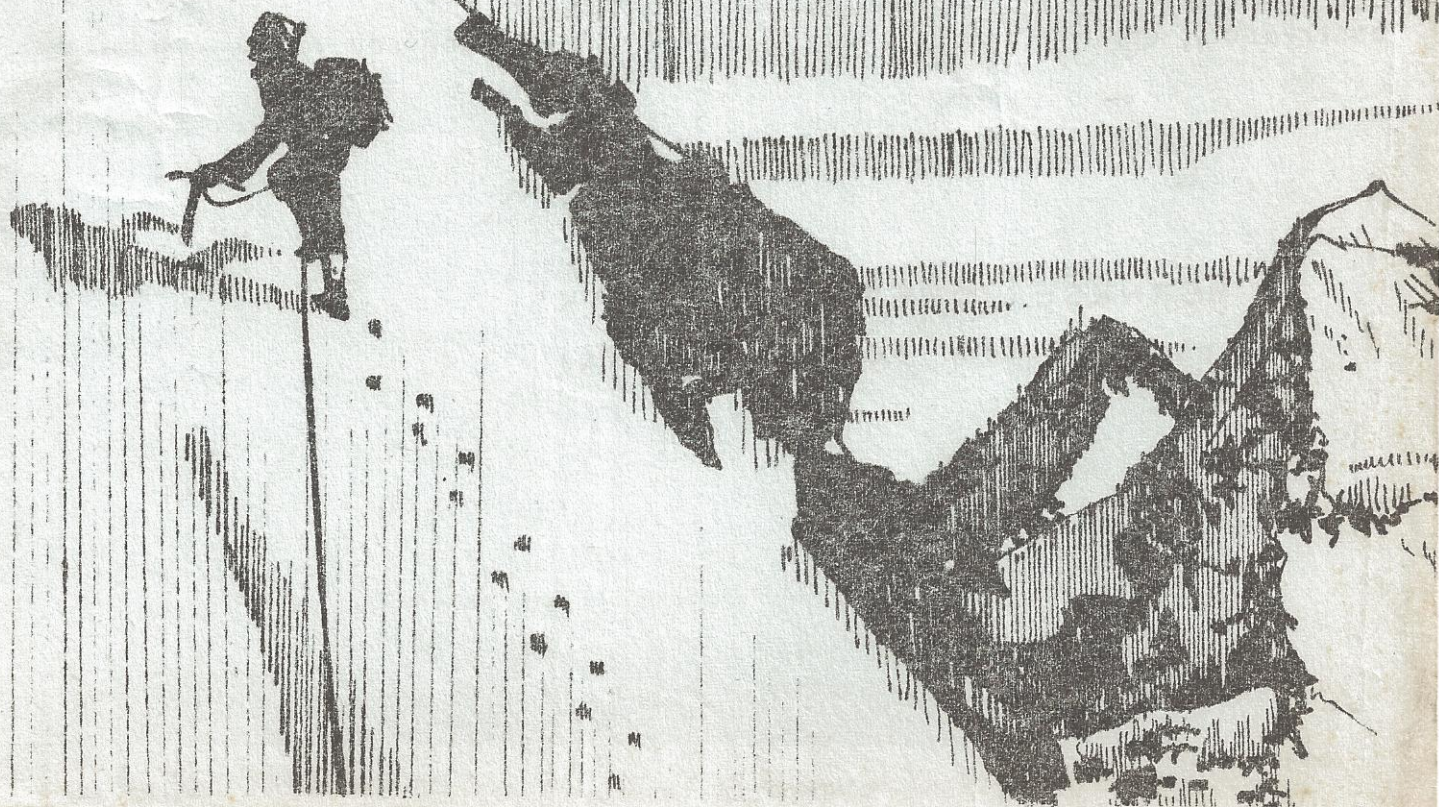


# THE MOUNTAINEER

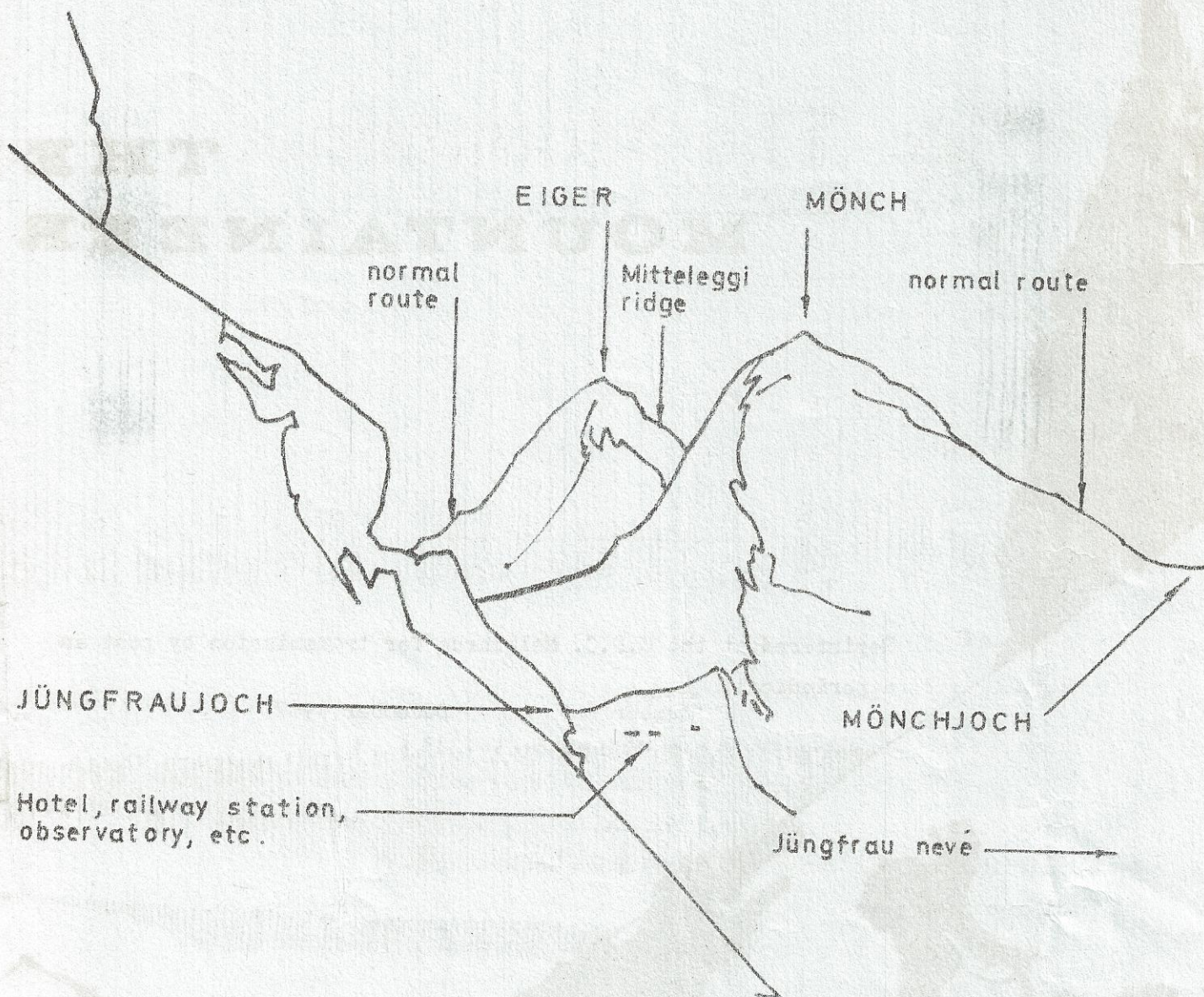
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Number 6

