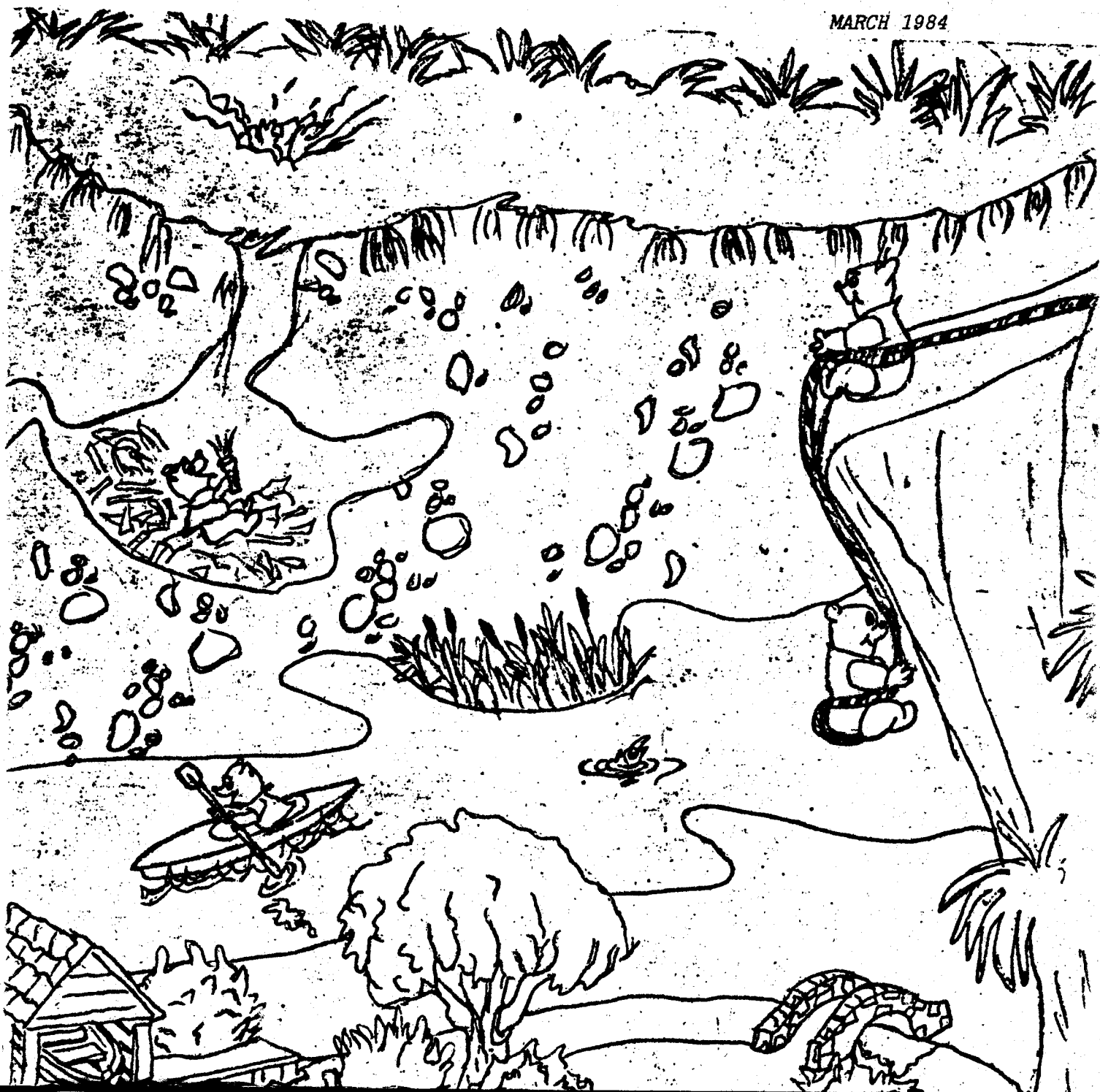


THE ROC CAIRN



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

MARCH 1984



Editor's Note

Well, as the saying goes- Better late than never! I'd like to thank the few devoted people who did contribute to this issue of the Cairn and initiate all those who did not to the Green Slime Mold Clan. I'd also like to thank Victor Duck for his personal contribution as the Victor Duck Award.

