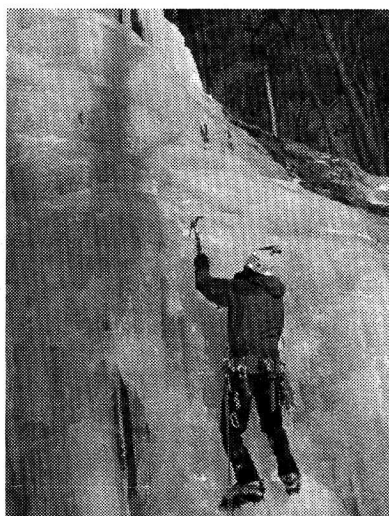


Volume 60 Issue 1

Spring 2005

### **ROCKFALL**

- For the latest current events, notices -visit the website
- Pete Grant made Honorary member
- PMC to purchase climbing gear for club trips
- Welcome New Members!!!!!!
- Vice-chair Lee Jenkins leaving in July- *vacancy*



*John Smith*

### **Mount Washington, N.H.**

*By Ozana Halik*

John Smith and I left for Manchester, N.H. on Friday Jan. 14, 2005. United flight 7882 leaving from Dulles was delayed 2 hours, of course they told us that right as we were checking in. I had to hustle and change the Dollar rent a car reservations, since they close their office at the Manchester terminal at midnight. Our flight was scheduled to land at 12:45am. I found Alamo stayed open till 1:00am, and was even cheaper, we even got a free upgrade to a full size car for the price of a compact. The drive to North Conway took 2 hrs, we arrived at the White Trellis Motel room #26 at 3:00am. Mitch Hyman who was trip coordinator and some MS members were already there since Thursday.

(Continued on pg.2)

### **Inside This Issue:**

Mount Washington

Gulf of Slides

PeTe Grant

White Oak Canyon

Jet Boil

Climbers Calendar

Carderock Origin

GMAIL & the LIST

Snow skills

Cochise stronghold

Mt. Kenya

Riegelsville

- C Ten PMC members participated, in part or in whole, in the New Hampshire trip, as described below. We knew going in that the weather could turn nasty and dangerous, but decided to give it a try. An excellent team effort made the trip successful and enjoyable
- 3 despite the terrible weather.
- 4 **March 31 :** John Smith, Dave Green, Tammy Pham, and I drove to the AMC Joe Dodge Lodge at Pinkham Notch, where we were met by Pete Grant.
- 5
- 6 **April 1:** The 5 of us skinned/snowshoed up about 2,100 vertical feet over 2.5 miles, where we established a camp at c. 4,100 feet directly below the Gulf of Slides.
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 13



(Continued on P.15)

*Dave Raboy*

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

**Mt. Washington** (Continued from cover)**Saturday, Jan. 15.**

Mack Muir woke us up at 8:00am, he said that the rest of the guys had gone to Lake Willoughby for better ice. I mentioned my plan to John and Mack. It involved hiking to the Harvard cabin, dropping our sleeping bags and continuing up to

"Huntington Ravine" and doing one of the gullies, then come back down and spend the night at

the cabin. Next day we would do "Damnation Gully" and then go for the Summit. After checking the weather for the next couple of days and after calling for the trail conditions at the Pinkham Notch visitor center we decided to go for it. The weather looked good and the avalanche conditions were low. We got ready and headed to Pinkham notch, making a quick stop for breakfast at Dunking Donuts. After checking for cabin space availability, signing the log and finishing the last packing details we headed up. It took us a couple of hours to get to the cabin. We dropped our sleeping bags, filled our bottles with hot water and moved on to Huntington Ravine. We got to the base of "Odell's Gully" (NEI grade 3) at around 1:00 pm. Weather was great, calm wind, very cold, sunny, clear, and great visibility. John led the first pitch, since he picked that gully and had never been up it. At the end of the pitch, he built a "V" thread as a belay anchor and brought Mack and I up. It was getting late, so we decided to bail off. We rappelled down from an anchor on a rock, that was made of a piton and a wire nut, it had some old slings but it looked safe. After getting to the cabin we started dinner. The cabin (overnight fee \$15.00) has a stove, water from a nearby spring, wood stove, and a sleeping area upstairs. Mack had not planned in staying overnight at the cabin, but we convinced him to stay. I shared my dinner and he had plenty of layers to keep warm. Also he slept downstairs by the wood stove. There was a nice group of people staying at the cabin, including some funny Canadians. We all had a good time telling jokes. The cabin caretaker constantly fed wood into the stove, he was going for a record 90 degrees. I went to bed at 10:00 pm but didn't sleep well, but at least I was warm. It's a good idea to bring ear plugs, then all that snoring and noise will not keep you awake all night.

**Sunday Jan. 16.**

We got up at 4:45 am, had some breakfast and got ready to go. We soloed to the base of the first ice pitch of "Damnation Gully" (NEI Grade 3). I led the first ice pitch, after 3 moves the pick on my tool broke. From there on I had

to whack a bit more to get a good placement. At the end of the pitch, I set up a belay anchor on a crack, good thing I had brought up rock gear (trcams, 2 pitons and a couple of nuts), then brought John and Mack up.

With double ropes, it is much faster to bring both following *Alpine Start* climbers at once. John continued

up the next ice pitch, what do you know, he breaks a pick also. I'm glad I brought my spare tool, I used it from there on. Mack brought his mini video camera, and got some great shots of us climbing. On the route we met another guided party of tree going up. The climb consisted of a couple of pitches of ice, then mixed rock/ice and frozen snow.

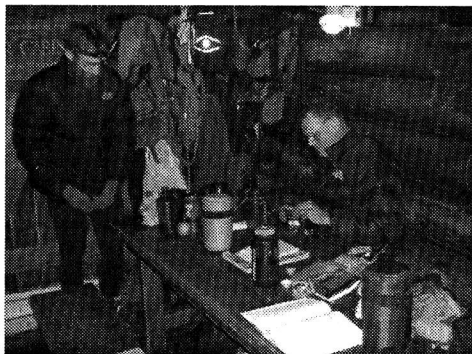
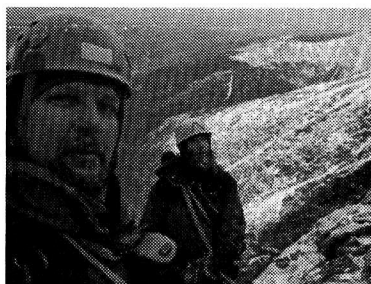
After 5 pitches we reached the "Alpine Gardens", packed the gear and ropes, had a bite of lunch and continued to the summit (6228ft.). The visibility was still very good even though some clouds were rolling in, also there was no wind, just really cold. It took us about one and a quarter hours to get to the summit. We shot some more pictures and video, ate some fruit and chocolate and headed down on the Lion's Head trail. On the way down I spotted a large fox going for the summit. Later on, Mack found a picture of it on the Mount Washington weather website. You think that going

down is a breeze, trail is has a lot and ice. con-pounding and giv-quads a out. At 4:00pm, couple of going for the

