

State and Local

Rockclimbing offers highs

Grapplers face challenges to physical, mental limits

By Thomas Eikel
Reporter

Rockclimbers aren't nuts, necessarily. They're simply hooked on a sport that offers participants a chance to test personal limits, overcome fears and catch an adrenaline high.

"You don't have to be that good," says Stewart Maxwell, a senior computer science major from Lancaster. "Climbing is based more on your own limits."

And because it is such an individual sport, beginners are able to achieve the same satisfaction as more experienced climbers, Maxwell says.

But rockclimbers — like people who participate in other risk-oriented activities — often are incorrectly classified as people who are crazy or have a death wish, he says.

"Once you get into climbing you realize you can always minimize the risk so it's safe," Maxwell says, who has been climbing almost four years. "Of course, you reach a point where, in order to go further, you have to increase the risk. But, whenever you increase it, you also increase the reward."

People have different reasons for climbing, Maxwell says. Many climbers do it primarily for the controlled risk involved and the "adrenaline rush" it gives them.

"What keeps me climbing is the concentration required and the mental focus I get out of it," Maxwell says. "When you have such a narrow focus on something, no matter what it is, you get that feeling — it's a sort of high."

Camille Bunting, who has a doctorate in exercise physiology and outdoor education, says these types of physical responses result from hormones the body produces when it is involved in adventurous activities.

The extent to which an individual experiences this "high" also is

related to his or her personality type, Bunting says.

Bunting, who teaches a rockclimbing course offered in the Texas A&M outdoor education department, has her own reasons for climbing.

"It's like a puzzle to me, a physical puzzle," she says. "You have to figure out the hand and foot placements that will be the most effective or the most challenging."

"Then, in order to accomplish it, you have to focus on just that thing. If you think about other things while you're climbing, you're not going to be focused on the activity and you're not going to be able to accomplish it."

Maxwell says this sense of accomplishment is another reason many people climb.

"When at first you think you can't do something, but then you succeed at doing it, you get a feeling of accomplishment that's hard to come by," he says. "I suppose this relates a lot to life in that you don't know your limits until you go past them."

Scott King, a senior economics major from Longview, enjoys overcoming the physical and mental challenges associated with rockclimbing.

"If you're climbing at the edge of your limits, it takes 100 percent mental and physical effort," King says.

The rewards from meeting the demands of the sport and overcoming the challenges involved are unique to the individual and very personal, King says. Rock climbing fosters competition within oneself, not with others, he says, and those who compete successfully are rewarded with physical and mental self-improvement.

Anxiety and fear are a part of any climb and all rockclimbers must deal with them, King says. Overcoming this fear is a step-by-step process in which one must start small and strive toward bigger and more difficult challenges.