December 1967







BERNESE OBERLAND PEAKS  
(as seen from Rottalhorn S. ridge)

Key to the cover.

Both cover and diagram by Fred Mitchell.





# The Mountaineer

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Official Journal of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club.  
Registered at the G.P.O. Melbourne for transmission by post as a periodical

Number 6 December 1967

Correspondence: Beaurepaire Centre, University of Melbourne,  
Parkville 3052.

Well, summer and holidays are here again and mountaineers are heading in all directions as fast as they can go. Unfortunately this includes the Editor, who dropped this into my lap just before heading for the "land of the long grey cloud."

This Mountaineer is a little late and somewhat thinner than this year's previous issues. The reason is that not many people contributed, and those who did were a little slow. I find it very disappointing that in a club of over three hundred members, supposedly literate university types, one person has written over one third of the issue, and that the number of contributors is only seven.

The exam term is over now and plenty should be happening, so lets have some articles, and soon please.

\*\*\*\*\*

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY MOUNTAINEERING TO YOU ALL.

\*\*\*\*\*

Annual General Meeting. April 5th 1968, 7.30 p.m.

Notice of the Annual General Meeting is given for the above date (venue to be decided). Nominations for

- (1) President
- (2) Vice President (one or two)
- one Vice President to be editor of an annual journal -
- (3) Secretary
- (4) Treasurer
- (5) Assistant secretary
- (6) Stores officer
- (7) Editor of the Mountaineer
- (8) General committee (2)

should reach the secretary not later than one week prior to the meeting.

Postal voting is allowed. Applications from those people unable to attend should reach the secretary no later than two weeks prior to the meeting and ballot papers must be returned by 7.45 p.m. April 5th, 1968.

- - - - -

The Editress,

A number of new projects have been initiated by the committee. Some of these are large and will require some quite hard work to see them put into operation. The club I feel has to some extent been stagnating instead of trying to contribute to mountaineering as a whole or specifically in Victoria. We have been content to follow in the steps of other people instead of using some initiative ourselves.

It is thoughts such as these which lead me to introduce these projects by a letter. The cooperation and support of the whole club will be necessary to make these projects come to fruition.

Yours,

Nicholas White  
President.

Equipment Testing Subcommittee

We are consumers of a very specialized range of equipment from both local and overseas manufacturers. This precludes the possibility of getting a body such as the Australian Consumers Association or the Australian Standards Association interested in testing the equipment available. To this end then we intend setting up a Subcommittee to carry out testing of equipment available such as boots, tents, materials, climbing equipment, etc. Obviously, we cannot test everything at once but the time is approaching when "Equipment for Mountaineering" will need revision and so we have set up this committee.



We thus need a Convenor to direct this work and it is imperative that he (she) be vitally interested in it, to see it gets started on the right foot.

#### Guide Book

Victoria's walking and mountaineering territory has nothing published in an organized manner about it. The Geehi club have their booklet Snowy Mountains Walks and the University of New England a booklet on the surrounding walking, climbing and caving areas. It is this gap which needs filling in Victoria.

The Victorian Alps could be a starting point. We thus need an editor to organize this booklet.

#### Annual Journal

This will come out next year. The Vice President of the club will be editor. The Journal will be modelled on such publications as "Walk", "Melbourne Walker", etc.

#### Miscellaneous

Some other things which have also been started are (a) Stretcher and Rock Rescue Group. This will safeguard our climbers and provide a very useful adjunct to the F.V.W.C. Search and Rescue group. (b) Song Book. This should be out over the holidays. (c) History of the Club. David Hogg has already done a lot of work on the files but whether he has the time or not to tackle this is another matter. The early exploration of S.W. Tasmania was done largely by members of this club but apart from a few names in S.W. Tasmania all this is lost in our files.

Dear Editor,

It was with considerable interest that I read your recent articles on "Bunyips, Yetis and Other Beasties", but I could not help noticing that, while Australia as a whole and Victoria in particular were dealt with in a thorough and efficient manner, there was little or no mention of the indigenous species peculiar to South Australia. I should like to take this opportunity of correcting this appalling lack of interstate rapport by describing certain of said creatures, which might conceivably be encountered by any of your members who visit the South Australian bush.

