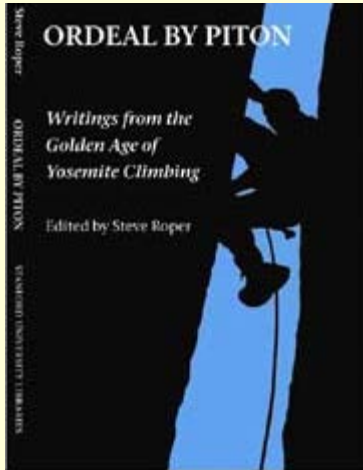


# No Guts, No Glory: A History of the Stanford Alpine Club

SAC [alumni membership list](#)

SAC *Quad* photos & names: [1947](#) | [1948](#) | [1949](#) | [1950](#) | [1951](#) | [1952](#) | [1953](#) | [1954](#) | [1955](#) | [1956](#) | [1957](#) | [1958](#) | [1959](#) | [1960](#) | [1961](#) | [1962](#) | [1963](#) | [1964](#) | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968



Great Chimney, Washington Column Direct Route. Photograph by Henry Kendall, 1958. Copyright ©2000 Estate of Henry Kendall.

- [The new Stanford Alpine Club](#)
- No Guts, No Glory: An Exhibition of the History of the Stanford Alpine Club. [Bing Wing](#) of Green Library, May 13 to August 15, 2000. Club founder Alfred Baxter's [sermon to the faithful](#) upon the opening of the exhibit. ([Al Baxter memorial](#))
- *The Stanford Alpine Club*, featuring the photography of Tom Frost, Henry Kendall, and Leigh Ortenburger, by John Rawlings. Photography editor Glen Denny. Stanford: CSLI Publications/Stanford University Libraries, 2000. 178 duotone and halftone photographs and illustrations, 208 pages, \$49.95. 1,000 copies printed. [Order Information](#). There is a discount (\$32 plus tax and shipping) for members of the Stanford Historical Society, the Library Associates, and the Stanford Alpine Club.
- [QuickTime movie](#) 4:45 minutes (12,859 KB), SAC film festival trailer (13 May 2000). The complete video *El Capitan* by Fred Padula, Climbing photographer Glen Denny, is available from [Chessler Books](#).
- From the SAC Archive: [Freedom of the Quad](#), 2nd ed. 1971 | The Stanford Alpine Club Journal [1955](#); [1958](#)
- [Ordeal by Piton](#): *Writing from the Golden Age of Yosemite Climbing*. Steve Roper, Ed. Stanford: Stanford University Libraries, 2003. Order from Amazon.com or your local bookseller. Booksellers contact [rawlings@stanford.edu](mailto:rawlings@stanford.edu).

## Exhibit Preview

[SAC exhibit part 2](#)

### 1 / No Guts, No Glory

The Stanford Alpine Club was one of America's prominent college climbing clubs. Its identity was forged in the crucible of Yosemite Valley's smooth, steep granite. Members made important contributions to the development of modern Yosemite rockclimbing technique and helped carry the lessons learned to the world's great ranges. Coeducational membership was another factor distinguishing the SAC from the longer-established and better-known eastern clubs, and a tradition of "manless climbing" dated from the club's



"I kept seeing rocks in my mind for days afterwards. I was just stunned and thrilled." --Meredith Ellis, climbing an overhang, Yosemite, 1962. Copyright ©2000 Wally Reed. Meredith Ellis Collection.

1946 inaugural year.

In the foreword to [The Stanford Alpine Club](#), climbing historian Steve Roper writes "Nothing lasts forever, and for various reasons, the Stanford Alpine Club no longer exists. But nostalgia persists, and the story of this remarkable organization begged to be told. [It] is a testament to an era when young, enthusiastic college kids simply went out and had good fun in the mountains. Look at these rare, often exquisite, photos. Ponder the Pleistocene equipment and clothing we old-timers once were so proud of. . . . You'll be transported back to an innocent time."

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## 2/ The First Stanford Climbers



When Stanford Alpine Club members occasionally paused from conversations of recent accomplishments and future plans and reflected on Stanford's mountaineering heritage, they contemplated a noble tradition stretching back through a web of connections involving Sierra Club climbers and its Rock Climbing Section, the legendary alumnus Walter Starr Jr., '24, Professor Bolton Coit Brown and his wife Lucy Fletcher Brown--all the way to the beginning of the university in the person of its first president, David Starr Jordan.

left: Freddy Hubbard demonstrates how to avoid curfew restrictions by rappelling from a Roble Hall window, 1947. Winifred Brown Collection. The new club drew some of its membership from the student hiking club that Cynthia Cummings, Freddy Hubbard, and three other Colorado friends had formed in 1945. Climbing, however, was what the coeds desired.

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## 3 / Founders

At Stanford the existence of the Alpine Club is as precarious as it is precious: The club exists in terms of a nucleus of avid climbers, sentimental enough to want to express their esprit in objective, institutional form, and proud enough to desire independence of the Sierra Club. But the Alpine Club has not always existed at Stanford; it was founded and has flourished in peculiar times, and how long the club can survive will always be problematic.

--Dave Harrah, 1951

Through the summer of 1946, Larry Taylor worked on plans to form a climbing club at Stanford when he returned for graduate work in civil engineering. Then in August he chanced upon Al Baxter buying hobnails in the campus shoe shop, giving himself away as a mountain climber. "Though he had never done any roped climbing," wrote Taylor, "Al was at once enthusiastic about my plan; indeed it was his enthusiasm which had a great deal to do with the actual carrying out of the idea." The third founding member, Fritz Lippmann, the only experienced climber of the group, Taylor had met during Sierra Club Rock Climbing Section outings.



below left: Some of the members of the Stanford Alpine Club in its first year. *Stanford Quad*, 1947.

first row, left to right: G. Schoder, R. Gates, R. Hines, D. Meyer, A. Baxter, F. Lippmann, L. Taylor, C. Cummings, W. Bedford, A. Cheney, M. Coolidge.  
 second row: M. J. Fiksdal, W. R. Kane, M. Palmquist, L. Wing, P. Kaufmann, M. Thomas, F. Hubbard, V. Bengal, S. Marsden, E. Seaman, C.B. Forster.  
 back row: L. Ames, E. Ornitz, W. Kissell, C. Feldman, K. Campbell, J. Cumming, J. Hood, E. Irvine, W. Gorton, S. Hall, N. Hamilton, K. Hutchinson.

## 5/ Lippmann, Harrah & Lindbergh

The personal connections and corporate traditions that bound one class to another became the SAC's strength. One such connection was between founder Fritz Lippmann and Dave Harrah, and then between Harrah and members who would become club leaders into the 1950s, including Jon Lindbergh and Nick Clinch. Lindbergh, Clinch, Dwight Crowder, Sherman Lehman, and Rowland Tabor were examples of the club's ability to attract, train, and retain a nucleus of leaders that would guide it through the fifties in the form established by the founders, strengthened by Harrah, and carried on by a cadre of new club presidents with a shared vision and commitment to the club.

right: Dave Harrah preparing to rappel from the roof of Encina Hall in 1948. Copyright ©2000 Dave Harrah.



## 7 / Hidden Peak



Approaching Hidden Peak. Copyright ©2000 by Bob Swift.

In his book *A Walk in the Sky*, Nick Clinch told how while sitting twenty-eight days in a storm-bound tent in the mountains of British Columbia, clutching tent poles to prevent them from breaking, morosely contemplating the lowering white veil of the first of several blizzards that would plague the forty-day duration of the 1954 Stanford Coast Range Expedition, he formed the conviction that he and his fellow SAC climbers could actually succeed on an 8,000-meter peak. "Surely the Himalaya could not be worse than this," Clinch mused. "Why not go there?" "That was my great insight," he reflected. "And I was proved right." Clinch and his comrades would be the only Americans to do a first ascent of an 8,000-meter peak.

Fanshawe and Venables wrote about Hidden Peak in *Himalaya Alpine-Style*:

Nick Clinch led the successful 1958 American Expedition. His team, with the exception of Pete Schoening who had climbed on K2, was made up of old friends with relatively little altitude experience. . . . Clinch himself did not reach the summit of Hidden Peak but masterminded the first ascent, two years later, of Masherbrum and was a member of that expedition's second successful summit party. His contribution to American mountaineering is thus profound, though he was never to gain the same acclaim as his countrymen who were to climb Everest and K2 in the following decades.

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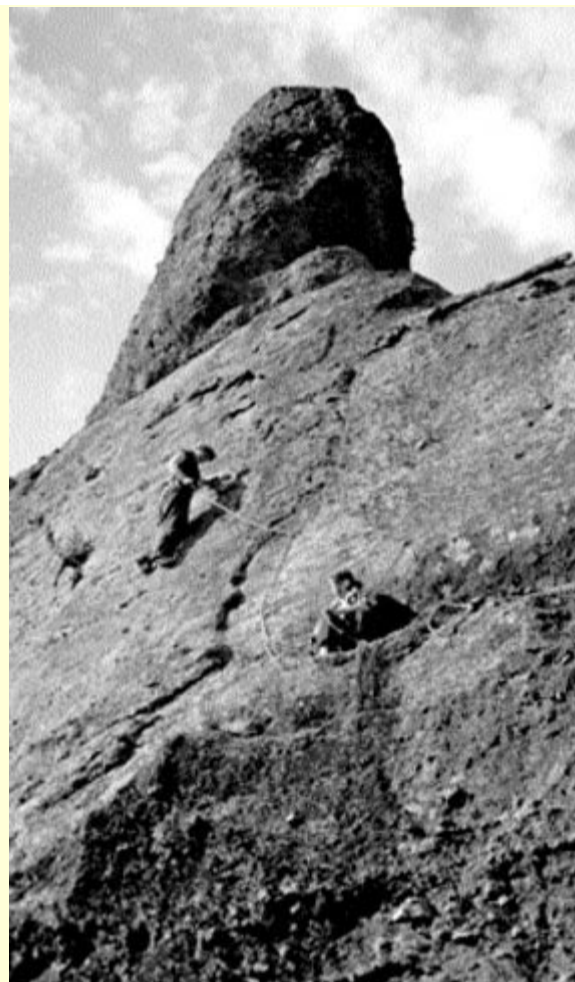
## 8 / Coed Climbers

Women climbers had distinguished themselves beginning in the club's first year when Mary Sherrill and Freddy Hubbard became the third and fourth women to climb to the top of Higher Cathedral Spire in Yosemite Valley. Later Hubbard made the first ascent by a woman of the Washington Column Direct Route. The

club's tradition of "manless" climbing dated from 1947. In 1952 Jane Noble, Mary Kay Pottinger, Gail Fleming, and Bea Vogel made ascents of Mt. Moran, the North Ridge of Middle Teton, and the Southwest Ridge of Symmetry Spire. In 1965 Irene Beardsley and Sue Swedlund made the first all-woman climb of the awesome North Face of the Grand Teton, the most famous north face in the United States. Climbing historian Chris Jones called that adventure "probably the most arduous all-woman ascent then made in North America," and Beardsley "one of America's best women climbers."

Freddy Hubbard and her Roble Hall companions were not merely beneficiaries of the new club's coed-friendly attitude. Experienced mountaineers all, they were important contributors to the SAC's success.

right: Su Wheatland belays Bea Vogel on the Monolith, Pinnacles National Monument, 1952. Copyright ©2000 by Richard Irvin.



## 12 / Harlin & Frost



John Harlin atop the Aiguille du Fou after the first ascent of its south face, 1963. Copyright ©2000 by Tom Frost.

