



THE ROC CAIRN



RENSSELAER OUTING CLUB, INC. — 15TH ST. LOUNGE, R. P. I., TROY, NEW YORK

IDIOTORIAL

and preview of coming attractions

It seems that my threat of turning the Cairn into a speleological journal worked. In thish we have a veritable flood of non-editorial contributions.

On tap for nextish, we have (1) a photo-cover, (2) a report on Winmouse, (3) much more by the excellent Klaus Thomas on skiing, including a map of ski areas mentioned this time, (4) more on Winter Caving. That much is definite. Nextish will be 11-Feb-64.

Oh, yes. We have received solutions to the caving problems.
Problem #1: First solution; Wait until your membership expires and then break out. To prevent yourself from expiring before your membership, get food by spearing the bats with your tip reamer. Second solution; Break out and write a letter of resignation from the committee on the wall. If no one finds the letter, so much the better.
Problem #2: Without wiggling your feet, reach behind your back and grab the rope. Tie a butterfly and slip into it. Let go with your feet and fall into the butterfly. Tie a smaller butterfly below the first one so you can step into it and retrieve your prussik slings. In this position, you can easily set up a rappel.
(solution #1 by Lou Sasmore, #2 by Bob Lambeck and Walt White))



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21 January 1964

F A L L M O U N T A I N E E R I N G

Run, deer! Run run run run run!

Very early one Saturday morning in November, a violent explosion went off right next to my eardrum. A short time after I had crawled out of bed and turned off the alarm clock, I realized what I was up for. With a groan I picked up my pack and marched down to the 15th St. Lounge. To my complete surprise, there were three other madmen ready to leave for the Adirondacks.

By the time we reached Schroon Lake, it had started to rain. The surrounding peaks were socked in solid, but we pressed on to the head of the trail up the Johns Brook Valley. After a while, Armand Catelli rolled in with the Kneehold contingent.

It was only drizzling as we started up the trail. There was a thin coating of snow on the ground -- which turned into ankle- and occasionally knee-deep mud as soon as you stepped on it. After a while everyone made it to Howard Leanto, about 3 miles in from the cars. The mountains were still socked in, and fearless leader Armand said, "I don't want to go up there." So, after a short rest, we headed up the trail to Gothic. This time we really learned what mud was. Sometimes after slipping on snow-covered rock and sloshing through chilling streams, we almost welcomed it.

We had such typical Fall weather up to about 4000 feet. However, as we reached Gothic Leanto (and entered the overcast), conditions suddenly changed. The temperature dropped below freezing, and that was the end of the mud. Suddenly we were out on 45 degree, ice covered rock. The ice was too thin to use crampons, which, of course, we didn't have anyway. The summit cone of Gothic is quite exposed, and there was a roaring wind. After some hairy moments on the ice, we made the summit. It was interesting to me that there was absolutely no wind in the 6 foot scrub which grows between the false and true summits of Gothic. However, on the exposed peak, the wind was strong enough to blow one over a cliff if care wasn't exercised.

After spending a very short time staring at the fog and the bench mark (the only things visible!), we slipped and slid back down the mountain. We struggled back to the leanto in two groups; I was in the later one. The thing that stands out most in my mind about the trip down was the way a cup of soup was shoved at me as soon as I walked into camp. That was the best cup of soup I have ever had. Shortly after supper we all hit the sack and slept a good 13 hours.

After Sunday breakfast, a splinter group consisting of Armand Catelli, Tom Vandevanter, and myself headed for Troy. Mike Huston, John Sidle, Jim Hill, and Even Berger decided that they wanted to take a walk in the clouds again. However, they apparently began to yearn for warmth and dryness, too, and it wasn't very long before they decided to head home.

One advantage of Fall mountaineering is that you don't have many people cluttering up the trail. True, the deer hunters are out, but one only has to face their curtain of fire a quarter mile or so from the trail head. We saw plenty of deer tracks up on the mountainside, but none down where the hunters loafed in the leantos. Consequently, they were shooting at trees, as they didn't want to carry that ammo all the way back out. Fortunately, they don't have enough energy to carry this reign of terror back into the woods, and consequently peak beggers and other compulsive climbers are left to their own madness.

-- Dave Raymond

T A L K I N G C A R B I D E

-- by Walt White

Well you wanna go cavin' lemme tell you what to do,
You gotta get you a hard hat and coveralls, too,
You gotta get you some boots and a source of light,
And warm clothes, too, 'cause it just might

Get cool down there -- Lots of water -- LAND TIDES!