First, there is the White-handled Nightjar (Goesunder goesunder). This species is now, unfortunately, almost extinct, but it can still be



found in a few country areas, where it may be studied at your convenience. Any specimens should be examined carefully, noting in particular the obvious radial symmetry and the permanently gaping mouth. If it does not visit water frequently, as is often the case in certain drought areas, the creature emits a pungent odour, which it utilises to the best advantage in keeping intruders from its nest.

Secondly, we have the Seven-toed Piebald Lesser Throtwuttle (Keebe jeebe). This animal is nocturnal in its habits, which is not surprising considering its appearance. It has been known to throt on occasion, and may even wuttle if environmental conditions are suitable. It lives on an exclusive diet of succulent, super-sexed, Siberian Shad, and has a mating call rather similar to the sound of a dying veeble-fetzer blowing on an all-leather, portable, electronic Mongolian bagpipe. WARNING: If you should hear this noise, run smartly in the opposite direction, as this animal is not at all fussy with whom it mates.

I hope that these brief descriptions might be of some use should any of your members decide to sample South Australia's magnificent bush country.

Yours faithfully,

Major R. O. Adahead.  
of the Mountain Club, University of Adelaide.

Editor's note: Sir Augustus Twitt is at present leading the Society for Useless Research expedition to Mt. Rum Doodle (40,000½') (wearing his normal high altitude attire of gym boots and swimming togs) and has asked me to thank the thousands of people who wrote to him.

Another creature worthy of note is Pterodrongo ambulans, first reported from South Australia but apparently common to all states. A description appears in "Tarndanya", May, 1965.

From Tasmania comes a strange report. The Old Relion Hut log book contains the manuscript of "The Ballad of the Leech". The leech in question was about four miles long and the balladeer had climbed it, mistaking it for a mountain. He was only saved because the previous day it had gorged itself on a tribe of Boy Scouts.

See also an article by Normal Wakefield in "The Age", about October 7th, 1967.



TRIPS PROGRAMME

27-29 JAN. (AUSTRALIA DAY WEEKEND) - KOSCIUSKO AREA (N.S.W.)  
(3 days)

Transport - private; Leader -            X  
Standard - Medium.

16 FEB to 5 MARCH TASMANIA

See article elsewhere in this issue.

24-25 FEB GETTING INFORMATION FOR OUR GUIDE BOOKS

Trips to areas covered by our proposed guide book.

2-3 MARCH EXPEDITION TO SNOWY BLUFF

Transport - private  
Leader - Michael Feller  
Standard - Hard

"Beautiful but dangerous Snowy Bluff rises like a citadel near the confluence of the Moroka and Wonnangatta Rivers to form the northern perimeter of the Kent Range.

Bigger and better mountains there certainly are, but all have easier approaches . . . . Like an Elizabethan collar, a 60 ft. wall of rock almost encircles its expansive dome, thorny scrub bristles from its eastern spurs, deep gullies bisect the southern side, and a tangled bracken waste a mile square at the mouth of the Moroka denies access via this valley."

(Taken from "The Melbourne Walker", 1955) Thus, Snowy Bluff has been considered Victoria's most inaccessible mountain.

16-17 MARCH WILSON'S PROMONTORY

Transport - van  
Leaders - Harry Schaap, Pat Miller, et al.  
Standard - Easy and Medium.

NOTE: The Club contact during this vac. will be Nick White (phone 33 3749). Could leaders of private trips please contact Nick before their trip takes place.

BOOKINGS: Until 23rd JANUARY - phone Nick White on 33 3749.



FEDERATION OF VICTORIAN WALKING CLUBSMT. FEATHERTOP HUT

The Federation is now ready to start building its hut on the Bungalow Spur, Mt. Feathertop, but a great tangle of red tape has delayed the start of the project. It is hoped that the problems will be ironed out soon, so that a start can be made in plenty of time to enable the hut to be finished before next winter.

Anyone interested in helping on the work parties should contact Tom Buykx (phone 43 3534). Further information regarding the hut is displayed on the notice board at "Aikman's Road", or is available from Dave Hogg or Don Thomas.

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CLIMBING SUB-COMMITTEE NOTICE

The Climbing Sub-committee strongly suggests that people (other than competent and leaders) who do not have their own climbing equipment should make sure that some leader or competent is prepared to supervise or participate in their climbing before they go on a trip, and not wait until they arrive at the rock face to arrange assistance.

NEW GUIDEBOOK OUT!

The V.C.C. Rock Climbing Guide to Victoria except for the Grampians and Mt. Arapiles has just been released.

The new guide is very similar in format to the Arapiles guide. It contains descriptions of 112 climbs in 12 climbing areas including 27 routes at Hanging Rock, and is illustrated by 5 line drawings and 5 excellent photographs.

This well written guide is a must for anybody and everybody who goes climbing at all. It is available to MUMC members at only \$2.00 (cheap at twice the price) from Clive Parker.

Support the V.C.C. and buy a guide now.



TRIP REPORT: POST EXAM BLUDGE 1967

Fifty doomed souls gathered in the Union courtyard on Friday evening beneath a warm blue sky to take the van to Darby R. for two days of sunbaked relaxing. The party atmosphere thickened as we travelled down St. Kilda Road to the plinking sound of zip tops, and apart from a two-minutes-to-ten dash into Korrrumburra the trip down was uneventful. At Darby R. the moon shone down as tents were put up (?) in the sand while hardier folk settled down to an all night tea party.

Saturday dawned bright and clear, a gentle breeze blew and Miles set off for Tidal R. to vote. Sand castles were built, bikinis appeared, mountaineers glissaded on the dunes and the first cans were opened; it rained at half past ten and the wind blew.

- It'll blow over; it can't rain - there's a drought.
- Whaterbout Inergo Jones?
- Who?

But it didn't blow over.

And as dark fell, with much bravado, a party started on the beach. The higher the fire, the harder the wind and rain, but soon the revellers were made oblivious of the weather by the good offices of Mr. J. Walker and his clan. Waving fists and bottles at the sky they called on Hughie to do his worst. Hughie did; it hailed. And footsore Miles returned from Yanakie. John wished he was back in hospital. Zmood wished he had long trousers. More tents blew away. Monash and Latrobe delegates wished they had some acid. The Trip Leader wished the creek would stop following him about. An utter darkness descended upon all things.

