



THE ROC CAIRN



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

Sept. 1975

THE
Speerhead



CLIMBING IN ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

We had arrived in Colorado the previous day and were psyched for several weeks of climbing. We were rescued from our transportation dilemma by Scott in the Scout, and headed for the most popular peaks in Colorado, Rocky Mt. Nat. Park. Surprisingly, this is the only mountainous national park in the state, and is within easy driving distance for several million people. The fact that 10,000 technical climbs were registered last year tells the story of its heavy use.

When we arrived we found all the backpack sites in the park filled. Luckily, as technical climbers, you can register for a bivouac at the base of the climb that you wish to do. However, the rules were quite annoying. We had to register for a specific climb (which we had never seen) and were not allowed to change our plans. If we did not do the climb we were registered for we couldn't do a climb. We had to hike out immediately after the climb and check out. We could not do more than one climb before hiking out of a phone. We could not bivouac after the climb. Rather restrictive!

We hiked to Frozen Lake that evening under the shadow of the imposing wall of Spearhead. Scott and Al would climb the face and Doug and I would follow the ridge. We would meet on the summit and descend the 3rd class gullies to the tents.

But at 5 the next morning as we hiked to the base of the respective routes, we found that another party had registered for the route Al and Scott had planned and "had beat up to the punch". Not wishing to violate park rules, but becoming more and more perturbed, we both climbed the ridge route. Ten pitches later I dragged my 30lb pack of warm clothes and the usual superfluous gear to the summit, where Al had been sunning himself for an hour. Panting in the 13,000 ft. vacuum, I surveyed the west face of Long's.

Many hours later we phoned in from Estes Park. We left for Boulder that night. Though the climbing was superb, the registration system drove out.

-Boulderhead Harris

PROVING ONCE AGAIN, "YOU CAN'T DRINK POKOMOONSHINE"

It threatened rain, but didn't. It was cool for September, but surely it would get warmer. Dressed in wool...only our fingers turned to a useless wax. Perhaps this was a blessing tho...hand jams are painless with frozen fingers.

Pokemoonshine is an imposing cliff near exit 33 of the Northway. Its largely blank walls are broken by jagged corners and thin cracks, affording difficult climbing. Gamesmanship is a route up a jam crack near the middle of the face, first climbed by John Turner, the pioneer of the area in the late 50's. Clean rock deteriorates to wet, mossy slime and a forest, then the route returns to good rock up a corridor in the lichen. Smooth slab characterizes the last pitch.

Dan was now leading the third pitch. The sun had graced our ascent several times. I had slid out of the crack and cut my hand, and retreated to the safety of the mid-cliff forest to belay. The rope went tight as Dan reexamined the situation. Then he was gone and it was my turn again. Following was less of a challenge and in a few minutes I was on the easy slabs at the top of the 400 ft. cliff. Only the second time I completed a route on the face.

-Boulderhead Harris

ADVERTISEMENT

2" webbing for climbing & caving harnesses, gear slings,
maroon color 18¢/ft. pack straps see Don or Roger 273-7971



DOWN SOUTH AT SENECA ROCKS SUMMER 75

Down in the mountains of West Virginia lie the towering faces of Seneca Rocks. The roadside sign said "The Switzerland of America" and they were right. We arrived at Seneca hopping for four days of clear weather and good climbing. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon on our first day we started off for our first climb. We picked Simple J. Malerkey, it sure sounded easy. We started up the first pitch, an overhanging face, with all the holds sloping the wrong way. Greg, Mike, and I quickly made the first belay ledge. The second pitch looked exciting, a sloping ledge angling up and broken by overhangs in several places. The sun had slowly faded behind the rugged mountains of West Virginia by the time we reached the second belay stance. We all sat there half hanging off the ledge and the ropes hanging off into space. The ledge was just above a 40 foot overhang and the exposure was unreal. The third pitch threw more overhangs and traverses at us, but Mike finally finished cleaning it and we all sat on the top as the sun was long gone. Darkness had almost caught us, but we ran across the Luncheon Ledges, down the talus slope, across the dying suspension bridge, and back to the car before complete darkness fell. We were now all set for three more days of climbing and swimming down in sunny West Virginia.