Throughout the 1957/58 school year Mike Roberts, Lennie Lamb, Henry Kendall, Dave Sowles, and Gil Roberts were working on their contributions to a new edition of the *Stanford Alpine Club Journal*. Gil

Roberts, back from his summer first ascent of Mt. Logan's East Ridge, was also planning to join Nick Clinch's 1958 American Karakoram Expedition to Gasherbrum I.

In addition to the challenge of the great Himalayan peaks, a second test of American mountaineering beckoned. The most severe routes of the Alps, including the Walker Spur of the Grandes Jorasses and the Eigerwand, awaited American ascents, as did major lines and faces yet unclimbed. Club members were learning skills and forging relationships that would help them accomplish these mountaineering goals. John Harlin and Gary Hemming would lead the way in a breakthrough for Americans climbing in the European Alps. Kendall joined Hemming on the Walker Spur of the Grandes Jorasses, the first American ascent of that classic climb, "a route to dream of, perhaps the finest in existence." Frost joined them on some of their greatest first ascents: the South Face of the Fou and the Hidden Pillar of Fréney. These adventures on great mountains had their beginnings in small places, on Sunday outings to Miraloma Rock and Hunter's Hill, with the Stanford Alpine Club.

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Tom Frost grew up in southern California and became a national champion in sailing as a teenager. At Stanford he majored in engineering, rowed crew, and kept on looking for what he called "the real thing." He found it after meeting SAC members and seeing Henry Kendall's photographs. He joined the club in 1957, rising quickly to the front rank of American climbers.

In 1960 he was invited to join the team attempting the first continuous ascent of El Capitan. Frost knew nothing of photography but recognized the visual potential. Bill "Dolt" Feuerer had been on that wall and offered his camera to Frost, along with instructions on how to use it. The historic ascent took seven days, and Frost's innate visual talent was revealed on six rolls of Plus-X film.

On his El Cap ascents in the 1960s Frost used a Leica IIC 35-mm camera with a collapsible 50-mm 3.5 Elmar lens. In less daunting places he used a 4x5 view camera and tripod, for which he built a carrying case that attached to a Kelty pack frame. But climbing still came before photography, Frost said; and on his major ascents, where survival itself was often in question, he carried the smaller instrument. In *Big Walls: Breakthroughs on the Free-Climbing Frontier* (Sierra Club Books, 1997), Paul Piana wrote that Frost "more than any other climber conveyed what it felt like to dangle thousands of feet off the ground. Tom Frost's beautiful black-and-white photos are still among the finest and most inspirational examples of climbing photography."

Glen Denny said of Frost: "Most of the climbing photos you see now are prearranged setups for the camera on much-traveled routes. The impressive thing about Frost is that his classic images were seen, and photographed, during major first ascents. In those awesome situations he led, cleaned, hauled, day after day and--somehow--used his camera with the acuity of a Cartier-Bresson strolling about a piazza. Extremes of heat and cold, storm and high altitude, fear and exhaustion . . . it didn't matter. He didn't seem to feel the pressure."



Tom Frost bivouacking in his net hammock, Dihedral Wall, El Capitan, 1964. Copyright ©2000 by Royal Robbins.

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[SAC exhibit part 2](#)

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This is a mailing list for all former members and associates of the Stanford Alpine Club. Please review your listing and send additions and corrections to Irene Beardsley, (650) 493-8383, [irene@beardsley.org](mailto:irene@beardsley.org). In particular, please send your email address if it is not listed. First is a list of people for whom we have not yet found addresses, followed by the year(s) they were in the club yearbook photo. Thanks to Al Baxter, who started this project by going through the yearbooks and putting all names on 3x5 cards.

SAC mailing list is now located at <http://www.beardsley.org/sac/sacdata.html>

Return to [SAC exhibit](#)



# ALPINE CLUB

The Alpine Club, headed by President Fritz Lippmann, is composed primarily of students interested in mountain climbing. During the Autumn Quarter, three members took part in nine ascents in British Columbia, and later three more climbed the difficult Washington Column in Yosemite Park. Several outings were held by the entire group, including many practice climbs in the Pinnacles National Monument.

Alpine Club president,  
Fritz Lippmann

*Front row:* D. Harrah, W. Mead, F. Lippmann, U. Ramm-Ericson, H. Stauffer, J. McKean. *Back row:* A. Baxter, G. Anderson, D. Crowder, E. Irvine, J. Moore, S. Bowers.

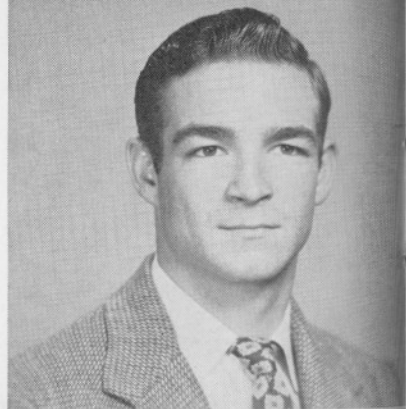


# ALPINE CLUB

This year local practice climbs and longer climbs at Pinnacles National Monument and Yosemite have been conducted by the Alpine Club. Several members have shouldered ice axes, varying the usual rock-climbing techniques with some winter mountaineering practice. The Club welcomes anyone interested in rock-climbing as a means to mountain-climbing or as an end in itself.

President Bud Gates

Front row: D. Harrah, S. Lehman. Second row: D. Curry, F. Lippman, E. Irvine, C. Crush, A. Strong, W. Kane, E. Swann, J. Boyd. Back row: G. Anderson, B. Hachmann, G. Schoder, M. Fiksdahl, U. Ramm-Ericson, J. Moore, H. Stauffer, B. Trefsgger.





LEFT TO RIGHT: ROW 1: Dave Harrah, Mort Yelton, Jon Cummings, Gail Flemming, John Chaffey, Ben Chaffey, John Mowat, Neal Bostick, Sherman Lehman, Cliff Hopson. ROW 2: Betty Swann, Doug Campbell, Bob Trefzger, Nick Clinch, Jim Case, Ron Hayes, Dwight Crowder, Jim Moore, Jack Maling, Bill Davis, Maxine Steineke.

Alaska, the Alps, the Andes—the Alpine Club covered territory in 1949-50. Five more "first ascents" were recorded, and the Matterhorn was conquered by four roughs and two girls from the Farm. Yosemite challenged the rock-climbers in the fall and spring, and the ski-tourers in the winter. More novices were trained on practice trips to qualify as Qualified and Leader members. A hiking section was added to show the outdoors from a new angle. In off-moments they practiced the traverse on the pillars of the Education Building, denied they put the footprints on Hoover Tower, and reminisced at L'Ommie's and the Bergsteigers' Ball.



PRESIDENT DAVID HARRAH

## ALPINE CLUB

PRESIDENT DWIGHT CROWDER



FRONT ROW, left to right: Jim Lee, Bob Finkel, Dick Stark, John Mowat, Karl Stauffer, Roland Tabor, Chuck Lipman. SECOND ROW: Jane Noble, Marian Steineke, Lillian Kresling, Enid Holt, Carolyn Teren, Maxine Steineke, Maisie May, Joan Marshall, Betsy Crowder, Wendy Chrisman, Gail Fleming, Sherman Lehman, Cliff Hopson. THIRD ROW: Jack Maling, Mort Yelton, Melvin Bethke, Malcom Clark, Henry Stauffer, Jack Cook, Jim Moore, Dwight Crowder, Nick Clinch, Jack Weicker, Morris Fiksdal, William Davis, Bill Martin, George Stricker, Louis Christian.

## CREW AUXILIARY

THE CREW Auxiliary was formed two years ago to function in a secretarial capacity to the crew. The girls take on most of the paper work of the organization—typing, sending out

## ALPINE CLUB

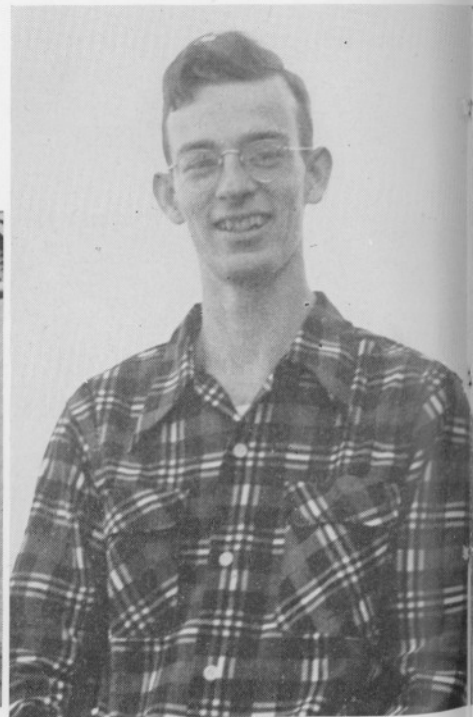
FAR BELOW, the meadows of the Tuolumne; on the horizon, an October storm; nearby, silent on the warm summit rocks, one's companions—old timers who have shared experiences in the mountains of Canada or Europe, young bucks eager for “first ascents” and cross-country skiing, a new crop training to qualify as leaders in their turn—this is the Stanford Alpine Club.

# ALPINE CLUB

United by a common love of the great outdoors, The Alpiners carried on with their frenetic activities still another year. Expeditions roamed the wilds of Alaska, Canada, and California, managing to put themselves in many spots of that inaccessible and improbable nature so dear to the mountaineer. Closer to home, Yosemite ascents were forged with new zeal, and even on campus remote spots bid their help to fun loving members on moonless nights.



FRONT ROW, left to right: Bea Vogel, Jane Noble, Marian Steineke, Mary Kay Pottinger, Sherman Lehman, John Mowat, Bob Kincheloe, Carol Rudnick, Wende Chrisman, Al Davidson. SECOND ROW: Nancy Bickford, Ellen Searby, Maxine Steineke, Maisy May, John Sobieski, George Mowat, Sabra Osborn, Neely Bostick, Sue Wheatland. THIRD ROW: Tom Nevison, Bill Martin, Jack Welcher, Dwight Crowder, Nick Clinch, Rowland Tabor, Chuck Lipman, Gail Fleming, Jon Lindberg, Don Benson, Chrissy Stevens.



PRESIDENT SHERMAN LEHMAN



FRONT ROW: Rowland Tabor.  
 SECOND ROW, left to right: Irene Smith, Neely Bostick, Mary Kay Pottinger, Marion Steineke, Binney Carpenter, Jane Noble.  
 THIRD ROW: Ellen Searby, Nancy Bickford, John Sobieski, George Mowat, Sue Wheatland, Lillian Lehman, Herb Foster, D. Ambler Gowles. FOURTH ROW: Jack Maling, Hugh DeWitt, Bill Martin, Jack Weicker, Martin Johnson, Bob Kincheloe, Jon Lindbergh, Sherman Gehman, Emilie Sturger.

ROWLAND TABOR  
 President

## ALPINE CLUB

The club, an inhomogenous organism, with a desire to climb, maintained almost year-round activities. Members, retreating from the Tetons and Alaska in the fall, continued climbing activity at Stanford with a welter of practice climbs, trips to Yosemite, Tuolumne, Castle Crags, and Pinnacles; filling the snow months with ski tours to Shasta, Tuolumne, Mt. Ritter, ski week ends, tea parties and speleology, club members consoled themselves until valley snows disappeared and spring climbing commenced. The annual dinner and Bergsteigers' Ball terminated the year's activities.





