



THE ROC CAIRN



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

FALL LAKE GEORGE



FALL
CAVING



SEPT. 1989

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ROC OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: KEVIN DUMONT
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 EQUIPMENT CHAIRMAN: RICH ROYER
 SECRETARY: STACY SMYTH
 TREASURER: PHIL KAHRL
 MEMBER AT LARGE: KIM ROFFMAN
 CAIRN EDITOR: ANNIK WHITE



Note From The President

Hi folks. How was your summer? Good. Mine too. Well, classes have started again, but fortunately for you and I, this school comes equipped with a fully functional Outing Club with which to do all sorts of fun and exciting stuff with. This is just a little note to explain things a bit to newcomers and refresh everyone else.

The primary purpose of the Rensselaer Outing Club is to go out, as the name implies. No, seriously folks, I believe our purpose is to have fun and help others have fun (which in our case usually *does* involve going out...). We meet every week in CC 330 at 7:00PM and discuss various things dealing with outings both past and future. In other words, we report on the trips of the previous weekend and announce trips for the upcoming one. At the end of the meeting, sign-up sheets are available for the announced trips. Each student is allowed to attend one trip before paying dues (which are \$15 for a full year and \$8 for a single semester for RPI students, a bit more for non-students). What kind of trips are there, you ask?

Primary fall activities would include Rock Climbing, Canoeing, Hiking, and of course Caving (or Spelunking, which is more fun to say but sounds kind of silly). There will be friday night caving until at least the first week of October, all beginner trips. Other types of trips generally go out during the day on the weekend, although there are some exceptions (mid-week trips, over-nights, etc...).

The big event that you doubtless have heard about on the National news which we sponser every year is called Fall Lake George. The complex origin of the name of this event probably involves the fact that we go to Lake George in the fall. This year, FLG will be held from September 29 to October 1 (friday to sunday). You can find out all the details of this event by attending a meeting before FLG takes place. The relevant facts that you may want to know now are 1) we camp on an island, 2) there are many activities included in the weekend (climbing, hiking, conoeing, etc.), 3) there will be many people there from

colleges all over the northeast, 4) food and entertainment will be provided, 5) it does cost money , 6) but it's well worth the price, 7) and it's just generally a damn good time and an easy way to get out of Troy for a weekend.

Now that I have finished my pitch for FLG, I will mention a little bit about what is beyond that. Later in the fall there will be vertical caving practice sessions and then, consequently, vertical caving trips. The week of Thanksgiving there will be the traditional caving trip to West Virginia (where the big caves are!). The approach of colder weather will then bring on Winter Mountaineering (which will include Winter School and Week in the Woods early next year) as well as (provided that it snows this year) X-Country Skiing. In the spring, there will be Rafting and Kayaking, as well as all of the fall activities again.

Well, thanks for reading this; I hope it provided you with at least a little useful information. Please feel free to contact any of the officers listed on the front of this publication for more information; we're all pretty nice people (except me). I sincerely hope to see you all at the rest of the meetings this year.

Kevin A. Dumont

*For Great Outdoor Fun
Canoeing · Camping · Dancing*

FALL LAKE GEORGE

at least · THE 35th YEAR · we think

FRIDAY · SATURDAY · SUNDAY
Sept. 29 · 30 · Oct. 1st ~

Sponsored by:

Intercollegiate Outing
Club Association &
Rensselaer Polytechnic
Institute Outing Club

Contact:

Rensselaer Outing Club
Meetings Tuesdays 7 p.m.
CC 330
or Call 272-6245

* FALL LAKE GEORGE *

at least - THE 35th YEAR - we think

THE GREATEST CAMPING & CANOEING & DANCING EVENT OF THE YEAR

FRIDAY - SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 29, 30 & OCTOBER 1

Sponsored by IOCA (Intercollegiate Outing Club Association) and
featuring the attendance of college outing clubs from
all over the northeast.

FRIDAY:

- meet at the Armory for a ride up north at 4:00 pm
- registration at CAMP CHINGAGHGOOK ON THE SHORES OF LAKE GEORGE
4:00 - 11:00 pm
- CANOE OUT TO TURTLE ISLAND
- set up camp
- ROAST MARSHMELLOWS, STARGAZE, SING, MEET FELLOW OUTING CLUBBERS FROM
OTHER SCHOOLS

SATURDAY:

- EXPLORE LAKE GEORGE BY CANOE
- HIKE BLACK AND TONGUE MOUNTAINS
- SWIM
- CANOEING WORKSHOPS (learn new canoe strokes and canoe rescues)

SATURDAY NIGHT:

