

April 86



THE ROC CAIRN



RENSSELAER OUTING CLUB INC. — 15TH ST LOUNGE R. RIDGE TROY, NEW YORK —
SPECIAL HARD-CORE ISSUE Thimble Invited! 11/20/86

Blue Polycap hat keeps little
ones left warm

A Antelope - classy look

le jacket

and jacket over pile

ove with over
tees

find pants for the poor
up of the fine Salopettes -
for the rich

Maize Boots

Large eyes - used in searching out next climb

Large ears caused by wringing in loud music areas
come in handy for jams

Red Chamois shirt - must wear!

Patch correct shoulder unknown

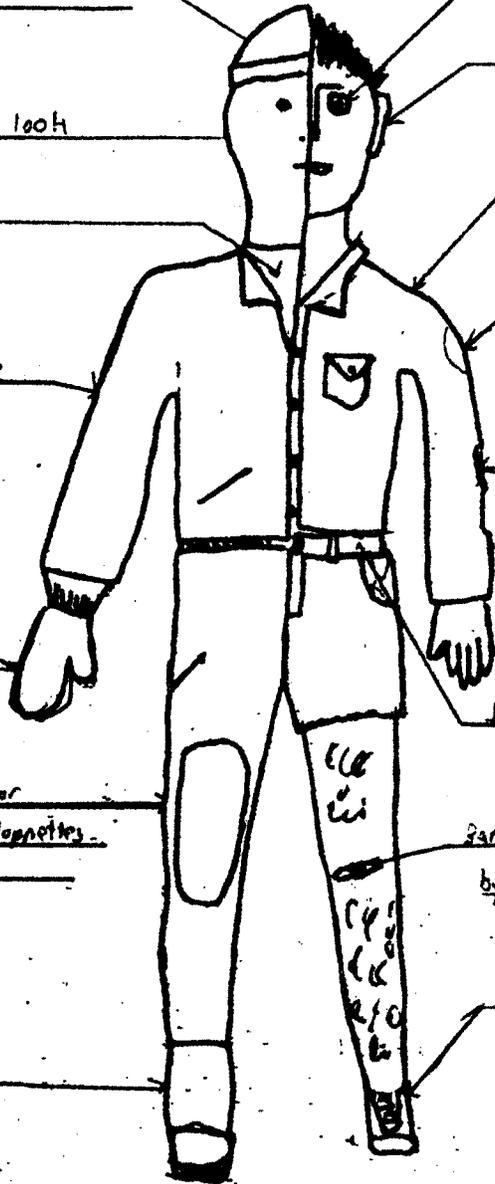
Elbow worn out from crawling
a rock

Hands look like hamburger
from last climb

1" webbing belts double on each

Bandaid covering scars caused
by excessive kneejams

Climbing boots



HOW TO FIND A HARD-CORE ROC MEMBER

Well, this is it, the final Cairn of the year. I want to thank all the people who have donated articles, especially Dave Sudlik, who donated not one but two. People like him certainly make my job alot easier. This Cairn also starts what I hope will a regular feature: articles that teach about some area of interest in the club. Dave's article on ropes is certainly informative and also very important to all those interested in what keeps them alive when they fall. Also included in this Cairn is a list of summer trips and summer addresses. So if you are interested in any of these trips or seeing any one over the summer give them a ring. Well before I begin to bore you all, Have a great summer and see you next year. (P.S Summer dues are \$2.00 if you will be in the area and want to borrow equipment.)

ROC Officers

| | | |
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SUMMER TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT

What: Backpacking

Where: Pukaskwa National Park-Ontario, Canada (NE Lake Superior)

When: early to mid August (10 days to 2 weeks)

Who: Henry L Welch

25 Madeira Dr.

Tabb, VA 23602

(804) 868-8621

Special Gear: Copy of Birth Certificate

Proof of Identity with Social Security Number

Hiking boots (No tennis shoes)

For more information contact the club secretary.

