



Royal Robbins
OPED PAGE 3

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THE EGO-DRIVEN CLIMBER--AN ACCIDENT WAITING TO HAPPEN?

Looking at RCS climbing over the last 12 years, two things seem to me to have changed recently. First, the average difficulty of routes climbed by RCS'ers has increased. Second, serious accidents have increased, mainly due to leader falls. Are these two changes related? Suppose that more RCS climbers today are climbing near the limits of their current abilities, so that the "margin of error" is reduced? When I came to the RCS, most of us were climbing routes rated 5.1 to 5.5, and anyone leading 5.7 was a real "heavy" who could bask in the admiration of his (Ed. note: or her) peers at the campfire. Leader falls were rare in those days, as leaders slowly mastered the sophisticated art of creating protection systems that work, without prematurely testing them with their own falling bodies. (Lord help me if I had ever fallen on some of the pro I put in as a beginning leader!)

Why do we get into rock climbing? We want challenge, accomplishment, pleasure, camaraderie, and recognition, right? Let's look more closely at the last item, recognition. Nowadays, an RCS climber has to lead 5.10 before he's considered a "heavy." HOW HARD A CLIMB DO WE HAVE TO DO TODAY IN ORDER TO FEEL MERELY ADEQUATE AT THE CAMPFIRE? Is there a new group dynamic propelling climbers to strive for the higher "numbers" too quickly?

The best (good and safe) climbers I've met have all been willing to back off a lead with which they felt uncomfortable rather than risk a leader fall. Mike Dent, an RCS'er when I first came in (5.10 first ascents, way back then), admitted he had backed off dozens of leads, and that it didn't bother him. More recently, Neil Montgomery has astonished me with how easily he can detach his ego from his climbing. Neil seems to realize that his ability to climb difficult rock varies from day to day and simply accepts it, rather than trying to override what his body and emotions are telling him on a lead. I have seen Neil back off and recoil his rope on something he would go up easily on another day, without apology or defensiveness--it simply didn't bother him. Several years ago Emory Yount and I tried to snag Royal Robbins at an RCS picnic at Big Rock. Royal had never climbed there before, and we suggested a lead to him which we knew was insidious. The crux is about 5.9 but tricky; I've watched more leaders fall on it than on any other climb. Royal climbed up to the crux, looked at it for about a minute, then, without attempting it, downclimbed to the ground in the most elegant manner I had ever seen.

Dismayed by the number of RCS accidents, Royal Robbins wrote a letter in 1980. (The letter is reprinted on page 3 of this issue.) Royal called our accident rate at that time "unacceptable," and it has not decreased since then. I see that letter as sage advice from a true expert regarding our attitude toward climbing. I also recommend a review of the chapters on Safety and Leading in his book Advanced Rockcraft. You might also ask around, find out which climbers are considered least likely to get injured, talk to them, climb with them if you can, and observe how they operate.

I'd like to urge our newer climbers to concentrate on improving technique on routes within your ability, rather than thrashing up routes near your limits (you'll improve faster this way). When learning to lead, choose climbs that are well within your limits, so your chances of taking a leader fall are minimal. Remember, falls on rock are always the leading cause of accidents in North American mountaineering. Your primary defense against injury in climbing rock lies in not falling, rather than in your protection system. Do not equate all the falling you see on Fossil Falls top ropes with what should happen at Tahquitz, Suicide, Joshua Tree and Yosemite. Bouldering and top rope climbing are completely different games than multi-pitch lead climbing. It doesn't take a very long leader fall to break bones. Any fall on a multi-pitch climb, leading or following, injury or no, should be a bell in your ear to rethink your whole approach to climbing.

TJ

The above is the first in a series of articles to be written by RCS Safety Committee members on aspects of climbing safety.

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NEXT ISSUE: June 21, 1983

DEADLINE: Thursday, June 16

JUNE SAFETY COLUMN: Virgil Shields

MUGELNOOS MEETINGS: Third Tues. of each
month, 7:30 pm, Dept. of Water and Power
Cafeteria (Orange Rm) or Auditorium, 111
N. Hope, downtown LA. Parking free. Pro-
gram, conversation--climbers, skiers, &
guests all welcome!

