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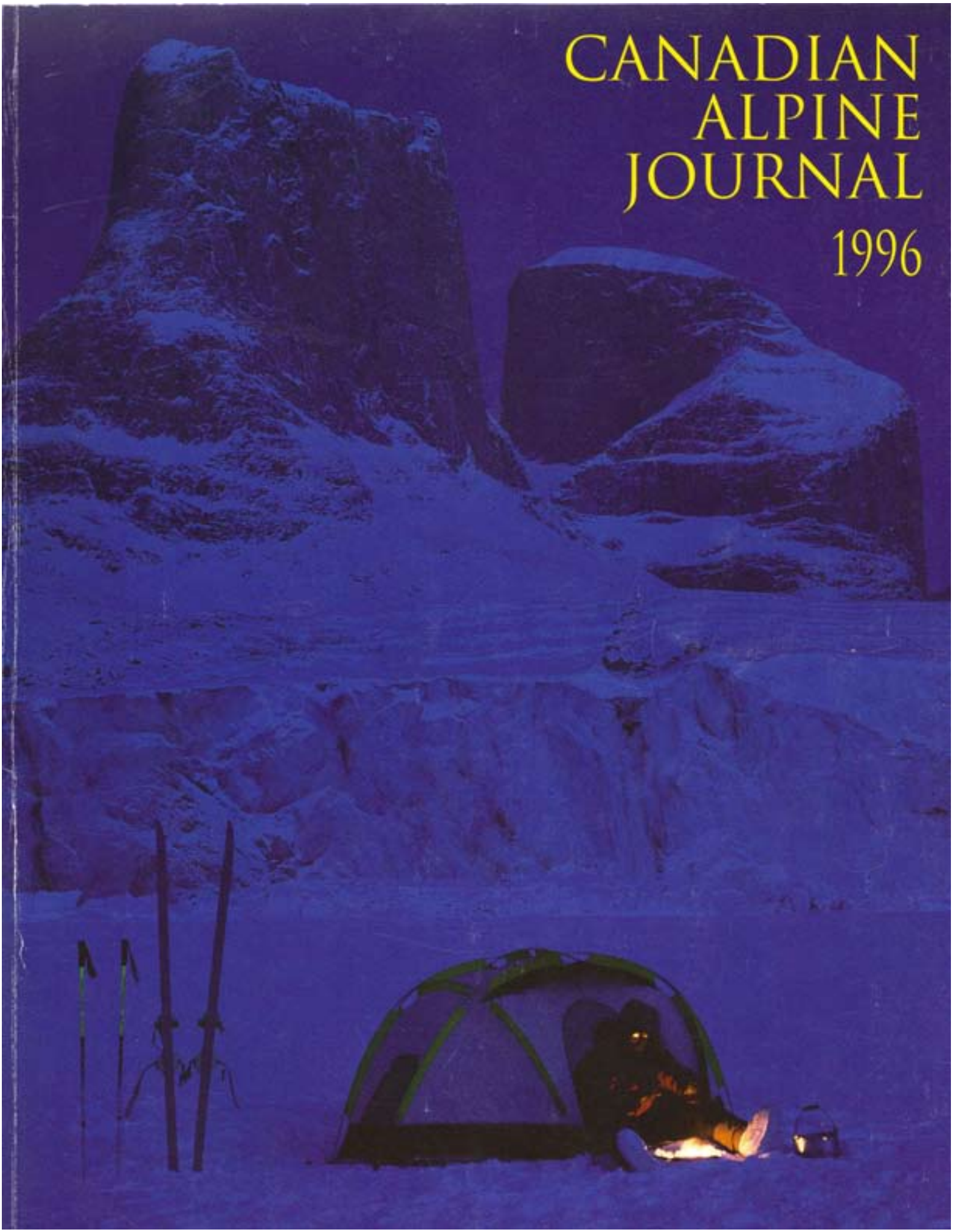

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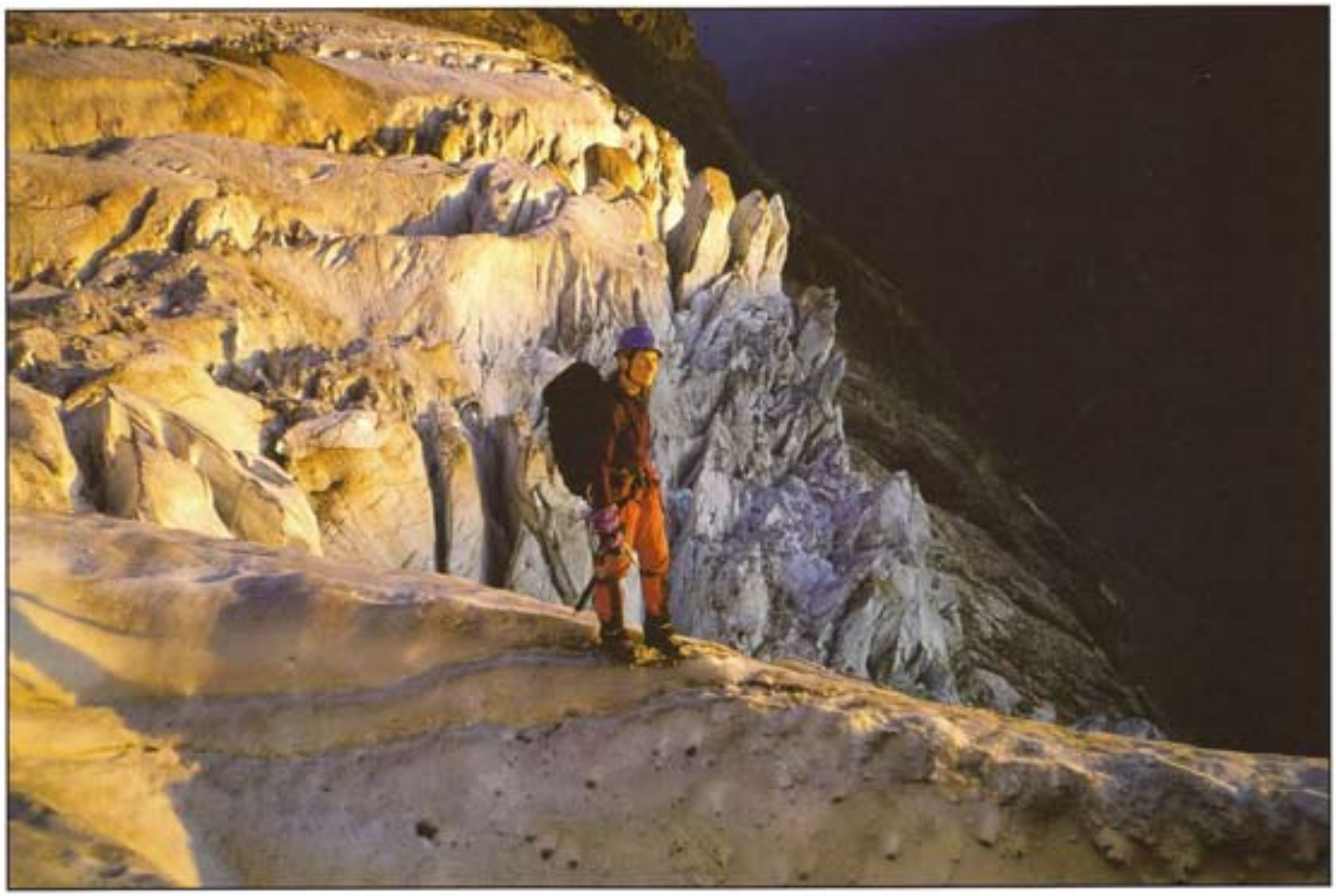

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Front cover: Second Turret and Broad Peak, Baffin Island. Photo: Eugene Fisher
Inside front: Alison Andrews, Mount Edith Cavell. Photo: Rob Orvig
Above: Photo: Hans Hortenhuber
Back cover: Martin Roos, Paul Swayze and Dominik Hartmann on the Lotus Flower Tower. Photo: Kevin Riddell

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Editorial

Amidst the great parts of this job — hearing the news flashes of all the energy around the country, getting occasional insights into the strange regional variations in our game — there are also moments of sadness. They come after the climbers' network passes out the word of the death of one of our friends, and I wait for a telephone call or a letter carrying an obituary. Occasionally, I have to track someone down to write the piece. That, invariably, is a miserable thing to have to do, until I see the eulogies eventually sent to the Journal.

If there is a silver lining to the dangers in climbing, it's that we as a community gain an unsettling, but liberating, familiarity with the reality of death. I'm always astonished how few of my friends outside the climbing world have ever had any experience with losing someone close to them, and how completely disabling it can be to face death without a means of understanding how to celebrate the life of the lost person. Too often, they grieve in hopeless pain.

A climber's passing, and even a climber's funeral, is a different matter. Our community seems to have a remarkable ability to understand and move forward; tearfully at times, but also with great and thankful laughter for the memories. The Journal's obituaries are deeply affecting and honest embraces of partners and friends who have made remarkable differences in our lives. This past year, we have lost some wonderful spirits from our community; some at the end of a full life of climbs, some at the moment of living out their dreams. As always, the things said about these friends in these obituaries are always joyously about life, and that is perhaps the most profound testament of the beauty of our sport.

I am pleased to report that last year's award for the Best of the CAJ went to Bruce Hendricks, for his story "Sea of Vapours." This year, the award will also start to carry a cash prize of $250, thanks to the kind support of the Canadian Himalayan Foundation. The award will be presented at the 1996 Banff Festival of Mountain Films.

GEOFF POWTER

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

The Canadian Alpine Journal welcomes contributions from all interested readers, in either English or French. If possible, submit a 3.5" disk in a Macintosh or DOS format, with a hard copy included.

Submission deadline is January 15, 1997.

Photos are welcome, either as original slides, or prints from negatives. Include the negatives if you send prints. Clearly label and credit all photos.

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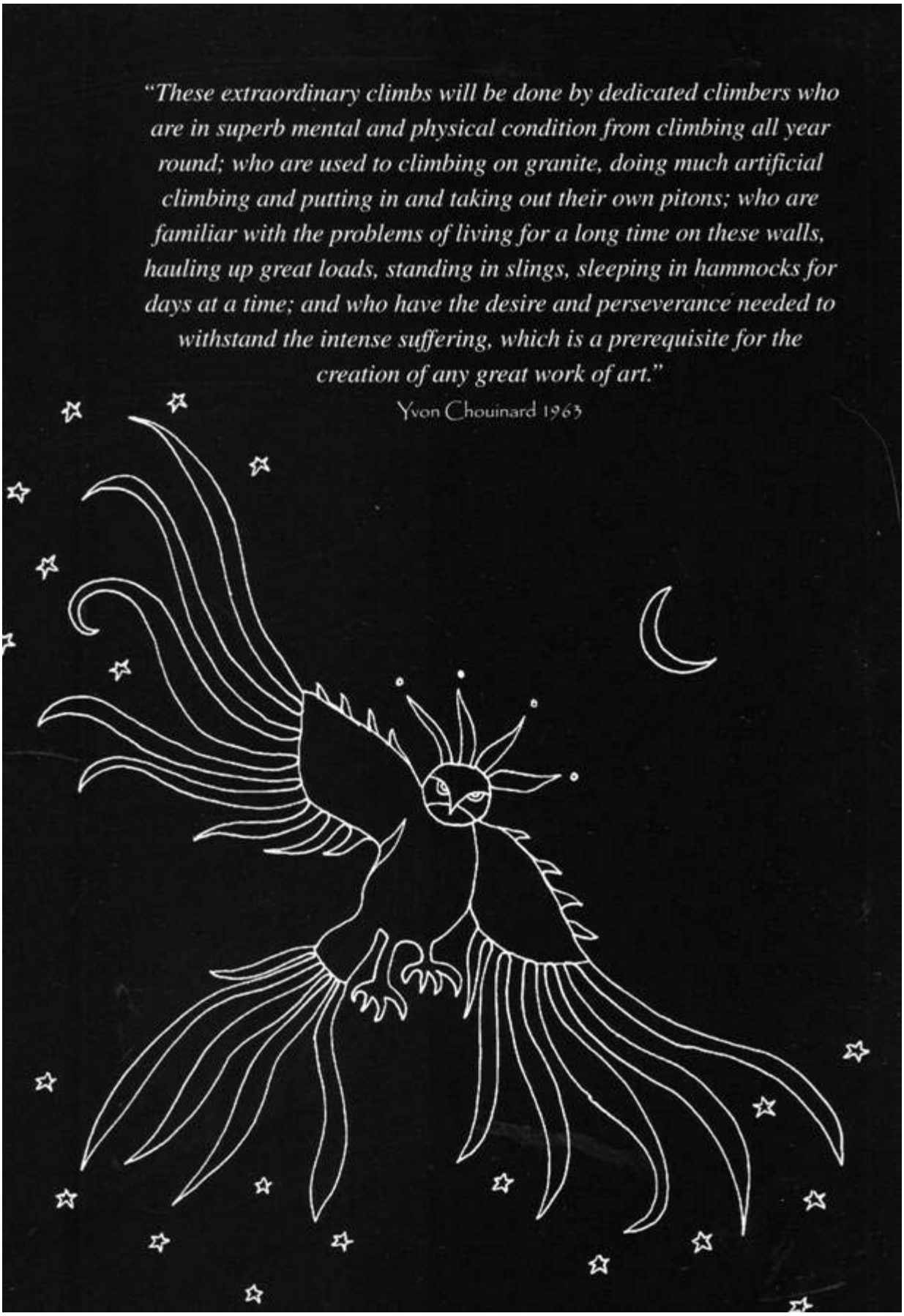
"These extraordinary climbs will be done by dedicated climbers who are in superb mental and physical condition from climbing all year round; who are used to climbing on granite, doing much artificial climbing and putting in and taking out their own pitons; who are familiar with the problems of living for a long time on these walls, hauling up great loads, standing in slings, sleeping in hammocks for days at a time; and who have the desire and perseverance needed to withstand the intense suffering, which is a prerequisite for the creation of any great work of art."

Yvon Chouinard 1963



Chris Breemer on Valkyrie. Photo: Brad Jarrett

The Mecca Of Walls

If one were to ask a random selection of the world's most active climbers where the world's greatest concentration of big walls might be found, the answer might be Pakistan, Patagonia, or even Yosemite. At least that might have been the answer before 1994. Because in that year, and in 1995 as well, the potential offered by the walls of Baffin Island became clear to the world, as no less than nine major routes were established, an achievement that would quadruple the number of established big wall routes there. Those routes and the realization that they represented just the tip of the proverbial iceberg, has lead to the conclusion among many climbers that Baffin Island is in fact home to the greatest wealth of big walls in the world.

Since Baffin Island is lacking any resident climbing population, the history of climbing activity there is far from complete. Probably the most reliable source of information is held by the Auyuittuq National Park administration in Pangnirtung, but it offers sparse coverage of climbing activities within the park. Owing to the fact that the office holds no jurisdiction over much of the eastern fiords area, is especially lacking in the climbing history of that region, which in all likelihood, holds the wealth of virgin granite walls.

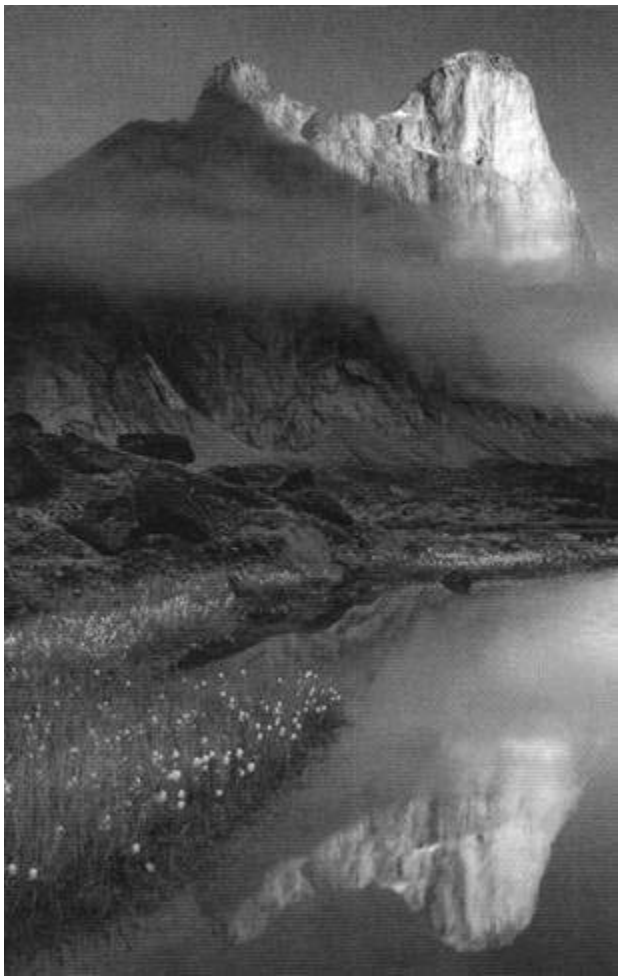
What follows is a history and guide to the big walls of Baffin Island through 1995. Since it is the big walls that Baffin Island is now internationally famous for, they will be the subject of this article. In North America, the term "big wall" has evolved to describe (with a few exceptions), those rock routes that are predominantly aid and require more than 24 hours of actual climbing. Usually this involves hauling and the use of Portaledges. At the risk of offending some of Baffin Island's first ascensionists, I have limited the scope of this article to just those routes that fit into the above definition.

