on the Lost Flatiron (5.7) in Boulder Canyon. This was the only route all week that we would not recommend even though it was a \*



Summit 1st Flatirons

route in the guide?! In the afternoon, we drove up to Rocky Mountain National Park to look around. It was a weekend, and the traffic was heavy. In hindsight, it would have been better to go there

during the week. Lee did find a nice snow coulour that he would like to go back to in May/June to climb so it wasn't a total waste. As expected the scenery was outstanding.

We didn't climb there but we did visit the Boulder Rock Gym. It was a very nice facility with lockers and showers, a weight training room, a boulder cave on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. floor and lots of climbing including variable sized crack climbing in the main gym. It was crowded with lots of superb climbers. Sport Rock could learn a lot from a visit here - obviously, there are many economic considerations that come into play here (Boulder probably has many more climbers./memberships/fees/etc.) that prevent SR from upgrading their facility.

We also took some time to visit the local climbing/gear stores. Several of the stores listed in the guide books have gone out of business. Apparently they couldn't compete with Neptune Mountaineering, the premier store in Boulder. They had the largest selection of climbing gear I have ever seen as well as a "mini" climbing museum – pictures, newspaper articles dating back to the 1930's and lots of old primitive gear.

Every night after a full day of climbing we went into the town of Boulder to walk the downtown area and to dine. The area is set aside for pedestrian traffic only with many street performers (Including a Dog with a Cat on it's back and the Cat had 2 Mice on its back!) and outdoor concerts and such. It was all a very pleasant place to explore, shop and to eat.

I'm sure we will go back again (the Bastille Crack is calling our names). You definitely need to put Boulder, CO. on your climbing "tick list."



## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

Following a terrific week in Wyoming's Wind River Range during which we climbed Gannett Peak (see Mack's report on that trek) and a rest day (only 10 miles & 2200 ft) hiking in Grand Teton National Park, Mack Muir, Dave Green, and I spent three days in the Beartooths, climbing Granite Peak, Montana's 12,799 ft highpoint. You can view a digest of my trip photos at:

<http://langley.lifepics.com/a/v.cfm?h=B39AE6D7>

Mack will probably post some photos with his report of the Wind River portion of the trip too.

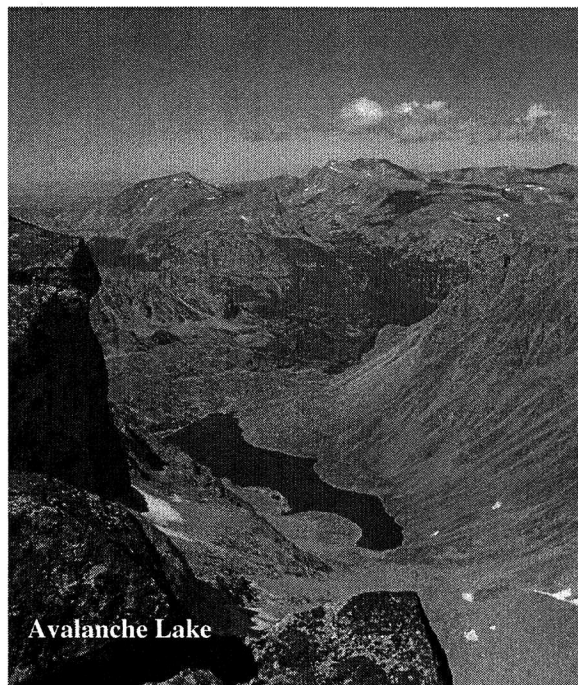
## **GRANITE PEAK, MONTANA**

Having approached Granite Peak via the East Rosebud drainage (Phantom Creek Trail) and over the Froze-to-Death Plateau on our 2002 visit, Mack, Dave and I decided to do the West Rosebud approach via Mystic Lake and the Huckleberry Creek drainage this time. We set out from the carpark (6557 ft) at about 0830, and were at gorgeous Mystic Lake (7673 ft) not much more than an hour later. We followed the easy trail on the south side of the lake 'till we crossed the footbridge over the mouth of Huckleberry Creek. From that point on, it was a strenuous but fairly straightforward bushwhack/rock scramble, following the west side of Huckleberry Creek south, up past Huckleberry Lake, Princess Lake, and the Snowball Lakes (9600 ft). The scenery was spectacular as we ascended, and at one point we passed under some truly huge cornices a couple thousand feet above us on the right. I could only imagine what they must have looked like a couple months earlier.

