

# THE ROC CAIRN



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

## SPRING IS HERE

AND WITH IT ARE ALL THE SPRING OUTING CLUB ACTIVITIES SUCH AS RAFTING, HIKING, CANOEING, ROCK CLIMBING, CAVING AND KAYAKING. AS THE SEMESTER COMES TO AN END, TAKE SOME OF YOUR STUDY BREAKS OUTDOORS WITH ROC. ALSO REMEMBER, ROC IS HERE IN THE SUMMER. IF YOU WILL TOO, BE SURE TO KEEP TRACK OF TRIPS GOING OUT. (SUMMER DUES ARE ONLY SIX DOLLARS!) IF YOU WON'T BE HERE, MAKE SURE YOU ARE ON OUR SUMMER ADDRESS LIST.

SEE YOU IN THE FALL!

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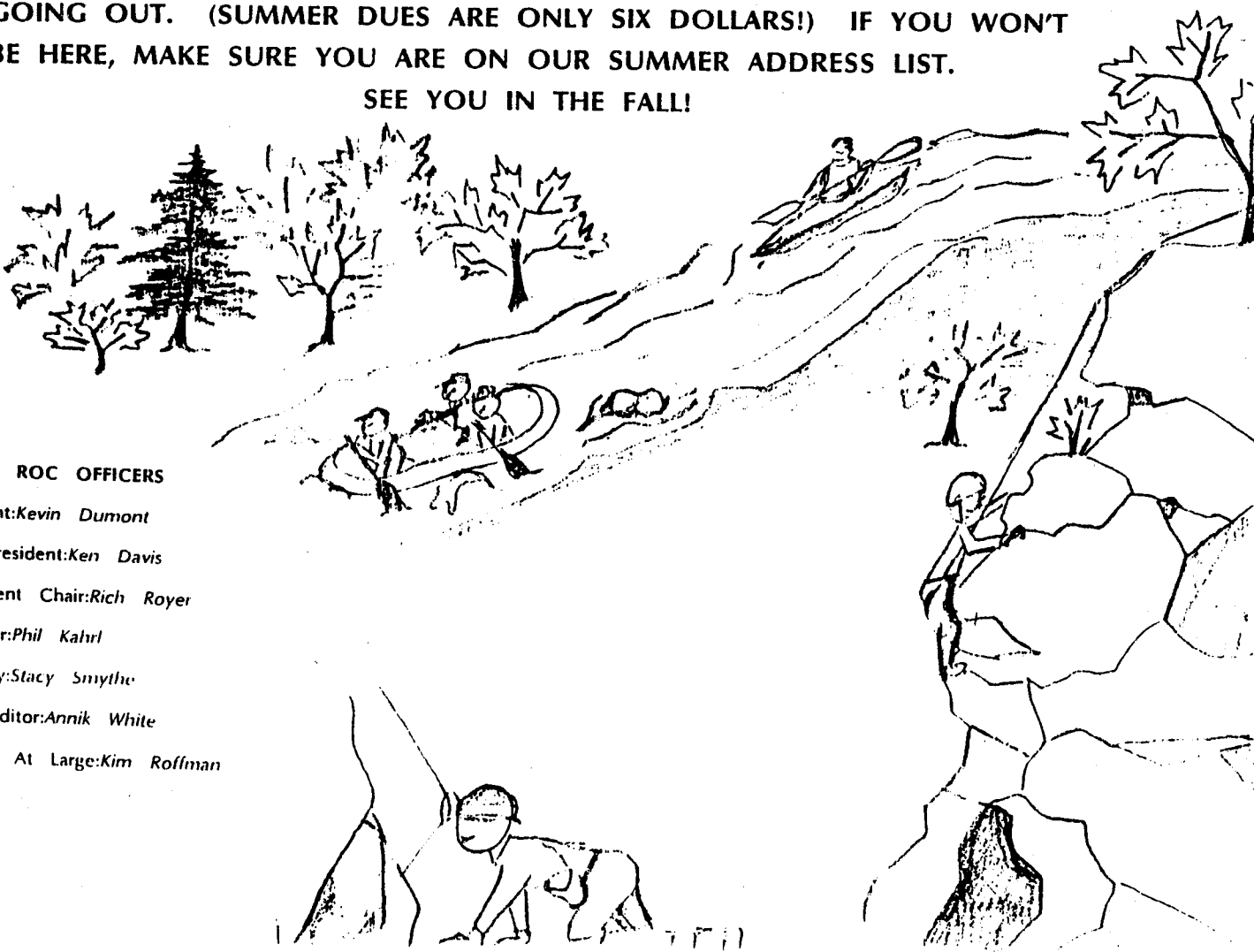
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Why Bats Have No Feathers  
and  
How Cold People Got Warm