(I would like at this stage to thank the kind person(s) who led/dragged me to my sleeping bag and anchored/buried me from the wind with those lead weights, packs, rocks, etc.)

Sunday morning wasn't much better as tents continued to collapse in a strengthening gale and Church services had to be abandoned.

Tremendous! Brendan's tent's blown down. And he's wet. Les emerged smug from his fancy English pyramid. Our President deserted the sinking ship for the comforts of the farm; morale dropped at his departure and we proceeded to evacuate. A farewell burst of hail and the vans headed for Melbourne to the plaintive sound of RV's harmonica.



For once we were back early - half past four on Sunday afternoon and the sun was shining. Monday is a beautiful day.

In closing I would like to commend the freshettes on their excellent tent pitching. Some even joined the club after the trip!

R. A. CHAPPELL.

#### MUMC PARTY FOR TASMANIA IN FEBRUARY

A party is currently forming for an assault on Geryon in the Cradle Mt. Reserve in the latter half of next February. At this stage the party officially consists of seven males, most of whom intend to spend most of the time climbing on or near Geryon. A number of girls have expressed interest in a trip to the area, but have been put off by the talk of "base camp duties". We can assure them, and others who may be interested, that although offers of such assistance would not be declined, no demands will be made. The Pine Valley area offers a number of day and two day (etc.) walks to very beautiful areas (the Labyrinth, the Guardians and Mt. Gould, The Acropolis, Mt. Geryon itself, etc.) for those interested. One member of the climbing party proposes to walk through the park on the first half of the trip.

Assistance and advice is freely available, but those who do go will have to be able to look after themselves to some degree. P.O.T. bookings are filling fast so don't delay too long. For information contact Clive Parker on 34 0484 ext. 529 or at Aikman's Road.

All those who were dripped on at Feathertop last winter will be interested to know that the top half of the hut has been insulated. We're not taking any bets that this will solve the problem, though.

Christmas Gift Idea! Buy your girlfriend/boyfriend a copy of the new V.C.C. Rock Climbing Guide. She/he will be thrilled and you will be able to take her/him climbing. Only \$2.00 - available from Clive Parker. Buy one each!

The slightest inadvertent push  
Upon a peak in Hindu Kush  
May cause the mountaineer to fall  
Down to a glacier in Nepal.



DID YOU KNOW?

\*\*That in 1956 an attempt was made by members of the Club to scale the Ormond College clock tower at night. Artificial technique (namely a wooden step ladder) was used. Although the party was unsuccessful in attaining the summit, it succeeded in leaving the step ladder on the roof of the tower.

\*\*In 1954, the Club ran a pancake stall to raise money for the International Fair. During the two days it operated, approximately 1300 pancakes were cooked, at the rate of one per minute. One person worked full-time filling choofers. Materials used included 110 lb. of flour, 11 gallons of milk, 13 dozen eggs, 1 26 oz. bottle of rum (not all of which was used in the pancakes!) and 5 gallons of shellite. The stall raised £57 at a profit margin of about 900%.

\*\*In 1956, the manufacturers of a certain brand of beef tea (not the obvious one) approached the club in search of someone to make a testimonial of the following nature for an advertisement:-

AT HIS PEAK.

"Lost in bad snow country" - the urgent message is flashed to mountaineer (Fred). His job? Find the missing hikers!

"One of the first things I pack is a flask of piping hot \_\_\_\_\_" says (Fred). "It's a wonderfully warming drink - concentrated strength and energy."

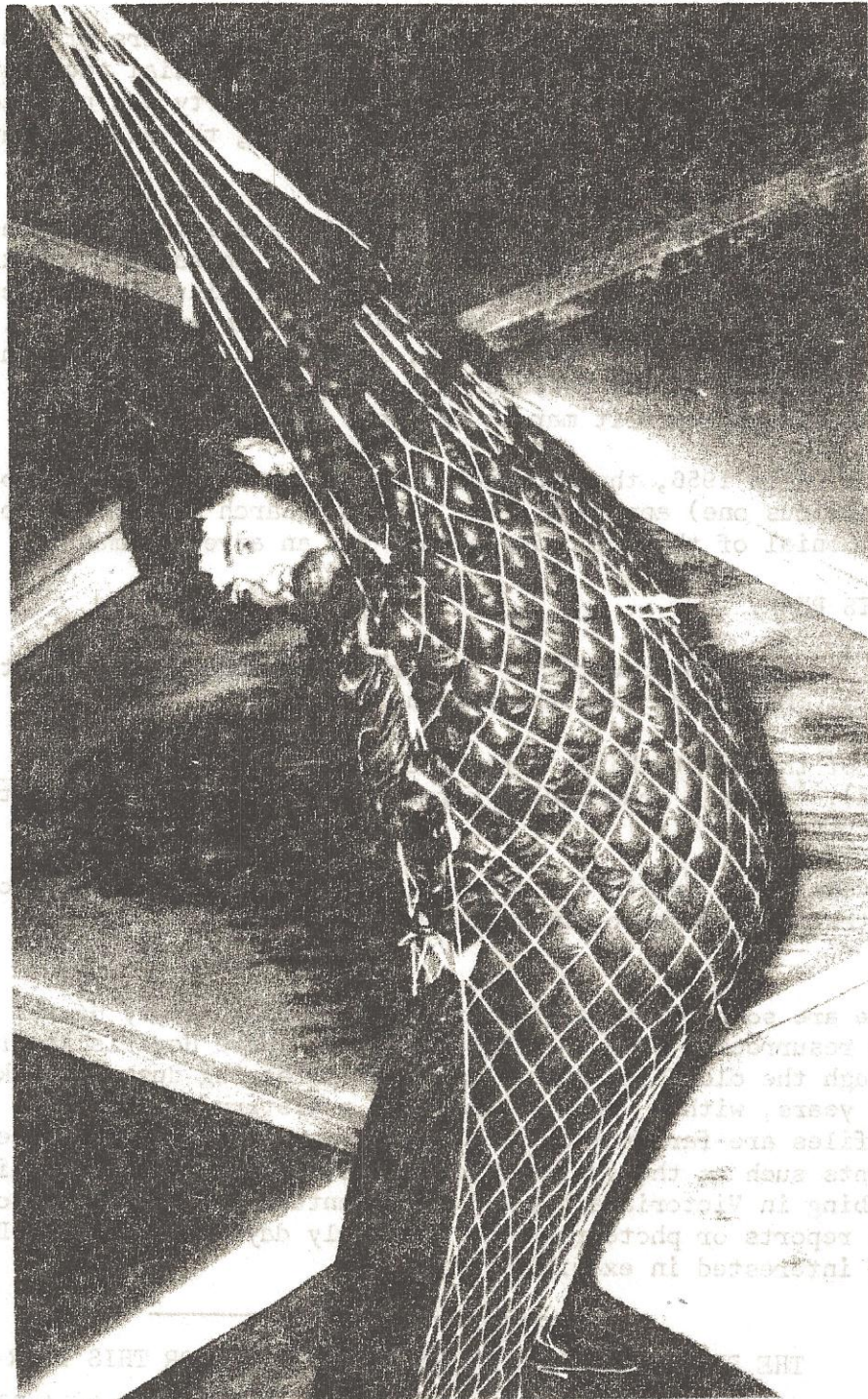
The Committee, in all its modesty, declined the proposal, together with the testimonial fee of five guineas.

