Mountaineering #6.

LORE & LEGEND

Mountaineering is an oral tradition. Over the years, it has been passed down from teacher to pupil, from father to son, package store owner to customer. As a result, a folklore—a mythology, if you will—has formed around the mountains of Busch. You, being a student of mountaineering, no doubt wish to acquaint yourself with these truths and half-truths, these stories both accurate and apocryphal. A wise decision. And, as luck would have it, this ad is just the ticket.

One of mountaineering's earliest legends is Bennington Dexter-Bennington, Adventurer, international bon vivant and inventor of the phrase "your check is in the mail!" It was he who perfected the finer points of expedition financing. While other mountaineers resorted to such bizarre extremes as gamblers' employment, Bennington subsidized assaults on the Busch mountain trap with creative economies. An amalgam of paper schemes, franchised dwarfs, charade corporations and corporate dummies kept him in clover for nigh on 20 fiscal years. Asked at the culmination of his career to reflect upon the secret of success, Bennington revealed his first rule: "Keep all your assets liquid!"

Another frequent subject of mountaineering lore is the wildlife. Numerous tales abound, but perhaps the most famous story is that of the 1973 Muncie Mathematics Convention. All 75 prodigies, whiz kids and befuddled geniuses initiated an after hours expedition. It began harmlessly enough. But soon, the Busch mountaineers reached the Mobius Strip, a racy nightspot catering to highbrow hijinks. Before the evening was over, several of them were bending the slide rules. Others were smoking big cigars and telling every woman in sight they were agents with an eye for figures, claiming they were bent on the mathematics of the veld.

I can make you a mathematical model, baby! Talk about your wildlife!

But when looking for sheer courage, W. Dexter Poole must rank in lore among the top mountaineers. Fond of saying "The road to truth goes through bad neighborhoods," Poole enjoyed skirting with danger and approached mountaineering as a test of survival skills. In his most famous challenge, Poole, equipped only with 30 water-proof matches and a major credit card, parachuted into a remote area known as Cleveland. He was up to the task. Within 24 hours, Poole was bask- ing under the hot sun of Antibes, downing the smooth, cold, refreshing mountains of Busch Beer. A credit to his colleagues and a colleague on credit. What becomes a legend most? That is (one) a matter of subjective judgment and (two) a constant state of flux. Keep in mind legends are created every day. So when you flex your mountaineering muscles, be true to the tradition. At best, you'll be part of history. At least, you'll be a near-myth.

1 Mountaineering is the science and art of drinking Busch. The term originates due to the mercy, joy pales exerted by the label outside and perpetuated due to the cold, naturally refreshing taste inside. The above mountaineers and these scenes of their exploits are legendary and similarity to actual people, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Don't just reach for a beer. Head for the mountains.