It's been another exciting year, highlighted by an extensive caving program in the Fall as well as Fall Lake George. Many trips went out ranging from hiking and rock climbing to kayaking and canoeing, although not much was heard from our many ambitious newly elected back-packing leaders. As for rafting, I guess we really didn't need that Longhorn frame after all. This Winter, as typical, was cursed with mid-week snow storms and week-end rains which to say the least is not desirable for skiing. Ice climbing continued rather unaffected though. Well Spring is here and the white water will soon be flowing- so start breaking out the shorts and sun tan lotion.

As a last parting message, I'd like to say good luck to our new Cairn editor and hope that he is not left with a club plagued by writer's cramp. May I also suggest that the Victor Duck Award be instated; it can prove very worthwhile.

Your Now Ex-Cairn Editor

Sheila Bennett

* The artistic cover drawing was done by Karen Bennett

You've been to Winter School , you've heard about Winter School '82 . Now, coming soon to a theatre near you...

WINTER SCHOOL '84

Starring:

Robert "Macho Mountineer" Galejs

Davis "Chap-Man" Chapman

Ray "Duck Feet" Tice

Bryan "I'm gonna die" Cholfin

Dave "No pee bottle" Sudlik

Pete "There goes another rescue" Reynolds

"Wet" Willie Smythe

Warren "Who are these people" Weckesser

Marc "Flash Pants" Lamere

Ron "High Tech" Goodman

Also Featuring:

Ranger Rick

His dog Astro

Huey and Dewey as the friendly, but wise climbers

Plus Dave Mathers as "The Beaver"

Join this merry crew as they brave the rigors of winter camping in mountainous upstate New York. You'll be rolling in

the aisle as you experience in full living color, the Granola Snafu, the night of the Yellow Snow and the ROC trail crew incident. And just when you thought all was fun and games, you'll relive in full dolby stereo sound, Cholfin's collapse and that epic day on the infamous cold brook trail. A mountaineering adventure that must be seen to be believed.

"... a must." -Yvon Chouinard

"...gripping adventure." -Rob Taylor

"What fools..." -William Shakespeare

-Robert Galejs

A Note from Victor Duck

Victor Duck would like to volunteer his body (feathers lead and all) to anyone who has successfully (or unsuccessfully as the case may be) returned from a meritable trip (as decided on by the Cairn editor or by vote of the club), for personal companionship (to eat, sleep and not be seen outside the presence of), to aid the elected in writing, until the requested article is given to the editor and approved!

V.D.

You know you're at Winter School when...

- you have to put on snowshoes to go to the outhouse
- when you get there you're glad to be indoors
- you can do your dishes with an ice ax
- the first thing you use your shovel for is to fill holes in the trail
- it's 20 degrees out and you're ready to go swimming
- you think of the "good ol' days" at the Commons as you look at your dinner
- you're so hungry that you eat it anyway and seconds too
- you lick your spoon and your tongue freezes to it
- you can do things with mittens on, almost as well as without
- you really believe it when you say "hell, I can fix anything with duct tape and chute cord"
- you then go on to prove that you can fix anything
- you wake up and you can't bend your clothes
- you think- 'thank god I'm not standing down wind of myself' as you undress
- you swear you'll never put on another pair of mouse boots again
- you begin to think of water as liquid ice
- Pete Reynolds keeps saying, "We're manly men."
- you begin to believe him
- as you're hiking out you think, 'Nobody's gonna believe I did this.'

ONE NIGHT ON 12th STREET

by Andrew Weiss

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The following story is an attempt at the humorous retelling of a recent ROC occurrence. Nothing malicious is intended. If you're offended, I don't care, but if you don't think that it's funny, I apologize.