Based on some sketchy information about possible bivouac sites gleaned from old trip reports, we had decided to set our camp at the southern end of Avalanche Lake at around 9700 ft. I have a few observations. First, it's a really long way around Avalanche Lake, and a pretty strenuous rock scramble. It's not called Avalanche Lake for nothing. Second, there are some HUGE trout in that lake, and it's almost never fished - too hard for most folks to get to. If I ever go back, I'm taking fishing gear. Finally, yes, there are a couple tolerable bivvie sites at the southern end of the lake, but if there had been another party there, we'd

have been pretty hard pressed to find a comfortable spot for the three of us.

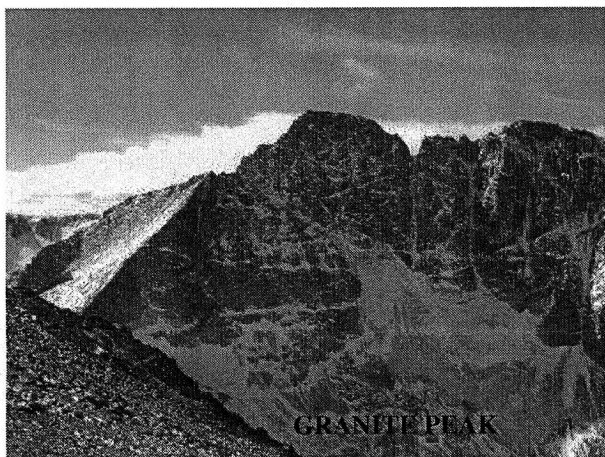
Shortly after we set up our tent, we had our first visit by a mountain goat. He very cooperatively struck photo poses for us on the rocks surrounding our camp. After sundown, we were visited by a nanny with a kid, who seemed like they were going to come right into the tent. We had decided to go light on this climb, so the three of us stuffed into Mack's two-man tent. Head-to-toe, we were not uncomfortable. We had originally planned to come back to the same camp after our summit, but the boulder hopping around the lake had been so time consuming and strenuous, that we decided to go out over the Froze-to-Death Plateau instead. Of course this meant we had to take everything with us when we set out in the morning for our summit attempt.



We were up at 0300, and heading up through the seemingly interminable talus by 0400. By about 0530 we were able to turn off the headlamps. We had tried to scope the route from a rise above camp the previous evening, so our route finding difficulties in the dark were minimal, though in retrospect I think we should have been higher and to the left. The cirque under Granite Peak and the Granite Glacier is a pretty wild place, and since I had first glimpsed it back in 2002, I'd looked forward to climbing up through it on the

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

approach. It did not disappoint. The North Face of Granite Peak brings to mind the Eiger Nordwand, and having that hanging over you as you approach your climb is kind of humbling. Our chosen route took us pretty much up the center of the cirque to the Tempest Mountain/Granite Peak Saddle at around 11,400 ft. When we got to the Saddle, we put all our water, rations, and technical gear (we took a thin rack and a skinny 50m rope) into one pack, and stashed the other two rucksacks in the rocks, to be retrieved after the climb. Bad idea. The local varmint population had a party while we were climbing, eating holes in packs and stuff sacks, and munching on Swiss Miss, chocolate bars, and Cup-a-Soups.



Heading up from the Saddle, we tried to keep pretty close to the ridge line as we scrambled up toward the first expected difficulty of the climb, the much ballyhooed and misnamed Snowbridge. First thing, it ain't a snowbridge, it's a hogback; and second, this year, there was a trench in it with rocks to the right, so there was no real exposure anyway. There have, under different conditions, been fatal falls from this feature, so we took a set of crampons and an ice axe in order to assist a leader across, but they turned out to be excess weight. Once over the Snowbridge we finally started the first real climbing, a fairly long chimney section, for which we roped up. Your mileage may vary, and I'd say you'd certainly move faster up this section if you soloed it, but a fall is possible, and would definitely be injurious. This chimney system takes you over what I'd call a buttress, and it's not 'till you climb through the notch at the ridge of this buttress that you actually see the summit. Even then, the route ahead is not at all obvious, and only if you can see climbers ahead of you to give a sense of scale, can you

really have an appreciation for how big the face ahead of you is.