A Short History of the Big Walls

On September 10, 1975, Charlie Porter stood alone on the barren windswept summit of Mount Asgard. He had just completed an audacious solo first ascent of the 800-metre west face. After a lonely bivouac on the summit, he began an epic retreat back to civilization by down-climbing the Swiss Route and hobbling to the emergency shelter at Summit Lake. There, suffering from a combination of trench foot and frostbite, he waited for his swollen feet to shrink before cutting open his boots and resuming his retreat. By the time he reached civilization at the head of Pangnirtung Fiord he had crawled and hobbled fifty kilometres, going without food for the last ten days. That route would mark the culmination of his astounding record of first ascents, stretching from Yosemite Valley to Alaska's Kichatna Spires, and ironically, it would also herald the end of his big wall career.

As was the norm for Porter, he avoided publicity about the route, and it soon developed an aura of mystery. Rumours circulated that Porter had never actually climbed the route, the grade was never publicly revealed, and still, the exact line of the route remains an enigma. Today, one might argue that the mystery surrounding the ascent was a blessing to modern climbers, because rather than encouraging an influx of climbers, it allowed the region to remain relegated to the ranks of the world's forgotten wonderlands. The cliffs remained untouched for ten years before another big wall was established there.

Prior to Porter's groundbreaking ascent, there had been a significant amount of mountaineering activity in the vicinity of Mount Asgard. Much of that activity was non-technical, but notable exceptions occurred, such as the first ascent of Mount Asgard via the Swiss Route in 1953. That route consisted primarily of snow climbing, but was capped-off by several pitches of technical rock in the 5.7 range. The 1972 ascent of the Scott/Hennek route on the east face of Mount Asgard's north tower, was also a landmark



West Face of Mt. Thor, Auyittuq.

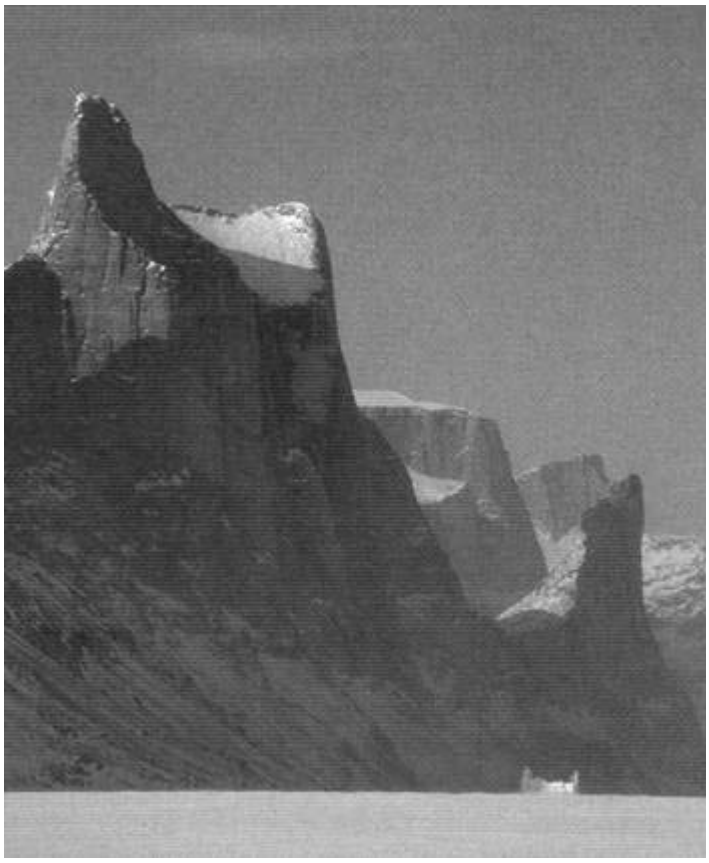
achievement. Consisting of 1200 metres of superb freeclimbing at standards up to 5.10, the route was immediately recognized as one of the world's greatest freeclimbs. On that same expedition, displaying visionary eyes, Scott and Hennek also made a short-lived attempt on what would later become the Porter Route.

In the ten years following Porter's ascent, climbing expeditions continued to visit Baffin Island, and succeeded in establishing a number of fine routes, but they involved predominantly freeclimbing. Most notable were the 1977 ascent of the Southeast Face (VI 5.9, A4) of Mount Asgard's north tower and the 1978 ascent of the Diagonal Buttress (VI 5.9, A4) on the west face of Mount Thor.

It wasn't until 1985 that another big wall route was established. That route, the 1050-metre West Face (VII A4+, 5.10) of Mount Thor, had been attempted on five previous expeditions, resulting in the deaths of two climbers, and a reputation as the tallest uninterrupted cliff in the world. Doug Scott had contemplated climbing it during his visit to the area, but upon close examination decided that it would require many bolt ladders, and gave up the idea. As it turned out, the party of John Bagley, Tom Bepler, Eric Brand, and Earl Redfern drilled less than fifty holes during the first ascent.

That ascent, inspired by an idea of Warren Harding's, was, as Brand describes it, a terrifying climb that "only happened because we were on it at the right time with the right attitude, and were lucky." They fixed the first 275 metres of the route before embarking on an ascent that would last 33 days. Climbing in capsule style, they climbed to the massive ledge that cleaves the face at the 600-metre level. There, they realized that their food would not last through the next 500 metres of overhanging rock that lay between them and the summit. Determined to complete the ascent, John Bagley and Earl Redfern continued fixing ropes above the ledge as Brand and Bepler began a terrifying traverse across the ledge and off the face. Once off the face, Bepler and Brand accidentally descended directly through the icefall at the terminus of the Fork Beard Glacier before reaching base camp. After gathering the remaining food in base camp, they returned to the ledge, rejoined with Bagley and Redfern, and completed the route. They reported constant rockfall, less than perfect rock, and nearly continuously difficult climbing, resulting in what would become the first route in North America, and the second route in the world to receive the controversial overall rating of Grade VII.

In contrast to Porter's ascent, the first ascent of the West Face of Mount Thor received international attention with articles appearing in North America and Europe. Surprisingly, that publicity did little to increase Baffin Island's popularity among big wall climbers. Once again the island was relegated to relative obscurity in comparison to such similar destinations as the lower Baltoro Glacier in Pakistan or the granite spires in the Paine and Fitzroy regions of Patagonia. In the eight years following the ascent of the West Face of Mount Thor, only one new big wall route was added to the island, that of the Direct West Face of Mount Asgard's south tower, bringing the island's total number of big wall routes to three.



The view down Sam Ford Fiord.

Mateuse Akkomalik and dog team.

Then in 1994, Baffin Island, and Mount Asgard in particular, received an unprecedented amount of big wall activity. Three independent parties converged on Mount Asgard's piece de resistance, the west face of the north tower. The first group to arrive, consisting of Noel Craine, Keith Jones, Paul Pritchard, Steve Quinlan, Jordi Tosas, and Simon Yates, endured a laborious month of load carrying, team changes, and atrocious snow conditions before embarking on a new route approximately 200 metres left of the Porter Route. They established fixed lines approximately halfway up the wall before embarking on a continuous push to the top of the wall. Their route Hyperborea (VI 5.11+, A4+) became the second route on the face, 19 years after Porter's ascent. Simultaneously, a Swiss group began fixing ropes up a fantastic crack system in the center of the same face. They eventually abandoned their route (and their ropes) only to return the next year to complete Inukshuk (VI 5.10, A3+).

Taking advantage of a helicopter temporarily based in Pangnirtung, and a previously unheard of landing permit, Chris Breemer and Brad Jarrett arrived last. Having avoided the grueling hike to Mount Asgard, they immediately embarked on a capsule style ascent of Valkyrie. (VI 5.7, A4+), completing the route only seventeen days after arriving on the island.

While 1994 might have seemed an extraordinarily busy year of climbing on Baffin Island, it can, in hindsight, be seen only as the beginning of a surge in the popularity of Baffin Island's

One of the many dangerous fords.

great walls. The following year, 1995, six new Grade VI routes and one new Grade VII were established. Significant ascents occurred in the Weasel Valley region, such as Intsumisioa on the north face of Mount Turnweather, and the ascent of The Midgard, Serpent (VI A5) on the west face of Mount Thor. Its A5 rating was a first for Baffin Island. But perhaps historically most significant was the activity in Baffin's eastern fiords, Sam Ford Fiord in particular.

Prior to 1995 the enormous climbing potential of Baffin Island's eastern fiords remained virtually untapped. Climbers had ventured up some of the region's biggest peaks, but the nearly endless rock walls remained largely unclimbed. Perhaps the first serious effort to climb one of the Grade VI walls there occurred in 1992 when Conrad Anker and Jonathon Turk arrived in Clyde River intent on using sea kayaks for approach. Hampered by particularly bad pack ice conditions, they were forced to abandon much of their aid climbing gear, and instead concentrated on long free routes. Their ascents of Kigut Buttress (V 5.10) and Stump Spire (V 5.11) were at the time probably the most difficult routes established on the rock walls outside of the Weasel Valley region.

Apparently, the three expeditions visiting Sam Ford Fiord in 1995 learned of the drawbacks of kayak travel in the eastern fiords, as they all relied on Inuit snowmobiles to transport them to their chosen walls. Once there, they established four big wall routes, and in doing so, pushed the climbing standards of the eastern fiords to equal those of the Weasel Valley region. Also that year, a team comprised of Mark Synnott, Warren Hollinger, and Jerry Gore, achieved a Baffin first when they succeeded in establishing two new Grade VI routes in a single season, Crossfire (VI 5.10, A4) on the Great Cross Pillars and Nuvunlik (VI 5.10+, A3) on the Turret. That same season, Paul Gagner and Rick Lovelace spent twenty-three days establishing Superunknown (VII 5.10, A3) on the southeast face of Walker Citadel, the second route on Baffin Island to receive the Grade VII rating. Upon reaching the summit, Gagner and Lovelace found themselves in a situation reminiscent of Charlie Porter's twenty years earlier as he limped away from Mount Asgard. During their twenty-three day ascent they were appalled to watch as the pack ice that had formed the base of their route melted away, leaving them with no ground to return to. After reaching the summit, they embarked on an epic series of traverses, rappels, and sections of downclimbing, eventually leading them to dry land. There they soon discovered that they were trapped by the open water and unmapped wilderness that lay between them and Clyde River. Resigned to their fate, they subsisted on a 300 calorie-per-day diet for one week and then outright starved for a second week before they were fortunate to be rescued by a group of Inuit hunters that happened upon them.

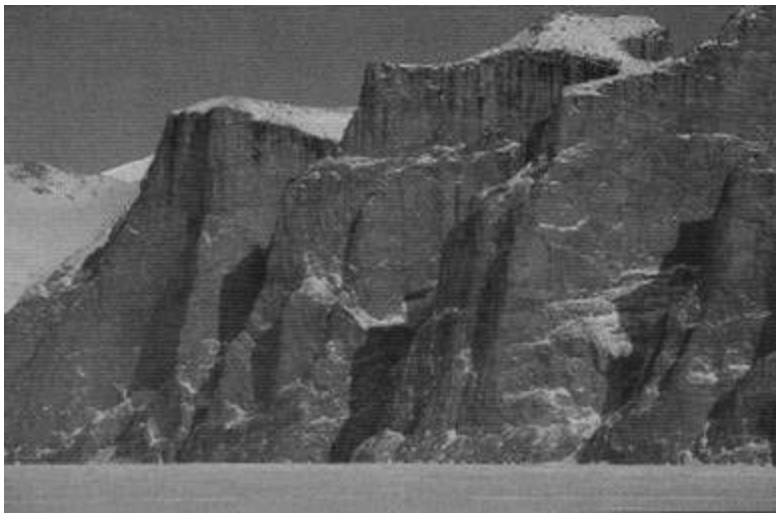
The superb, and unclimbed, Polar Sun spire.

The Future

Of all the factors responsible for the sudden surge in activity, Eugene Fisher's photo essays were probably the most important. His essays, appearing in mountain journals in the USA, Japan, and throughout Europe in the fall of 1994 presented a dramatic selection of Baffin Island's biggest walls. In particular, his coverage of Baffin's eastern fiords opened the world's eyes to a region containing numerous walls easily comparable to the greatest walls in the rest of the world.

Apparently, the climbing activity seen in 1994 and 1995 will continue unabated in the near future. The Inuit outfitters serving the eastern fiords report that numerous climbing groups have made reservations for their services. And if history can be considered a guide to the future, one could assume that all of the climbers visiting the big walls will be establishing their own routes. Surprisingly, no big wall on Baffin Island has seen a repeat ascent.

One particularly interesting facet of Baffin Island's short history has to do with the fine style used to establish the majority of Baffin Island's big walls. Eight of those walls have been established in capsule or alpine style, and all of the routes have been established by climbing parties consisting of four or fewer people, a trend that will hopefully continue in the future. The area is blessed by a history of high stylistic and technical standards, leading to the



Kiguti Pillars, Sam Ford. 1000 metres of climbing possibilities.

Mount Asgard.
The Scott Route roughly follows the left skyline; Valkyrie rises above the shadowed col in the foreground; Inukshuk follows right skyline.

question: How will future climbers improve on the accomplishments achieved during the last twenty years?

If the past is any clue as to what to expect in the future, then those stylistic and technical improvements will probably be most dramatic in the form of speed. Thirty-three years ago Yvon Chouinard correctly predicted that from Yosemite, "a new generation of superalpinists... will venture forth to the high mountains of the world to do the most esthetic and difficult walls on the face of the Earth." Today those "superalpinists" are systematically climbing the most difficult walls in Yosemite in single, continuous pushes, often in times under twenty-four hours, a trend that is on the verge of spreading to the world's other great wall-climbing destinations. Jerry Gore, Mark Synnott, and Warren Hollinger's ascent of the 620-metre west face of the Turret in 40 hours is the first hint of this trend, a trend that will revolutionize standards and techniques on Baffin Island in a way not seen since North America's golden age of wall climbing in the late 1960s.

The Routes

Baffin Island's big walls have been rated using the traditional A1-A5 aid rating system. Unfortunately, that is a closed rating system, meaning that the rating of any given route must be constantly lowered as the envelope of difficulty is pushed forward. What this means for an area like Baffin Island, with no resident climbing population, is that the true difficulty of the climbing described by a given rating is likely to vary drastically from one route to another. This lack of rating consistency is further exacerbated by the fact that not a single route has been repeated and had the rating confirmed. Those considering a repeat of an existing route are advised to use the rating as a very dubious description of the difficulty.

All of the walls represented in this article involve some freeclimbing and have been rated using the Yosemite Decimal System. The YDS is not a closed rating system, so one can expect much more continuity between the free ratings on Baffin Island's big walls and between those walls and the rest of North America.

One might think that the height of a wall would be one of the few characteristics of a route that could easily and accurately be recorded, but that is not the case. To accurately determine the height of a big wall, one must first decide where the "wall" begins. In this article, the height of a wall describes the distance from the start to end of the technical rock climbing — that is, climbing more difficult than fourth class. The drawback inherent in this definition is that it ignores the terrain encountered between flat ground and the wall. Many of the walls on Baffin Island, particularly in Auyuittuq National Park, involve lengthy sections of steep snow and ice, or slabs of rock. For example, to reach the base of Mount Thor one must climb about 300 metres of slabs, which, when covered with snow, are quite serious. The west face of Mount Asgard also involves a serious approach. It is guarded by about 300 metres of snow and ice, at angles up to 55°. When available, such approach information is included in the topo diagrams.

The unexplored Quernbiter Fiord.