C A L E N D A R

Ski Mountaineers

May 28-30 - Tioga Pass: Maloy

June 4-5 - Rock Creek: Crandall

Rock Climbing Section

May 21-22 - Needles trip cancelled due to
snow. Call Margo Koss to find out where
the trip will go (Suicide or Tahquitz).

May 28-30 - Yosemite Valley: Puss & Houpt

June 4-6 - Domelands: Vernon & Jeter

June 11-12 - Tahquitz: Russ & Harris

June 18-19 - Suicide: Lindgren &
McPherson

June 21 - Mugelnoos Meeting

SMS MEMORIAL DAY SKI TOURS

Send sases to Owen Maloy, or call (714)
551-5495. We are not full as of May 5.
We do not yet know whether we will be
able to ski the Tioga Pass area and Mt.
Dana--the road may not open in time. But
there are many other things to do. OM

WANTED: Companion for run of the Silver
Moccasin Trail across the San Gabriel
Mountains from Vincent Gap to Altadena
in early June. Approx. 40 mi., 6000 ft.
elev. gain. Virgil, (213) 798-9621 eves.

RCS & SMS HONORARY MEMBERS: The Mugelnoos
goes free of charge to Honorary members--
you need not send a check to Dove.

GERMAN CLIMBING EXCHANGE

Places are still open for young climbers
(21-24) to go to Europe, returning the
exchange that began last summer (see last
issue of Mugelnoos). Contact Andy Fried.

RCS NOTES

Carpooling: When you have people carpool-
ing with you, provide each with a key.

Campsites: The leader and assistant on
each RCS trip are guaranteed a parking
space. On trips where RCS pays for camp-
sites, participants owe \$2 apiece for the
trip (regardless of how many nights they
stay, unless they stay over none), \$3
for climbers with families or friends
camping with them. VS

RCS NOTES

Yosemite, May 28-30: (1) No campsites
are available. (2) Meeting time on 5/28
is 8am in Curry Village cafeteria.
(3) New proficiency rating holders must
contact the Asst. Leader, LeRoy Russ,
for permission to attend the trip. This
requirement includes 1982-83 students.

Trip Leaders: If an individual is not on
the membership list or proficiency list,
do not allow them to climb with the RCS
unless a member takes responsibility for
the climber as his or her guest. LR

Multi-pitch Climbing Techniques Teaching:
Leaders, please pass out the sheets of
suggestions for teaching new climbers
about multi-pitch techniques. Rope
leaders, please actively teach. LR

Proficiency Rating Requirements: To
keep proficiency rating, maintain Sierra
Club membership and Mugelnoos subscrip-
tion, and participate in 4 climbs per
year. (Practice climbs and Fossil Falls
do not count toward the 4 climbs.) LR

Safety Committee: The following RCS
leaders have generously consented to
serve on the Section's Safety Committee:
Leonard Bayless Richard Mundwiler
Kathy Crandall Maris Valkass
Jim Erb John Peters
Andy Fried Don Pies
Larry Tidball Virgil Shields
Paul Harris Fred Wing
Tom Jeter LeRoy Russ, Chair
Andre Korbut-Weberg LR

Safety Climb: Proficiency ratees who are
interested in taking their safety climb
for membership should contact one of the
above Safety Committee members for a
mutually arranged time and climb. LR

SMS PATCHES

The Ski Mountaineers patches have finally
arrived, after more than a year's wait.
This is one of the most beautiful of all
Sierra Club patches, showing a corniced
peak in blue, white and gold, with a ski
track running down it. The original
design was done by Sierra Club artist
and SMS charter member Leland Curtis in
1935. On the new patch, the ski track
emerges from the woods in the foreground,
as it does on the SMS Section seal but
not the badges--showing that the skier
survived.

You can have one or more of these beau-
ties by sending a sase and \$2 for each
patch to Owen Maloy, 4591 Green Tree Ln.,
Irvine CA 92715. Make checks payable to
Ski Mountaineers Section, Sierra Club.
The new SMS treasurer will presumably
take over these sales after we know
which member of the new Central Committee
has lost the competition for the office. OM

RCS RUNNERS

Anyone is welcome to join the morning or
evening runs on trips. We run for fun
and go at the pace of the slowest.
(Susan and I promise to cut the mileage
back from 20 to 6 or less after our
marathon.) MK

A LEADER MUST NOT FALL

Royal Robbins

Reprint of letter from Royal Robbins printed in the September 16, 1980, Mugelnoos.

