



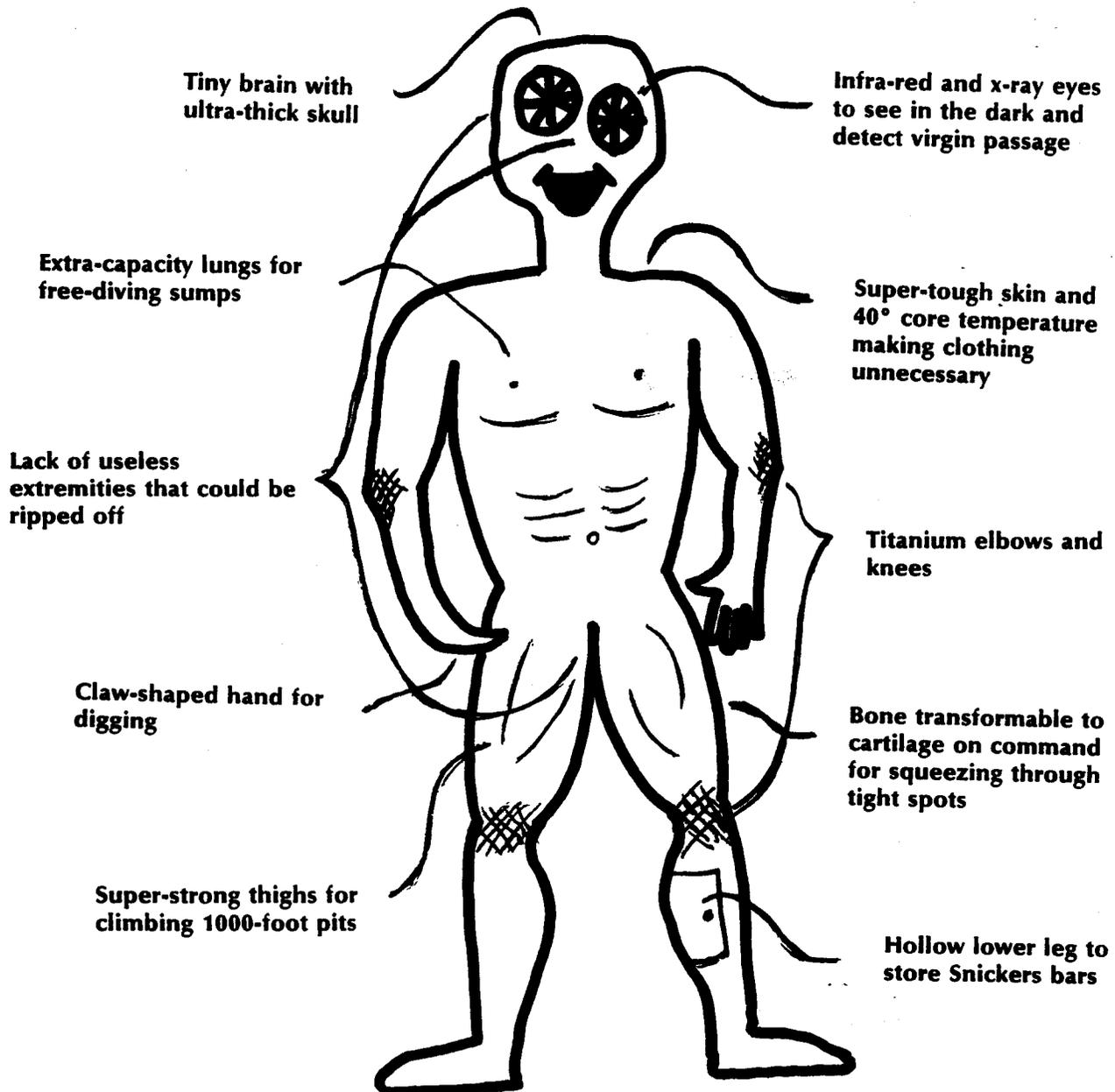
# THE ROC CAIRN



February,  
1990

—RENSSELAER OUTING CLUB, INC.—UNION BOX 26, R.P.I., TROY, NEW YORK—

## The Ultimate Caver



ROC CAIRN  
February 1990

From the Editor:

Here is the first Cairn of the spring semester. Inside are three articles well worth reading, information on outdoor job opportunities, and two new sections: quotable quotes and recipes. Thanks to all those who contributed with articles and ideas and thanks Kevin for the great cover picture.