The routes described in this article are divided into two sections. The first, covering the walls found in the Weasel Valley region, describes the walls and routes in the order that one would encounter them during a hike from the head of the Pangnirtung

Problem travel in the ice break-up.

The unexplored walls above Branstock Glacier, Auyittuq.

Fiord to Mount Asgard. The second section, covering Sam Ford Fiord, describes the walls as one would encounter them travelling clockwise through the fiord, starting at Kiguti.

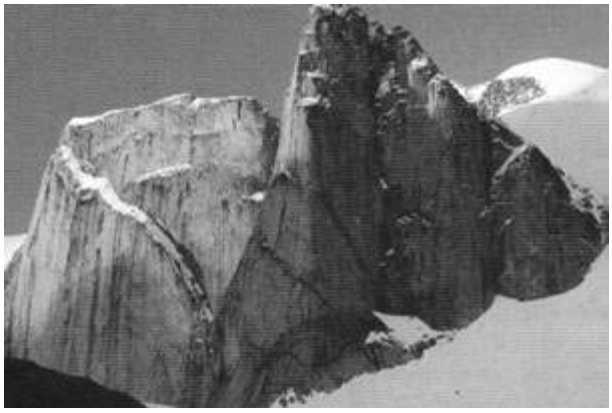
The information presented is as complete as possible, however, those considering attempting any of the routes presented in this article should be aware that none of the routes have been repeated and thus, are likely to vary substantially from the descriptions. Where possible, detailed topo drawings of the routes are included. Unfortunately, several of the routes are lacking topos because the first ascent party declined to draw one or simply forgot the details of their route. Undoubtedly, in the future, mistakes and omissions in this article will be discovered, an unavoidable condition considering the number of international climbers that have visited, and the distance of Baffin Island from any permanent climbing population.

Getting There

All climbing trips to Baffin Island begin at the airport in Montreal or Ottawa. You can expect to pay approximately $750 US for a round trip ticket to Pangnirtung, the launching point for trips into Auyuittuq National Park, or $915 US for a ticket to Clyde River, the standard departure point for forays into Sam Ford Fiord. There are no roads between the villages on Baffin Island, so air transport is your only option. Airfares may rise dramatically depending on the excess baggage fees levied by the airline. On a trip to Auyuittuq National Park in 1993, Brad Jarrett and I were allowed to check in eleven pieces of baggage in Montreal, with no excess baggage fee. That same year, a German expedition paid more than $800 US in excess baggage fees, carrying far less luggage per person than we were. Apparently, the baggage policies of the carrier, First Air, are partially determined by the total amount of non-passenger freight (not just your own) being carried on any given flight. We were informed that excess baggage policies are far more lenient on flights that are light on cargo. Unfortunately, you won't know how full or empty a plane is until you board it, so your safest bet is to arrive at the check-in counter with a big smile on your face, and just in case that doesn't get you through, with a wallet as wide as your smile.

Supplies and Lodging

In Pangnirtung and Clyde River, you can find lodging, food, white gas, and a few other basic supplies. Unfortunately, everything is quite expensive. Imagine a watermelon for $45 CDN or a shower for $12 CDN, and you'll get an idea how steep prices really are. To minimize costs, it's probably worth risking excess baggage fees and bringing most of your food from the mainland.



Breidablik, Auyittuq. A German team freed the central buttress at 5.11.

Since the temperature is generally cold, your "perishables" will probably last a while. Liquor is illegal in both Pangnirtung and Clyde River.

If you care to pay less than $ 1 00 per night for lodging while in Pangnirtung, then you'll want to check into the Parks Canada campground, situated approximately three kilometres northeast of the airport. It's free, quiet, and even equipped with wind walls and camping platforms to keep your tent out of the muck. Beware, during summer the local kids have twenty-four hours of light and a lot of time on their hands — a situation that leads to mischievous rummages through unoccupied tents, resulting in disappearing equipment.

Clyde River lacks a campground, so unless you can convince a local to allow you to camp in their backyard, you'll be staying in the Qammaq Hotel for $180 CDN per night, or in the home of a local outfitter. There is no cheap way to get through Clyde River, but on the bright side, those prices will do wonders for anyone hesitant to commit to an extended stay in the Arctic wilderness.

Auyuittuq

Most parties approaching peaks within Auyuittuq National Park choose the least expensive option, that is, paying an Inuit boat driver to transport them the 32 kilometres from the village of Pangnirtung to Overlord, the park entrance at the head of Pangnirtung Fiord, and then walking. The price of boat transport varies significantly depending on your driver. The park administration maintains that the Inuit boat drivers have a cooperative system in which transport prices are fixed between $100 and $175 US per person, round trip, based on the number of passengers. However, it was my experience that, with a little querying, one can find drivers that will operate at rates significantly lower than those quoted by the park.

At Overlord, you'll find the first of a series of emergency shelters built in the Weasel and Owl Valleys. Those shelters each house a radio which may be used for contacting the park administration in emergencies, as well as arranging boat transport back to

Pangnirtung. There, you'll also find a trail leading northeast to Summit Lake, down the Owl Valley, and ultimately to the head of North Pangnirtung Fiord, a distance of approximately 100 kilometres. It is that trail that is used for approaching all of the established routes in the park. Mount Thor looms directly above the trail, only 20 kilometres from the trailhead, and Mount Asgard lies another 28 kilometres farther.

Those who plan on carrying a large amount of equipment into the park might want to consider a more expensive approach method — either snowmobile or a helicopter. In a normal year, pack ice covers Pangnirtung Fiord from November until early June. During that time, local outfitters can be hired to snowmobile people to destinations as far as Summit Lake. Unfortunately, it is often quite cold when the snowmobiles can operate; so cold in fact, that several expeditions have simply cancelled their plans or sat and waited until the weather warmed.

If you're adverse to frozen fingers, but don't want to be burdened by monstrous loads, you can hire a local outfitter to cache gear within the park during the winter. You then arrive during July or August, waltz up the trail with a light pack, and find a pile of gear awaiting you. This service is not cheap. You must first pay to have your supplies shipped to an outfitter in Pangnirtung, and then pay a premium rate to have it driven into the park. A group of four Swiss climbers spent approximately $1,000 US, in addition to postage, to have their gear cached at Summit Lake.

The most luxurious approach option, the helicopter, is quite expensive, and, for destinations within Auyuittuq National Park, is dependent on a landing permit from the park administration. Presently, the park's exact policy regarding aircraft use within the park is not clear. Parties have been both refused and allowed to land within the park. If you can obtain a landing permit, you can expect to pay about $1000 per hour for helicopter flight time. There are no helicopters permanently based in Pangnirtung, so unless you are lucky enough to find a helicopter temporarily based there, you will also have to pay for the round trip flight time between Iqualuit, where a few helicopters are permanently based, and Pangnirtung, a distance that adds up to a couple of thousand dollars each way.

The Eastern Fiords

To date, all the wall climbing activity in the eastern fiords has been concentrated in Sam Ford Fiord, so it is the approaches to that area that this article concentrates on. Between December and June, pack ice covers the sea in and around all of the eastern fiords, allowing snowmobiles to travel virtually anywhere in the region. All of the parties that have successfully climbed big walls there have used snowmobiles for transportation. One way snowmobile transportation between Clyde River and Sam Ford Fiord, a seventeen hour trip, costs about $1200 CDN for two people.

In July and August, the ice breaks up enough to form a barrier impassable to snowmobiles and boats, virtually ending sea travel during that period. People have successfully used kayaks to travel through the morass of broken ice, but found the kayaks were too small to carry the amount of gear used on the big walls.

Usually, by the end of August, the ice has melted sufficiently to allow passage by motorized boats. In the past, climbers have considered this too late in the season for approaching big walls, but in 1995 two big walls were established in Auyuittuq National Park during August. Although untested, it seems likely that climbers might also have a good chance of succeeding on walls in the eastern fiords during the same time period, provided that the walls don't rise directly out of the sea.

Air transport is also available, at prices consistent with those of Pangnirtung. More than one party has entertained ideas of approaching a formation via parachute or float plane, but so far, these methods remain untested. Helicopters, although expensive, offer the most convenient form of transport in the eastern fiords. Unhindered by ice breakup, they can operate during the months of warmest weather, July and August, and unhindered by park regulations, can land almost anywhere.

Hazards

In 1995, four hikers drowned near Clyde River when their outfitter's boat overturned. That same year, at nearly the same time, Paul Gagner and Rick Lovelace found themselves starving, their way back to Clyde River blocked by open water in a fiord they had planned to walk across. They survived, as have most of the people climbing on Baffin Island, but their situation illustrates one of several hazards unique to the island.

In the eastern fiords, many of the walls rise directly from the sea. When pack ice is present, the sea becomes a giant, frozen parking lot, allowing travel virtually anywhere. But, as Lovelace and Gagner found, climbers relying on that ice to approach their chosen wall need to very carefully and conservatively plan their retreat to precede the ice breakup.

Humans aren't the only creatures that take advantage of the pack ice. Polar bears follow the breaking ice in search of seals. Unfortunately, polar bears are one of the few creatures in the world that won't necessarily run away at the sight of a human. On the contrary, polar bears have been known to stalk humans. Many visitors opt to carry a weapon, often a slug-loaded shotgun, while in polar bear territory. Firearms aren't allowed in Auyuittuq National Park, but polar bears are quite uncommon in the area that climbers frequent.

As far as rescue is concerned, there is none. If you find yourself in need of outside assistance for a rescue off of any of the walls, your best bet is probably to simply untie, jump, and get it over with. There is no one on Baffin Island trained to initiate a high angle rescue. Rescues are limited to carry-outs for people injured in the flats.

The greatest danger to Baffin Island visitors is probably stream crossings. The trail that follows the Weasel and Owl Valleys crosses numerous streams. Most of those crossings are lacking bridges, making them potentially very dangerous, especially during warm afternoons when tremendous amounts of meltwater are released from glaciers. It is quite common for visitors to be simply stopped by high water. If that is the case, patience will generally be rewarded with a lower water level, and a much less harrowing crossing. Ski poles, neoprene booties, or sandals will also make crossings much less miserable.

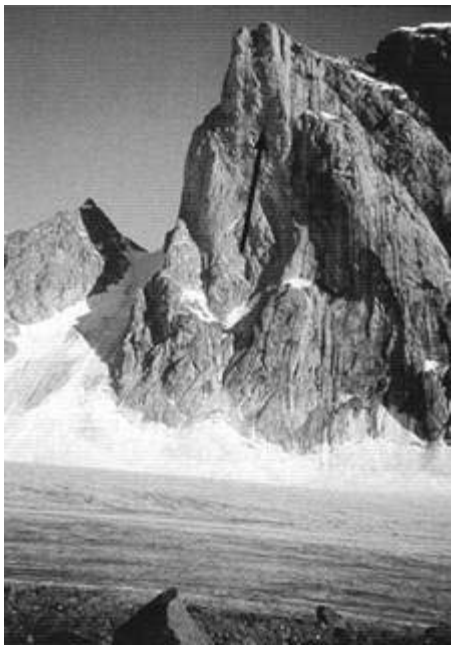
The Second Turret, 1000 metres excluding talus.

Routes of Baffin Island - Auyittuq

The routes of Weasel Valley – Pangnirtung

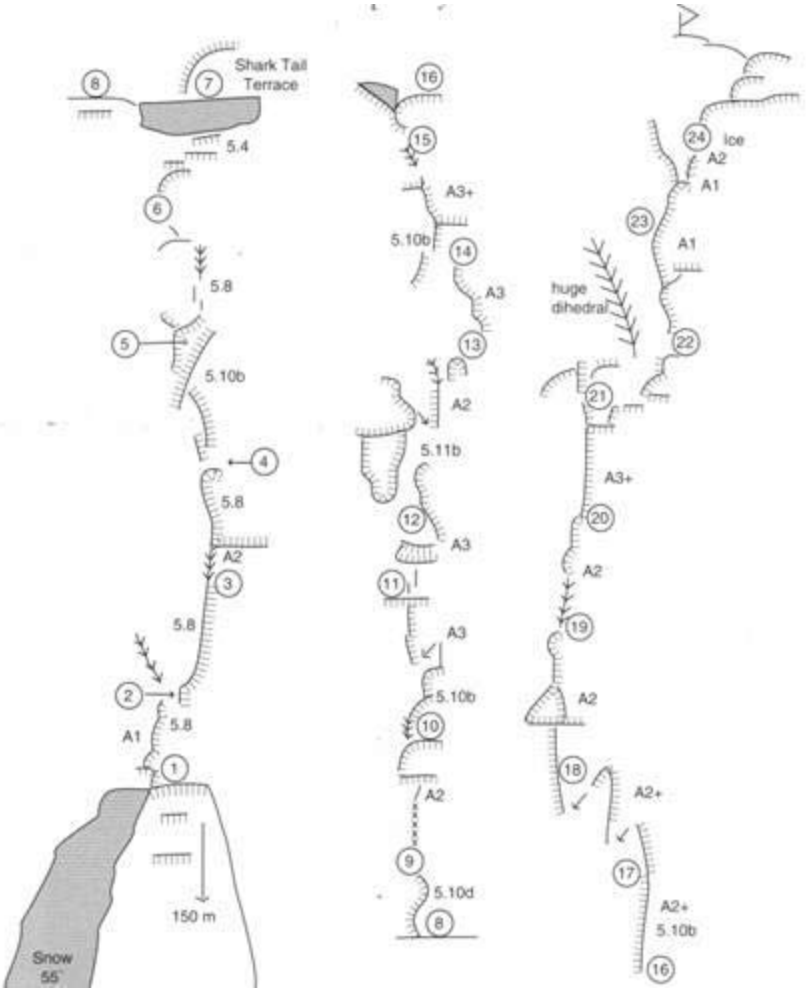
1. Mount Turnweather - Intsumisioa

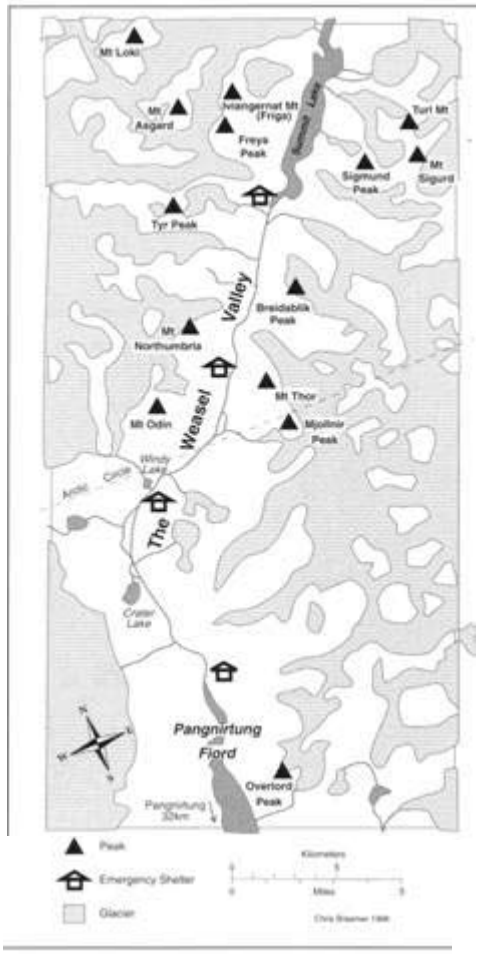
North Face 900m VI A5 +, 5.11b
F.A.: August 3-14, 1995
Miguel Berazaluze, Manu Blazquez, Cristobal Diaz, Raul Melado
Capsule Style



Surprisingly the north face of Mount Turnweather, the big wall with the shortest approach in the park, was among the last of Auyuittuq's walls to be climbed. Perhaps that is because several attempts had left it with a reputation as home to some of the worst rock there. Undaunted by those rumors, a Spanish and Basque group walked in, and in excellent style, established Intsumisioa.

