

THE ROC CAIRN



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SKI RALLY ISSUE

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NUTS TO THE WOOLY BEARS

Sure these blasted caterpillars have wide brown bands this year just as they had last year, and the year before. But that does not mean that there isn't going to be any snow, so let's start thinking about it, and getting ready for it. Tonight's Ski Rally marks the opening of the ski season. The featured speaker is Victor Kovack, who hails from the land of the Northwest - Tacoma, Washington. He became interested in mountaineering during his high school and college years. His main interests lie along the lines of skiing and ski mountaineering, and he has instructed on the techniques of this, the most overall phase of mountaineering. An avid photographer, his pictures won the "Picture of the Year" awards in 1945 and 1946, on the Pacific Coast. Also scheduled for tonight are colored sound ski movies of the Sierras, Norway, Sun Valley, and Vermont.

Then, after you go with the ROC to see John Jay and his newest ski picture, "Alpine Safari", on December 17th, you'll be in just the right mood to get those skis ready for the first snow. ("Alpine Safari" will be shown at the Albany High School Auditorium, at 8 p.m. - cost \$1.25). And with your skis ready for use, all you have to do is sit back and see who wins this year - the weather predicting caterpillars, or Mother Nature.

Jim Clinton

1951 HUDSON VALLEY CONFERENCE

November 17th and 18th saw the arrival and departure of the third annual Hudson Valley Regional Conference, again held at faithful Sampson Lodge. Representatives were sent from the Russell Sage, Vassar, Skidmore, and Rensselaer Outing Clubs, with a total of 33 present. Activities consisted of song-festing, conferencing, square dancing, treasure hunting, eating, and a little sleeping. Big business conferred over was the site and program of future H.V.C.'s, future Hudson Valley Regional trips (esp. ski trips), possibility of enlarging the number of HVR outing clubs, and the election of a regional secretary (congratulations, Carl Henrikson).

To illustrate how active a group attended, out of a crowd of sixteen gals and seventeen fellers, there were four squares going during most of Saturday evening square dancing (someone must have been singling off).

Hearty thanks are due Dick Opsahl for his cookery, par excellence, Dan Moore and his gang for fine square dance calling, Don Bailey for laying out the treasure hunt, and "last, but not least", Charlie Hine and his daughter for keeping the girls in line.

Jim Wells

The following article was submitted by two illustrious ROC-IOCA Alums.

WE CLIMBED THE MAN-KILLER

--- as told by the expedition members.

An unbelievable, unprecedented ascent of Treestump was recently made by two members of the Rensselaer Hilling Club. This extraordinary feat, the culmination to months of preparation, was a virtual contradiction of fate's decree. Located west of a vast borderland called Dakota, the hill is known to local natives by its legendary name, "Live-drewot", which translated means man-killer. In spite of its inaccessible nature, the region around Treestump is attained by a seldom used native trail, referred to on maps as US16.

Permission to enter the territory was finally granted by the government, and the expedition set out for Sundance which is the largest native settlement within fifty miles of Treestump. It was there that the party discovered that US16 only went to within seven miles of the man-killer so plans were adjusted accordingly. It was decided that base camp should be set up in a hayfield near Sundance.

The desirability of a night near Sundance became apparent the next morning because, even with an excellent Sherpa, "Rocket Olds", it took ten minutes to cover the seven miles from US16 to Treestump. Upper camp was then established in a large asphalt covered clearing at the end of the trail. At long last the RHC'ers were at the base of the 850 foot high man-killer.

Although weary from guiding their sherpa, "Olds", along the treacherous and tourist-strewn US16, the climbers could not disregard the plaguing memories of RHC traditions. They therefore decided to force a climb in sunlight (even though it was quite likely that a climb in the rain could be made the next day). It is unfortunate that space does not permit detailed description of the bloody climb. It is possible, however, to give a brief synopsis by saying that, despite seemingly unsurmountable obstacles, the Hillers pushed on. Both climbers frayed their fingernails, one even spraining an eyelash while hanging from the proverbial lichen. The faithful "Olds" was forced to turn back because of a cracked head (damn those loose rocks anyway!!), and the 80 pounds of expansion bolts necessary for the climb had to be transferred from him to the already exhausted climbers. Despite all such stamina-depriving hardships, the summit was attained, and the Hillers found with great dismay that they were the 69th and 70th, and not the first and second to stand there. Ah well, Everest is yet unconquered.

