

# Ethiopian Monks Pull Themselves Heavenward

WASHINGTON — The monks of Ethiopia's Debra Damo monastery find a citadel of faith at the end of a rope.

It's a 60-foot rope, and climbing it is the only way the monks can reach their ancient monastery atop a mountain plateau in the rugged northland of the country.

With rare exceptions, the plaited leather rope has been the sole umbilical with the outside world for 1,500 years, perhaps far longer.

The coming and going of the monks over the face of the steep cliff produces one of the most gripping sequences of the National Geographic Society's latest television production.

The color documentary Ethiopia: The Hidden Empire, will be broadcast by the CBS Television Network December 2.

### Obedient Snake

The first rope up Debra Damo was a snake. The Abyssinia of 2,500 years ago spawned the legend, remembered even today in Ethiopian devotional pictures.

A holy man named Za-Mika'el helping spread the faith of the God of Israel through pagan Abyssinia, chanced on the tabletop mountain in his wanderings. He chose it as his place of prayer and penance.

But climbing to the heights was impossible. So, as the old tale tells it, God commanded a snake living amid the rocks to uncoil itself and lift up the monk. All the while an archangel sword in hand, kept a careful eye on the snake.

In gratitude, the monk founded the monastery of Debra Damo, Ethiopia's oldest religious community, now Christian. Parts of Debra Damo's two churches may have been built ten centuries ago.

A ramp the builders used was torn down after construction of the monks. From then on it was decreed that only a rope would serve to get up and down the cliff in remembrance of God's help with the snake. Even today

in Ethiopia a snake is often "a rope of the earth."

### Almost Impregnable

With the rope pulled up, the monastery proved almost impregnable to centuries of invading armies. The historic club is over the lowest of the surrounding cliffs, in other places 650 feet straight up.

A pagan queen reportedly built a new ramp and captured the heights in the 10th century. In 1557 Turkish troops under cover of artillery, fought their way up the steep path leading to the top where every monk was put to the knife.

The Ethiopian Orthodox faith survived. However, only about 300 monks now remain where once more than 1,000 lived.

Few novices come to Debra Damo to accept its ancient codes and remote existence, though some still spend most of their lives there. The National Geographic film shows funeral rites of a monk who had made his home in the monastery for 82 years.

The initiated scramble up the monastery's rope with amazing agility. As one witness described it:

"Before one's very eyes, monks, seminarians, and monastery servants climb up and down the rope with the ease of the angels on Jacob's ladder up to heaven. They dance up rather than climb up the cliff, reckoning with every bump and dip in the rock, swinging from side to side on the rope like monkeys in the jungle."

Occupations directly related to work with computers will be among the most rapidly growing in the next 10 years. Occupations in elementary and secondary education will be among the slowest growing during that period.

tidal current in San o Bay reaches a peak of million cubic feet a second again the flow of the Amazon, National Geographic says.



Cub Scouts are shown with Den Mother at meeting at clubhouse. They are, left to right: Seated—Larry Robertson, Charles Brantley, Mike Norwood and H. A. Smiley; standing—Owen Mitchell, Den Chief, Ronnie Robertson, Kent Daeke, Gene Rooker, Fred Powell, and Mrs. Gus Daeke, Jr., Den Mother.

## Norlina Cub Scouts Hold Meeting

Den 1, Pack 618, Cub Scouts met Friday at the Norlina Woman's Club. Den Chief, Owen Mitchell, led the Pledge to the flag and scout promise. Fred Powell carried the flag for the

flag ceremonies. Larry Robertson welcomed the parents and friends.

A skit, "Legend of Davey Crockett," was presented with Gene Rooker playing the part of Davey Crockett, Mike

Norwood, the bear and the others were Indians and did an Indian dance.

Refreshments were served by Mrs. Owen Robertson, Jr., and Mrs. Horton Brantley.



## Rod And Gun

By ROD AMUNDSON

Seeing a bearded, long-haired hippie going down the street bobbing a yo-yo is not an uncommon sight these days. But yo-yo fishing is something else again.

As far as we can learn, yo-yo fishing is practically unheard of in North Carolina, but in states such as Louisiana and Arkansas it seems to be a common practice.

A yo-yo is a device that gets its name from its similarity to the spool-type jobs you buy at the corner drugstore. The mechanism is similar to the kind in a roll-up window shade or the gizmo that wound up the chain on Aunt Sadie's pince-nez glasses.

The fishing yo-yo contains a length of fish line wound up in a coil spring spool. A hook is attached to the end of the line, and the spool is fastened to a branch or other object hanging over the water. The hook is baited and the line pulled out until the hook sinks to the desired depth.

A ratchet gadget holds the hook in this position until, hopefully, a fish strikes. This triggers the windup spring, and the gadget automatically winds the fish up out of the water.

This is about as sporting as shooting chickens in the henhouse, and a lot less effective in putting food on the table. Louisiana fisheries biologists checked 9,203 of the devices, and found they caught only 0,161

fish per effort.

If fish yo-yos ever come into common usage in North Carolina, there will probably have to be new regulations set up to control them. Judging from the description, these devices don't seem to fit present fishing rules, except that they would constitute set lines, and using live bait would be unlawful.

The Boat Registration Section of the Wildlife Resources Commission is in the process of mailing out some 76,000 motorboat registration forms to people who registered boats during 1970. If last year's experience is repeated, all too many people will fill in the form improperly, or worse, fill it out, keep the stub, and send the other half back to the Commission.

This is by way of warning boat owners to fill in the form carefully and accurately, and send the entire form back to the Commission. The part the boat owners must carry aboard his boat with him must be validated in the Commission's office.

Unless certificates are completed accurately and validated the owner stands an excellent chance of being arrested for improper boat registration.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Belete of Greensboro spent the weekend with Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Brauer.

## LITTLETON NEWS

Mr. and Mrs. William Sharpe and son, Gregg, of Newport News, Va., were Thursday night visitors of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Delbridge.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Shaw of Chesapeake, Va., visited Mr. and Mrs. Joe D. Pope Friday and also visited in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Delbridge.

Mr. and Mrs. Herman Newsom are spending several weeks in Mobile, Ala.

Guests of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Newsom during the holidays were Mr. and Mrs. Bradford Hudgins and children of Fayetteville, Mr. and Mrs. Luke Shearin, Mrs. Ruby Davis and Mrs. G. T. Daughtie of Roanoke Rapids.

Mr. Brantley Acree of Keysville, Va., spent the weekend with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Brantley Acree, Sr.

Mr. and Mrs. Durwood Keeter of Portsmouth, Va., visited relatives here Friday.

Thanksgiving holiday guests of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Shearin were Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Evans and Miss Annie Shearin of Rocky Mount, Mr. Horton Shearin of Charlotte, Mr. and Mrs. Pete King and children of Wise, and Mrs. Arthur Evans of Warrenton.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Harrison and children of Silver Spring, Md., spent the holidays with Mr. Roy Wright and also visited Mr. and Mrs. Sol B. Bobbitt and Mrs. John Curl.

Miss Hazel King of Newport News, Va., spent the holidays with her mother, Mrs. Graham

Mr. and Mrs. Lowell Harris of Grove Hill were Friday visitors of Mrs. W. E. Wagner. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Thomas Currin and children, Tom, Libby and Mary Lou, of Wilmington, Del., spent several days with his father, Mr. O. L. Currin. Mrs. Jesse Shearin has returned to her home after being a patient in Memorial Hospital in Louisburg for some time.



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