Are You REALLY Hard Core?

modified by Dave Sudlik from
Joe Eyre's article in Feb '86 CLIMBING

Several weeks ago we all recoiled at the tale of Davis's Dixes-in-a-Day trip, 22 or so hours of grueling work. But what about the rest of us, the weekend warriors who never muscle past a "walk in the woods" or endure epics of mountaineering machismo? Must we write ourselves off as wimps? Find out by circling your answer to each survey question. Add the numbers to get your rating.

My idea of an alpine start is:

1. After the midnight movie lets out.
2. As soon as the bars close.
3. First light.
4. After a four egg Omlette with a side-order of French Toast at the Copper Kettle.
5. After watching The Bad News Bears on HBO in our room at the Woodruff Motel.

Proper climbing attire includes:

1. Patagonia baggies, a chalk bag, and thick callouses.
2. Bla Nortivas and matching plum-colored lycra stretch pants.
3. Worn out club Fire's and cotton sweat pants.
4. Mountain boots, wool knickers, and a felt Austrian yodeling cap topped with a pheasant feather.
5. Basketball sneakers, levis, and a wineskin Boda-bag.

My idea of prosperity is:

1. Paying 20 dollars a month for an alcove on College Ave.
2. Saving a little more money than I need for the next trip.
3. Eating hot meals up to one time a day.
4. Having a Dodge Omni that push starts most of the time.
5. Hiring a guide to cook, carry, and entertain me.

While I'm climbing I like to eat:

1. Some perfectly good rolls that someone left in the Commons.
2. Peanut butter and banana sandwiches chased with a quart of ERG.
3. Pop-Tarts and Cranberry bread.
4. Brie cheese, Wasa Light Rye crackers, and a semi-fruity, chilled wine.
5. Steak (medium-rare and smothered in A-1), potatoes, and a pitcher of Budweiser.

I work out:

1. Twice a day, seven days a week (except on climbing days; then I only work out once).
2. After school most days of the week.
3. A couple of times a week.
4. Before every trip.
5. Every other February 29th.

My idea of a good work-out is:

1. Three sets of climbing-specific free weight exercises, 10 sets of 10 pull-ups, four traverses of the VCC, and alternate one-arm door jam hangs.
2. An hour and a half of buildering.
3. A round of Nautilus during the after-school rush.
4. Pumping three sets of Dinkerbacker dark (I don't waste time on the light beers).
5. Two dates in a row with the same girl.
6. Watching the first free ascent of the Lost Arrow Spire on Wide World of Sports.

The essential rack includes:

1. A set of R.P.'s, ascending rocks, a set of Friends (with double 1's and 1 1/2's), and a couple of tube chocks that I use for pounding in tent stakes (see Willie's rack).
2. A complete set of chocks and my trusty 7 mil prussik cords.
3. All of the above plus jumars, fifi hooks, three Snargs, and a rescue pulley.
4. Some biners (to set up top rope) and a nail file.
5. The keys to my Saab Turbo, a figure eight, and my address and appointment book.

When it comes time for winter climbing, I:

1. Think it's good training when my fingers feel like wood and I can permanently bend them into the shape of a cliff hanger.
2. Might throw in an extra jacket if the forecast predicts the snowstorm of the century.
3. Don't mind cool weather as long as I can still feel the rock.
4. Never touch the rock before the air temperature is above 70.
5. Go climbing at Joshua Tree with Willie.

My idea of a bad accident is:

1. Breaking my leg after falling off the arch in the Quad.
2. Getting hit by a bottle dropped off the Uberfall.
3. Falling off a bar stool in the Copper Mug.
4. Realizing I forgot my little baggie full of toilet paper.
5. Forgetting to set my alarm and having to sleep in on Sunday.

To me route finding is most difficult:

1. When my tears smear the hand-drawn topo of this great new route that has just traversed into a blank wall.
2. Hiking up the trail to Grafton.
3. When the guide leaves me behind in the serac field.
4. Between Sutter's and campus (via Approach) after dark.
5. During the fall sale at REI.