About all I could remember of the route advice we'd been given was "don't take the obvious route straight up to the keyhole." The advice, which we took, was to go "right" which was kinda vague, since "right" is still a big expanse of rock, with lots of cracks and chimney systems. We had been given a couple features to look for but never really found them. Published advice says that if you find yourself on 5<sup>th</sup> class rock, to back off and try another way, 'cause you're off route. The heck with that! I ran into a guide from Jackson Hole Mountain Guides who was rapping off with her party, who pointed me up a chimney with a chock stone in it, and said she thought that was the most "fun" route up, so off I went. She was right. It was fun, but it was not 4<sup>th</sup> class, nor was the bit that followed, out around above the North Face, which Mack led. Quite frankly, with a couple thousand feet under his feet, Dave and I thought he led a couple of quite bold moves.

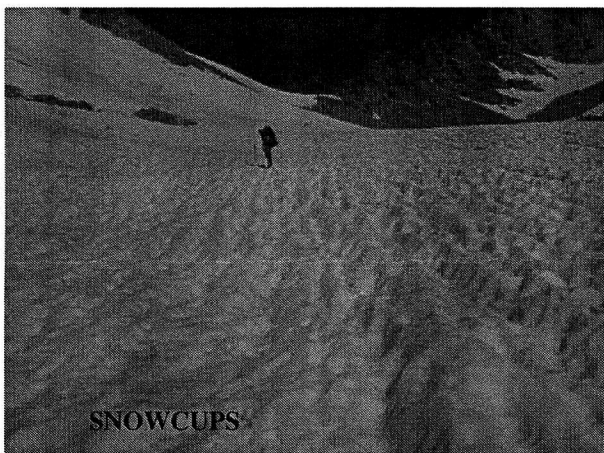
Anyway, after wandering around a bit, we finally crossed back south under the summit block, and the "Keyhole", up another easy chimney, scrambled up a section of exposed short slabs, and onto the summit. The weather gods were benign, and we were treated to great views while enjoying our summit feast. No wind, and thankfully, no thunderstorms, which are the usual afternoon fare for this peak. The descent was uneventful, if a little confused. We obviously did not find the easiest, nor the "normal" route down, because at one point, we had to rig a new rappel, but we did find a few established stations which we gratefully made use of. I got back to the saddle about a half hour ahead of Mack and Dave, and had the pleasure of discovering how active the local rodents had been. By the time they arrived, I had repacked the rucksacks, and Mack and I took off up the long rising traverse from the saddle up and over the shoulder of Tempest Mountain. Dave took a little while, hydrating and mourning over his newly ventilated Dana pack, and left the saddle maybe 15 minutes behind us.

The slope is pretty big, and the cairns were pretty small, and before long, as it turned out, Dave lost sight of us, and ended up going almost straight up Tempest Mountain. Mack and I topped out at around 12,000 ft, and waited, and waited . . . and waited. Turned out, Dave's route took him to durn near 12,300, near as I can figure. Guess he just hadn't had enough exercise that day. Well, by the time we got reunited, and fig-



## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

ured out there wasn't any water to be found up on Tempest, it was headlamp time again. We knew there were snowfields further down, so headed north over the Froze-to-Death- Plateau. Before long we saw a few headlamps winking maybe a mile in the distance. We figured we'd found the Jackson Hole Mountain Guide camp, and assumed there'd be snow nearby. About a half mile short of that group, we nearly stumbled across a couple guys at a great site, and they graciously invited us to share their snowfield and rock ring. Turns out, they lived in Bozeman, MT, but one of them used to guide for Markwell at the Gendarm! What a small world. By the time we set up and cooked dinner, it was after 2200, so we hit the sack. I slept like a stone, having been on the move since 0300.