Howie set the papers aside and leaned back in his chair.

"Now that we've finished with the budget, we need to decide what to do about Robert."

Confused, I looked up. Nobody ever tells me anything.

"What happened?"

"Haven't you heard?" laughed Sheila. "I thought everybody knew."

Ray spoke up with a huge grin on his face. "Robert lost Willie during Winter School."

I glanced at Robert. He was staring blankly at Victor.

"Well, uh...no...nothing like this has, you know, ever happened to me before."

"That's right," said Howie. "And we have to decide whether or not you should pay to replace him."

"Maybe we can put him in the budget as equipment replacement."

Patty was smiling as she said this, but Davis frowned at her.

"C'mon, this is serious..."

"Yeah, we've lost our Willie. What're we going to do without him?"

"Shut up, Bryan," suggested Ray.

By this time I was totally confused, and the rest of the E-Comm wasn't being much help.

"Quiet!" I shouted above the meaningless drivel and stupid jokes. "Let's have Robert tell us exactly what happened."

Everyone settled down, and Robert began his tale.

"Well, we were heading up the trail toward the shelter, and it was getting kinda dark, and snowing pretty hard. Willie was in front of me, and I think he was getting a little hypothermic, I think. He couldn't get up this big snowbank, so I tried to help him.

"I'm not real sure what happened, but I might've thrown my pack on him after I tossed him up there. I dug around in the snow a while, but I couldn't find him. There were a lot of people coming up the trail, and I was getting cold, so I went on and set up camp."

"And came up the trail a little later and didn't see anything," said Ray. "I would've noticed if he were lying in the trail or something."

"I know I'm only a caving leader and don't have much winter experience," I said, "but I've led a number of trips, and one thing you just don't do is lose somebody like that."

"No one else has ever lost anyone," said Steve. "I could understand if he had fallen off a cliff or something, but..."

"Steve's right. I think Robert should pay for Willie and whatever gear was lost with him."

"But we didn't lose anything, Howie. Dave found it."

"Did you?"

"Yeah. I got all of it."

"Including the ice axe?"

"Especially the ice axe."

"Oh...well, let's just forget about it then."

Everyone nodded, and Robert smiled.

"Let's not tell Evan, he'll just make us have another meeting after the meeting."

"How 'bout if we make Henney a green slime mold again?" I offered.

The vote was unanimous, and the meeting adjourned, each of us thankful that no more equipment had been lost. In time, I suppose, we'll get a new Willie, but his Lifetime is still hanging in the pit, and that's what really matters.



"A Caving Story"

Ann jammed her right hand into a muddy crack and pulled herself up over the lip of the pit. She rolled onto her side and squeezed out of the crawlway leading to the next climb.

"Wow. That was tough. Neat, huh?"

John didn't answer. He squatted on a rock, staring dejectedly at his vertical gear.

"C'mon, John, it's not that bad... it's great. Here... we have one more passage to check out before we climb."

John looked up at Ann. A broad grin flashed brilliantly against her cave-mud coated face.

"Shit."

"What?"

"I said shit. I don't belong here-- just look at this place. You're all crazy for doing this stuff. I want to get the hell out of this hole and go home."

He stood and walked to one side of the room, splashing through a puddle.

"Look at this place! It's crazy! These walls are a cross between limestone and barbed wire, and the floor isn't any better. My knees feel like hamburger. I'm standing in a wet cold dirty hole in the ground. It sucks."

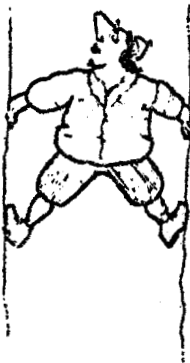
Ann stared at him for a moment as the rising steam from her body slowly drifted through the hole in the ceiling.

Just one more passage, John. There're some great formations at the end. You'll like it. Then we can go. It'll give you a sense of accomplishment. You'll see something few people have ever seen."