as told by  
Pima Indians of the Southwest

A long time ago the people were very cold.

They sent a young woman to the East where the sun is born to get some fire. After being gone for many days, she returned very tired and told the people she had walked and walked, as far as she could, and could not get to the place of the fire.

A boy was sent out but he returned and said he could not get any fire either.

Next an oriole bird was sent and he also came back empty handed.

Vulture was the next to try. And he found the fire! He flew too close to it though, and the heat nearly got him. When he came back his face was burned red and his feathers were black.

The people then decided that they would send a night creature to bring back some fire. They called on Na-na-ku-muli, the Bat, and he took off to the East.

He was gone a long time and people feared he had been lost.

Then one cold, dark night they saw a spark of fire flying through the black sky, and knew Na-na-ku-muli had made it back with some fire.

As the bat flew overhead, he dropped a glowing ember, which the people fanned and put grass and sticks on until they had a great fire burning.

It was the first time they had been really warm.

The next day everyone went out looking for Na-na-ku-muli to thank him for bringing the fire.

They found him hanging upside down from the limb of a tree and all his feathers had been burned off.

From then on, bats have had no feathers



**Note:**

This article was taken from a letter which I just wrote to a friend of mine. I decided to put it in the Cairn, not because it's about a great trip, but because I'm hoping that other people will learn from my mistakes instead of their own.

While you're reading this article, please try to think what you would have done differently to make the trip less hazardous. At the end, I have listed some of the many things that I would have done differently. See what you may contribute to the list

### **Gage Cave and its Spectacular Underground Waterfall**

Since my trip to Kentucky, I've gone caving, or maybe I should say trying to kill myself, in NY three times. The most memorable trip was to Gage Cave. Kim Roffman and I went there about three weeks ago. (Note: the minimum safe # of people for a safe caving trip is 4.) The entrance to Gauge is a forty foot vertical drop, so we had to rig a rope and kick off all of the icicles hanging from the mouth of the cave before we could rappel down into the pit. While we rigged, a constant drizzle fell on our heads, so I had a rain coat with me. (This is important later in the story.)

We finished rigging, checked our knots and gear, and then dropped into the cave. Things were going well; it was a cool cave; and as I was looking up from the bottom of the pit at the fine, misty rain falling through the entrance into the pit, I was glad that I had blown off work to go spelunking.

Once inside the cave, however, our troubles began. I was climbing up a crack when I heard this squeaking noise. I thought it was my helmet so I readjusted it and kept climbing. That's when the real source of the noise, a tiny bat trying to sleep, fell off of the wall. I must have bumped it somehow.

Kim and I didn't know what to do. The bat was still pretty much in hibernation mode, and I was worried that if we left it lying on the floor where it fell, the floor would suck out all of it's body-heat and kill it. So we tried to pick it up and place it back on the wall. That's when it started squeaking and moving a little, and it slipped, rolled down the hill, and grabbed onto Kim's boot. Wonderful! Eventually we did get it off of Kim's boot and back onto the floor, which is where we left it figuring that the more we that we would try to help it the worse things would get.

Next we did a tight crawl and climb down a small dome. The tight crawl got me. It was more than just tight; it was very tight. It was so tight in fact that it nearly

completely removed the bottom half of my coveralls as I wiggled through. At the bottom of the pit, I tied them back together with a piece of string while Kim came through the pinch. The climb down the pit got Kim. She tensed up from fear of falling. I had to spot her and work her down step by step, but things worked out. And except for me feeling like I was going to be stuck forever in the squeeze on the way back out, the rest of our underground exploring was pretty uneventful.