**Summit Shot**

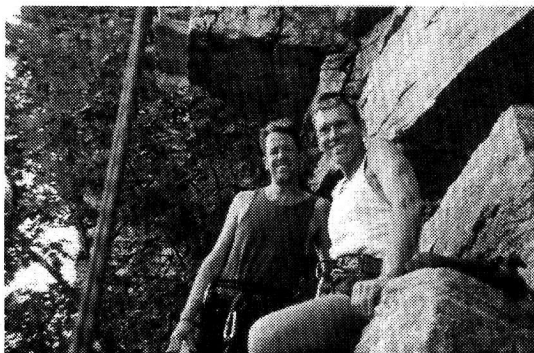
was kind of late for them to be just on the way up. It's a long way down the Lion's Head winter trail, in some places we were able to glissade. You have to be careful, since there are tree stumps sticking out of the snow. Going down is fast and fun so, we caught up with a party of 4 hikers. They slowed us down since they were inexperienced and some were not wearing crampons. The Harvard cabin was busy with climbers, we took a break told a couple more jokes and packed the rest of our gear. After a 1 hour hike we got down to Pinkham Notch, got in the car and headed back to the motel. After a short hot shower, John, Mack and I went to the Moat brewery and pub for dinner. Lee Jenkins, Bill Duvall, Phil Boyer and Kurt were there and already had eaten dinner. John had a burned burger, Mack and I had the ribs, they were awful, needless to say we did not finish them. I complained, but the manager didn't care and the waiter had an attitude, too bad, because the place has good beer. Maybe I will try the chicken wings next time, maybe.

(continued on p. 14)

**Harvard Cabin**

going to be but the long and of rocks You are stantly your toes ing the real work-around I saw a hikers

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION



Lee Jenkins (L) Pete Grant (R) mid climb of "Something Interesting" (5.8) in the Gunks in Sept. 1999.

## Climbing with Pete Grant

By Simon Carr

I've known Pete for roughly 6 years; and when Charlotte asked me to write something about climbing with Pete I thought back over the many trips and places we've been together in that period. Most of these were via Pete's maroon BMW...now over 200,000 miles and still going. Pete likes to drive, and I fall asleep in cars so there was a natural division of effort. Plus of course Pete teaches race-car driving, making him a natural for the section on I81 between I66 and Lexington...

The first time we met was August 99. Pete picked me up in Georgetown and we went to Talking Head Wall, a PATC trip, one of many that he organized. For some five years Pete was the main PATC trip coordinator, and without his efforts there wouldn't have been much in the way of climbing trips run by the club. He was particularly generous with his time in terms of taking out the less experienced members...not to mention all the women he climbed with at the Gunks that he'd met via Gunks.com!

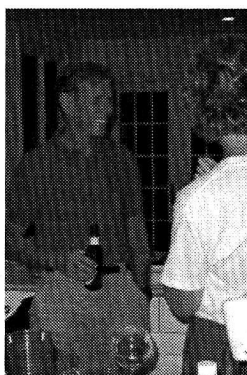
Some other memories... our epic trip to North Carolina, my first Thanksgiving in DC. By the end of the second day, we were at Looking Glass, having driven over 1000 miles and having climbed 4 pitches - the Great Arch, at Stone Mountain, in the pouring rain, with Ozana and Greg Mistler. Pete led the approach pitch, a wet poorly protected 5.7 slab; this was not the only time he led something I would have avoided. Pete could pull out the stops when needed...for example what I think must have been his hardest ever lead, Muckracker (11a) at the New, or Commando Rave at the Gunks, a 5.9 route worthy of a +++ annotation.

Other trips of note....Arizona, visiting Cochise Stronghold and Queen Creek....the Red River Gorge in Kentucky....and a number of ice-climbing trips to Pennsylvania, the White Mountains and the Adirondacks....faced with increasingly steep ice, Pete eventually retired his pre-history ice tools and bought some fancy new Charlet-Mosers.

We spent a lot of time in West Virginia, at the New River Gorge and Seneca, great trips working through the three star 5.9 & 5.10 classics. We'd talk a lot in the car there and back...and I learnt about Pete's time in the military, as an infantryman in Vietnam, about playing blackjack on cruise ships, and about his plan to climb all the Gunks routes below 5.10. Eventually Pete mentioned Linda, whose enthusiasm and energy has been so good for Pete.... for those who don't know, Pete and Linda are getting married in August, before they head to Europe for their second trip this year. Retirement was a good choice...and Linda an even better one!

Pete now lives with Linda up in Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks. He has a new hiking list of the 4000ft peaks in New England, and he and Linda are working their way through this. I expect we will see Pete on a few more club trips yet, either up north or on visits to his family in DC.

If asked to sum up climbing with Pete, it's his irrepressible energy and good nature that stands out. It didn't really matter where I suggested we go...incredibly punctual, he'd be at the door at 6am, I'd pile in, and we'd be on our way to another adventure.



ThePotomac Mountain Club is very proud to announce, that for his selfless service to the club, leading countless club trips and driving to any crag with terrifying speed, we have made Pete Grant, an honorary member of the Club with all rights and privileges therein. ®

## WHITE OAK CANYON

BTR, ain't that kind of like a BFR 'cept it don't hurt quite so much?

Nine, yes, go ahead, count 'em.

Nine people braved this massive winter event today to experience the mediocrity of WhiteOak Canyon ICE. Ok, so maybe I shouldn't belittle our local ice scene, but really, it's nothing to write home about.

Still, it was fun (a heck of a lot more fun than staying indoors on a beautiful winter day), a bit of a challenge for some, a chance to exercise too-little used muscles for others, and a first time experience for one. Oh, and from that one -- THANKS directed to Ozana for the loan of crampons.



smiling Lee Jenkins

The details: we climbed about 6 separate lines on the flows left of the third falls, the ice was soft with tons of water running, splashing, dripping, the temperature was extremely bearable and wind was nonexistent, and the snow held off until just before heading down. The grille at ECow was open and provided us with satisfyingly stuffed bellies for the mostly(?) uneventful drive home -- Rodrigo: was that a shortcut?, or a wrong turn and you're still out there somewhere????

### Participants:

Bill Wright  
Dave Green  
Kurt Ferstl  
Jeff Fiedler  
John Smith

Ted Plasse  
Rodrigo Riadi  
Mack Muir  
John Watson-Jones

OK, BTR = Brief(?) Trip Report.

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## JETBOIL PERSONAL COOKING SYSTEM

By  
Ozana Halik

On my recent winter ice climbing trip to Smuggler's Notch VT, I took my brand new JETBOIL Personal cooking system to give it a try. Retail \$79.99, I bought it online for \$65.00 (fuel \$4.00 sold separately) I like the concept of small and light, I used to carry a 1qt. S.S. thermos filled with hot soup, but it was too heavy.

The stove is light (14oz.) and compact (about the size of a 1qt Nalgene bottle). Everything fits inside the neoprene insulated aluminum cooking cup that also serves as a drinking cup with a plastic lid.