John shivered and sat back down... and slipped off the rock and landed in a puddle.

"I think I'm gonna die. This place is trying to kill me."

-Andrew Weiss



KNOTS FOR THE NOT-YET-PERFECT CLIMBER

(perfect climbers don't need knots- they don't fall)

There are probably hundreds of impressive, fancy and difficult to tie knots; but for the everyday climber, these are quite unnecessary and a burden to use, not to mention unsafe- if tied incorrectly. Most knots a climber will use are simple and quick to tie, while being obvious if tied incorrectly. There is good reason for this. Imagine an exhausted climber on a tiny ledge 200 feet above the ground with one more pitch to go! In almost any situation, a climber can get along by using only two easy knots. Six basic knots will be illustrated here, but the best way to learn how to tie them is to get a piece of rope or sling (about 5 feet in length) and work along with the diagrams, then practice them often. It could be a fatal mistake to say, "Oh, that's easy! I won't forget how to tie this."

Square Knot

The square knot is handy and easy to tie, but should not be used by itself. Reasoning for this is that the knot has a tendency for working itself out when not in constant tension. Securing the square knot with a second knot (another square knot is fine) would be a good idea. It is used mostly for tying sling harnesses and securing other knots.

1.) Start with two ends of a rope and tie the first half of an overhand knot.

2.) Using the same end as in step #1, trace back in the

opposite direction. (Sometimes known as right over left then left over right)

1)



2)



When tied correctly, this will appear like two interconnecting rings. Incorrectly, it is an overhand knot!

Figure-Eight

The figure-eight is used quite often and for many different purposes. It may be tied with a single rope and fed back through with the same end to form a loop, or formed with a doubled rope, depending upon the situation. The knot can be used for securing the rope to a tree when top-roping, for making the interface between two ropes when top-roping with a bottom belay and for fastening the climber and belayer to the rope.

The fed through version is used for fastening to a permanent object. Begin by leaving enough rope at the end to form the second half.

1.) Form a loop and bend the end behind the standing part of the rope.

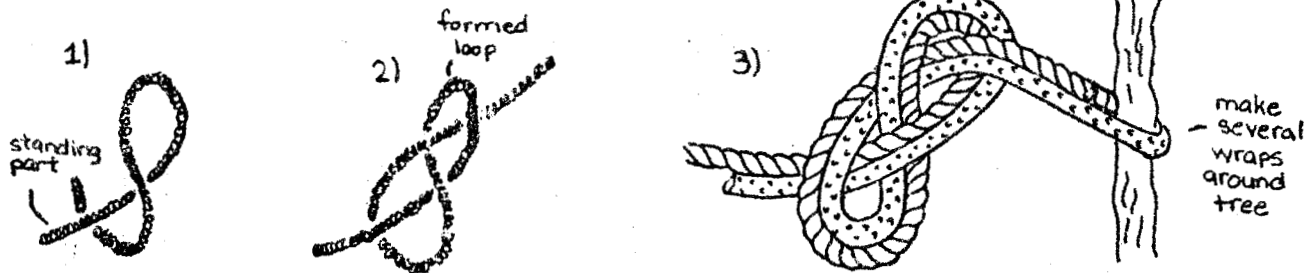
2.) Bring the end back up and through the formed loop away from you.

To form the second half, after wrapping around tree etc.

3.) Feed the same end back through the previous knot in the opposite direction as the first half was made.