Our big problem came when we headed out. As we started up the final crack to the entrance dome, I turned to Kim and asked, "Water wasn't flowing down over these rocks when we were coming in was it?"

It wasn't.

As we approached the mouth, it became evident that a waterfall, a freezing cold waterfall, was now pouring in through the entrance. We grabbed our ascending gear and moved back down the crack to get out of direct assault of the incoming water. There we rigged up our harnesses and Gibbs. Although out of reach of the waterfall, we were still getting wet from spray and from water running down the walls, so I donned my rain coat. Things were still OK though, we weren't too cold and we were both familiar with vertical rope techniques.

Kim was ready first was ready first, so she climbed up the last lip and started to attach herself to rope while water poured down on her head. This is when things started down hill, for me and I assume for Kim also. Kim called to me "Ken, can you hold the bottom of the rope tight?" (When you're climbing with Gibbs, the rope doesn't feed through the last Gibbs easily unless there is weight on the rope.) So I climbed up under the waterfall and held the rope for her as she climbed. This was not fun, my hands were freezing; water was running up my sleeves; and I was getting very wet.

I began to get very cold. And to make matters worse, my carbide lamp was starting to die. When I felt the rope stop moving, I let go. I couldn't hear what she was trying to scream, but I assumed that it was that she was off rope and that things were fine not that she was stuck in the waterfall somehow. I yelled back, but didn't think that she could hear me.

After climbing back down the lip, I resumed preparing. My lamp was really dim at this point (I hadn't changed carbide at all in the cave, but at this point I was wishing I had), so I took some precious time to recharge my lamp. Upon putting the lamp back together, I found that the flint was wet and I couldn't get the lamp re-lit. It tried everything to try and dry the flint, but with wet, cold hands it's nearly impossible. It was time for emergency measures: my Bic lighter. I dug it out and gave it a flick. The lighter was stored in a ziplock bag, but I guess my thumb was wet, because the lighter wouldn't spark

either. I stuck my hand inside my inner most layer of clothing and dried it. I then proceeded to flick my Bic until my thumb was sore, but finally the friction dried the flint and it lit. I then went to light my cave lamp. The lamp burned dimly because the tip was partially clogged, but I wasn't going to put it out again to clear the tip.

At this point, I was somewhat annoyed that I wasted time fixing the lamp because I knew that the water would douse it during the climb and I would have to use my flashlight anyway, but using the lamp as long as possible would save my cold batteries for the climb.

I thought I heard Kim yelling again, but I wasn't sure. It could have been just the water splashing. I had to make sure though and re-climbed the lip to the water fall, and screamed up, "Kim, ARE YOU OFF ROPE?"

Then I actually heard an "off rope" back or I imagined I did anyway, and hollered back, "OK."

Now happy at least that I only had to worry about myself, I began to tie my chest harness. (This was my main mistake of the trip. I had used the Gibbs system which I had before, but I had used it with one of the club's seven chest harnesses which had a roller which sat in the middle of my chest and kept my chest Gibbs fixed. We didn't have access to club gear for this trip, so I decided to tie one.) After about three attempts at tightening my tied harness, I finally gave in and said it's as tight as I'm going to get it. Anxious to get out, I crammed my gear and carbide lamp back into my cave pack, wedged my flashlight between my cheek and chin strap and tied it there, clipped the stuff sack containing my dry street clothes to the bottom of the pack, and climbed the lip for the last time.

I really wanted to be heading up the rope at this point, and I had to force myself to take time and double check everything. All systems were go and I began to walk the rope toward the surface.

About five feet from the ground, I stopped moving. My chest harness had loosened so that when I went to put my weight on the chest Gibbs, it would cling to the rope and I would drop a foot thus rendering my last step upward useless.

"Davis, you stupid jerk. You had better think of something mighty fast or you're going to die here. Your not going to last very long in this ice water."

