

# THE CRUX

Spring 2003

## The Closing

**Nancy Savickas**

Let me set the record straight. I am an average rock climber; my technique consists of a lot of grunting and hauling. I doubt anyone would say, "She dances up the rock." With that in mind I found myself plastered to a dripping wet, featureless, bulging piece of New Hampshire granite, being belayed by one of North America's most famous climbers, Henry Barber. How the hell – you might ask yourself – did Savickas get to climb with Hot Henry, the legend? I was asking myself the same question, as I struggled to maintain what little dignity I had, and not to fall. But I digress.

This past summer I hosted the AAC barbecue. That's the American Alpine Club, for those not in the know. The New Hampshire house I shared was now dubbed Casa Diablo, after my housemate. Suffice it say, things had gone sour and somewhere in all the mess and chaos, yours truly was hosting a barbecue with Henry Barber as the guest of honor. The weekend came and it poured for both days, but the folks came from near and far to hear Henry and see his slides. As he was setting up for the show, he found out that I needed to

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## Scott Sandberg

**Tom Maguire**

Our friend and climbing partner Scott Sandberg died in an avalanche in Tuckerman Ravine on Mount Washington on November 29, 2002.

Scott began to climb with many of us in the Boston area last year, and was soon an active participant in the AMC's rock and ice climbing instructional programs. Scott was a loving husband and father, a tireless worker, an environmentalist, an activist, a writer, and a musician. On top of it all, had a marvelous sense of humor. He lived in Arlington with his wife Rona, daughter Jessie, and pet dog.

Scott injected fun into everything he did. His blonde ponytail was a fixture at the Boston Rock Gym, as well as at local climbing areas, where he was an ever-present part of the scene. Rather than driving to work from Arlington to Cambridge, he often rode his bicycle to save some air for the rest of us. He liked listening to the Grateful Dead, and their gentle rolling music touched his soul. He was committed to making the world a better place.

All of us who knew Scott are stunned and have been deeply affected by his loss. Scott brought his love of life and joy to many: his family, friends, climbing partners, co-workers at Radcliffe College, and to the people he met when he organized last year's Quincy Quarries cleanup. Scott's efforts to improve the Quincy Quarries were recognized by the Access Fund.

The City of Cambridge commended Scott with a Recycling Award in the year 2000 for his efforts that increased the recycling rate at Radcliffe College, calling him "a first class recycling hero."

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In January 2003, the Cambridge City Council voted to name a square in Cambridge to honor Scott.

To remember Scott, please do two things:

- Contribute to the fund established to aid Scott's wife and daughter. Make your check payable to the "Scott Sandberg Memorial Fund." Please note that the AMC Boston Chapter Mountaineering Committee will be matching all *new* donations up to a combined total of \$1,000 (contact Eric Engberg to arrange for the match). Send your check to:  
  
Medford Cooperative Bank  
856 Mass. Ave.  
Arlington, MA 02476.
- Make a difference. Scott didn't sit around on his rear end complaining about the state of world. He did something about it. Regarding the Quarries restoration, Scott was quoted by the Access Fund as saying: "I am a firm believer that to have a cohesive community, one must have active participants." To honor Scott, be an active participant, not only in climbing, but also in everything around you. Make the world a better place.

Articles about Scott are posted on the web at:

[www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2002/12.05/15-sandberg.html](http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2002/12.05/15-sandberg.html)

[www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2001/01.24/01-talkingrash.html](http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2001/01.24/01-talkingrash.html)

<http://rutlandherald.nybor.com/News/Story/57010.html>

[www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~TheWorks/recycling/edp\\_2000.html](http://www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~TheWorks/recycling/edp_2000.html)

[www.benrudnickandfriends.com/frScott.htm](http://www.benrudnickandfriends.com/frScott.htm)

Here are some excerpts from Scott's Yosemite journal:

*OUTSTANDING, camping at Camp 4 and gazing up at the Middle Brother Face. Ty [Cook] and I did a bunch of excellent climbing including a first pitch of the nose at the base of El Cap! Okay, so I only led the 5.7 pine*

*line but after looking up and seeing the additional 34 more pitches, I quickly figured out that one is enough. We took a trip up north to the Meadows for some alpine rock, where we found Matthes Crest (5.7 \*\*\*\*). Talk about alpenglow! Yellow bellied marmot, mule deer! Just excellent. Yosemite has so much to offer. Incredible crack lines that seem endless. More granite than you would know what to do with. Well I guess that would be understood just by saying Yosemite.*

Near the end of the trip, a rope soloist fell while climbing on a route below Scott and Ty. The soloist hit the ground. Scott and Ty rappelled the route and came to his aid, along with other climbers. They stabilized the fallen climber over several hours. The injured climber was hauled into the air by a helicopter, and just when all seemed well, the helicopter lost lift and the rescue litter dangling below the helicopter struck several trees. The climber whom they had rescued, whom they had spent several hours with, and had come to know, died. Scott wrote this after the incident.

*Ty and I are standing on a sand dune in the middle of the Merced River. The water is passing us on the left and the right. I poke a small stick in the sand, just about a foot below the water. The water, interrupted, moves around the sides of the stick, rejoining back again, then moves on. Creating this very smooth pattern of water gives me something to focus on. I place several more sticks, then a few more; one for each feeling I have about this day. I must have placed a bunch because a beaver approached me and said that he was going to take over from there!*

*Won't you take me to the river. Let me see my reflection in the water*

*Twenty-four hours pass, then seventeen days; by now I have replayed the event a hundred times – in my head, to my wife, to friends – and strangely enough I am not sure how to finish the story this time. I want to say, climb safe... . ❖*



*Scott Sandberg, 1969-2003*