

# Wilderness Climber

The Online Newsletter For Those Who Like To Climb Wild Trees  
In Wild Places

October, 2005

The TreeClimber Coalition

## From Out In The Woods

### Joe Maher

After several months of dealing with one computer problem after another, I am happy to be able to present another month's worth of *Wilderness Climber*.

Hopefully, this time we will be able to enjoy these reports without having to concern ourselves with problems arising from my lack of computer expertise.

Those of you who follow recreational tree climbing through the TreeClimber Coalition are also aware that our website has been experiencing severe technical difficulties during the past few weeks and that we have only gotten ourselves back on line a few days ago.

All I can say is that I apologize and that I am sorry about that. I will try not to let these problems happen again, but I guarantee nothing!

In order to have this issue ready to send out on October First, I am cutting it a little short. By time for the November issue everything should be back up to full speed.



Headed to that world "up there". A climber leaves one world behind while going toward another.

## What's Up There?

**Will Isaacson**

Climbing into the canopy of a tropical rainforest can offer glimpses of both flora and fauna that are of a totally different sort and frequency than those of the temperate forests in North America and elsewhere.

The best way to experience this is to climb up there and then sit quietly and observe. It takes time to become comfortable in such a place, particularly if you are new to the tropical regions. The forest and its vegetation are more dense. The climb will probably take you higher than you normally climb.

Everything about you is foreign and therefore can seem quite mysterious. Once settled into a convenient nook or perched on a temporary platform it is only a matter of time before the climber can relax and begin to appreciate what may be there for observation.

The secret to having meaningful encounters while climbing is to relax and be patient. Be willing to sit quietly and wait for things to happen. This is not only true for a climb in a tropical rainforest but can be applied anywhere. The quieter you are and the longer you wait, the more likely you are to be able to observe something of interest.

In the tropical forest your encounter could involve a monkey, in temperate regions it could be a squirrel, an opossum, or a raccoon. Birds will come close to investigate your presence and can exhibit just as much curiosity toward you as you to them.

Scientists are telling us that more than ninety percent of all rainforest animals spend time or live in the canopy, and that the only way to study and observe is to climb into the canopy with them.



Taylor Barlass, a student from Virginia Intermont College in Bristol, Virginia, spends time checking out the fauna to be found in the wild canopy of a rainforest tree in Central America. Taylor is resting on a TreeShelf temporary platform in a large ficus tree.

Animals that could be found in the canopy of the rainforest include reptiles (above) and baby hummingbirds in their nest (below)



## Panama Climbing

**Bill Maher**

Take a moment and look three months ahead. It's early January and there's snow piled up on every street corner, with another storm coming that night. The trees are bare and the limbs are stretched by the bitter, relentless wind. The car windshield's covered with ice and the battery is getting weak from the grinding it's done for the last month just trying to crank the engine. The kids are in the back seat, grouchy and argumentative because they've been cooped up since Christmas. The car heater just won't warm up fast enough and the air leak around the driver's window is getting on your nerves.

We know you'd rather be in Boca del Drago!

So where in the world of climbing is Bocas del Drago?

It never gets cold in Bocas. The beach is a few feet in front of you. Some of the best trees are right behind you. Every evening in Bocas you can prop your feet up, sip on your favorite libation and gaze across the Caribbean while you embellish the tales of your climbing adventures. Bocas is one of those little beach villages that people can only dream about.

It's easy to get to Bocas. The 2006 rainforest and cloudforest expeditions to the Republic of Panama, sponsored by the Tree Climber Coalition and Tree Climbing USA, will be held Jan. 14-29. You can come for the entire trip or just the first week in the rainforest or the second week in the cloudforest. The rainforest expedition will take place the first week at the Institute for Tropical

Ecology and Conservation. The second week will take place around the Boquete coffee plantations high in the mountains, along the border with Costa Rica.

This expedition is for experienced recreational, educational, and research treeclimbers over the age of 18 who have reasonable experience in double-rope climbing. It is also recommended but not required that climbers have some understanding of single-rope climbing. A class in single-rope techniques will be available at no additional charge for those on the rainforest part of the expedition at Bocas.

If interested, contact Abe Winters at Treeclimbing USA , [abewitheye@msn.com](mailto:abewitheye@msn.com); Joe Maher at Treeclimber's Coalition, [jmaher@treeclimbercoalition.org](mailto:jmaher@treeclimbercoalition.org); or Bill Maher at the Treeclimber's Coalition -- [wcmaher@alltel.net](mailto:wcmaher@alltel.net).

## Wanna Write?

Are you tired of seeing the south get most of the tree climbing attention in the news? We agree that a more diverse input is necessary in order to display treeclimbing's true demographic spread around the world.

If you are one of those people out there who does not happen to be a southern climber, we want your input. Write up your climbs and send us your ideas. We will use them!

send to:

[jmaher@treeclimbercoalition.org](mailto:jmaher@treeclimbercoalition.org)

## About This Newsletter

The activity of recreational tree climbing has become more popular in the past few years. Within recreational climbing there is a growing number of participants who perceive climbing as a new venue for the experience of wilderness. Climbing in wilderness implies the necessity of climbing within the bounds of a strong foundation in wilderness ethics. Climbing in wilderness requires different techniques and a different approach than that necessary for climbing in metropolitan areas.

It is the intent of this newsletter to provide articles and information that will appeal to the climber who is interested in pursuing the activity of climbing in those places that exist beyond the impact of modern civilization. As the population of wilderness climbers grows it is hoped that a growing number of those climbers will contribute to this newsletter, making it more useful to those looking for ideas and techniques applicable to the wilderness experience.