Writing something for the Cairn doesn't have to be difficult. Anything club-related, including artwork, trip reports or puzzles can be submitted. If you just have an idea but don't know where to go with it, I'd be interested in that too. In the next Cairn I'd like to start a personals column if anyone would write me a letter. Ask about anything- crampon crises, rock climbing woes or fashion faux for Fall Lake George, (humor is good but questions can be serious too). Address all inquiries to 'Dear Annik'. I'd also be interested in top 10 lists if anyone has an idea for that.

-Annik White

Here is some information which may be useful if you come across stray wildlife which is injured, out of it's habitat, or very young. Last summer while driving back from a caving trip, Kevin and I found a racoon in the road which had been hit by a car but not necessarily near death. We found a place to bring it (in the phone book), called The Capital District Animal Emergency Clinic. They are open only at night and are located on Route 9, 1½ miles north of US 7, phone 785-1094. They took the racoon and tried to help it in hopes of releasing it back into the wild when it was able. It is difficult to treat a wild animal so that it is able to reenter nature. These people seemed very knowledgible and willing to help. Unfortunately our racoon was too badly hurt and they put him to sleep, (which they will also do instead of having it suffer for several days outside).

The other place to be aware of is The Volunteers for Distressed Wildlife. There are several volunteers in our area who have wildlife sanctuaries. Call (518) 872-1660 -Marcia Kent, or (518) 235-3981 -Denise and Rose Ziter for the location nearest you. We brought a baby grey squirrel there who had fallen from its nest prematurely. They also care for injured wildlife.

## Near the Ice

*Fabio Guerinoni*

Seventeen hours by plane, eleven hours by car and a ten hour hike is the close to the best you can do to get to this remote place in one of the most solitary places on continental South America. In those regions, usually called Patagonia, the population density is less than one inhabitant per square mile.

And there we were. Three of us. We were the first Costaricans to reach this place, at least to what the records of the park could tell (and they went back as far as twenty years).

Gray glacier was an imposing mass of electric blue ice. As the ice reached down to the lake of the same name, huge crevasses heaved from the surface. Farther to the west, lies what I believe is the largest ice cap in the Americas, excluding Greenland and maybe some Artic islands. At those latitudes, strong westerly winds carry a lot of humidity from the Pacific Ocean, which is then deposited in the form of rain in the Chilean archipelago and in the form of snow when it reaches the Andes. Gray glacier is just a tongue, tens of kilometers long, of this frigid domain.

Penetrating into the crevasses without proper gear was asking for trouble. Nonetheless, we did it whenever we thought was relatively safe. Being in those caves was a quasi-mystic experience, feeling completely surrounded by smooth, pure, pristine blue ice under high pressure due to the weight of the glacier. Beneath it, grooved rock provided us with a firm stand. Water there shows no hint of any type of contamination or pollution, explaining in part the color of the ice.

My brother wanted a picture of him taken with the icy wall as the background. In order to get a good one, he dared to walk in the ice with no special gear at all. Once he got to the right place, he yelled at me to take the picture promptly, since he could feel the rumbling and cracking of the ice. Icebergs are constantly calving from the glacier; the time that this happens and the size of the block are highly unpredictable, so he preferred not to sun bathe where he was standing. In the distance, one of those giants drifted slowly toward the outlet of the lake, like a peaceful crystal swan.

In the last day we hiked about thirteen hours; three hours to get to the glacier from the base camp and ten hours to return to where the car was. The hike was not hard at all. First, it went through enormous open field — called *pampas*— and then through the more demanding creeks and ravines, but never so as to qualify as difficult. However, the last three hours of the return trip will never be forgotten.

We were not prepared for a change in the weather, especially after an extenuating hike. At about 11:00 pm complete darkness surrounded us: no flashlight. Shortly after the temperature drop to the low forties and big drops started to fall: no rain gear. And the winds started to blow in the solitude of the pampa.