Hint: It would be a good idea to keep the first half loose for

ease in the feed through process



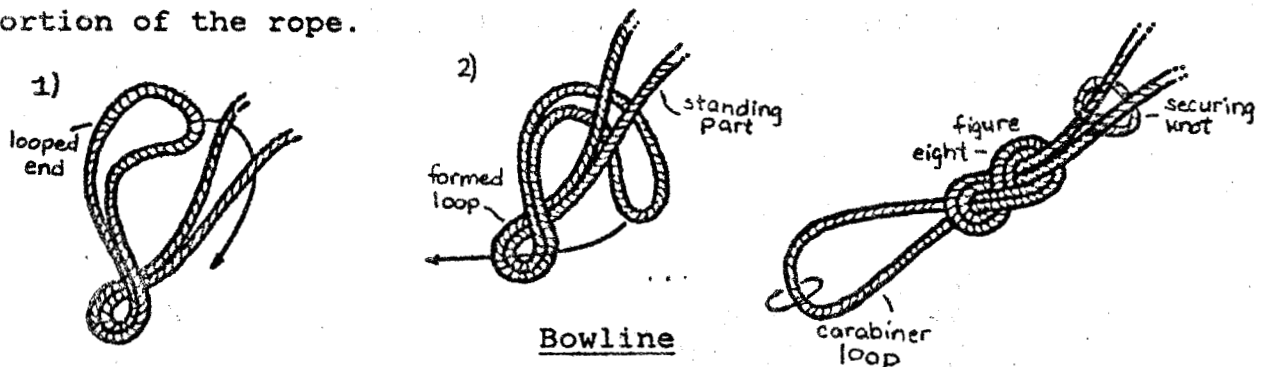
When done correctly, this looks like a figure eight!

When only a small loop is needed, such as for attaching to a carabiner, then the doubled rope version is quicker.

1.) Begin by doubling your rope (a few practice tries will tell you how much rope to leave) and using the looped end to form a double loop as in the previous example.

2.) Pass the looped end behind the standing part and back through the formed loop just as before. Simple!

The single free end is best if secured back around the main portion of the rope.

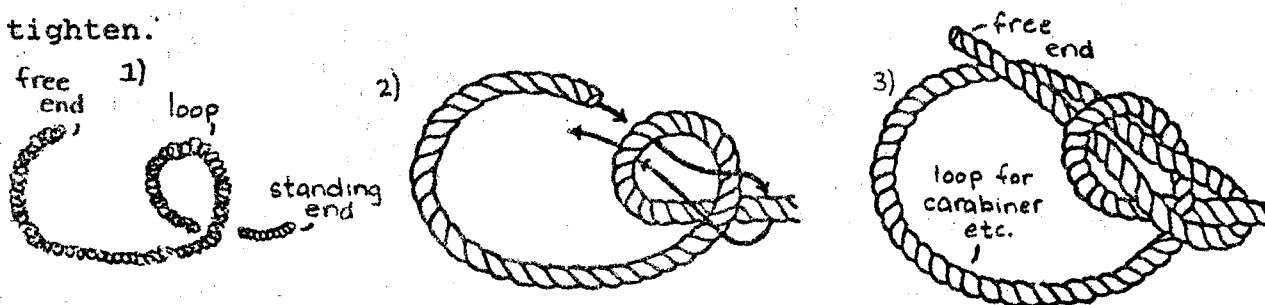


The bowline is a popular knot but should be used with caution. It can be tied incorrectly and not discovered until too late. The figure-eight is a good substitute if there is any uncertainty. Uses for the bowline are the same as for the figure-eight. Its main purpose is for forming a non-slipping loop.

1.) Form a loop by placing the free end over the standing end.

2.) Pass the free end through the loop from behind and around the back of the standing portion.

3.) Feed the end back through the front of the loop and tighten.