'Course on whether or not to use a carbide light,
You and the boys could have a big fight,
But do as you will and don't lose your head,
But find a cavin' leader instead

Like Duncan or WeeWally -- or Lambeck -- or Gilmore (?)

Now your leader will try to act like a tool,
Claims leadin' trips doesn't get him through school,
But you can always tell a cavin' leader, that's a fact,
He's got a stripe of cave mud down his back.

He's fresh out of carbide -- but he'll get along --
Psst! Hey buddy, got a match???

Well, you're cavin' now and you're gettin' muddy,
Believe me, those caves can sure get cruddy,
But there's relief ahead you're told,
And THAT pool of water is ALWAYS cold,
Well, you struggle through and you hit your head,
Your leader thinks his group's half dead,
Your carbide's gone and your headlamp's dim,
And a drop appears before your leader's chin

And it's a big one -- Hoo Ha! -- Anyone for cards???

Now boys you've come to the hardest time,
Your leader will clutch the edge and whine,
He'll drive a piton and clip in a sling,
He'll try most every damn thing

But it's no use -- He knows he's gotta lead it --
He's got the rope and you boys are blocking the way out!

Well he rigs a rappel and he's off in a flash,
But suddenly there's an awful splash,
A hollow moan and you hear him yell,
"Hey boys, guess what? I've found the well!"
Well, he's all wet but he's no fool,
And he's NOT gonna find the bottom of the pool,
So he walks a ledge to solid floor,
Unclips, and then he calls for more

O.K., guys -- Come on down -- HEH, HEH ... water's fine!

ALPINE SKIING SAFETY PRECAUTIONS, TIPS AND COMMENTARY

DEDICATED TO THE LATE MARY & ROGER STAFFORD

Skiing in, on, around, and thru the Alps, or any of the higher ranges can be a rewarding experience and fun. Use of good common sense and adhering to some simple safety precautions will add to the enjoyment of skiing. The Alps are beautiful, mighty, majestic, and overwhelming but never friendly or compromising. One slip or goof up can be the cause of much distress, uncomfot or even loss of life. In skiing on pistes or trails where there is much traffic, dangers are somewhat reduced but this is no reason to let your guard down. Although there is a ski patrol in the Alpine countries, the sweeps are not as intensive as in New England. This is not because of discrepancies in training or personnel or lack of desire. On the contrary, the Swiss and Austrian ski and mountain patrols are a group of dedicated, highly skilled personnel -- However -- there is just too much territory, too many pistes, and too many endless, open slopes for patrol persomel to control closely. The patrol personnel control regularly only the established, well travelled, and marked pistes and trails. Several hints and safety precautions, then, should be heeded:

1. Never ski alone. If it looks like that is going to be the case, tag along with someone else.
2. Never ski when you are tired. First, you can't control yourself as your muscles won't react properly; then, skiing becomes a chore rather than a pleasure. You also fall awkwardly which increases susceptibility to fractures.
3. Ski within your capabilities. (i.e., don't bite off more than you can chew) If you panic or take a spill, you will become aw'ward, tense and uncoordinated. If you should chance a slope which is beyond your ability, either side slip down it or take off your skis and walk down. The latter looks funny but at least you won't ruin yourself.
4. Unless you are well familiar with an area, don't wander off the established pistes and trails. Consultation of a pamphlet listing trails of an area is highly advisable.
5. If you must ski in fog or inclement weather, be well familiar with the network of trails. Maintain visual or audible contact with your comrades.
6. Ski equipment varies in quality and price. The most important components are the boots, then the safety bindings. Use of safety bindings does not indicate being a novice. Their use contributes to your skiing without fractures or sprains. Cubco, Marker or Eckle bindings with heel release are reputable makes.
7. Proper clothing, whether skiing in the vicinity of a population center or in high alpine regions must be considered. Long underwear is recommended --- even if the weather is warm. It absorbs perspiration and is an extra measure of protection in case of a rapid descent in temperature. Your attire can be stylish this costs money. Stretch pants, leather britches, wool pants or even Levi's can be used. A poplin or white shirt under a sweater and windbreaker or Anorak is suitable for wear above the waist. A head band or cap is

advisable plus, of course, a pair of insulated, soft leather gloves. The most attention should be given the boots and footwear. The boot should fit snugly and your heel should be held firmly in place by the boot when you lean forward. A pair of proper fitting boots should require only one pair of thin socks, hose for men and nylongs for women, and a pair of medium 100% wool socks (the same thickness as a Gym Sock). If at any time your feet get cold or numb -- stop your activities immediately, open the boot and rub or move the foot. You'll be much better off and more comfortable thereafter. If after you have all this attire you feel like a space man, don't worry -- everyone else looks like one, too. What's more, you're comfortable. If you are skiing on one slope you can always leave excess items near a lift shed or a cabin.