Unable to read the compass or the stars, we groped in the darkness, trying to sense the faint trail. Every few minutes we thought we had lost it. Soaking wet and shivering cold. Hungry and tired. My sister-in-law crying loudly, stumbling to the ground frequently. At some point I ask my brother what time it was — Twelve twenty— he said. I asked him again after what I thought it was half hour, it was only 12:25...

After about three long hours that seem like twenty, we made it. We slept in the car with the motor running the rest of the night and part of the morning, at the risk of running out of gas.

Our adventure in those barren landscapes invites thinking on how New York and  
New York would have looked like the of the time that it was 14 000

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new molecules has presented itself to the face of the earth.

At first there was rejoicing. It seemed as if the second age was coming to a close and a new, mysterious age was beginning. But quickly I began to realize that we were not moving into a new age, but being driven back into the old one. These new molecules brought no wonder, only death and destruction in many ways, some evident and some unimaginable. Life, that wondrous invention of a time long past, seems to be coming to an end. Granted, it may take hundreds if not thousands of years, but you must remember that within my perspective, within the perspective of this planet, it will seem to happen in the blink of an eye. I can question, but I must accept. Perhaps it is just the way of things: a cycle of lifelessness to life, then back again. Perhaps the process will reverse before it's too late. Perhaps someday in the future, life will recreate itself. But unlike the time before, next time I will know what it is to miss wonder that I had known.

### Three Fun Caves: New Mexico (Part 2)

This past August, Andrew Weiss, Kim Roffman, and I went down to New Mexico to do some caving. Andrew submitted part one of this story quite a long time ago, and I was supposed to follow up with part two. Well, I know that it's been a while since August, but I am finally getting around to writing the story. If things continue at this rate, the next decade may roll around before Kim will get out part three. Anyway . . . .

#### Fun Cave #1: Ogle Cave.

Ogle was a major caving adventure. We packed our gear on the day before the trip so that we would be ready to beat the Chihuahuan Desert Sun into North Slaughter Canyon in the morning. For the most part, we were successful at avoiding the sun. By staying to the east side of the canyon, we were able to stay in the shadow of one of the nearby Guadalupe Mountain peaks. Our "hike in the shade plan" continued to work until we were about one-third of the way up the mountain on which Ogle lies. As it got hotter; we took more breaks. One break was an interesting excursion.

We dropped our packs and clambered up a small talus slope to the opening of a small man-made tunnel. According to Kim, Ogle Cave's bat guano mining history included an attempt at obtaining easier access to the mining area via a horizontal tunnel. (The natural entrance is a 180 foot vertical drop.) The miners set up two tunnelling operations: one on the surface working toward the cave and one in the cave working outward. After about one hundred feet of mining in each direction and the realization that some engineers mistake ensured that the two tunnels would never meet, digging stopped. Later, we had the opportunity to see the other half of the tunnel from inside of the cave.

We weren't inside the cave yet though. We still had to find the entrance. After some more gruelling hiking in the sun, through cactuses, and with packs on, we decided to drop our gear and split up to find the entrance. It took a little while, but finally Kim and I both managed to find the obscure little opening into which my parents' house could have been dropped with room to spare. I really don't know how we managed to have difficulty finding the entrance, but we did.

My knees were a little wobbly as I circled the entrance back toward Kim and Andrew. I was tired from the hike; however, my wobbly knees were more of a result of some mind trick. As I circled, I felt that the huge void to my right would somehow suck me off the edge and down, down, down into the cave. (Yes, I have slight fear of heights.)

We gathered our gear and began to rig. The miners made rigging easy. We tied our rope onto an old hoist which was left at the edge of the pit and tossed the free end into the opening. We changed and ate lunch before dropping into the

hole. Kim was the first to go. About half way down, she called up nervously, "I don't think that the rope will reach the bottom." It did though, but not with much rope to spare. I'm sure that I didn't use 120 feet of rope in my knots at the top, so either Kim's 300 foot rope is not 300 feet long or the entrance drop is taller than 180 feet. The second choice is my guess; I carried the rope, and that sucker is heavy.

