

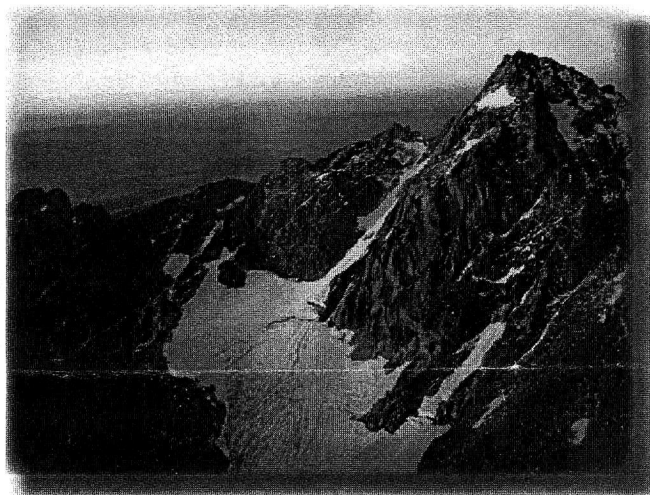
Up Rope

FOUNDED BY
HERB AND JAN CONN

Grand Tetons - September '08

Bill Dudley

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Sunrise on the Middle Teton from the Grand

For my three weeks in the Tetons, I flew out to Salt Lake City (closest airport for Southwest) where I was picked up by Josh and Kath Baker. We drove on to Grand Teton National Park and checked into the Climber's Ranch, run by the American Alpine Club. This is a great facility for climbers, just a few miles south of Jenny Lake. It features about a dozen cabins with anywhere from 4 to 12 bunks in each. There's a bathhouse with hot showers and also a cooking pavilion to meet other climbers and exchange beta and stories. They reserve a good chunk of their space for walk-ups so once there you can go off on a climb and be sure of a place to stay when you get back down. All this for only...\$8 a night per person! (If you're an AAC member). Drew, the ranch manager, is very cool and helped us out a lot.

The next day we decided to tackle Baxter's Pinnacle. After taking a ferry across Jenny Lake and then a 30 - 45 minute approach we ended up doing the 5.10 East Face

variation finish on this 5 pitch climb. One rap and a downclimb of a gully to get out. It was a fairly short day with gorgeous weather and a nice way to dig into the area.

The forecast the next day was for rain, so we tried to beat it with a 3 AM start to attempt Symmetry Spire. At about 4:30 a.m., about where the climber's trail breaks off, we heard a low sound just off the trail and saw some eyes reflecting off the headlamps. Worried it might be a bear we cruised on (it was probably a moose - read on). Five minutes later it started raining and with the forecast of worsening conditions throughout the day we decided to bail. Spent the day cruising up to Yellowstone to check out Old Faithful.

Monday the weather looked good and we chose to attack the Grand. We packed up and hiked into the Lower Saddle (11,600') in about 5 hours. Worried about notoriously windy conditions, we were happy to arrive to sunny 45 degree temps and just a light breeze. The Grand was right there in front of us and we were pretty optimistic about our chances, but the weather changed overnight. The next morning we awoke to see the Grand completely socked in, and accumulating snow coming down. Not at all equipped for winter alpine conditions we had to turn around and head down.

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meeting Judy Wu at the airport Sunday night. Back at the Climber's Ranch the next morning, we awoke to head up to Baxter's Pinnacle. On the approach in I almost ran into the biggest bull moose I've ever seen, but luckily it didn't seem to care and let us walk by. Judy lead the first 4.1 pitches (out of 5) before letting me do a little leading. This time we did the regular 5.9+ finishing pitch.

Tuesday we tried to go for Symmetry Spire but I'm now 0 for 2 on this one as the 3000' vertical approach combined with a long climb at altitude was too much for Judy for her second day in the Tetons so it turned into a long training hike. It looks fun, I'll have to get back. Wednesday - chill out day - Breakfast at Nora's in Wilson (south of Jackson), shopping the 60% off racks at Cloudveil, went to see Tropic Thunder. That evening we drove to Victor, ID to eat dinner with Jack Tackle who has spent most of the last 30 seasons guiding in the Tetons and repping for gear companies. I felt lucky Judy knew him - he gave us lots of good beta for our climbing.

Thursday we picked up a backcountry permit and did the approach hike into Death Canyon in the afternoon. Unfortunately the first backcountry campsite we could use was about a ½ hour past our route. We were hoping that by getting the approach in the day before we might be able to do the whole Snaz route but we didn't get up early enough and just did the same 6 pitches that I'd done with Kath and Josh. Still a great climb and this time we had it to ourselves.

After spending Saturday picking up food, gear, and a four night permit we left Sunday morning to head back towards the Grand. We stopped the first night at The Caves (yes, there are bivy caves here but we had a tent) at about 10,000'. Our objective the next day was Irene's Arete, a classic 6 pitch 5.8. Judy led a couple of the first pitches and I finished it up. Despite the descent descriptions in the guidebook CLEARLY saying "go down the SECOND gully we saw slings 'n rings at the top of the first gully and headed down. I had tweaked a muscle in my back that morning and it was really hurting so I'm going to claim "pain induced stupidity" on this glaring error as we turned an easy one hour downclimb into a 2+ hour adventure getting back to our tent. The next day we were supposed to move up to the Lower Saddle but my back was really sore so we decided to just chill out a day and try to just do the Grand the next day from our Caves campsite. We spent the day sunbathing in the 75 degree temps (at least we bathed!) and watching our sitemates Scott and Tanya from Canada and Phoenix climb Irene's.

Woke up the next day at 2:45, on the trail by 3:45, arrived at the Lower Saddle by 6 and started up with the Upper Exum Ridge as our goal. Luckily it started getting light just about the time we really needed light to figure out where we were going. We had a bit of trouble figuring out where to cross the Central Rib to get over to Wall Street but eventually made it there and once on the ridge route finding got easier, but certainly not easy, as we found it to be very complex and the simple line drawings on the topos leave out vast stretches of 3rd, 4th, and lower 5th class terrain. We were on the summit by one in beautiful 55 degree sunshine and little wind. After a couple phone calls from the summit we headed down. With only minor difficulties on the way down the Owen Spalding route we were back at camp at 7, packed up and on the trail again by 8 and rolled into the Climbers Ranch at 1 AM. Long but fulfilling day. We killed the next couple days going up to Bozeman for the Alpinist/Reel Rock filmfest, mailing packages home and checking out Old Faithful on our way back towards Salt Lake City for our flights home.