These are some of the lighter moments in the history of the Club, which have been resurrected from the Club archives. Dave Hogg is at present sorting through the old files which have been gathering dust at "Aikman's Road" for many years, with a view to compiling a history of the Club. Unfortunately, the files are far from complete, and many of the Club's more glorious moments such as the exploration of S.W. Tasmania, and the pioneering of rock climbing in Victoria are poorly documented. If any of the older members have reports or photographs of the early days of the Club, Dave could be very interested in examining them.

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THE DEVOTED PARENT OF THE YEAR AWARD FOR THIS YEAR HAS BEEN AWARDED to Mr. and Mrs. Harsant who walked up to Feathertop to tell Margaret of a supp. two days later. What a shame that Marg had missed the transport and was still in Melbourne. Still its good to see the oldies getting about...





John Bennett at Feathertop.

Photo: V. Harvey.



ADVERTISEMENTS

For Sale: La Dolomite Mountaineering boots. Size 7. Almost new (too small for owner). \$16.00.  
Contact N. White, 106 Mt. Alexander Road, Flemington (33 3749).

For Sale: One almost new pair of Sherpas. Contact Barbara Moffit.

Wanted: Choofers for testing, especially primus and Svea types, but any lightweight stoves would be of interest.  
Contact John Bennett, 2/63 Brougham Street, North Melbourne.

J. Molony and Co. in Elizabeth Street are now selling camping and bush-walking equipment, both local and imported. John Freeman, formerly of that other place is in charge. They hope to get some imported boots in the near future. They also have a hire service.

Tasmanian Transport: Maxwell's Cradle Mt. Taxi and Coach Service (Wilmot 7306, Tas.) offers transport between Waldheim and Devenport or Burnie. Information from them, or at Aikman's Road, or Uncle Reg.

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LOST SOULS DEPARTMENT

Jennifer Phipps will be in Papua-New Guinea this vac. and would like to hear from anyone interested in going on a trip while there. Knock off a 15,000 footer! Contact Jennifer at Bulolo Forestry School Library.

\*\*\*\*\*

There is also a bloke in Wangaratta who wants to join a party to S.W. We are told that he is experienced and reliable, and can be contacted through Ken Collins, 41 Vincent Road, Wangaratta, 3677.

\*\*\*\*\*

Well known harem keeper Bill Oostermeyer is moving to Sydney. We're watching you, Bill!

\*\*\*\*\*

Fred Mitchell is engaged. So is Lindsay Milton. Also Joanna Sykes and Lindsay Hackett. Dave Hogg and Sandra Barnes are just married and Phil Seccombe and Marg. Godson are about to be. Betting has opened on at least four more.

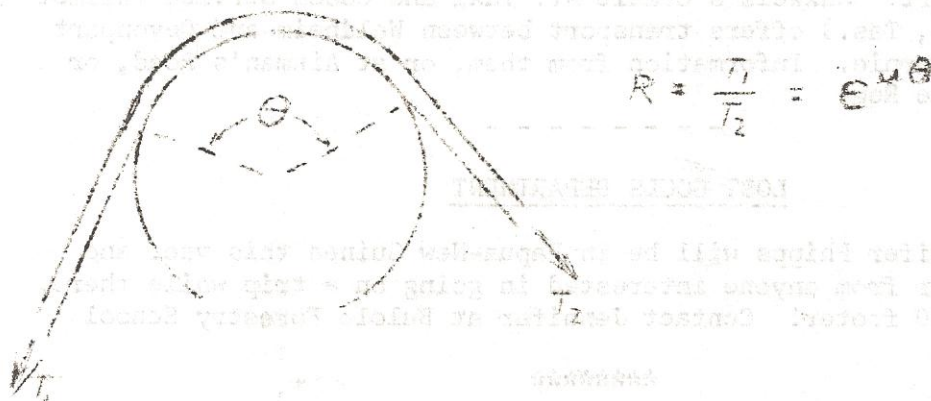


BRAKES

Brake bars and other friction systems such as karabiner twist and and two and three karabiner brakes as well as assorted devices like descendeurs have become widely used for abseiling and rescue work. I think most people who have used them would agree that they offer advantages in controllability and safety, not to mention wear on shoulder and clothing. There is reason to believe that they result in increased wear on the rope but I know of no tests that demonstrate this.

It is instructive to consider the forces involved, and what affects them. As the Club's foremost armchair mountaineer, I feel uniquely qualified to do this.