First I had to go to a climbing store and buy a 100 gram butane canister since you are not allowed to bring them on the airplane. The 100 gram canister is the only one that fits inside the cooking cup. I tried the stove in the warmth of the hotel room, it fired right up, but it was a different story in the cold of the climbs.

I was disappointed when I had trouble starting up the stove at the bottom of the ice climbs, I believe it was because the lack of fuel pressure due to the cold. I finally got it started, added a small amount of water and then the snow for melting. It warmed the water but not as fast as advertised, I had to relight it several times. The same thing happened a couple of weeks before, at the Alpine Gardens on Mount Washington.

I believe you have to keep the fuel canister warm against your body, maybe make an insulation cover for the canister itself, I will try that next time. I will use it during the summer were I believe it will perform much better.

## Climber's Calendar

**Saturday, April 30**

### **Great Falls National Park, VA (Top-roping)**

#### **Beginners Day Clinic**

Trip to Great Falls this Saturday April 30th, meet at the side lot ("climbers lot") @ 8 AM. If interested please let me know draboy@PATTONBOGGS.COM

**Meeting time:** 8:00 a.m.

**Meeting place:** Side Parking Lot (aka: climbers lot)

**Trip coordinator:** Dave Raboy at  
draboy@PATTONBOGGS.COM

**Saturday, May 21**

### **Buzzard Rocks aka Little El Cap**

There are 20+ long slab routes (sport/trad/mixed) from 5.3 to 5.11 and up to 110' in length. Some long TRs as well. Be prepared for the fairly steep 45 minute approach and bring lots of water as there is no source near the rocks. Check out these links for directions and route info.

<http://www.rockclimbing.com/routes/listSection.php?SectionID=5422>

**Meeting place:** Plan on meeting at the Oakton Giant shopping center at 7 a.m. (next to the old Appalachian Outfitters). We will probably be in front of the Starbucks...

**Trip Coordinator:** Lee Jenkins leejenkins56@msn.com

**Sunday May 22**

### **Great Falls National Park, VA (Kids Climbing Trip)**

A Chance to bring the kids to the crag and climb with their parents or guardians! A funtime.

**Trip Coordinator:** Ken Roberts  
climbkong@AOL.com

**June TBA**

### **Seneca Rocks, West Virginia (*Spring Trail Maintenance Trip*)**

All PATC members and friends are invited to attend. Here is your chance to help improve a favorite multi-pitch climbing area. Participants stay free at the Seneca Shadows Campground. We'll have four of the walk-in sites at Seneca Shadows campground Friday and Saturday nights; check for a note on the Gendarme bulletin board or just walk in and find us.

Meet for work at 8:00am sharp (mandatory safety briefing & sign-in) in the parking lot nearest the foot bridge leading to the rocks. Bring work gloves if you have them and a lunch and water for the day. Helmets and tools will be provided by the forest service but you can use your own helmet if you'd rather (no guarantee where that other one's been). Saturday evening our "appreciation dinner" will be provided.

Trip leader: Bill Wright at [william.wright@uspto.gov](mailto:william.wright@uspto.gov) or (703) 305-7792

**July 1st-4th - (*July 4th Weekend*)**

### **Seneca Rocks , West Virginia (*Multi-pitch climbing*) & Nelson Rocks Preserve**

The annual July 4th trip to Seneca Rocks. This trip is for multi-pitch climbers.. Participants are expected to find their own partners (leaders/followers). Individuals may contact the trip leader to help locate partners. [www.Climbseneca.com](http://www.Climbseneca.com)

**Meeting time:** TBA

**Meeting place:** Chateau Seneca Shadows Campground

**Trip leader:** Vincent Penoso vdotmatrix@gmail.com

---

**CARDEROCK**

**WEDNESDAYS**

## Google Mail: GMAIL

"The last thing we need is another email address", I said when Google announced their IPO, but I soon changed my mind the more I tried to follow discussion threads on our LIST SERVER. The PMC LIST SERVER is a wonderful way to stay in touch with our climbing friends, but it tends to clutter up our mail boxes at home, work or office with so much talk about bolting and such.

There are a number of features that sets this web based email apart from the rest. The first thing I noticed was that I first started out with 1 gigabyte of storage space for email. This is nutz! Today I have 2128 Megabytes (2.128 gigabytes) and for some craziness it grows minute by minute. So what the hell would anyone need all this storage space for email and how could you manage anything so ridiculous?

For one thing, I never have to delete any email and what little spamage gets through is zapped; I really see very very little spam. GMAIL is by invitation only at this time and this must cut down on the amount of spam; that is, someone who has a GMAIL address must send you an invitation. Ya want one, write me at [vdotmatrix@gmail.com](mailto:vdotmatrix@gmail.com).

You can assign a "tag" (label) to individuals or groups and with these tags you can filter and channel your emails in a very organized kind of filing system. The email search feature allows you to search words, names, phrases in emails sent to you months ago, and it is so, so easy!.

Tired of flipping through emails to see what was said on a particular topic in the LIST? GMAIL treats your emails as conversations that you can collapse or expand all at once at will. Pretty cool? Well besides of being able to download 10 MEGS of pictures, have POP access and forwarding, import email contacts (addresses) from almost any other mail program, or have an interface in 12 available languages, a myriad of fonts, bullets, and highlighting, 60 colors, signature options- it meshes well with almost any browser.

Now you can have a special place for all the real important chatter on the PMC LIST and never have to worry too much about spamming everyone's personal mailbox. Aaahh, check it out

<http://gmail.google.com/gmail/help/whatsnew.html>



## The Name Carderock

Many people who live in Carderock have often wondered about the origin of the name Carderock. The past two or three months I have done some research on that subject. Some people thought it was a Scottish word and referred to a town or village in Scotland. I called the British Embassy in Washington and they said there is no town in Scotland or England called Carderock.

One day I called Brenda Bell, Ed Bennett's sister, and asked her if she knew where the term came from or had any ideas about it. She said, "It could be an Indian name. Why don't you check with the American Indian Museum in Washington, D.C.. The next day I went to the Indian Museum. I spoke with the librarian at the Museum who said some people think it is an Indian name, but I don't believe it. He showed me a book entitled "The Place Names of Maryland" by Hamill Kenny. In that book under the name Carderock, it said "The name is evidently from "Carter Rock" in the Great Falls area.

I did some more research in Annapolis and College Park at the Maryland Archives Museums. The name Carderock was mentioned several times as early as 1700. In Rockville at the Montgomery County Historical Museum, a review of the Census of 1783 showed three Carters living in Montgomery County: Samuel Carter, Daniel Carter, Thimsey Carter. Also the book "Revolutionary Patriots" listed 4-5 soldiers from Montgomery County who fought in the Revolutionary War as Carters.

On the basis of this research, I believe the name Carderock comes from "Carter Rock", a man's name Carter and the word Rock. If anyone has any questions or comments please call me at (301)-229 0106.

