



December 26, 2021

VOLUME 65, ISSUE 10

What's New?

The club instagram has been resurrected - follow us at @potomacmountainclub

New Website Launching January 1st

The website committee, headed up by our webmaster Neal Atfield, have been working tirelessly for months to bring this to fruition. This is a complete overhaul, with an entirely new platform (with a mobile friendly version)!! It's going to take some adjusting for everyone, so we ask for your patience as we work out any issues that may arise. Feel free to email Caroline or Neal if you have problems.

AAC New Ice Climber Weekend

The American Alpine Club, DC Section with the support from Arc'teryx Washington DC is excited to offer you a fun filled weekend of ice climbing. Are you already a climber that is eager to expand your climbing through the colder months or have bigger objectives in your sights? This event will provide climbers the chance to develop their ice skills over two days of top roping on moderate to technical ice climbs under the supervision of experienced ice climbers. Participants will be required to organize their own travel, gear and lodging.

Location: Keene, New York

Dates: Feb 25-27, 2022

Detailed Itinerary:

FRI, Feb 25 (arrival date)

Evening (Time TBD) Gear Shakedown in the game room of ADK Trail Inn. Bring your gear and we'll make sure you're all set.

SAT, Feb 26

0700-0800: Breakfast at ADK Trail Inn.

0900-1700: New ice climber clinic with top rope ice climbing at Cascade Pass. Group dinner at a local restaurant.

SUN, Feb 27

0700-0800: Breakfast at ADK Trail Inn.

0900-1500-ish: More ice/mix climbing at Chapel Pond Canyon.

PREREQS:

Rock climbing experience.

AAC or PATC membership.

Travel:

It's about an 8/9 hour drive from DC area. Seek directions to Keene, New York there are flights to Albany as well.

Carpooling is recommended. Will create spreadsheet to coordinate carpools and lodging in near future.

Clothing:

Please dress accordingly for winter weather. Multiple gloves and a down/synthetic parka is beneficial. Pro tip: hand and toe warmers... 😊

See layering guide for additional information: <https://arcteryx.com/us/en/shop/layering-guide/>

Please don't wear cotton during the climbing days!

Climbing Gear:

Helmet, Harness, Belay device.

Ice Gear: (borrow, rent or buy)

Need Ice Climbing Gear? Ice Tools, Crampons and Mountaineering Boots.

Several option...

1. Borrow from friends.
2. Check out from Potomac Mountaineering

Section <https://www.potomacmountainclub.org/>

3. The Mountaineer in Keene, NY has rental gear available <https://www.mountaineer.com/> Please plan pick up within store hours.

Food:

Bring plenty of water and snacks to include lunch for the day while ice climbing. A thermos full of coffee or hot chocolate will help keep everyone warm.

Lodging:

We encourage all participants to stay at ADK Trail Inn <https://www.adktrailinn.com/rooms.html> Rooms vary in size, some can accommodate 4.

Questions:

Feel free to contact us

@ washingtondc@americanalpineclub.org

Thank you to our mentors and support from Arc'teryx Washington DC!

FYI...Climbing is a dangerous sport and serious injury may occur.

Meeting Recap- Happy Holidays!

The club gathered at the Carderock Springs Clubhouse for our annual holiday party. We had a successful potluck dinner, a raffle with generously donated prizes, a used gear drive, and a photo contest.

Wishing all our PATC-MS family a healthy, happy, and restful holiday season!





Upcoming Events

[Click here to sign up for an event!](#) See the website for details on each event

Women's Winter Hike at Sugarloaf Mountain

Saturday, January 8th, 2022

9:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Sugarloaf Mountain, West View Parking lot, Maryland

PATC Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, January 12th, 2022

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Zoom

Alpine Skills Weekend

Thursday, January 12th, 2022, 11:00 AM

to

Monday, January 17th, 2022, 10:00 AM

North Conway, New Hampshire

Gear Swap

Wednesday, January 19th, 2022

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Port City Brewing Co., Alexandria, VA

Mental Strategies for Experienced Trad leaders: Mentoring Report Fall 2021

By Riley Abbott

December 2021

This Fall, the Experienced Trad Leaders Mentor Group focused on mental strategies to improve leader capacity. This article summarizes the program climbing, instruction and camaraderie.



[caption: Before leading, mentors discussed assessing a climb for potential gear, climbing techniques needed and fall consequences.]

1) Falling and Movement (Great Falls, VA)

Top roping at Great Falls we got acquainted with each other's motivations, familiarity with gear, anchors and transitions, and climbing ability. We practiced:

- Falling, an essential aspect of climbing. Improving falling skill helps us grow as climbers. Focus on B-E-B: Breathing (exhale and relax throughout), Eyes (directed downwards), and Body (sit back and down as if in a chair).
- And Movement by "following your eyes". The climber's body wants to balance while climbing. Grab and step precisely where your eyes point after a movement. This helps to keep moving and prevent the habit of "shopping for holds".

We also introduced the concept of Yes-Fall- and No-Fall-Zones. Take an objective look at the fall consequences before AND while resting on the route. Before committing to a move, ask: What is the angle of the rock? How bomber is my last protection? What obstacles are there? These questions help determine if a fall would be safe (yes-fall-zone) or potentially dangerous (no-fall-zone).

2) Preparing to lead: active belay and assessing the climb (Annapolis Rocks, MD)

We started with fall practice (on top rope). Why? Fall practice also helps relieve jitters and enter the headspace for leading.