I was second to drop into the entrance, and Andrew was last. This order allowed me to take pictures of someone rappelling the drop from both the top and bottom. I went camera berserk on this trip, but despite the fact that I'm still paying off the loan which I took out to buy the film, I'm glad that I did. I got some really nice shots. The drop itself was somewhat intimidating. I've rappelled off of cliffs and into caves before, and I know that a rope failure on those occasions would have had the same outcome as a failure on this occasion. Somehow, though, at about halfway down, thoughts of "just how is this rope supporting all of my weight" entered my head. I'm not sure what was different about this rappell. Perhaps the ride down was just long enough that I had time to think.

Even after that long drop, we still didn't need our lamps to see at the base of the pit because the opening to the cave was so large. We freed ourselves from our harnesses, said Aufwiedersehen to the sun, and headed downhill toward the darkness. The passage was huge, and where light could reach, a green mold covered the ceiling giving it a beautiful turquoise color. Just as the surface light began to wain, we came across a column which ran from the floor to the ceiling and which was as wide as a redwood tree. It was a pretty amazing formation. Continuing onward, we came to another column, and another. Soon, it was as if we were walking through a sparse forest of immense trees at night. One of the columns in Ogle is reported to be the third largest known column in the world.

We spent about an hour in this portion of the cave trying to get a good panoramic picture. I had Andrew and Kim running all over the place setting off flashes while I uncovered and covered the lens of my camera with the shutter locked open. I had a great time, and two of the pictures even came out.

A large cable led us deeper into the cave to where the guano mining took place. The preservative properties of the cave made it seem as though the remaining guano mounds were sifted only yesterday. The tools and cigar tins left by the miners were also still intact. Although these remains were historical and interesting, they were a blatant reminder that any man made change in a cave is there to stay, whether it be a footprint, a broken formation, a spent carbide pile, or a candy wrapper.

Kim wrote an entry for us in the register which was attached to a table, and we pushed a on. (I guess that "pushing on" is an inappropriate description of what we

did. More correctly: we strolled further into the cave.) The man-made guano mounds served as an interesting reference in time. Mining stopped in the 1920's, and since then, small formations have begun to form on top of the mounds. These formations were the type which would grow into the giant columns which surrounded us. After seventy years of growth they are now about the size of a tennis ball.

We went directly to the end of the main straight-away, the area from which the guano was removed, and then back-tracked a little to a side passage which we originally passed. This passage saw less mining traffic and was slightly more wild. The formations here were smaller but more plentiful. We were walking in fantasy land. At one point, Andrew and I went exploring in a small hole in the floor. A crawling passage led us in a twisted downward path until we came to a long deep vertical crack. Both sides of the crack sprouted millions of little lumpy fingers. Suddenly, we were Jacques Costeau swimming through an underwater corral cave. The illusion took little imagination; it was fantastic.

Andrew climbed down into the crack and disappeared, while I sat admiring the walls. Shortly, he reappeared at the bottom of the climb. All leads had petered out on him; it was time to head back. Fortunately, Kim showed up before we started our upward crawl back to the large passage, so she, too, was able to see the amazing world of Jacques Costeau. We made only one last detour to see the tunnelling operation before heading back through the forest to the bottom of the entrance pit. It was getting late, and it was no hop skip and a jump to the car. The initial hop would have to be pretty amazing to begin with.

Andrew had borrowed some Jumars from Warren Weckesser to make his climbing rig. He had tried his rig out on a rope strung from a tree in front of my apartment before we had left for New Mexico, but even now he was making last minute changes to the webbing lengths. It was therefore decided to have him ascend first. After two false starts and some additional adjustments, he was under way and reached the surface without further incident. Kim's climbing system was fine tuned, and she chugged up the rope behind him. I had practiced with and used my ascending system many times before, still the first sixty or seventy feet were miserable. I had expected that I would have a little trouble with the unweighted rope not feeding through my bottom Gibbs, but I wasn't expecting to have to go so high before the rope was heavy enough on its own for my system to work correctly. After this initial problem and one on rope repair to a broken bungy cord, things went more smoothly. (Note: Don't think that putting carabiner on your chest harness and feeding the end of the rope through it, as suggested in On Rope, will eliminate all difficulty of ascending on an unweighted rope.)