Rope: 60m
Descent: Rappel Route
Gear: Pitons: 1 Rurp, 15 KBs, 10 LAs, 5 Angles
5 Heads
1 ea. RP's
2 ea. Nuts
All hooks
Cams: 3 ea. .25-4.5", 1 ea. 7", 8", 9"
2 Tube chocks



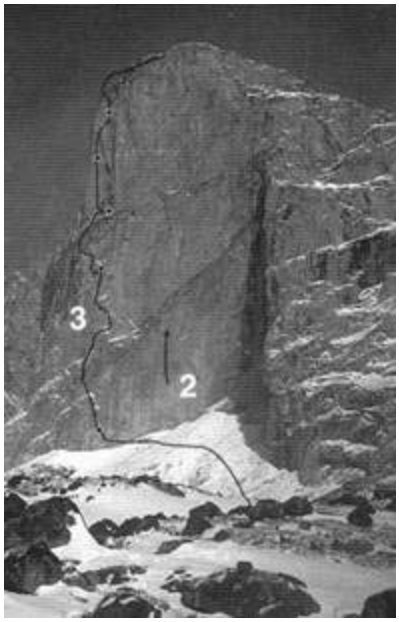


2. Mount Thor – The Midgard Serpent

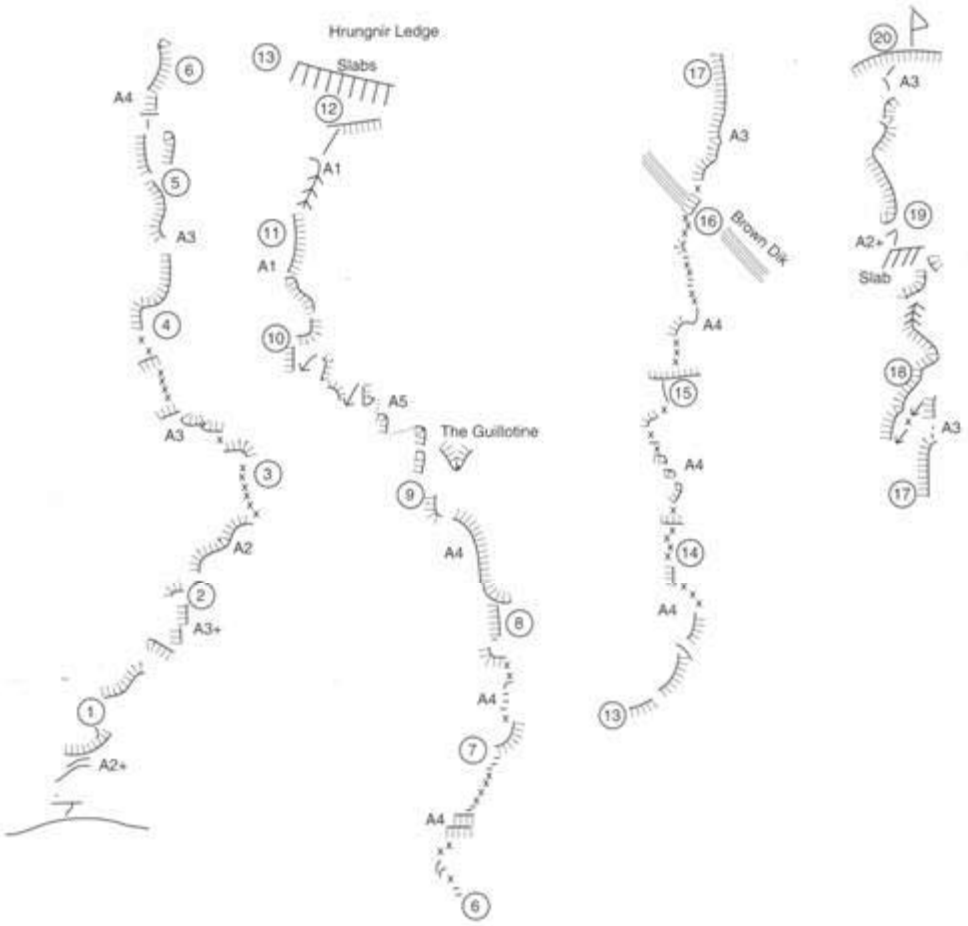
West face 1050m, VI, A5
F.A.: August 10-25, 1995
Brad Jarrett, John Rzeczycki
Capsule Style

After his successful ascent of Mount Asgard in 1994, Brad Jarrett returned in 1995 intent on establishing a second route on Mount Asgard. When his scheduled air transport to the Turner Glacier failed to materialize, he and John Rzeczycki settled for Mount Thor as a consolation prize. In contrast to the original West Face route, they reported the quality of the rock to be very good.

Rope: 60m
Descent: East slopes
Gear: Pitons: 12 Beaks, 6 Rurps, 20 KBs, 20 LAs, 4 ea. 1/2-5/8 angles, 2 ea. 3/4-1 1/2 angles
75 Heads
2 ea. Nuts
All hooks
Cams: 3 ea. to 3", 2 ea. 3.5-4", l ea. 6-7"
Bolt hangers



2. Midgard Serpent, 3. Thor West Face

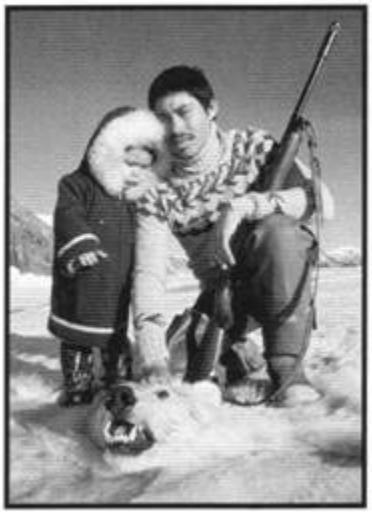


3. Mount Thor — West Face

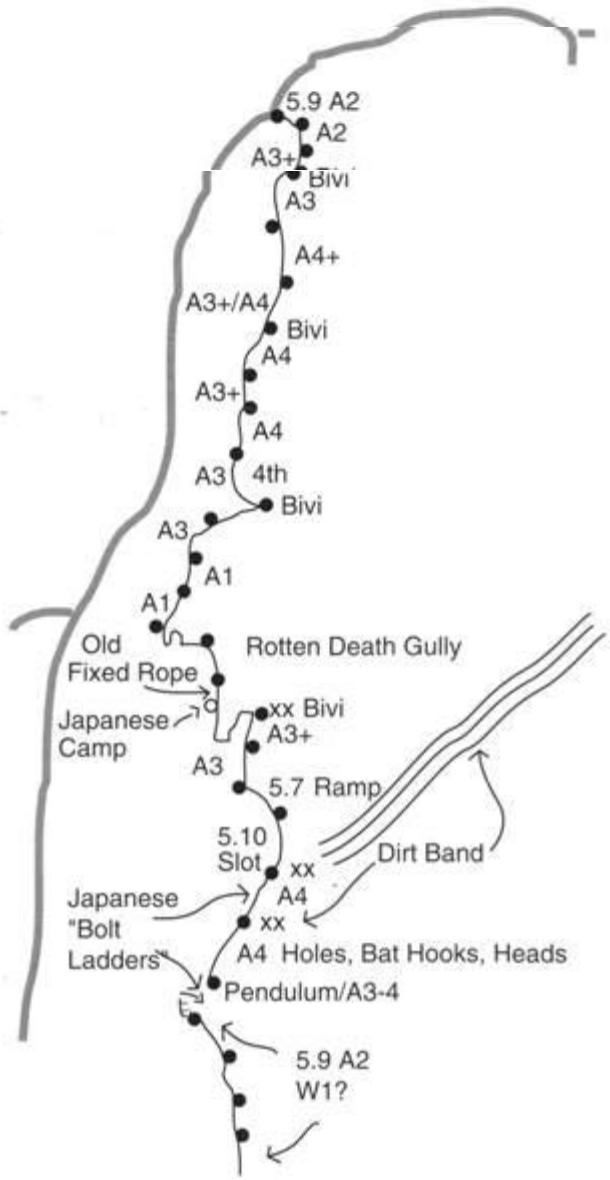
1050m VII, 5.10, A4+
F.A.: May 19-June 21, 1985
John Baglev, Tom Bepler, Eric Brand, Earl Redfern
Capsule style

The first ascent of the West Face of Mount Thor was the culmination of several attempts on the route by various parties. Two separate Japanese parties had attempted the route previously. One climbed to the giant ledge at two-thirds height before traversing off the wall, and continuing up the easier back side. The second group gave up when one of their members was killed by rock fall. An American group tried it in 1980 and gave up after sustained buffeting by 160 km/hr winds. The successful party reported generally very poor rock, and found the route littered with ropes and gear abandoned during previous attempts.

Rope: 50m.
Note: The first ascent party hauled the route in 600' segments. Intermediary anchors may require drilling for hauling.
Descent: East slopes
Gear: Pitons: Beaks, many KBs, LAs, Angles, Leeper Zs
12 Heads
3 ea. Nuts
All hooks
Cams: 3 ea. to 3 1/2", 2 ea. 4-5"



Objective hazard, Baffin Style.

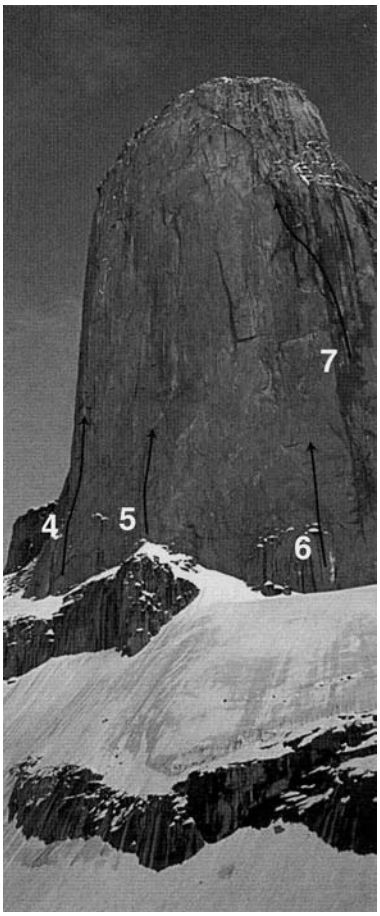


4. Mount Asgard North Tower - Valkyrie

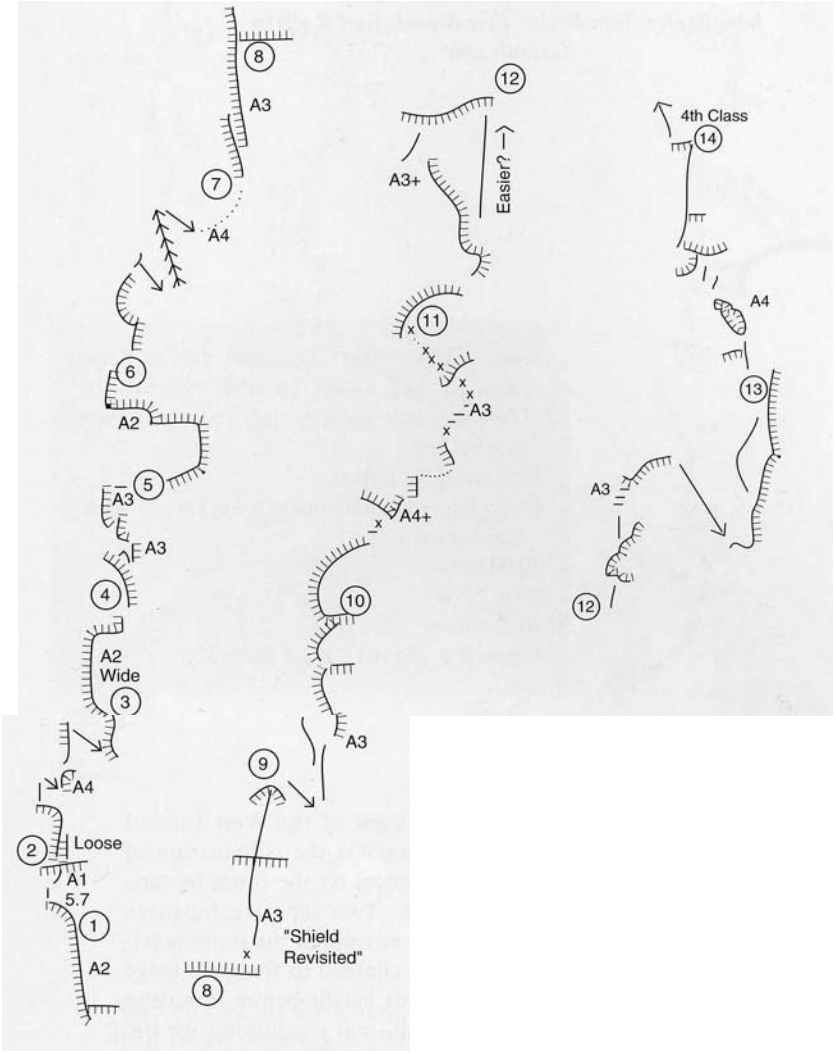
West face 800m VI, 5.7, A4+
F.A.: July 12-24, 1995
Chris Breemer, Brad Jarrett
Capsule style

Rope: 60m
Descent: Rappel route
Gear: Pitons: 7 Beaks, 3 Rurps, 15 KBs, 15 LAs, 4 ea. 1/2- 5/8, 2 ea. 3/4- 1
30 Heads
3 ea. Nuts
All hooks
Cams: 3 ea. to 3", 2 ea. 3.5-7"
2 Tube chocks
Keyhole hangers

Valkyrie was the first route established on the west face of Mount Asgard without the use of fixed ropes. The route was climbed in nearly continuously poor weather, resulting in cases of trench foot for both team members.



4. Valkyrie 5. Inukshuk 6. Hyperborea 7. Porter Route



5. Mount Asgard, North Tower - Inukshuk

West face 800m VI 5.10, A3+

F.A.: July 1995
Denis Burdet, Cédric Choffat, Pierre Robert, Jean-Michel Zweiacker
Fixed ropes

Rope: 60m
Descent: Rappel route
Gear: Pitons: 1 Beak, 1 Rurp, 20 KBs, 20 LAs
15 Heads
2 ea. RPs
3 ea.Nuts
All hooks
1 ea. Slider nuts
Cams: 3 ea. to 3", 1 ea. 4-5"
1 Tube chock
10 8mm nuts for bolts

Inukshuk was the product of two consecutive expeditions to Mount Asgard. The first attempt, in 1994, was foiled by poor weather. In 1995 the team returned and completed what may be the most attractive route on the west face of Mount Asgard's north tower.

6. Mount Asgard, North Tower - Hyperborea

West face 800m VI 5.11+, A4+

F.A.: July 1994
Noel Craine, Paul Pritchard, Steve Quinlan, Jordi Tosas
Fixed ropes
Rope: 60m
Descent: Rappel route
Gear: Unknown

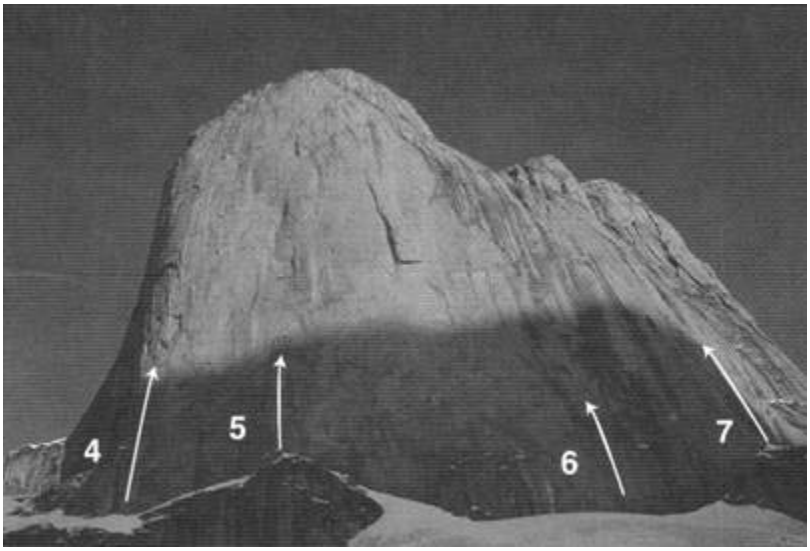
The first ascent party declined to draw a topo diagram of the route in order to "avoid detract(ing) from the adventure of those who may follow." Beginning approximately 200 metres left of the Porter Route, they fixed ropes approximately halfway up the wall. After growing tired of the daily chore of jumaring to their high point, they established a portaledge camp. They continued fixing ropes above that camp until a period of extremely stable weather arrived, and they dashed to the summit. They reported several sections of poor rock, particularly high on the route where they encountered bands of diorite. A complete route description can be found in On the Edge, No. 53.