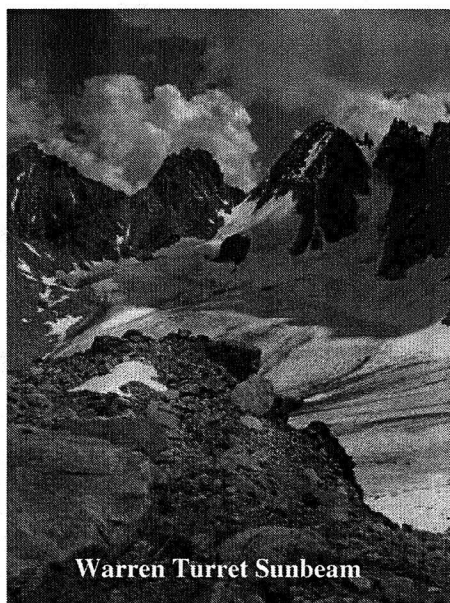
I don't think we broke camp 'till around 1000 next morning, but a few short hours and 29 switchbacks later, we had descended the northern end of the Phantom Creek Trail (known to ascenders as the Switchbacks from Hell) to Mystic Lake and were headed back to the car. Ya know, when you're in the wilds, you never know when the truly bizarre will appear. Less than a mile from the car, I was met on the trail by two teenaged girls in teeny little bikinis. I swear, they were NOT an hallucination. Mack and Dave saw them too. They asked if I had gone "all the way up," and I must have given them a weird look, because they looked back at me like they perhaps thought I didn't speak English. I caught on that they'd meant "all the way to the lake" so I said "sure, it's just up ahead." I think I waited long enough down the trail before I broke into laughter so they didn't hear me. Next stop was the Grizzly Bar in Rosco for their justly famous burgers, they Dave headed off to the Badlands

and Black Hills, and Mack and I headed for Billings and the airport.

The Highpointers' Website, America's Roof, rates Granite Peak as the third hardest of the 50 highpoints, behind Denali and Gannett. Most literature says that if you look hard enough, you can find fourth class routes up to the summit, but we must not have looked hard enough. I think it's important to keep in mind that most of the literature and trip reports you'll read about this peak are written by Highpointers, who, as a group tend to be more hikers and less climbers. My recommendation to anyone from the Potomac Mountain Club, is to carry a light rock rack, and just head up. There are lots of ways to the summit once you pass the buttress, and you're going to want a rope to get off anyway, so why futz around looking for the easiest way up. All-in-all, I highly recommend this trip to anyone looking for a wilderness mountaineering experience.



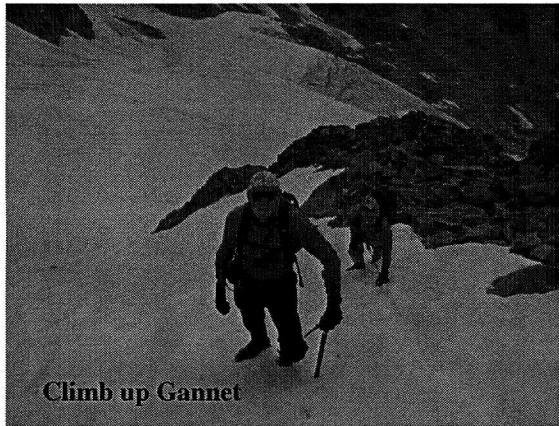
Snow Bridge



Warren Turret Sunbeam

## Wyoming's Wind River Range and Gannet Peak Something "Special"

The last day of July 2004 Dave Green, John Smith, and I met in a Pinedale, Wyoming for a very memorable week. Sunday, August 1<sup>st</sup> at the trailhead at Elkhart Park at a quarter to 9, we hefted our packs and started walking; the day's destination: Little Seneca Lake. First stop was the very aptly named "Photographer's Point." Needless to say had we gone no further the price of the airfare may have been justified. Before us lay a vast panorama of jagged peaks with our ultimate destination (Titcomb Basin and Gannet Peak) lost in the expanse. The severity of our task