Bill Feller  
January 14, 2005

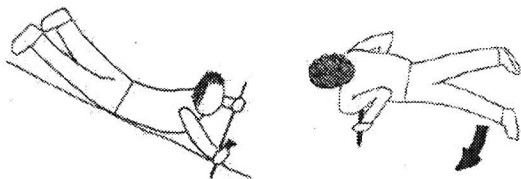
## Snow Skills Trip by Andy Britton

Firstly I must thank Dusty Westmeath from Ski Whitetail for liaising and obtaining clearance for PATC MS to use the slopes of Whitetail for this trip. At one stage it looked as though the trip would be delayed when Whitetail thought it could stay open one more weekend. Having been skiing there the previous two Fridays I was highly skeptical that the slopes near the bottom would hold up with 70F temperatures, full sun and then torrential rain early in the week. Anyway on Wednesday Whitetail decided to close its skiing doors for the season so the trip was on.



On arrival on a dank dismal Saturday it was amazing how much damage the rain had done to the slopes, but the target area for the exercises was at the bottom of Drop In which faces North so could be expected to avoid the worst ravages of the hot sunny days. True enough after a long arduous approach to the snow line ample snow remained for the needs of this trip.

Principal purpose of this trip was to cover basic snow skills so participants developed and revised the techniques for arresting themselves from a variety of unfortunate situations (fortunately no charges were pressed) where they were sliding feet first or head first for the abyss (some poetic license here).



Having secured the release of the participants they were then all tied up to various forms of snow anchors. An important aspect here was stressing the import of a solid bucket seat from which most second slips on snow can reasonably be expected to be held provided that there is not significant slack in the system. This seat was backed up by various anchors including bollards, ice axe belays and deadmen (no arrests) and successfully resisted significant attempts to dislodge the afflicted belayer(s) helped by the concrete snow. One additional belay technique was demonstrated (the stomper belay) that can be used at the top of routes when the ground levels off (this was shown as an example so no-one would be shocked if they saw

this as they scrambled over a cornice to see the belayer apparently nonchalantly taking rope in)

Finally a brief session was spent going through the principals of moving together roped on snow and the importance of not allowing slack develop in the system. The most awkward part here is to keep the rope taught if zig-zagging up the slope when turning the corners. (This is also difficult if skiing roped when the last in the line gets whipped around the corner if the front guys don't slow down as the rear guy reaches the corner!)

Once again thanks to Ski Whitetail and hope that this can become an annual trip to keep everyone safe on steep snow slopes.



**Stomper Belay in Action**

NB: This picture is not at Whitetail!

®



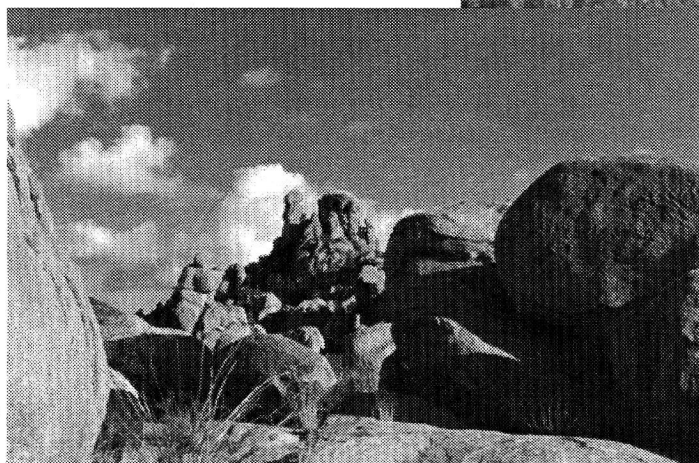
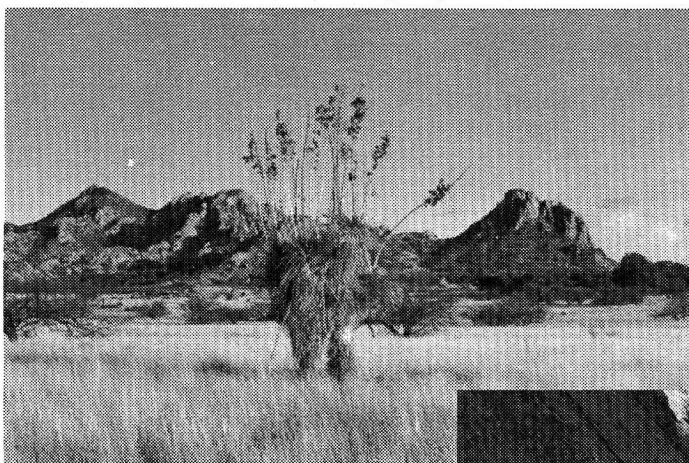
## Cochise Stronghold

By Marian Greenspan

I joined a NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) alumni rock climbing trip to Cochise Stronghold (~3 hours from Tucson, AZ) the first week in March.

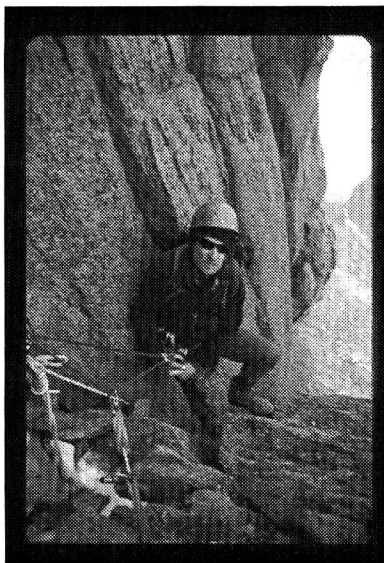
Car camping.

Beautiful weather \* we missed the rain. Lots of rocks (granite) and not many other people around. Good top roping and easy to moderate multi-pitch. There are harder routes for better climbers, too. A highlight for me was doing a mock-lead.



## No Summit on Mt Kenya

By Simon Carr



"Have fun" Amy said as she walked through the departure gate at Nairobi airport.

"I'll be thinking of you living it up on Mt Kenya, while I'm in Amsterdam, eating Dutch chocolate and sipping lattes. It will be tough."

That afternoon David and I took my gear to the campground in Nairobi where he had been staying. On entering the gate, it was as if I'd stepped back to my months in SE Asia in 1985. I was surrounded by 20-something Is-

### Mt. Kenya abseiling

raelis, Brits, Germans...well-thumbed copies of Lonely Planet, Let's Go, Rough guides on every table alongside the hand-rolled cigarettes. I instantly felt too old for this scene.

I'd met David a few years earlier in Boston, and we'd climbed together for a couple of seasons. He'd moved to Boulder, got good, became a refugee from the dotcom meltdown. His road trip had lasted 9 months now, from Australia and NZ to Asia and onto Africa. So when Amy and I decided to do the safari thing in Africa, I emailed David suggesting we climb Mt Kenya. With internet connections everywhere, there is no longer the isolation I'd felt in 1985 when there were only post restante addresses in Kathmandu and Delhi for contact. However email wasn't quite foolproof....

"We're going light I see" David said. "One 9mm rope eh?" I looked at him somewhat surprised. "Don't you have one?" "No" he replied, "I thought you were bringing the gear."