FIRST ROW, left to right: I Mountain Goat, Sabra Osborn, Marian Steineke, Carol Rudnick, Loren Mae Arthur, David Sowles, Gary Driggs, Anne Pottinger, Lillian Lehman. SECOND ROW: Wende Chrisman, Emilie Sturges, Sue Roberts, Irene Beardsley, Ellen Hoadley, Ellen Searby, Nancy Bickford, Alexander Cole, George Scithers, Gordon Greve, Fred Hadden, Bert Woodburn.

JACK MALING  
President

The Alpine Club trains students interested in rock-climbing by holding practice climbs on rocks in the Bay Area several times a quarter. Expeditions to Yosemite and skiing jaunts to the Sierras give its members the experience and thrills of mountaineering. The year's official activities come to a close with the annual dinner and Bergsteigers' Ball in June.



# A LPINE CLUB

Nature lovers and mountain climbers unite their interests in the Alpine Club. Students interested or experienced in rock-climbing give vent to their desires and abilities on quarterly practice climbs which the club sponsors. This year, expeditions proceeded to Yosemite and the High Sierras, as well as remaining close to home and attacking familiar peaks in the surrounding landscape. Club activities came to a close with the annual dinner for all adventurous members.



BOB BROOKE

FIRST ROW, left to right: Pete Holm (equipment manager), Sandy Cole (vice-president), John Mathias, Bill Martin, Adriano Garsia. SECOND ROW: John Harlin, Marilyn Miler, Emilie Sturges (treasurer), Ellen Hoadley (secretary), Anne Pottinger, Bob Brooke, (president), David Sowles, Nick Clinch, Tom Eisner. THIRD ROW: Meredith Ellis, Irene Beardsley, Nancy Bickford, Paul Revak, Martin Johnson, Steve Cowie, Fred McMurphy, Ben Crocker, Ellen Searby, Gordon Greve, George Scithers, Bill Sundblad, Tom O'Connor. NOT PICTURED: Sabra Osborn, Bob Kincheloe, Sue Roberts, Anne Constant, Carol Rudnick, Jack Maling, Jerry Tiemann, Ernst Gehrels, Sue Wheatland, Mike Roberts.

# ALPINE CLUB

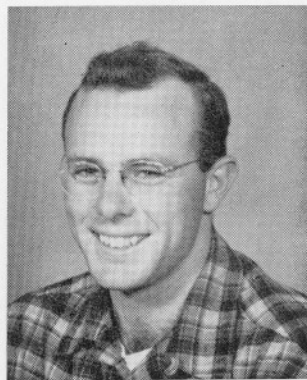


Nature lovers and mountain climbers unite their interests in the Alpine Club. Students interested or experienced in rock climbing give vent to their desires and abilities on quarterly practice climbs which the Club sponsors. This year, expeditions proceeded to Yosemite and Tuolumne, as well as remaining close to home and attacking familiar peaks in the surrounding landscape. A new practice climb area was found in Black Rock. Club activities came to a close with the annual dinner for all adventurous members.

## ALPINE CLUB



GORDON GREVE  
President



FIRST ROW, left to right: Michael Roberts, Irene Beardsley, Gordon Greve, Ben Crocker. SECOND ROW: Pete Banks, Neale Creamer, William Poppino, William Sunblad. THIRD ROW: Pat Hofmann, Pete Holm, Ricky Tidrick, Tom O'Connor.

# Alpine Club

LEFT TO RIGHT, ROW ONE: John Mathias, Bill Pope, Lil' Brown Jug, Tom O'Connor, John Harlin, President; Jim Briggs. ROW TWO: Karl Hufbauer, Bruce Smith, Mary Murane, Neil Creamer, Fred Gronemann, Pete Banks, Jim Bjorken, Adrianno Garcia, Rupert Miller, Henry Kendall, Ron Phillips, Hot Rock Tidrick.





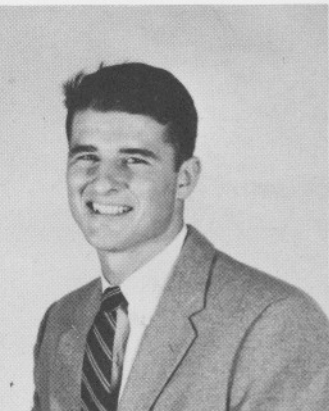
**Mike Roberts**  
President

## *Alpine Club*

LEFT TO RIGHT, ROW ONE: Patty Clark, Sid Whaley, Lennie Lamb, Mike Roberts, Margi Meyer, Irene Ortenberger, Earl Cilley, Bill Pope. ROW TWO: Hoby DeStaebler, Henry Kednall, Howard Brenton, Ivan Weightman, Dick Evans, Hugh Voris, Dick Fallgren, Gordon Greve, Bob Kinchloe. ROW THREE: Karl Hufbauer, Larry Headlee, Randy Pyle, Leroy Junker, Tom Frost, Paul Delany, Dave Coward.



# ALPINE CLUB



**Karl Hufbauer**  
President



**Left to Right, Row One:** Sid Whaley, Hugh Voris, Bob Charlson, Naydene Nutley, Priscilla Brown. **Row Two:** Karl Hufbauer, Sumter Miller, Gerry Czamanske, John Ott, Bruce Smith, Dick Fallgren.

The membership of the Alpine Club includes undergraduates, graduate students, and professors. One of the main activities of the group is local climbs on Sunday which prepare the members for the three or four week-end trips which they take to Yosemite Valley or Mt. Shasta. Their meetings often feature talks by guest speakers.

A trip to Yosemite National Park spring quarter was the main activity of Stanford's Alpine Club this year. The club, whose purpose is to promote interest in and opportunities for mountain climbing, prepared its thirty members for the spring weekend with weekly climbing trips during Winter Quarter in the mountains near the campus.

## ALPINE CLUB

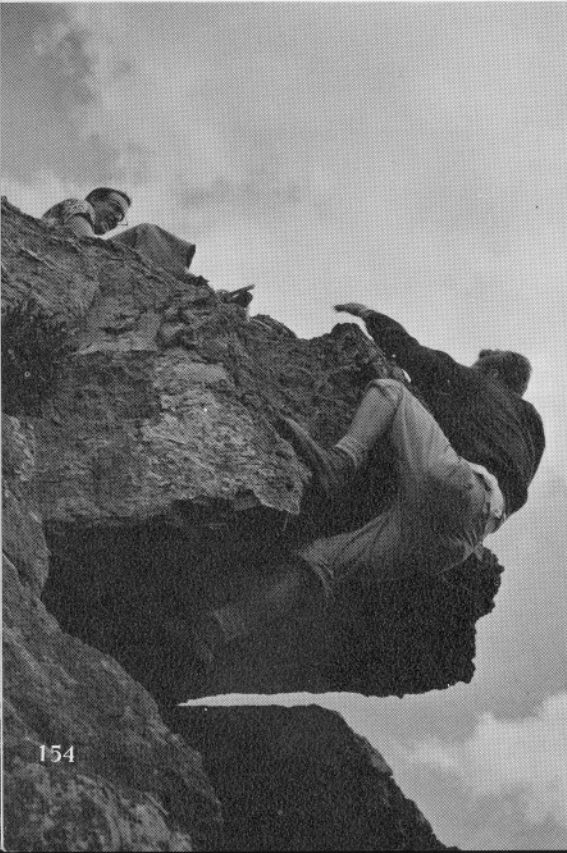


# Alpine Club

The Alpine Club is a group of faculty members and students who are interested in mountain climbing. The members make practice climbs every weekend and take one or two weekend trips each quarter. Activities planned for this year included a ski tour during winter quarter.

The last participant arrives for a summit meeting.

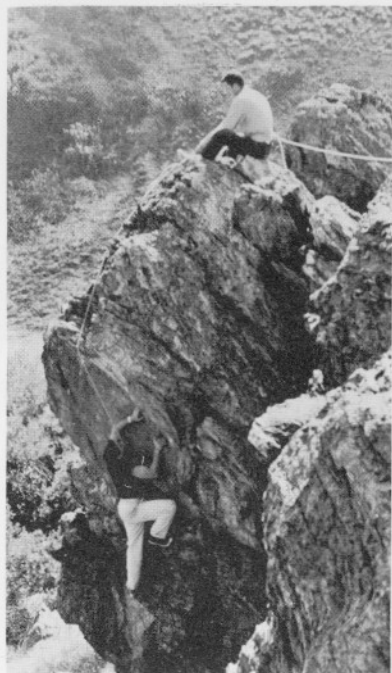
*First Row:* Eleanor River, Penny Carr, Dorothy Haase, Anne Arnon, Sukey Leonard. *Second Row:* Fred Smith, Clint Heiple, Pete Melz, president; Bruce Benedict, Masahiro Omori, Bruce Nesbit, Bob Summers.



year. Members who qualify may join the varsity team which regularly competes with teams from other schools in the Bay Area.

## ALPINE CLUB

The Alpine Club, whose members include both students and faculty, is designed to promote interest in and opportunities for mountain climbing. Week-end practice climbs prepare the members for 3 or 4 trips which they take to Yosemite Valley or Mt. Shasta. Guest speakers are often featured at the club's meetings.



With intelligence, imagination, and cooperation, Man faces the challenges of nature



First Row: Bernie Mayer, Lucy Ames, Dennis Wilson. Second Row: Bruce Morden, John Neale, Dave Czamanske, Ned Mackay, Dave Boore, Rick Litterick.

# *ALPINE CLUB*

Take a majestic mountain and a scenic view of nature's serenities and you can easily forget papers, mid-terms, and finals. This is the creed of the Alpine Club, a group of students and faculty members who enjoy climbing mountains. Practice climbs on week-ends get the club members in shape for their trips to Yosemite National Park, Pinnacles National Monument, and Mount Shasta. Plans have been discussed for a trip to Tibet in search of the Abominable Brewmaster but they had to be discarded. Until bigger and better mountains are built by Nature and Walt Disney, "The Club welcomes interested, but inexperienced, people of either sex," and continues to climb the available hills.

Left to Right, Row One: Steve Ludington, Steve Jervis, Edward MacKay, Vice-President; Dave Boore, President; Judith Lovelace, Treasurer; Sylvia Wells, Secretary; Rick Luttmann, John Neale. Row Two: Sam Johnson, Hal Van Zoeren, Matt Pauly, Bruce Benedict, Hugh Warren, Bruce Morden, Doug Loescher, Linda Channell, Peter Carah.







## **ALPINE CLUB**

For those that grimace at the thought of having to walk up to their room on the third floor of the dorm, the thought of climbing hills and, yes, even mountains will probably have little appeal. To these persons the Alpine Club has little to offer. But if you get a secret thrill out of the thought of ascending Hoover Tower — and not on the inside — the Alpine Club is just for you. Members of both sexes continue to work their way over hill and precipice, upward . . . ever . . . upward . . .

Left to Right, Row One: Ned Mackay, Dave Boore, Bruce Morden, Devens Gust, Gary DeBell, James Bryan, Russ Robinson, John Hill. Row Two: Diann Stein, Judy Oglesby, Bruce Benedict, Kathy Scott, Lisa Lillydahl, Jennifer Buss, David Clark. Row Three: Donna Reid, Ron Adler, Lynne Nelson, David Crafoot, Helen Arnold, John Harbuck, John Battaile, Barbara Dietz, Susan Flader.



Great routes, great writing. It was a special time, this Golden Age of Yosemite climbing. Virgin walls soared 3,000 feet. Immense pinnacles had golden eagles atop them, but no cairns. The phrase “kids in a candy store” springs to mind. Excited by such possibilities, climbers who barely knew what they were up against swarmed up new routes, and then, as if to further savor their adventures, put pen to paper.

Steve Roper presents fifty-four selections that represent the most interesting and significant literary output about Yosemite climbing from its beginnings, in 1933, until 1974. Sixty-seven photographs and illustrations.