Yes, I was very worried. Fortunately, though, the Outing Club teaches people how to prussik up ropes before they teach them about mechanical ascenders. So, I began to use my chest Gibbs like a prussik knot and slid it up the rope as far as it would go with my hand before I put my weight on it. Although not easy, this worked. I would alternate between sliding my chest Gibbs up the rope and reaching down and pulling the un-weighted rope through my bottom Gibbs. It was tough, slow work, and I was extremely glad to be wearing my rain coat.

With tired arms, though, I finally dragged myself over the ring of ice surrounded the mouth of the cave and sat on the ice with a deep breath of relief.

Emily Mobily Davis, the caretaker of the cave, was waiting for me at the surface. She was worried that we were taking too long and came out to check on things. When she arrived she found Kim in early stages of hypothermia and sent her back to the car a mile away to warm up. Emily waited behind for me.

After replacing the batteries in my now completely dead light, I struggled to free myself of my harness and Gibbs system, while Emily pulled the rope out of the cave. Together, we wrapped the rope and headed back to the car. On the trek back, I began to cool down from the work of getting out of the cave and I started to realize how really cold I was. But I made it back and changed out of my ice coated clothes in Kim's car.

We stopped in at Emily's place, Speleobooks, afterward to have some hot chocolate and warm up. Emily was more than great. Apparently, the drizzle had stopped shortly after we entered the cave; however, the temperature rose during the mid-day and began to thaw the swamp behind the cave. The runoff drained into the entrance.

It was an exciting trip. It was a great trip. I learned a lot.

Things I would have done differently now that I can look back on the trip:

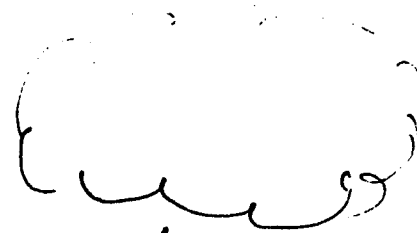
First and most importantly, I will never climb on a system again without having tested every part of it before hand. Going into the cave, I knew that I could climb the rope no matter how loose my chest harness was, but I was not expecting to have to climb through a waterfall with a lame system. Now, I know to be ready for the unexpected.

The second most important mistake, I feel anyway, was that I let Kim climb the rope before I was completely ready. She could have helped me tighten the harness and have helped me to light my lamp. Also, on going up the rope, she got completely wet, and because I wasn't ready, she had to wait out in the cold night too long. She became so cold that she not only couldn't help me, but she was in danger herself.

Also, I carry a whistle in my first aid kit, but I didn't think to use it. We could have signalled each other over the roar of the water had we thought to set up a signalling system.

I can think of about ten other suggestions but don't have the time to write them down. Think of some of your own.

# HOW CAVES ARE FORMED



$H_2O$  (RAIN)

+

$CO_2$  (SOIL)



$H_2CO_3$  Carbonic Acid



$H^+ + HCO_3^-$  (ions)