The unrelenting clear weather forced the party to stay on top for over half an hour, after which a descent "en rappel" left both climbers feverish. Their condition was such that immediate treatment was necessary. This was done by forcing each of the Hillers (against his will of course) to partake of the local brew. Recovery of the party was spontaneous.

Tris Coffin
Franz Mohling

Some Pre-Season Hints for the Skier

Now is the time to break out the 'ole' boards, run your fingers tenderly over the grooves carved by those uncovered rocks of last season, and make plans for the coming ski season.

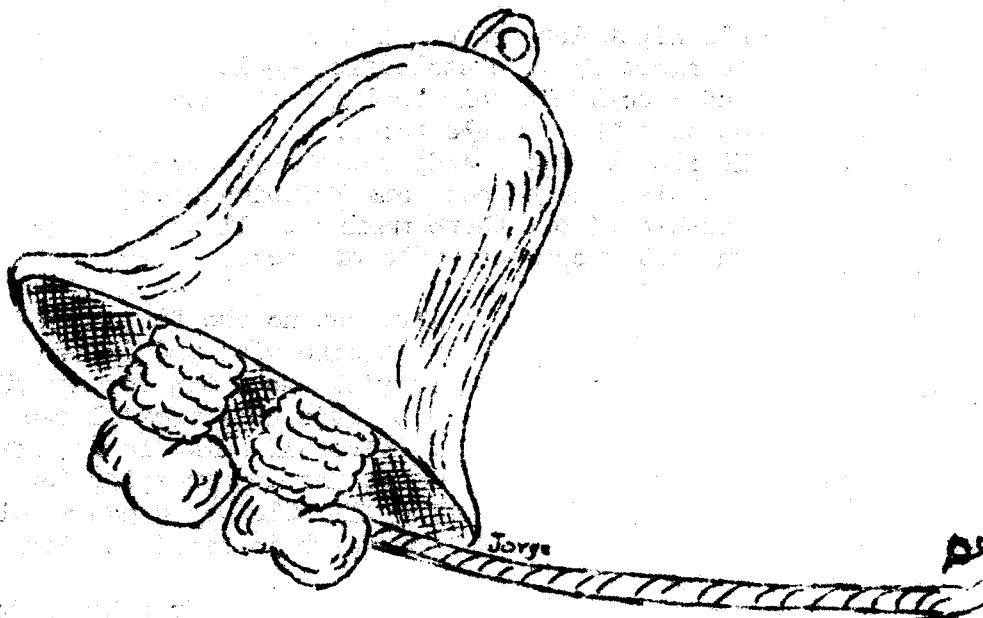
First, something will have to be done about those grooves. Unless a ski has a smooth running surface to begin with, it is difficult, regardless of the wax you use, to make the skis run fast. A fast ski is much easier to control and adds greatly to the enjoyment of the sport.

Assuming you are thoroughly convinced, we'll start work on the skis. The first job is to remove last year's lacquer using either a special scraper supplied by all ski shops, or an old sheath knife, or similar object. Some find that liquid lacquer remover used with the scraper is the most painless way to do this. After smoothing the bare wood with sandpaper or steel wool, we are ready to lacquer. The edges should be covered with masking tape to do the job right. The skis may then be lacquered with any ski lacquer, or so-called "plastic base" which has a fairly viscous consistency. The "plastic bases" seem to provide a hard finish which will resist rock scrapes. A thin coat should be first applied and then subsequent layers (one or two) are spread on heavily and smoothed, to fill in nicks and scratches in the wood. Don't give the middle groove this treatment, however. When using a "plastic base", it is necessary to smooth out the small air bubbles which will appear on drying.

Another point which should not be disregarded is, that besides having your equipment in good condition, you yourself should be in good physical condition before you strap the boards on for the first run. Poor condition and skiing when overly fatigued are the main causes of accidents according to National Ski Patrol records. Conditioning consists of a general, all-round workout, stressing most the knees and ankles. Tom Sheehan, the school trainer, is publishing a series of articles on ski conditioning - currently appearing in the Poly. Ice skating is great for the ankles; deep knee bends and running flights of stairs are the old standbys for the knees. A few trips a day up and down the Approach will fulfill most conditioning requirements.