We discussed how leading is often enabled by an active belay and the different phases of active belaying (Donahue, 2016):

- Belayer as the leader's biggest hazard. Before placing protection, a belayer slip could pull the leader off the wall.
- Inches matter. Still close to the ground, the leader could deck or get short-rope.
- Feed out rope like there's a snake-in-your-pocket. The leader is highly stressed and needs slack to make a clip.
- Leave extra slack. Leader is on moderate terrain and moving smoothly.
- Get ready for a whipper. Leader is committing to difficult moves above protection with a high fall chance.
- Leader is out of sight. Using the rope to feel whether to give or take slack when communication is not visibly possible.

Then prior to leading we discussed, preparing to lead (adapted from Ilgner, 2003):

- Assess the climb from the ground. Read the route and rock, plan for protection, rests, cruxes, and gear placements.
- Set your intention. What are you going to give attention to during the ascent? Instead of focusing on "completing/sending", how might you focus on process variables like breathing, remaining calm, continuously moving, and listening? These intentions open learning possibilities beyond "pass/fail".
- Make a transition from thinking to doing. Thinking is planning, reading and assessing the route (this also pertains while on the route). Doing is climbing. When you commit to climb, give your attention to climbing to the next decision point.

Mentees took the sharp end. Joe dispatched Black Hole Sun (5.6) with little resistance. Matt, Joe and Corey, each attempted In Your Face (5.3). The final roof shut everyone down...except Corey. On lead, Corey rested at the crux and placed solid protection. Assessing consequences, he probed above and returned to stance several times. Then he committed. And sent.



[caption: Matt probes In Your Face. The final roof requires 12ft of committing moves to a slab well over last protection.]

3-4) Setting intention and open to learning (Seneca Rocks, WV)

For the final sessions, we rented a cabin at Seneca and enjoyed sunny days with temps in the 40s and low 50s. Pre-arrival, mentees studied routes within reach but out of their comfort zone.

To foster attention-focused climbing, we started by practicing mental exercises (adapted from Ilgner, 2003):

- Rock Meditation -- warming up on an easy route, focus on precise movement, natural breathing and soft eyes (i.e. eyes relaxed yet alert and open to stimulus). Applied to climbing, meditation helps continuous movement and quieting mental chatter.
- Centering Right Brain / Left Brain -- good pre-lead exercise. The left brain is associated with analysis and logic and the right brain with creativity and intuition. Centering the hemispheres can activate both. Close the left nostril and take a deep inhale through the right nostril. Before exhaling, close the right nostril and exhale slowly through the left nostril. Take three breaths and switch sides.
- Setting Intention -- just prior to climbing. Ask yourself "what do I want to practice?" Share with your belayer who can then remind you while climbing. Setting your intention has the power to focus your awareness and help improve learning and performance. When you set an intention, you can practice something new and open to possibilities.



[Caption: Will transitioning to lead on Bear's Delight. This will be his most difficult lead to date. He dispatched with style and delight.]

The weekend was not all work! We enjoyed a hot tub and hearth fire and cooked a tremendous Saturday night feast. "This beats Thanksgiving!", John exclaimed.



[Caption: The sun breaching Seneca Rocks. From left: John Kang (mentor), Matt Kilcullen (mentee), Riley Abbott (mentor), Joe Hines (mentee), Will Fortune (mentee), Corey Balinski (mentee).]

Referenced Material:

- Anderson(s), Michael L. and Mark L. "The Rock Climbers Training Manual: A Guide to Continuous Improvement". Fixed Pin Publishing, Boulder, CO. 2014
- Donahue, Topher. "Advanced Climbing: Expert Skills and Techniques". Mountaineers Books, Seattle, WA. 2016
- Ilgner, Arno. "The Rock Warrior's Way: Mental Training for Climbers". Desiderata Institute, La Vergne, TN. 2003

Are you a new member?

Welcome to the club! Here are a few suggestions to help you stay connected to the group.

New Members Guide

Check out our [New Members Guide](#) to learn about what we do and how you can get involved.

Monthly Meetings

Join us at [Club Meetings](#) for a great opportunity to come and meet the members of the club and see what we do!

Carderock First Wednesdays

Everyone is welcome at Carderock Wednesdays, which usually kicks off around 4pm. Sign up through the [Events Page](#).

Get involved on Social Media

The Listserv - The Google Groups [Listserv](#) is how a majority of club members communicate. To join:

1. Go to [PATC-MS Google Groups Page](#).
2. Log in to your Google account ("Sign in" button at top right corner)
3. Hit the button at the top of the page that says "Ask to join group". There is no approval process - once you hit Ask to Join, you are in!

Facebook - Follow [Potomac Mountain Club](#) on Facebook or join the [Potomac Mountain Club Facebook Group](#).

2021 Club Officials

Chair

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Vice Chair

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Up Rope History

Did you know
Up Rope Newsletter
has been around
since 1944?

Check out past issues
on our
[Archives Page!](#)

Up Rope Submissions

Trip Report Submissions: Please send all trip reports to upropeeditor@gmail.com. Please put in the subject line TRIP REPORT: Name. Please include the full first and last name of the writer and full names of as many club attendees as possible. If you have it, logistics information such as guide services, camp grounds, restaurants, etc. would be useful at the end of the story. Please list who is in each photo and who took it. There is no word limit for trip reports.

General Submissions: Submissions for climbing news, member of the month, and gear/book/gym reviews can be sent to upropeeditor@gmail.com at any time. Aim to keep them between 200-400 words.

All submissions will be edited for grammar and length when necessary.

COVID 19 Safety

Let's all make sure we're balancing caution with passion! Here are some resources to help protect ourselves and our community during these trying times. Here are some resources to help you stay informed.

- Check out the Access Fund's [Climbing During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#).
- Learn about the CDC's [Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#). (If you must gather, be safe!)
- Stay up to date with the CDC's [COVID-19: What's New & Updated](#) page.