7. Mount Asgard, South Tower – Direct West Face

West face 800m, Rating unknown
F.A.: September 10, 1975
Charlie Porter
Fixed ropes

Surprisingly, this, the first big wall on Baffin Island has yet to see a repeat ascent, more than 20 years after its establishment. During the first ascent, Porter began climbing with two partners he met on Baffin Island. A disagreement between Porter and his partners led to the abandonment of the route. Relieved of his partners, Porter returned with more food, ascended his fixed lines, and resumed climbing the route, solo. Nearing the top of the route, Porter was engulfed in a terrible storm, during which he froze his feet, an injury that would later reduce him to crawling during his return to Pangnirtung. At the time, Porter was arguably the foremost big wall climber in the world, so it is likely that the climbing is of a very high standard.

Rope: Unknown
Descent: Swiss Route (east face of Mount Asgard)
Gear: Unknown



4. Valkyrie, 5. Inukshuk, 6. Hyperborea, 7. Porter Route

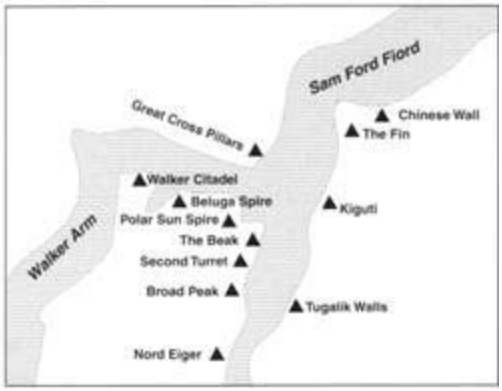
8. Mount Asgard, South Tower – Direct West Face

VI 5.10, A4 800m
F.A.: July 1987
John Bagley, John Barbella, Will McCarthey, Earl Redfern
Fixed ropes

Two years after establishing the West Face of Mount Thor, John Bagley and Earl Redfern returned to Baffin Island along with John Barbella and Will McCarthey, to establish the Direct West Face of Mt. Asgard's south tower. The route had been attempted at least three times previously, once by another team lead by Redfern and twice by Nil and Nestor Bohigas. On Redfern's previous attempt, cold May weather and snow-filled cracks stymied the team. Wiser from the experience, the successful team arrived in July, and relying on ropes abandoned the previous year, jumared up to their previous high point and continued to the summit.

Rope: The first ascent party used 600' ropes for leading and hauling. Individual pitches are up to 75 metres long.
Descent: Rappel route
Gear: Standard big wall rack

Routes of Baffin Island - Eastern Fiords
Sam Ford Fiord

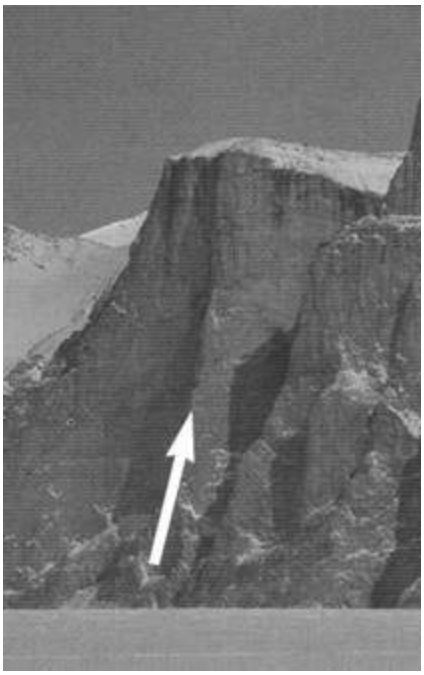


9. Kiguti - Nirvana

West face 1000m, VI 5.10, A3
F A: May 21-28, 1995
Daniel Ascaso, Javier Ballester, Pepe Chaverri
Alpine style

Nirvana was the first big wall route established in Baffin's eastern fiords. The route, bearing a striking resemblance to the Nose on El Capitan, was established in impeccable style. Climbing in temperatures varying between -30° and -40°C, the team spent eight days in an alpine-style ascent of this stunning route. They declined to draw a topo in order to preserve the secrets of the route.

Rope: Unknown
Descent: Rappel route
Gear: Unknown



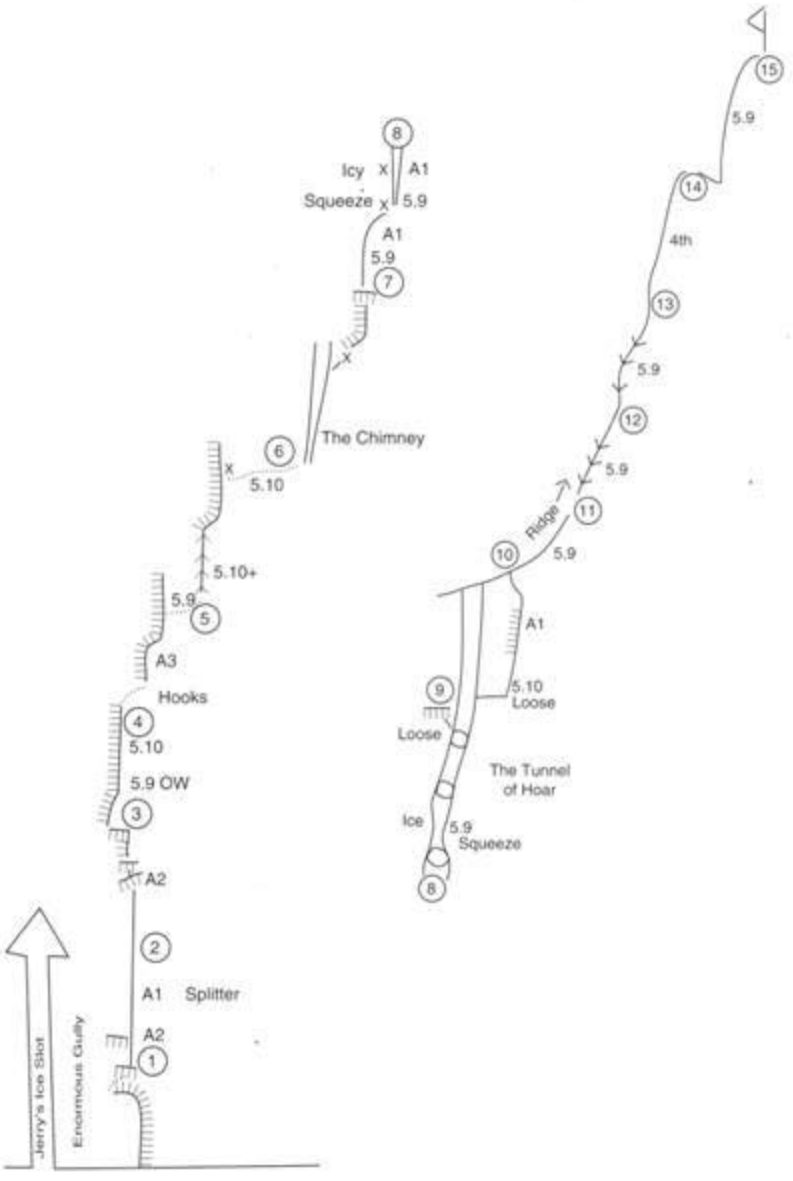
10. The Second Turret - Nuvualik

West face 620m, VI 5.10+, A3

F.A.: June 21-22,
Jerry Gore, Warren Hollinger, Mark Synnott
Alpine style

"Nuvualik," the local name for the formation known as the Second Turret, was the second big wall established in 1995 by a group comprised of Jerry Gore, Warren Hollinger, and Mark Synnott. After fixing five pitches, the team jumared the ropes, and then in a continuous 40-hour push, climbed to the summit.

Rope: 60m
Descent: Rappel route
Gear: Unknown



11. Walker Citadel — Superunknown

Southeast face 1230m, VII 5.10+, A3
F.A.: June 17-July 9, 1995
Paul Gagner, Rick Lovelace
Capsule style

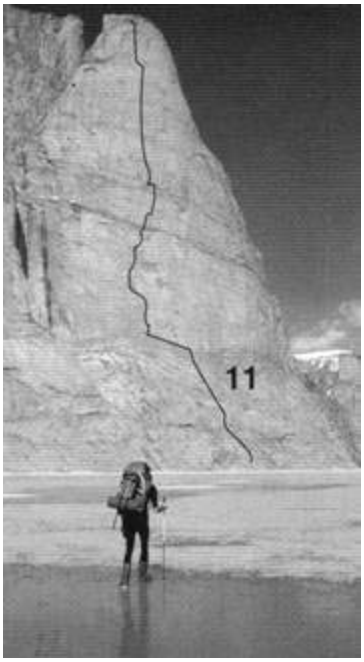
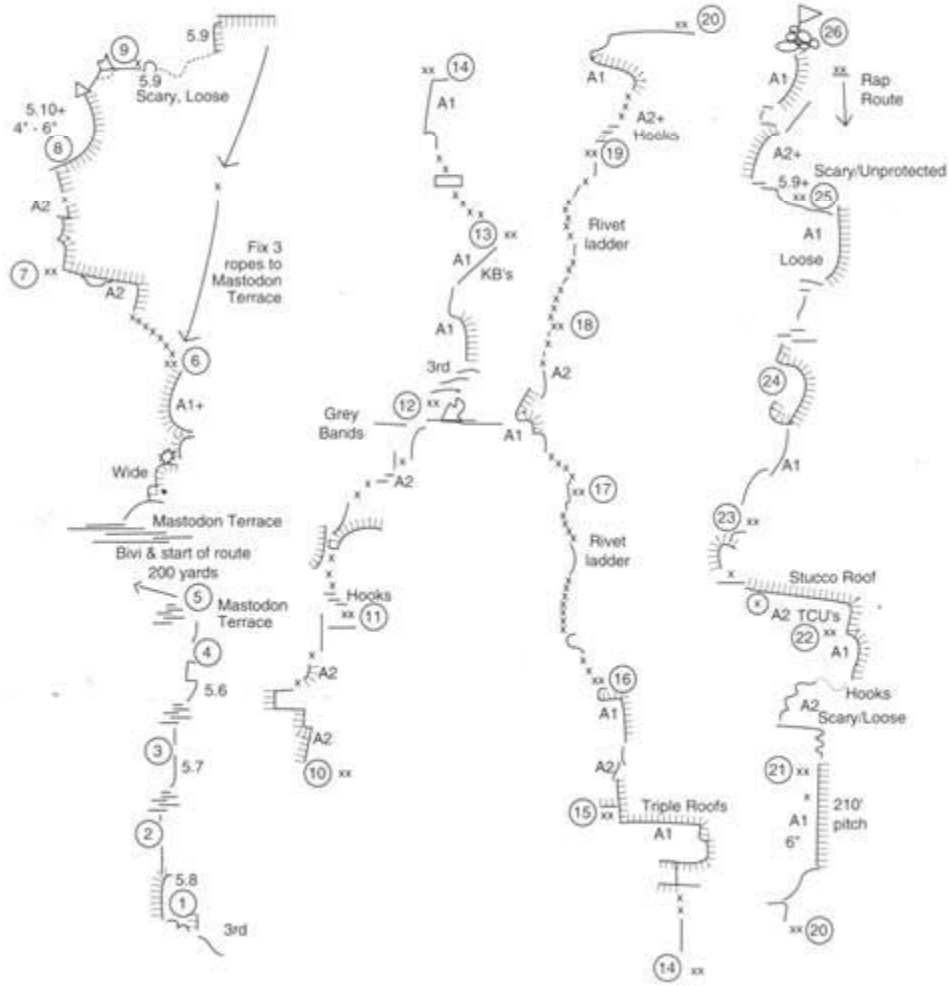


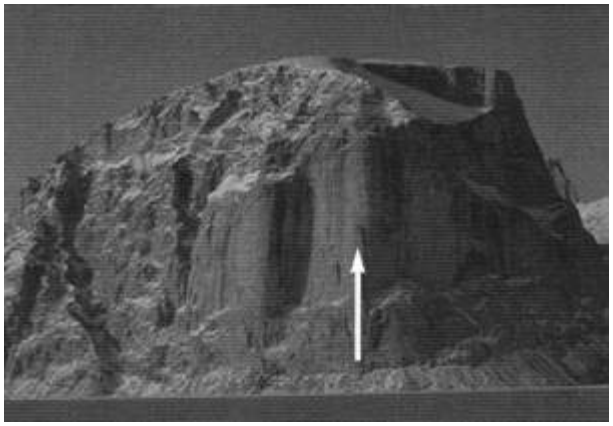
Photo: Rick Lovelace

The ascent of Superunknown wins the misery award for 1995. After spending 23 days climbing the wall, Paul Gagner and Rick Lovelace were forced to make a long and circuitous traversing descent of the wall. The pack ice they had used to approach the wall melted during their ascent, forcing them to descend a different route to reach dry ground. There they realized that the open water cut off their intended walking route to Clyde River. Low on food, and lacking a radio, they made a short-lived attempt to walk back to Clyde River via a different route. When they realized that that route would most likely lead them astray, they returned to the shoreline near their route and waited. Two weeks later they were rescued by a group of hunters that happened upon them, saving them from imminent starvation.

Rope: 65m
Descent: Rappel route
Gear: Pitons: 10 Beaks, 10 KBs, 10 LAs, 3 ea. 1/2- 3/4" Angles
15 Heads
Nuts
All hooks
Cams: 4 ea. to 4", 2 ea. 5-6"



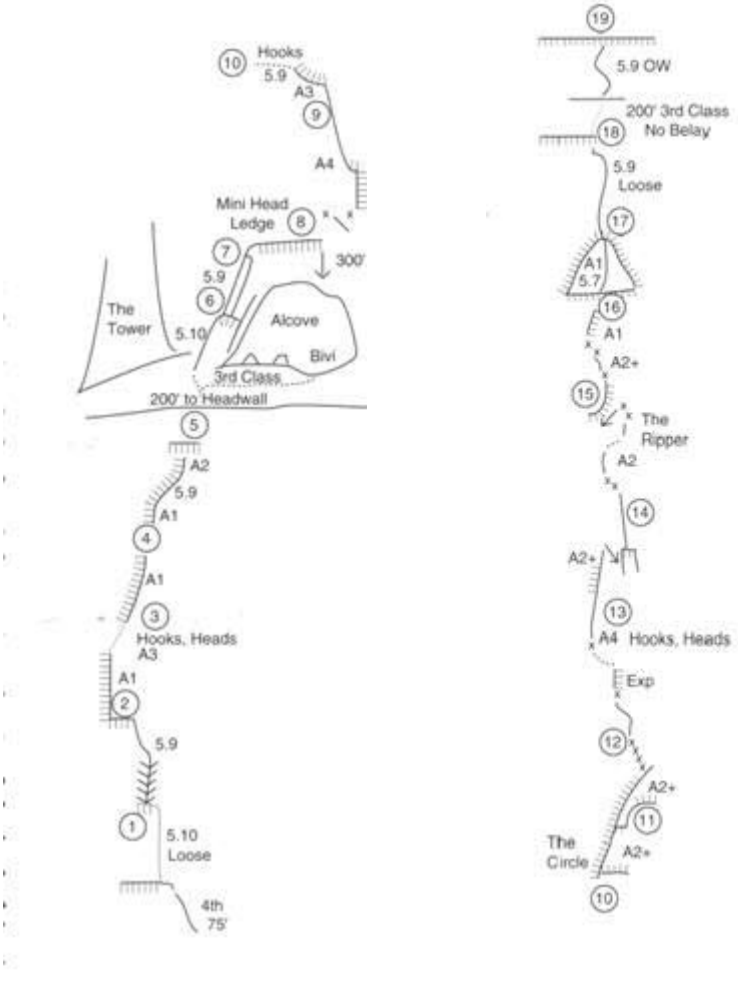
12. Great Cross Pillar Crossfire

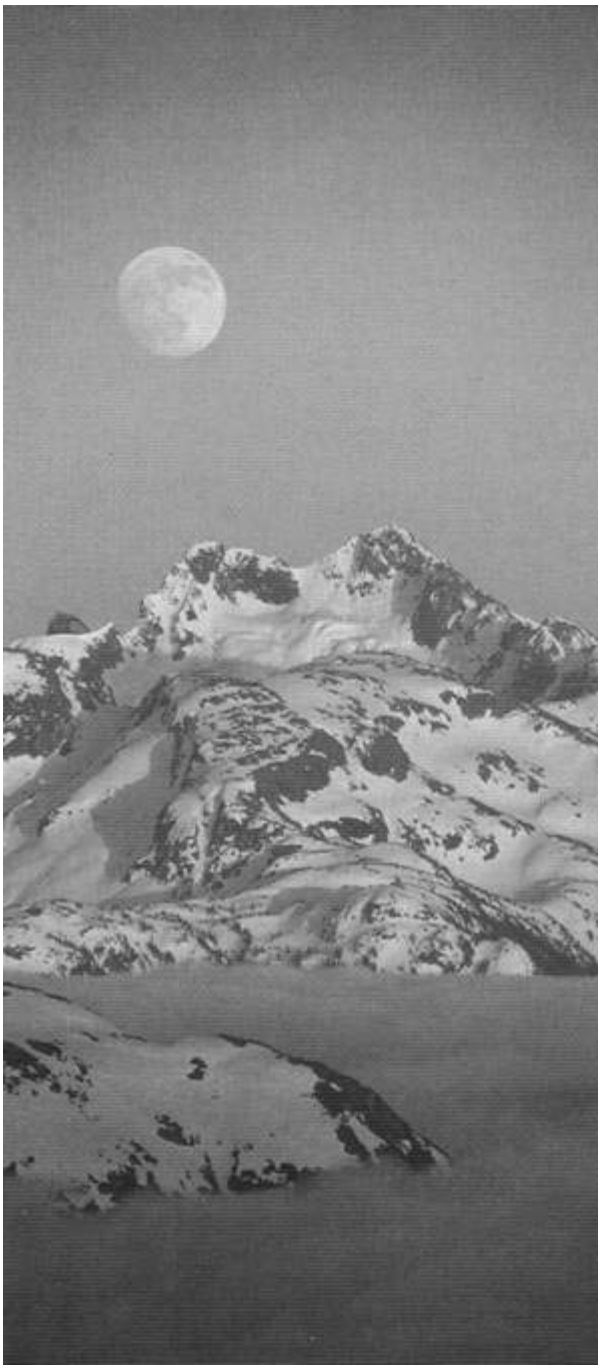


Southwest face 830m, VI 5.10, A4
F. A: May 22-June 3, 1995
Warren Hollinger, Mark Synnott
Capsule style