It is always a pleasure to read the monthly issue of my beloved Mugelnoos. A seemingly frail reed, this little newspaper has weathered the vagaries of time better than many apparently sturdy trees (e.g., Life, The Saturday Evening Post, Colliers, Harpers). I was, however, shocked while reading the last issue to discover that so many of my fellow members of the RCS are getting themselves hurt. What's going on here? This is unacceptable. There shouldn't be any accidents. Yet this one issue chronicles five. It all argues a certain laxness, a lack of mental rigor-ousness, a want of relentless common sense. For these are the tools that insure a climbing holiday unmarred by mishaps.

I note that in the same issue Kent Withers avers his "faith in the system, the belayer, anchor, rope, etc.," because he took a leader fall and didn't get hurt. Thank God for that, and Kent is right to thank the RCS leaders for showing him the ropes. Only, the tone bothers me. Faith in the system or one's equipment is more likely to lead to danger than lack of faith. I say be suspicious, be critical, and keep your guard up. It is pretty unusual for me to preach about safety (as opposed to style and ethics), but I can't remain silent when members of my club are decimating themselves.

So, Wake Up, RCS'ers. Rockclimbing and the sort of mountaineering involved in the accidents mentioned should be safe activities. The phrase "an almost accident-free weekend was enjoyed..." leads me to worry that accidents are becoming almost routine, and accepted as a normal part of climbing. Allow me to repeat myself: there should be no accidents. You should go into the field with that in mind and make sure you don't have any. It's not your equipment, and it's not your training, and it's not chance. If you get hurt you have only yourself to blame.

When we step from a curb into the street we know we must look both ways. Every step in the mountains is like that step into the street. If we become mentally lazy while strolling across town and step off one curb without looking we have sinned against prudence. In the city that's unwise. And in the mountains too. So, in so far as I like my fellow club members to be whole and healthy, please resolve that "My fate is in my own hands, and as a favor to all of my fellow club members who want me to remain whole and healthy, I hereby resolve to stay that way." RR

AND SNOW IT GOES--THE ENDLESS WINTER, 1983

I was heartened to read in the last Mugelnoos that even the RCS has had its share of weather on trips, but good grief, for skiers and the SMS, WHAT a winter! When is it going to all end? Every time I go to Mammoth, the door to the lodge moves up a floor. Is it spring? Fishing season is starting and Crowley Lake is still covered with ice, it seems to snow every other day, and the backcountry is still in winter's grip. Where's all that April and May corn snow? You want to know how much snow there is? Mammoth is going to stay open until July 17th! Now that's a lot of snow. I wasn't joking when I asked for summer ski touring trips. Hopefully, the front doors will be visible by then.

Even with all the stormy weather, the SMS and its members have been out in the thick of it, and sometimes there were pleasant surprises. For example:

Saturday, March 12, I was checking out the Mt. Waterman area for the Mountaineering Committee's XC downhill training session on Sunday, and after leaving cloud-covered lowlands, I found bright sunshine and perfect corn snow, covering even the summit boulders. I skied the south slope almost to the Twin Peaks saddle and the East Ridge back down. Of course it snowed the next day.

Easter Weekend, April 2-3, Larry Bigler and I hiked and skied our way up Mt. Baldy in bright sun (boy did our faces get cooked). We skied from the summit down below West Baldy, and then back up and down into the bowl via the east slopes. The snow was great until we entered the bowl, then the bottom dropped out--deep mushy pple sauce; we actually got some surface slides going. After changing to a mushy powder technique, we skied on down half of the trail.

On Sunday we met at 8 am at the tramway. Battling high winds, we all trickled in wondering why we were there--Crandall and Harris from Joshua Tree with scarred hands, P. & G. Holleman, B. & G. Kluwin, L. Bigler, M. Coebel. This was one of those surprise days. We got the Easter discount on the tram, the wind didn't blow in the trees, and we found good snow all the way to the summit (almost). Then most of us let our guard down and delayed the descent for lunch. I knew it, the clouds rolled in and the snow froze right up. We made it down, slightly jarred, and retired to the San Gorgonio Inn for some Dago wine with Easter supper (the second high point of the day).