Next morning we headed for Mt Kenya in a Peugeot share taxi; so called because they take 8 people to a common destination. Share taxis are more expensive but marginally safer than the alternative, the minibuses known as matatus. These typically have space for 14 but are invariably overloaded and are driven by lunatics. In fact, given driving behaviour in Kenya, it is hard to see why there are so many driving schools. No one could ever fail the test!

Share taxis don't leave until they are full, and don't have space for gear, so in the interests of expediency we bought all the seats. We also took Joseph, a Kenyan who was accompanying us as a porter.

Joseph at one point had been a ranger in Mt Kenya National Park, and had a piece of paper testifying to this. He now hovered round the campground, capitalizing on his command of English to work as a guide or porter for backpackers wanting to trek on Mt Kenya or Kilimanjaro. Trekking is a very competitive business in Kenya and Tanzania. Portering jobs are sought after, even though the pay is only \$10 US/day.

The journey to Chogoria, a small town some 200 km north west of Nairobi, was supposed to take 4 hours. We made it in 2½, our driver not being in the slightest handicapped by his broken speedometer. The roads in Kenya, particularly near Nairobi, have frequent police roadblocks complete with tyre-shredding speed bumps. According to Kenyans the main function of these stops is for the police to supplement their wages...however we were waved through, as shaking down tourists is a no-no. We were dropped at the Transit Motel, identified in our guidebook as the place to hire porters, and even before the taxi had left we were asked if we knew Cameron [Burns], the author of our guide...like many poorer countries, Kenya runs on recommendations and word of mouth. Within 2 hours we had hired two more porters, and arranged a ride to the Chogoria road end. We were also the best part of \$700 US lighter. Most of this was park and camping fees for 9 days, all payable in advance.

Mt Kenya is circled by a ring road, and there are a number of different starting points. We had chosen the Chogoria - Sirimon route, supposedly the most scenic. We were hoping to avoid the trekking hordes found on the Naro Moru route, the shortest and most popular approach. The approach for Mt Kenya is short - if fit, you could do this in one day, but the killer (literally) is the elevation gain. Batian, the highest summit is 5199m, Point Lenana the trekking summit is 4985m, and the ring road is 1700m. So altitude is a problem, and acclimatization a real issue. There are park rangers stationed permanently at the Austrian Hut on the Naro Moru route, to carry down altitude-affected trekkers who in the interests of economy have come too high too fast.

For our ride that afternoon to the Chogoria park gate, we climbed in the back of a specially modified land rover. Modified, that is, to pipe choking exhaust fumes directly through the floor into the back of the vehicle. Curiously, there was a grab bar welded to the roof. The purpose of the bar became clear when we started up the road. The technique was one hand gripping the roof bar, one seeking purchase on the seat, feet braced on the floor, trying not to be thrown violently against the sides of the vehicle as the driver hammered up the road.

The track was impressively steep, rutted and muddy, a red gash between walls of impenetrable bamboo and trees. In these conditions, the usual \$50 fee became \$72, but it was money well spent avoiding not just 29 km of dirt track but also 1200m of elevation gain. About half way up, where it became *really* steep, the driver stopped to put on chains. When even these failed to provide traction, our porters cut bamboo fronds from the forest and threw these in front of the wheels. Where this was necessary, to lighten the vehicle David and I walked, escorted by Benson, our head porter. The mist had come down, so Benson started whistling. He explained he was trying to sound like a dog, because "in these conditions you could meet buffalo and buffalo don't like dogs". African Cape buffalo are unpredictable and bad tempered, and apparently kill more Africans each year than lions, elephants, or hippos.

I had always wanted to climb Mt Kenya, my imagination fired from Shipton and Tilman's writings about their ascents in the 1930s while pretending to be tea growers in East Africa. With evocative names such as "Upon That Mountain" and "Snow on the Equator", their books were of a different world, one of the Empire and bold exploration, an age of few maps and certainly no guidebooks.

We had both. And porters.

(Continued on page 11)

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

(Continued from page 10)

I had also read Felice Benuzzi's "No Picnic on Mt Kenya", the story of how Benuzzi and two other Italians had escaped from their PoW Camp in 1942, and had attempted to climb Mt Kenya with home made ice axes and a linen rope. They almost climbed Batian via the West Ridge, at that time the most difficult route on the mountain. Forced to retreat, they had succeeded on Pt Lenana, the trekking summit, before returning to their camp and turning themselves in to their guards.

I should have realised that wilderness was long gone from Mt Kenya from the width of the track when we started walking next morning. Day 2 was easy, 5km and 300m elevation gain to reach a campsite at 3200m, where we spent the afternoon and night. Three British climbers were already there, a party led by John Barry, well known as a speaker and climbing author. This was his fourth trip to Mt Kenya. He was as funny as his books, and we observed his acclimatization strategy - cans of Guinness and Tusker, the local Kenyan beer. Perhaps we should have reduced the food and opted for beer over Diamox.

Day 3; in fine weather we walked 10km to Minto's Hut, a derelict hovel at 4200m. There are a number of pseudo-private huts on Mt Kenya, used by the porters and by guided parties for sleeping. We had a tent as the hut fees are \$20 US per day per person for non-residents.

The route to Minto's was spectacular, as the path followed the edge of a huge gorge, the walls formed by hundreds of metres of vertical and overhanging rock, all unclimbed. For a few hours we could even see Batian and Nelion - the second highest summit - at the head of the valley. Around mid-afternoon the clouds came in, with light rain. This was the weather pattern most days, except higher up the mountain the rain fell as snow. My fine-quality \$60 altimeter watch performed superbly. According to the display we were already 300m higher than the top of Batian. John Barry's party had also walked to Minto's that day, so he and I engaged in more nostalgia about UK rockclimbing and the superiority of British pubs.

The following morning I felt a bit so-so from the altitude, so we stayed in camp drinking tea and in my case consuming paracetamol, ibuprofen, aspirin in medically-inadvisable quantities. I counted 40+ trekkers pass by, on their way out. Interestingly, most of the trekking parties were not DIY; they had porters, guides, and cooks.

I felt better in the afternoon and we headed over Simba Col at 4600m. By the time we reached the col, the light rain had become a full-blown snowstorm so we descended to Shipton's Camp at 4200m, the closest shelter for the porters. As the snow continued to fall for another three hours, David and I weakened and bought a place in the hut... Joseph "negotiating" a reduced rate of \$12 US, which we later discovered is the standard charge as we had already paid the \$8 camping fee! It was surprisingly cold; down jackets, balaclavas and gloves were the norm inside the hut. Given the porters' clothing, I couldn't understand why they weren't shivering. "Very strange" they all kept saying in relation to the weather "this is not normal". David was keeping a journal so I suggested he expand his vocabulary to include the Swahili words *theluji* and *muva* (snow and rain).