Front cover, The Great Chimney,  
Washington Column Direct Route, 1957.  
Photo by Henry Kendall. Back cover,  
The Valley, photo by Glen Denny.

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Steve Roper

ORDEAL BY PITON

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

# ORDEAL BY PITON

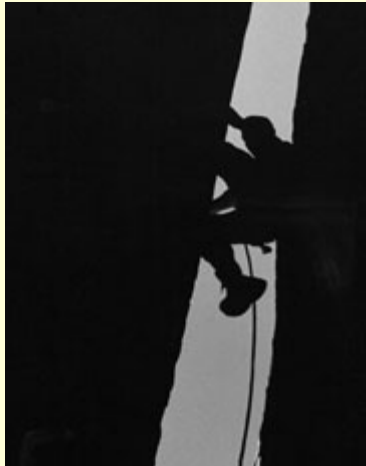
*Writings from the  
Golden Age of  
Yosemite Climbing*

Edited by Steve Roper



# No Guts, No Glory: A History of the Stanford Alpine Club

Opening remarks made by club founder Alfred Baxter at the SAC film festival and exhibit opening, 13 May 2000



Tom Frost, Great Chimney, Washington Column Direct Route. Photograph by Henry Kendall, 1958. Copyright ©2000 Estate of Henry Kendall.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a happy fellow guest, let me add my welcome to this reunion to the welcomes provided by so many members of the Stanford Library staff. Let me remind you that a special Alpine Club Exhibit will be open until 9 p.m. in the Bing Wing of the Green Library. Do not expect a wing ding in the Bing Wing. John Rawlings fine new book will be on exhibit there and will be offered for sale. An interesting film festival will begin in a few moments.

It is my intention to begin with a short, lay sermon starting with the theme of humility. I read in the book that we honor today that my friend-of-a-life-time and former climbing companion, Freddy Hubbard Brown, regarded me as a long-winded gas bag. She was quite correct. I am contrite, as behooves a sermonizer. I shall be brief and speak to you with a sermonizer's appropriate humility.

I shall not call this gathering historic because it is not and it would be inaccurate to pretend so. Compared with the soaring triangle of Alpamayo, superbly photographed by my friend and one-time roommate Leigh Ortenburger, ours and other human associations must be seen to be as insignificant in history, as they are brief.

This occasion, however, may properly be called historical because it celebrates both a series of events and associations, important in many of our lives, and a thoughtful interpretive history of those events. The research of John Rawlings is impressive in its extent and deployment. His writing displays intelligence and a species of love reflected in imaginative, well-directed and productive scholarship. In the spirit of Leopold von Ranke he has described boys, girls, attitudes and events "as they actually were."

The new book and the exhibit deal with climbs worldwide achieved by climbers drawn from some nine generations of Stanford students. The history makes three characterizations crucial for mountaineering history:

- the styles, moods, and careers of the climbers
- the qualities and contexts of climbs, and (this I believe is the finest achievement):
- the complex and often subtle relationships between serious mountaineering and human character over a life's span

Some of the book's 178 illustrations are attractive and serviceable. Such pictures support the narrative and put visual flesh on the text. The rose-lipped girl and the light foot lad are splendid. So is the unemphatic shot of climbers hauling Werner-Hopf's wrapped body on a sled over the lower slopes of Mt. Shasta. Any who might doubt that girls can climb cliffs should consider the picture of Meredith Ellis on page 65.

The five, well-edited portfolios by Kendall, Ortenburger, Frost and others go far beyond mere climbing incidents; they open a view to mountaineering's central core, the vast and compelling beauties of form, texture and context. Who, seeing these pictures, would not gain at least a limited appreciation of the call of

the Walker Spur, of the north ridge of Chacraraju, of great Gasherbrum, or the walls of El Capitan? Rawlings and Glen Denny have done very well in adding great pictures to well-framed words in the joint service of resourceful historical explications.

Mountaineering differs intrinsically in character from other sports (with the possible exception of small-boat ocean sailing) and extrinsically in that it, alone among sports, has a large and varied literature of high quality. Rawlings has contributed to that great literature. In addition he has done well as an historian to record that members of the Alpine Club both read about and wrote about their sport. Fritz Lippman was no scholar but he knew chapter and verse of alpine literature in three languages. Fritz and I were pleased when our first historical collaboration for the *Sierra Club Bulletin* was translated into Japanese.

Many of us selected and repeated classic alpine routes exactly because they were not new but old and sacred ground, trod first by pioneers of our sport, and thus to be cherished, *inter alia*, for literary and historical reasons.

I conjecture, although I can not prove, that enduring friendships born of shared climbing experience are superior to many acquaintanceships otherwise gained. Dave Harrah, David Brower, Leigh Ortenburger, Larry Taylor, Ulf Ramm-Ericson, Rupert Gates, Freddy Hubbard, Robin Hansen, Hans Breu--I should have had a vastly poorer life without their comradeship. My experience can not be unique.

Let me extend this anecdote to honor Gail Fleming, my first wife and climbing buddy for 40 years. She was burned to death before she could draw maps for the new edition of Ortenburger's Teton climbing guide. I must also recognize Mary Sherrill Mead Baxter, with Gail a founding member of the Stanford Alpine Club, who married me in 1993 and brought joy to my later years along with criticism more effective than any received earlier from "fearless" Freddy Brown.

I offer these personal circumstances as examples of what I believe to be a larger and more generally applicable truth: that who one climbs with and how one profits from climbing associations by incorporating them in a larger life are as important in the long run as what one climbs, how one climbs or where one climbs. Except for solo climbers mountaineering is a profoundly social sport wherein many enduring values derive more from flesh than from ice or granite. Fine friendships have been formed without the soil and leaven of a university climbing club. Even if this be so, we can all be grateful to our once institutionalized club for making important friendships potentially abundant and graceful of access. We can be grateful to John Rawlings and to the Stanford University Libraries for invigorating our memories of important associations.

Steve Roper, in his introduction to the Alpine Club history, designates our climbing days as "an age of innocence." Even if it was, we should not forget the sobering tragedies of young climbers dying young. Let us remember :

John Hood, the first of us to die climbing, and Larry Green, Fred Hadden, John Harlin, Ed Hermans, Richard Litterick, Ernie Milburn, Ann Pottinger, David Sowles, Edgar Werner-Hopf, Bert Woodburn.

Alfred Houseman's epitaph, presaged by an early photograph in Rawlings' book, is better than most.

By brooks too broad for leaping the light foot lads are laid;  
The rose-lipped girls are sleeping in fields where roses fade.

There you have my sermon. I have not touched upon faith because I have a philosopher's low regard for beliefs without evidence. I have touched on humility, accuracy, grief, love displayed in scholarship, beauty in mountain landscapes and in human character. I have mentioned sacred ground with reverence and touched upon warm affection among friends. Not too bad coverage for one short sermon.

Let me thank you for your attention and for this opportunity to share a happy occasion. As your master of ceremonies it is now my privilege to introduce Nick Clinch who will speak to you about the films we are to see.

Return to [SAC exhibit](#)

*A Friend of Bancroft*

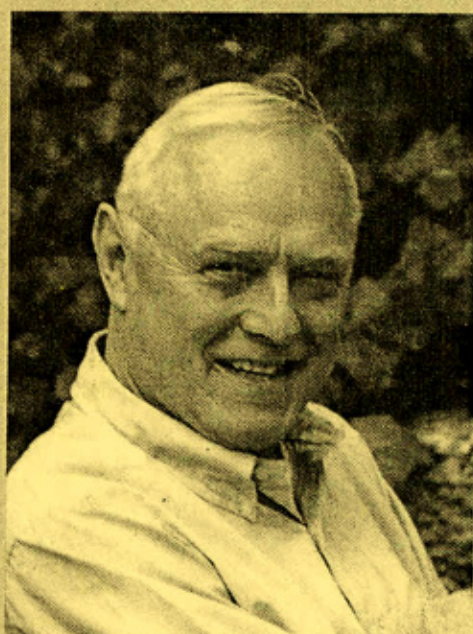
# AL BAXTER

With the passing of Alfred W. Baxter on March 7, The Bancroft Library lost a dear and dedicated friend. His contributions and their impact on the Library stand as a memorial to him. While professionally a management consultant and a producer of fine wine, Al seemed always to be giving more of himself to his diverse personal interests. As he was by inclination and talent a scholar, he probed deeply into each of the fields that fascinated him. An active climber and leader of expeditions into the high country in Africa, Asia, and Alaska, he proceeded to compile an extraordinary mountaineering library, reportedly of more than 4,000 volumes. He was the author of some 49 articles and books on subjects as varied as mountain climbing, wine, poetry, military and naval history, Latin poets, social clubs, and California history and architecture, in addition to considerable humorous verse. At heart, he was a great bibliophile.

Born in Oak Park, Illinois, Al served in World War II in the U.S. Army Air Force Intelligence, graduated from Stanford University in philosophy, and went on to graduate work in Zurich and the Universities of Maryland and California, Berkeley.

After serving as Budget Officer and Assistant to the Chancellor at UC Berkeley, he was a guest lecturer at a succession of seven universities: the University of Colorado at Boulder; Athens Technological Institute; Oxford; American University, Beirut; University of British Columbia; Stanford University Graduate School of Business; and Sonoma State University.

Mr. Baxter formed his own consultancy, Baxter, McDonald and Company, Berkeley, but winemaking at home, by himself and his family, drew him into serious wine production and sales. Typically, he went all the way, becoming Wine Maker and Managing General Director of Veedercrest Vineyards, Napa, which developed an international reputation; he became a consultant in the industry.



Throughout his life he was devoted to service, first on the Secretary of the Army's National Advisory Board on Bases and Installation and the California Health Manpower Council. He later held leadership roles with the Sonoma County and California Historical Societies, Institute of Historical Studies, Golden State Rehabilitation Hospital, San Ramon, and the Friends of the Bancroft Library.

A genial companion and clubman, Mr. Baxter was a member of the Himalayan (Calcutta), American Alpine, UC Faculty, Roxburghe, and Bohemian Clubs.

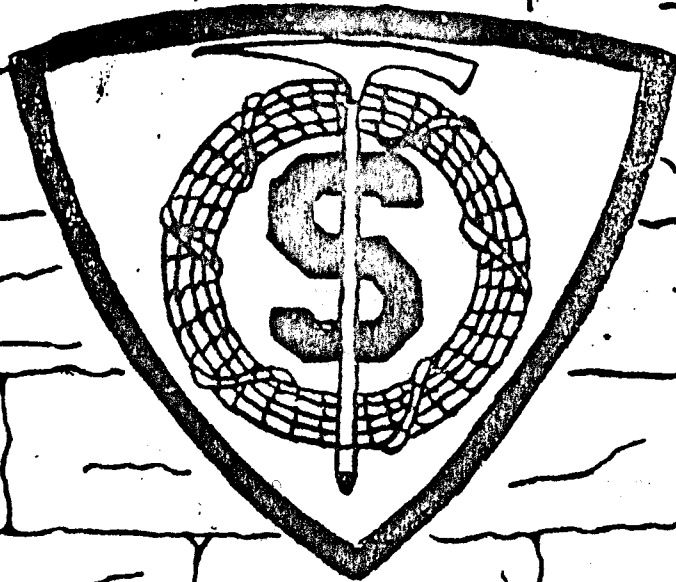
A man of indomitable spirit, Al Baxter overcame the terrible injuries and personal loss suffered during the Berkeley-Oakland hills fire of 1991 to win 14 more years of research and writing and zestful living. Finally, in a hospital in Phoenix, Arizona (the Baxters were staying at their second home), Al Baxter's strong heart gave out at the age of 78.