April 9-10, base camp was established at Owen's condo, from which we set forth to the slopes of Morrison Canyon, just up the hill from Convict Lake. Participants included the leaders, and L. Bigler, Steve Hansen, Ralph (Tahoe) Johnson, June Lane, Cathy (Telemark) Johnson, Paul Kenworthy, and Greg Fisher. We skinned up from the lake with continuing wind blasts. Heli skiers' tracks were noted in the canyon (\$25 per run). At canyon's end we lunched, practiced with the beepers, and then started a crusty survival run down. Just when all seemed lost, one of those pleasant surprises came along, and it was figure eight time, and good enough for a repeat.

(continued on page four)

AND SNOW IT GOES (continued from page three)

Conditions remained excellent to the car. Back in camp, Chef Lane prepared an abundant feast which was appropriately devoured.

Sunday it was snowing again. Some went racing, some remained in camp, and the rest explored the Sherwin Bowl, located south of Old Mammoth Road. Away from Mammoth, the sun was out and we discovered a lovely area which ascends in a series of steps to a distant ridge. Upon reaching the crustline and snowing line, we descended with lots of turns and promises for a return visit.

April 16-17, San Geronio--sometimes it's best not to listen to Dr. George. Saturday was perfect. Present were Jackie Van Dalsem, Mark Goebel, the Kluwins, Jacques the Frenchman, Larry B., Bugaboo Bob, and Kathy J. It was 3 hours into Dry Lake and then on to Grinnell Mountain. On the way down, everyone died and went to heaven. The snow was that good! At the bottom, 4 pm and they were beginning to go up again. TURN, TURN, TURN.

On Sunday the wind was blowing up high, but before the next front arrived, we carved up Charlton Peak and the Little Draw. Snow was up even with many of the ski trail signs, and Christmas Tree Hill, trees covered, looked like Mammoth's Broadway. The rain began following dinner in Redlands, and our tracks were soon only a memory. And snow it goes . . .

MG

ON STYLE IN FALLING

Since we have concerned ourselves with proper spelling and grammar in past correspondence to the Mugelnoos, we do not consider it entirely inappropriate to deal with other matters of style in climbing. We're not talking here about the use of knees, which seems to be such a needless preoccupation among beginners. No, we're talking about The Fall.

It has come to our attention that the RCS safety record has taken--you will pardon the expression--a bit of a dive in the past year, and it has been suggested that the reason is that members are attempting more and more difficult projects. We have cause to suspect that this has been partly in response to concern about Section Image propounded by a certain Hollywoodish climber-member who has been known to hang out at casting sessions for mountaineering movies. It also, no doubt, has been spurred by the widely quoted epithet delivered by a teenage hardboy at Stoney Point, who advised a more mature climber, "Oh, you should climb with the Sierra Club--lotsa old people climb with them."

So, with bruised egos, RCS'ers are undertaking more and more difficulties, resulting in bruised elsewhere. During the height of last year's climbing season, Mugelnoos meetings resembled the waiting room of one of our more prosperous Beverly Hills orthopedists. There has been some interest in creating a socks-and-shoes pool for those with left- or right-debilitated ankles, and we're waiting for used crutches to show up in Mugelnoos want ads. Don't be shy, folks.

But, The Fall. We recently climbed with an able member who has generously bribed us to keep same anonymous. Coming off a tricky crux at Joshua Tree, this member emitted a short squeal of surprise, then quickly descended 30 feet of monzonite face in a very businesslike manner before the protection system tightened up. The climber came away with fewer scratches than one gets from a good jamcrack, and had there not been a number of campers in the vicinity, the feat, one of the highlights of rockclimbing, would have gone unnoticed.

Now, to critique this performance, we must first say that The Scream is the most important part of The Fall. The climber who merely expresses surprise and then selfishly looks out for his or her own physical well-being is depriving the belayer of considerable excitement, not to mention other bystanders, and, beyond them, the mothers and future grandchildren who seem to be the most-intended recipients of climbing yarns. No, a good fall needs to have a good scream, preferably for the entire length of the descent, only to be cut short by the thud and clank which marks the end of the performance.

It also helps to jangle the rack properly, during a leader fall. I have been told by fall aficionados that the sound of a freely descending climbing rack is one of the most aesthetic aspects of the fall experience.