It was dusk by the time we all reached the surface, so

we tried to de-rig the rope and pack up as quickly as possible. Still, we ended up hiking out in the dark. The white stone of the desert reflected light fairly well, but we used flashlights in going down the mountain to avoid a possible fall or rattlesnake encounter. At the canyon floor, we were able to turn off the lights because the wide, dry, white stream bed made a nice path back to the car.

The car . . . the car: what a lovely sight! We were beat and glad to be back at our mobile home.

Fun Cave #2 was Endless Cave and #3 was Sand Cave. Unfortunately, this Endless tale of our visit to Ogle Cave has used up too much time already. Maybe, I'll complete my New Mexico (Part 2) writing responsibility in some future Cairn.

You are probably ready to read someone else's article by now anyway.

Ken Davis



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March 1989 Contact: Dean S. Klein  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Telephone: (603) 826-5741  
4301

The Student Conservation Association (SCA) will be offering over 1,000 conservation and resource management volunteer positions for high school students, college students and older adults during the the summer and fall of 1989.

Individuals selected for SCA programs will contribute from 3-12 weeks of their time to the protection and management of over 200 National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and other federal and state resource agencies across America.

The Student Conservation Association operates two distinct programs: the Resource Assistant Program for men and women over the age of 18, and the High School Work group program for students between the ages of 16-18.

SCA is currently accepting applications for positions to be offered during the 1989 summer/fall season. A sampling of opportunities include:

\* *GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK, ALASKA*

Resource/Wildlife monitoring (seals, otters, nesting birds and bears); visitor information

\* *TONTO NATIONAL FOREST, ARIZONA*

Salt River canoe patrol and management.

\* *ACADIA NATIONAL PARK, MAINE*

Interpretive walks, talks and boat cruises.

\* *EUGENE DISTRICT - BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, OREGON*

Fish sampling and salmon habitat inventory.

\* *MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK, WASHINGTON*

Backcountry patrol and management.

*These are only a few of the over 800 opportunities available through the Student Conservation Association.*

While carrying out their assignments, volunteers receive a grant for round trip transportation to their program area and a weekly stipend to offset living expenses. Free housing is provided by the hosting agency. An allowance for a uniform is also provided (if required by the participating agency).

Positions are filled on a competitive basis. Although specific academic background or previous field experience may be required for some positions, many others require only enthusiasm and the applicants interest in conservation work.

Applications will be accepted as long as positions are available. While there are no final deadlines, application processing does begin at varying times. Applications received by these dates increase the chance of an applicant being accepted for a position:

March 1, 1989                      Positions beginning May-July 1989

June 1, 1989                      Positions beginning August - September 1989

The Student Conservation Association offers programs throughout the year. An additional 200 opportunities will be available during the winter of 1989/90.

Anyone interested in participating or learning more about SCA programs should contact:

The Student Conservation Association  
P.O. Box 550  
Charlestown, NH 03603  
(603) 626-5206

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is a non-profit, education organization founded in 1957 to enable young people to actively participate in the management of wilderness areas and natural resources. More than 15,000 young men and women have participated in SCA's programs during the past 32 years.

Programs are carried out in cooperation with federal agencies including the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The SCA also contributes to conservation efforts at many state and local natural resource areas across the country.

SCA's programs are financed by a cost sharing arrangement with cooperating agencies. The Association raises its share of funds from foundation and corporate donations and contributions from its membership.

The Student Conservation Association is the only organization in the United States that places volunteers in conservation positions on a nationwide basis. SCA operates as an equal opportunity program. All qualified applicants are considered for placement without regard to race, creed, color, sex, national origin or age (subject to minimum age eligibility requirements).

