

Sept. 13

Hi, Kay.

please excuse my hand printing; I only use my typewriter about once every ten years, and I make too many mistakes. I enjoyed the stories you sent me, and I'm happy to give you a few of my own. Feel free to edit them for the website. (Too long as is)

I was in on that infamous kangaroo court cage incident but only played a minor role.

A bunch of us went on a storm drain expedition one night. We sang folk songs while we were underground but had to keep quiet when we popped out in people's back yards. We suspected a connection between the storm drain and the sewer when the water got waist deep and there was toilet paper floating by. We were able to open a manhole to get out, so the return trip was mostly outside. I think we got pretty close to the bay.

Another time we went to Stanford, where they have steam tunnels similar to Cal's. It was on a Sunday, and the campus was swarming with people. In broad daylight, we played the role of maintenance workers, wearing suitable clothes, and lifted up a large metal plate and climbed down, closing the cover behind us. After exploring the tunnels we managed to get into a building, as is easy to do at Cal, and we left a derogatory note on a desk, written on Stanford stationery.

Bridge and building climbing was usually done starting around 1:00 a.m. It's pretty easy to escape detection because there are few if any people around and they wouldn't be looking up. Besides the buildings on campus, such as the women's gym (access to the pool for skinny-dipping, and exit via the steam tunnels), the library, the president's house, etc., sometimes finding open windows, we also went to San Francisco, where we climbed St. Mary's Cathedral (the old one, before it burned down) with five of us, and we got up to the dome of the Palace of Fine Arts, via an inside ladder.

In Oakland the Kaiser Center next to Lake Merritt was just being built, and we had this ongoing joke: "You can't climb the Kaiser building with a mob." Well, some of us took up the challenge (7 of us), and we climbed over a fence, sneaked past a watchman's shack, and climbed about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up on steel scaffolding, which was made easier by the existence of crossing diagonal braces. The top part of the climb (up to about 300 feet above the ground) had to be done on the building's girders. At the top there was an overhanging wooden hauling beam, and one of us crawled out on it and carved "UCHC" on it. Luckily, we did the climb without getting caught.

Keith Howard, Dick Sheible and I did the Golden Gate bridge together. We climbed onto the cable at a low point and used a sling for protection, sliding it up the hand cable and unhooking it at each post. The main cable is like a big pipe, with grooves around it. It gets steeper as you go up, and the hand cable runs out just as you're crawling up the steepest part. At the top there's a bridge from one side of the roadway to the other, and a trap door allows you to climb down a ladder inside the tower, but you can't get out at the bottom due to a locked door. There's also a cable winch for hauling materials. (over)

A trap door got us into the organ loft and we walked out the front door.

Naturally, the three of us wanted to do the Bay bridge, so one night (actually, early morning) we drove to Treasure Island and parked my car there, which was pretty dumb, since it caused the Navy to start looking for us. As we were running up the lower part of the cable, a CHP officer named Lynwood Blote just happened to be driving by, and he yelled to us, "Get down from there!" We were tempted to keep going and get our money's worth, but we finally decided to obey. We were cited for walking on the bridge, and he was nice enough to schedule our court appearance so as not to conflict with our final exams. After we had explained to the judge that we were just rock climbers and didn't intend to commit suicide or blow up the bridge, he said, "Well, the maximum fine for walking on the bridge is \$54." "But, Your Honor," I said, "we're poor struggling students and can't afford that." "O.K. - I'll make it \$35," he said. "That's still a lot," I said, and he finally came down to \$15. "I was hoping for a suspended sentence!" I said, but a courtroom official said, "Get in the next room and pay the fine or go to jail!" I didn't have \$15, but Dick or Keith wrote a check for all three of us and I paid him back later. I was about to graduate, so my night climbing was coming to an end, but that \$15 was a small price to pay for all the fun I had had on this and other climbs.

We were frustrated by not being able to climb the Bay bridge, so the same night when we were caught, we drove over to the Carquinez bridge and climbed it! The new bridge wasn't open yet so there was no traffic on it. The bridge had long plates with oval holes, so it was tricky. The old bridge was later closed for repairs, and we climbed it another night. It was easier because it had a latticework of small x's. In both cases we climbed back down on ladders.

There's a tall building in Berkeley, just west of the campus, called the "Public"? → something-or-other Health building. It has an outside stairway, so you can go up to the top and do a 90-foot rappel down a smooth wall, with your rope around a railing. A couple of us did it one night, leaving black shoe marks all the way down. Unfortunately, we were so concerned about getting caught that we came down too quickly and the rope (which was borrowed) turned to glass.

We also climbed a mausoleum in Oakland and entered it via a trap door or a window.

I've enclosed accounts of a couple of bad outings, for everyone's amusement. I hope this is the kind of thing you were looking for.

Best wishes.

