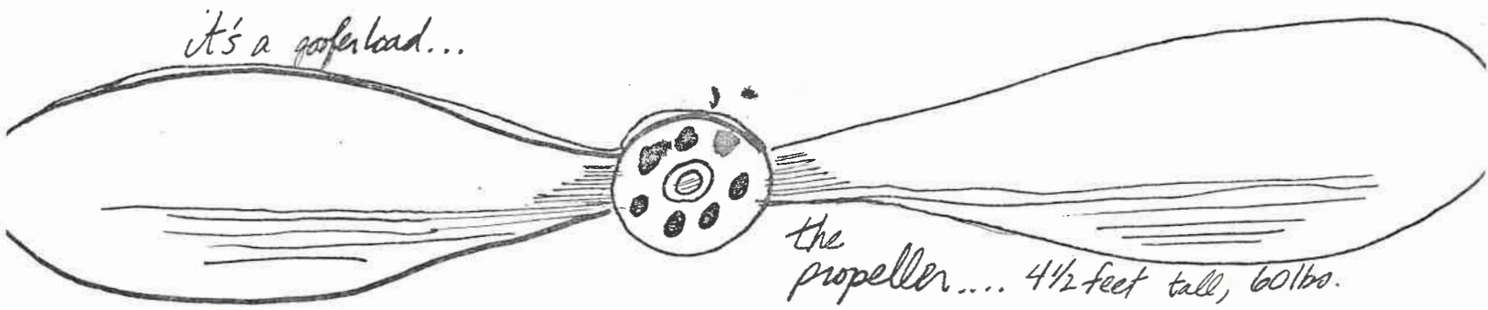
Among the Clouds

Published on Saturdays at Porky Gulch - 2032 Feet Above the Sea

Vol I, No. 4 July 10, 1982 FREE



Prop-er Treatment

AN INCOMPLETE BALLAD OF THE OAKES PROP.

This summer season has seen the return of green leaves, potentilla, ground turkey, Bill Blaiklock's seven-layer casserole (burger, bacon, rice, burger, rice, burger, bacon), and the Oakes Gulf Propellor. Due to technicalities beyond my control, it has also seen the disappearance of that very same metallic blade. While some of us are waiting for the prop to find its way back to visibility I thought I'd fill the gap with a short yet relentlessly boring saga of the prop's travels since the summer of 1977. My knowledge of its history between the airplane crash of the 1969 winter (the plane evidently full of paratroopers dressed as Santas for a post-Thanksgiving shopping daze publicity stunt) and 1977 is at best spotty so I will ignore that time completely.

In late June of 1977, in retaliation for a particularly embarrassing raid, in which Mizpah Hutch Bill Blais woke one morn to find "TUNDRA" indelibly stamped onto his body, the prop was violently absconded by a large daytime force. The group included an M. Torrey, then just a visiting nomad, and intimately involved at later dates. This event left Lakes assistant "Bear" Johnson tied and taped in the dry goat, the soup burning and the blade at the Pah. In a move very appropriate to this tale, the Pah crew that fall "stored" it deep in the bowels of

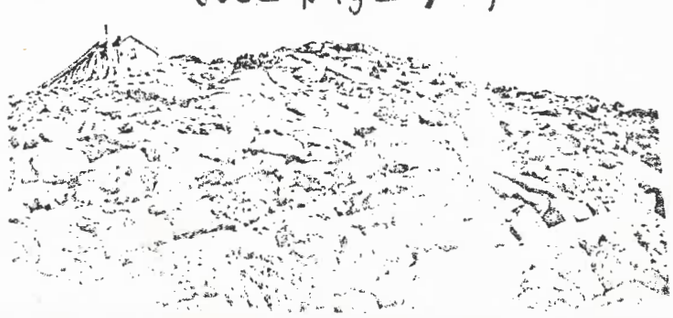
(cont. on page 4)

THE FIRST SUMMIT IN THE VALLEY

Wednesday, July 5th dawned warm and clear across the White Mountains and representatives from the huts donned their bronzing lotion and mirror shades in anticipation of the first System-wide Raiding Summit Meeting. The last conference of this sort was reputed to have been held on the summit of Mt. Eisenhower in 1974, with folks from the Pah and Lakes providing tables and benches. This year, however, in a move to merge tradition with the times, the plan was to mass at the Mt. Eisenhower Wayside Picnic Area, just a few miles north of Crawford's on route 302. The Western Hut Association Buss (Buck Blaiklock, Chauffeur) swept the western trailheads and then stopped at the Cog Base Station for delicious tube steaks, coal-dust induced lung cancer, and to pick up the Lakes delegate.

After arriving at the picnic area and finding only the flag waving, the bus headed to Crawford's, occasionally reputed to be the "Switzerland" of North Country facilities. While refreshments were passed out the first counsel decision was reached; to send out for pizza from the Pub in Twin Mtn. This motion was promptly seconded and carried. Other delegates soon roared in and found their places around the Summit Meeting Room table area, formerly known as the Crawford Hostel Dining Room. When all were seated the stats looked as such: Sue Hall and John Dunn,

(see page 7)



EDITORIAL

One of the advantages of living in Randolph and working for the hut system is the many ways one can wander up to Madison for parties, official visits, and lunar eclipses, the variety of trails one can take home or to Pinkham, and the plethora of green places, in between and out around, that only the most intimate of mountain people get to visit. Randolph is the center of some of the most beautiful places, year-round, and to be able to pass through them as a vocation is the greatest reason for working here.