Rope: 60m
Descent: Rappel
Gear: Many RURPs, many beaks, many pitons:, KBs, LAs, Angles
Many heads
All hooks
3 each Friend and TCU
Nuts
RP hangers

After topping out on the southeast face of Great Cross Pillar, Warren Hollinger and Mark Synnott continued up 1.5 km of third and fourth class scrambling. Mysteriously, at the summit they found a single bolt with a rappel sling attached to it. The locals didn't know who had climbed the peak, although a few reported hearing voices there several years ago, voices that they recalled spoke English. (See report in Climbing, No. 158)





Peaks of the Mass River Range. Photo: Markus Kellerhals

Clubhouse

From the benchland overlooking Three Sisters,
Chinamans Peak, and Mount Rundle draped in linen white,
the forest grows through the building,
a breeze rises through the trees,
windows rising from the cedar and pine,
grassy plants in the crannies between the furniture,
the sweet smell of spruce on the wind,
and spring's mineral soil,
roots soon to come alive.

Artifacts;
heavy oak furniture from Sulphur Mountain;
the grandfather clock
dedicated in memory of Hector Wheeler,
time perpetually 7 o'clock;
Edward Whymper's 1909 ice axe
auctioned off to raise funds;
shelves of books and leather-bound mountaineering journals;
hobnailed boot bookends;
wooden skis, bamboo ski poles,
carried Lawrence Grassi over Rocky Mountain snows;
rock samples and hunks of white quartz;
and everywhere the Club is camping still
in watercolours by Fred Brigden and WJ. Phillips;
no humidity control, no white-gloved fingers
they hang in the sun
exposed rock faces for handling
by rough-skinned mountaineers.

Slate-black Rundle rock fireplace;
a circle of armchairs, a rocker
gathered around the wood stove
Friendly Giant style.
Who has come and gone from here?
Who has sat in these chairs?
Who has seen the winds of time
that carved these mountains
that made this Club?

PearlAnn Reichwein

The Cirque of the Unclimbables

The State of the Cirque

Martin Ross

This trip began with exam-time procrastination in McGill's Redpath Library. The entire CAJ collection graces her shelves, and can have a powerful effect on redirecting studies. My attention was destined to wander from my crib sheets, and I was soon drawn to the Northwest Territories, and tales of adventure in the Cirque of the Unclimbables. The area is remote but accessible, the climbing has an excellent reputation, and the photos that I had seen were stunning. I became convinced that an expedition was absolutely necessary. On this 36-day trip, Kevin Riddell, Paul Swayze, Dominik Hartman, and I climbed in the Cirque, and returned to the Liard Highway by paddling down the Nahanni River. This report is written to describe our expedition in the Cirque of the Unclimbables, and to encourage climbers to protect it for the future.

We flew in from Fort Liard, since we planned to paddle down the Nahanni, and this is where the river trip would end. Most people however, come in from Watson Lake since it involves the least flying time. After being delayed a few days due to weather, we piled our gear into a single Otter floatplane and flew to Glacier Lake. When we arrived, we divided our equipment into two equal parts that we would ferry into the Cirque. With our packs approaching 100 pounds, the ever-shifting talus mountain leading into the heart of the Cirque was a brutish and joint-grinding chore. Although the approach is only about three miles, it rises about 2000 feet, all of which was within the last mile. Our first ferry complete with a Tyrolean traverse across a swollen creek, and losing the trail several times, required seven exhausting hours.

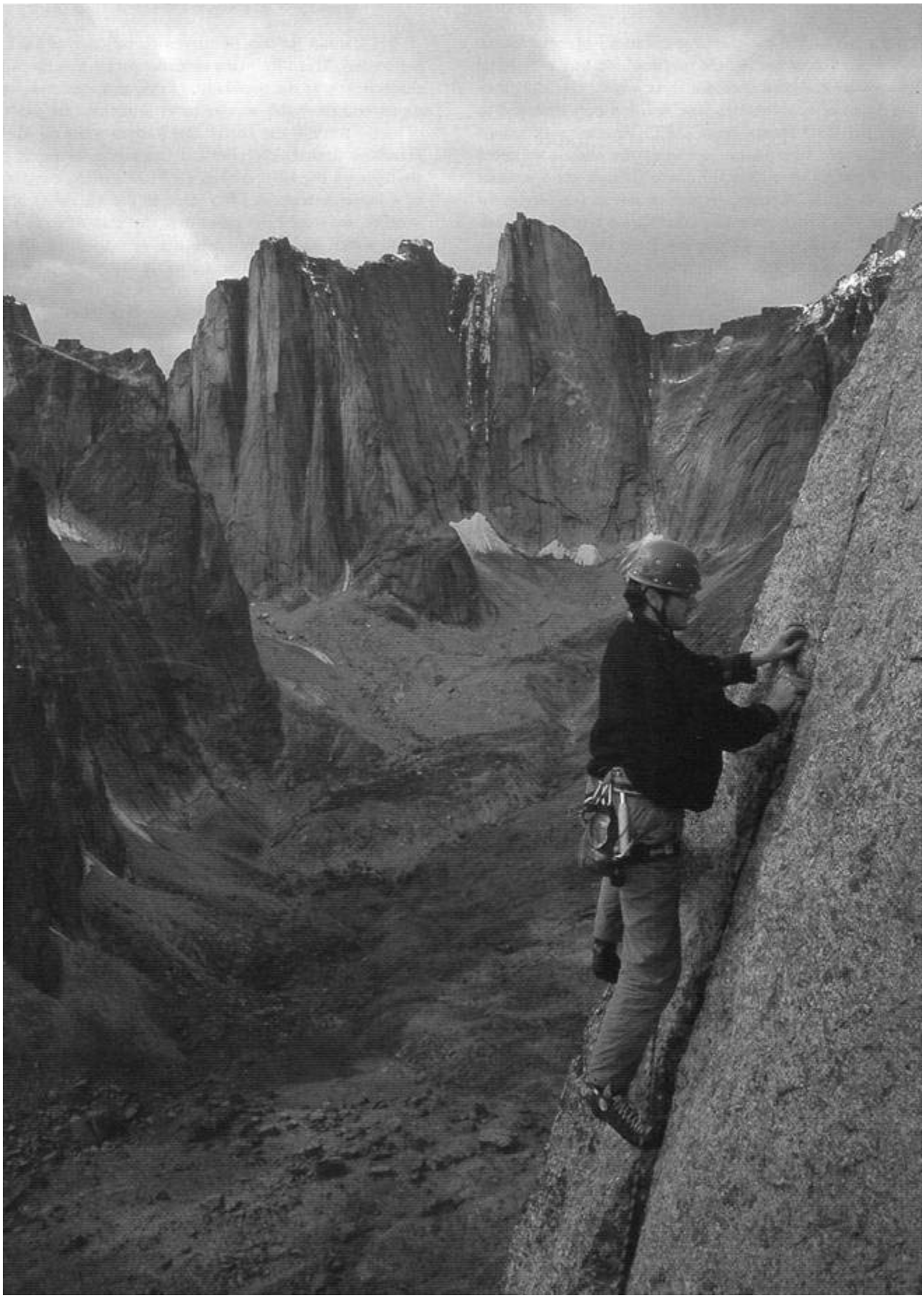
After hauling in our food and climbing gear, we were rewarded with our first view of the Fairy Meadow. This is a lush alpine meadow at the centre of the Cirque, which is adorned with boulders of all sizes, and gushes with clear rivulets. With luck, one can see families of wild goats, and also chunky marmots that oversee the meadow from the tops of the boulders. We saw no signs of the grizzlies that patrol the Brintnell Creek valley. The ground squirrels are the only threatening wildlife in the Cirque; everything must be fastidiously hung above the ground, since the diminutive marauders find great delight in gnawing on everything from sleeping pads and tents, to rubber dry bags. Some hefty steel military cases can be found at the more popular campsites, and these can keep the rodents out of the whisky.

We made our home in a cave under a house-sized boulder; this was useful during the ensuing deluge, since the waterproofness of our 20-year-old expedition tent was not worth debating. For the first ten days, the weather cycle included intermittently rainy and snowy mornings, and only slightly less soggy evenings. We spent our time in our cave, cooking, staying warm by climbing the boulder problem formed by the roof of our cave, and devising clever ways of waging war on the more clever squirrels. The foul weather in the Cirque has soaked the climbing ambitions of many teams. When we first arrived in the meadow, we met a dejected group who had been there for three weeks; originally they had hopes of establishing a new line, but only managed to climb the Lotus Flower Tower (LFT). Another experienced group stayed two weeks, but again the climate rebuffed their attempts on technical routes. Though good weather is never certain, it is best to plan to stay in the Cirque for at least two weeks, providing your Karma is in positive balance. The walls of the Cirque block out the sky other than directly overhead, making it difficult to analyze the weather. Our barometer proved to be of little use, since the weather patterns are very local, and offer few forecasting clues. When bad weather comes, it sweeps down quickly on the Cirque, dousing it with freezing rain or hail. When the weather looked like it was finally settling, we prepared to climb the (in)famous LFT.

With our first clear view of the peaks around us, the apocalyptic sound of engines filled the air; a helicopter landed by the base of the LFT. Our route was being scooped! Some well-heeled climbers wisely avoid climbing the talus slope by flying directly into the meadow. Grumbling about our tree planting wages, we set out the next morning at 4:15 for the one-hour hike to the base of the route, passing the tent that had materialized there the night before. The first three pitches are technically only moderate, but required direct aid due to the torrent of frigid water and glistening verglas on the rock. Beyond this, the route follows a system of easy chimneys to a Ritz Carlton of bivouac ledges. Above the ledge, the route takes on a different character. A system of cracks leads to the summit, and numerous chickenheads make great holds; some are so large that they can be slung as protection. The LFT is by far the most popular route in the Cirque of the Unclimbables, and for good reason. Whereas the lower pitches are damp and dirty, the upper pitches provide interesting climbing on solid, clean rock, with eye-popping views and breathtaking exposure. A night on the great ledge is said to be a spiritual experience, especially if the Northern Lights are glowing. On our first attempt, we climbed to pitch 13, when the sleet that had started while we were on the ledge forced us to retreat. We rappelled down the well-established descent route adjacent to the main line, which has very solidly-bolted anchors set approximately 50m apart. Though we were soaked and frozen, the taste of the upper pitches was so delicious that we swore we would return. This route truly deserves its spot in 50 Classic Climbs of North America.

Unfortunately most of the climbers in the Cirque are there specifically to climb the LFT; when the weather finally clears after a long wet spell, any team that has not yet climbed the LFT will inevitably be lining up. When the four of us summited on the LFT on our second attempt, we shared the route with eight other climbers! Perhaps this is the bane of a route that is known for its quality.

Yet it is not for lack of interesting routes that the LFT is crowded. There are many excellent routes that rarely get climbed, and as the popularity of this area increases, these routes will inevitably receive more attention. An example of such a route is the Direct East Buttress route on Mount Harrison Smith. We climbed the route between our attempts on the LFT. This is a 17-pitch affair, established by a Japanese team in 1985. Due to the instability of the weather, we sieged the route over the span of three days, fixing ropes, and returning to our cave to sleep. Due to the slightly northern exposure of this route, the first few pitches are very mossy; multe erba as the friendly Italians in the meadow would say. The upper pitches of Mount Harrison Smith are a lot dirtier, wetter, and looser than the LFT. Aid was necessary several times, but only briefly to avoid particularly loose sections. A handhold pulled out, sending me on a 50m space flight, as my protection zippered out from the chossy rock. This is exactly the kind of



Patrick Swayze on Unicorn Spire. Behind: Lotus Flower Tower on left and Parrot Beak on right. Photo: Martin Roos

Sunrise from the Lotus Flower Tower, Proboscis on right. Photo: George Bell

bladder-draining ride that can make a person laud the merits of golf. In retrospect, the route is perhaps not as brilliant as claimed by the Japanese, but it is more of an adventure than the LFT.

In addition to the East Buttress of Mount Harrison Smith (V 5.l0d, A2), and the LFT (V 5.9, A1), we also climbed Terrace Tower (III 5.9, A1), and Unicorn Spire (III 5.9). From the latter, the views of the entire Cirque and Fairy Meadow are absolutely stunning. The routes we managed to climb are but a tiny sample of the approximately fifty known routes in the Cirque. Since Arnold Wexler's team first climbed in the Cirque of the Unclimbables in the 1950s, many impressive lines have been established. The week before we arrived, Stefan Glowacz and Kurt Albert, two leading European alpinists, established a new route on Mount Harrison Smith, their progress recorded by a helicopter-supported film crew. Across the meadow, a team of three was visible near the summit of Mount Proboscis. Elite alpine rock climbers see great potential for new routes in the Cirque, and the number and calibre of routes is sure to increase.

The Cirque is no longer a well-kept secret among climbers. The relative ease with which information can now be accessed and disseminated is a mixed blessing; every team that we met in the Cirque had a copy of George Bell's Guide to the Cirque of the Unclimbables (which follows this article in the CAJ.) This is an Internet site which contains maps, geographical and logistical information, relevant addresses and names, a topographic route description of the Lotus Flower Tower (LFT), and a record of mountaineering routes in the area. We used this ourselves several times during the planning and execution of the expedition. One of the results of this access to information is that more and more people are discovering the Cirque of the Unclimbables, and making the pilgrimage. During the 24 days that we were in the Cirque, there was a total of 33 climbers from Montreal, Calgary, Revelstoke, Illinois, Colorado, Utah, Czechoslovakia, England, Italy, and Germany. Non-climbers, including hikers and guided tourists from Nahanni River-based tourism companies, added approximately 25 more. The volume of traffic in the Cirque is infinitesimal in comparison to the masses seen in Yosemite. However, considering the fragility of the Fairy Meadow, this number may already be too many.

The ecosystem in the Cirque is an alpine meadow, which is fragile by definition; it does not take much to erode the vegetation at this northern latitude. Based on the accounts that I had read, I went into the Cirque expecting an untamed wilderness, and in many ways this was true. The walls rise high, the pristine meadow is verdant, and the endless streams that wind through it are cold, clear and pure enough to drink. Nevertheless, the meadow is beginning to show signs of wear. For example, in 50 Classic Climbs in North America, the bivouac ledge is described as grassy. There is no longer any grass on the ledge, and its cracks have been stuffed with many rusted tins and other signs of human laziness. Refuse and old fuel cans littered our base camp cave, and others nearby when we moved in. Deep ruts have been worn into the meadow by human feet. It will not take much more carelessness to violate the raw beauty of the Fairy Meadow, and thus low impact camping should be encouraged.

There are a few simple measures that we can take to protect the Cirque from human-induced damage. We packed out our rubbish, as well as several bags of trash left by other people. Hauling garbage down the monstrous talus slope is an added effort, but it must be encouraged.