All these devices rely on the fact that for a rope slipping or about to slip around a rounded surface the ratio of the higher tension  $T_1$  to the lower  $T_2$  is



where  $\theta$  is the total angle change of the rope and  $\mu$  is the coefficient of friction. This shows that  $R$  can be increased greatly by increasing  $\theta$  and implies that a small force  $T_2$  can control a large force  $T_1$ , which is of course the principle of the dynamic belay.

Siri, in "Belaying the Leader" gives figures suggesting that the coefficient of friction for nylon rope on karabiners is about 0.35. The angle change can be worked out from the geometry of the system. In general it depends on the rope diameter as well as the dimensions of any hardware. I leave this delightful exercise to you.

If our abseilers weight is  $W$  and his downward acceleration is  $a$   $\times$  the gravitational acceleration, then summing the forces gives

$$T_2 = \frac{W}{R} (1 - a)$$

This is the force he must apply to the lower part of the rope,



using hands, teeth or whatever. The success of the method depends largely on his ability to do this.

Suppose we have a three karabiner system; all three karabiners are 3" long, 2" wide, 0.4" constant diameter. The rope is 0.5" diameter and  $W = 160$  lb.  $R$  works out to be about 4, and the forces in three situations are:

	$T_1$	$T_2$
$a = 0$	160 lbf	40 lb. ie. just hanging there
$a = -1$	320	80
$a = -2$	480	120 a pretty sudden stop.

The internal forces in the brake are also interesting. The sideways force on the bar is  $3.3T_1$ , which in the worst case above gives 400 lb., and results in a maximum bending stress in the bar of 30,000 lb. in. which should be alright for hardened steel karabiners. It would be interesting to know if the gate of a karabiner can take a sideways force of about 200 lb.

One oft-stated reason for using three karabiners is so that the gates of two can be opposed to lessen the risk of opening. There is another: the third gate acts as a spacer and increases  $R$ . Reducing the rope size will also reduce  $R$ . The value of  $T_2$  you can apply is affected by the size of the rope. It is hard to grip a small rope firmly, so that single or small diameter ropes need a larger  $R$ .

Part or all of  $T_2$  could be provided by the weight of free rope. In the above case if the abseiler had 800' of rope (No.4) you could just hang there without holding onto the rope. If you had more you couldn't move. The moral is clear - don't use 800' abseil ropes.

My armchair is only 18" off the floor so I haven't been able to test these figures. The maximum value of  $T_1$  compares with a measured value of 550 lbf. quoted in "Belaying the Leader". This was for a heavier body in a deliberately sudden stop. I'm inclined to think that  $R = 4$  is a little low and the estimated values of  $T_2$  a little high, based on meagre experience.

Now would you mind passing that crutch. Thanks. The only trip I have been on for months was over my footstool, and I broke my leg on that occasion.

T.Kneen.

+++++

This looks like being a bad year for water- too little--and fire--too much. Already restrictions are heavy and they will probably get heavier. Perhaps we'll have to develop the art of waterless, fireless camping. Even if we don't, extra care is needed this year.

+++++

Prayers answered? Bevan Napper of Mountain Mule fame is said to have produced a new pack which weighs less than 3 lb., comes in four colours, has an aluminium frame, lightweight canvas bag, and nylon webbing and will cost about \$29. It will be very interesting to see this, since it would be a big advance on anything available here now and would justify the ideas several people hold on pack design.

+++++



## HOW TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL WITHOUT TAKING IT ALL WITH YOU

I write this in desperation, if not in despair. I'm sick, sick, sick of seeing people who should know better go off on trips with vast quantities of unnecessary junk. In fact this situation has got to the stage where an enormous pack has become a sort of status symbol in the club. Status is certainly the right word; some of the owners can barely stand with the things, much less move with them.

So if you regard mountaineering as a form of long-range weight lifting, don't read on. If you never move more than 20 yards from your car, this is not for you, because you haven't learned what mountaineering is all about. For in a sense we are the freest people on Earth. We can go almost anywhere we choose, and we can do this largely by carefully choosing our equipment. To my mind it is silly to restrict this freedom by taking unnecessary weight. So I propose to suggest ways in which the load can be reduced. Perhaps you will disagree with me, but even so this may mean that you are at least thinking, and this is the root of the problem.

There are three ways to reduce the weight of what you carry. These are: (1) Don't take anything that is not necessary, (2) Share equipment where possible, (3) Use the lightest possible equipment. Of course, it is always necessary to satisfy requirements for safety, servicability, cost, and availability of equipment, which often conflict with the goal of minimum weight, so that some compromises will be needed. But the ultimate aim in the design and selection of the mountaineering equipment must be to do a given job at the lowest possible weight. The equipment we carry can be divided into four groups: clothing, shelter, special equipment, and food. The weight of each of these can be reduced by the above methods. In trying to apply these we immediately run into a couple of problems. Everybody has a different idea of what is necessary and tends to define this as what they take. Sharing seems to



conflict with an inherent individuality among mountaineers, but then most people in this club seem to borrow anything and everything if given the chance so perhaps there is some hope.

I think that many people carry too much clothing, or the wrong sort. On a short trip in reasonably fine weather it is often quite safe to leave quite a lot behind. Air beds, choofers, and powerful torches are often unnecessary. Light footwear can be quite adequate if the going is not too rough, cold, or wet. Tents can be left out if the weather is fine or huts can be relied on. You can get by with a minimum of cooking implements. In summer a light sleeping bag is usually all that is needed. Tinned food is awfully heavy stuff to cart around.

Now that we've left behind all the unnecessary junk, we won't need so much energy to cart it around, so we can take less food. And if the weight gets really low we can use a frameless pack and save a bit more.

The advantages of sharing are obvious: the weight per person is reduced and equipment is used to its maximum capacity. This allows a reduction in the total load and the inclusion of items that could not be taken on an individual basis.

Do I hear voices murmuring "This nut will have us all roughing it." That's not the aim. The skilled bushman doesn't rough it; he makes himself comfortable with very little. You'll probably say that weight reduction is alright for good conditions, but what about hard trips? But it is under hard conditions, where you must take more and better equipment, that it is most important that you keep the weight as low as possible, and constant practice helps.