Also, to make The Fall truly satisfying, some injury ought at least to be feigned. Better the climber who pretends to have sprained a wrist and goes on to finish the pitch than the one who announces cheerily, "I'm okay!" within earshot of non-section members. This is terrible for Image.

Perhaps the Safety Committee could include a station for Fall Fashion at the next training session, beginning with top-roped falls and working into full leader falls of 20, 30 and 40 feet. We also might ask a swimming coach to speak on the technique for a Swan Fall, a 1½ Forward Somersault Fall, the Double Back Flip Fall, and so on.

UG

FROM PEAR LAKE TO BALDY HUT, APRIL 23-24

This was not a good year for Pear Lake. Avalanche danger cancelled our February trip. Unconsolidated heavy snow, a pending storm, and the prospect of huddling together in tents for three days, as Mark Goebel outlined the scenario, convinced me to change the April tour to Baldy Hut.

We left L.A. Saturday morning amid threatening clouds. Fortunately they hung low. The mountain tops were clear and sunny.

Chuck Wilts and Steve Wilkie were eagerly waiting for us at the Falls Road turnoff as Mark Goebel, Paul Harris, Pete Matulavich and I pulled up. Pat and Gerry Holleman were close behind.

Intermittent patches of snow covered the road, but the trail was fully covered. We took to the slopes after opening the hut and grabbing a bite to eat.

Upon crossing the stream, we heard a low whooshing sound. A skier was high above us, trying to ride out a slow-moving avalanche. We all stood there mesmerized by the scene, watching the avalanche grind its way down to within inches of our feet, plunging into the stream. We continued.

Mark crossed a high-angle slope, heard a whomp, and unwillingly joined the slope in a short slide down the mountain before it settled. We all froze. Mark headed for a tree and took off his skis. The rest of us joined him.

We found safer slopes and skied all afternoon long in good corn snow. Pat and Gerry Holleman toured up to the ridge and found it icy. That night, two figures loomed out of the misty dark. Tony Bird and Ron Hudson joined us for dinner and a night's rest.

The wind howled all night and we woke up Sunday in a white-out. Ron took off early to explore the Pine-Dawson route. Tony took off to attend meetings in town, and the rest of us stayed around for a leisurely breakfast, periodically checking for a break in the weather.

Chuck saw a ray of light and convinced us that the sun would soon dominate. We all raced up the slope only to be defeated by a front of rising clouds from the valley below. We got in one long run on surprisingly good snow. Others played it avalanche-safe and continued skiing on lower-angle slopes only to be pelted by rocks. On the trail out, these silent missiles continued careening down on all sides; Mark and Chuck skied most of the way out in a race with the rocks. JVD

RECORD SNOWPACK: GOOD FOR SPRING SKIERS AND SEAGULLS

The L.A. Department of Water and Power has announced that in the Eastern Sierra watershed runoff from the snowpack will be the second highest on record. Snow near Mammoth is as deep as 18 feet, and Cottonwood Basin near Whitney has about 7 feet. The amount of snowfall at Donner Summit this year exceeded the previous record there. As a result, not only will there be late spring skiing, but the DWP promises to give some of the surplus runoff to Mono Lake, raising it several feet higher for the seagulls. BL

BIG WALL WORKSHOP RECAP

Twenty-nine climbers assembled at Stoney Pt. on April 9 for the second RCS-sponsored Big Wall Workshop. The leaders, Pies and Shields, discussed and demonstrated the wide variety of techniques necessary to tackle multi-day outings in vertical environments. Emphasis was placed on efficient equipment handling without comprising safety.

The session concluded with the dangling duo synthesizing a climb to display these techniques. The route was contrived by the twisted mind of Pies with the intention of concentrating a variety of direct aid difficulties into only one and one half pitches of climbing. For those who wish to rack up some time in direct aid slings, the route is described below (sorry, it is not on any Sierra Club list).