The Southern Climbers
Rich T., Mike W., Greg T.

COME TO FALL LAKE GEORGE!

Gunwale pumping, hiking, square dancing, EATING! Meet new friends (this is a n Intercollegiate Outing Club Association function). October 10, 11, 12. Rides to Bolton's Landing, meal plan, etc. will be announced at ROC meeting.

HOW STRONG IS A STITCHED SPLICE IN NYLON WEBBING ?

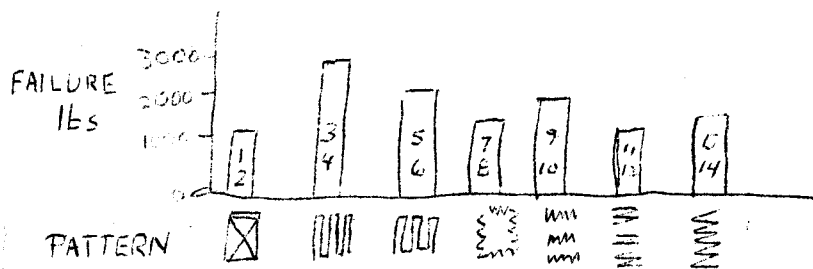
by Cal Magnusson
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Tubular nylon webbing is one of the most versatile materials used in mountaineering. It is used for rappel anchors, rappel slings, chest slings, chest slings, runners, hero loops, jam nut riggings, swami seats, and any other uses that the imaginative mind will conceive.

JOINING THE ENDS

Probably the most common method for joining the ends to make a loop is with a knot. There are a number of different knots that can be used quite successfully, but all knots have certain disadvantages. The efficiency of knots varies from less than fifty percent to possibly seventy-five percent. Some knots require several inches of material, thus the sling or loop is heavier and bulkier than necessary. Some knots in slippery nylon materials tend to work loose unless they are pulled extremely tight or safetied by additional knots.

Sewing the ends of a piece of webbing together to form a loop or sling, if done properly, is much better than a knot. Some of the advantages of a sewed splice over a knot are higher strength, smooth surface, less material required, and more secure in use.

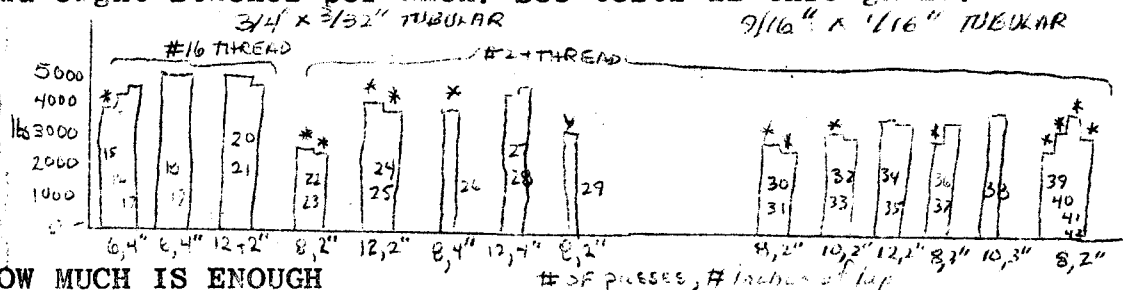


3/4" x 3/32" TUBULAR WEBBING
STAR DEE DB-46-2 THREAD
ALL FAILURE OCCURRED THRU
THE THREADS

TO DETERMINE OPTIMUM STITCH
PATTERN

ON THE HOME MACHINE

...a third series of tests were run with loops sewed on a Singer portable sewing machine using Number 24 Star Ultra Dee polyester thread and eight stitches per inch. See tests 22 through 29.



HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH

Once the seam strength per inch with a certain thread is determined, the optimum splice for any type of webbing can be calculated. As shown in Figure 2, twelve passes on a four inch lap was stronger than the webbing around a one-half inch diameter bolt. A two inch lap was only slightly lower in strength than the webbing over the bolt so would undoubtedly be adequate for any normal use. One inch tubular webbing with a breaking strength of about two times that of the 3/4" x 3/32" webbing would require 24 passes using the same type of thread to obtain the optimum splice. The 9/16" x 1/16" webbing would require about ten passes.

A series of test samples were made up using 9/16" x 1/16" tubular nylon webbing... loops with 12 passes both failed at the splice by webbing fracture rather than thread breakage indicating the optimum splice was achieved.

OVERLOAD INDICATOR



WILL FAIL AT 60% - 80%

Hints on sewing

The ends of the webbing should be hot cut, or melted after cutting to prevent raveling. The rows of stitches should all be as near the same length as possible except for the indicator stitches if they are used. ...if the first pass is made down the center of the webbing, better alignment can usually be achieved. Stitches should not run over the ends of the webbing as they would be more subject to abrasion as well as higher stress under load.

Eight to twelve stitches per inch is probably best...

Read the complete article in Off Belay Oct. 1972 or NSS News May 1975

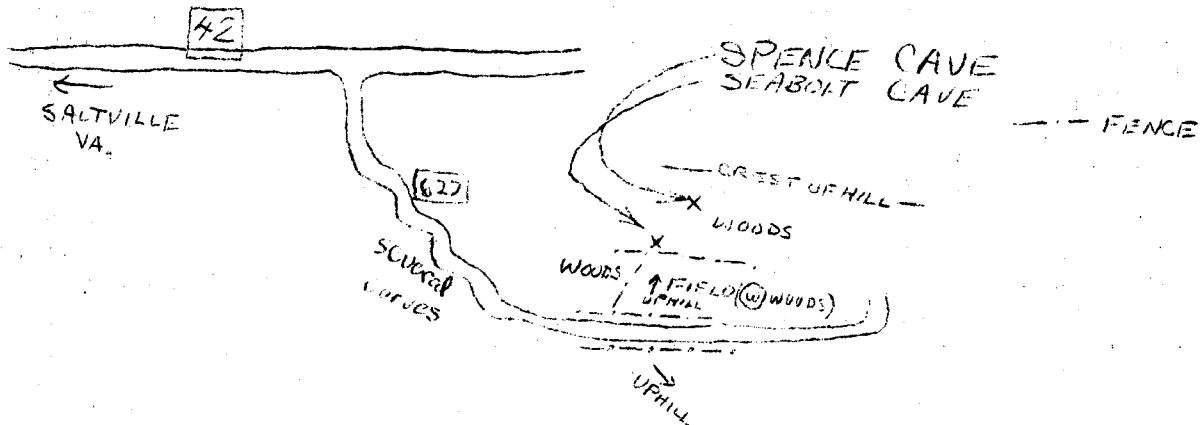
SPENCE CAVE CHATAM HILL QUAD S.E. VIRGINIA NEAR MARION

...a possible stop on your way to N.C. rock climbing...

Jack Middleton and I visited this cave briefly this summer. It's a nicely decorated cave with two muddy drops. We did the first drop only, about 160ft, to view a 13' x 2" stalagmite. Nearby (a couple hundred feet) is Seabolt Cave.

DIRECTIONS:

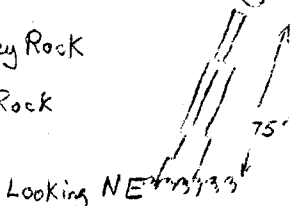
- from Saltville drive north on 91
- at Broadford take east 42
- drive 6 miles; then turn R onto 629
- follow this for .75mi and park on the narrow shoulder between two steep fields
- on the left side of the road go uphill to a fence and up thru the woods 'til the crest of the hill is a couple hundred feet above. The cave is a small hole in the ground, marked by yellow tape on two trees. (The first drop has a bolt.)
- Seabolt is downhill from spence about 120 vertical ft. at the fence jct.
- see page 492 in Caves of Virginia for maps and description
- OWNER'S PHONE 624-3362



A NOT-TO-SUNGE MAP OF SPENCE CAVE AREA

P.S. Butt's Geology of the Appalachian Valley (early-mid 1900's) reports a resistant bed of vertical Oriskany Sandstone in Bracks Gap, Rockingham Co., Va. (near Harrisonburg)

Chimney Rock
Gap Rock



The Oriskany is non-friable, solid sandstone!

