

Up Rope

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HERB AND JAN CONN

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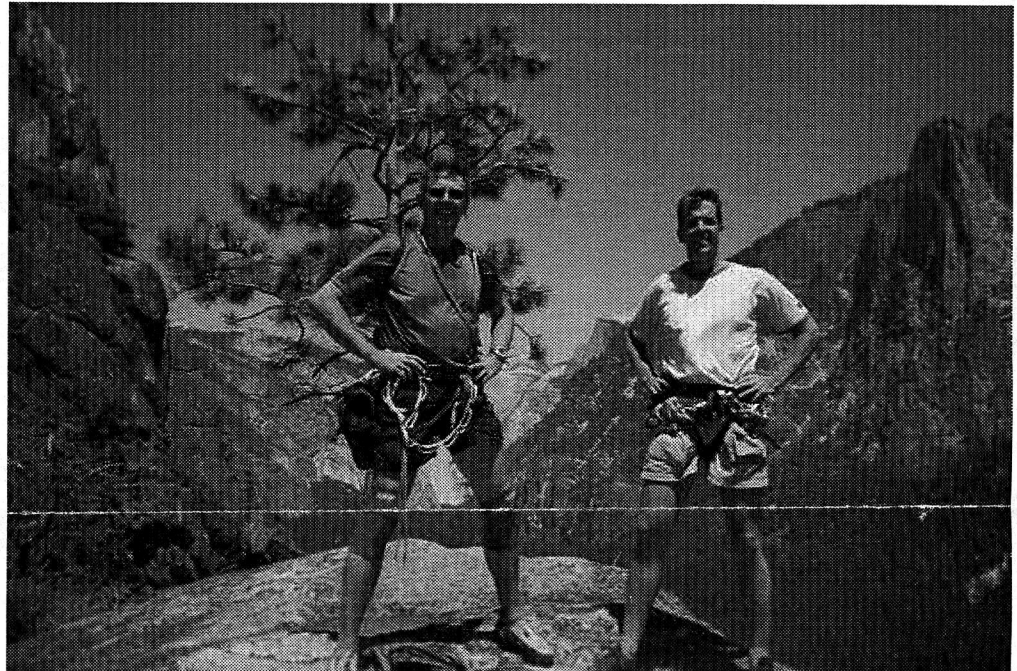
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Marty Comisky and Lee Jenkins topping out "After Six (5.7)" in Yosemite

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ROCKFALL

- Photo contest can be viewed in color on our website!
- Send Up Rope articles to new email address:
UPROPE@COMCAST.NET

Yosemite

Observations on a First Time Trip

By
Comisky and Jenkins

Yosemite - anyone who climbs, knows about Yosemite; the myths, the "facts", the legends. In June, I made my first visit to the famous valley. On a ten day trip, Lee Jenkins and I climbed in Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows (the high alpine area of Yosemite national park).

Where I was a "newbie" to the park, Lee had made several earlier visits (none of them for climbing, i.e. normal tourist trips, hiking outings &/or winter visits). So here we were two Yosemite climbing virgins in paradise. The trip was everything I expected (and more) - great views of mountains and waterfalls, great scenery and hiking, great climbing and adventure.

Where and what does one climb in Yosemite when there are literally thousands of climbs? I bought the two Falcon Book guides to free climbing in Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows but they were-

(continued on page 5)

Single-Handed

by Simon Carr

The game plan was to leave early, cruise down to Swanage, warm up on **The Conger**, tick off **Ocean Boulevard**, finish the day with an easy HVS or two...a plan concocted (as usual) in the realms of fantasy.

Of course we left late, and traffic was heavy on the M27. We stopped for the usual greasy breakfast in a cafe. So it was mid morning when we arrived at Fisherman's Ledge, where an attack of realism suggested a VS to start with before attending to the plan.

There were two other climbers at the top of the descent to **The Conger**, a man and a woman. Judging from the scattered, well used gear, they appeared exceedingly competent. He had that unmistakable "I'm good" look about him. She was just gorgeous; further verification of my theory about climbing (and) talent.

(continued on page 4)

Comparative Testing of High Strength Cord

While surfing the web recently I came across an interesting article from the 2000 International Technical Rescue Symposium entitled "Comparative Testing of High Strength Cord." Two of the authors are employees of Black Diamond Equipment. The full article (all eight pages) can be viewed at "<http://www.xmission.com/~tmover/testing>." I will attempt here to summarize the key findings of this study.

