

# THE GOOSEDOWN GAZETTE

Spring Open House Edition 1999

Volume 21 Issue 2



UC MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

# Welcome to the UC Mountaineering Club

Take your body where your mind wants to go!

## We do it all

We are the largest student organization on campus, with a membership of over one-hundred and average meeting attendance of over forty. Our activities include, but are not limited to: hiking, backpacking, camping, caving, climbing, white water rafting, kayaking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, downhill skiing, mountain biking, trail running, skydiving, hang gliding, snorkeling, scuba diving, recycling, partying, tree planting, ice skating, sledding, canyoneering, bungee jumping, star gazing, base jumping, ice climbing, and, of course, mountaineering.

We've had outstanding trips this year. Two separate mountaineering expeditions, numerous backpacking trips, caving, whitewater rafting, countless climbing weekends, and introductory courses for beginners.

Beginners' climbing courses are always a big hit. Three new whitewater raft guides were checked out for both the Ocoee in Tennessee, and West Virginia's New River. With summer approaching, we can look forward to Whitewater 101 classes, the annual Memorial Weekend trip to the Ocoee River, a climbing course, and the Wilderness First Responder Course in the fall.

Come experience LIFE! Go where you want—where you breathe a little deeper, sweat a little harder, and paddle, climb, hike, slalom, and push your limits to the perfect exhaustion. Or go where you tune into a slower pace, listening to the patter of rain on the tent fly, feel the wind play with your hair and the grass tickle your feet. Savor the simplicity of a warm campside meal with the stars overhead, and wonder how you could have possibly gone so long without it!

## Join us every Wednesday at 7:00

Weekly meetings are in 525 Old Chemistry. We informally discuss trips, do a bit of business, then kickback for a program or slide show.

### Membership is \$10/quarter, or \$30/year.

Membership entitles you to use the club's library, and check out enough equipment for yourself for one week. Gear checkout is every Wednesday after meetings, and should be returned the following Wednesday before the meeting.

The UCMC Office is located in 217 Tange-man University Center (556-6014).

Check out the UCMC home page for news, minutes, trips, and cool links:

<http://soa.uc.edu/org/ucmc/>

UCMC Webmaster: [sibertjd@email.uc.edu](mailto:sibertjd@email.uc.edu)

## Need More Info?

Feel free to contact any and all officers!

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Editor's Note: The Goosedown Gazette is published by the University of Cincinnati Mountaineering Club, a student operated non-profit organization. The articles and comments within are neither endorsed nor acknowledged by the University of Cincinnati. All contributions including articles, poems, stories, pictures, rumors, quotes, cartoons, notes, gossip, money, drawings, and food should be sent to the editor. Comments and criticisms are welcomed, but will be duly ignored without the subsequent offer of help with the

**Cover:** In loving memory of Steve Must, long-time honorary member and respected mountaineer. This sketch by Pat Artman, illustrated from a photo taken by Alex Cudkowicz, depicts Steve on rappel in one of his first ascents in the Northeast Cascades. This cover first appeared one decade ago, on the '89 edition of the Goosedown Gazette, of which Steve was an editor.



## Your First University of Cincinnati Mountaineering Club Trip

Let's face it- your first UCMC trip is a little scary. It may feel like:

- you don't know anyone
- everyone else seems to know each other
- you have never [insert activity] before, and don't know what to do
- you've never even heard of [insert place], much less been there!
- you don't have the equipment, much less know what to do with it
- you don't know what to take

Welcome to the Club! Everyone in this club has been through the same experience. We have all been newcomers and beginners. Remember. The UCMC exists for YOU to try out new activities and outdoor pursuits!

We can provide you with the equipment, instruction, and guidance you need to have a safe and fun trip. Experienced members will help you throughout the trip. Whatever your spirit for adventure, whatever your activity of choice, there is guaranteed to be a member in the Club to already pursue that same passion.

There is, however, a secret to being involved in the Mountaineering Club. It is going on trips! Speaking from experience, it is easy to attend a few meetings, not feel a part of the club, and eventually give up on it. It is going on trips and getting involved in the outdoor activities that makes a rewarding membership.



So check out the exciting trips the UCMC offers this quarter!

Hit the Road, Get Outta Town, and Take a Hike!

See you on the next trip!