Pete Oliver

* * * * *



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I'VE GOT NO USE FOR WOMEN

I've got no use for women
That hike with the IOCA,
They'll use a man for his firewood
When it's gone they'll steal away;
They're all alike in the mountains
Clutching and grasping for all,
They'll stick by a man who belays them
And laugh in his face when he falls.

My pal was an honest young woodsman,
Faithful and upright and swell;
But he coupled off on an outing
With a woman known as Ell.
She helped him out with the cooking
My god we were better off dead,
She lifted his knife from its scabbard
And into the woods she fled.

Bailey's hot stew did not trouble
Our chances for better were slim
But what Blondie did to that cocoa
Was all that worried him;
He lifted the laddle to taste it,
The brew from the kettle flowed brown,
He gazed at his pals gathered round him
And said as he sank to the ground:

"Bury me out on the island
Where the Phys-Eds may tramp o'er my grave;
Bury me out on the island
And some of my bones please save.
File them up like firewood,
Leave them to weather and age
Split them into kindling,
To be swiped by Vassar and Sage."

All night long on the island
We slept by the smoldering coals,
And I couldn't help seeing that woman
Beneath the parka's folds.
If she'd been the lady she should have,
She might have been home knitting socks
Instead of out there making small talk
On that storm beat pile of rocks.

I've got no use for women
That hike with the IOCA,
They'll use a man for his firewood
When it's gone they'll steal away;
They're all alike in the mountains
Clutching and grasping for all,
They'll stick by a man who belays them
And laugh in his face when he falls.

Writ by: Jorge &
Hy O. Benzwanger

WEEKEND AT VASSAR

Fifteen ROC'ers stormed Vassar College on October 27th on the occasion of the VOC Square Dance Weekend.

Soccer, softball, and other games highlighted the "sunny" Saturday afternoon.

Come evening, the ROC'ers made quite a hit dressed in their "dinner" togs - blue dungarees and clean white shirts with distinctive bow cravats, which provoked cries of, "I say, they're ROC'ers" & "My, don't they look just dandy."

After a very good VOC skit (Hang on the Bell, Nellie), the ROC staged one - the brainchild of Carl. After the few acts were over, the audience waited expectantly for more, and waited, and waited As the skit script read "Patience, jackasses, patience." Maybe someday there will be more to this skit, so be patient.

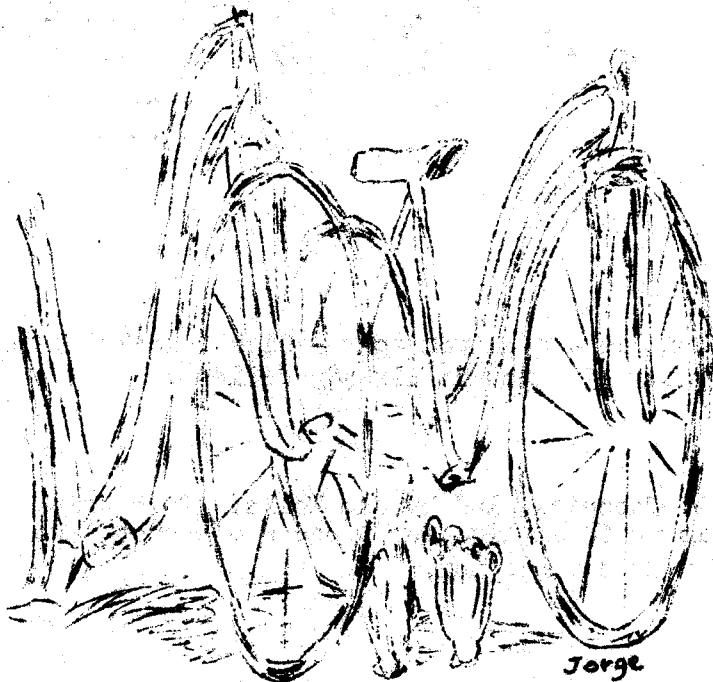
The Saturday night Square Dance was a bit disappointing at the start. After a Yalie took over the calling, however, it livened up considerably.