Anyone for a needle climb - first ascent...

CLIMBING IN SCOTLAND

or

"Bloody Hell! It's pissin' down again!"

"A whole week in the Highlands in winter! Great! my winter mountaineering blood is getting stirred up in anticipation. Ben Neirs had had excellent snow conditions back in November, now that its January, it should be better. Sure there's no snow in Aberdeen, but there will be on the peaks." Such were my thoughts as I packed up in normal winter style (except snowshoes, which are never needed in Scotland) and boarded the Lairig Club minibus. After a pleasant ride across Scotland, we arrived after dark at Elphin in SW Sutherland to find it raining with a 50 mph wind howling! I'd be a bloody idiot to try to set up my tent in that, so I decided to sleep in the hut on bothy, instead.

Talk about roughing it! Not only does this hut have sound walls and roof, bunk beds, tables, and a coal/peat stove for heating, but it also has electricity, a gas stove for cooking, running hot and cold water, flush toilet, shower, and refrigerator. I looked around—I was the only one who had packed everything in his pack; just about everyone else had bags, boxes, etc., although no one was tourist enough to bring a suitcase.

The wind continued to howl throughout the night and into the next day, but the rain had stopped, so shortly after dawn (9:00) four of us set out to attempt a nearby hill. We had pretty fair going until cloud level. Then it started to drizzle and the wind picked up even more. My next major discovery: ponchos are useless in Scotland, one has to have a waterproof cagoule or parka instead. No, I wasn't fool enough to try to don a parka in that gale, I was blown off my feet often enough without having it for a sail. I thought it was idiotic to continue in such severe conditions, but two idiots wanted to carry on. Finally, we split up and two sane turkeys turned back while two idiotic peakbaggers went on.

By the time we got back to the bothy, I was thoroughly soaked. that's the insidious thing about Scottish rain; it hardly ever pelts dawn. Its usually a light drizzle you're hardly aware of, but it soaks through just the same. "Pissin' down" is the British term for this kind of rain and it accurately describes your feelings when you're out in it. Since it rained or snowed a little every day, there was one luxury feature of this bothy that became an absolute necessity; the drying room. Its a small room (or large closet) electrically heated and has hooks, racks, etc. from which to hang your wet clothes. Just one problem, it became so overworked, moisture condensed on the ceiling and rained back down on the clothes.

In spite of the rain, and falling into cold streams, by far the most miserable part of the trip was mealtime. Each person plans his own menu and does his own cooking, so in true ROC fashion I planned a whole series of glops. Have yoy ever tried eating glop when everyone around you is eating real food?! 'Nuff said. Only I shouldn't say everyone; Steve Evans ate only porridge (oatmeal to you Yanks), without milk or sugar, both morning and night. He amazed everyone.

Perhaps I should introduce you to some of the more distinguished Lairig Clubbers. There's Alf, Trip Leader, who has since been elected president, who sleeps with a towel around his head so the elves won't steal his ears. There's Tim Little (Mr. Big) who collects dirty songs (and a few clean ones) and always carries his dot-to-dot books (Connect the dots. Remember? You had them as a kid). There's Jackie, Tim's girlfriend, who has formed the Guinness Appreciation Society (for Guinness Stout, an Irish beer). There's another Steve, who, although he's always lived in Britain, always eats with chopsticks.