Reams could and should be written on the design of lightweight equipment. I hope that the days when all metal parts were mild steel and all fabric items were ordinary canvas have gone



forever. I believe that the major improvements in equipment design in the future will come from the careful use of new materials and treatments, and the result will be a considerable improvement in performance and reduction in weight. There are readily available aluminium alloys that are at least as strong as mild steel, one third the weight, and much more corrosion resistant. There are fabrics which are lighter, stronger, and more water resistant than the fabrics in general use a few years ago. The effect of the use of new materials is already apparent. Karabiners now are much stronger than those available a few years ago. Sleeping bags and tents can be made much lighter by using nylon fabrics. Nylon parkas are light and strong. There has even been some success in the search for the elusive fabric that is waterproof but breathes. And there is plenty of room for further improvement. For instance, lightweight packs are still not readily available, at least in this country, and a really efficient stove could mean a considerable weight saving in fuel on a long trip.

One member of this club has aluminium alloy bolt plates; a small item, but they weigh one third as much as ordinary M.S. ones. Perhaps it is blowing my own trumpet, but I have used a pack for the past two and a half years that weighs 27 oz. It has an aluminium alloy frame and nylon webbing and bag. Admittedly, it tends to distort if it has more than forty pounds in it, but this is not the point. It was never meant to carry more than forty pounds.

So if it isn't necessary, don't take it; share whatever you can, and buy or make lightweight equipment. Here's a goal - 20 lb. for a summer weekend, 30 lb. for a week. And the prize? Greater enjoyment of the mountains.

Thus speaks the heretic!

Tom Kneen.



ASCENTS OF MT. OXO

by I KIDEW-KNOT

An account of adventures and trials of an MUMC expedition to a hitherto unconquered face.

On August 31st a team of six experienced and fully equipped MUMC climbers set out for what promised to be one of the most exciting and rewarding faces ever attempted within 5,000 yards of the G.P.O. At 2 p.m. the first two to arrive stood beneath the towering 720", 85° face, a little intimidated by its almost featureless wall, which ended in the fearsome overhang beneath the summit snowfields.

The doubtful privilege of the first lead was Phil's and he settled for the right hand artificial crack. He slowly worked his way up, placing doubtful pegs in the horizontal cracks, spurred on by violent abuse every time he paused (which was frequently). Phil ran out of krabs while going around the overhang and begged to be allowed to return, but we made him free the snowfield at the top, where he belayed. I nervously followed the route and we quickly abseiled to base camp.

The free route was rather devoid of holds, but since some of us had already ascended it using aid I decided it had to go free. I tried to encourage myself, "Go on, you procrastinating b...., commit yourself. Are you not a fearless climbing leader? Get on with it!" My pulse rate was a cool 140 as I delicately changed toes an intimidating 4' from the ground. The face was steep and unsound, the holds fingertip jugs at best, and widely spaced. Thirty feet up - the crux. With my feet on tiny holds and one hand on a fingertip hold near knee level, I reached to full stretch and found a tiny ledge on which to rest my fingertips. I very carefully stood up and reached for the next



hold. The crux was past. Up I scrambled to the overhang. I, too, went around on the right using those delightfully large jugs in the crack. A long, long lunge for the next hold and I was standing in balance at the start of the snowfield. I quickly moved to the top then abseiled to a very welcome drink down below.

There were other notable events during the nine day assault. Bruno, the fiery Swiss, soloed the artificial route - from which several pegs were later removed, either deliberately by means of a little finger, or accidentally while being used for aid.

On occasions the natives gathered in large numbers to watch our antics, so we decided to amuse ourselves and horrify them by "dropping" a few times. The obvious and most frequent effort was to clip onto a channel peg beneath the overhang, climb on until hanging well out and fall free of the face for about ten feet.

We performed seven of these tricks, but by far the most spectacular starred Tony and Bruno, the former performing one of four unscheduled drops. Tony had climbed past the overhang so Bruno, thinking all was well, stepped well back to have a look while still belaying. Tony fell (a goodly drop) and Bruno was picked up and unceremoniously slammed against the face. In the midst of this an intermediate piton fell out under transverse loading, detached itself from the carabiner (through which the rope had been passed the wrong way) and hurled itself at the startled natives.

As food supplies were dwindling we terminated our expedition with a party half-way up, with about ten fools dangling very precariously on unsound rock, while guzzling aperitif and devouring potato chips and sponge cake.

Sadly we bade fond farewell to our mountain. Now it has gone, probably forever, but the memories will live on and the tales of our adventures will grow year by year, in true armchair mountaineering tradition!

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THE B MOUNTAINS

I'm becoming convinced that all mountain activities are governed by the Law of Maximum Inconvenience. Why else would it rain almost every time I went away in what has been a very dry year? Still, if nothing else, we discovered that all clouds look the same from inside.

An interesting trip at any time of year is to go from the Howqua to the Delatite via Mr. Buller. Our expert river crosser showed how at Eight Mile Hut, but we decided it was better not to fall in. The spur to Little Buller is steep. We climbed it in intermittent rain, with magnificent views to all sides hidden by the murk. We met the snow, and with it the wind, on the razor back ridge below Little Buller, and the steep-sided snow-covered sawtooth ridge was perhaps the most interesting part of the trip. Camp was made in the saddle between Little Buller and Mt. Buller. Next morning a signpost loomed through the mist: Lhotse Face? Good grief! 6,000 miles off course! Who's navigating? But this was not the Himalaya but the land of Touristus Alpinus Obnoxia, a species much given to pretentious names. Much to their amazement we marched to the summit, hoisted our "Wear a Poppy" flag, and vanished down the Mirimbar Spur.

A trip to Baw Baw followed. A week later, after one of those parties, we found ourselves at sunrise driving up the logging road that follows the Howqua, along what is surely one of the most beautiful valleys in Victoria. The road ends below The Bluff, which we climbed in shocking weather. After losing two hats in the wind, we got the hell out. In better weather The Bluff offers a lot for winter trips and there could be some interesting snow climbing on the cliffs. The whole area has been a bit neglected by this Club.

