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**Subject:** PATC-MS July Newsletter  
**Date:** July 6, 2025 at 9:56 PM  
**To:** sacarr@YAHOO.COM

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## July 2025 Newsletter

### What's in a name (Update on PATC)

Since we last wrote, ExCom has continued to have conversations with both the PATC parent club and our sister section, the Ski Touring Section (STS) about the future structure of MS and STS sections within PATC. PATC believes that non-profits associated with environmentally adjacent issues will face increased scrutiny.

As a 501(c)3 organisation with an over a million dollars annual budget that is 115x over the mountaineering section budget, PATC is legally liable for the financial and other activities of its sections and has been advised that the current level of management control and oversight is an unacceptable risk. PATC has offered three options to restructure the relationship with the sections that they believe will satisfy these concerns: 1) fully integrating with the immediate increase of the membership fees and dissolution of the independent section's management; 2) becoming a "financially sponsored" semi-independent 501(c)7; and 3) fully legally separating into an independent non-profit (most likely 501(c)07) with the option of some form of an MOU with PATC). It is ExCom's opinion that fully integrating does not serve the interests of the club as we would lose the autonomy we have enjoyed for many years and undermine the viability of the club. The major concern is that we will not be able to operate our trips and clinics expeditiously as they will require PATC approval

to operate our trips and clinics independently as they will require PATC approval that has not shown interest in the section's activities in the past. The other two options would require the club to form a 501(c)(7) and add varying cost and burden to the clubs operations.

The fundamental difference between options 2 and 3 comes down to insurance coverage by PATC, the extent of financial oversight/control over the club, and the prospect of maintaining a 501(c)7 filing. ExCom has been investigating the implications of some of these elements. On its face the administrative task of making 501(c)7 filings should not be particularly problematic for options 2 and 3 (if a highschooler can do it, then it can't be that complicated). Going independent would mean losing financial accountability that comes from reporting to a larger entity. Another question is the exact extent of PATC's insurance coverage as it is unclear whether rock climbing is currently covered and if so how long we would still be covered. Insurance companies are increasingly hesitant to provide cover of our sport. Thus, whichever option we follow, it seems likely that the club may have to bear the costs specifically related to climbing insurance in the future if deemed necessary. ExCom is inquiring about the cost of and extent of coverage from various insurance brokers and clarifying our existing coverage (or lack thereof).

After ExCom has worked through these issues, we will report back on our conclusions. As the options currently on the table will require changes to our constitution members will be given an opportunity to vote on them. ExCom will offer its recommendation, along with all of the pertinent information and implications. PATC has asked that the club inform them of our decision in August so that they can begin their 2026 budget planning with full information about our intentions, even if not yet executed.

## **Buddy Check (Bylaws)**

Earlier this year, we surveyed the club about what mattered most to the members. This has been immensely helpful information. With the expectation that the club will need to engage in some significant administrative overhauls in the coming months, ExCom will launch a process to begin redrafting the bylaws. Ahead of that process, we would like to hear from you again about how the bylaws should be updated. Please send ExCom your recommendations though this [form](#). Multiple submissions are welcome. Current bylaws are on the

[website](#).

## **"At -A-Glance" from the John Christian Resource Center (JCRC):**

Key to the local history of the Mountaineering Section is one of the most important first ascents at Seneca Rocks: "Skyline Traverse" which was completed in 1939, by Paul Bradt, Don Hubbard and Sam Moore. The climb on the South Peak's East Face was dubbed "One of the finest climbs of its grade" in the second edition of "Seneca, The Climber's Guide" (2006). This first ascent didn't happen all by itself in 1939, not without some earlier climbing reconnaissance of the North Peak and the Gunsight Notch by Bradt and others as far back as 1935 and 1938. Click on this link to read Paul Bradt's full account in the October 1, 1939, edition of the PATC Bulletin.

<https://thejcrc.org/up-ropes/climbing-on-seneca-rock/>

What an adventure—and getting back was the hardest part! The first ascent of the South Face of Mount Arras in British Columbia was completed in 1984 by members of the Mountaineering Section: in July, by Cathy Bushnell, John Christian, Gary Duncan and Pete Grant. According to John Christian's report, returning down and out to the trailhead was the hardest part of their expedition. Read about it and see photos <https://thejcrc.org/region/1878/>

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## **Expedition Grants Now Open!**

We might be late getting the expedition grant program out the door this year, but thanks to our volunteers we are up and running. If you didn't catch Jenny's message on Whatsapp, check out the website for the application

(<https://potomacmountainclub.org/member-benefits/expedition-grant-program>).

We will award up to \$1,000 total and no more than \$500 per grant.

Submissions are due September 30, 2025, for expeditions between 2/26-1/27.

There will be other grants for outdoor education and women's leadership as well. Please contact Jenny for further details.

## **Summer is for Sends**

It may have been hot and humid, but that hasn't stopped the club from getting out. Folks have managed to get everywhere from Seneca to the New River Gorge to our back yard favorites at Great Falls. We've also had clinics for new leaders, trad, and transitioning from single pitch to multi-pitch. Be sure to look for the rescheduled pride climb on the calendar (July 23rd). As always, if you have an adventure we are collecting stories for our 2025 UpRope. Just send a note to [Secretary@patcms.org](mailto:Secretary@patcms.org) .

### **Carderock Wednesdays**



### **Taking over Aidbox at Great Falls**







## Sweaty Seneca Saturdays







## New River Gorge





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