There's also Mark and Pat (Patricia) who got separated from the rest of the climbers on the fourth day at nightfall (sun sets at 3:00, dark by 4:30). They bivvied together in a common bag during a howling

gale with rain and sleet, while everybody else (about two dozen of us) were getting frantic and sending out search parties. We even called up the official Scottish Mountain Rescue. We met them the next morning on their way down in surprisingly good condition. They hardly knew each other before that evening. What a first date!

In spite of the rain, there were occasional periods without and in fact, it was not raining more often than it was. We never saw the sun once during the entire week, but cloud ceiling was usually high enough to offer excellent views. This section of Scotland is like a rolling plain with blobs of hills scattered here and there. Between the peaks are broad flat areas filled with locks, bogs, and moors. There are no trees, just heather. The occasional "forest" marked on the map is a small grove of widely spread birch trees, so stunted that a twenty foot tree is probably 200 years old. The land is a purplish-golden color, except for the two days we had a snow cover, all three inches of it. (Now you know why snowshoes are not needed in Scotland.)

After the first day's miserable failure, We had good conditions and the next two days resulted in two peaks, each with good views. The next day I took it easy, recuperating from the exhausting pace of the day before. That night was the storm that Mark and Pat bivvied through, while I sat back at the hut having nightmares about hypothermia. We were so relieved to find them the next day, we went down to the local pub and celebrated. That afternoon we drove down to Ullapool, the nearest big town, where we bought real food, walked along the fishing wharves, watched the seals cavort in the harbor, and read the street signs in Gaelic. No -- that's not just a tourist gimmick, the churches all had two services, one in English and one in Gaelic.

The last day I climbed Quinag with three others. Nice day, we could look out over the Atlantic, 2600' below, and see land on the western horizon. No dummy, that's the Isle of Lewis, not North America. It didn't start raining until we got back to the car. When we got back to Elphin we found that Brian had been down to Ullapool and brought back a basinful of fresh herring he had gotten free (spillage on the wharve, etc.). So we had a fish fry, followed by a big birthday bash for Pat where most people got roaring drunk and we sang Scottish folk songs, climbing songs, etc. throughout the night. I even taught them "Gory, Gory" and "Seven Old Ladies". Ah well, next day back to Aberdeen, almost as much a bummer as Troy, but in spite of getting wet every day, it was a great week. RIBBIT.

the Highland FORG

(ed. note: This is an open letter to the club from Alan McEuen, an old member of the club who is presently studying in Scotland. Rumor has it that Alan will return to RPI next year.)

THE FIRST GUNKS GRADE V
(Or How We Got Blown On Fellatio)

The trip started just as many others had. Tolcser and myself, along with several others, were discovering the full significance of the fact that the rat now has Molson's on tap.

The weather was taking a turn for the better, so we decided to leave for the gunks at 6 o'clock the next morning. After we had finished discovering the significance mentioned in the above paragraph, we moved the time back to 6:30, with a stop at Coca's on the way.

We knocked off "Simple Ceilings" in the morning, and decided to do a 5.6 in the afternoon.

"I've never done a 5.6 before."

"There's always a first time."

"Oh, really?"; What have you got in mind?"

"Fellatio."

"I'd really rather do a climb."

It was 4:30 by the time we found the climb and got started. The first pitch was an uneventful lead over wet and mossy rock. On the second pitch, the rock was clean, but steep and a bit loose. It finished off with a hairy crawling traverse over loose debris.

I started the last pitch (continue 40 feet to top) at about 7:00. After about 40 feet, I found myself surrounded by lichens, and figured I was off route again (actually, I don't think I was ever on route). I went up an inside corner, past an overhang, blasted heroically through a bush, and saw..... CLEAN ROCK!!!! (a short pause, while climactic music plays in the background) The rock was a bit flakey, but aren't we all?

It was getting dark now, so I figured I'd better hurry.

"Hey, Double D."

"Wha?"

"Do you think we'll be spending the night here?"

"I guess there's a slight chance, but I think I'm about 25 feet from the top."

"You don't have that much rope."

At this point it was completely dark and I was under a ceiling which I was later to find out was A2. It seemed feasible, but I was running out of rope, and Tolcser couldn't follow it anyway.