I think physical pain:

1. Is fun.
2. Should be expected when climbing.
3. Is the necessary evil that goes along with Vedauwoo-grade hamburger hands.
4. Can be minimized by wisely avoiding any climb that has more than a 300 yard approach.
5. Is watching the Redskins get beat one more time.

Sometimes my hands suffer a cut or two. To prevent infection and aid the healing process I:

1. Dab on some gasoline (only use unleaded).
2. Dribble on a liberal amount of tincture of benzoine and dry the wounds with chalk.
3. Refrain from climbing for at least two hours.
4. Apply J+J First Aid Cream and call it a day.
5. Ask my masseuse to rub in a little lotion.

My idea of a long approach is:

1. Mushing up the Muldrow Glacier.
2. A half-day bushwack through poison ivy and/or devil's club.
3. An hour of scrambling up a loose talus field.
4. 100 yards on the Carriage road in the Gunks.
5. An hour gondolier ride.

As a leader, my idea of a good belay anchor is:

1. Who needs a belayer? I only solo.
2. Three tied-off RURPS.
3. A half-inch epoxied bolt.
4. Three bomb-proof Friends.
5. A Chrysler bumper.

As a belayer, my idea of a good belay spot is:

1. Nestled in the snow slope as I watch the third winter storm in two days move our way.
2. A hanging belay (without a butt bag) on the Leaning Tower.
3. A shady spot without bugs.
4. A flat ledge where I can sit and dangle my legs.
5. The front seat of my car with Dire Straits in the deck.

Psychologically, climbing:

1. Elevates me from the dregs of daily living and cleanses my mind
2. Lets me experience the beauty of the outdoors and know the camaraderie of close partners.
3. Takes my mind off of last week's Thermo test.
4. Enhances my split personality every time I have to talk myself out of freezing on the spot.
5. Scares the shit out of me.

My climbing code of ethics guides me to climb:

1. Without that dusty white stuff that blemishes the rock.
2. Without previewing a route by top rope.
3. A route again from the start if I fall.
4. Without hanging onto vegetation or pro.
5. Routes where no one can see my belayer hauling me up.

Overall, I think the amount of effort I put into climbing:

1. Is never enough - I'm going down to do some more fingertips right now.
2. Is about right as long as I stay in shape this winter.
3. Has led my significant other to resort to using my Ever-dri for a tow rope.
4. Is getting to be a little much. I think I'll spend more time at the beach.
5. Has worn out my bean bag chair although I've collected a great mountaineering library.

Everything you always wanted to know about ropes
by David J. Sudlik, RpD.

Since the warm weather is upon us and rock climbers everywhere are coming out of hibernation, I decided to pick up my quill and mention some maybe-not-so-well-known facts about ropes. We are, of course, talking about CLIMBING ropes and not CAVING ropes. As I understand it, a climbing rope must be more dynamic in order to reduce the force of a leader fall, while a caving rope is more on the static side to reduce rope stretch when rappelling. The only other difference I know of is that caving ropes are caked with mud.

It may seem at first glance when shopping for a rope that the more UIAA falls a rope holds, the better (The UIAA is a group of people that likes to abuse ropes). A UIAA fall consists of dropping a 180 lb weight 16 feet using under ten feet of rope. This is a very demanding test, and usually such falls are not seen in the real world. Any new, modern climbing rope (excluding your mother's clothesline) will not break during your first fall unless it is run over a sharp edge while under load. Therefore other factors can be taken into account.

Probably the next most important factor is the impact force delivered to you and your protection during a fall. In addition, impact force is proportional to the force driving the rope against a sharp edge, so a rope with a smaller impact force has less chance of cutting over an edge during a fall.