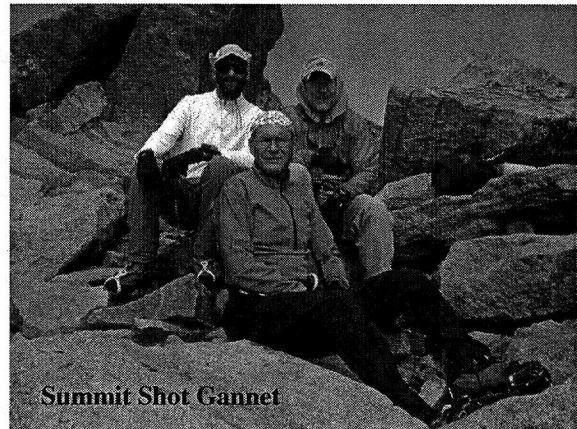


Climb up Gannet

began to sink in with a sense of awe mixed with humility. Enter modern technology (GPS) and good, basic navigation (map and compass) and a speck of white among the peaks revealed itself as the summit ridge of our final goal, Gannet Peak some 12 miles distant. We shouldered our loads and continued our trek along the well-worn trail crossing beautiful streams and lakes reflecting the ever-present images of distant but nearing peaks. In mid afternoon a short rain welcomed us to our camp past Little Seneca Lake. It was soon replaced by our annoying companions for much of the rest of the trip – mosquitoes.

The scenery the second morning was a continuation of the previous day's beauty but took on a more alpine feel as we neared the entry to Titcomb Basin. Peaks loomed higher and closer with the mass of Freemont Peak dominating the view. As we came alongside the first of the Titcomb Lakes the air carried the chill off

the glaciers ahead. Soon the first real obstacle in route to Gannet appeared in the snows of 12,800-foot high Bonney Pass. Surrounded by steep walls we made camp beyond the Upper Titcomb Lake near the convergence of the streams of melt water from Bonney pass and Knapsack Col. A heavy rain passed in the night with us snug and safe inside our shelters. A bit of excitement came as the torrents undercut rock high up one of the peaks; the noise of the crashing boulders continued for several tense seconds.



Summit Shot Gannet

Day 3 began not long after first light with drying gear from the night's rain. Our plan was to keep a camp here and carry light packs of just bivy gear for the next day's climb of Gannet. Thus unencumbered we climbed the surprisingly steep snow (up to 50 degrees) to Bonney Pass where we met a pair from Alaska with their glacier pups – a pair of chocolate labs named Satchel and Gaylou. Camped on the pass for days, they were thoroughly fit and acclimated. Those dogs were really a sight to see running about the snow slopes and playing out across the glacier.

From the pass we cast eyes on our route up Gannet for the first time and it showed us no apparent difficulties. We dropped down onto the Dinwoody Glacier, which proved tame except for a broken section just before Gooseneck Ridge. This was negotiated by way of delicate snow bridges and soon our bivy was established at 12,000 feet on the ridge, almost at the base of the route. The afternoon precipitation welcomed us as graupel at that elevation so without tents, we sought refuge amongst the rocks as best we could. It passed quickly though and clear skies surrounded us the rest of the evening.

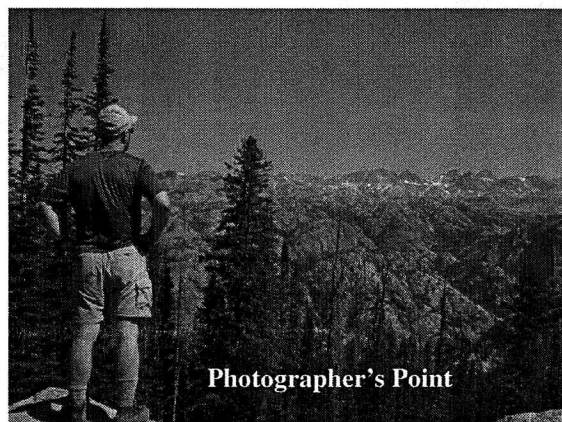
## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