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## Excuses for the Nineties- "The Dog Ate My Belay Plate"

by John Sherman



About a year ago I had a great stroke of luck. I participated in some medical research pertaining to climbing injuries. The doc took my history, x-rayed my hands and feet, then declared I was one of his most outstanding subjects yet- I'd had nearly every hand, finger, and foot injury he'd seen in his entire climbing study group. I left the medical center beaming. It's not every day that a barrel full of prime excuses falls into your lap. If milked properly, this cow would last for years. I could fail on any climb I wanted and walk away proudly.

My joy was short-lived. I made one critical mistake and have only myself to blame. I told the doctor to look at Maria Cranor's hands if he had a strong stomach. She has the hands of a spastic carpenter- her thin fingers take numerous dog legs and the knuckles are swollen like grapes. Little did I suspect the doctor would actually go out of his way to check out this former Black Diamond bigwig. A few radiographs later he declared that she had three finger fractures she hadn't previously known about, including one where the tendon had ripped out a chunk of the bone it was attached to. I would have wallowed in self-pity over my tactical blunder if I wasn't busy being so damned jealous.

Excuse-making is one of the most fundamental and important of climbing techniques, but also one of the least mastered. Most climbers think that if they just practice a lot, their partners will buy their alibis each time out. Wrong-O. Unless you know the rules, chronic excuse-making can actually hurt your climbing. I know this from experience. So others won't have to suffer as I have, I'm setting down a few rules for making excuses right here. After those, we'll go over some examples and examine their effectiveness.

**Rule 1:** Always make your excuses beforehand: the earlier, the better. Post-failure excuses have all the impact of the dog-ate-my-homework ploy. Seed your field early. Don't wait until the climb is in sight; drop hints the day or even the week before. Early excuses also reap benefits when you succeed "against all odds."

**Rule 2:** Be subtle. Instead of saying, "You ever get the feeling that your elbow is part of a shish kabob?", bring along a 100-count bottle containing a single ibuprofen. Shake it about, the lone pill making its pitiful rattle, and gently mutter, "Damn bottles don't go as far as they used to."

**Rule 3:** Work in pairs. Whining about your own problems is in bad taste, but if an "unwitting" accomplice should prompt you in front of others, it's acceptable and expected for you to discuss your troubles. Make them draw it out of you. After grudgingly giving up the details, repay the favor and say, "But I'm sure it's nothing like the pain you had in your shoulder last week..."

**Rule 4:** Don't forget mental anguish. If partners think your keeping something hidden- say a failed kidney, a malignant tumor, an impending divorce, or a blown tendon pulley- then it's obvious that the stress of keeping it a secret is eating at you as well. Never underestimate this implied mental stress factor; it's worth up to three letter grades.

**Rule 5:** Know your partners. Your excuse must be better than theirs. If you've had five surgeries, don't team up with somebody who has had eight. If you've had ten, avoid someone who has had twenty. If you've had forty, don't tie in with Kim Schmitz.

**Rule 6:** Counterpunch when necessary. If you have violated rules one and/or five and your partner scoops you up on your planned excuse, it's time to stick a needle in their balloon. For example, let's say Boone (not his real name) looks up at his project and remarks, "I'm not sure about the crimpers on this 14d, I lost all my calluses when I bleached my hair the other day." You fire back, "You'll do just fine. It never stopped Ben Moon." Now, if Boone fails, it can only be for one reason: he's weak.

**Rule 7:** Props are fine. A pink slip on the dashboard, an inhaler falling out of your pack, three empty Jagermeister bottles on the kitchen counter... all speak loudly so you don't have to. If you have scars, let them be seen. If you don't, get some.

**Rule 8:** A true craftsman doesn't blame his tools. He blames someone else's. If success is the least bit in doubt, be sure to use your partner's rack. Eyeball said rack with curiosity. If necessary, establish unfamiliarity with mundane questions such as, "Who makes this nut?" If stuck with your own rack, salt it with some brand new gear. Say, "I've been meaning to try out these new 'biners (cams) (nuts)."

**Rule 9:** Wear a shirt. If your buffed, ripped, or shredded and people know it, nobody will be impressed when you succeed and everyone will snicker when you fail. Furthermore, wearing a shirt helps keep you pale so you have that pencil-pushing office lackey appearance. You'll look so geeky, they'll never suspect you train. Note: the only exceptions to the shirt rule are if you have scars (see above) or a good beer gut to show off. Second note: Women who climb topless need no excuses. Nobody will notice if they're getting bouted or not.