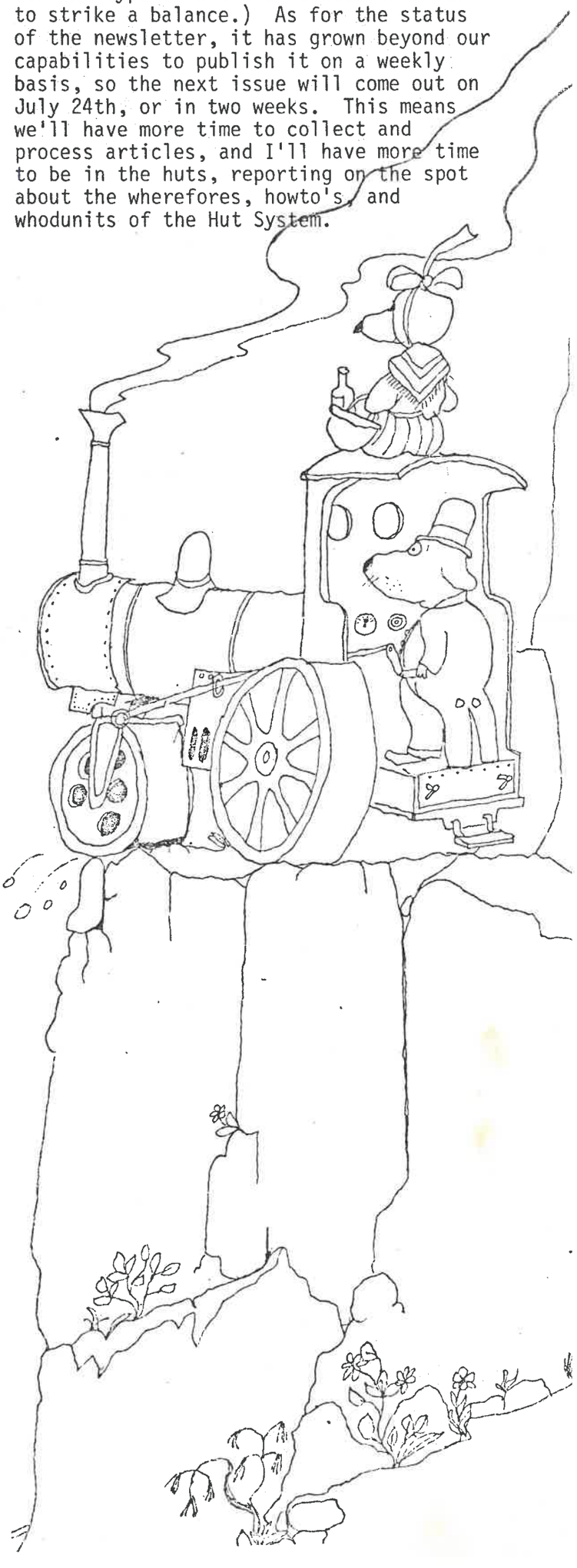
One of these special places is Bumpus Brook, which parallels the Hawker Ridge Trail for about a mile and then climbs to the Ridge above Bumpus Basin. From Route 2, Bumpus Basin resembles a smooth shadowy bowl, and from the looks of the lower reaches of the Brook, must bear some fascinating sights up above. Like any other brook at the lower elevations, it changes about a half mile in and becomes a deep chasm cut by centuries of water. The walls stand 60 feet high, fractured rock tumbling and crumbling in places, looking like the slightest agitation will bring them down. There are no fish in any of the deep, seemingly trout filled pools that are in abundance, however, and the fishing was better off put aside in favor of two armed scrambles. I will find some time, maybe this fall, to find out how big the trees in Bumpus Basin really are.

After Madison, I had a couple days off in Post Mills, VT., where schizophrenia reigns (another story) and here I sit, editing. To those of you interested in the plight of the newsletter, a status report seems vital. After three healthy issues, I am finding some hotbeds of activity, some critical areas in need of diplomatic summitry, and the usual rampant craziness engendered when "Kooky, zany college kids go WILD in the mountains". I can see a need for a place to "let is all loose", and the newsletter is obviously that. It is also a communication tool, something we can make or break, and the challenge remains to communicate new ideas, ongoing issues, important dates, as well as experiences, history, and the most common humorous event. We're getting feedback saying the original purpose is being lost. That's not necessarily bad, but there are other directions to take this. For example, during Gala, each hut said they would have a program every night. Take time to jot those new program ideas down, and share them with everyone. We've created this ↗

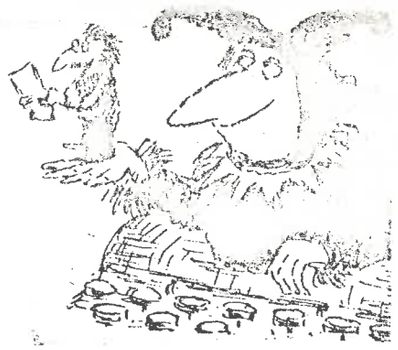
Conservation. Dick Doucette of the Joy Street Conservation Department, an intern from Northeastern, will be coming through the huts during the next two weeks, carry with him acid rain test kits for you acidophobes to play with. He should be treated like a naturalist, and will be available to do evening programs. Also, a direct quote from Bonnie Christie, "I'll be through all the huts by the end of July".

monster so we can shape, develop, and change it. It can only get better. Enough pep talk.