SUMMITTING IS AWEWSOME - GO CLIMB SOMETHING!

p.s. When I was a little kid with my family in the Tetons I saw folks go by us on the trail with huge packs dripping with gear. Somewhere along the line I was told that we couldn't go where they were going "because they have ropes and helmets and special gear". Thanks to all of you who have turned me into one of the cool people with ropes and helmets and special gear...

Lover's Leap

Lake Tahoe

John Oster



John Oster on The Line, Pitch 1

Craig Yamaoka and I had work travel out this way, so we took advantage of our proximity to Tahoe and climbed at the Leap for a few days. We found both the climbing and the trip overall exceptional. The Leap is located about 45 minutes from South Lake Tahoe. The granite cliff is nearly a half-mile long and 400 feet high; the rock is of very high quality and textured with dikes and sills (horizontal dikes). Two other climbing areas, Hogwild and the Hogback, are only 15 minutes away and offer outstanding routes 3-4 pitches long. The routes are somewhat long at an average 120-160 feet. Chris McNamara's guidebook, *South Lake Tahoe Climbing*, proved both very useful and comprehensive.

We started on the East Wall up Haystack (3 pitch 5.8). From camp it takes about 15 minutes to get to the East Wall. The route trends right up a dihedral with an interesting 5.8 roof problem midway. Corrugation Corner (3 pitch 5.7) was next on our list. Most parties climb another route to get to the base of Corrugation. The direct approach is kind of nasty and why not just climb up instead? So, we climbed *The Farce*, a two-pitch 5.5 that I was able to complete in one long pitch with 60m doubles by a concerted rope stretch effort to reach the tree anchor. By the time we got to the base of Corrugation it was getting late, so we decided to climb the first pitch of *The Groove*, 5.8. Both of us are on the short side, so this route required us to do numerous mantles and probably would have been trivial for someone 6 feet tall. Next up was *East Cracks*, another 3 pitch 5.8 that does not see a lot of traffic, perhaps due to its proximity to the famous *Bear's Reach* (see Dan Osmond solo this in minutes on YouTube, etc.) The first pitch goes mostly 5.6, with one 5.7 move to surmount a bulge, which Craig handled quickly.

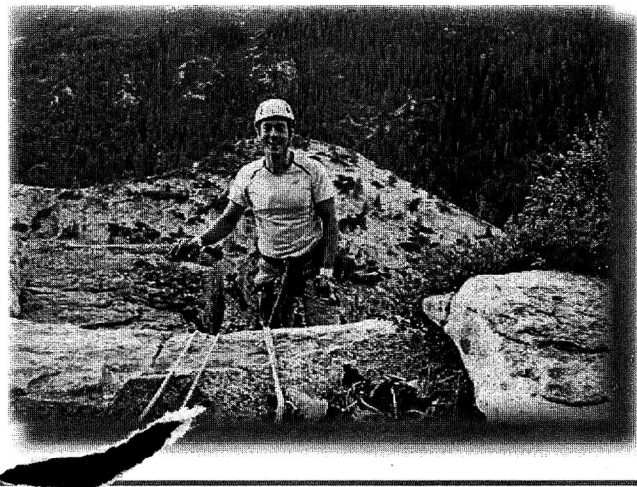
Our last route was to be *The Line*. I had read about this route in an issue of *Climbing* and had been drooling over this true *Direttissima* ever since, hoping to have the skillset to lead it if and when the opportunity arose.

The crux moves on *The Line* are at the beginning of p1, about 20 feet off the ground. These nearly stifled me with polished (slippery) rock. It reminded me of *Banana at Seneca* only on steroids. I finally powered through this section without really using much in the way of footholds and wondered how the heck I was going to continue for another 130 feet. That pitch may have been the most sustained I have ever led, not easing off much at all. P2 did ease off, with only a few 5.9 moves and a bulge to work through. Craig and I were feeling pretty good at this point; we knew the last pitch was only about 60 feet and I could see the 5.8 roof, which looked very doable and protectable. It was fun pulling this 5.8 roof with 300+ feet of air below, and a very aesthetic finish to the route. I set up the belay on a tree, took the shoes off, and enjoyed belaying Craig up with the sun just beginning to disappear. We enjoyed a few minutes of elation at the top, then hiked out. A close encounter with a rattlesnake reminded us we weren't quite finished with our adventure yet! All of the routes we climbed were on excellent quality rock, G-rated with ample pro, and the ratings seemed dead-on. Routes I'd do on return; *Corrugation Corner* (3 pitch 5.7), I'd probably do *Surrealistic Pillar* or *Traveler's Buttress* to reach the base of Corrugation. At *Hogwild*, I'd try *Hogwild* (1 pitch 5.7) and *It's Better with Bacon* (4 pitch 5.8).

Camping: We were not optimistic about finding a camp site over Labor Day, but there were plenty available. Sites are \$10/nite, very clean, and contain a bear container and grill. There is running water and pit toilets, but no showers. These sites are at the base of the cliff and in view of the wall.

Eats, etc: *Strawberry Lodge* is literally 2 minutes from camp and serves breakfast (open at 7:30), supper on the weekends, and a bar menu in the evening. You can get a nice, hot shower for \$5, which includes towel, soap and shampoo. We did run into Tahoe one night to grab supper, with anything you could imagine available at the casinos, etc.

Climbing Shop; *Outdoor Ltd* offers climbing gear and any other last-minute camp supplies you would need. The one we hit was near *Heavenly* ski resort in the plaza with the Starbucks out front.