Butterfly Knot

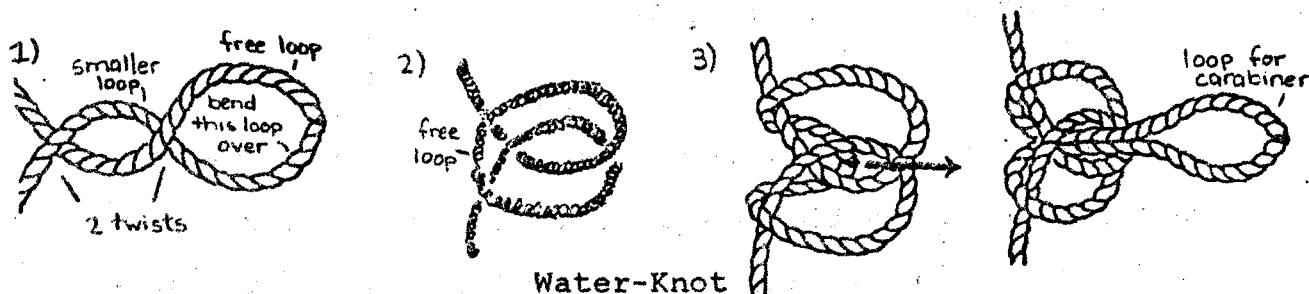
The butterfly knot is used to place a loop in the middle of a rope. It has the advantage of forming a small loop which may be used to tie in a middle man. But again the figure-eight or the bowline-on-a-bight (not shown here) may be used as a substitute.

1.) Make two twists using the middle of your rope.

2.) Bend the formed loop over the main rope.

3.) Bring the free loop back through the smaller loop formed from the twist.

(Better explained by the diagram)



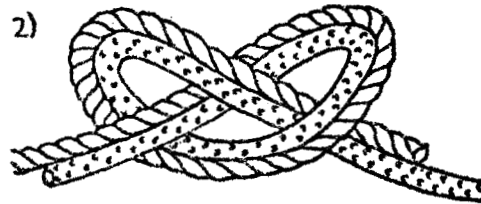
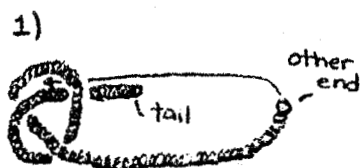
Water-Knot

The water knot's most common purpose is to form a ring out of a sling. When formed around a tree, it can be used for securing a top rope set-up. This is another knot which is best if not used by itself, but instead supported with securing end

knots.

1.) Tie a loose overhand knot in one end of your rope leaving a sufficient tail.

2.) Feed the other end of your rope back through the first knot but in the opposite direction and tighten.



Prusik Knot

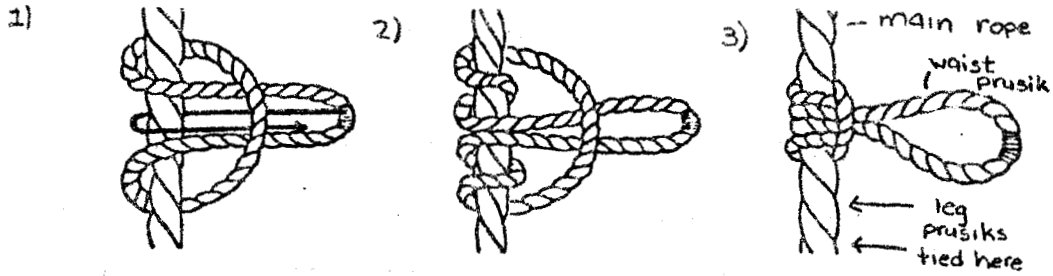
The prusik knot is used for ascending a rope.

Although this is not a knot in the sense of the rest of the knots illustrated, neither is it commonly used by a climber. On the other hand, a caver ties prusiks almost exclusively. (Explanation: a climber climbs rocks and uses the rope for safety, whereas a caver climbs the ropes and uses the soft mud for safety.)

Anyway, to tie a working set of prusiks, you will need three loops of rope. (One smaller than the other two). The waist prusik (shorter loop) attaches to your waist and above the two leg prusiks on the main rope. The leg prusiks are attached to your feet and all three pieces are tied to the rope in like manner. 1.) Wrap the loop behind the main rope.

2.) Send one end through the opposite end of the loop and continue around the main rope again.

3.) Bring the wrapped end through as before and tighten.



The prusiks are used by loosening the knots in succession and sliding them up the rope as you go. When tension is placed on the knot it should not slide down the rope. For greater friction, a third wrap may be made when tying the knot.



-Sheila Bennett