Wednesday August 4 began as one of the most leisurely summit days I've had. Mr. Sun was already touching the peaks around us as we crawled from our sacks and began the day. A peek at my watch showed the inordinately late hour of 7am as we began to head up. A 30-degree slope above camp took us up a few hundred feet to a boulder scramble across right to a steeper snowfield. Increasing to 45 degrees and narrowing to 30 feet it lead up beside the most prominent feature of the route, Gooseneck Pinnacle. Here we unshod crampons for a consistently rising boulder scramble that put us ¼ mile closer to the top. This ended at a 40-degree slope that we climbed directly to the summit ridge 300 feet above. From there a simple traverse following a deep boot track lead the final half-mile to the summit. It was not without exhilaration; the precipitous 1000-foot drop of the West face was to our left and the slopes to the right fell away at a frightening angle. The summit was a pleasant one with plenty of space to relax after our unhurried 9:30 arrival. The view from Wyoming's roof was magnificent with peaks and glaciers in every direction, alpine lakes far below, and the somewhat less than Grand Tetons visible faraway to the Northwest. After recharging ourselves and recording the effort photographically and in the summit log, we began the uneventful trip down.

Back on the Dinwoody we encountered thunderous streams of melt water disappearing into dark wells on the glacier. That unearthly environment never ceases to amaze me. Much later, nearing camp in Titcomb Basin we were greeted by a trio of backpackers with way too much dessert. These gluttons had packed everything but the kitchen sink (at least we didn't see it) but, to their credit, they could really cook! A fitting conclusion to a successful day.

Often the day after a successful summit is a restful "letdown" but Thursday was anything but that. We arose well after the sun but wasted no time breaking camp and reorganizing and loading for the planned three-day hike out. We retraced our steps up the valley but shortly headed left over the deep sun cups of Twins Glacier and up to 12,250 foot high Knapsack Col. We paused for a short break in the col and gazed at a small yellow flower there – the sole source of color amid a mass of grey rock. The sky was generally clear and the temperature agreeable as we descended the other side over steep, loose scree to the lush grasses of an alpine valley the likes of which is hard to match. We stopped in a meadow full of wildflowers next to a raucous stream with a huge waterfall nearby. We were still high with not a tree in sight, which helped to serve up an unobstructed view. I marked this spot in my GPS simply "777". Continu-

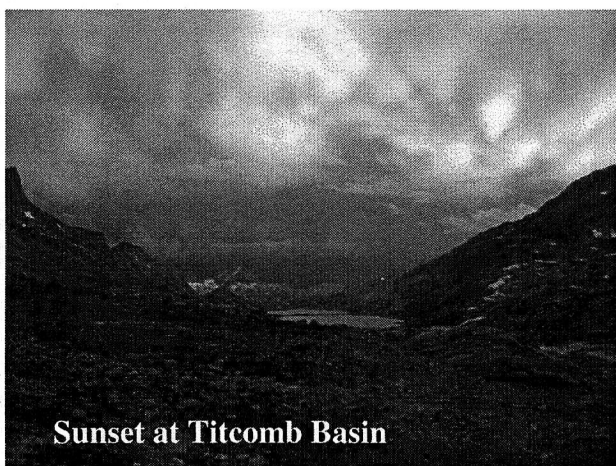
ing on we passed Peak Lake as the sky darkened for the afternoon shower. Shannon Pass was our next obstacle – one which the backpackers in Titcomb Basin warned us not to try the same day as Knapsack Col. We considered this a worthy dare and after a short pause continued on up. Shannon pass is not high but stretches for about a level mile alongside precipitous Stroud Peak with Mount Oeneis and Sky Pilot Peak off to the right. Down near the junction with the Jeanne Lakes trail we made camp. While Dave set up his shelter John and I hiked up a nearby peak to gaze at the landscape and our route for the next day. The map showed no name for this high point so we dubbed it PATC PEAK.



Friday we continued on a fairly level grade around Elbow Lake and past Twin Lakes and Pass Lake. Several miles later a really pleasant surprise greeted us. A little sand beach along the South side of Summit Lake invited us into the clear water. At 10,324 feet the water is liquid only a few months of the year but after six days without a shower we couldn't pass on it. Thoroughly invigorated we continued to the Pine Creek Canyon Trail, which would ultimately take us back to the cars. The rest of that day was filled with a continuation of what was quickly becoming blandly beautiful scenery. By late afternoon we had covered about 12 miles and found ourselves at Glimpse Lake. Our camp there was probably the most comfortable for the trip – we dubbed it the Glimpse Lake Hilton.