Bogong next, accompanied by a mad peakbagger, a tea-making smoked oyster-eating shutterbug, and a maniac who wears gym boots



in the snow (not anymore!). Snow all the way from 2000' and a minor blizzard on top, but by nightfall we reached Cleve Cole after some instructive experiences at the top of the Staircase. On Saturday some went climbing in the gullies; the rest were almost blown off their feet in Hell Gap. Hell on Bogong! Kevin and I dug a snow cave and spent a reasonably comfortable night inside.

But Huey rewards those who persist. Sunday was a perfect winter day. We stood on the summit looking around at everything over 6000' in Australia, at the pole line marching across the skyline like a YHA excursion, and down on the plane that flew past. It is times like that I know why we go to the mountains.

We returned via the Eskdale Spur.

Rumblegut.

\*We always reckoned it was contagious, especially at this time of the year. Not wishing to be left out of the current spate, MARG. JAMES and JOHN KAVANAGH have announced their engagement. Since I usually suffer from the dreaded foot-in-mouth disease, I shall say no more except offer my congratulations and wish them (and the others mentioned earlier) all the best for the future.

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New Member of the Fallen Angels Club!

The fallen Angels club welcomes new member Bob Thornycroft, who recently "slipped" twice on the one climb. The first time he stopped himself by straddling the bough of a tree! (ouch). The second time he penduled while seconding the "Traverse of the Gods."

Pity the shirt was ruined, and you're covered in grazes, but congratulations Bob, and keep up the good work.

\*\*\*\*\*

About that questionnaire.....

The club has invested a lot of time and money in it, so please have the courtesy to return it. Better late than never, but better still on time. Don't be one of the 300 odd bunnies that some of our more pessimistic (realistic?) friends think will forget, avoid or otherwise ignore it or swipe the stamp...or will you?

STOP PRESS

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The rot has really set in. JAN NEVILL and ANDREW SPATE have taken the plunge. Andrew, of course, loses a dozen bottles of beer to Bob Chappel by this move. Now Bob is in mortal danger. Hurry up girls, there aren't many bachelors left!

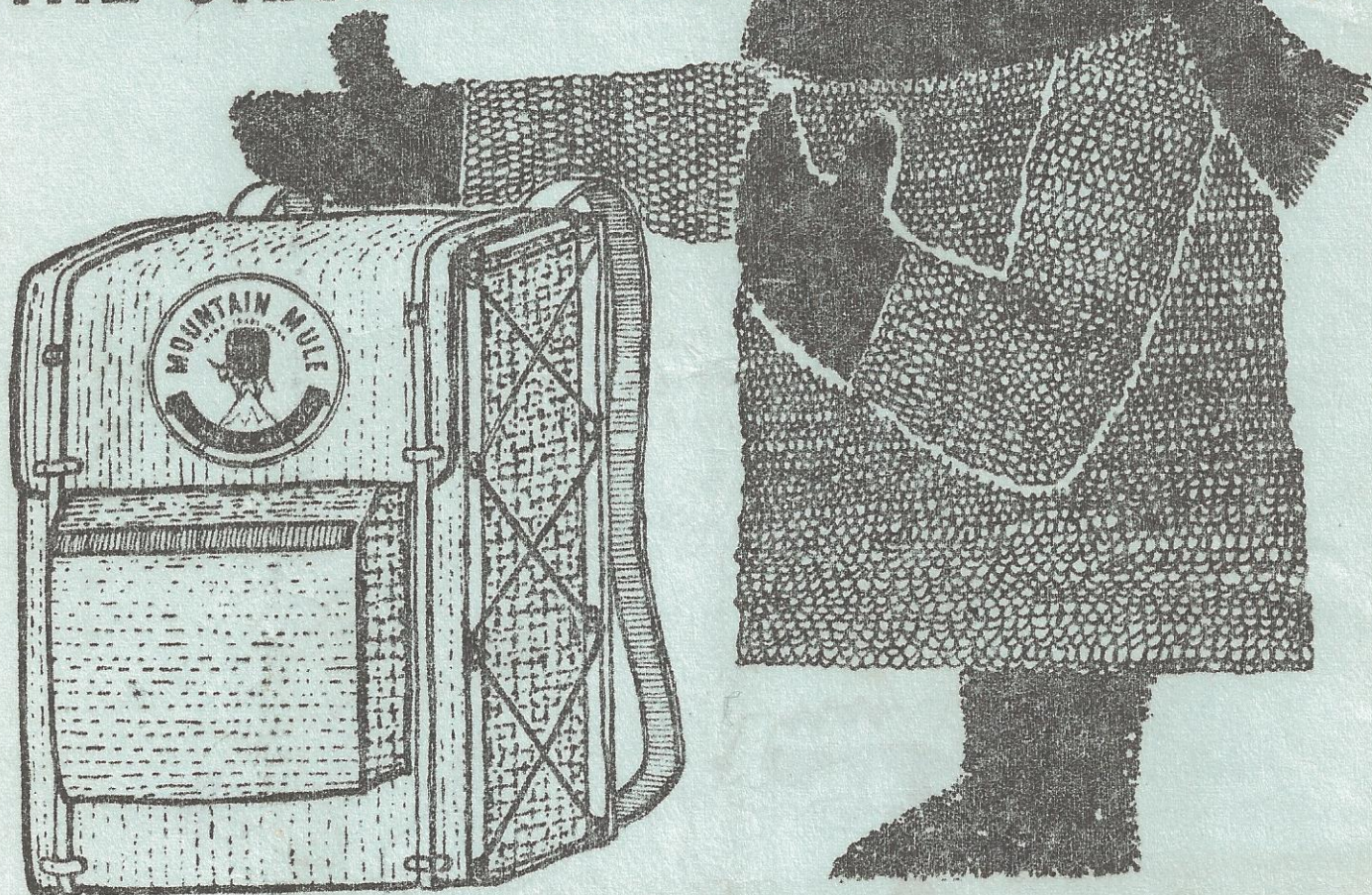








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