His first wife, the architect Gail Allison Fleming, whom he married in 1952, perished in the Berkeley-Oakland hills fire. In 1993, he married Mary Sherrill Mead who survives him, along with three sons, Eric Baxter of Novato, Anders Baxter of Ashland, Oregon, Willard Piers of San Leandro, and four grandchildren.

—Robert Commanday

MOUNTAINEERING:

FREEDOM OF  
THE QUAD



SAC

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The reappearance of MFTQ is justified by the scarcity of the First Edition and by various changes in Stanford Park itself, rather than by the number of climbs developed since its original publication. There are a few worthwhile new routes, the most notable being the Southeast Buttress of Memorial Church.

Relations between climbers and the rangers seem to have improved, and all climbers are urged to notify the ranger headquarters before doing any roped climbing within the Park. This permits more effective crowd control and hopefully will prevent the climber's being mistaken for a spoiler of the environment.

Seasonal fees at the Park have increased markedly. To state the present entrance and camping fees would serve only to date this edition.

Many routes are still Class 4 and should remain so. The rock will not support very much protection and climbs should be done



in the old, bold way.

Climb clean.\*

R. S. C., T. K. W.

Palo Alto  
30 September 1971

\*With apologies to Y. Chouinard.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

## GENERAL NOTES ON THE PARK

Some 33 miles south and east of San Francisco lies the beautiful area of rugged sandstone formations which comprise Stanford Park. The park is easily reached via U.S. 101 (Bayshore Freeway) and Interstate 280 (Junipero Serra Freeway) from the north or south, or by canoe from the east. Some visitors find the many recreational opportunities in the area so attractive that they camp there for the entire season (which usually runs from late September to early June). This may be done for a modest entrance fee (nearly \$3000 for the whole season), plus a small campsite (over \$1000). Although dogs should be leashed, many are seen running wild and occasionally are found in caves and caverns inside the craggy mountains and tors.

The rock formations in the park are generally characterized by even, horizontal strata of light tan sandstone of almost

uniformly excellent quality. Vertical columns of the same sandstone appear in remarkably even rows and add much to the unique appearance and scenic beauty of the park. The sandstone is capped, in many places, by beds of smooth red slate. These are usually thinner than the sandstone strata, and themselves vary in thickness, suggesting erosion in some areas. The red slate beds have an inviting appearance to the climber, but should be approached with great caution because of their tendency to scale off.

Stanford Park affords a variety of climbing conditions, and the novice and seasoned climber alike can find challenges here. The Art Gallery and Main Library traverses provide excellent conditioning opportunities for the weekend climber, while a successful ascent of Memorial Church is worthy of mention beside the stirring names of Cambridge, Everest and the Golden Gate Bridge.

Stanford Park has seen a long history of climbing. Although little is known of the dauntless pioneers who first assaulted its craggy sandstone heights, scattered records are available to document the activities of the first post-war (World War II) generation of climbing greats — Jon Lindberg, Dave Baxter and the rest. Two different teams, in 1949 and 1952, braved death and discovery to blaze a trail on Stanford Park's highest pinnacle, Mt Hoover. Their deed will long be remembered by those who follow in their colossal footprints. Recent years have seen the influx of a new, adventurous breed of climber. New routes, undreamed of only a few years ago, have now been opened up. And improvements in the park itself offer promise of more first ascents in the days to come.

But the Stanford climber truly worthy of the title — before plunging, guide-book in hand, on to new glories — will

4.

want to bear in mind a few points of safety; for it is only the caution, diligence and cool, steady nerve displayed by those who went before that have preserved the area and its climbing possibilities for the present generation:

1) Rangers. The good old maxim that your daddy taught you, that "the ranger is your friend," does not necessarily hold true at Stanford Park. The ranger administrator (Homo establishmentus) can usually be distinguished by his uniform, which consists of a business suit, a briefcase and a suspicious look. On the job from 8 AM to 6 PM, the ranger administrators should be avoided at all costs. The regular rangers (Homo semi-innocuus) wear blue uniforms with eight-pointed rhodium badges, unloaded guns, realistic ballets and loud walkie-talkies; they are on duty 24 hours a day. Climbers planning to use ropes or other paraphernalia are advised to telephone

regular ranger headquarters first for authorization since regular rangers are uncomfortable about climbing in general and tend to forbid it whenever they can. In the 1969-70 season ferocious Santa Clara rangers (Zinjanthropus vigilante) were introduced into the park for the first time. They have thrived in the park's habitat and, whereas they were only occasionally encountered, their presence has increased to the point of being a continuous pest. Some conservationists have advocated an open season to reduce the numbers of these formidable beasts, but legal experts suggest the opposite effect would result. Santa Clara rangers usually travel in herds, wearing riot helmets, riot sticks, loaded guns, tear gas cannisters and loud walkie-talkies; sometimes they are seen in groups of two or three, in which case their appearance may not be very unlike that of a regular ranger. Climbers should avoid close contact with Santa

Clara rangers; above all, do not try to feed them.

2) Use of iron. Direct aid employing the use of old iron (especially drain-pipes) is not recommended. Not only does dependency on such iron tarnish the climber's glory, it may even result in permanent damage to his limbs. Old iron in some areas, however, has been found satisfactory for anchoring belays. These areas are mentioned in the Guide, and most of them involve railings.

3) Wildlife. Stanford Park has an abundance of wildlife. Flora include numerous kinds of palm trees, flowering shrubs, brown grass, the Venus man-trap (Circe enamorans), and the domesticated lotus (Cannabis sativa). Of the park animals, the most commonly seen are the gaping tourist (Perigrinator oculans), the Old Grad (Plutus nostalgicus), and the Stanford student (Donor potentialis). The nighttime climber should be on the alert for the well-known Watchmanus noctis

periculus, who makes his rounds in the wee hours. Less dangerous is the Early Morning Sweener. He is normally just a scavenger, although it is uncertain how hostile he might become if unduly provoked.

4) A word about directions. Contrary to popular assumption, Palm Drive and the park entrance face almost due north, and the "western" foothills behind the park actually lie as much to the south as to the west. For convenience, all directions in the Guide are given as though the park entrance did indeed face due north. Thus the "west side" of Encina means the side that faces Mt Hoover; the "south side" of the Art Gallery is the side facing the Cummins Art Building; and so forth.



## ART GALLERY

Traverse. First ascent: unknown. (Carbon-14 dating on certain blackened handholds suggests circa 1898 as a reasonable estimate.) This traverse is easily the most popular route in the park. It begins on the S face, opposite Cummins, where an easy ascent can be made using lie-back technique at the SE corner, or with direct aid from the iron (railing) about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way W along the S wall. If starting from the iron, traverse right (E) along a narrow and remarkably even ledge, using excellent holds. Rounding the SE corner (here the route begins for those lie-backing up the SE corner), continue traversing N along the ledge for approximately 30 feet. Holds become thinner, but are still ample. The climb ends with a 3rd-class step up and into a spacious alcove and a walk-off down the N side, or else with a ropeless rappel down the E face to

the ground. An experienced climber can execute this climb in less than 6 minutes. For this reason it has become popular as a study break or between-classes diversion — to the wonder and occasional irritation of the rangers.

Traverse II. Climbers in recent years have enjoyed a nearby traverse which is especially popular in poor weather. Approaching the Gallery from the N, enter a high-ceilinged open cavern. Traverse right (W) along the back wall of the cavern on tiny handholds and uncertain footing. After rounding several corners, the climber reaches a smooth, upright "rotten log" which necessitates a 6th-class step. The climb may end with a ropeless rappel down the S face, or may continue E along the S face, ending at the railing where the main traverse begins. If the last pitch of this climb is attempted, cautious use of iron (a drain-pipe) at one point is advised.

Circumnavigation. On 1 or 2 occasions

climbers have traversed completely around the Art Gallery without falling off at some point on the way. The route is a combination of the two described traverses. Two doors and part of the S wall are unprotected and involve some risk to the moderately experienced climber.

## MAIN LIBRARY

Main Library offers a great variety of practice routes. All library climbs are easily accessible and can be done in street clothes at almost any time of day or night.

Chimneys. Across the front (W) side of Main Library stands a series of straight, open-sided chimneys formed by columns. Here the novice climber can practice chimney technique, sit and read his Civ book, or impress his non-climbing friends by doing chin-ups with his fingertips on the ledge at the top.

Liebacks. Also across the W side, about 3 feet off the ground, run narrow ledges broken by wide blocks of sandstone. New and experienced climbers alike enjoy traversing the ledges and practicing pressure, balance, and lieback moves around the blocks.

Traverses. Along both the N and the S faces of Main Library are straight and very narrow ledges. Follow them from W

to E as far as possible (preferably at hours when Library campers are not in abundance).

## HISTORY CORNER

Column Route. First ascent: November 1961, by Judy Lovelace. The outstanding feature of this climb is the degree of exposure and "realistic" atmosphere that it affords. Approaching from Inner Quad, descend via the improved trail (steps) into the narrow valley that runs along the back (S) face of History Corner. The belayer ascends the 3rd-class trail that leads N to Room 214. At the top a wide ledge on the left (W) affords a satisfactory belay position. A fire rail some 8 feet behind and across the trail provides an excellent anchor. The route of the climb follows a 90° dihedral beneath the towering heights of Room 214. Stem the corner on excellent foot- and hand-holds to the base of a column. The short ascent to the top of the column requires several rather difficult moves. Some climbers prefer jam-crack technique between the column and the wall, while others face the wall and use lieback holds to the

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extreme left in the blocks just above the column, with foot pressure against the wall. Once the column is surmounted, standard Stanford Park stemming technique may be resumed. Proceed upward for some 15 feet more on precarious but quite usable holds. Mantel onto the belayer's ledge, and walk off down the "trail," or rappel down the route of the climb.

Short Corner. First ascent: November 1961, by Rick Litterick. This climb lies just opposite (E) the longer column route described above, and uses approximately the same belay position. The starting point of the route may be approached via a Class 1 traverse N along a cement platform just W of and below the Room 214 trail. The climb begins with a column that calls for jam-crack technique. An alternate method requires a long step upward to a ledge carved into the wall, and a second long traversing step and balance move onto the narrow

ledge at the top of the column. Stem the remaining few feet to the top.

Bear Hug. This is a Class 3 route up the buttress at the base of the Column Route. It consists of a bear hug maneuver up the sandstone buttress and a scramble onto the cement platform above. It is popular with impatient climbers who are waiting to do the Column Route.



**LAW SCHOOL & OLD BUSINESS SCHOOL**

Chimney. First ascent: Unknown.

This popular route is located just E of the center of Memorial Court and can be done safely at almost any time of day or night. Use standard chimney technique, or stem, up a 90° chimney which rises about 20 feet and is remarkably free from debris. Walk off from the top on an improved trail (steps).

Traverse. A variation of the above climb involves a traverse S along the base of the buttress on which the "trail" runs. The first pitch — about 10 feet — ends at a corner. Here one horrendous step takes the climber into a tunnel running E. Short climbers may have difficulty stemming through the tunnel, especially since it widens for two or three steps in the center. A balance move around the final (E) corner leads into the 90° chimney previously described.