The use of cordelettes (18 foot length of accessory cord) has gained wide use in recent years for rigging anchors and for self rescue applications. Initially, climbers used easily accessible 7 mm nylon cord.

Today, climbers have a wide variety of materials to choose from, including:

- Vectran
- Technora
- Spectra
- Kevlar
- Kevlar/Spectra blends
- Spectra/Nylon
- Nylon cord and webbing

To quote the authors "This study tests and compares the strength of different knots in these materials, in both static and dynamic loading, along with their resistance to cyclic flexing, in order to judge their suitability as tools for climbers and rescuers."

Like most things in life, one's decision has tradeoffs. Each of the above mentioned materials has it's pros and cons.

Some of the positive points include:

- high strength (in smaller diameter)
- high melting point
- low stretch
- low moisture absorption
- low weight

On the negative side, some of these materials have:

- high weight/ volume (clumsy/awkward to carry)
- low melting point
- poor fatigue properties

- slippery nature (doesn't hold knots well)
- difficult (i.e. expensive) manufacturing process

In a perfect world, one material would have all the positive and none of the negative traits. It would be strong, light weight, cheap, hold knots well, wouldn't stretch, wouldn't fatigue, etc. But that's not the case. Whichever material you choose, you get something and you give up something.

All the materials were tested by using slow pull tests, drop tests and flex cycle tests. They were tested "au natural" (full length -no knots), with figure-8 knots and loop knots (double and triple Fisherman's and water knot) as well as various friction knots (i.e. self rescue-prusiking).

The full report has complete tables showing all the testing results.

Some of the more interesting (and surprising) results include:


- 7mm Nylon cord kept 92 % of it's tensile strength when knotted with a figure 8 (the best case for the samples tested)
- Vectran kept only 48% of its tensile strength when knotted (the lowest strength of the samples)
- The three highest bend knots samples included the "low tech" 7mm Nylon cord, 1" tubular webbing and the Mountain Tools Web-o-lette.
- used with a friction knot, all the cords did better than the webbing samples
- as a cordelette, in a worst case using the UIAA max impact force spec. some of these materials would fail a UIAA drop test.

I have to admit, I'm a "gear head." I like to go through catalogs, peruse the latest equipment and try to stay on the leading technical edge. In the past I have used a Vectran cordelette. After reading this test report I am retiring it to top rope anchor material.

To sum it all up, the lowly 7 mm "Nylon cord and webbing may be the best of all. Although heavier, they are cheap, strong, universally available, and seem to have a virtually unlimited flex life." (they can also be readily and cheaply cut up for emergency rappel slings).

Have fun out there and be careful.

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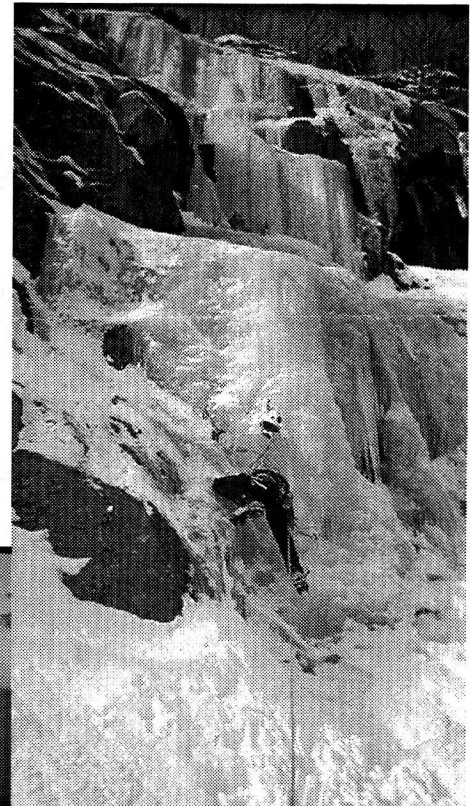
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Best Climbing Photo
Lee Jenkins on Smear (III/IV) Frankenstein, NH
taken by Bill Duvall



Best Humor Photo
Best View in Wyoming
(lower saddle on Grand Teton)
taken by Ozana Halik

Best Scenic Photo
Popocatepetl volcano from Ixtazihuatl volcano,
Mexico
taken by Ozana Halik