- STEAK DINNER (Catfish for vegheads)
- one helluva SQUARE DANCE on MOHICAN ISLAND with a LIVE BAND
(squares, contras, circles, chicken dances, and all foot stompin'
country dances known to men and women)
- CIDER AND DONUTS
- BONFIRE
- JAM SESSION (bring your musical instruments)

SUNDAY:

- Explore some more
- Pack up and head home (all GOOD THINGS have to end)

** for more information and to sign up come to **
** RENSSELAER OUTING CLUB (ROC) MEETINGS Tuesdays at 7 PM in CC 330 **
** or call **

Ken Davis
271-1340

Kim Roffman
272-6245

Kevin Dumont
274-3714

God-like Canoeing at Fall Lake George

by Andrew Weiss

The events described here are not intended to discourage anyone from attending this year's Fall Lake George. There is no truth to the rumor that my own failure to attend this year's event is due to my desire to avoid a repeat performance.

It was Monday morning, and most people had left Turtle Island on Sunday. I awoke bright and early and, having heard loud wind-noises went out to check the weather; Henry Welch, my canoe partner, was still in our tent.

"Henry," I said. "There are whitecaps on the lake."

"Which way are they going?"

"The wrong way."

Within a few minutes the Outing Club brain trust gathered to discuss the task ahead. Would we paddle to the nearest landing and shuttle the canoes around the lake by car? No. We would go for it. After all, it was only four miles to the mainland.

There was, however, a catch. The previous day's maneuverings of personnel had left us with an extra aluminum canoe, and Henry and I were the lucky pair who would tow it home.

With much trepidation we covered ourselves in Gore-Tex and set out-- Henry in the stern and myself in the bow. After perhaps a half-hour a pair of beginners, who'd never been in a canoe before paddling to the island three days earlier, blew by us like we were standing still. I think that's when we knew we were in trouble. Nonetheless, we continued. Waves occasionally crashed over the bow, and we felt like we were towing a sea anchor.

As we hugged the shore, attempting to find calmer waters in coves and in the lee of islands, a sail boat cruised by, its crew ignoring our struggles. But then a ranger in a power boat motored up and asked us if we needed help. Bravely, we thanked him and waved him off.

We were at the halfway point and in open water when Henry noticed that we were barely moving. He thought to himself that I must have been completely worn out, because I didn't seem to be pulling my weight. But then I stopped paddling, and we began to move backwards.

After two-and-a-half miles Greg zipped up in the power boat and took the extra canoe on board, relieving us of our albatross. Our progress improved somewhat, but our arms were now so tired there was no point in switching sides as we paddled.

We made one pitstop on an island to relieve ourselves and stretch our legs, and then we made the final push. The closer we came to the mainland the harder we stroked. And then, after three-and-a-half hours, we were there. Complaining bitterly to all around us, particularly Greg, we guzzled water and inhaled cookies and sandwiches. We were now god-like canoers.

BAT FACTS

In China bats are a symbol of fertility and long life.

In many Native American cultures bats are believed to bring good luck.

Bats are mammals and belong (along with humans) to the order of most highly developed mammals, the primates.

Bats are the only mammals that can fly. The wing span of bats range from 5 1/2 inches to 5 1/2 feet.

Bats have eyes and can see. Most bats also use echolocation to navigate in the dark. The bat sends out ultrasonic sounds from its mouth and nose, which bounce off objects and send an echo back to the bat's ears.

Bat's faces have wrinkles, lumps, bumps, and big ears -- to help the bat send and receive sounds.

There are species of pollen eating bats, fruit eating bats, carnivorous bats (lizards and fish), insect eating bats, and (you guessed it) blood eating bats.

Vampire bats have never existed in Transylvania.

Vampire bats are found only in South America, Central America and occasionally in southern Mexico.

There are 3 species of vampire bats. One eats the blood of birds, one eats the blood of mammals, and one eats both mammal and bird blood.

Bats can transmit rabies, but they are not healthy carriers of the disease. Bats get sick and die if they are infected with rabies.

Bats are not a major transmitter of rabies. Only 1 in 1000 bats in the U.S. is infected with rabies, less than rodents and raccoons.

There are 900 species of bats in the world, 40 in North America.

You might get a peek at one of our local bats if you go caving this fall !



Cave Radiation: RADON

Cave radiation exists because of the small amount of radium that is present in most rock and soil. This radium is constantly breaking down into radon gas and its by-products, which are called radon daughters. On the earth's surface the daughters are quickly diluted by fresh air, but in the limited airflow of a cave, the radon daughters tend to build up.