Corner. First ascent: Autumn 1961, by Dave Boore, Dave Eddy, Judy Lovelace and others. Some mountaineers believe that this route should properly be named the Law Review Corner. The fact that it begins near the Law Review offices lends support to this view. However, it will probably continue to be called by its popular name. In any case, the route lies on the same massif as the History Corner and Law School Chimney climbs. It is between the two, but nearer the Law School Chimney. As in the History Corner Column route, the belayer ascends an improved trail and the climber descends into a small valley. Roped climbing begins at the NW corner of the valley. After the initial obstacle, a column, is overcome by jam-crack and pressure techniques, the route is smooth and straight upwards for some 15 feet more. Handholds are small, but the climber who remembers to stem with his legs far apart and to apply foot pressure against both walls should have

little difficulty. Walk off.

## JORDAN HALL

Left Statue (or L. Agassiz) Route.

First ascent: June 1962, by Lee Donaghey at midnight. The route starts with a foot-jam between a round and a square column, beneath a statue of L. Agassiz imbedded in the vertical N face of Jordan Hall. Apply friction with the outer foot on the outside of the round column. Rely on hand power a great deal, using first the ledge above the columns, then small handholds in the rock above. Beware of excessive dust. Once the ledge is surmounted, the pedestal and narrow ledge atop the arch afford good handholds. The route continues up the E corner formed by the pedestal and the rock face. Grasp a sloping ledge and then a level ledge directly beneath a window, where the climb ends. The descent from the climb can be hazardous unless the window is open.

Arch. First ascent: June 1962, by Bernard Mayher. Follow the statue route

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to the ledge above the columns. Then traverse right (W) up a narrow arching ledge, using handholds in the rock and approaching the belay window from the side away from the Agassiz statue. This route has been said to be more challenging than the Left Statue Route. However, both of these Jordan Hall routes offer challenges to even the most experienced climber.

Right Statue Route. This route is perhaps best characterized as the mirror-image of the Left Statue Route; the difficulties it presents seem identical. Yet there is no record of an ascent by this route. Perhaps no one knows the occupant behind the belay window for this climb.

## PHYSICS CORNER

Physics Corner is the NW corner of the Outer Quad. Unlike the other three corners, it bears no descriptive legend such as "History," "Geology," or "Engineering." At some time in ages past, the physics department was housed there.

Statue Route. First ascent: June 1962, by Lee Donaghey at midnight. The strange rock formation resembling a human face near the top of this climb gives the route its name. An aperture in the rock face just to the left (NE) of the statue affords a satisfactory belay position. The route followed in the first ascent begins at the base of two columns that support the left (NE) side of a broad arch, and requires a traverse left along a narrow ledge to the bas relief of the outer arch. The bas relief can also be reached by a first pitch that lies to the left of both columns and begins in the corner separating the outer arch from

from the main rock face. From the ledge, proceed up the face of the bas relief on small toe and finger holds. Avoid the outer, curved surface of the arch until very near the top. This pitch, of about 14 feet, ends at a wide ledge. Grasp the ledge firmly in a thank-God hold, and do a mantel step onto it. Then climb to the belayer through a small, square opening. It should be noted that a nearly identical route lies to the right of the arch. For some reason, however, climbers have found this more difficult, and it is rarely attempted.

History, Geology, and Engineering Corners. These corners appear here in the Physics Corner section because the Statue Route description seems applicable to all. The HG & E Corners may well remain unclimbed, however, since there seems to be no record of any ascents.

## MEMORIAL CHURCH

Direct Aid Route. First ascent: early 1950's, at night, by a party believed to have scaled the W face supported by tension from an upper belay. The belay was set up by throwing a ball with a string tied to it over the church and then pulling the rope over. A drainpipe was also used in this ascent, with rather injurious results. Climbers are urged not to use this route, especially since the far more glamorous and challenging route described below has now been opened up.

Sacred Corner. First ascent: May 1962 at 6:00 AM, led by Frank Cole, with Lee Donaghey, Dennis Wilson, Hal van Zoeren, Judy Lovelace and Lucy Ames also in the party. This three pitch climb is the most complex, and among the most challenging, route in the park. The leader must advance without protection at several points. He should, therefore, be a climber of great skill, courage, experience (and

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foolhardiness?). Other climbers in the party have the advantage of an upper belay on the perilous second pitch and consequently can make the climb in comparative safety. It is advisable to make this climb during daylight hours, but preferably very early to avoid disturbing conservative campers and rangers (who, by the way, have a station very near the route).

Roped climbing begins at a prominent buttress on the W side of the church. About 10 feet above is a down-sloping ledge of red slate and, above that, a dark patch of stained glass shows on the vertical sandstone wall. The first pitch leads up and to the right (S) of the buttress. A short friction traverse (S) along the slate ends just beneath the dark patch described previously. The second pitch begins in a corner just beyond. Stem the corner as far as possible. An overhang at the top can be bypassed by

a short traverse N onto the face. Then mantel onto a broad ledge. The third and final pitch begins several feet E, across a wide platform, and runs E up a long sloping layer of slate. The climber should stand firmly on both feet and use friction to ascend to the razor-back ridge of the mountain. An optional traverse N along the ridge offers splendid views of the park. Descend to the ledge at the top of the second pitch and rappel the entire length of the buttress to the ground. Note: in the first ascent the rappel was supported by a human anchor, but an alternate method would be to run the rappel rope over the buttress top and anchor one end to the ground.

Traverse. A popular bit of unroped climbing on Mem Chu involves a traverse N from window to window across the lower level of the W face. Also recommended is a chimney-technique ascent up the corner formed by a tower and an arch at the N end.

Buttresses. Several buttresses of varying widths afford opportunities for bear-hug technique or even straight climbing. A favorite is near the back (S) of the church on the E side: the adventurous climber may ascend as far as he desires, without belay, on easy holds (see SE Buttress, infra). Buttresses at the back of the church have been viewed as potential first-pitch routes for future first ascents of the S face.

SE Buttress. First ascent: Spring 1971. This is one of the most continuous and unprotected routes in the park. "The route to the top is obvious and requires no further explanation."

### ENCINA HALL

This great monolith, the second largest single mountain in the park, stands just E of Mt Hoover, somewhat removed from the main climbing areas of the park. There are no records of major ascents made on it before 1962, when the famous corner route was opened up. However, there is some evidence of climbing activities — chiefly bolts to protect window-to-window traverses, dating from the time Encina was a major Stanford Park campsite. Climbers have noted a number of ridges and corners that should offer additional routes, but the corner route described below provides the most readily accessible belay spot, and for this reason will probably remain the most popular.

Corner. First ascent: 27 January 1962, by Hal van Zoeren. Approaching from the W, follow a wide E-trending valley that parallels the main ridges of Encina, which is on the left (N). Mt Hoover will be clearly in view behind you. The valley

becomes a narrow pass, then widens again. At this point turn left (N) and advance down an improved trail to the NE corner, where roped climbing begins. The route is one of the longest in the park, and even a sturdy climber may tire somewhat. Therefore, it is advisable to have a support party set up a strong upper belay. A bombproof belay point can be safely reached via a winding staircase within the mountain. The belayer should either obtain a license or have friends among park authorities. Belaying may be done from apertures in the N wall at any level, making the climb as long or as short as the climber may desire. A gap in the E wall at the beginning of the climb makes the first few moves rather difficult. Most climbers prefer to do a very wide stem, though some begin on the E wall and traverse N across the top of the gap and into the corner. Once this obstacle is overcome, the route proceeds straight up for some 40 feet. It ends with a traverse

W along an extremely narrow ledge on the  
N wall and a final thank-God grasp at  
the belayer's ledge.

## CHEMISTRY BUILDING

Corner. First ascent: Spring 1962, in several parties that included Lucy Ames, Frank Cole, Lee Donaghey, Dave Eddy, Judy Lovelace, Dennis Wilson and Hal van Zoeren. The corner is located on the N side of the Chemistry Building and is easily recognized by a broad cement platform at its base and metal steps that rise just beside it. The first-ascent party used the top of the staircase for its belay point. If belayed in this manner, the climb represents a true test of the climber's skill in Stanford Park corner technique because the angle of the belay increases as the climb progresses, and any dependence on the rope near the top is likely to result in a free pendulum fall. However, there is some potential for a new and more directly overhead belay point in a window. It is best to make this climb in the very early morning hours and to be especially alert

for unusually hostile rangers who patrol this area. Roped climbing begins in the corner, on top of the platform. Stem upward for about 20 feet on satisfactory holds until a strange rock formation on the N wall comes into view. At a point almost directly level with the belayer, traverse right (W) for a step or two across the face, and then onto the belayer's ledge. Descend via the stairs or rappel down from the belay point against the N face or in a free rappel.



## OTHER MOUNTAINS

Burbank Hall - Tribolet Bolt Ladder.

First ascent: Winter 1970 by Chuck Tribolet. On the S wall of the SE entrance to Burbank is this three-storey bolt ladder. Climbers should bring their own screws and hangers. Beware of particularly wild animals in the vicinity.

Memorial Auditorium - Lillich Chimneys. First ascent: Spring 1971, by Al Lillich. . Beside the E and W doors of Mem Aud, these routes are obvious.

(New) Business School - Liebacks.

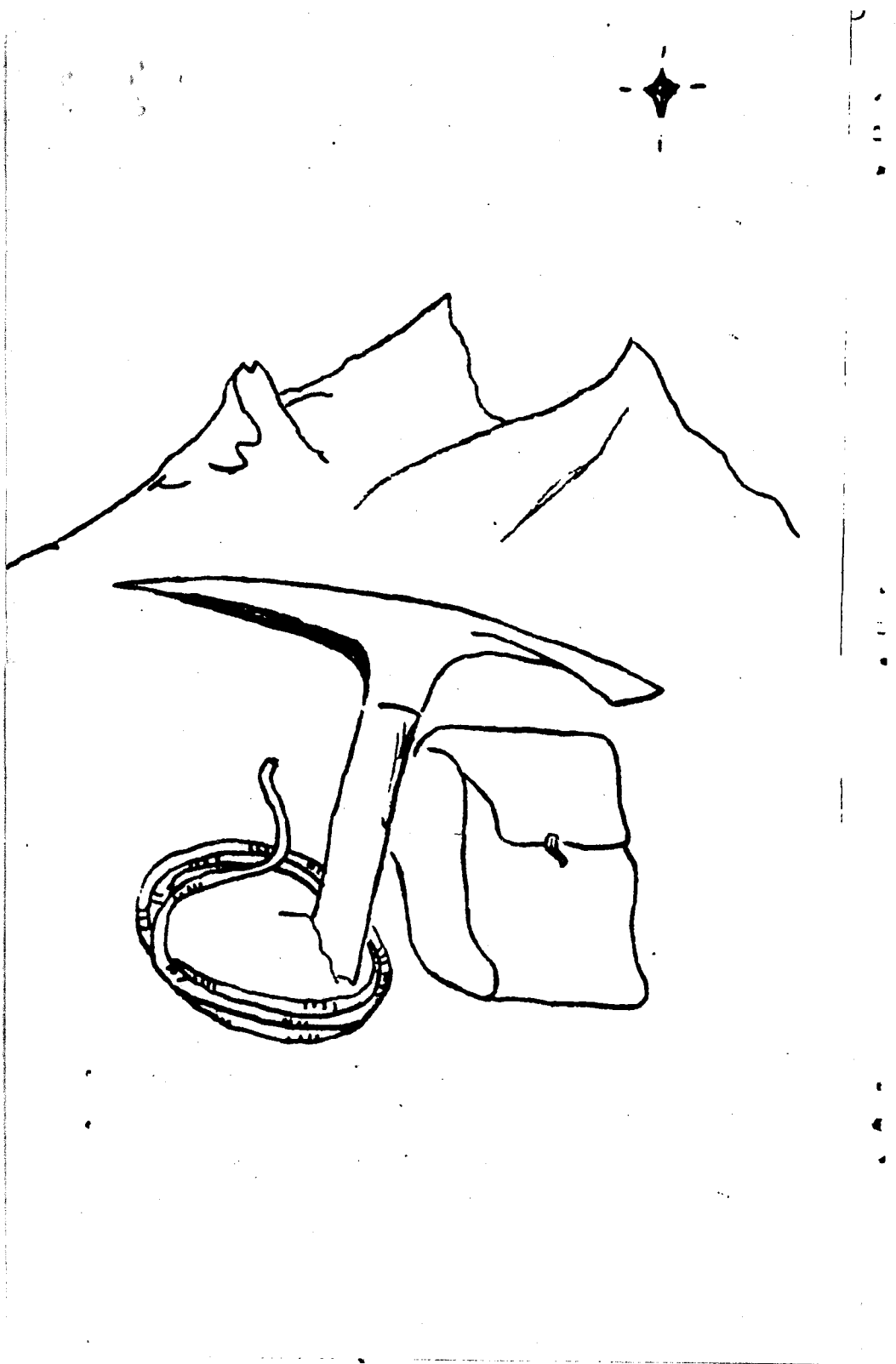
First ascent: Spring 1971. On the lower S wall of the Business School (reached by descending any of several improved trails into the dry moat surrounding the building) is a series of vertical cracks running upward about 10 feet to a ceiling. Although fairly shallow, they may be ascended by fairly strenuous liebacking or by quite improbable jamming.

