

# SO... YOU WANT TO GO ICE CLIMBING.



ICE CLIMBING EQUIPMENT: PACK, ICE PICKS, CRAMPONS, CARABINERS AND A HELMET.

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I'm forty feet above the ground... its -20°C.. I can't feel my fingers or toes ... and I'm hanging off the side of an ice covered cliff clutching two ice picks, backed up by two little prongs clamped on to the toe of each boot, while one rope around my waist tries to make me feel secure... QUESTION: Am I having fun yet?!!!

The above description is what happens if you are overcome by a sudden warped sense of adventure to go ... ice climbing in Welsford!

What does it take to be a rock or ice climber? Speaking of the present group, they are a good hearted bunch of nuts whose distinguishing feature is their willingness to alternately freeze and get heat stroke while climbing up and rappelling off cliff faces (year round of course).

With the patient coaching of instructors Joey Kennedy, Steve Robertson, Jeff Holmes and Greg Hull (and between bursts of hysterical laughter) I finally managed to wedge one foot in a crevice while madly whacking one pick axe into the ice to sustain a hold. Not very stylish, much to the amused viewers below, but damn good survival techniques, which were at the top of my list. Climbing this particular route called 'Ice Cheese' was my major accomplishment of the day; and I must say I was pretty proud of myself. After finishing that climb I thought back to the early morning; and the bad case of jitters which had plagued me the night before.

What ever possessed me to go to that organizational meeting? I remember babbling on at the meeting in a cheerful enough humour, asking all kinds of relevant ice-climbing questions (at least I



JOEY KENNEDY RAPPELING DOWN THE "ICE CHEESE".



DARRELL KALNICK - PROOF CRAMPONS AND ICE PICKS WORK.



JOEY... "JUST HANGING AROUND"



BERNICE LAMB - "GIVE ME EVEREST!!!"



STEVE ROBERTSON... READY FOR ANYTHING.



PATTI MULVIHILL - "BREAKTIME".

thought so). It was only during the ride down that I remembered the smug smiles and mischievous looks that passed from one seasoned climber to another, as if to say 'yep, got another fool, wonder how long she'll last'.

Just before our arrival at the cliffs we all pulled into the local truckers stop to have a coffee, or a nervous breakdown, whatever. The usual jokes about turning back before it's too late came up ... no one realized I wasn't joking. I was thinking of just hangin' out at the shop till the end of the day, tasting all the different types of donuts (then

writing a feature article about them) waiting for the troops to pass through and pick me up - no such luck; they said the donuts would still be there later, ... if I came back.

After a half mile there we were ... (but where was there?) All I saw was the snow and cliffs in the distance, and all I felt was cold ... meanwhile, I was expecting Joey Kennedy to burst into song at any moment, (something to the effect of 'oh, what a beautiful morning') - while bounding into the woods. I would follow behind meekly wrapped in my electric blanket, trailing my extension cord.

If you were a class A boy scout or girl guide then skip this next paragraph, because I can't identify with you. The simple task of tying a double figure eight knot was beyond my comprehension as Jeff Holmes soon found out. All you feminist oriented gals will be proud to know that good old Bernice Lamb couldn't wait to get cinched? lynched? (I think belayed is the right term) fast enough to tackle the Ice Cheese - she doesn't know the meaning of the word fear - stay away from her!

While Patti, Chris, Jeff, Steve got on with the serious matter of climbing ice, I stuck with trying to get two feet off the ground, co-ordinating ice-picks with crampons (steel foot fangs) - easier said than done.

Before I knew it the Florence Nightingale of climbing, Bernice informed me that it was my turn to tackle 'The Drainpipe'. I couldn't see myself saying 'I broke my leg on the drainpipe', so it was time to put my morning of instruction, and two days of phobias to work.

When climbing you have to tie a rope through a harness, with the rope running to the top of the cliff, then back down to an anchor on the ground (like a tree) and a person who feeds you the line.

Once you're harnessed up, you have the rope to take your weight, after that you're home-free. So, after about 20 minutes (compared to everyone else's 10 minutes) I conquered my first cliff.

By the end of the day, my feet had called it quits, and so had I. We packed it in for the day (for some of us lot longer than that) and headed back to good old Freddy Beach.

I have to say I learned a lot that Sunday about trying new things, and I met some very nice, if not kinda crazy people too. If you ever get an urge to try something a little off-the-wall so to speak, check the club out - I guarantee you won't be disappointed!