Radon daughters give off a radiation in the form of alpha particles. There is concern about this alpha radiation because long exposure by uranium miners has been correlated with increased cases of lung cancer.

An alpha particle acts like a weak bullet. Its energy level enables it to travel only a few inches through the air and its penetrating power is low. If it were to strike the human skin it would be stopped by the outer layer, causing no damage. Yet, when we inhale radon daughters found in the cave air, their alpha particles can penetrate lung tissue, which does not have the protective layer the skin has. Some of the alpha particles may damage or cause changes in cells. Though much of the damage may be repaired by the lungs, a small number of cells may be permanently changed. Over many years this may lead to lung disorders such as cancer. The number of years this takes depends on each person's individual resistance to lung damage. The longer one is exposed to the alpha radiation of radon daughters, the greater the chances of lung cancer. Also, the more daughters we inhale with each breath, the greater the radiation level and amount of exposure. The concentration of radon daughters found in the cave air is referred to as the radiation level. The exposure level is the value obtained from both the amount of daughters in a certain volume of air and the time one spends in an area exposed to that air. Exposure to radon on the job is regulated by law.

Cave radiation presents another problem when tobacco smoke is present. As both tobacco smoke and radon daughters are lung irritants, their effects are greatly magnified when combined. It has been found that uranium miners who smoke are 10 times more likely to develop lung disorders than those who do not.

(Excerpted from a Carlsbad Caverns National Park training program.)

Coming Attractions

In the next issue of the ROC Cairn will be a thrilling tale of three brave adventurers on the fabled NEW MEXICO EXPEDITION. Join Ken, Kim, and Andrew as they brave bats, vultures, rattlesnakes, and the blazing desert sun in their search for underground (and above-ground) amusement. Off-trail in Carlsbad Caverns, the 180-foot drop into Ogle Cave, the journey through the aptly named Endless Cave, the Sand Cave through-trip, the search for McKittrick Cave, and more.

Don't be left out. Reserve a copy today (or keep showing up at meetings and pick one up when Anik gets around to printing it). And remember--stick with the Outing Club, and you too could go on an amazing trip like this.

One Small Step...

It was a perfect day in October, warm and sunny. The previous day's rain had washed the air sparkling clear, and the leaves were at their peak of color -- a sharp frost had brought out explosions of deep reds and oranges, lightened by brilliant yellows. As with all beautiful days in October, there was an unspoken warning that this might be the last before winter, and was a gift to be enjoyed while it lasted.

Evie almost ran home after class, she was so happy. A glorious afternoon with no homework due for a week, and tomorrow she would start horseback riding again. Even the potentially sobering thought of sore knees for the next few days after that could not dampen spirits on a day like this.

As she breezed into the kitchen, Matt and Steve were just starting their lunches. She dumped her backpack into a corner and went straight for her own supply of peanut butter and jelly.

"Hi, guys! What is the Outing Club doing to celebrate such a beautiful afternoon?" The two club officers made room for her at the table, and Matt replied, "We were just talking about that. We're going to go to the Pit after lunch to look for people to go rockclimbing. Want to go? It's worth it for the view."

Evie laughed as she rummaged for her soda in the fridge. "Come on! This is me, remember? I love to rappel off the side of the Student Union for Activities Day, but you know I can't climb!"

Matt's eyebrows went up. "Can't, or won't? Come on, Evie, there's lots of easy climbs there, and we'll bring some other beginners along if we can find any. These cliffs aren't high -- no more than forty feet, and besides, it's illegal to stay home on a day like this. If you don't agree, we'll be forced to kidnap you, and that's all there is to it. Now that that's decided, go change into some grubby clothes."

"Do I have any say in this at all?"

"NO!!" her two housemates chorused. Steve added, "Cheer up! Maybe we won't be able to find anyone with a car."

"Gee, thanks. First you convince me to go, than say maybe not. You're right though, we have to go somewhere today. We'd better find someone with a car!" She swallowed the last of her sandwich and climbed up the stairs. "This is ridiculous. Well, I don't really have to climb. I'll just enjoy the view." But she knew her pride wouldn't let her do that in front of others.

Within a few minutes, the three were at the Pit, where Outing Club equipment was stored. It was a popular gathering place for club members, who met there to repair old equipment (an ongoing struggle), to brag about past trips, and to arrange future trips. Of the five people there, two had cars. All five decided to go, and the Pit was closed early with a "Gone Climbing" sign hung on the door.