The Co-op basement proved quite comfortable for the night's lodging (Ed. note - some of us slept outside in the heavy fog which fell that night).

The tired ROC'ers nodded their heads sleepily to the sweet strains of a lullaby:

"In the cool, cool night at Vassar,
Sweetlings (?) warmed the night."

(I surely would like the scoop on this song).



Sunday morning everyone took off on a hike. Conditions were "optimum" (Do I hear a ha-ha). Most impressive to those seeing it for the first time was Mohonk House, which, because of the lake and the haze in the air, stood like a hugh castle in the air. After a romp across the country, the ROC'ers took time off for a tour of the Vassar Gymnasium.

The blushing colors of the evening beckoned the ROC'ers, and with a final farewell (rather-Au Revoir), they turned away from Vassar on the dreary trip back to good ole RPI.

Naren Chevli

WITH THE SPELUNKERS

We Spelunkers have been trying to get the most out of the few weeks of good weather we have available. Our last trip was run to Benson's Cave, just a few hundred yards from the entrance to the well-known secret caverns in Schonardie. Benson's Cave turned out to be a 60 foot deep vertical sinkhole branching out into several side passages at the bottom.

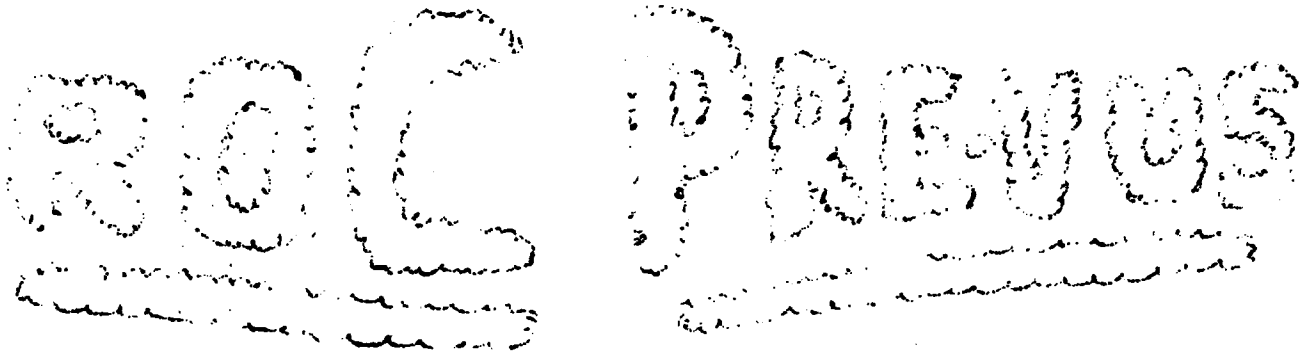
Our rope ladders come in very handy in the descent as it would have been rather uncomfortable, to say the least, to rappel down the slippery walls. Once the bottom was reached, we found the cave to be fairly horizontal, with a small stream running in the main passage. Of course there were the usual tough spots for the enthusiastic caveman: a tight "lemon squeeze" where you had to take off most of your clothes to get through (June didn't), and a few pools of awfully cold water.

We were quite surprised to find a coed party from MIT and Wellesley who also intended to go down. The girls really appreciated our rope ladders as they only had a couple of ropes to go down with, to say nothing of coming up.

We had been told that there was a connecting passage between Benson's Cave and Secret Caverns, but we could not find any. We hadn't time to explore the whole cave thoroughly however.

Plans for the near future include a trip to Howe's Cave. Everybody is welcome at any of our meetings; the trip to Howe's Cave will be discussed at the next one, which will be held next Wednesday, in the Clubhouse.

Ken Symington



DECEMBER 7, 8, 9

Don Bailey is leading a trip to the Adirondacks - Giant, Rocky Ridge, Cascade and Porter. (Sorry, this trip list is already filled).

DECEMBER 9

Trail clearing trip in the Taconics, led by Jim Wells. This trip list is still wide open, and is an ideal hike for those who cannot take off earlier in the weekend than Sunday morning.

DECEMBER 14-16

Carl Henrikson is leading this trip, scheduled for the Ausable Lakes Region in the Adirondacks.