Red Rocks

Mike Dannhardt



We hiked toward Oak Canyon via the parking lot just south of the loop road exit starting out right before sunrise with a nearly full moon in a cloudless sky. The wind was howling mostly out of the southeast and pretty much directly into our faces as we hiked. We hoped that Mt. Wilson would block the wind otherwise we'd have to punt our main objective of climbing upper Solar Slab.

Reaching the base of lower Solar Slab took about 1.25 hours. The wind was still stiff but as we'd hoped, we were somewhat sheltered. I lead P1 and P2 of Johnny Vegas. As Pat took off on the mostly unprotected P3, wind gusts started hitting us again. Pat went out of sight over the route's big roof and shortly after keyed the mic on walkie-talkie. All I heard was the scratchy roar of wind; we were able to communicate better the standard way by yelling. He was safely anchored and I followed on. As I rounded the arête to reach him I was in a full on gale. We knew rappelling the route now would be stupid. We'd never be able to pull the ropes in the wind so we continued the rest of the way to the huge ledge area that separates lower and upper Solar Slab area, staying roped for the final section of Vegas and then unroped to the top of the slab. We estimate the wind gust to be over 60mph.

Climbing Solar Slab route was definitely out of the question. Really disappointing since the day was perfect with a bright blue sky and mild temperatures. The wind was the only

problem keeping us from climbing that beautiful six pitch route before us so we rappelled down lower Solar Slab Gully mostly out of the wind.

By now the sky changed from all clear to big rolling dark clouds, we were definitely glad to be back at the base. We hiked north over to Fliar - this is a four pitch route with the last pitch 5.9+ on a small tower. Our route hiking to it put us at the top of P1, so we climbed P2 and P3 then rappelled back to our starting ledge. The two pitches we did were definitely fun. The rap from top of P3 was a single shot with double ropes straight down to where we started. Pulling the ropes we had our only snag of the trip: our second rope hung right above us as it fell. Using the second rope I lead back up to the snag plugging in a crazy amount of pro along the way, freed it, then downclimbed back to Pat. We were pretty pleased with the outcome, and we reached the cars well past sunset quite happy with a great day.

Notes about approach: in retrospect we think it would have been better to park at the pullout down 160 about .5 miles past where we had parked (right at the loop road exit). We think the approach would be much shorter and the trail looked fine. Hiking out, we were on this trail and would have missed our car except Pat noted the cars exiting the loop road onto the main road and figured out we needed to go cross-country to reach our car.

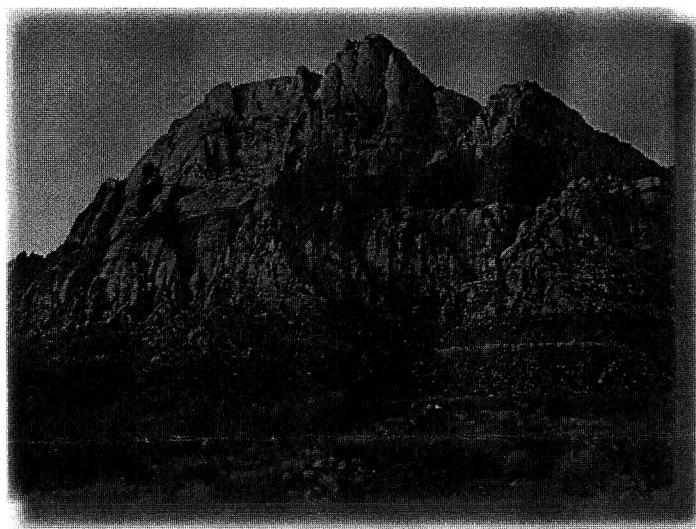
Sunday, we decided to try the classic Geronimo. We drove the loop road to the Pine Creek parking pullout as directed in our guide book and hiked toward the route base located on the Jackrabbit Butte of Juniper Peak in a clear, windless moon-filled sky. The desert was a beautiful place in the crisp morning and we thoroughly enjoyed the hike. Geronimo, it is written, is one of the 'must do' moderate climbs in Red Rock, and we agree. It is super steep and exposed but offering good rests and taking decent pro. Pitch 2 leaves you grinning. This was our booty climb. We found a small brand new nut and a new power cam

with biner! We happily managed to get down the five raps off Geronimo without a single stuck rope. We did take extreme care since this route is also known as a rope eater. We were down by about 2:30 and decided to hit up Olive Oil, and then spent the next two hours trying to find it. Our beta was off and we didn't study photos of Rose Tower to even get close to finding the route. But it was fun hiking around, at one point looking up at Cat in the Hat. Looking back we should have climbed that.

On Monday, Winter storm warnings were issued but we optimistically packed a light rack and headed for our coffee and breakfast at 6am. But alas, as we got to the trailhead, it was indeed snowing and already there was a fair amount on the ground. We charged off east into total white, eventually getting into Oak Canyon. We proceeded as far as we could in the deepening snow; it was really coming down. Route finding through the narrow boulder-strewn canyon would be challenging even in good weather - in four inches of snow it was exciting and we had a blast. Our tracks seemed to cover over about as quickly as we made them. Cairns were sharp bumps of snow when we managed to find them and we dutifully clear them off in vain hope they'd assist us on our return.

We decided to turn around after about three hours. The temperature was starting to rise and if the snow turned to rain we'd be really unhappy. Already the canyon, which had been for the most part a dry stream bed at the bottom, now had several more areas of flowing water. Many places we'd walked over were now wet and had to be avoided. Other than finding our route down again, it was easier going then we expected. The snow cushioned our slips and slides over the boulders. We were back at the car for a round-trip of a little under six hours. Soaked. Tired. Happy.

Oh. And we stayed in Red Rocks Casino only minutes from the trailheads! Sweet!



Maple Canyon, UT

Dan Beckmann

If you've never heard of it, Maple Canyon is a "sport climbing Meca" of sorts - the rock is conglomerate "cobbles" literally cemented into the wall; a lot like a really huge outdoor climbing gym. Every route we climbed was at least slightly overhanging. There are routes from about 5.7 through 5.15. I was satisfied with the shape I was in for the trip, and my crowning achievement was a flash of a very steep .10c that we walked past every day and I vowed to flash as the last thing I did on the trip.

