

# On the ROCKS

Clinging to the columns of Skinner's Butte, University senior Kendall Cook signals his appreciation of the day's challenge.

"Dynorrific," he yells down to his climbing partner Spencer Cundari, also a senior at the University.

On any given sunny day in Eugene, visitors to the rock pillars at Skinner's Butte might believe the park was being invaded by an army of brightly clothed commandos.

South Eugene High School senior Ari Denison said the mellow atmosphere and variety of climbs attracts people to the columns.

"About half the people here just come out to probably get away from school and enjoy themselves a bit," he said. "The other half is usually older people who are out here get-

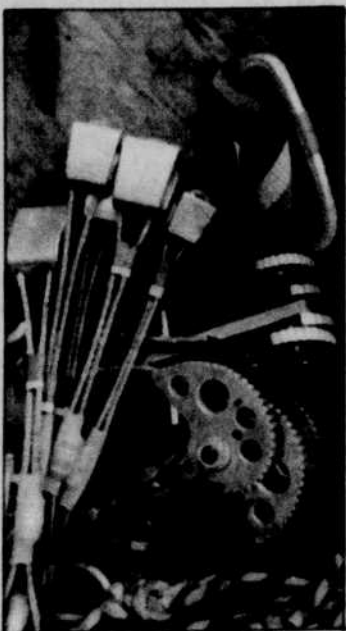
ting away from their jobs. It's a really good place to relax and gather your thoughts. The people are mellow."

After a short talk with Denison, it's obvious climbers have a language all their own.

"The columns are a great place to climb because it offers a huge variety of things you can do, like cracks and faces and chimneys and ruts — whatever you want," he said. "As far as route-making goes here, you just pick and choose. You really have to pick and choose holds. You can start, like, lead-climbing or down-climbing, or you can work on boulder problems."



**Kendall Cook reaches for a handhold near the top of the columns at Skinner's Butte.**



**Carabiners, friends and stoppers (above) are some of the pieces of equipment used to protect climbers against falling. Jenny Root (right) belays fellow climber Eric Allstott.**



**Ari Denison (top) gets a firm grip as he makes his climb. Three people ascend the columns (above).**

**Photos by  
Michael Shindler**