+

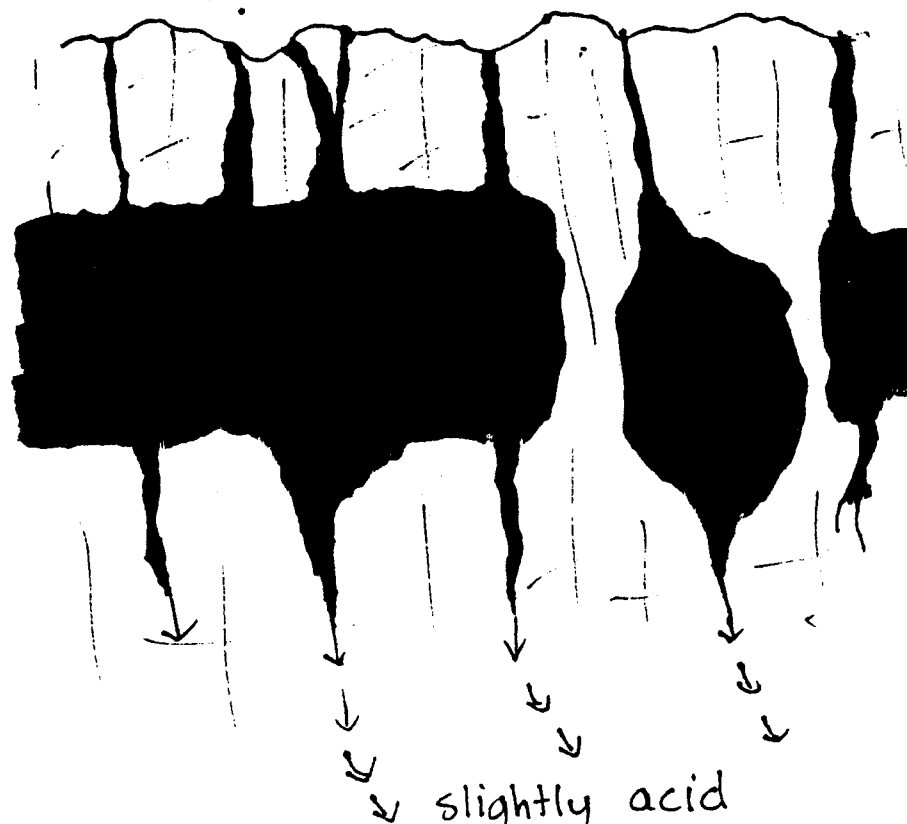
$CaCO_3$  (LIMESTONE) ROCK



$Ca^{++} + 2 HCO_3^-$



Limestone rock is dissolved and carried away in solution as calcium ions ( $Ca^{++}$ ) and bicarbonate ions ( $HCO_3^-$ )



slightly acid groundwater moves down and off to the nearest river and ocean (eventually)

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## The Great Bear

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Once, a long time ago, when the earth was young, there lived a giant bear who was pursued by a giant Indian chief. Day after day, the chief chased the bear until finally one day he caught the bear by its stubby little tail.

The bear roared, but the chief held the bear tightly by its stubby little tail and began to swing the bear around his head. Faster and faster went the bear until his tail was stretched all out of shape. And then the chief hurled the bear up into the sky where the bear got stuck—and he's been going around ever since.

And even today the bear spins in a giant circle around the northern sky—high overhead, then down toward the horizon—with the two bright stars of his body always pointing toward the North Star.

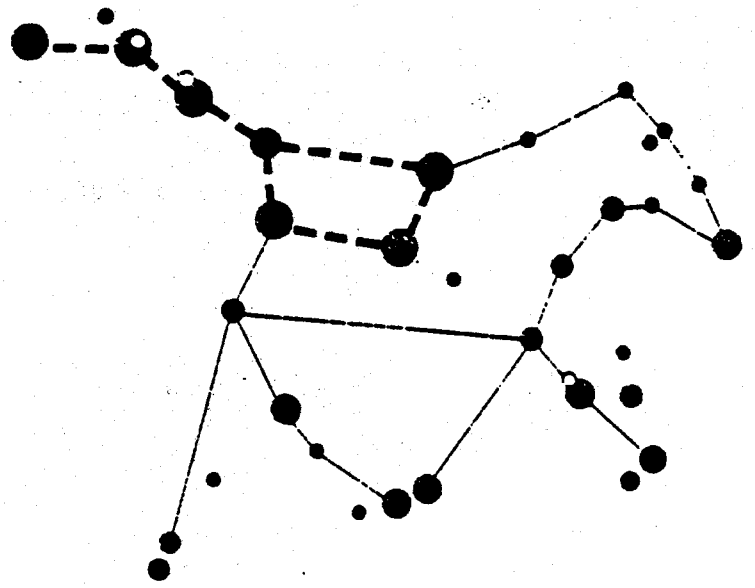
Most stories say that there are four main stars in the body of Bear, and three stars in the tail. But some stories say these three stars are not a tail at all. They are instead three Indians hunting the Bear.

The first Indian carries a bow and arrow to shoot the Bear; the last Indian carries a load of firewood to build a fire; and the middle Indian carries a pot on his shoulder to cook the bear in.

If you look very carefully, you may be able to see the pot—a faint star next to the middle Indian.

The chase began back near the beginning of time when the first Indian shot his arrow and struck the Bear in the side. The wound isn't serious—the Bear has been running ever since and the three pursuing Indians have never gained a step nor gotten close enough for a second shot at the Bear.