Mt Hoover. Stanford Park's most

3

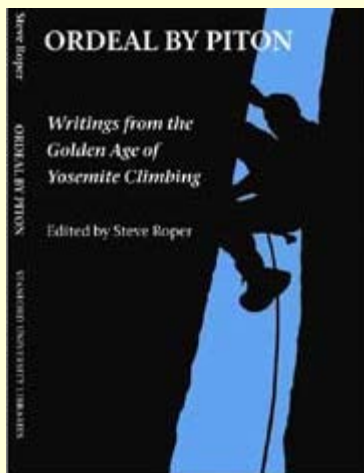
visible landmark, Mt Hoover towers over the surrounding landscape in majestic symbolism. The first ascent of Mt Hoover is unknown, although it is known that several parties reached the level of the carillon on the first day of the elevator's operation. The first to set foot on Mt Hoover's virgin outer walls was a party in 1949 that rappelled, presumably from the level of the carillon, painting a trail of gigantic footprints behind them. Their feat was duplicated in 1952, with the footprints going in the other direction. The treacherous layer of exfoliating red slate above the carillon has been surmounted and the actual summit reached. This route, beginning at the bells, has been closed by the placing of iron bars all around the carillon to prevent persons from slipping off. In the later 1960's, one intrepid climber sought an interior route via great vertical caves serving as heating conduits; he was apprehended twice in the same

evening after scaring the bejabbers out of the night janitor with the sounds of his exertions; the route has subsequently been abandoned. In a fog of secret mystery, word began to circulate in the 1970-71 season about midnight drilling of a bolt ladder up Mt Hoover's walls and a successful assault of the summit. This exploit remains in the realm of legend or fantasy, just as those who made the climb would have it. It is suggested the route be known as the Lost Dutchman Bolt Ladder. In 1971 lightning struck Mt Hoover, dislodging the 300-pound spherical summit stone, which cratered in an adjacent parking lot. Climbers are therefore urged to check the weather forecast before attempting the lofty heights. Bottled oxygen is unnecessary.



# No Guts, No Glory: A History of the Stanford Alpine Club

SAC [membership list](#)



Great Chimney, Washington Column Direct Route. Photograph by Henry Kendall, 1958. Copyright ©2000 Estate of Henry Kendall.

- No Guts, No Glory: An Exhibition of the History of the Stanford Alpine Club. [Bing Wing](#) of Green Library, May 13 to August 15, 2000. Club founder Alfred Baxter's [sermon to the faithful](#) upon the opening of the exhibit.
- *The Stanford Alpine Club*, featuring the photography of Tom Frost, Henry Kendall, and Leigh Ortenburger, by John Rawlings. Photography editor Glen Denny. Stanford: CSLI Publications/Stanford University Libraries, 2000. 178 duotone and halftone photographs and illustrations, 208 pages, \$49.95. 1,000 copies printed. [Order Information](#). There is a discount (\$32 plus tax and shipping) for members of the Stanford Historical Society, the Library Associates, and the Stanford Alpine Club.
- [QuickTime movie](#) 4:45 minutes (12,859 KB), SAC film festival trailer (13 May 2000). The complete video *El Capitan* by Fred Padula, Climbing photographer Glen Denny, is available from [Chessler Books](#).
- From the SAC Archive: [Freedom of the Quad](#), 2nd ed. 1971 | The Stanford Alpine Club Journal [1955](#); [1958](#)

Companion volume to *The Stanford Alpine Club*:

- [Ordeal by Piton](#): *Writing from the Golden Age of Yosemite Climbing*. Steve Roper, Ed. Stanford: Stanford University Libraries, 2003. Order from Amazon.com or your local bookseller. Booksellers contact [rawlings@stanford.edu](mailto:rawlings@stanford.edu).

## Leigh Ortenburger & Irene Beardsley

Leigh Ortenburger's connection with the Stanford Alpine Club extended over some thirty years. Bob Brooke described him as the holder of a long-time record for non-dues-paying participation in Stanford activities. He had not been a Stanford undergraduate, nor had he learned to climb in the club. He was already a Teton guide when he first climbed with Clinch, John Mowat, and Dick Irvin in the Tetons in 1951. Ortenburger's SAC connection developed when he came out to Berkeley for graduate school in the fall of that year, climbing with the same trio in Yosemite Valley. He shared apartments with Al Baxter and later Dick Irvin, attending practice climbs, parties, and dating Stanford coed climbers. He married Irene Beardsley in 1956. Gil Roberts told of his influence in the early fifties:

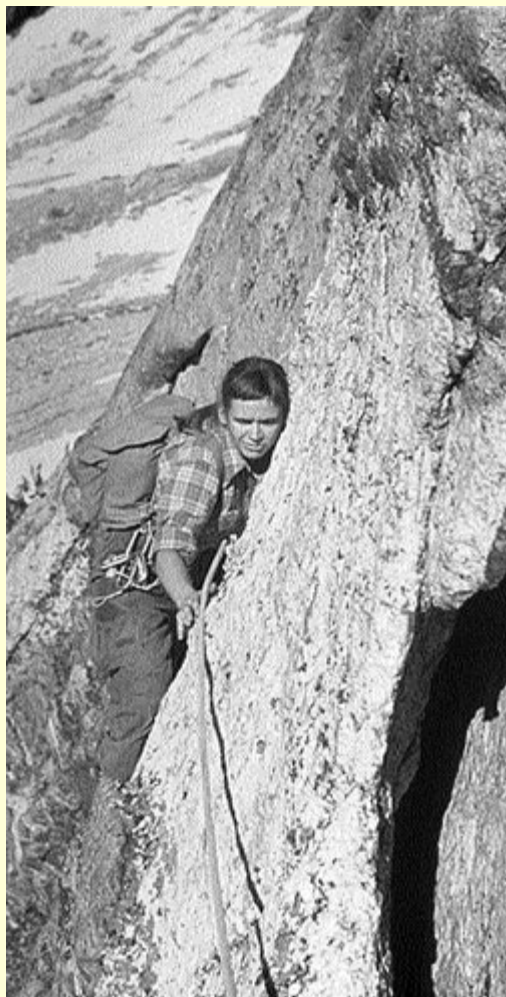
*He was a couple of years older and he was very experienced. He'd been to Peru and he'd done new routes in the Tetons. So he certainly was one of the guys that was setting the pace on club trips. . . . Leigh was an excellent climber and everybody*



Ortenburger during SAC practice climb, Pine Valley, Mt. Diablo, 1952. Copyright ©2000 Richard Irvin.

*respected him.*

In the sixties Ortenburger earned a master's degree from Stanford and did course work for a Ph.D. Throughout the sixties and seventies he sometimes attended club meetings and climbed with Stanford climbers. Probably no other person had such a long-term connection with the club. [Leigh Ortenburger Photographer.](#)



In the summer of 1952, while still in high school, Irene Beardsley traveled with her parents by car west to Stanford from her Washington, D.C. home. Viewing the eastern escarpment of Wyoming's Teton mountains, jutting six thousand feet above Jackson Hole, she knew that people climbed those imposing rock and snow summits. She was intrigued. She was also occupied just then by other dreams. She wanted to study physics:

*My mother wanted me to go to Mills, but I wanted to go to Stanford. It was just something I decided to do because of their reputation in physics. And I got interested in the SAC because when I was in my freshman year I looked around for various social activities and didn't find any that fit. I remember an embarrassing interview when I tried out for some kind of political sort of thing; I wasn't the right type, and they told me so. I next saw an advertisement in the Daily for the Alpine Club, and I went to a practice climb at Miraloma Park in San Francisco. I wasn't very good.*

While becoming the fourth woman to earn a Ph.D. in physics from Stanford in 1965, she made hundreds of ascents beginning in the 1950s, including notable firsts as the 1965 first all-woman climb of the North Face of the Grand Teton, the most famous north face in the United States, and the 1978 first American ascent of Annapurna (26,545 ft).

Irene (Beardsley) Ortenburger on the first ascent of Irene's Arête, Disappointment Peak, Grand Teton National Park, July 1957. This climb on a beautiful knife-edge ridge is one of the most popular of the

difficult rock climbs in the Tetons. Copyright ©2000 by John Dietschy.

## Hard Rock: The Sixties



Chuck Kroger, Dihedral Wall, El Capitan, 1969. Copyright ©2000 by Scott Davis.

The SAC continued throughout the sixties in a form that would have been recognizable and familiar to all earlier members, albeit the overall membership was smaller than in many earlier periods, no more than 15-20 members. The change in Yosemite sign-out rules in the mid-sixties, along with the growing number of climbers, development of commercial climbing schools, production of guidebooks, and availability and relative affordability of climbing equipment contributed to a situation where many Stanford climbers were pursuing their goals independently.

Sixties outings sounded pretty much like old times: Belay practice was

held in the San Francisquito creek bed near the shopping center and Children's Hospital--as it had been since 1950--at the beginning of fall quarter and sometimes spring quarter as well. It was still required of members who aspired to climb in Yosemite. The raising through a pulley and dropping of a hundred-pound block of concrete, testing the technique of well-anchored and padded belayers, presented an entertaining spectacle. "Belay practice was always a jolly event which attracted a fairly large crowd of both participants and spectators," Russ Van Dyke, president in 1969/70 and 1970/71, recalled. The principal social events were beach trips and club parties, still called Bergsteiger balls through the mid-sixties. Folk dancing and sing-alongs were regular activities at the latter. One-third of the active members were women. Meetings, held several times a quarter, sometimes included slide shows by members or guests and were the forum at which club outings were planned, including Yosemite trips, which were made at least four times during the fall and spring quarters.

"The Yosemite trips were obviously the high point of my experience with the alpine club," Van Dyke wrote. His first Yosemite trip was the traditional fall Tuolumne Meadows trip. His group climbed the classic Southeast Buttress of Cathedral Peak, "pitch after pitch of great rock and beautiful views." With a number of beginners on the climb, including himself, it took longer than planned. "As with many SAC climbs to follow, I recall hiking down to the campground late at night by flashlight," he wrote. Late returns were a constant of SAC history. Chuck Kroger, president 1968/69, was also familiar with the phenomenon:

*One thing I remember about the club's Yosemite trips is the number of near disasters. There would be a group doing an unplanned bivouac on one side of the Valley and another group on the other. Someone else would have a harness come loose or rappel anchor slip. Everybody else is sitting in Camp 4 drinking red wine and worrying about the other club members out there bivouacking. Finally we would go out to the base of, say, Lower Brother and yell up, shout and shout and shout. We might see a little light in the talus where a party was crawling out to the road or, maybe, it was their campfire burning. There was a real worry but there was also sort of a cavalier attitude expressed at times.*



Judy Lovelace climbing at Mickey's Beach, Highway 1 south of Stinson Beach, 1962. Judy and Dave Boore Collection.