A previously established bolt ladder route is located on the front headwall of Stoney Pt. Ascend a slightly bulging crack found 20 feet to the right on chocks. A crack-'n-up placement and a free move will get you within reach of a series of shaky bolts. Continue up and left (one sky hook move) and pendulum off the double bolts over to the bolt ladder route. Set up a hanging belay halfway up the face on the three 3/8-inch bolts. Cleaning the pitch is also demanding since the rope runs downward and diagonal from the pendulum point to the bolt ladder. A short second pitch brings you to the top. Rating is A2 or A3 depending on how mushy you find the sandstone from the last rain. A top rope belay is recommended for both climbers. DP

(Ed. note: Mike Mulry and others who attended requested that the editor print their thanks to Don and Virgil for putting on the workshop; editor knows of at least three RCS'ers who hope to begin big wall climbing this year and will use what they learned)

BIG ROCK, APRIL 23

A beautiful day, a beautiful rock and a great day for climbing! Twenty people came to test their skill on the rock. As usual, the Trough, African Flake and Nedunit were conquered. Those who looked for greater challenges climbed the Hard Trough, the Left and Right Flake, Boogaloo, Let It Bleed, Rat Crack, Northwest Passage, Headwall, Mindbender, Pudnurdle and many more. At 4:25 pm we called it not just a day, but a very good day. Everything went well, and even the unwanted presence of a rattlesnake in the bushes did not dampen our spirit. We all went our own ways.

HL

TAHQUITZ JOSHUA TREE, APRIL 30-MAY 1

Being fair-weather climbers, the leaders limited the climbing at Tahquitz to the steps of Jan's, and moved the trip to Joshua Tree. Tahquitz is beautiful all plastered with new snow, but for climbing sunshine--even with a bit of wind--beats sleet by quite a lot. Thirty-one RCS climbers joined at Intersection Rock (some sooner, some later--see below), then scattered to Walk on the Wild Side, put one in the Eye of the Cyclops, corner the Southeast Corner (it almost cornered them), Bypass the Overhang, and otherwise desport themselves on the rocks. Having conquered the corner, Chuck Lahmeyer celebrated by juggling in the same high style he showed while juggling in the middle of the Tyrolean Traverse at Fossil Falls.

Sunday Chuck flew up Bat Crack, while others occupied themselves with Turtles, Blobs, Old Women, and Echoes, among other phenomena. LeRoy began his penance--hey, wait a minute, penances aren't supposed to be fun--by leading Carolyn and Bonner (not astray this time). Judging by all the exclamations on the route sheets (Great! Classic!) the weekend's climbing was tops. Meanwhile Susan McDonough lured the leader into joining her on a lovely 18-mile desert run. Trips that start with bad weather should always end so well!

MK

ODYSSEY

If tenacity is the only quality needed for rock climbing, the trio of Bonner, Carolyn, and Ruth is destined to the hall of fame of rock climbing.

Armed with 1½ dozen Mrs. Fields cookies (priorities, folks, priorities), new carabiners, and rope, the three new proficiency card holders started off for Tahquitz at 7 pm on Friday. With the aid of a xeroxed map they headed for camp at Idyllwild, planning to get up Saturday morning for a warm, challenging day of rock climbing. Such were the best-laid plans of this trio.

Arriving at Idyllwild at 11 pm (obviously, there were a few stops between 7 and 11, but where??) they were buffeted with hail. In the spirit of true adventurers they quickly modified their plans and checked into a motel (so much for camping). The next morning, discovering that it had snowed during the night, the three met the trip leader, Margo Koss, and other similarly victimized rock climbers at Jan's for breakfast. Margo decided to relocate the trip to Joshua Tree. LeRoy Russ, making a seemingly innocent (???) miscalculation of 971 palm trees, directed the trio to 1000 Palms instead of 29 Palms. (Clearly, the three had missed that part of the RCS class which would have told them to multiply any directions from LeRoy by 34.4828.)

On the ill-fated way to 1000 Palms, windshield wipers failed (no problem, they could peer through the snow and rain), signal lights failed (no problem, they knew hand signals), engine faltered and made strange noises (problem). Still they persisted in circling 1000 Palms (counting each of those 1000 palms, mind you).

Well after seeing the 999th palm the three came to the unanimous decision that LeRoy Russ had clearly given us a bum steer. Eventually recovering from the incredible navigational error the trio met the RCS at 1 pm Saturday--18 hours after leaving L.A. (who said Tahquitz was close????).

After some fun climbing, with broken windshield wipers, manual turn signals, and strange engine noises the happy climbers headed back to L.A. True to form it rained. Nonetheless, they made it.