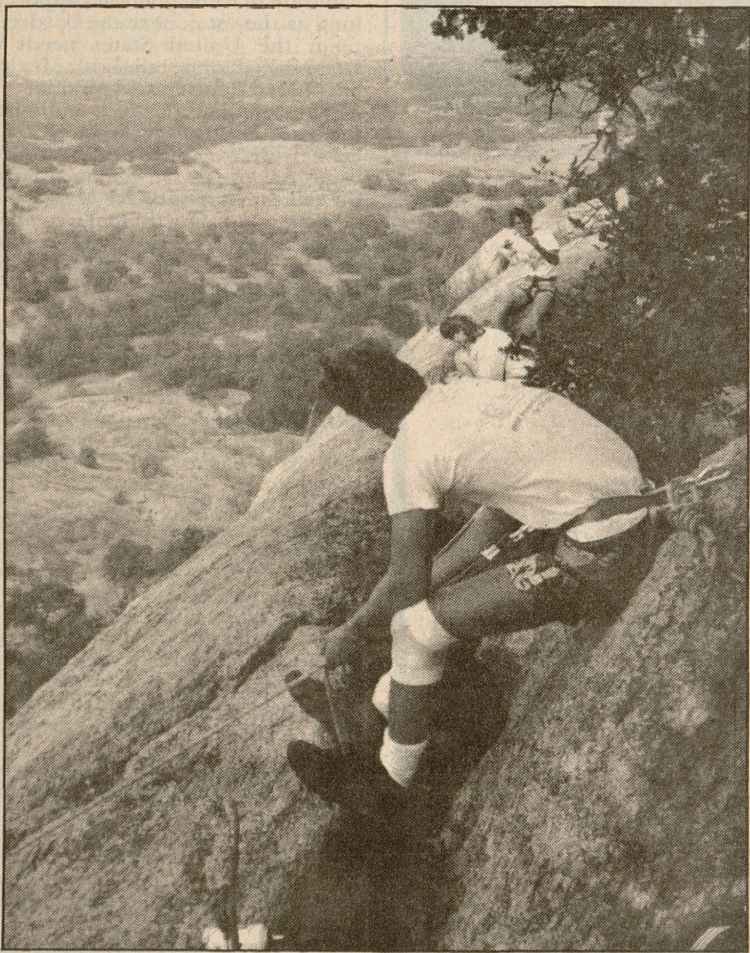


Photo by Jean Mansavage

Outdoor education students, from foreground, Randal Zoeller, Mary Schwind and Mike Mackey climb during a weekend trip to Enchanted Rock near Fredericksburg.

Fear, King explains, can be positive mental energy if it can be turned around.

Maxwell agrees, saying that to a certain degree, fear is positive.

"Fear is not a bad thing when you're climbing because it keeps you safe," Maxwell says. "If you're not scared, you get careless, and that can lead to serious consequences. We have a saying, 'If you're not scared, you're not

having fun.' There's some truth to it, but in climbing you're in complete control of the situation."

Bunting says the climbing environment for beginners is highly controlled, and the class offered by A&M stresses safety.

"Our classes are geared toward education, not recreation," she says, "to learn and understand how things are done."

Service fraternity gets probation from MSC

By Doug Driskell
Staff Writer

The MSC Council approved probation terms for the service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega as a result of complaints from other student organizations last semester, a council member at the MSC Council meeting Monday night said.

"A committee or group in the Student Programs Office has never been put on probation before," Frank Muller, vice president for operations, said. "We wanted council to approve this action because I felt that we (budget operations committee) just could not take this on our own initiative."

Noise made by APO members was the chief complaint given, Muller said.

Ken Pecus, vice president for administration for APO, said this probation was a result of a lack of communication.

Last semester APO was notified, early in the week, of the complaints against them, he said. The problem came when probation for this semester was given before the officers could notify the members during their weekly meetings on Sunday.

The terms of the probation limit the number of people in the fraternity's cubicle, require respect for the MSC and other committees' prop-

erty and noise is to be kept to a minimum, Muller said.

"This is generated from last semester and has no reflection on the organization this semester," he said.

New leadership in the fraternity and a willingness to work resulted in a complete change in the organization, he said.

Pecus said APO has more than 300 members with the pledges included. "When you have that many people coming in to check out what is going on, noise is going to be made," he said.

"Because we are so large, we tend to get the blame," he said.

New policy was made at the beginning of this semester, he said. Members and pledges now are required to have discussions outside the office to cut down on noise.

In other action taken:

• MSC Promotion Day on Nov. 11 will help students understand the purpose of organizations in the MSC, Liz Hudson, vice president for public relations, said. "A lot of students don't even know that the Student Programs Office and the MSC Director's Office are up here," she said.

• An A&M tradition will be broken Friday when the center pole is raised at 6:03 p.m. instead of 4:03 p.m., Paul Williams, deputy Corps commander, said.

Inspection shows hospital handled asbestos properly

DALLAS (AP) — Officials who inspected Parkland Memorial Hospital said Monday the facility complies with federal asbestos removal regulations, despite claims by former and current employees that they were exposed to the hazard.

Hospital documents dated Feb. 23, 1986, to Sept. 23, 1987, allege employees and patients were repeatedly exposed to asbestos. The documents say the substance was improperly handled and was disposed of in hospital dumpsters. In addition, they say, asbestos fragments were visible in areas accessible to hospital

employees and patients. Patients exposed to asbestos include newborn babies, the complaints said.

Don Higgins, Texas Department of Health regional industrial hygienist, said Parkland requested the inspection.

"The reason I went to visit Parkland is because the administration wanted a review," Higgins said. "I reviewed the present (asbestos removal) contract and the contractor and the consultant are more than complying with the (federal) requirements on the removal of asbestos in buildings."

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