## Davis and Kroger



In 1969 Chuck Kroger, SAC president 1968/69, became the first person to climb four routes on El Capitan in a single season, including the third ascent of the menacing North America Wall, widely considered the most difficult rock climb in the world. Scott Davis, '70, joined Kroger on three of those climbs: the NA, West Buttress, and Dihedral Wall. Kroger and Davis, two of the finest big-wall climbers in the country, capped their El Cap tour de force with the first ascent of the Heart Route in April 1970.

Davis was a foreshadowing of the club's future. "I sort of thought I was a member," he concluded some thirty years later, though on another occasion he conceded that he may not have been an official member. "The 1960s were pretty informal," he added. Davis participated in club activities and regularly climbed with club members, especially with Kroger, who counted Davis among the SAC ranks. Another example of the amorphousness of the situation in the late sixties and the seventies was Walt Vennum, a geology graduate student from 1966 to 1971. During his Stanford years he made first ascents in Alaska and the Sierra Nevada, and listed himself in published climbing notes as "unaffiliated." "I don't think I was officially a member of the SAC," Vennum said. "I climbed with a lot of people who were in the club. It was a pretty fluid situation."

Scott Davis, first ascent of the Heart Route, El Capitan, 1970.  
Copyright ©2000 by Scott Davis and Chuck Kroger.



By the end of the sixties membership was becoming "a pretty fluid situation." Greg Donaldson (far left) and Walt Vennum in Yosemite. Copyright ©2000 by Greg Donaldson.



## Freedom of the Quad

Jim Collins, sporting his distinctive leather cap, shorts, tube socks, and EB rock shoes, was a familiar campus sight in the late 1970s, cruising the back wall of Building 260 or the Art Gallery. Collins, an applied math major, never had so much to do that he wouldn't take time out of his regimen to encourage and advise another wall climber. "The University is the ideal place for practicing rockclimbing by way of buildering--the art of climbing walls," Collins told a *Stanford Daily* interviewer in 1979. "The sandstone blocks are ideal for climbing, though extremely difficult. In fact, the most difficult rockclimbing challenge in the world is in the Quad."

Buildering flourished on campus from the club's beginning in 1946: roofs were scaled and rappelled from, walls were traversed, and Freddy Hubbard rappelled out of her Roble Hall second-floor dorm window in order to make a pre-morning-curfew start for the crags. What distinguished the Stanford's post-War buildering history from earlier times was the application of climbing technique and technical rope work to the local problems.



Jim Collins training in the Quad. *Stanford Daily*, February 22, 1978. Photographs by Luke Erdoes.

## The '70s and '80s

All the causes and effects of forces shaping club history and society at large in the sixties intensified in the seventies. Roger Gocking, Darien Hopkins, Jim Collins, Rob Bracken, Greg Larson and other club officers each attempted to make the club relevant, and different solutions were tried. Despite their efforts club activities lapsed during 1975/76 and a few years later in 1980/81. Resurrected once again, it disappeared after the 1982/83 school year. Gocking described the Stanford climbing scene in the early seventies:

*The club had played several roles. One was it provided a basic introduction to rockclimbing, and it helped to provide the logistics for climbing. People would pool their cars, equipment, and all those sorts*

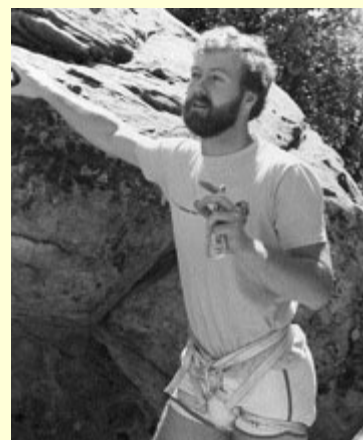


Roger Gocking, 1972. Copyright ©2000 by Brian Cox.

*of things. And then too, it was something of a social club. People met one another. I remember talking to Leigh Ortenburger about this, and his observation was that a lot of people got married as a result. When I was president that role was beginning to change. The better climbers didn't feel the need to belong. They were off doing their own things.*

*Climbing levels continued to rise. There was a big gap between club-type activities and what many people were themselves climbing. I think that people who were serious didn't want to be involved in something like a climbing club, which didn't really cater to what they were doing.*

The End: Greg Larson, Tresidder Union recreation manager, championed student voluntary outdoor groups in general and the SAC in particular, which he and Steve D'Hondt reestablished in 1981. Having been inspired to try out rockclimbing by a Jim Collins presentation, and having learned to climb with the SAC, Larson fondly remembered the trip-taking and camaraderie. Larson and D'Hondt rejuvenated the SAC to fill the need for rockclimbing instruction. Larson took the title of coordinator. They organized ten instructional climbs at local outcrops that year, along with the showing of climbing films and a presentation by Jim Collins. After Larson's departure, D'Hondt took over as club coordinator for 1982/83, repeating the previous year's pattern of activities. The club, however, disappeared during the next school year.



Greg Larson, 1982.

## Henry Kendall

*Two kinds of exposure*

*Illustrate the intimate relationship*

*Between the climber and his route.*

Henry Kendall, "Climber's Camera," *Sierra Club Bulletin*, 1962.

Henry Kendall began photographing as a teenager in New England. Already an experienced diver, he began taking underwater stills and movies in the Florida Keys, coauthoring a book on the subject. He came to Stanford in 1956 to do advanced research in physics, joined the SAC, and began to climb.

In Yosemite Kendall saw that the magnificent visual situations encountered could best be captured with a small camera carried on the body--not in the pack--and used as the action unfolded, pitch by pitch. He chose a folding Kodak Retina II 35-mm camera, using fine-grained, ASA 32, Panatomic-X film. Kendall wrote that a camera "is one of the last pieces of nonessential equipment to be discarded in preparation for a difficult ascent. In one way, however, a camera is an essential



Henry Kendall, Cordillera Blanca, 1964. Copyright ©2000 Tom Frost.

piece of equipment because, beyond tenuous memory, photography is the only means by which the climber can relive and reenjoy the qualities of an ascent."

In the Cordillera Blanca, Leigh Ortenburger encouraged him to use a 4x5 camera. Kendall was inspired by the possibilities of the larger format, especially for landscapes.

Awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in 1990, Kendall made the following comments, published in the *Nobel Prize Annual*:

*I like to go in the mountains to places no one has been before. The world is an astonishingly beautiful place. It's beautiful at the deep level of physics, way down inside things. What we know of the universe that's visible to us is also of astonishing beauty, and I like to see that and explore it. That's why I take photographs.*

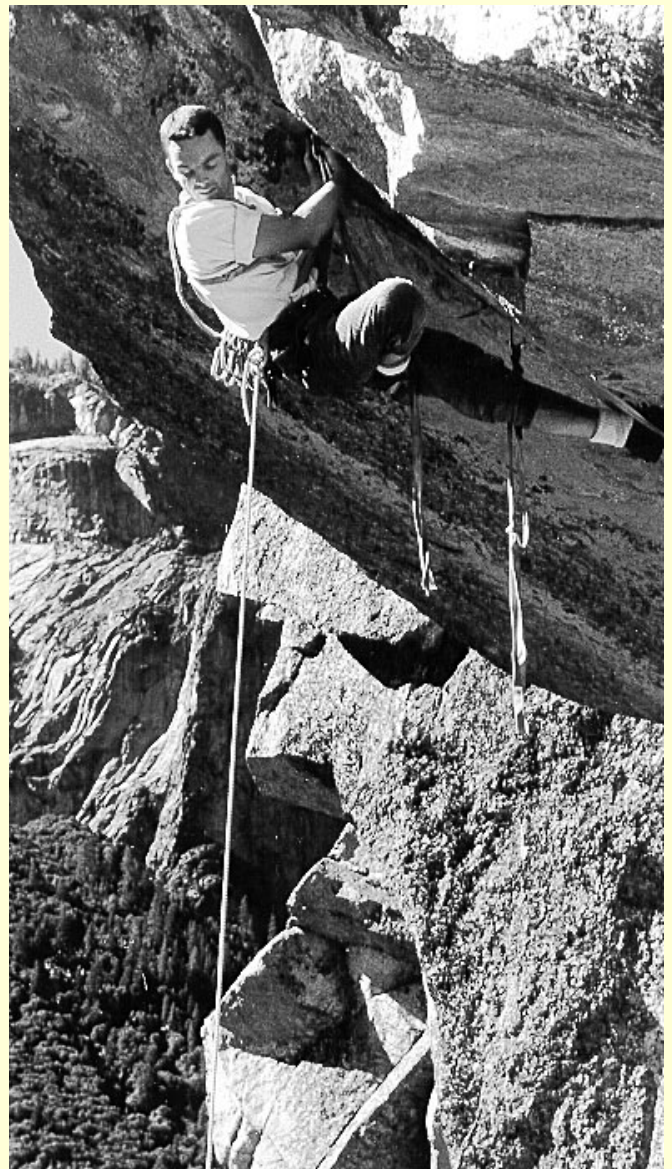
Kendall was Tom Frost's mentor at Stanford. Frost described their relationship with the exact words Kendall used for Harlin, "He took me under his wing and taught me how to climb." And Kendall took photographs. "He would give me a print of the odd photograph of us climbing together," Frost recalled. "One of his great photos was of me nailing a roof he had spotted up near the Overhang Bypass." Frost also credited Kendall with his branching out from Yosemite Valley to the great peaks of the Andes and Himalaya.

Richard Blankenbecler, a physics graduate student and member, also admired Kendall and Kendall's roommate Hobey DeStaebler because they set a high standard for the club--a standard not only of climbing difficulty, but also of safety and camaraderie. Blankenbecler elaborated:

*Henry knew what he wanted, but it wasn't in his nature to achieve something at some other person's expense. He taught me that while climbing was no mere game, it ought to be fun. And while there's competition, it need not be outright competition. You climb with a partner and there's a fellowship there. That was at the essence of the activity.*

Steve Roper remembered as a teenager meeting Kendall:

*One afternoon in late 1956, in Pinnacles National Monument, a young man with a square jaw saw me gazing longingly up at a towering crag called North Finger. He had just rappelled from*



"One of his great photos was of me nailing a roof he had spotted up near the Overhang Bypass" --Tom Frost, shown during the first ascent of The Roof, Lower Cathedral Rock, Yosemite, 1958. Copyright ©2000 by the Estate of Henry Kendall.

*its summit and was coiling a rope. Incredibly, he asked me, a fifteen-year-old kid, if I wanted to do it. I jumped up and shyly told him that my elders didn't think I was ready for it. He laughed and began uncoiling his rope. And so I met quiet Henry Kendall, just arrived at Stanford and quite pleased to have encountered our group. Fifteen minutes later we were shaking hands on the summit, watching the rest of our small band scurry down the trail in the waning light. I never saw Henry again, but every time I encountered his illustrious name in the next four decades I recalled his generosity.*

Henry Kendall died in a diving accident in 1999.



Huandoy Group from the slopes of Huascarán Norte, 1964. Copyright ©2000 Estate of Henry Kendall.

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