When they reached the cliffs and started hiking toward them, Evie realized that despite Matt's promise, she was indeed the only beginner there. Even so, her determination mounted. She had come out here, and refused to let these silly boys think that she, as the only female along and therefore representative of all females, was a *wimp*. None of the others knew about her knee problems; she looked like a fairly normal person to them. She couldn't back out now. She would just have to hope that there really was an easy climb.

She soon stopped worrying about rock climbing and began to worry about hiking. The cliffs themselves were only forty feet high, but they were at least a hundred feet above the level of the road, and the path through the woods was steep. Evie began to fall behind the others, breathing heavily. Why had she agreed to this? She thought she might be strong enough to go rock climbing, but she would be far too tired by the time she got there. It had better be a good view, or she would kill Matt and Steve later. If she had enough energy.

It was a beautiful view. As some of the more experienced began to set up the ropes to catch the climber if he fell, she clambered up the path around the cliffs to the top, pausing often to catch her breath. Perched on an outcropping of rock, legs dangling above the tree tops, she could see for miles across the valley. The irregular brown fields scattered along the valley floor were surrounded on all sides by a blazing carpet of trees in every autumn shade imaginable. At one end of the valley was a line of hills, their brilliant trees muted by distance into a blur of sunlit red. Above those rose the sky, with only a single contrail to split the expanse of blue.

Gradually, her breathing slowed down and she began to relax. From where she sat, she could see part of the easier rockface. She watched as Dave, one of the club's best climbers, zipped up forty feet in less than five minutes. She sat open mouthed as he compared notes with the next climber, suggesting that he not use this or that handhold, in order to make the climb *harder!* Maybe the climb wasn't so hard after all. As each of the climbers finished that one, they wandered over to a much more difficult one on another part of the cliff.

Steve was the only one left, and called up to her. "Hey, Evie! Would you come down and belay me? I want to try this again. You can watch from down here and pick up some of the basics of climbing."

She quickly walked back down the easy path, and joined him at the bottom of the cliff. It looked taller from here, but not quite as steep as it had from the top. Soon she found herself tied into a climbing harness, which Steve called a "gelding harness". It was the same one, wrapped around legs and waist, that she had used to rappel down the side of the Union in September. This time, however, Steve tied the harness to a large tree behind her. Then he attached the climbing rope to the front of her harness.

"Okay, Evie, I'm going to be hanging from one end of the climbing rope. Most of the time, I won't need it -- it's just a safety in case I fall. Your job is to keep the rope taut. The pulley system the rope runs through between the top of the cliff and your waist would take the strain if I fell, but it doesn't pull the rope through as I climb up. If the rope is taut, then when I slip I won't really fall, I'll just hang there on the cliff until I can get footholds again. It will pull on the front of your harness, but that's why you're tied into the tree. You won't go anywhere, even though I weigh more than you."

Evie grinned, testing the rope. "Does that mean that if I let go of the rope, you'll fall and kill yourself and I'll get straight A's because you're my housemate?"

Steve grinned right back; this was a frequent joke between him and Matt. "There's a catch, though: I'll be right above you, so if I fall, you'll make a nice soft cushion for me to land on."

"Oh. In that case, I'll hold on real tight."

"I thought you'd see it my way. Now, I'll climb it a little more slowly than everyone else did. Watch where I put my hands and feet." Steve took his time, moving slowly and surely up the rock. Unfortunately, he was wearing shorts, and Evie kept catching herself looking at his leg muscles rather than at his foot placement. But he certainly did make the climb look easy.

When he reached the top of the cliff, he quickly untied himself and walked back down the path.

"Your turn now!" He tossed the end of the rope to her. "If you don't agree, I won't untie you from the tree!"

Evie hesitated. This was just the sort of activity that aggravated her knees most, but she'd decided that following to the doctors' advice hadn't helped anyway. Her knees felt much better after basking in the sun on top of the cliff, and besides...if she chickened out now, they might not give her another chance. "You guys would never let me hear the end of this if I don't try, right?"

"You got it."

"Well...I'll try. Can you lower me back down to the ground if I get stuck?"

"Sure, no problem. Come on, you'll be all right."

Steve showed her how to tie into the end of the rope all too soon, and there was nothing left to do but face that wall. The rock was cold. On top of the cliff, the sun had warmed the rock, but not here. It was rough to the touch, which made it easier to climb, although it scraped her hands. She was no mineralogist; it looked sort of like granite. The first step was easy: a ledge just at knee height above the ground, wide enough for her whole shoe. Above that was another ledge, this one narrower and sloping. Good thing the stone was rough -- friction was a wonderful thing. With each step, the footholds seemed to shrink and slope ever more. Handholds were reduced to small cracks in the rock face. She hardly dared breathe, afraid it would be enough to shift her weight and send her crashing down...