Hopefully, the next issue will feature articles from our researchers on their various projects; a history of the Trails Booster Program; and a great deal more staff input (I've been promised some "news". This should help give crews ideas for the type of article we need in order to strike a balance.) As for the status of the newsletter, it has grown beyond our capabilities to publish it on a weekly basis, so the next issue will come out on July 24th, or in two weeks. This means we'll have more time to collect and process articles, and I'll have more time to be in the huts, reporting on the spot about the wherefores, howto's, and whodunits of the Hut System.



Letters to the Editors... (and others)



POINT:

Crawford's
July 6, 1982

Fellow Croo members,

It is with heavy heart that I write these words. Today I was told by my able assistant, G. Jeffrey Worst, that he had participated in a raid on the Lakes of the Clouds Hut with two members of the Madison Croo on Monday, July 5, during which raid he absconded with that raid item known as "the leg".

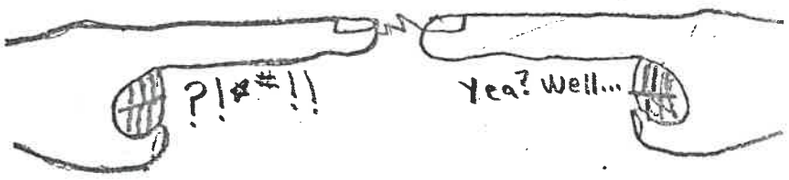
Mr. Worst's action came as a shock and an embarrassment to me. In prior discussions with him, he had indicated that he, as I, prefers racking to raiding, and it seemed to me that he endorsed the stated neutrality of Crawford's. Doubled, then, was my shame when, on the same day - perhaps at the same moment - that Crawford's was announced as the Switzerland of the AMC facility system, our neutrality was violated by one of our own.

Greater still was my shame when I realized that this heinous collaboration of my assistant with the Madison Croo occurred on his daze off. While the ultimate rule of raiding may be, indeed, that there are no rules, one of the most generally agreed upon points of raiding etiquette is that there is no raiding on daze off. Mr. Worst, new to the facility system, (even though a veteran AMC employee), claims that he was unaware of this basic, yet tacit agreement of raiders; perhaps, then, he may be excused from this gross breach of courtesy, and perhaps, too, the onus for this sin should fall on the shoulders of his fellow perpetrators, who lack such an excuse of ignorance.

I have spoken with Mr. Worst, and attempted to educate him in the ways of raiding, an attempt which the Madison Croo, evidently, did not undertake. I have stressed to him the importance to facility peace of Crawford's neutrality. In order to make amends to the Lakes, and to the rest of the facility system, he has agreed that, if in similar circumstances at Lakes, he will assist in a like raid at Madison, and thus endeavor to maintain Crawford's balance in the raiding scheme.

Again, I offer my most humble apologies to the Lakes croo, and indeed to all croos, for this severe breach of etiquette.

Sincerely Yours,
Peter
Peter J. Crane



COUNTERPOINT:

In response to my superior's article, I would like to submit the following report:

A. I did agree to the "I'd rather rack than raid" philosophy established by Dr. Crane, but this raid took place at high noon, in classic Steven Spielburg (Raider's of the Lost Leg) Style. I wouldn't have been sleeping any way, so what better way to spend the afternoon than a ridge walk. Adhering to the above statements simply implies no night raiding - which I will strictly abide by.

B. I admit to my guilt of raiding on days off, but I was completely ignorant that such a rule existed until after the leg was procured. I think it should be noted that I hiked with the croo from Madison and back that same afternoon. In other words, I put in as much effort to snatch the leg as my accomplices who were not on days off.

C. I admitted in theory to helping Lakes with a similar counter attack upon Madison but I feel this raises a few moral and ethical questions:

1) My name has already been blasphemed for performing unfair raiding practices. Would Dave Huntley (the high Llama of raiding) want a person of my tarnished background representing his backcountry facility?