The meadow currently has no outhouse, which as human traffic increases, will become a necessity. If the borders of the Nahanni National Park were extended to include the Cirque of the Unclimbables, wardens would be able to maintain an outhouse. There is a movement to expand the Nahanni Park borders, however this is a controversial issue involving native land claims, and no solution is immediately forthcoming.

When our sojourn in the Cirque of the Unclimbables was over, we exited via the Nahanni River. We staggered down to Glacier Lake, where we were picked up by floatplane, to be deposited by the warden's cabin at Rabbitkettle Lake. It would have been possible to hike this distance, but the plane was carrying our rented canoes, as well as our salvation of fresh fruit and single malt whisky. The river is a leisurely cruise, spiced with exciting whitewater sections,

that attracts about one thousand paddlers every summer; this does not include the hundreds who fly in simply to view Virginia Falls. Although the river witnesses hordes of tourists, the campsites are clean and relatively unobtrusive. The wardens do an excellent job at managing the crowds and keeping the park organized and clean. Perhaps if the Cirque were granted National Park status, the area might be protected from human damage. Until then however, it is up to climbers to pack out what they pack in. It is sad to think that if we do not adopt a protective attitude toward this beautiful area, it may be spoiled by human laziness. As young climbers of tomorrow, we extend a challenge to those who climb in the Cirque of the Unclimbables to keep its rough fragility intact.

A Mini-Guide to the Cirque

George Bell

Internet address:
http://www.dtek.chalmers.se/Climbing/Guidebooks/NorthAmerica/Unclimbables

Getting In and Out

Most climbers fly into Glacier Lake from the town of Watson Lake, but it is equally feasible to fly in from Fort Simpson or Fort Liard. The drive from Seattle to any of these outposts is nearly 1500 miles. As you drive north, road quality decreases while gas prices increase (overall, gas prices triple along the route). The Alaska highway is mostly paved, but expect numerous potholes, while several hundred miles of gravel are encountered en route to Fort Simpson or Fort Liard. Alternatively, Canadian Airlines International (in 1991) offered daily service from Vancouver to Watson Lake and Fort Simpson (via a connecting flight). It is wise to bring most of your food with you, as it is expensive at Watson Lake and Fort Simpson, and very limited at Fort Liard.

A small float plane may be charted for the flight into Glacier Lake (see list of flight services). The charge depends on the number of miles flown by the pilot, and the rate per mile varies with the size of the plane and the particular flight service. Approximate air distance is 160 miles from Watson Lake and 200 miles from Fort Simpson or Liard. Since you will normally be paying for the pilot to fly out an empty plane, you can cut your cost in half by arranging to fly in at the same time that another party flies out. This is well worth inquiring about as it will save you several hundred dollars, but is rarely accomplished in both directions. In any case you can expect to fork over a sizable sum, ranging from $400 to $600 (US) per person round trip into and out of Glacier Lake. Bad weather can delay flights for several days, but this is much less common here than in the Alaska Range.

If you have the time and experience, the most adventurous exit from Glacier Lake is by raft or canoe. A grueling six mile portage leads to the Nahanni River. Ahead lies 220 miles of wilderness whitewater, through the spectacular gorges of Nahanni National Park and ending at the Nahanni Butte Warden Station. Much of the river is easy, however, rapids up to class 3 or 4 will be encountered (depending on water levels) and another (easier) portage is necessary to bypass the thundering, 300-foot Virginia Falls. This trip in itself is the envy of many a whitewater rafter, and takes 7 to 14 days.

The trip from Glacier Lake to Fairy Meadows is a short day even heavily laden, provided you do not lose the route. Be sure to cross the major stream exiting The Cirque before heading uphill and onto the talus below Mount Harrison Smith (see schematic map). Everyone (including myself) seems to get the brilliant idea of taking a more direct route. Take my word for it: don't do it! Talus is infinitely preferable to the vegetable nightmare your party will soon become enmeshed in.

"What Notch," shown in the schematic map of The Cirque, is the traditional foot travel route from Fairy Meadows to Mount Proboscis. An ice axe and crampons are required to cross this difficult pass. Most other climbs in The Cirque can be approached in sneakers (in August), but you would be wise to at least take your ice axe along in case snow is encountered at the base of a route. There are several "pocket glaciers" in the area but they can generally be avoided and they do not have serious crevasses. However, exercise caution at all times! If you get in any trouble, help is a long ways off.

Season

Late June to the end of August is best. Deep snow may be encountered as late as mid-June. Torrential rains occur frequently throughout the summer, bringing snow to the summits and occasionally all the way down to Fairy Meadows. Fortunately, spells of excellent weather often last three to five days. In addition, the 18-hour days allow one to take maximum advantage of good weather. September brings shorter days and snow which lingers on the faces longer.

Maps

The 1:250,000 scale map 95L (Glacier Lake) encloses The Cirque, but is of limited value because of its large scale and 200-metre contour interval. More useful is the 1:50,000 scale map, 95L/4.

General Notes

The Lotus Flower Tower has eclipsed all other climbs in the region, to the extent that nearly every climbing party concentrates all their efforts on it. Climbers come to The Cirque to escape crowds, only to become part of the Lotus traffic jam. Meanwhile, surrounding them are a dozen equally beautiful monoliths, most of which have not been climbed in the past ten years. It must be admitted, however, that the quality of the climbing varies considerably from wall to wall. Many a climber has launched himself onto a seemingly beautiful face only to find cracks crammed with moss and mud, dripping water during the longest of dry spells. Fortunately, there is a simple rule for avoiding most such nightmares: north facing means grunge. The cleanest walls have at least a partial southern exposure, and these have yielded the highest quality routes. Although the majority of walls with a southern exposure have been climbed, there has typically been only one ascent, usually using aid. The potential for free ascents, as well as additional lines, is virtually unlimited.

General Information

Superintendent, Nahanni National Park
P.O. Box 300
Fort Simpson, NT XOE ONO
(403) 695-3151

Flying service to nearby towns

Canadian Airlines (800) 426-7000

Flying services into the Cirque

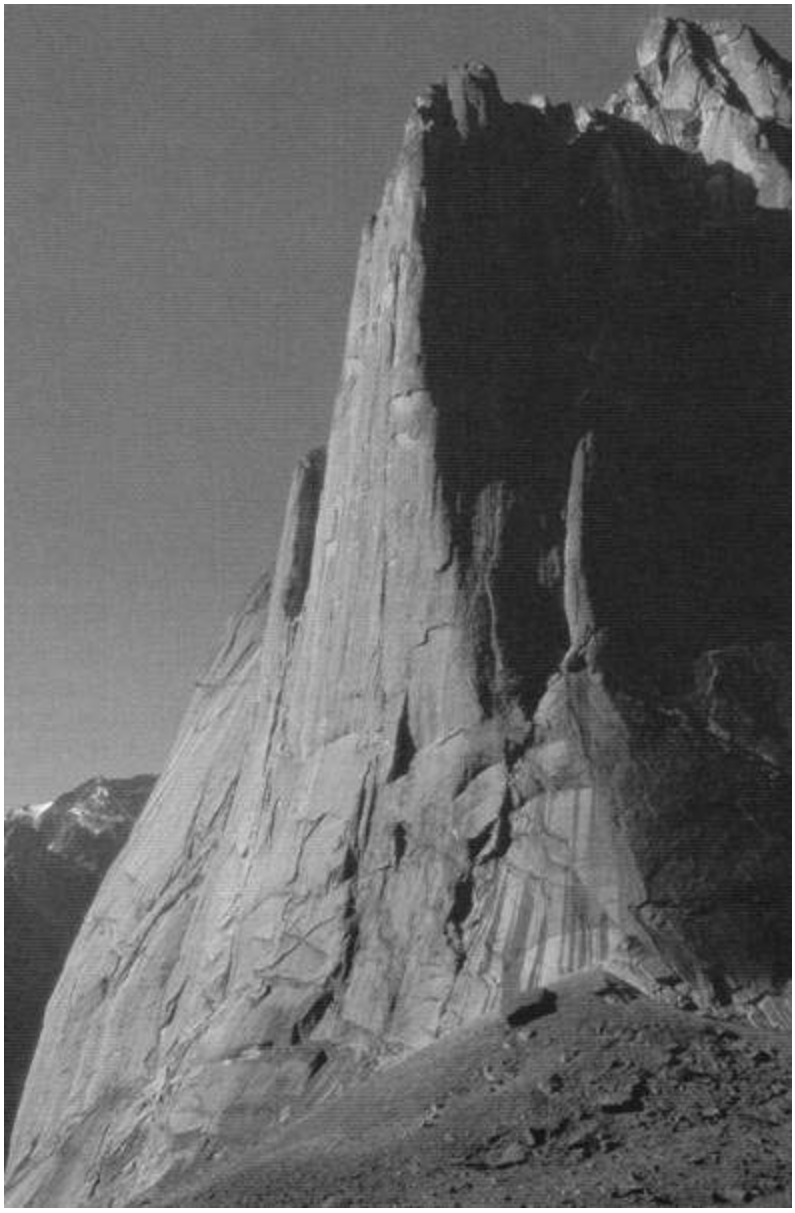
Watson Lake Flying Service
Box 7
Watson Lake, YT, YOA ICO
(403)536-2231

Wolverine Air Ltd.
Box 316
Fort Simpson, NT, XOE ONO
(403) 695-2263

Simpson Air Ltd.
Box 260
Fort Simpson, NT, XOE ONO
(403) 695-2505

Deh Cho Air
General Delivery
Fort Liard, NT, XOG OAO
(403) 770-4103

Kluane Airways Warren LaFave
Box 4730
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 4N6
(403) 667-4070



East Buttress of Mount Harrison Smith. Photo: Martin Roos

Routes in the Cirque of the Unclimbables

Peaks are listed in counterclockwise order starting at the entrance to the Cirque. Routes are listed left to right. Most of the other routes with ratings are pure rock routes.

Ratings of most ascents by Arnold Wexler and Bill Buckingham are unrecorded. When no further information is given, you would be wise to expect rock climbing to about 5.6, and bring an ice axe and crampons.
Unless noted, routes have seen only one ascent.

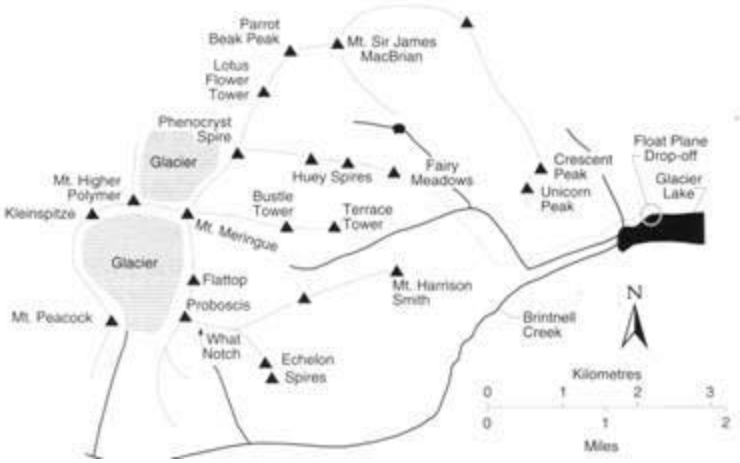
Mount Harrison Smith (2500M/8200 ft.)

A massive, complex ridge leading east from Mount Proboscis. It has dozens of summits, the highest of which is referred to as Middle Cathedral, while the spectacular eastern high point is Mount Harrison Smith. The South Face is nearly 5,000 feet high but is quite broken and ledgy and relatively low-angle overall. The rock at the base of the East Face is very monolithic and reminds one of the base of El Capitan. Unfortunately, after 800 feet or so this face deteriorates into a long series of easy ledges separated by cliffs. The Northeast Buttress is a familiar sight to all who have camped in Fairy Meadows, and is chronicled in a well-known Galen Rowell photograph (Mountain Light, p. 59). Routes 3 and 3a ascend this formation. To the right of this further buttresses are found, but they appear rather mossy and unappealing. Anyone contemplating an ascent of the north side should consider seriously why one of them is named "Bavarian Cow Ranch." The easy accessibility of the North Face likely accounts for the number of routes on it.

1) South Face F.A.: Arnold Wexler party, 1955)

2) Upper South Face (IV 5.8)
Starts from a talus fan 1500 feet above the toe of the wall. Ascend 2500 feet, half roped, half scrambling, to a ridge 500 feet from the summit, (not completed to summit, appeared to be 3rd class). Descent: rappel the route. F.A.: Joe Bridges, Harthon (Sandy) Bill, Galen Rowell, 1973

3) Direct East Face (V 5.10d A2) ***
Follows most obvious crack on NE prow facing Fairy Meadows. Crack is left of several prominent white overhangs. 17 pitches, 2 days. Snow and ice prevented the F.A. party from reaching the summit. "Brilliant" (Iwa to Yuki #113) F.A.: Syuichi Okada, Masahiko Suga, 1985

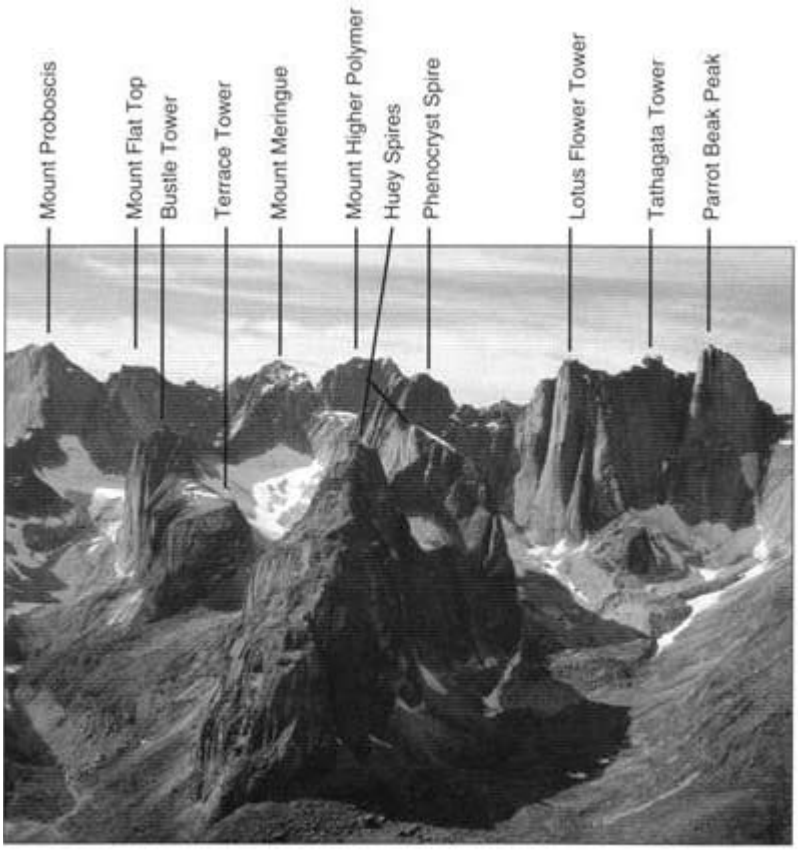


3a) North (?) Face (V, 5.11, A2)
Head for "a great dihedral which leads toward the summit from a point halfway up the wall." F.A.: Mario Manica, Paola Fanton, Giuseppe Bagattoli, Danny Zampiccoli, Fabio Leoni, 1993

4) Northeast Buttress
Four pitches of 5.7-5.9 freeclimbing, 3.5 pitches of dirty aid climbing to a hanging bivouac. Buttress is 2000 ft. plus a 1200 ft. jagged ridge to the summit. F.P. (attempted): Joe Bridges, Harthon (Sandy) Bill, Galen Rowell, 1973

4a) Central North Pillar (V, 5.10a, A2) "Bavarian Cow Ranch'1"
Route follows third pillar from the left. Follow the main crack system to the top of the pillar (end of route). Only 30m of aid (wet), 1 bolt. Descent: Rappel the route. Rack: Some pitons (LA, KB, AG), Rocks (medium size & double), full rack of Friends. F.A.: Rainer and Ernst Grosskopf, Christian Rester, 26 July 1992 (This route description was found on a scrap of paper under a rock in Fairy Meadows! Source: xkknike@hfetx.eua.ericsson.se)

5) North Buttress (VI 5.10 A3)
Climb mossy dihedral and traverse up and left to a square niche (1st bivouac). Keep right of the crack above with poor protection to 2nd bivouac on tiny shelf. Follow great chimney which becomes a couloir with ice and unstable rock blocks. At the col between the tower and the summit, continue along the ridge, penduluming finally back to a dihedral. F.A.: Jean Michel Haupens, Philippe Godart, 1977



6) North Face
Follow a steeply-sloping, snow-covered shelf left across the North Face, crossing an avalanche-scoured gully to a point directly below the summit of Middle Cathedral, then straight up a broken face. F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960

Pentadactyl Spires (2440M/8000 ft.)