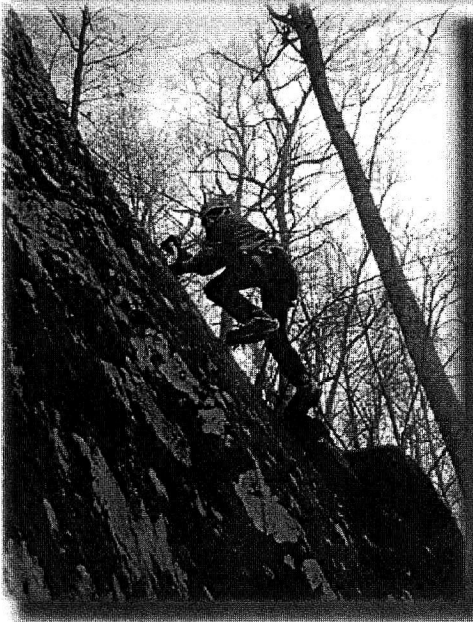
The most adventurous route we did was The Haji Rock 5.9+, a 3-pitch sport route that's just been listed on mountainproject.org. A half hour approach got us to the bottom of a freestanding tower with a bolder the size of my townhouse sitting on the top. The first pitch climbs a tower next to it for about 110 feet and finishes at a very airy stance. The second involves "falling across" (no kidding, that's the description in the guide), and stemming the gap with just air for a LONG way down between your heels. Stepping across and climbing another 20 feet or so got us to the bottom of the Haji Rock. A sick overhanging 5.9+ (the plus is like a Seneca +, putting the pitch right about at .10c) got us to the top of the Haji Rock where there's

a register with less than 20 entries - the first was the FA's from fall '06, making this a pretty young route. 2 bolts off the side of the Haji Rock gave us a "free rappel" through 100 feet of just air back to the first tower, then to the ground. I'm pretty sure our 70m was necessary, as for many of the routes at Maple.

I HIGHLY recommend Maple for anyone. The campsites were great, and the climbing was incredible. Trust me, clippin bolts can be very adventurous and wild.

Gibbons Roost Drytooling

John Oster



Ten hardy souls converged under the American Legion Bridge at Gibbon's Roost for drytooling. Joining me were Ernesto M., Simon, Reed, Christina C., Mike Baur, Dudley, Raboy, Vo, and David Raines. It should be noted that both David and Christina had never even worn crampons before and both have aspirations of at least giving ice climbing a try. I think it's fantastic to have two talented, young climbers wanting to do some ice.

Gibbon's Roost is located near Boucher Rocks, but on the other side of the bridge. The crag is small and short at about 50' high. It is an ugly pile of rock with graffiti on it and seldom sees any climber traffic. With easy access, a perfect place to go drytooling. Toprope anchors can easily be set up from above and there are comfortable belay stances below. We set up three lines with very different feels to them. The leftmost route combined delicate face moves and a crack that could be used for hooking with correct body position. The route around the corner on the right, Delicate Slab, offered an excellent opportunity to practice face moves on thin slab holds. The top section rewarded you with some horizontal cracks that could be used as sidepulls. The middle route, D'Icey Traverse, was my personal favorite. This short line offered numerous start and finish variations and allowed you to practice nearly all the moves, from delicate stances on nubbins, chimney stems, tool laybacks, and even a tool stacking, cut-the-feet-loose move on an overhead roof hook. I think drytooling offers excellent training for ice and mixed climbing for the following reasons:

1. Training of the muscles and techniques for ice and mixed. Very similar muscle coordination, core strength, and body positions required for efficient movement on ice and mixed terrain.
2. Neuromuscular Training - Ideally, these crazy things hanging off our hands and feet should feel like an extension of our nervous system. Time spent doing any delicate crampon and tool work strengthens those pathways and gives you a better feel and thus more control with your tools and crampons.
3. Gear check / cold hardening - How are those new boots going to work on the ice this year? Spend a day drytooling and you get some practical feedback on that gear you bought. And any time spent outside in the cold helps acclimatize you for ice season. Thanks for all for coming out, braving the cold temps, and joining me on the rock.

Old Rag

Michael Doyle

Many thanks to the stalwart souls who joined me in the brisk temperatures at Old Rag for some pseudo-alpine fun on the N. Ridge of Old Rag - John O. and Francesca McLin (of PATC-MS), John's partner Joel who travelled over here from Elkins, WV, Tim Grabowski from up near Baltimore, and Phil Gordon from Lexington, VA. A selection covering the whole area! And only three of us had even met before...obviously motivated folks.

We had a delayed start around 9AM from the lower parking lot at Weakley Hollow - the upper lot had been full at 7AM as Phil discovered. Suprising how many folks were out for a hike on a cold morning - it was about 20F. Francesca, Phil, Tim, and I headed up, with John and Joel joining us a mile up the trail, not long before we broke off towards the N. Ridge. With the leaves down, the ridge is unmistakable, south off the Ridge Trail, only a hundred meters or so from where the trail turns away from a stream that runs through a boulder-strewn area to begin a long switchback. The ridge is a bit broad at its butt end and we just hiked up the first rise we came to, easily seen from the trail and followed it all the way up to Dead Tree Crag, a few pitches below the summit.

Hiking up the ridge was very enjoyable - minimal bushwhacking (particularly given what exists higher up on the mountain getting to some of the crags), mostly just finding open lanes among the short laurels and scrambling over short rock steps, not to mention the enjoyment of scoping out a different part of the mountain. And we had sunshine, blue skies and little wind throughout this section so couldn't ask for more.

This ended with the summit ridge blocking the sun as we traversed a 50m wide band of boulders then thick laurels at the base of Dead Tree Crag (the Dead Tree is now fallen and lies on the south side of the ridge, where

there are a couple of quite nice crack climbs). Now out of the forest we were exposed to a brisk breeze so donned woolies/down/parkas/gloves/hats, in addition to our climbing gear. Someone who rushed his prep that morning (coughJohncoughcough) forgot a rope, leading to us climbing 3 to a rope. Certainly slower but good practice, nonetheless, in good company. We climbed the crag twice, first without our packs to the notch between the crag and the summit block. Then we hiked back down along the base on the north side and climbed again with the packs, this time finishing with the technical pitch up to the summit.