Dave Rottman

The Caving Trip from Hell

Ray de Saussure, Tom Aley, Ann Dacey and I went on a trip to Shasta Lake on a Thanksgiving 4-day weekend. We planned to camp in the entrance room of Samuel Cave, and we had borrowed Tim Kaarto's boat for the trip down the McCloud River arm of Shasta Lake to explore Baird Cave, now commercialized and known as "Shasta Lake Caverns." Everything seemed to go wrong on that trip. We started out having to turn around and go back to retrieve the turkey which we had left on the curb. While driving along Gilman Road at the lake (not paved at the time), a boat trailer wheel came off, and we had to hunt for the nut, washer, cotter pin and wheel bearing before we could put things back together. After launching the boat, we dropped one of the oars overboard and had to retrieve it, before getting to Samuel Cave. It's about 5 miles down the lake to the other cave, and we had to climb several hundred feet up a talus slope to reach the original entrance, so we got a pretty late start. Nowadays there's a boat ride across the lake and a bus ride up the hill, and they've blasted out a new entrance leading to both old and new sections of the cave. We spent several hours in the cave and got back to the boat at about midnight. We didn't have any lights on the boat, and we eventually ran aground on a sandbar and decided to build a fire and wait for daylight. With no supper or breakfast and freezing temperatures, it was a pretty miserable trip back up the lake. To make things worse, the outboard motor was temperamental and the seat of Ann's pants was ripped out. Back at Samuel we heated up our turkey with a reflector oven and a fire and had our Thanksgiving dinner a little late. The others wanted to try to get a little sleep, but I wanted to explore the 70-foot pit in one of the back rooms, so we rigged a rope ladder for coming back up, and I rappelled down. We arranged to have Ray come back at a certain time to belay me up the ladder. Things went o.k. until Ray decided to pull up an unused rope before I started up, and it got tangled with the ladder about 15 feet above me, so I had to climb up to undo the mess. After I got back up to the room, I couldn't find the hole that led to the entrance of the cave for several minutes - probably due to being very tired and sleepy. We got back to Berkeley just in time for my 8:00 class, but I doubt that I learned very much that day. That trip was a fiasco all the way, but it was certainly a memorable one, as you can tell from the fact that I can still describe the details after more than 50 years.

The Climb from Hell

This was back in the days when all the climbers would sleep under boulder overhangs in Camp Four and the mediocre climbers like me would hobnob with the great ones. One day, against my better judgment, I let Chuck Pratt talk me into doing Rixon's Pinnacle with him, even though I wasn't experienced at direct-aid climbing. The next morning, at about 8:00, Warren Harding met us at the start of the climb and gave us a few tips. Most of the climb involved putting in and taking out pitons and standing in slings and was quite strenuous. I did my share of leading, but I was slow and inefficient. (over)

At one point I got a cramp in my hand and had to pry my fingers loose from my piton hammer. Late in the day we could see that we probably wouldn't make it to the top, and we hadn't had any food or water since lunch time. I led the last pitch that we did, with Chuck yelling at me to hurry up and to put the pitons far apart. I did this, but then Chuck, who was a lot shorter than I was, had trouble reaching. We came to a spot where the only way to go up was to pound a piton into a crack underneath an overhang, swing out on a sling, and then climb over the end of the overhang. I managed to make it up o.k., but Chuck needed some tension on the rope because of the reach problem. We rested on a large ledge and watched the light from the setting sun shining on Half Dome, as we contemplated how we would get down. Instead of going via the route we had used coming up, we decided to rappel straight down the face, to save time, supposedly. Chuck took my flashlight so he could see our next rappel point, and after a while he yelled up at me to come on down. When I was near the end of the rope, I could see that he had attached some slings to it. In those days we used a body rappel rather than some kind of mechanical brake. I was on an overhang, and I could feel the slings and carabiners bump their way around my body, but I couldn't see Chuck in the dark, and I was actually almost resigned to dying. Then I heard a shout: "Over here! In the tree!" Somehow I managed to touch a vertical face with my foot, and eventually I was able to swing sideways and hook my foot onto a tree branch and pull myself to safety. Chuck rigged the next rappel single-strand, so he was sure to reach the ground, promising to find me a ledge halfway down so I could go down double-strand and retrieve the rope. As I went down, I tied a sling around the rope with a prusik knot and had the other end around my chest, feeling that I needed a self-belay because of my weakened condition. Unfortunately, it did more harm than good, because I put too much weight on the sling and the knot jammed. Somehow, exhausted or not, I was able to support my weight with one hand while I briefly got out of the rappel and undid the sling with the other hand. I quickly wrapped the rope back around me and continued downward. I hadn't heard anything about a ledge from Chuck, but I was lucky enough to find one (in the dark) that protruded about six inches and had a crack at the back of it. I was quite willing to leave a 75-cent angle piton, as you can imagine. The next day I was so sore I could hardly move. I lost two of my nine lives on that climb!