MORAL: Rock climbing may be difficult but sometimes getting to the rock and back is more difficult.

MATH

LESSON: Attention LeROY--1000 Palms is 971 palms more than 29 Palms.

NOTE: LeRoy Russ, you owe us one!!!!

CK

. . . AND A SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Over 70% of RCS members responded to a recent survey on risk-taking (the researcher thanks you) (Ed. note: Will the researcher tell us his secret so that we can get a quorum for the Annual Business Meeting?). A group of non-climbers also was surveyed.

The survey sought evidence as to whether there are differences between RCS members and non-climbers in (1) how they are motivated to take risks, (2) how they evaluate risky activities as to their degree of risk, and (3) their actual risky activities.

The results: (1) There is little difference in how RCS members and non-rock climbers are motivated to take risks. Both groups expressed equal motivation to "avoid personal harm" and to "take risks."

(2) A number of activities were rated as to their riskiness. While the risk levels of the individual activities differed (rock climbing was considered more risky than violating minor laws), climbers' and non-climbers' ratings of the various activities were similar. Rock climbing was considered equally risky by RCS members and non-rock climbers.

(3) Finally, the actual risky activities of the two groups differed. The majority of RCS members specified rock climbing or mountain climbing as their first or second most risky behavior. Non-rock climbers specified speeding and drinking and driving as their most risky behaviors. The activities performed by each group were considered high risk by the other group. Non-rock climbers considered rock climbing and mountain climbing as high risk, while RCS members considered speeding and drinking and driving as high risk.

JA

EXPOSURE

As we entered the dimly-lit dive in West Hollywood, the driving rhythm of high-decibel, low-frequency amplified sound vibrated every bone in our bodies. The doorman-'rent-a-cop', belly protruding over his pistol belt, eyed us suspiciously as we entered. Around the edges of the cavernous building, young scantily clad women pranced about collecting fistfulls of dollar bills in return for erotic kisses to the customers.

We were: Alois Smrz, Mark Cole, LeRoy Russ, Fred Wing, Tom Jeter and Andy Fried. The occasion: Andy's final bachelor "night on the town" just prior to his marriage to lovely Diann Gill on February 26. This was the symbolic last night of debauchery at the Tropicana--female mud wrestlers, hot oil wrestling, and wet t-shirt contests. Among the other low points of the evening were the beer and wine, which were undrinkable (although we managed it). (Ed. note: The other low points are censored.) Pictures of the parts the Editor will censor are available--see me.

P.S. I wonder if we couldn't have this sort of entertainment around an RCS campfire some summer night?

TJ

(Ed. note: You first, Tom--Ladies Night at the campfire?)

CUNO SIGNS IN!

The northern escarpment of Owens Ridge has been aptly described by one RCS member as comparable to three or four Tahquitz Rocks adjacent to one another. Even so, rumors continue to abound telling of harrowing approaches and deteriorated rock in "Virgil's new playground." These rumors are all in error. Contrary to what might be expected, the rock is solid granite that is probably no more loose or friable than Tahquitz was initially, and as Tahquitz was, there are numerous cracks and faces which have not even been approached on a facade with the potential of providing 8+-pitch routes. It is therefore disappointing that few RCS members attend outings which have been arranged to this area in the southeastern Sierra. By far the best approach is from the north. Although this is private Indian land, we have struck up a friendship with the owner, who has pipes tapping springs for year-round water on his ranch.

On April 16, nine climbers signed in at the Grapevine Ranch below the ridge. This group included three RCS members and six guests, five of whom were hard-core SPS members, who were "known to tremble and quake at the sight of 3rd-class rock." This group included the unlikely person of Cuno Ranschau, who during the wee hours of the Saturday-night festivities proved that he could ably aid in reviving the spirit of carousing in the RCS. During that day Tony Bird, Phil Rabichow, and Virgil Shields succeeded in putting up several pitches out of a 7-pitch, 5.9, A2 route on the unvisited Rock III. They retreated back to camp by the light of the moon and headlamps, leaving behind a fixed wired hex at the start of the aid section.

The next and last day of the climb saw 10 climbers sign in, to venture out and participate in various first ascents throughout the formation. All who participated felt the area was worth many trips in the future.

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