Even though we were almost on the equator, the slightly different angle of the sun throughout the year makes a significant difference in terms of snow and ice cover. Our planned route was the 'North Face Standard' on Batian, the normal route for this time of year. The better-known and shorter route on the southeast face of Nelion is the

usual route at Christmas, the other dry season. Our route was 29 pitches, mostly easy, but with a dozen pitches of roped climbing up to 5.6. This leads directly to the top of Batian, the highest summit of Mt Kenya. To reach Batian from Nelion, you need to carry ice tools and crampons to cross the Gate of the Mists (lovely name), a 140m gash between the two summits.

Routes on Mt Kenya are difficult to climb in a day, with only 12 hours of light combined with the afternoon rain/snowfall. While I'd been living it up on safari, David had gone to a meeting of the Mountain Club of Kenya, an organization reminiscent of the glories of the Empire. The membership was largely expatriates with British accents who seemed to know more about 4 x 4 vehicles than they knew about routes on Mt Kenya. However, we had learnt that the recommended strategy was to take two days, climbing roughly 1/3 of the route the first day to bivvy below the crux of the route, the Firmin Tower. We needed to take the tent because as we'd also



ended up with only one bivvy sac, and **Simon Cooking** David had a down bag, not great for sitting out a snowstorm. It was surprisingly cold - each night it was going down well below freezing, so sleeping bags were essential.

Day 5. From Shipton's Camp we could see the route was plastered from yesterday's storm, so we decided to walk up Point Lenana for acclimatization. This would also serve as a reconnaissance of the route, and if we didn't get up Batian, at least we would have managed what the trekking parties could! I'd already made myself unpopular the previous evening with a group from Britain when I'd explained that they weren't actually climbing the *real* mountain. We left at a civilized hour of 9am, well after the usual 3am departure of the trekking groups. A useful reconnaissance indeed - on the top of Lenana, we could see about 20m. Batian and Nelion were invisible in the clouds.

Day 6. The rock was still a bit snowy, but we had to try the route. If we stayed much longer we'd run out of cash, and credit cards are not useful at Shipton's Camp. We shamelessly gave the porters our rucksacks to carry to the foot of the route, an hour's walk above the hut. I took the first lead, up cold rock, probably only 5.4, but in mountain boots and a rucksack it seemed quite hard enough, and I put in lots of gear. After all we'd paid to have it carried here! David had the stove and tent, so I led most with a lighter pack and he suffered following. In places there was snow on the rock, and water running down, but the climbing was mostly easy, in a gully system with the odd 20-30m rock step to add interest. There were many signs of previous parties - rappel anchors, old slings, food wrappers. Although we had spent a couple of days not doing much, I was by no means acclimatized and every pitch felt like I was running uphill through sand.

(Continued on page 12)



## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

(Continued from page 11)

By 1pm we had climbed 10 pitches and were at the bottom of the Amphitheater, an easy angled scree basin that was the recommended bivy spot. There were many sites to choose from, all furnished with comforting walls of rocks to cut down on the wind. The clouds had come in, light snow was falling, and a couple of hundred feet above I could see bleached ropes hanging down Firmin's Tower. The previous evening we had met a British couple whom had just climbed the route, and they had told us the harder pitches had fixed lines hanging down, knotted and tied with foot loops. We put up the tent, crawled into the sleeping bags, took more aspirin, melted snow and whiled away the afternoon until it was time for dinner. Fortunately Mountain House meals (brought from the US) had improved since I had last tried these.

It was already 7am when we woke up. We'd lost an hour of the limited daylight. Given our superb rate of ascent the previous day, it was clear we had to go light to have any chance of reaching the top, so we left the sleeping bags, tent and stove. David took the first two pitches, up cold slabby rock, to put us under Firmin's tower at the foot of a steep 15m wall.

We could see that the rock in the shade was snowed up, so David opted for a harder looking but dry crack. As he hadn't climbed for 4 months, there was some whimpering along the lines of "I want my rock shoes" but he pulled through to stop underneath the first pitch of the Tower, a wide chimney draped with fixed lines and blocked with water ice in the back. My lead, so I tightened up my boots and took all the gear. I started ethically enough, climbing the rock, but as soon as it became awkward it seemed churlish to ignore the fixed ropes so I heaved on these. And I kept doing so to the top of the pitch. In places, there was no protection, so I clipped the fixed lines. We were mountaineering after all.

David, possessed of more ethics, stylishly climbed the pitch without using the ropes, and reached the belay markedly out of breath. Without the assistance of the ropes the climbing was probably 5.6. To speed things along while his heart rate went down, I kept leading, another wide chimney with more fixed rope. A third pitch took us to the top of the tower and to the crest of a ridge that led back towards Batian. We'd gained some height now, and the ridge fell away on both sides into the clouds boiling up from below. A couple of easy pitches, another iced up pitch of 5.4 rock led by David, an easier pitch led by me and we reached the junction with the West Ridge. We were at around 5000m, the top of pitch 23, and it was 12.30.

"We'll be ok if we don't dilly dally" David said looking at me as I sat slumped against the belay.

"Dilly-dallying? I'm not dilly-dallying" I replied. "I'm trying to breathe."

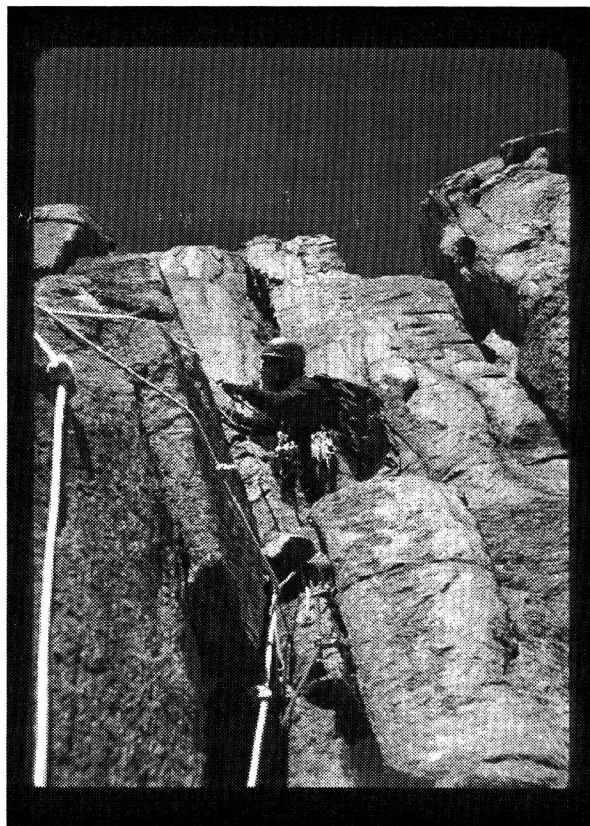
From this point the route followed the summit ridge of Batian for six pitches, often traversing below the crest where the climbing was easier. We climbed two more pitches to Shipton's Col, roughly 50m vertically and 150m horizontally from the summit. It was 1.45, and we'd need another two hours to reach the top, pretty much guaranteeing that we would be climbing and abseiling throughout the night. A bivy up here without the gear we'd left below was not an option; we were paying for that lost hour. So after some discussion we started back down, taking small consolation in that we had climbed all the pitches of technical difficulty. *And hasn't Marc Twright, one of the premier US alpinists, said that is all that matters?*

The abseiling went very smoothly, and the absence of a second rope did not matter. Most of the abseils were short, 20 - 30 m, and the

ground was sufficiently broken that the chances of catching the knot with two ropes would have been high. The anchors were in place, thick wads of rope and slings and the odd fixed biner. We were back at the bivy site just after 5pm, in light snow, so we packed up everything and kept heading down. We made it to the foot of the climbing just on dark, and as we approached the hut the porters came out to meet us and take our packs. I was impressed by this, even more when they brought us hot water in the hut. Our porters had shown considerable initiative the previous day. While we were paying them to sit around the hut, they had walked back over Simba Col and had carried John Barry's gear to Shipton's Camp, for a small tip!