Unfortunately, the soft landing provided by a rope with a small impact force is not worth much if you crash into a ledge before the rope stops your fall. Ropes absorb energy by stretching. Part of the energy is converted to heat as the rope fibers rub against each other. The rest is converted to potential energy, which is released when the climber bounces back up. Eventually, all the energy is converted to heat. The secret to a climbing rope is finding the "perfect" combination of these two factors. A rope like a steel cable will stop your fall, but won't leave you in much condition for climbing, while a rope like a rubber band may bounce you off the ground 10 or 20 times. The ideal rope wouldn't stretch at all under body weight, making it convenient for jumaring and rappelling, but would stretch quite a bit under the high load generated by a fall. Also, two ropes can have the same impact force but different amounts of total stretch. Goldline is a notorious example of excessive stretch. Other characteristics that should be looked for in a climbing rope are easy handling, light weight, and high abrasion resistance. Specially treated dry ropes are advantageous when ice climbing to keep your rope from turning into a steel pipe, and to keep it from getting as heavy as lead when caught in the rain on a climb. Chouinard impregnates their dry ropes with Teflon which also aids handling by reducing the friction of rope against carabiner and increasing the abrasion resistance of the sheath.

Most Gunks-type people use 11mm single ropes in either 45m (150 ft) or 50m (165 ft). If you really want to move fast and light you can use a 10.5mm rope, but you get a decrease in rope strength.

A system that is catching on is to use two (different-

colored) 9mm (8.8mm, etc) ropes. A Double rope has many advantages over a single rope. The major advantage is that it reduces the chance of total rope failure through cutting over an edge. If you climb in an area of sharp-edged rock (limestone, quartzite, etc) you should consider using a double rope. According to rope manufacturers and UIAA officials, there has never been an instance where both ropes in a double-rope system were cut.

Another advantage is that you can clip in alternately with the two ropes to avoid rope drag, although for maximum security you should clip in both ropes wherever possible. And if you're ice climbing and hit one of your ropes with an axe or crampon, you still have one rope left. A further advantage occurs during rappelling when you can tie the two ropes together and do a full 50m rappel. Some people that use 11mm single ropes also carry a 7mm rope for this purpose. The disadvantages of double ropes are the added weight and the increased chance of rope snarls compared to a single fat rope.

Some final words on rope maintenance:

1. Keep your rope clean. Rock particles can work their way inside and abrade the rope core. It is this core that holds your fall, the sheath is only for protection. This means DO NOT STEP ON A ROPE. You may have had a climber jump for your neck when you stepped on his rope. This is why. This especially holds when wearing crampons.
2. Never store your rope in sunlight. UV radiation weakens nylon.
3. Never allow battery fumes or acid to reach your rope.
4. Shelter your rope in rockfall and icefall areas.
5. Wash your rope in warm water with a mild soap on a delicate setting and hang it out to dry.
6. Know the history of your rope from the day you buy it until the day you retire it.

Tests have shown that most of the decrease in a rope's strength occurs in the first 100 hours of use; after that, the loss of strength nearly levels off. But, recent UIAA tests of never-used, 20-year-old ropes yielded sobering results. The ropes had been stored carefully and appeared soft and supple, yet they broke in the first test drop. A rope that has held severe falls or has been cut should be retired. It is better to err on the side of prudence and retire a rope early than prolong the rope's life and endanger your own.