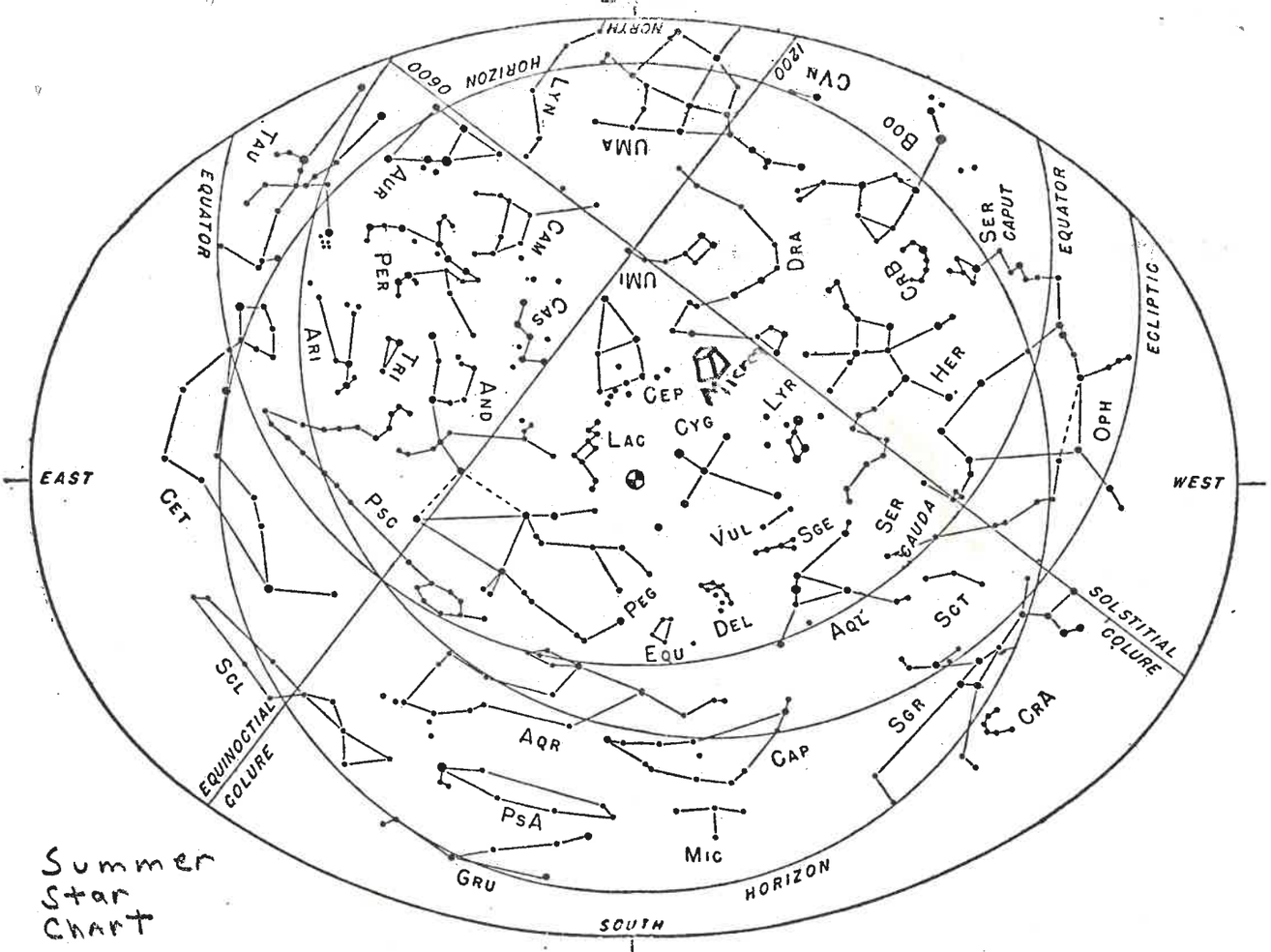
2) Also, performing a similar raid on Madison would mean breaking the rules (which I was previously ignorant of) over again. Do two wrongs make a right (leg)?

D. During the morning of July 5th, Steve Colt informed us that the raiding rules were in a state of vacuousness (they didn't exist) and almost anything was legal. I realized some logic in this statement since the previous rules had severely deteriorated and new rules were being made at that very moment.

Anyway, I had a great time, thanks for the apple pie Lakes. Thanks Phil for conceiving of the idea and to Cindy for that great route back to Madison (Wamsetta-Buttress). Sleep well, Philbert.

Jeffrey

see page seven, 1 more Letter



Summer Star Chart

PROP

(from page 1)

the Mizpah cellar for safekeeping.

Come opening day of 1978 the observant, if not anal retentive crew discovered the prop, dragged it into the sunlight, and placed it back on the dining room wall for all to view. Over the summer months the Pah crew somehow accumulated most of the raid items in the system , incurring the wrath of most other hut crews in the process. On a fateful August day, after the last hutmaster's meeting, six of eight hutchs and most of the Lakes crew descended upon Mizpah and "split the Kitty" (so to speak) as well as nearly splitting a few heads. With the help of M. Torrey, Lakes rookie, the prop humped its way back over to Lakes.

Opening day of 1979, Maria Many and I hung the prop up in the Lakes dining room where it stayed for all of ten hours. Late that night a by now familiar M. Torrey and Mr. Allen Doyle scooted over the ridge to Madison with the blade between their teeth (it being a breezy cool night out), arriving at their house around dawn with skinless knees. In typical fashion the prop was bolted to the wall and reinforced with twenty pounds of silverware perched precariously between it and the wall. Fall arrived and Mr. Doyle departed but not without first unbolting the item and leaving it on easily removable hooks.