Through the night, as the Indians chase the Bear around the sky, the whole sky seems to be turning. But as the weeks pass, each evening the Bear begins the night at a slightly different place in the sky. In the autumn the Bear begins the night low in the northwest.

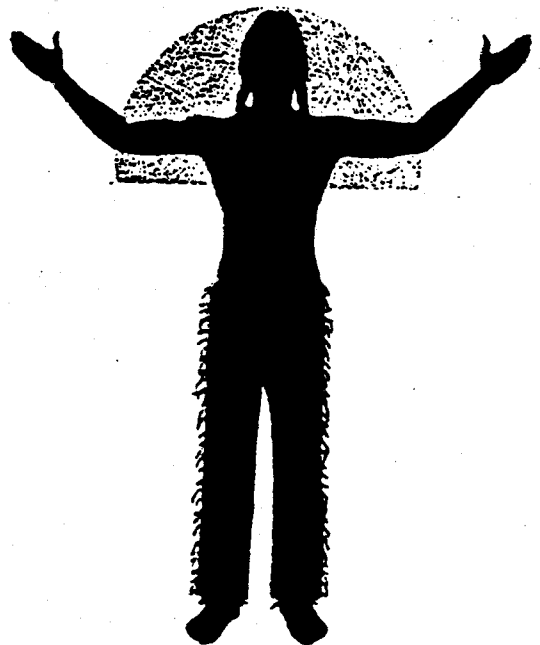


It is at this season every year, with the Bear crouched low in the northwest, that a strange thing happens. The arrow wound in the side of the Bear opens slightly and a little blood trickles down upon the land. It covers the leaves of the trees and dyes them red—and that is why we have autumn.

We tell this story and so we never forget, even when the weather is warm late into the fall, that when the Bear starts his nightly journey low in the northwest, it is time to store up food for the winter.

The people who cannot see this wisdom in the sky—those people will surely perish in the long cold nights of winter.

(Adapted from Iroquois myths from *Star Lore of All Ages* by William Tyler Olcott)





Do You Need a Belayer?

(To the tune of "With a Little Help From My Friends")

What would you do if I made the wrong move?  
Would you stand up and just let me fall?  
Clip yourself in, and then I will begin,  
And I'll try not to trust you at all.

Oh, I'll get by with a little help from my friends  
Oh, I'll get higher with a little help from my friends  
Oh, I'm gonna try with a little help from my friends

} Refrain

How do you feel when you're really exposed,  
And your whole world begins to turn gray?  
If you unglue you'll sail into the blue  
And you think that you've seen your last day.

--- Refrain---

Do you need a belayer?  
I want somebody below.  
Can you see your belayer?  
I need somebody on rope!

How do you feel when when you reach for your rack,  
But you can't find a piece that'll stay?  
You know it's dumb but you use bubble gum  
As the birds hear you fervently pray:

--- Refrain ---

Do you need a belayer?  
I want somebody below.  
Can you feel your belayer?  
I just want someone on rope!

What do you do when you get near the top,  
and it's blank as a blackboard, of course?  
Set your face in a maniacal grin  
As you lunge and just trust to the Force.

--- Refrain ---

How do you feel when you're finally safe,  
As you weakly fall into a heap?  
feebly you say that you're off of belay  
But you see that your friend is asleep?

Oh, I got by with a little help from my friends,  
Gave it a try with a little help from my friends,  
I could've died with a little help from my friends!

Written by Stacy Smyth - with the exception of the refrain,  
which was lifted more or less in tact from the Beatles.

# Everything You Wanted to Know About IOCA, but Were Afraid to Ask

Greg d. Moore

Well, as I promised Annik, I am writing an article. The subject of this article is IOCA. If you have been in the club for any length of time, you have heard these initials. IOCA, which is short for Intercollegiate Outing Club Association, is an association of outing clubs of which ROC is a member. I have had the honor of serving as the head of IOCA for the past two years.

In order to make my life easier, I think I will explain IOCA using a question and answer format.

Q: Ok, I know what the initials stand for, what does IOCA do?

A: Well, IOCA has several functions. Its most important one is to keep outing clubs in touch with each other and hopefully get clubs together on trips.