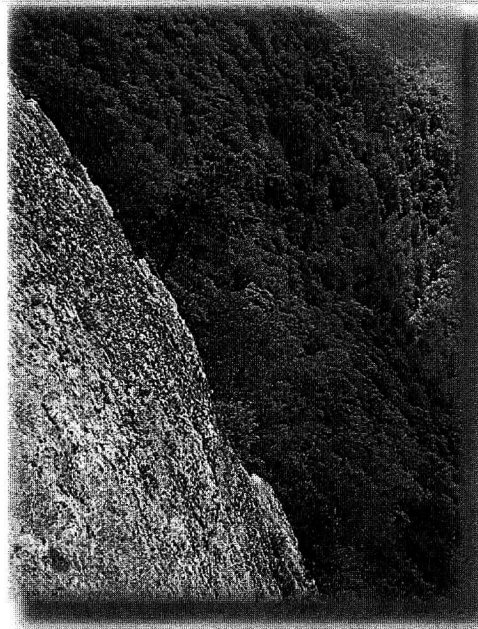
The initial lower end of the ridgeline is technical and breaks naturally into 2 short pitches. There are 2 protectable lines up here, though the L-hand one is a lower-angle off-width. Tim led this in approach shoes (the rest of us had big boots) - I'll leave it to him to comment on this if he likes. Francesca and John followed me over on the right side and we found belay spots that were mostly out of the wind. We then traversed the ridge, first mostly on the right side, then on the crest, to the notch. We didn't see the other 3 so can't comment on their route. We met again down at the packs for lunch.

John led the second time around, and then followed me up the final, technical, pitch to summit. I started up a gully 20m down and right of the notch, which quickly steepens. In contrast to other times I've been here, I stayed on the right side - pro was OK, including a couple of stout laurels. The pitch finishes with a 20-foot chimney which narrows at the top - a nice ending.

It was after 5PM before we all gathered on top so we watched the sunset colors as we packed up the gear, and headed down the Ridge Trail by headlamp. First time I've ever descended the whole of this trail - the scrambly sections between Upper Hidden Crag and the Lower Ridge Trail Slab crag weren't hard but not much fun, all slick from the passage of a jillion hikers. Wouldn't be too pleasant ascending these with a full pack, I think. Much more fun the way we came up! And on down to the cars by 7:30. Thanks to everyone, and I hope to do it again soon!

Buzzard Rocks New Route

Bob Graver



I had an unexpected opportunity to take a short break in my train-up for the winter climbing season yeasterday. Galen had previously asked me to go work on the Anonymous Flake Direct with him so we could up the ante a bit on our next go on the Buzz in a Day adventure. I was thinkin' it would be a great opportunity for a nice hike with a couple of friends (Galen and Quinn), get in a little TR'ing, and back home for dinner. The first two parts went like clockwork but we were a little late for dinner (sorry ladies).

We got to te the trailhead around 0930 and quickly made our way to the top of the climb, rigged our TR, and got the dogs situated at the base. No thought was given to changing shoes in the temps that quickly froze the water in the dogs' bowls and Galen started up the Direct Left variation in approach shoes and gloves to warm up. I was planning on warming up on the normal route but after watching Galen cruise the left decided to have a go at the direct (in my leather mountaineering boots and spring gloves - and to my surprise the route went (almost) easily - needed to work the last 15 feet for a little while to find the crux, underclinging fingertips pinch that proved to be key to finishing the direct (the gloves were off for this part). Galen went next and, armed with the beta cruised the direct, again, in his approach shoes.

Galen had mentioned that he "wondered if a traverse of the entire cliff would go" and when he got down I asked if wanted to have a go at it and, as they say, the rest is history.

The new route: Buzzard Guts, 5.8-, PG, 5 pitches (we used a 70m rope) starts at the base of Anonymous Flake and ends at the top of Three Amigos. Climb up to the first bolt of AF and then head left generally maintaining

that height until you eventually traverse past the single bolt on the unnamed route right of Three Amigos and finish with the TA traverse and up the twin cracks to the top. The climbing is mostly 5.6 or easier with several spots of "spice" along the way. It was GREAT fun (both of us were occassionally laughing out loud as we climbed) and will be a very casual route in warm weather and rock shoes. For gear, a standard trad rack beefed up w some extra long runners and a good imagination will suffice. Thanks Galen for the great idea and great climbin'!

Adirondacks Ice

Vincent Penoso



The trip north to the Dacks started the week before when 50 degree temperatures and a freak weekend-long down pour cancelled another trip. The warm-up threatened the ice that had formed nicely with single digit high temperatures for the 2 weeks prior. My bags were packed and we only had to survive New Years Eve and leave the next morning. Scott Hartsock and I left around 11am from my home near Old Town Alexandria. The route I plotted on my GPS routed us through the I-95 corridor but through Princeton, NJ and took a little less than 8 hours in 515 miles. We pulled into the Northway Hotel in the heart of Lake Placid at 7pm. Room #12 has 3 beds in 2 private rooms for \$85 weekend rate. This is centrally located and has free WIFI.

The high on Friday was in the 20's and there were a few parties on Cascade pass. The ice was ok and looked as if it had taken a hit but was being climbed none the less. We continued on to Chapel Pond where the parking lot was loaded and the climbers scrambled off in all directions in a constant procession across the pond. I felt exhilaration as I took off my down sweater and slipped on my climbing pack and Scott and I headed off down the canyon. The climbs all seemed to be in pretty good. The usual routes,

Whales on the Beach, etc were taken. We continued on to climb Quinn the Eskimo as a primer for the first ice of 2009. As we approached Positive Reinforcement we saw a few parties already there and engaged the closest crew. Without skipping a beat these guys offered to pull a rope for us so we could set up a TR!