Saturday reaped the benefit of Friday's longer mileage. The distance to Elkhart Park was comparatively short but demanded a 1500-foot drop to Long Lake then back up another 1600. Easy, if it's a day trip, but when one considers the weariness of 7 days on the trail, days spent almost entirely above 10,000 feet, ease becomes a feat.





Sunset at Titcomb Basin

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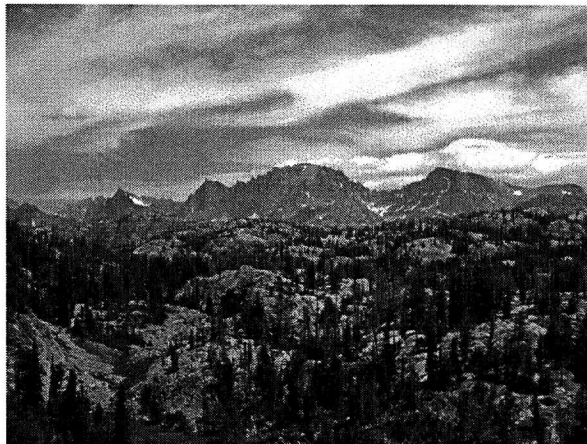
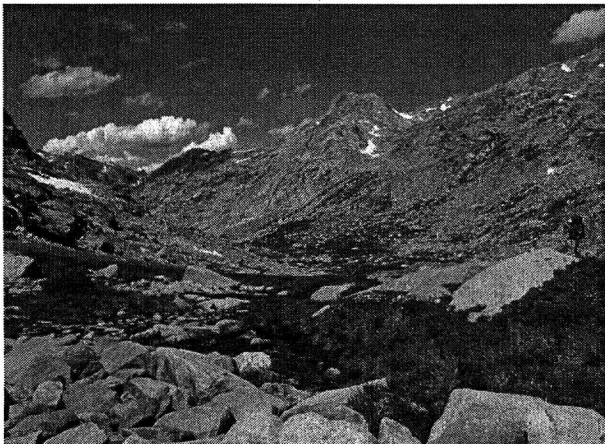
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( Special –continued from page 11)

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Back in town, with bodies washed and bellies satisfyingly full, thoughts returned to the week's unparalleled beauty. We each agreed: the Winds is a "*Special*" place.



## CHRISTMAS PARTY

PATC Mountaineering Section 2004 XMAS Party

WHEN: This years event will be held on Saturday December 11 at 7 p.m.

WHERE: Lee Jenkins home located at 1200 Lincoln Ave. Falls Church, VA 22046.

It's a Stone house located on the corner of Lincoln and Walnut streets.

## Climbers Calendar

January 14th - 17th (MLK) deposit required

North Conway, NH (Ice Climbing)

The club will be making a block reservation accomodation in New Hampshire for the MLK holiday weekend. We will be filling these reservations with deposits at the November meeting.

Trip coordinator: Andy Britton<TallAndyB@AOL.COM> or (703) 754 5834

## January Slideshow -

### Mike Law

On Thursday January 6 Mike Law, a visiting Australian climber, will be giving a talk about climbing in Australia at the National Cathedral School on the corner of Wisconsin & Massachusetts. This is being publicized jointly by PATC & the Blue Ridge Section of the AAC.

And who is Mike Law you say.....one of the pre-eminent Australian rock climbers of the 1980s, with a slightly outrageous reputation...check out

<http://www.chockstone.org/Interviews/MLaw.htm>

Mike is currently working at NIST in Gaithersburg, hence his availability...talk will start at 8pm and should be very amusing. Details plus a couple of spectacular photos are on the AAC website at

<http://brs.alpineclub.org/>

## Snowdonia – East Face of Tryfan

North Wales is one of the premiere climbing destinations in the UK with climbs of all grades and lengths easily accessible within a fairly compact area. The whole area is littered with well-frequented campsites and numerous small cottages that have over a period of years been converted into climbing club bunkhouses. Most of the climbing area is covered by the Snowdonia National Park which provides similar protections to in the US, however, unlike the US there are very few "rangers" (I'm not sure I have ever seen one!) and the climbing community maintains its own standards which includes a strong ban on bolting within the park. The ethical standard can be summed up as: "if you haven't the intestinal fortitude to lead the climb with the protection opportunities that the route naturally offers climb somewhere else and leave the route for someone with the necessary abilities." With excellent route descriptions in the available guidebooks those routes that are poorly protected are well known and appropriately described by such words as bold, committing or simply exciting!