8. Clothing and equipment for an all day tour: In addition to the basic clothing mentioned above, several other items must be considered and taken along. These can be carried in a small rucksack or in a satchel strapped around your waist. Remember when you take off on an all day excursion or tour you must be prepared for any eventuality; sudden change in weather, accident or emergency. You are matching your wits and resourcefulness against nature ... an uncompromising entity. The following are recommended:

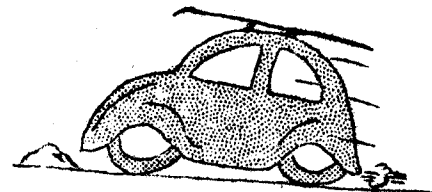
a. An extra sweater is essential.

b. Sun glasses or ski goggles with yellow or green lenses. Snow blindness is not pleasant and, if serious enough, permanent.

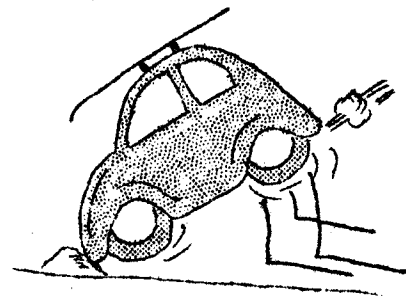
c. Sun cream and lip balm. The higher you get, the more intense and unfiltered and sun's rays are. Don't try to rush a tan by not using a sun cream. Chapped and split lips are painful. Lip balm can also be used for chapped hands.

d. Ski wax: Red, yellow and silver.

e. Screwdriver, crescent wrench and pliers -- for broken bindings, ripped edges, etc. Several screws and extra steel edges are helpful.



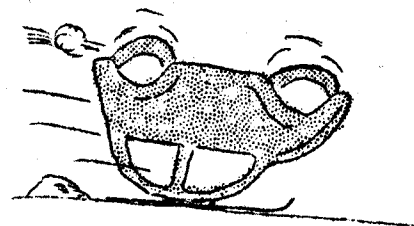
f. Waterproof matches and/or small flashlight.



g. Small self-concocted first aid kit consisting of some band-aids, merthiolate, ammonia vials, ace bandage (optional) and a small bottle of cognac or other spirits (optional).

h. Chewing gum - great for thirst.

i. Chocolate or some other high energy food such as dextrose tablets or honey.



j. If possible, a 1:25,000 or 1:50,000 map of the area. These are obtainable at the tourist office in the nearest town.

T H E C A V E F L Y S O N G

-- by Walt White

'Twas early in the spring when I decide to go,
For to work down in the depths of old Onesquethaw;
And the NRO office said they'd send me through
To the little old sin'dhole with the survey crew.

And the caveflies, the little caveflies,
Always the cavefly no matter where you go;
I'll die with the cavefly a-pickin' my bones
In old Onesquethaw, in old Onesquethaw.

Now the man Bob Lambeck was the captain of the crew,
And he said: "I'm gonna tell you boys what we're gonna do;
They want a Grade One Survey and we must find a way
For to make the Upper Passage run around the other way."

To the caveflies . . .

So we surveyed to the east and we surveyed to the west,
And we couldn't make our minds up how to do it best.
Cavefly, cavefly, what shall I do?
For I'm all but goin' crazy on the survey crew.

With the caveflies . . .

It was cavefly, cavefly, cavefly everywhere,
A-crawlin' in your whiskers, a-crawlin' in your hair;
A-swimmin' in the soup and a-swimmin' in the tea;
Oh the devil take the cavefly and let me be.

Oh, the caveflies . . .

Bob Lambeck fell to swearin' cuz the work was goin' slow,
And the state of our morale was a-gettin' mighty low;
The flies swarmed heavy; it was hard to catch a breath
As you stumbled through the passages a-talkin' to yourself.

And the caveflies . . .

At last the job was over and Bob Lambeck said, "We're through
With old Onesquethaw and the survey crew."
'Twas a wonderful experience but this I know --
I'll never go again to old Onesquethaw.

And the caveflies . . .