DIXES IN A DAY

J.D. Chapman

What motivates a person to attempt the absurd? Soon after I joined the club almost four years ago, an alum related stories about doing climbing the many Adirondack trailless peak under all sorts of weather conditions. foremost in these trips was doing the Dixes range as a day trip, in the winter if the group was especially hard-core. Seems the last club attempt was successful. That was in the winter of '78. The picture hangs in the Pit. But, I was a young freshman and not capable of such a trip. Suddenly, senior year arrived. Time to take that dream in the back of my mind and make it reality. The weekend after finals in December found Bill Rodgers, Wendy, and I looking for a three day backpack trip. Ahh, the Dixes. Ought to be nice in there! We'd even get the time to hike in to a leanto and get a jump on the summits. Well, we didn't even get one of the five peaks, but I as at least more familiar with the area. By the end of February it looked like a group of people were psyched to join me for another attempt. This time it would be a day trip. We would move faster without all of the overnight gear. Finally a date was set and the trip announced. A lot of people laughed, but seven other people signed the trip list. Let me digress for a moment to describe some specifics of the trip to provide some perspective. The Dixes range consist of five peaks (Macomb, South Dix, East Dix, Hough, and Dix), four of which had no trails leading to their summits. Starting at Elk Lake, we would ski in the four miles to the leanto (Slide Brook). From there we head through the woods to the base of a rock slide leading to the summit of Macomb. Next on the ridge is South Dix and East Dix. Then its back to South Dix in order to catch the ridge to Hough and then Dix. A trail leads back to the leanto from the summit of Dix, where we would put on the skis and head out. Total distance for the trip would be 17 miles and 5000 feet of elevation gain, with about nine miles on trails. After consultation with alumni, a departure time of 2 am was set to allow us to drive up and ski in to the leanto before daybreak. Friday rolled around

with everyone ready and eager. After getting home from work, I managed to get about two hours of sleep before the midnight showing of the movie "Witness." The others got similar amounts of sleep. We were all wound up in anticipation of the next day. Two am arrived all too quickly, but no one was late showing up at the Armory. The ski in to the leanto passed quickly. Flashlights were only required for about half an hour. A light snow drifted down. It looked as if the weather was not going to cooperate.

Visibility remained good enough to locate the base of the slide though. One step at a time, we plodded on up. The view from the top was well worth the effort. The snow had stopped and the clouds were clearing out. Elk Lake and the cars looked a long way off! A short scramble led to the ridge and some beautiful wind sculpted snow drifts. Time to pick up speed, now that most of the altitude had been gained. The Macomb summit register was soon reached at 12:05 pm. Right on schedule! Gee, the last two entries were December 12th and October 27th. Not many people get up there! After a short snack of Mountain Dew and marshmallow Easter chicks, we headed for South Dix and then East Dix. By that time the sun was shining and the view had improved tremendously. The thought of lying in the sun on the rocks enticed us, but there was much left to climb. It felt like we had been on the trail for days. Back to South Dix we trudged. At least we had a broken trail to follow. After another snack, we headed over to Hough. This one was a definitely more rugged than the previous three. The summit was on a knife edged ridge with steep drop offs on both sides. It wasn't hard to chose the route! Finally the register was found at 5 pm. The group was cold and exhausted, and the sun was starting to set. Dix with its trail was still more than a mile away over very steep terrain. Time to turn back and instead cut down into the valley. Going down was certainly quicker. Another rock slide scar also helped to speed our descent. Yet darkness also arrived quickly, leaving us more than a mile from a trail that might not even be broken out. Luckily, we found an old abandoned logging road which made the bushwacking much easier. Bushwacking at night is really fun! The stars were beautiful. The trail was reached a 7:30 pm, and the leanto at 8:30 pm. Time for the long ski out. I think Warren was skiing in his sleep for most of that run. Finally, the glimmer of a street light. We

were back at the cars, eighteen hours after leaving them. Time for sleep!

But wait, someone has to drive! That would prove to be the most difficult part of the trip. I ended up driving Henry's van most of the way home, while he slept in the back of Guy's car. We beat them to the Armory, so we split up the gear and headed for bed. The phone rang while I was undressing. "Hi Henry, where the hell are you?" Turns out that everyone in Guy's car was sleeping including the driver. The car ended up in a snow bank around exit ten. Could I pick them up? Back I climbed into my cloths and trudged back to Henry's van at the Armory. At least they weren't too far away. I was soon back home. I looked at the clock as I crawled into bed. Hmmm, 3:30 am. It had been a long day.

ROC SUMMER DIRECTORY

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If the people who don't know their summer or permanent addresses yet want to send them to me when they get them, then I will have them to put on alumni lists or to give to anyone who wants them.

-- Jim O'Donnell