Mt Kenya was done. We weren't going back to walk the last 4 pitches. Next morning we headed down the Sirimon route, 22km to the road end. The valley was not as spectacular as the Chogoria side, but the vegetation - giant groundsels, lobelias, other alien-looking plants - was far more photogenic. We were at the road end by 3 pm, and in Nanuki on the ring road by 5. The British couple we'd met in Shipton's were there, so we indulged in post-route nostalgia, and next morning shared a taxi to Nairobi.

Two days later Amy and her cousin met me at the pickup point outside Amsterdam airport.



**Simon Leading Firmin's tower**

"I didn't bring you a latte," she said "but I have arranged a barbecue with my relatives. Won't that be fun?"





## Riegelsville (Kintnersville) Ice BTR

This past Saturday, undeterred by inadequate condition reports, 5 of us drove north for a look at Eastern PA Ice. The day was clear and comfortably cold as we pulled to the nearly full car park by the main gully. A short trudge to that gully and our eyes fell on wonderfully fat and semi-plastic ice! Other parties caused slow going through the lower pitches but the amphitheater above was devoid of the usual forest of top ropes.

An observation: drainage patterns have changed significantly over the years -- the center of the main headwall was mostly bare but the flow in the left corner looked really nice while the right side flows were as fat as I've ever seen.

We did the usual bit, leading the right side flow then setting top ropes, while Rodrigo proved his solo proficiency. His one true lead had only a single screw 10 feet below the top. "My tools are my protection", right??? The ice had some of everything -- wet mush, plastic "hero" ice, delicate chandeliers, dinner plating bulges, and resonant columns. Screw teeth never approached rock and the broad flows gave room to roam to avoid the sloppy stuff.

After lunch we lost one of our number as Rodrigo had an early appointment. The rest of us decided to get a look at Dead Deer Gully. The rappel was efficient with twin 60s (I'd recommend leaving the 50s at home) but it was late as we started up the steeper than usual bottom pitch. Here too the ice was fat and we soloed to the headwall. I'll say here that that headwall has never really been in for about the last 6 years, well, this year it's definitely in. The bottom is a bit dicey, but it's fun to top rope with headlamps. ;)

I sure miss the illumination the power plant once provided, but that is another story...

### Participants:

Mack Muir	Jen
Paul White	Kathleen
Rodrigo Riadi	

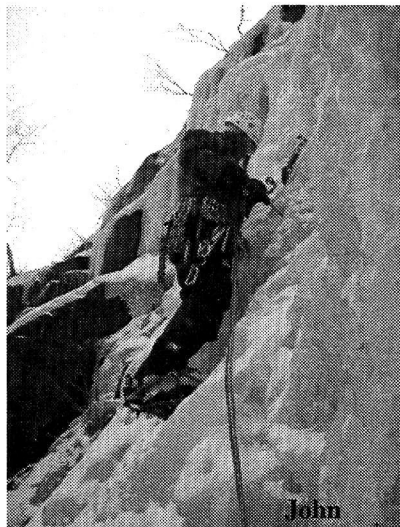


THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

**Mt. Washington** (Con't from p.2)

**Monday Jan. 17.**

The alarm went off at 8:00 am, John, Mack and I went to have bagels for breakfast. Mack left us since he had to go back to Manchester to catch a flight back home. John and I decided to go and do "Standard" (NEI grade 3) since it was one of the only climbs in shape. I led the first pitch and John followed. It got cold at the cave belay, after I gave John a couple of hand warmers he continued on. We rappelled down from the tree on the right side of the climb. After hiking back to the car, we headed back to the motel for a nice long hot shower. On the way we stopped at Ragged Mountain Sports to look for new gear. For dinner we went to Margarita Grill, John and I both had the ribs (better this time), complimented with margaritas.

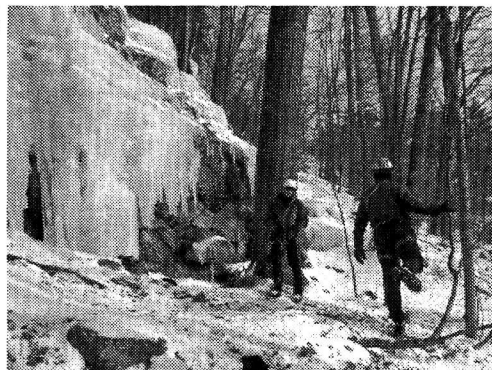


John

**Tuesday Jan. 18.**

Our intentions for the day were to do Willie's slide, but the day was very cold 1 F and the wind was blowing 20 mph., Brrrrrrrr!, change of plans, we decided to go to Rumney on the way back to Manchester. Rumney is 10 miles west from the I-93 highway. There is no approach to the ice, you can see most of the climbs from the large parking lot. There are toilet facilities if you need to change into your clothes after the climb. The day was sunny but really cold and windy, we looked around but there was not a lot of ice, only a curtain on the right side were a couple of climbers were top roping.

We got our gear ready and went up to join them. John led the right side and set up a top rope. Then we went up several times, trying different lines. We

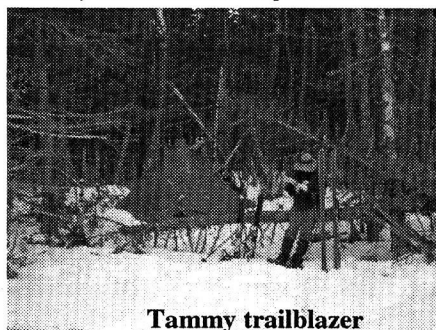


quit with enough time to get back to Manchester and catch our flight back. On the way we stopped at a Burger King and Super sized! To bad our flight was delayed, we could have climbed a bit more. O.K. then, let's make the best out of the situation, couple of pints of ale, please! The return flight to Dulles went smooth, United small planes make you feel you are in your own private jet. All in all we had a

great time, I accomplished what I wanted to do and John did two new routes on Mt. Washington.