Steve interrupted her thoughts. "Why don't you practice falling?"

"What?" she yelped. "You want me to get *good* at it or something? I have enough problems without falling, for crying out loud!"

"No, no, I mean it. The idea that it's okay to fall takes some getting used to. You're getting really nervous up there, and there's really no need to be. Go ahead, you could let go with both hands and feet if you wanted to. Just try, say, sitting down in your harness."

Gingerly, slowly, Evie shifted her handholds to ones she found near waist level, then...sat. Or tried to. The rope did stretch a bit, but only a few inches. Now it was like rappelling down the wall of the Union, except that this time, she wasn't even going down

the rope. That hadn't bothered her at all. But still, she felt a lot more comfortable with hands and feet firmly gripping outcroppings of rock. She stood back up again, balancing carefully on three limbs to reach for new hand- and footholds higher up. Maybe falling didn't really mean falling very far, but she would definitely rather not practice any more.

She didn't look down; her eyes were constantly searching above her for new holds. Below her, with a better "wide-angle" view, Steve called up suggestions of where to move next. Faintly, she could hear other voices. Some of the other climbers had finished the other climb, and returned to watch her attempt. What they were saying astonished her.

"Say, she's not bad. She knows to use her weight to push her feet into the wall."

"Further to the right, Evie. There's a nice ledge you can use for the next step."

"Is this only her first time?"

"You can do it, Evie. You're already most of the way there."

Their voices began to fade again, drowned out by her own muttering. Her muscles were rapidly tiring; her hands shook when she let go of the rock. One of her feet slipped, and her knee struck a corner. She whimpered, then focused on the corner she'd hit. It was the right height...carefully, she freed one hand, and used it to pick up her leg and place the foot on the outcropping. If her knee would just hold for another minute or two, she could reach the top. Her foot was in place. She reached up with the free hand, to find only empty space and smooth rock. The top of the cliff was flat!

There was a voice just above her head. Matt was at the top, a few feet higher. "Evie, there's a crack, but you have to stretch. Two inches to the left -- now up some -- it's a big one, enough for you to get a good handhold. Stretch -- a little more -- you got it! Now pull!"

She pulled. She, who had never been able to do a pullup in gym class, pulled. Her good leg pushed, and she gritted her teeth and made her sore knee push, too. Then she was over the edge, lying on the flat slab that was the top of the cliff, in the sun again. The view from the top was even better than it had been an hour earlier.

S.O.L.O.

16 HOUR WILDERNESS EMERGENCY MEDICAL COURSE

Since 1975 SOLO's 16 hour Wilderness Emergency Medical Course has been regarded as one of the most comprehensive backcountry first aid courses in the nation.

SOLO is the favored leadership requirement amongst college outing clubs in the northeast.

*
* RENSSELAER OUTING CLUB IS PROUD TO SPONSER
* SOLO ON CAMPUS
*
* SATURDAY AND SUNDAY
* OCTOBER 21 & OCTOBER 22, 1989
* 8 AM - 5 PM
*

REQUIRED FOR ROC LEADERSHIP

** minimum prerequisite: American Red Cross Standard First Aid **

for more information or to register
come to ROC meetings
Tuesdays at 7:00 PM
CC 330
or call Kim Roffman at 272-6245

* REGISTRATION * REGISTRATION * REGISTRATION * REGISTRATION *

Table with columns: name, address, phone, most advanced/current first aid certification, exp. date. Rows include ROC PATCH MEMBERS, STUDENTS, and ALL OTHERS with associated costs.

make checks payable to Rensselaer Outing Club

STANDARD FIRST AID AND ADULT CPR

* required for ROC leadership *
* minimum requirement for participation in SOLO *

A NEWLY REVISED AMERICAN RED CROSS COURSE

- * rescue breathing
* choking procedures
* heart attack
* CPR
* bleeding and shock
* burns
* fractures and dislocations
* sprains and strains
* stroke
* seizures
* poisoning
* diabetic emergencies
* hypothermia
* heat emergencies
* eye and nose injuries
* bites and stings
* rescues

Registration and payment must be received by the Tuesday prior to the beginning of class. You will be given your textbook when you register.

For information or to register come to the Rensselaer Outing Club meeting Tuesdays at 7 PM in CC 330.

Or call Kim Roffman at 272 - 6245.

REGISTRATION:

Table with columns for name, address, phone, course number, date and time, and price. Includes Course #1 (Sunday Sept 17) and Course #2 (Monday Oct 9 and Friday Oct 13).

Make checks payable to American Red Cross.