Noting any patterns yet? Yes, you guessed it; within a week of opening night 1980, Zool Hutch Mr. Doyle and sleazy assistant Dr. Doufarb had the prop bolted firmly ten feet up on the cavernous Zool dining room wall. The western alliance (then 7,5,5a) were appalled at such blatant disregard for well-known etiquette. In a daring liberation raid, the prop escaped with the help of a representative western force (also participating were proponents of Research and the Pah) and left at the Crawford Hostel till a suitable home could be found. Unfortunately, it was discovered the very next night by Mr. Doyle after his fruitless exploratory raid to Mizpah. It was promptly reattached in the Zool fortress. "Free the Prop" was the word in the west. Anxious to right this sad condition, the west again flew through the notch in early August. Due to a lack of understanding, Doyle and Doufarb had to be restrained. A hiker present at the time was heard to appeal to the also present Forest Ranger D. Thurston to "help them officer, they're typing up the hutboys".

By an unintended split in the 1980 western faction, the prop then dropped from sight. Reports had it lying beside the Cog Railway Base Road, placed back in Oakes Gulf, and hanging in Ranger Thurston's living room. Thanks to the efforts of Buck Blaicklock, the prop was removed from inappropriate hands and presented to me at the 1982 Gala Gathering so that I might start the cycle once more by hanging it at Tundra. After five minutes in such a good light, the prop was plunged back into a sleazy darkness from which it has not yet exited. That's the story as I know it. As you can see, it's one of intrigue, mystery, shady characters, stupidity, sore backs, and violent and sadistic acts. This may be a trivial and idiotic item that, like many other trivial, idiotic AMC traditions, will be around for awhile. Afterall, just like the Cog Railway, it won't go away.

D. Huntley

NOXIOUS ODORS

Tales in the wind from Tuckerman Ravine

THE HAUNTS OF THE HUT SYSTEM - TUCKERMAN RAVINE

There are lots of places, a lot of stories of strange sightings, lights, noises. The hut system has its tales, but for sheer population figures on ghosts, haunts, and things that go bump in the night, Tucks has the market cornered. If any place here in the forest is haunted, Tucks is haunted.

In 1910 a man fell off of Lion's Head to a terrible death. Unusual you say? Perhaps not, but the corpse has never been found. Someplace in our backyard up in the rocks, or the thick tangled roots of the krummholtz, is the skeleton. We haven't found it yet. We're not too eager to either. A few years back, someone bushwhacking down Lion's Head reported seeing it. The U.S. Forest Service and New Hampshire Fish and Game spent three days trying to locate it. No luck. It's still there...

Last summer on a busy day in August, Joe and I heard a horrible scream - clear, lucid, agonizing, and as realistic as you'll ever get. Everyone on the porch heard it too. We didn't find anyone. No one was reported missing, no one reported an accident. The only thing we are sure of was the scream. A vicious practical joke? Unlikely, but possible.

This past November on an overcast afternoon, Joe looked out the back window of our cabin towards the headwall. Way up on the snow and ice high above Lunch Rocks, he saw a man standing. Immobile. Joe thought it strange that someone would be up climbing that late in the afternoon, but since people do strange things around here all the time, he didn't think much of it. Until half an hour later he looked out the window again. The man was still there. He hadn't moved.

Lunch rocks is a along way off, and it is hard to make out things clearly on the snow from our distant location.. Joe picked up his binoculars from the sill. Clearly and distinctly he could see him - definitely a human form standing on the headwall. Joe looked again, only this time the man was running in place. Not going anywhere, just running in place. Joe studied him for twenty minutes trying to figure out what was going on. Thinking the guy was perhaps in shock over his dead friend or something, or perhaps hypothermic, Joe decided at five o'clock radio call to tell base and say he was going up to check it out.

When Joe got up to the headwall, darkness was setting in. Inching up on crampons with a headlamp he got to the very spot he had last seen the jumping man. No one. Not a trace. No footprints, no crampon marks. Nothing.

Joe scanned the area and walked around to other possible locations. At one point his foot gave way and he fell part way into a snow cave - a fracture in the snowpack. Thinking he had perhaps killed the guy bivouaced in the cave with his crampon, Joe slowly withdrew. He peered into the cave. Nothing. Just snow and ice. Everywhere just snow and ice. Not a trace. Joe returned to the cabin and called Peter Furtado who was on notchwatch to report seeing nothing. The story ends there. Nothing ever was seen or reported since, but Joe was sure he had seen a man on the headwall, through binoculars no less, running in place.

In our basement at night, not every night, but fairly frequently, we will hear a crash - as though a box, jar, or can of some sort had fallen. When we go down there with a flashlight to investigate, we find nothing. Nothing out of place, nothing on the floor, nothing amiss. Mice in the walls don't make that kind of crash. We don't know what it is.