In the meantime I ran down the canyon and saw that Quinn the Eskimo WI2 and the adjacent MidnightWI3+ had parties on it all day. We climbed all over PR and moved the line across to another anchor above and climbed the interesting cauliflowers on the left. Different sections were a shower that gave everything you had on an icy glaze. My tools were all covered in a Krispy Kreme glazing of ice as were my shell, gloves, helmet and boots. It was getting to 2:45 pm and with an hour or so left of light we decided to try and scope out tomorrow's climbs.

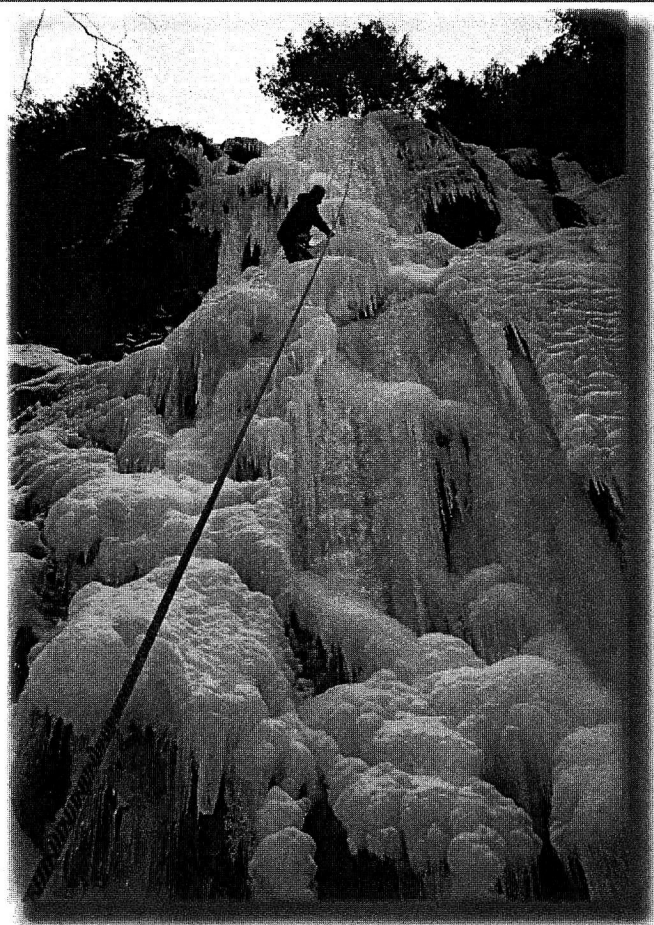
Scott talked about doing some of the slabs, Emperor or Chapel Pond Slabs. I am a new leader and instantly felt less than brave. We walked out and headed down the road to check it out. The slabs looked dark and thin in places but I really didn't think I was seasoned enough to climb any of that stuff. We headed on down the road to a place call Spanky's wall area located between both parking lots. We drove to the further pull out on the same side of the climbs, got out crossed the creek and headed up diagonally towards chapel pond and the crag above, following the tracks of another party that had just left. The ice was not really in on Ahab and Spanky's Wall but this place would be a nice alternative to stuff we climb all the time and you can walk around and set a TR up there-foreseeably on Ahab. We came down just before dark and headed off for dinner. We talked about going up NFOPO and I could lead Blue Chute WI3 or Weeping Winds WI3+ so this was our plan for the next day.

Saturday morning was a different day altogether. We awoke to 16 degrees and -1 wind chill and the projected winds were 15-20mph. We turned off onto Mountain Road and headed up to the North face of Pitch off. There had been a couple of inches of snow from the night before and that was enough to render my minivan a dead weight with no up-hill traction. I almost made it up the second hill but just died before getting airborne. I backed down about a half mile to the bottom and tried again hoping someone would be barreling up the blind curve in a freezing hurry. We bagged it before I forgot I had custom made cable chains for my tires sitting under the rear fold down seat.

By the time we hit Cascade Pass, it was howling at 20mph. Cascade Lake was a polished black mirror buffeted by the strong wind. No one was climbing on the pass when we drove by, okay maybe one lunatic near death party. I remembered the day before that the guys who strung our TR had come across the BEER WALL path and not from the Chapel pond Parking lot. I had always been intrigued by this avenue of access. As one leaves Chapel pond to go towards LP, you pass a turn out on the left then a quarter of a mile later a larger turnout/parking lot on the right. Park at the larger turn out and walk towards chapel pond and about mid way to the other turn out there will be a small drainage that leads into the canyon. Follow the trail for about 150 yards and go right to a little higher ground and walk towards the gigantic bolder the size of a house towards the canyon. Hopefully you are following tracks, but it all just go towards the canyon.

We made it to the canyon and had a great view of PR and there were loads of people on it. What was a wet grey ice shower was a drip less fattened crag that stopped all wetness overnight. It was amazing to see the change. We walked down about 300 feet following the path which had not seen traffic this morning. I was happy because I wanted to lead some ice; granted I am a new leader and I can get dead on WI2 just the same. At 110 feet I climbed up placing about 6-7 screws and slung 2 trees along the way and felt competent for a green horn. I felt really bad placing so many screws but I am just a beginner and there were a few stances which enabled placements. I even whipped out my John Smith fifi hook that was attached to my P.A.S. and fifi'd my tool to practice "clipping" off to my tool. I belayed Scott up and rapp'd down. We TR'd this crag for a couple of hours and couldn't figure a way to get the party next to us to rig a TR on Midnight. So we bailed and went in search of stuff to climb in the canyon. You are at a disadvantage if you aren't a badass leader.

We hooked up with Rachel and John who set up a WI5 pillar and we climbed until the light began to fail and the temperature dropped. We walked out and left the next morning. We drove the inland route through Binghamton, Scranton, Harrisonburg and Baltimore back to Old Towne at 9 hours and 580 miles to avoid the holiday traffic on the I-95 corridor. Flights on southwest are \$59 each way with advanced purchase and a car is about \$25-35/day; the room(s) can cost anything, but I like to be comfy!