**Ski Mountaineering** (continued from cover)

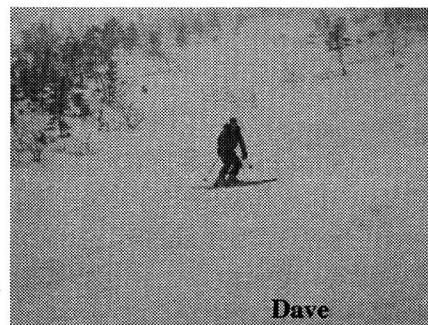
-Rookie-of-the-year Tammy Pham found the camp, a beautiful site protected from avalanche by a stand of thick, large trees, but proximate to the main gullies and the South Snowfields. Initially our camp consisted of 3 tents and a common cook shelter (the disco). In the afternoon, Mitch Hyman and 2 friends arrived and skied and explored the snowfield area. Dave Green also got in several telemark runs on the snow fields, accompanied by Tammy, who was on snowshoes. John Smith and I got in one run in the main GOS gully (Gully No. 1).



Tammy trailblazer

We expected Eric Pihl and Kathleen Steinle in the afternoon, and were somewhat concerned when they not only hadn't arrived for happy hour, but were still missing at dinner. We consoled ourselves with a campfire,

graciously gathered by Dave Green and Pete Grant (yes they're legal in that area), and some of my single malt (John Smith, in his only error of the trip, having left the Canadian whiskey in the car). About 8 pm we saw headlamps and Eric and Kathleen staggered into camp after a total ascent of over 4,000 vertical feet and 5 miles, in less than 5 hours. (Wait, didn't you say the vertical rise to GOS from Pinkham Notch was only 2,100 feet over 2.5 miles? Hmm, some suspected a route finding error but with no witnesses and a conspiracy of silence, we'll never know). We fired up the MSR's and helped them establish camp. Luckily the disco was still open and Eric had brought a collection of miniatures procured, we suspect, from airplanes on various business trips. A good time was had by all.



Dave

**April 2:**

Sound asleep in my cozy Bibler, I was awakened by a pounding on my tent by John Smith. John had picked up a NOAA weather report from the Mount Washington station that predicted snow followed by massive amounts of rain high on the mountain over the course of the day. The gathering deluge presented the potential for massive slab avalanche activity on all steep aspects (including, most importantly, the one directly above us). It was already snowing granular ball-bearing like flakes. John did it exactly right, showing his experience and wisdom in the mountains. He consulted each of the other 6 in the camp individually, without attempting to prejudice decisions, and we all came to the same conclusion: time to bail. The group dynamics were terrific with absolutely no friction in the decision-making process.

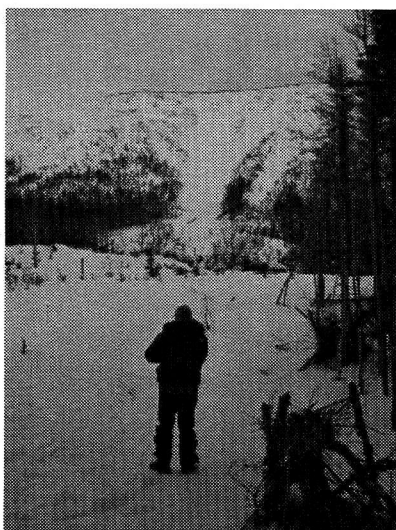
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

# Ski Mountaineering (continued from p.15)

As we were breaking camp, we heard from Don MacKenzie, who had stayed at the AMC Lodge the previous night, and wanted to skin up, to at least ski down with us on the GOS Ski Trail. Apparently the route-finding flu was highly contagious because he ended up skinning up the Sherbourne ski trail and not meeting up with us until our mutual descent to Pinkham Notch. (Actually he got a better run because the GOS trail was in terrible condition).

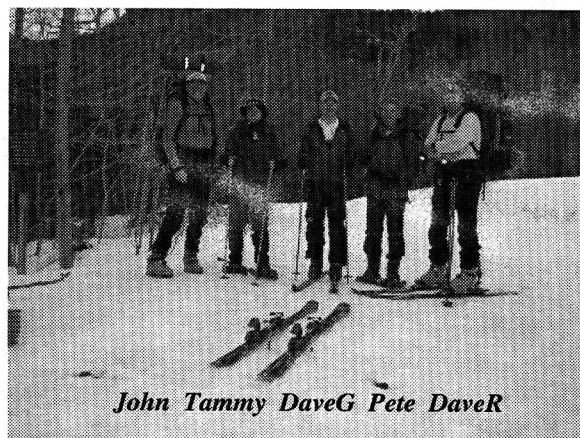
Then as we were about to depart our beloved GOS camp, Josh Baker showed up with snowshoes on his feet, and his snowboard on his rucksack. He took a run in the Main

Gully, and then descended via the GOS Ski Trail. The descent down the GOS Ski Trail turned into a bit of an epic, especially for those on skis. The trail was steep and narrow, and the surface was crusty. Since our ascent the previous day, in-

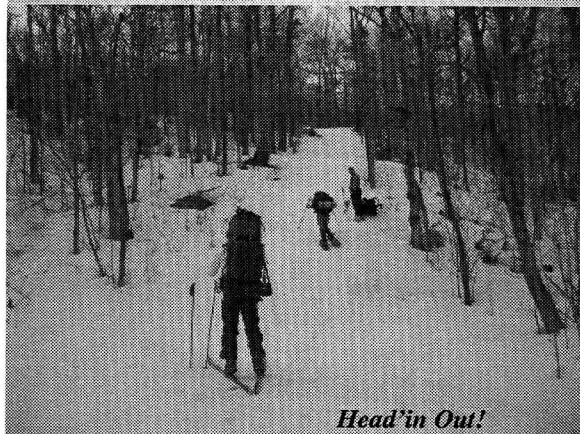


*This huge slide path gives about 1000' of verticle, just above our camp!*

ing and descend to Pinkham in the afternoon stated that: "Travel anywhere near avalanche territory today is borderline suicidal." But hey, that's Mount Washington. Next year. . .



*John Tammy DaveG Pete DaveR*



*Head'in Out!*



*Girls are cozy, guys outside.*

considerate hikers (who absolutely are not supposed to be on ski trails without snow shoes) had stitched a line of deep size 10 post holes right in the middle of the trail, virtually over its full distance. These are very dangerous to skiers, especially those with 50+ pound rucksacks on their backs (who tend to catch tips in the holes and go ass over tea kettle). And just to up the challenge, the snow turned to sleet and rain for the descent. Through a variety of unorthodox but creative techniques, however, all the skiers managed to descend without too much damage (the snowshoers were already warm in the lodge).

Pete had to leave, but John, Dave, Don, Kathleen, Eric and I passed a very pleasant evening in the AMC lodge.

All in all a very enjoyable trip despite the weather. The decision to bail a day early was the right one. The USFS avalanche advisory for Sunday, a day in which we planned to ski in the morn-

## Special Recognition:

**Rookie of the year:** Tammy Pham

**Wisdom in the mountains:** John Smith

**Most bruises per square inch on descent:** John Smith

**Runner up, most bruises on descent:** Dave Green

**Route Finding Award, 3-way tie:** Eric Pihl, Kathleen Steinle, Don MacKenzie

**Best line by an anonymous club member to an unknown mountaineer at the Hermit Lake Ranger Station at the foot of Tuckerman's Ravine:** "Is this the Gulf of Slides?"

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