"Pete!"

"What?"

"Remember what you were saying before?"

"Yes"

"At least you have a ledge to sleep on."

"Does that mean what I think it means?"

"Yes"

"Perhaps you'd better come down here."

Distasteful as a bivouac on a ledge at the gunks may seem, it sure beats the hell out of hanging in a swiss seat off a #10 hex, so it did not take long to decide. Climbing down almost a full ropelength in the dark was a trip in itself.

Back on the ledge, we took stock of the situation. We were two pitches up, so it would probably take three rappells to get down. That means two intermediate anchors, and who knew if there were trees? There were some dead cedars below us, but they would only serve to get in our way. Unbelievable as it may seem, neither of us had brought a sleeping bag, an expedition parka, a bivouac sack, or even a long sleeve shirt. We would each get one lemon drop for supper, and another one in the morning. Well, "Kay Sarah Sarah", as they say.

Pete lay lengthwise on the ledge, and I sat with my back to the wall, with my lower legs dangling.

"Pete, what time is it?"

"9:30. Are the stars out?" (Pete had removed his glasses, and couldn't tell)

"Yes."

I drifted off into an endless, dreamless sleep, finally awakening in anticipation of the dawn... Surely it was getting lighter.

"Pete"

"Yeah?"

"What time is it?"

"9:32, are the stars out?"

"Some of 'em"

This scene repeated itself at least a hundred times during

the course of the night (yes, Barb, maybe even a thousand!).

The temperature went down to 45 that night. Fortunately, the infinite stretch of the RPI baseball shirts allowed us to draw our legs up inside, pull our arms in, and duck our heads inside, effectively making them bivouac sacks. When Chouinard finds out, they will replace rugby shirts!!!

The sun finally rose over skytop, so we pulled a one pitch traverse, followed by one pitch to the top. To top off the perfect climb, it started raining as Pete was seconding the last pitch.

Pete had to be in Troy at one to pick up his schedule, so we bid the near traps a hasty farewell and scrambled. How could I give up a life like this for another semester at R.P.I.?

Double D Perley, MMC

Quotable Quotes:

"When ya fry chicken, yer supposed to stick it in a pot, not shove it down around the sides of the burner." Steve Campbell

"You know a bar has class when they've got Price Chopper on tap"

"Those birds are saying 'Yum Yum Yab Yum'" Pete Tolcser on a ledge in the middle of the night

"Watch me, the pins ~~at~~ my waist!" T. M. Herbert

"We're taking this expedition to climb the twin peaks of Kilimanjaro." One of the Pythonites

"Oh really now?" Pete Tolcser

"Oh now really!" Scott Leonard

"If I jump off the cliff, and go splat on that rock down there, does that mean gravity's on my side?" Andrew Tiajlov

To the people who are trying to find out what their new school is all about ,good luck, you'll probably come to "some" conclusion by the end of the year. But to those who are trying to figure out the R.O.C. forget it, it's an impossible undertaking.

Hopefully this year will bring some wisdom to us all. For the new members all I can say is don't give up. Even if we don't admit that we need everyones help it wouldn't hurt believe me! You'll probably find that everything is red tape whenever you try to do anything on your own. Even if you're a five-10 climber and can't lead a trip due to some ridiculous rule, ie. your not a trip leader or you don't have your first aid requirement, "keep the faith" you'll m make it. (I mean look at me!)

The first thing that will be taking up most of our time is spendingmost of our budget if not all on our equipment needs. As usual we weren't given all the funds we requested, but we should be able to fill most of our immediate needs. If anyone knows of places where we can get things cheaper ie. gov. surplus etc,please let me know, every little bit helps.

I would also like to talk to people who would not mind (and who are interested in) becoming a cycling or scuba chairperson. Recently their have been many people requesting trips in these areas in which the R.O.C. is not officially active.

In any event good luck during your stay in beautiful Troy, the home of Uncle Sam!

the prez

PS don't forget about IOCA Fall Lake George which will be coming up Columbus Day Weekend