**Rule 10:** Nurture any popping joints. Body parts that announce themselves always engender a "doesn't that hurt" query. Grimace when you say, "No."

**Rule 11:** For heaven's sake, don't use a real excuse. No one will believe you.

Now that you know the rules, lets examine some common and uncommon excuses and their potency.

### ***Tendinitis***

Don't try this one on me. I've had it in three tendons in the left elbow, two in the right, and in all eight fingers. I've had it in both wrists and in one shoulder. I've had it so bad I couldn't pick up a twelve-pack. Right now it even hurts to pick my nose. Let me tell you, nobody's buying it. Your only hope with this excuse is to pick a really obscure body part upon which an injury will reflect an unheard of dedication to the sport. Nothing says, "heel-hooking roof god," like tendinitis in the backs of the knees. As well, if you're one of those twisted types who likes training and takes pride in their immense power, toss them this line: "Do you know anything about tendinitis of the lats? Should I ice them or keep them warm?"

### ***Hangover***

Again, don't try this one on me; I've had one since 1976. Too often this excuse violates rule five. If you complain of front points to the forehead, your partner will claim he's running jack-hammers. Bitching about "acute toxic encephalopathy" sometimes makes this ruse work, but unless you actually vomit, preferably in your partner's car or on his or her gear, this puppy ain't going far. And if you do hurl, look out, your partner might just outdo you. This is a no win when you're following a pitch.

### ***Illness***

This is the time-honored classic and usually quite effectual when accompanied by visual or olfactory symptoms such as oozing welts, scarlet rashes, or giardic gas. It works best if your malady is contagious- your partner will keep their distance and you can work the "I thought we were in this together/this would be easy if I got a little support" angle.

### ***Work Related Stress***

Tread lightly with this one. If you're a climber, odds are all your friends know you work as little as possible. You can turn this around, however, by being stressed out by the prospect of possibly having to get a job.

### ***The One Sure-Fire Excuse***

In a word- hemorrhoids. Long approaches, hanging belays, stemming corners: you name it and hemorrhoids will make it miserable. Like tendinitis, hemorrhoids can flare up at any time, making them convenient. Unlike tendinitis, not everybody has or will admit to having 'roids, though I have several friends who use this excuse regularly. The beauty of this stratagem is nobody will ever check to see if it's true.

So there you have it, the keys to successful climbing. Now that you know the rules, it's time to practice, practice, practice. By the way, I was at the doctor's a little while back. Physical work made me gasp and wheeze. I was so short of breath that my lungs felt like two peanuts. They ran some tests on me and said I has airway hypersensitivity to methacholine. (In layman's terms- asthma.) What can I say? I haven't felt this great in years.

Editor's note: This article originally appeared in Black Diamond's Spring 1997 catalog, and has been reprinted with permission.



## How'd You Break Your Arm?

by Gloria Abrahamson, Mohall Farmer

Even if you aren't a skier, you'll be able to appreciate the humor of the slopes as written in this account by a New Orleans paper.

A friend just got back from a holiday ski trip to Utah with the kind of story that warms the cockles of anybody's heart. Conditions were perfect, 12 below, no feeling in the toes, basic numbness all over, the "tell me when we're having fun" kind of day.

One of the women in the group complained to her husband that she was in dire need of a restroom. He told her not to worry, that he was sure there was relief waiting at the top of the lift in the form of a powder room for female skiers in distress. He was wrong, of course, and the pain did not go away.

If you've ever had nature hit its panic button in you, then you know that a temperature of 12 below doesn't help matters. So, with time running out, the woman weighed her options.

Her husband, sensing the intensity of her pain, suggested that since she was wearing an all white ski outfit, she should go off into the woods. No one would even notice, he assured her. The white will provide more than adequate camouflage. So, she headed for treeline, began disrobing, and proceeded to do her thing. If you've ever parked on the side of a slope, then you know there is a right way and a wrong way to set your skis so you don't move. Yup, you got it. She had them positioned the wrong way.

Steep slopes are not forgiving, even during embarrassing moments. Without warning, the woman found herself skiing backward, out-of control, racing though the trees, somehow missing all of them, and into another slope. Her demiere and the reverse side were still bare, her pants down around her knees, and she was picking up speed all the while.