Q: Sounds like fun, what sort of trips does IOCA sponsor?

A: Well, the best known to this club is Fall Lake George. While ROC does much of the organization, IOCA encourages other clubs to attend, pays for the square dance caller, parking fees, and other fees for the weekend. Other major IOCA trips include Spring Conference and hopefully once again, College Week.

Q: What is College Week? You mentioned it at the meeting.

A: Well, the idea behind College Week is that the colleges agree on a place and a week or so of time in the late summer when they will get together. People from the various clubs show up when is convenient and stay as long as they can. It is a laid back week with people doing what they choose.

Q: Where and when will it be this year?

A: Where is hopefully at Lake Colden in the 'Daks, and when is just before school starts this year.

**Q: What happened at Spring Conference?**

**A: Well, the main objective of Spring Conference is to elect any officers that IOCA needs to elect. After that, it is up to the sponsoring club to provide the opportunity for fun. This year at New Paltz people went climbing, caving, biking, hiking, square dancing, and lots of other things. But perhaps the best part was meeting all the new people from other clubs.**

**Q: What other sorts of trips are there?**

**A: Well, Stacy sponsors caving trips with other colleges from time to time, and other colleges go on trips. Alfred from upstate NY is going rafting this month and has invited people, Clarkson wants to sponsor an orienteering race, and other clubs are always willing to go on trips. If you want more info, ask, I can give you phone numbers and names of other clubs and people in the clubs.**

**Q: I am graduating this year, can I still go on IOCA trips?**

**A: Of course, not only that, you can join IOCALum. IOCALum is an organization made up of outing club alums. They have their own newsletter and sometimes get together on their own and go on trips. And of course they show up at IOCA events.**

**Q: Does IOCA have a newsletter?**

**A: Yes, it comes out once every month or two. It has articles of interest for clubs and announces trips going out in the near (or not so near) future. Ask me for old issues, I have plenty. And listen during the mailcall at ROC meetings for the latest issue, and make sure you ask to read it.**

**Q: Well, this all sounds like fun, how do I join IOCA?**

**A: You already have. Since ROC is part of IOCA, all of the members of ROC are members of IOCA. This is true of any club in IOCA. At last count there were over 3 dozen clubs in IOCA ranging as far south as Delaware, as far north as Toronto, as far east as Maine, and as far west as Chicago. At last estimate there were over 3600 students involved in these clubs.**

**Q: What else can I do?**

**A: Well, if you are a leader, try to sponsor a trip with another club, there are plenty of clubs just within an hour of here. If you aren't a leader, get in touch with the other clubs and see if you can go on one of their trips. Finally, make sure you go to Fall Lake George!**

**Well, if you have any more questions after this, feel free to ask me. I am willing to answer them. And remember, ROC is only one club out of many. (Of course it's my favorite!) Ca-oo-h-Wah!**

It seems that within a single month, I went from being President of two clubs, to being an elder statesman. Looking back, I can see where being both President of ROC and Executive-Secretary of IOCA forced me to do both jobs at only partial capacity. Yet, as much work they both were, I must say that I greatly enjoyed doing both. In both cases I got to work with some great people. I want to thank you for electing me President last year and giving me the opportunity to try and do a good job. I hope I didn't disappoint you. I know you as a club didn't disappoint me. It was an honor to represent the club. It is still my feeling that the Outing Club is one of the best respected clubs in the Union and among the administration. I think having the 3rd or so largest club on campus also says how popular this club is among students. And when I was wearing two hats at IOCA events, it was a good feeling to realize just how well respected ROC is among other clubs. In closing, I want to say that I hope the club continues its fine tradition and that a year from now Kevin can write a farewell article and be just as proud, if not prouder, than I am.

Now, on to other things, this summer I am planning on doing a lot of stuff. I plan to spend my weekends climbing, hiking, caving or something else in the outdoors. If you happen to be in the Troy area and want to join me, or need a place to stay, feel free to call. In August, I plan on either doing some hiking on the Appalachian Trail, or going out to the Grand Canyon. If you are interested in going to the Canyon, please contact me as soon as possible. Finally, I plan on going to College Week, if you are interested, let me know.

VALE!