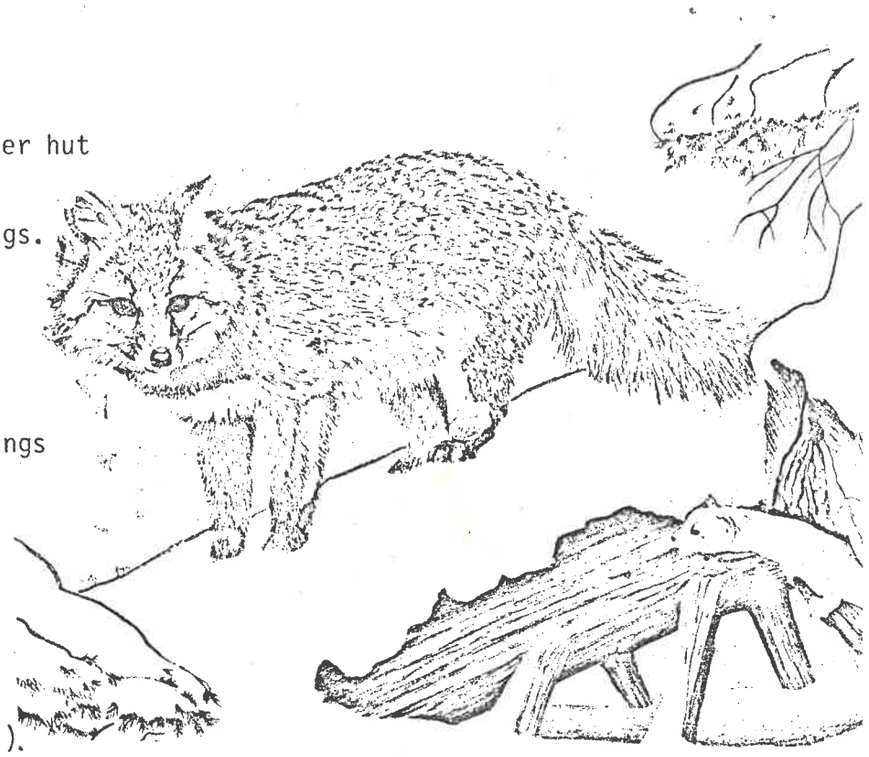
Those are just some of the Tucks haunts, some of the Tucks ghost stories. Neither of us believe in ghosts especially, but then we aren't going to dismiss the possibility altogether. On a dark, moonless night, you come up here and see for yourself what the Ravine has to offer in the way of stories and strange events.

You see, there is just too much that hasn't been accounted for...

Bill Kelley

A Day in the Life

THE KEEPER



His work is the fine tuning of a winter hut
In granite mountains, snow bound
Ice balled and frost heaved.
The door is frozen shut in the mornings.
With boiling water and ice axe,
He cleans away the sill,
Cracks the ice out of the corner,
Swings it open and shut
A few more times than necessary
(A satisfying fit).
Shovel in hand, he digs the outbuildings
Out of snow,
Carves paths in futile competition
with the wind,
(he stops to scan the peaks.
Snow clouds furl up and blur
the bowl,
Yellow humped ice balanced
on a rock chin like a beard.
The tug of the wind is
the breath of a straining giant.).
The bunkhouse doors ajar and iced-up,
he scrapes packed snow from the hinges,
sweeps tracked-in snow out.
The outhouse is full of snow
driven in through cracks
and up the hole
(he chuckles, thinking of the guest's
complaints.
Toilet paper was a yo-yo of the
unwanted on a wind string.
The wrinkled cigarette
lady with dark, tired eyes asked
a dozen times when the wind would stop.)
It is swept and a path re-chiseled
in the sharp snow wave that
threatens to engulf the most important
building in Carter Notch.
A screen collects garbage from the sifted dishwater.
The birds and squirrels dispose of the rest.
Wood is brought in and stored near
the roaring stove,
The kitchen wiped down and dishes washed,
The dining room benches tabled, the floor swept.
The door scraped clean of drifting snow
and multiplying ice,
The outhouse shoveled out again.
(he becomes aware of the sunset
and stops to watch pink caps
seal the mountaintops)

A walk to the lake for water, the
hole chopped clear of its thin veneer.
A dipper lifted and dumped fifty times
for ten gallons.
(half of each dip is lost on the
gusting wind, which sweeps the
ice and creeps up his back,
blows an empty can to the rocky
shore. It is retrieved.)
The two armed struggle up the hill,
straining for breath in the
quicksand of knee-deep snow
(a glance at the rock precipice
gleaming orange in the day's last
flashing rays, noticing the icy
half moon overseeing the
coming of night).
A shock of heat when the cabin door
is opened from inside.
A guest arrived, a quiet grey-haired man.
Greetings and essentials exchanged,
("it's all self-service")
The visitor sits near the fire
reading old "Appalachias."
The keeper is surprised at the lateness,
the darkness fallen like an eyelid
and opens a can of beans,
toasts some bread.
There's coffee left from this morning.
He heats that up and retires
to his room to read, write
and relax.

Retracing the day, he finds no one deed
To awe him or satisfy the need
To finish what's been begun
He thinks back to the setting sun
The colors that bit and held,
He remembers how the cold air smelled,
When he first went out in the morning
He feels a mood come on, a gentle warning
That the lone wolf in the woods
is a hungry beast.
Ever watchful for a gorging feast.
Under the glow of the propane light, he writes
"Today I shoveled snow from
the paths
And twice de-iced the door.
Tomorrow, if the weather's good
I'll do a little more."

Little Things

TRIVIA

Answers to last week's trivia questions:

1) The only latchstring still out is at Lakes, on the Refuge Room door.
2) The lower lake is Beaver Lake.
The upper lake is Black Diamond Lake
3) Katy Terrell is back at Zool, where she belongs.

New Question:

1) How many critters were terminated by the Carter caretaker this past winter? Name species as well as number of casualties taken.