She continued on backwards, totally out of control, creating an unusual vista for other skiers. The woman skied, if you define that very loosley, back under the lift, and finally collided violently with a pylon. The bad news was that she broke her arm and was unable to pull up her ski pants. At long last, her husband arrived and put an end to her nude show, then went to the base of the mountain and summoned the ski patrol, who transported her to the hospital.

In the emergency room she was regrouping, when a man with an obviously broken leg was put in the bed next to hers. "So how did you break your leg?" she asked, making small talk.

"It was the darndest thing you ever saw," he said. "I was riding up this ski lift, and suddenly I couldn't believe my eyes. There was this crazy woman skiing backward out of control down the moutain with her bare bottom hanging out of her clothes and her pants down around her knees. I leaned over to get a better look and I guess I didn't realize how far I'd moved. I fell out of the lift."

"So, how'd you break your arm?"



## A COWBOY'S GUIDE TO LIFE

1. Don't squat with your spurs on.
2. Don't interfere with something that ain't botherin' you none.
3. The easiest way to eat crow is while it's still warm. The colder it gets, the harder it is to swallow.
4. If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.
5. If it don't seem like it's worth the effort, it probably ain't.
6. It don't take a genius to spot a goat in a flock of sheep.
7. The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with watches you shave his face in the mirror every morning.
8. Never ask a barber if you need a haircut.
9. If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.
10. Don't worry about bitin' off more'n you can chew; your mouth is probably a whole lot bigger'n you think.
11. Always drink upstream from the herd.
12. Generally, you ain't leamin' nothing when your mouth's a-jawin'.
13. Tellin' a man to git lost and makin' him do it are two entirely different propositions.
14. If you're ridin' ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there with ya.
15. Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment.
16. When you give a personal lesson in meanness to a critter or to a person, don't be surprised if they learn their lesson.
17. When you're throwin' your weight around, be ready to have it thrown around by somebody else.
18. Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back.
19. Always take a good look at what you're about to eat. It's not so important to know what it is, but it's sure crucial to know that it was.
20. The quickest way to double your money is to fold it over and put it back into your pocket.
21. Never miss a good chance to shut up.

\*\* Cowboy unknown

## TOP SIGNS YOU MIGHT BE A UCMC'er:

You have any of last year's UCMC T-shirts, which have been sparingly given out. People are begging for them.

You have ever lived at 444 Dixmyth.

You've learned that it really is possible to go on amazing trips within a student's limited budget.

You already know where you'll be for next year's Memorial Weekend trip.

You have met people named Flipper, Gizmo, Beaker, and Static, but have never been told their real names.

You get discounts at BioWheels, RockQuest, and Climb Time.

You know what makes up Aunt Irene's, Larry Cookies, and the entire menu of Daniel's Pub.

Jeremy has you convinced you can cook an entire four course meal for a group of six using only an MSR Whisperlite stove and three bags of flour-like substances.

Your boss doesn't even attempt to schedule you for work on Wednesday nights.

When you hear the name "Hillary", you think of Sir Edmund, not Rodahn Clinton.

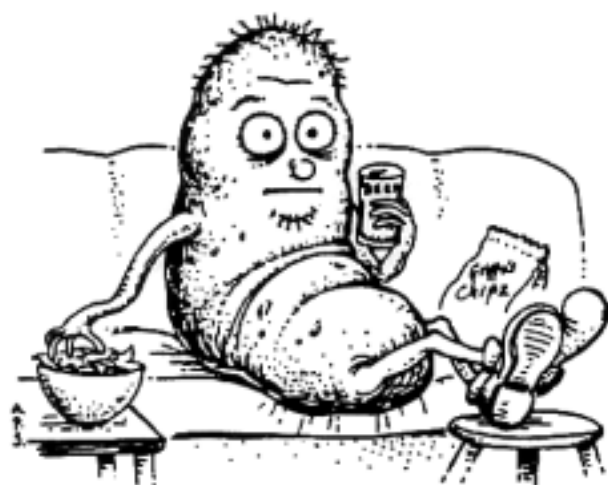
You have acquired more than one "Larry's Special".

You know a carabiner is not someone who lives in the South Pacific.

During sunset on your last trip, you and three others attempted to take a picture of your silhouettes in obscure yogic-like poses.

Your idea of fun includes strap-ons or paddles.

You actually understand more than three of these.



## Calling All Couch Potatoes!

Free time on campus? Looking for a great excuse to miss class? Stop by the UC Mountaineering Club office in 217 TUC. We have a comfortable couch, snacking food, plenty of beer, and more.