Hawksbill North Face Ice

Ross Hess

Mike Dannhardt and I left the trailhead at 8am, and passed very little snow and ice as we hiked up Cedar Run. After passing Skyline Drive and reaching the talus field, things started to shape up. There was snow on the low rocks, and some early season ice up high on the ribs. Just what we were hoping for!

Rather than start on the ribs right away, we decided to check out the conditions further along the trail. I had seen some promising sections of water ice there in the past, and wanted to see if it had formed. It had!

While most lines had long unconsolidated icicles, we did find one crag with relatively thick flows. Since it was early in the season, we decided to drop a top rope on two lines. One was WI 3, 20', the other was WI 4, 25'. The ice is shaded, and was thus very hard. No easy sticks today! Having enjoyed mostly plastic ice in the past, this was a new experience for me.

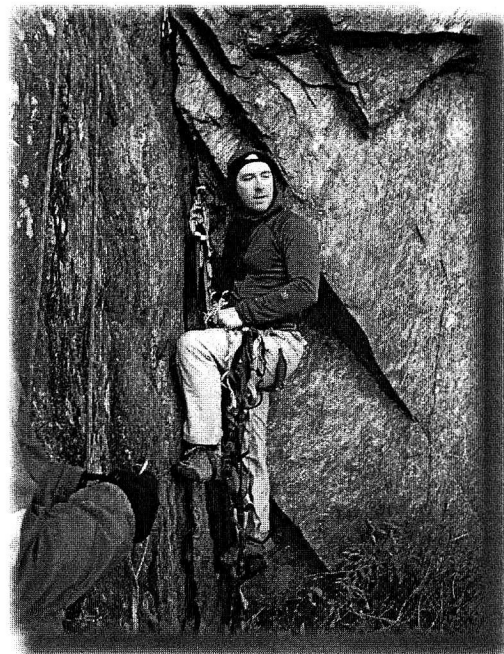
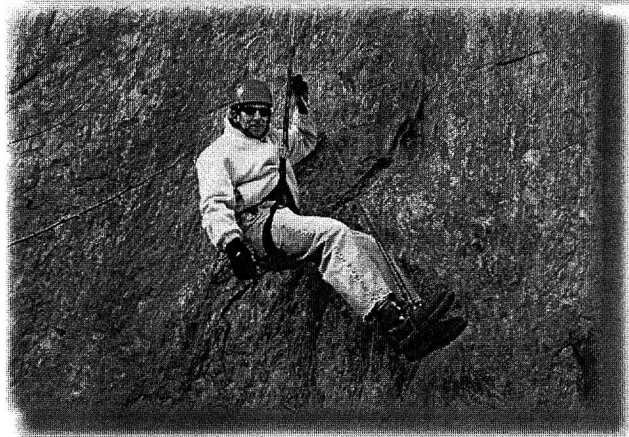
After some laps on these lines, we headed over to the left-most rib. There are several nice lines on that rib, and we could have easily spent the whole day there. We decided to drop a top rope on a beautiful line that was WI 4, 50', and included some nice rock. Both Mike and I were able to make it close to the top, but not the very top. Afterwards, we headed back down, and left in the dark at 6pm.

It was good to climb with Mike on his first day of ice climbing. He picked up the basics in no time, and by the end of the day, was moving very confidently. I'm sure he'll be joining the Club on trips up north. Just as Mike Doyle had shared the area with me in the past, it was good to do the same.

It was also my first day climbing leashless with my new Cobras. I'm a believer: Leashless is the way. I'm still no great ice climber by any means, but I was able to climb much more fluidly without leashes than I had in the past with leashes. Choking up on the upper grip, switching hands, and the like all came naturally. I might tether the tools for a long alpine route, but otherwise, leashless works for me.

Alpine Skills Clinic

Great Falls

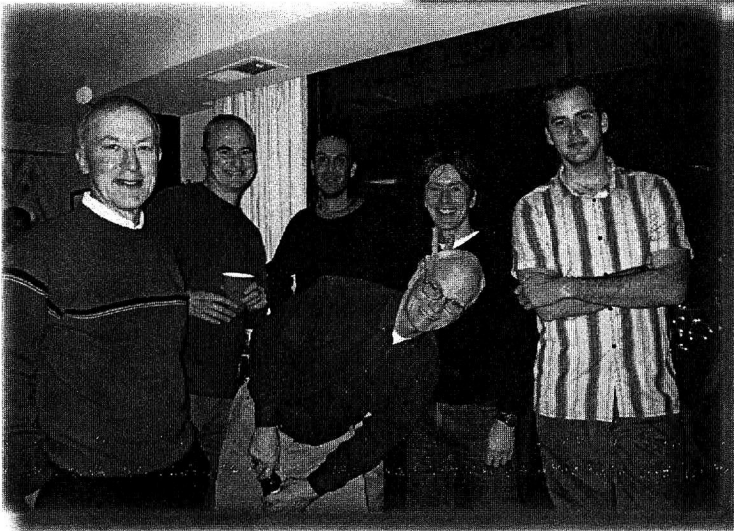
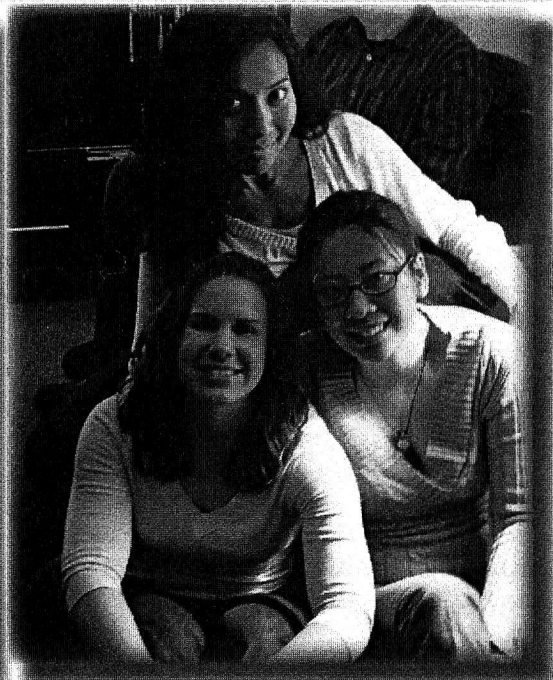
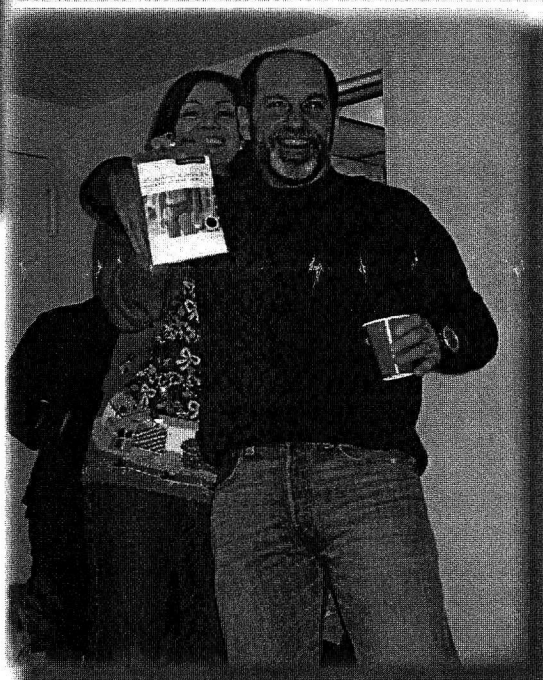