LETTERS:

Dear Editor and Dr. Kelley:

All of us here at Chez Belle were most interested in your article on "How to Pack Light" (...Crowds, June 26, 1982). As we all subcutaneously realize, however, packing light is about as temporary as an alpine septic system, and sooner or later, one way or the other, the shit will hit the krummholtz. Besides, Bill, you may want to listen in here in case (God forbid) the Forest Service abandons its Pinkham-Tucks thiokol shuttle, and you and that insect-loving T-shirt salesman sidekick of yours are forced to once again don the cruel boards.

So now, without any further abuse, are a few random ideas for bringing this whole packing thing back into the heavily-
filtered limelight.

First off, find a real trail to pack up. None of this down stuff (I don't care if you do go through 180 sow strips per morning!), or even flat... I mean, if you're gonna feel some pain, you might as well increase your potential energy while you're doing it.

Next, you want to make sure you're using a board that isn't really for you. I personally recommend ones that have uneven straps. For variation, try the packhouse door. Wicked goofer load.

When choosing what boxes to pack up, go for the "hero in your crewmates' eyes" approach. Eggs (preferably 2 or more cases), boxes with liquid in them (loose or otherwise), and our favorite, the "mystery box" - yes, it's heavy, but there doesn't seem to be any weight written on it...

Even if you are forced to carry less than 238% of your bodily bulk, this imbalance can be rectified by the tie-on job. Consult your local boy scout troop for the "suspended sleeping bag banging the knees" technique. Make sure you tie really loosely, too, because retieing your load a few times on the way up is character-building. Or, for variations on some other theme, tie on really high so the boxes come crashing down on your head just as you reach your first power step.

If you're in a hut-authority position, then gravy! Scant to non-existent initials are crucial. Better yet, req. everything your hut doesn't need so your crew can burn out their knees while packing it back down the hill. Never authorize any composting or burning of paper trash - takes away too much time from packingandcookingandpackingand cookingand...

If at anytime you get bored with the whole routine, don't ask the Wave where your life is taking you. No, instead try an alternative packing route. I hear Lonesome via the Bigelow Range is a real gas.

Well, Bill & others, I hope this brief summary has given you a more balanced view of the packing game. If not, I guess you'll just have to read and shudder.

As never,
P.D.

SUMMIT CONF.

(from page 1)

Carter; Steve Colt, Madison; David Huntley, Tundra; John Donahue and Rooney Self, the Pah; Rebecca Oreskes, Galehead; Jake Perkins and Bill Blaiklock, Greenleaf. There was no representatives from Pinkham, Lonesome, or Zealand.

The first order of business was splitting the costs of the pizza. It was decided by a majority vote that it be taken out of the Galehead OTC once their ashtray sales blossomed. Galehead abstained. It was then decided that a justifiable quorum for system wide raiding decisions required a minimum presence of five huts being represented although for simply gathering under the guise of the Summit Counsel to drink and eat until bloatness occurred a minimum of three huts was felt satisfactory.

In relation to the W.H.A.'s move to exclude Zealand from the west due partly to what the west has termed their "Eastern mentality", it was voted and carried that due to their location west of route 302, the rather flat nature of their packtrail, and their non-participatory attitude towards the system-wide meeting, Zealand's mentality was more aptly felt to be one of "Mid-Westernism".

Next on the agenda was a discussion of the Oakes Gulf Prop, which has been mistreated and horribly abused since Gala Gathering. It was decided by a unamimous vote that the prop, just like any other raid item, belongs to no one person or hut and that no one person or hut may decide its fate OUTSIDE the hut system in any way, shape, or malformation. Thanks to Colt's credit card number, phone calls were placed to the Pinkham Notch Camp to announce this decision and to have a sign posted for general consumption that no one will be in any danger IF the propellor is returned in a sealed goat bag and placed anonymously in the storehouse for its safe return into the huts where it may rest and travel in a legal light.

The last order of business was a collective recap of general raiding etiquette guidelines to be followed, supposedly understood by all but ignored by many. Rules agreed upon by all are as follows:

1) No raiding on days off.
2) No raiding when on a day visit to a hut (i.e., after accepting the hospitality and trust of others)
3) Once the raider(s) is/are outside the accepted ¼ mile RUA around each hut, he/she/they may not be caught/have items taken away from them/pummelled.
4) No rules apply in a power situation (save for #1).
5) A power raid is any raid in which crew members must be physically retrained and/or goated before the items are to be extracted from the hut.
6) No personal items may be raided. These include, but are not limited to, ice cream makers, beer, crotchless sequined packtrow, and golf clubs.
7) No items may be attached to any surface in such a fashion that it takes

(next page)

Gary Newfield's tabasco breath to melt it off.