## TOP 10 TRIP QUOTES

1. "Firemen don't like it when you throw water on a fire and get a bigger fire." -Bob Addis, WVa. 1988
2. "It was dark down there!" -squirt boat kayaker after going into a monster hole on the the Lower Gauley, WVa. 1989
3. "We'll get 'em for tent russlin' or something."  
-Watoga State Park Ranger, WVa. 1989
4. "Beer is fun." -Jim Rawding, Nov. 1988
5. "This reeks of caving." -Mark Karhl while bushwacking to Giant Slide, Jan. 1990
6. "There's more to life than climbing, but not much." -Mark K.
7. "It's an easy sell." -unknown climber at Pinnacle Peak, Az. 1989
8. "It's a good thing we have our strength to make up for our stupidity." -Phil K. Co. 1989
9. "If you ain't scared, you ain't having fun; and I've had my fill of fun today!" -unknown kayaker after a tough day.
10. Mark K. - "Real men aren't affected by the cold."  
reply by Annik W.- "I'm glad I'm not a real man so I don't have to pretend the cold doesn't bother me." -WVa. 1989

While working as a tour guide at Wind Cave this summer, Stacy Smyth heard some quotable questions from the tourists. Here are a few:

1. "How much does the cave weigh?"
2. While looking at a map of the cave, one tourist asked, "How much of this has been explored?"
3. "How long did it take to dig all this and are you still digging?"

While working as a tour guide, Emily Davis Mobley gave a quick (but politely stated) reply to one stupid question:

"Is this salt water or fresh water?"

"It's salt water ma'am and we'd better move along because the tide's coming in."

## RECIPES

Preparing food for a trip isn't difficult if you plan ahead. If you are bringing a stove, a pot and water you can make just about anything. Hot drinks are good, soup, or stew, (just don't leave a pot of stew in the tent on a windy day). Make ahead foods are very convenient too. Some favorites include apple crisp, strawberry shortcake as well as the traditional trail mixes, precut fruits and vegetables. Whipped cream for deserts can be brought in those spray cans which makes a nice treat. Foods with lots of carbohydrates, fiber, sugar and water are good pickups for any trip. In any case, be sure is wrapped in airtight foil or plastic. Animals may get into it or food could leak or spoil. (Don't store loosely wrapped food on the top of your lean-to at night either, squirrels can be very aggressive! Right Mark?) Thanks Letha and Alan for the ideas and recipes!

### CHOCOLATE-MARSHMALLOW-PEANUT BUTTER POPCORN

#### Sandwiches for the hike

Raisin bread  
Peanut Butter  
Honey  
Cinnamon

Spread honey and Peanut butter on bread. Cover liberally with cinnamon. Store in tupperware containers for the trip.

#### **Patties:**

**1 1/4 cups crunchy-style  
peanut butter**  
**3/4 cup marshmallow  
creme**  
**1 quart popped popcorn**

#### **Chocolate Coating:**

**1 cup semi-sweet  
chocolate morsels,  
melted**  
**1 tablespoon light corn  
syrup**  
**1 tablespoon water**

Combine peanut butter and marshmallow creme; add popcorn and mix quickly and thoroughly with hands. Form into balls; place on cookie sheets and flatten into patties. Combine chocolate morsels, corn syrup and water into smooth mixture; use to generously coat tops of popcorn patties. Yield: 12-16 patties.

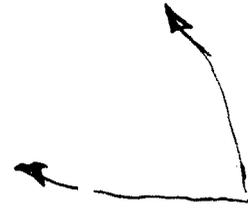
*The Committee*

### CHOCOLATE CINNAMON BARS

**2 cups all-purpose flour**  
**1 teaspoon baking  
powder**  
**1 1/3 cups sugar**  
**4 teaspoons cinnamon**  
**1/2 cup margarine**  
**1/2 cup shortening**  
**1 whole egg**  
**1 egg, separated**  
**1 (12-ounce) package  
semi-sweet chocolate  
morsels**  
**1/2 cup walnuts**

Combine flour, baking powder, 1 cup sugar and 3 teaspoons cinnamon. Mix in shortening, margarine, whole egg, and egg yolk. Mix well. Spread on greased cookie sheet. Beat the remaining egg white; spread over flour mixture. Combine remaining sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle over egg white. Layer chocolate morsels and walnuts over top. Bake at 350° for 25 minutes. Yield: 24 bars.

*Gayle Diffin  
Portland, Maine*



*These recipes  
from "The MAINE  
Ingredient."*