

STEPPING OUT

WITH MARK ROBICHAUD

CAVES, CRACKS AND CLIMBING
COCHRANE LANE

Reasons to climb can be as multi-faceted as the folks who do it, engineers, teachers, archaeologists, jr. high school students and the people who respond to the Canadian question:



Signs of the finger mash

Fredericton is a fabulous city. Cars stop so you can walk across the street, even where cross-walks don't exist. Folks wave to thank the thoughtful driver. People call out good tidings in the fading light of our fall evenings and every once in a while I see someone walking home. Know what I mean? No fuss, no push, just walking, strolling, sauntering home. I try to walk home whenever I can and I like people who do the same. Usually these folks make great climbing partners.

Me? I spent the weekend at Cochrane Lane, climbing, chatting, falling and taking my first lead. Leading created a new component of my climbing experience and I don't believe that I've devoted enough time reflecting on that first lead. Being the first to tie in, climb and placing protection is the act of leading. Will my climbing change? Of course it will. Climbing by its very nature is a perpetual learning and challenging experience. Will my climbing take a huge leap forward? I doubt it, I'll warm up to leading slowly and steadily. I want to avoid the danger of taking climbing for granted.

Leading created a greater respect in me for the accomplished climbers who introduced me to this lifestyle, guys like Karel, Justin, Marc and Don. While setting up the belay station, I found myself thinking of the people who started climbing Cochrane Lane - minimal gear, lots of cleaning and a tight circle of climbers. Earlier in the day I had learned that the Climbers Sign In Box is the original and it's twenty years old (thanks Pat). An infectious community of climbers nurtured this area into the climbing area of the Maritimes, this development is as constant as climbing itself and the process is as alive today as it was when the Sign In Box was established. Steve Adamson, J.P. Graham, Mark Dixon, Mike Gumpert and Marc Leblanc are some of the many people responsible for continuing this progression: Mike is the president of the U.N.B. Rock and Ice Climbing Club, Mark, Marc, and J.P. have been blazing some new climbs this summer and Steve is responsible for many new and established routes.

Cochrane Lane needs this community, it's a very important component of the climbing experience. This group is comprised of many different people, both women and men (the last Rock and Ice Club training weekend had a fifty-fifty split). Some climbers are encouraged by complexity and won't look at the 5.8's (a medium level of difficulty), they aspire to more complex heights and challenges. Others view climbing with a "where it takes them" attitude - a classic Karel quote., while still others are fascinated by the balance, strength and fluid flow of their body when climbing. This is by no means a complete description of why each and every person climbs, why I climb is a combination of all three.

"So... what do you do?"
"I Climb."
People who are introduced to rock climbing for the first time should take a little time to consider why they want to climb.

Cochrane Lane is a series of high rock faces just south of Welsford on Highway #7 (south). The drive is easy, just hop on to the highway heading to Saint



Shadows at Pyramid Wall

Take the left and drive over the covered bridge (built in 1921), keep on cruising and the road will change from asphalt to dirt, stop at the fence with the sign. Please park to the left as it asks you to do, the gentleman who owns the farm is very busy and would appreciate the co-operation.

Good spots for beginners would be Exfoliated Wall, Gollum's Cave, parts of Joe's Garage, and the Upper Tier. Exfoliated wall has four excellent climbs, the best and toughest (5.7) is Mental Floss. Walk past the campsite and on your right will be a short path leading to the wall edge, the large Spruce trees are anchors. From the base of Mental Floss you can see the crux, it's a tooth jutting out into an overhang; this is an excellent stretch for your left arm and I like to jam my right hand in the crack to pull myself over. Gollum's Cave is a blast with some great routes and a chimney. My description is no substitute for actual climbing with someone who is experienced with the area, or you could pick up the Route Guide from the kind people



Chalking up for the pinnacle of Pyramid Wall

John and drive about forty minutes until you reach Welsford, drive past the Irving and in a minute you will see a sign announcing Cochrane Lane.

this is a popular area and dodging falling stones is not the good, actually it's 9.8 metres per second of the bad. To get to the Upper Tier follow the orange flagging tape. The outside wall of the Upper Tier is still quite open for new routes, although it looks like there's a heap of loose rock, the potential is obvious. Please use the latrine provided (bring your own tickets). Pack out whatever you pack in, I've found water bottles, punched out webbing, energy bar wrappers and other garbage. If you plan to stay the night please be careful with campfires as the area is still quite dry, common sense never goes out of style.

Eagle Rock is another spot that I would like to mention. Take the right turn just before the Welsford Irving and drive to the Welsford school. Hike in behind the school and at the end of the field you'll find a trail. As you cruise along and come to the junction in the trail, stay right for a good twenty minute up-hill hike; it follows a dry stream bed so be wary of loose rock and unstable footing. The left at the junction takes you to a great boulder field and waterfall, absolutely beautiful in the winter and a terrific ice climb in the early months of 1996. Eagle Rock itself is a terrific vantage point to see clearly to Grand Bay, not to mention the



excellent beginner routes - the big bonus is nobody really goes here. The anchors are obvious, either bolts or natural.

The climbing season is drawing to an end as the leaves change and the days get shorter. So

if you want to tie in and explore Cochrane Lane take advantage of the U.N.B Rock and Ice Climbing Club training weekend on October 14 and 15th. The meeting for information and registration is on Tuesday the 10th of October at 7:00 p.m., room #105 McLaggen Hall. Go and check it out, I guarantee it will be worth your while. Usually the trip is overnight so bring a warm sleeping bag or better yet - someone to share it with.

For those of you who are displaced Saint Johners, you may want to check out **The Hangout**, a climbing wall owned and operated by climbers. They are located at 78 King Street, walk all the way to the top of the stairs and you're there, freshly open and ready for business.

In our home town the U.N.B. wall will be opening soon, we just have a few more technical hurdles to tackle. Namely mats. You would not believe how much it can cost to get something to fall on.

Last weekend had amazing weather for climbing, I hope the folks heading down to Maine this weekend will have agreeable conditions and a great Thanksgiving climb.

This is a long weekend coming up, so take advantage of the extra day and get outside. Ride your bike, go for a hike, take pictures and most importantly have a great time.



Cory and Tom above Joe's



Looking for the kind hold



Going strong

"She climbed the last 2000 feet Saturday morning, emerging onto the summit around noon into the view of other campers."

The Denver Post, from wire reports, May 15th, describing Alison Hargreaves' solo oxygenless ascent of Everest (*Climbing*, August 1st edition). Mrs. Hargreaves, a mother of two, died attempting to solo K2 this summer. May she rest in peace.

"It is better to live one day as a tiger than a thousand as a lamb."

-Mr Hargreaves, after learning of Susans death.

"The ultimate good is to be not afraid."

-Nietzsche.