2008 PMC Holiday Party

Right: Our fearless leader finally gets a second pair of underwear for his next trip, and some of the beautiful ladies of the PMC enjoying themselves at the annual Holiday Party.

Below: John O gets the good old bunny ears goin' in a group pic, and Raboy and Court pose for the camera with the lovely Christina.

Thanks to Court, Lora and Annette O. for hosting this year's gathering!



Odds & Ends

UpRope Newsletter Submission Guidelines

Please send all trip reports to Netty88@msn.com - either as a separate email or as a CC to the listserve. Please put in the subject line TRIP REPORT: Name i.e. TRIP REPORT: Seneca.

Please include FULL first and last name of the story writer, and full names of as many club attendees' as possible. If you have it, logistics information such as guiding services, campgrounds, restaurants, etc would be useful at the end of the story. I will edit trip reports for grammar, conciseness and length when necessary.

Any word processing program is acceptable (i.e. Word, Works, Wordperfect) and preferable to emailed stories - although these can be used if necessary.

Pictures:

Hi-res digital images only, please, .jpg or .tiff formats work best. Please provide original whenever possible - I can crop or color-correct also if necessary. Original compressed 72 dpi or uncompressed 300 dpi images are best.

If images are too large for email, use a 3rd party site such as YouSendIt.com. If you have a downloadable photo site, please let me know the web address where the images are stored, which ones you would like used (if you have a preference) or which albums I can choose from.

Please also list WHO is in each photo, and who took it if you would like a photo credit. Please do not insert/imbed images, but send as separate attachment.

Additional submission categories:

Please feel free to submit more than trip reports; would like to start including reviews on things from new gear to gyms or campsites visited as well as books or magazines. Books can be fiction, nonfiction or even guidebooks.

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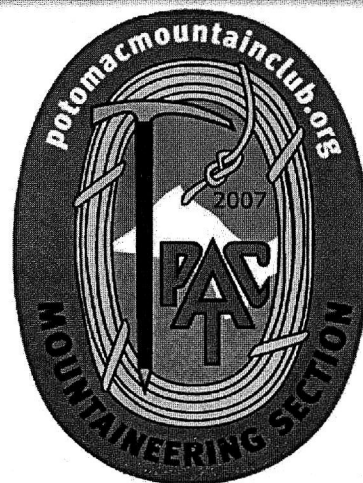
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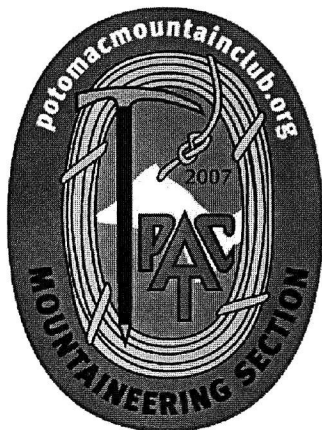
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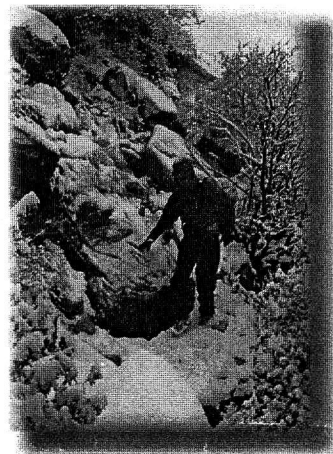
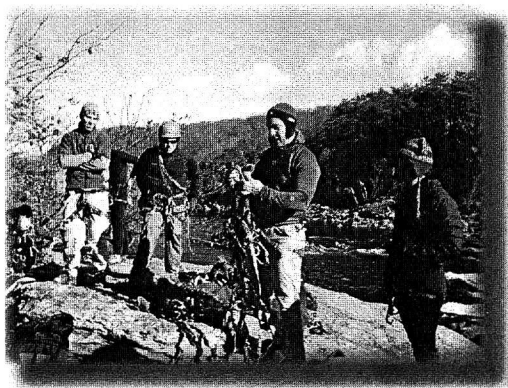
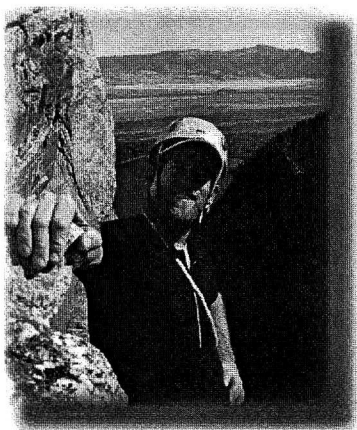


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Grand Tetons, Alpine Skills and the Red Rocks...Check inside for the full stories!



THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE POTOMAC APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB - MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

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