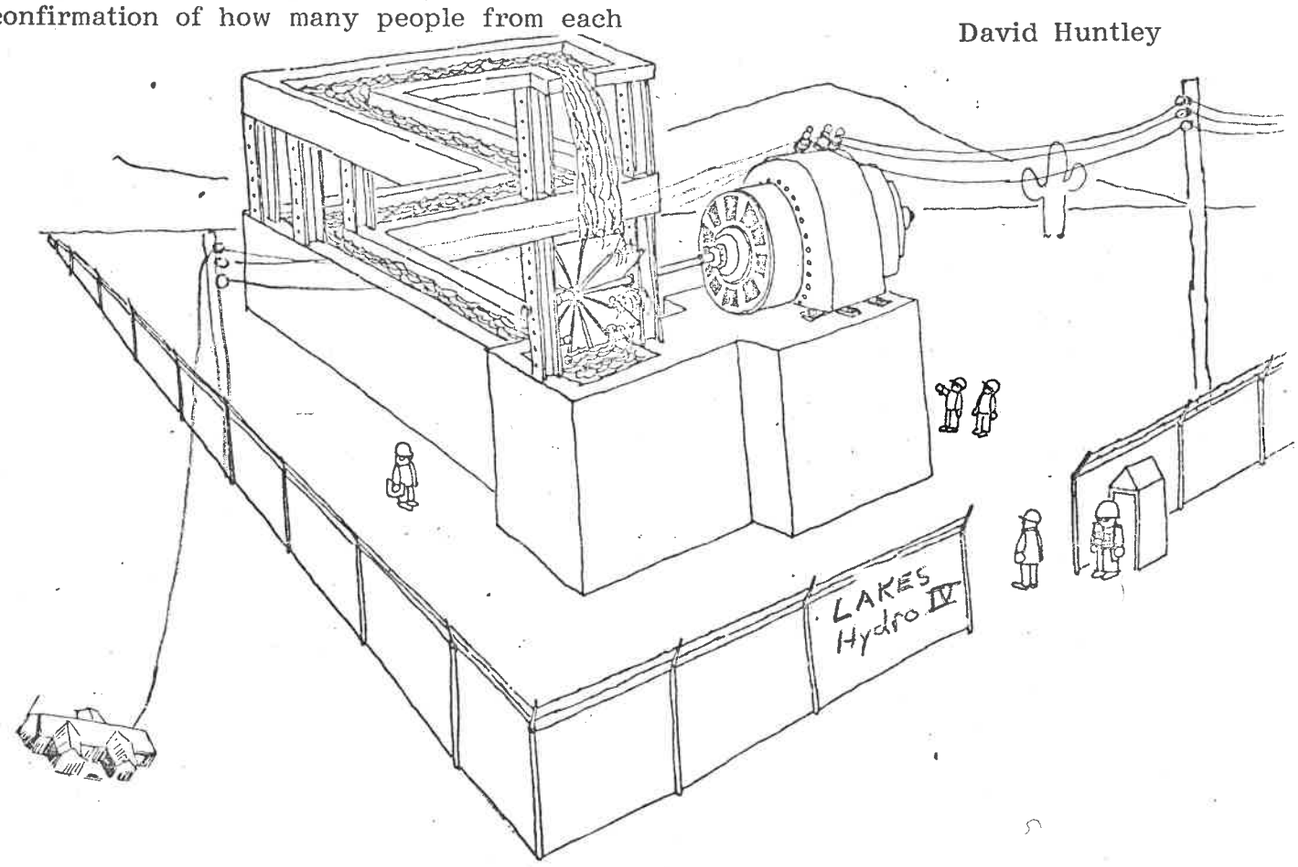
8) Raid alarms should be used discreetly and should not prove hazardous to any raider's health.

9) No raid item belongs to any one person or hut and no one person or hut may decide an item's fate outside accepted raiding protocol.

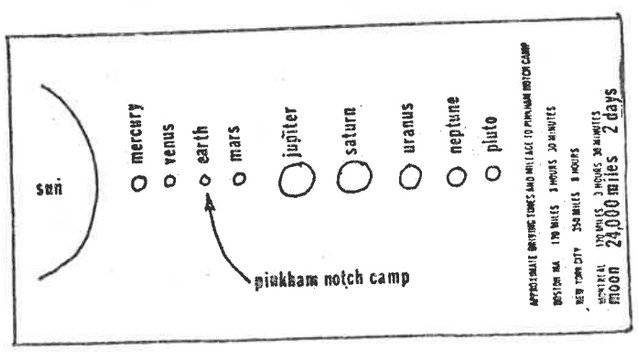
After a rousing and hectic confirmation and summation of the protocol recap it was decided that the counsel should meet every Monday to "discuss" raiding developments and to allow all crew members to support the local grocers and liquor establishments. The meeting for Monday, July 12th is tentatively scheduled for the Wildcat Ski Area parking lot. Other locations will be considered. A confirmation of how many people from each hut will be attending should be sent on Monday radio call to Unit 4, Lakes. A message confirming the time and place will be sent to all units from Lakes.

There being no old orders of business, the meeting was closed and all delegates mobilized themselves. Delegates Oreskes, Perkins, Blaiklock, Self, Donahue, and Huntley then took all non-essential business to Fun Towne, Twin Mtn. for ice cream and go-kart racing, this being only one of many recreational opportunities possible within this land of many abuses. The first Hut-System Wide Raiding Conference was officially designated as ended when Jake lapped Rebecca for the eighth time and was flagged to a stop by an oily fingered Fun Towne employee.

David Huntley



1999??

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Paid
Permit No. 6
Gorham, N.H.

Appalachian Mountain Club
Gorham, New Hampshire 03581