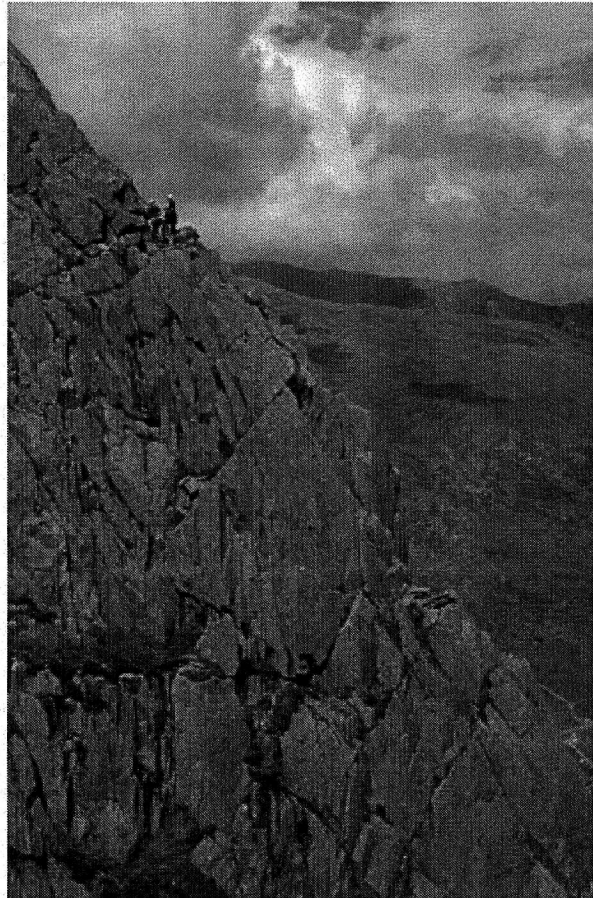
One of the more traditional areas is in the Ogwen valley which cuts a path between the principal chain of mountains within the park. One of these mountains, Tryfan, provides about 3000ft of 4<sup>th</sup> class climbing on sound volcanic rock (Rhyolite) to its summit. Of more interest to the climber is the East face where there are 4 routes that offer 500-800ft climbing of a moderate grade to the summit. These routes are popular throughout the year and can easily accommodate multiple parties.

A popular climb on this face is First Pinnacle Rib (first climbed in 1914) which is 600ft in length and is climbed in 6 pitches. Somewhat peculiarly the route is graded at VDiff or around 5.4 but the crux can be avoided by climbing a 5.5 variation?! The photo shows climbers just above the crux which is in the arête below them. As can be surmised the climbing on the crux is not particularly hard but protection is not particularly prevalent when it counts!

On this route and the other classics on this face, Grooved Arete (835ft) and Gashed Crag (500ft), an early start is recommended on popular weekends so as to be first on the route.

All these routes end near the summit and are full day routes. Descent can be made either down the "tourist" path, or if time and weather permits a better option is to descend down to a col in the main ridge and then scrambling up a high quality 4<sup>th</sup> class route called Bristly Ridge which leads to a large Pla-

teau before circling round to the South and then back down to the car park and on to the campsite or bunkhouse followed by one of the numerous local hostelleries (pubs) for revitalization for the next days activities.



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**A Word from the Editor:** I am very happy to be able to assemble the articles submitted by our club members. This issue characterizes the spirit of adventure and resolve inherent of our members. The pictures were numerous and it was a chore to pick these few pictures from dozens of spectacular shots, only to print them in B&W. If you get a chance to visit some of the websites where they are posted, enjoy them in breath-taking color. -v



**www.PotomacMountainClub.org**

**UpRope@comcast.net**

**Up Rope Editor  
Mountaineering Section  
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club  
118 Park Street, SE  
Vienna, Virginia 22180**