The "five-fingered" spires are subsidiary summits of Middle Cathedral Peak. Following the main crest which extends eastward from Mount Proboscis, the Pentadactyl Spires are a cluster of five spires just E of the point where the ridge defining the Echelon Spires comes in. They may be more obvious when viewed from the S, the direction from which they were originally climbed.

7) Pentadactyl Spires (first three) F.A.: Arnold Wexler party, 1955

8) Fourth Pentadactyl Spire — North Face
A finger-like snow couloir (glacial ice or ice mantled with snow). Starts at 45°, steepens to 60° near top (belay from inside several crevasses). 18 pitches, 3 hours. Descent: downclimb the route (also 3 hours). F.A.: Doug Burbank, Bill Putnam, 1975

Echelon Spires (2360M/7740 ft.)

The Echelon Spires form a ridge extending S from Middle Cathedral Peak and are visible from the vicinity of Glacier Lake. The South Echelon Spire is the prominent triangular prow. To reach them you must bushwhack up Brintnell Creek past the main entrance to The Cirque.

9) Echelon Spires (all four) F.A.: Arnold Wexler party, 1955

10) South Echelon Spire — Southeast Ridge (V 5.10c A1) ***

Twenty pitches (Iwa to Yuki #113) F.A.: Syuichi Okada, Toshiyuko Arai, Masahiko Suga, Kinuyo Hagiwara, 1985

Mount Proboscis (2600M/8530 ft.)

This well-named hunk of granite has always reminded me of Yosemite's Half Dome. It remains one of the most difficult summits in North America to reach. Not many peaks in the world can claim a 24-pitch route with 7 pitches of 5.12 as their easiest free route! To reach all routes (except 14) you must: cross a difficult snow/ice col ("What Notch") from Fairy Meadows; or bushwhack up Brintnell Creek from Glacier Lake and up the proper drainage; or fly in directly by helicopter.

11) South Ridge (IV 5.7 A2) *** F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960. Repeated.

12)Southeast face (VI 5.8 A4) ***
2000-foot crack system in center of wall. One hanging bivouac, one on ledges halfway, one on summit. Descend S Ridge. 2 bolts and 251 pitons placed. F.A.: James P. McCarthy, Layton Kor, Richard McCracken, Royal Robbins, 1963. Repeated.

12a) Southeast Face variation (VI ?? ??)
Follows Route 12 for first third, then heads straight up where original route traverses left. Traverses left to join route 12 for top third of route. Presumably similar rating as route 12. F.A.: Jose Maria Cadina, Joaquin Olmo, 1992

13) Great Canadian Knife (VI 5.13b) ***
Follows an arête on left side of SE face formed by a huge left facing dihedral. 17 pitches; two are 5.13. (Climbing #134, p.49) F.A.: Todd Skinner, Paul Piano,, Galen Rowell, 1992

13a) Yukon Tears (VI, 5.12c) ***
200 ft. right of The Great Canadian Knife. 24 pitches, seven are 5.12. (Climbing #149, p.52) F.A.: Kurt Smith, Jeff Jackson, Scott Cosgrove, 1994

14) Northeast Face (V 5.9 A2) 1650 ft.
Cross bergschrund on right; from top of snow, take line of left margin of face (just right of E ridge). Diagonal slightly right near the top, joining the N ridge to the summit. F.A.: Karl Kosa, Gustav Ammerer, Erwin Weilguny, 1977

Flat Top (2500M/8200 ft.)

Another well-named peak. It pales in the shadow of its neighbor Mount Proboscis, yet its East Face is as large as the Diamond on Longs Peak!

15) North Ridge F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960

16) Southeast Face (IV 5.7 A1) 1650ft.
Start in right-diagonalling crack and follow a line right of the prominent black right-facing corner. Then up left margin of SE face, direct to the summit. F.A.: Karl Kosa, Erich Lackner, Erwin Weilguny, 1977

Mount Meringue (2580M/8465 ft.)

A relatively tame peak in comparison to its neighbors, named for its summit snowfield.

17) South Face (IV 5.8) F.A.: K. Ezaki, T. Kuranishi, 1979

18) Southeast Ridge F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960. Repeated.

Bustle Tower (2300M/7545 ft.)

The S side of this peak is over 2000 ft. high in places and is one of the most beautiful walls in the area. The other side, by contrast, is quite broken and complex, yet probably still technical.

19) West Ridge (IV 5.9 A1) ***
Steep snow to unstable gully, escape to right. Then all pitches are on the ridge or to the left, except for a 10 ft. tension traverse to the right two-thirds of the way up. Crux 5.9 overhang in a dihedral gains a knife-edged ridge. Two pitches on the ridge to a false summit tower; true summit a bit further, with windy bivouac cave below it. Descent: rappel long icy gully. F.A.: Joe Bridges, Harthon (Sandy) Bill, Galen Rowell, 1973

20) Southeast Face (VI 5.10 Al) *** 2000 ft
Left of SE Dihedral route. Climbs great dihedrals, avoiding the last (overhanging, left-leaning) one by traversing to the right to join exit gullies two pitches from the top. All but 200 ft. freeclimbed in 1980 by Bill Wylie and Mark Wilford. 17 pitches. F.A.: Jaques Collar, Jacques Ramouillet, Renzo Lorenzi, 1977. Repeated.

21) Southeast Dihedral (V 5.8 A2) 1320 ft. F.A.: Ernst Machacek, Gustav Ammerer, 1977

22) Bustle Tower Sub-Peak — Southwest Face (III 5.9 A1), 660 ft.
The exact location of this route is not clear. It may actually be on Terrace Tower. F.A.: Gustav Ammerer, Ernst Machacek, 1977

Terrace Tower (2100M/6890 ft.)

A squat, cubicle tower to the NE of Bustle Tower. Its top is a gently-sloping shelf and it does not appear to have a well-defined summit.

23) East Buttress (IV 5.7 A2)
2 pitches, to the highest and steepest point of the wall. F.A.: William Webster, Steven Stine, Bill Gibson, 1977

24) Northeast corner (II 5.6) F.A.: Joe Bridges, Galen Rowell, 1973

25) North Face F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960. Repeated.

Phenocryst Spire (2420M/7940 ft.)

This peak lies at the intersection of three ridges. One leads towards Mount Meringue, another to the Lotus Flower Tower, and the third to the Huey Spires. "Phenocryst" is a geological term for an embedded crystal.

26) West Ridge (traverse from Meringue) F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960

27) South Buttress (IV 5.7 Al) 1980 ft. F.A.: Hilda Lindner, Rudi Lindner, 1977

28) East Ridge
Starts with 10 long pitches of crack climbing up a large dihedral in the S face between Phenocryst and the Huey Spires, the last pitch being the best. 4 pitches on the E ridge to the summit. Descent: 9 rappels with fixed pins, 500 ft. of downclimbing to glacier. F.A.: Doug Burbank, Jamie Farrar, 1975

Huey Spires (2310M/7580 ft.)

The three Huey Spires, like most of these peaks have no easy route. As usual in this area, their south faces are impressive clean walls while their N sides are black, wet, and mossy with occasional snow/ice patches.

29) West Huey Spire — South Face

(IV 5.8 A2)
From a point in the middle of the face, directly below the summit, climb up to a rightward-leaning crack system and follow this to the summit ridge. (Mountain #50) F.A.: Ruedi Hortnberger, Hans Ueli Brunner, Paul Muggli, 1975

30) Middle Huey Spire — South Face (IV 5.9 A3) P, 990 ft.
Gain the prominent left-facing corner. Exit right below the roofs at the corner's top and follow cracks up and right. F.A.: Karl Kosa, Erwin Weilguny, Erich Lackner, 1977

31) Middle Huey Spire — East Ridge (traverse from East Huey) F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960

32) East Huey Spire — South Face
Start at the western base of the S Face and follow a shelf spiraling around to join the E Ridge. F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960

Lotus Flower Tower (2560M/8400 ft.)

This peak needs no introduction. Unarguably the most beautiful buttress in the area.

33) SE Face of West Buttress (VI 5.9 A3) * * *
Extraordinarily good rock and 70% free. 3 days including descent. F.A.: David Locks, Bill Putnam, 1975

34) Southeast Face Left (VI 5.10 A2)
Possible bivouac on ledge at end of 5th pitch. Veer right to regular SE Face route at pitch 10. On 11th pitch, go back to left crack and follow it to the top. 20 pitches total. The route showed signs of a previous ascent, including a body in a sleeping bag at the end of the 5th pitch (Iwa to Yuki #143, p.64-70) F.A.: Masakazu Fujiwara, Atsushi Saito, Eisaku Nozu, 1990

35) Southeast Face (V 5.10 or 5.9 Al) *** (see topo)
The classic route on the peak. First 300 ft.: awkward 5.9 fist jamming in sometimes wet corner. Next: a long chimney section with some loose holds to the 1400 ft. bivouac terrace. Upper wall: short lieback pitch to straight in thin crack. Follow this crack for many pitches. Crux is where crack splits a prominent roof. Descent: rappel the route. F.A.: James P. McCarthy, Tom Frost, Harthon (Sandy) Bill, 1968. F.F.A.: Steve Levin, Mark Robinson, Sandy Stewart, 1977. Repeated.

36) Northeast Ridge (traverse from Tathagata) F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960

Tathagata Tower (2560M/8400 ft.)

This tower is a minor intermediate high point between The Lotus Flower Tower and Parrot Beak Peak. It has an impressive, broad East face. "Tathagata" is a Buddhist term for "one who has attained perfection."

37) East Face (V 5.6 A2) (AAJ. 1979, p.205)
On the right margin of the face, near the NE Buttress. F.A.: Jacques Collaer, Renzo Lorenzi, Dr. Francis Warzee, 1977

38) North Ridge (traverse from Parrot Beak) F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960

Parrot Beak Peak (2580M/8460 ft.)

Parrot Beak Peak is very similar in size and aspect to the Lotus Flower Tower, yet it has received virtually no attention. One problem is its significant summit snowpatch, which has a tendency to drain down the right side of the face.

39) South Face (VI 5.9 A3) ***
In 1973 the cracks funneled meltwater from an abnormally large summit snowcap. The 1975 attempt made it 3/4 of the way up, but had to turn back due to a 40 ft. fall and injury. They claimed they "found extremely rotten rock and difficult protection." (Perhaps this was intended to discourage attempts by others until they could return, as the F.A. party in no way agreed!) Follow cracks on the left side of the face to the top of a prominent rounded gendarme, and continue to the summit. (Climbing #65, March/April 1981, p.5) F.P. (attempted): Joe Bridges, Harthon (Sandy) Bill, Galen Rowell, 1973 F.P.(attempted): David Locks, Bill Putnam, 1975. F.A.: Perry Beckham, Scott Flavelle, Dave Lane, Phil Hein, 1981

40) West Face F.A.: Bill 1960. Repeated.

Mount Sir James MacBrien (2759M/9052 ft.)

The highest peak in the area. The SW face is a good route-finding scramble for those in need of an easy day. Be sure to take an ice axe and crampons. The most difficult side of the peak is the E face, an ugly series of rock walls separated by slashing diagonal ice or snow couloirs. It has never been climbed.

41) Southwest Face (3rd class)
Follow snow ramps leading diagonally left up the SW Face to join the W Ridge, which can be followed (passing a tricky notch) to the summit. Alternatively, some parties have found it easier to move back right and up the SW face all the way to the summit. F.A.: Arnold Wexler party, 1955. Repeated.

42) Southeast Arête (IV 5.9) ***
Scramble 2-3000 ft. to narrow 1200-ft. arête. Crux pitch 3: 100-ft. diagonal 2" crack. 10 pitches total. Descend W side, no rappels needed. Described by 2nd ascent party as "spectacularly situated with some superb crack and slab climbing." F.A.: James P. McCarthy, Galen Rowell, 1972. Repeated.

Zlegeberg (2410M/7910 ft.)

An easy granite peak immediately NW of Sir James MacBrien. Cassiope Col, between these peaks, offers access to the N side of the peaks of the third cirque (Phenocryst through Sir James MacBrien). Ice axe and crampons necessary.

43) East Ridge (traverse) F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960
trident peak (2410M/7910 ft.)
A reddish slate peak between Ziegeberg and Crescent Peak.

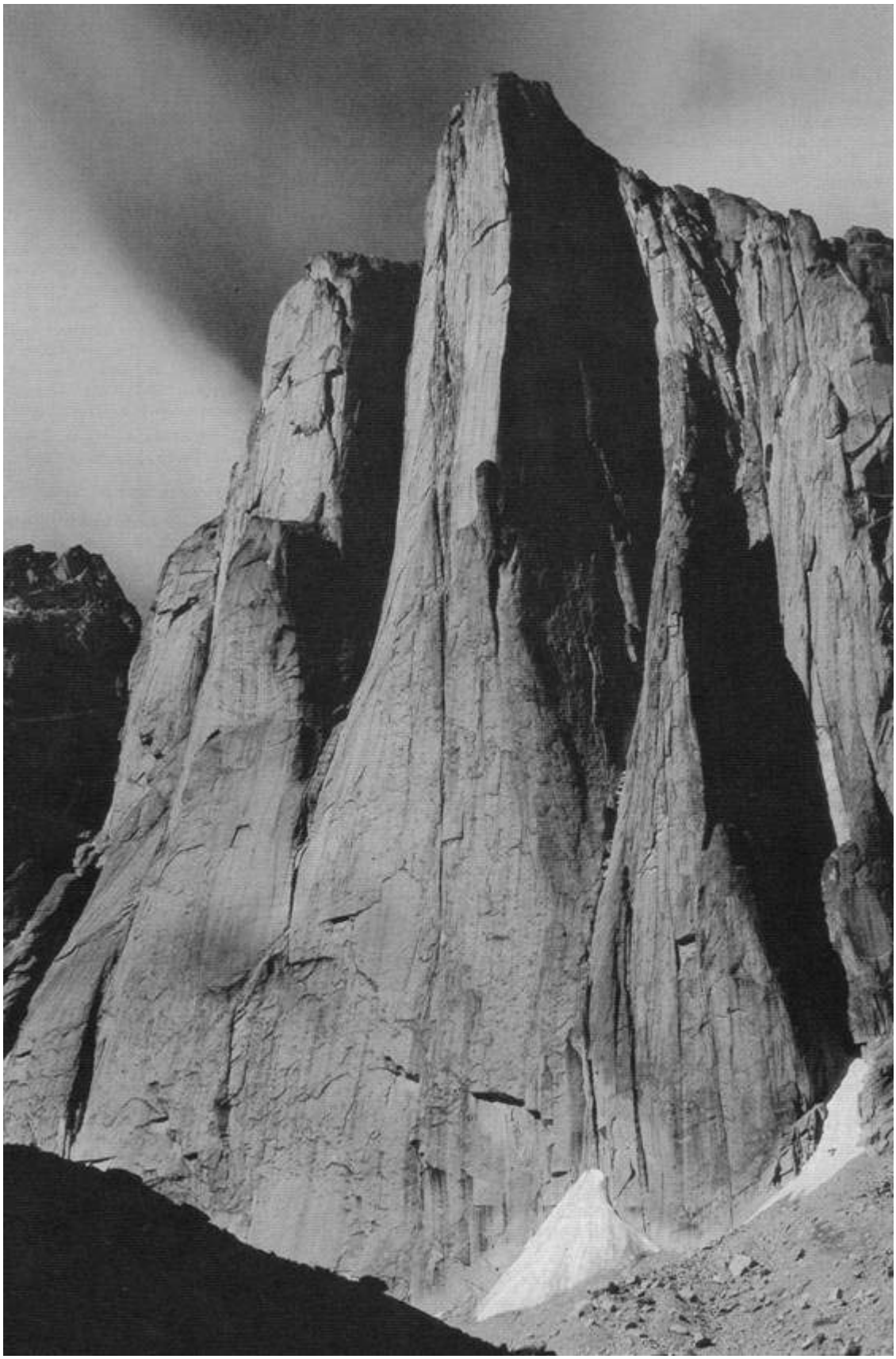
44) South Ridge F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960

Crescent Peak (2484M/8150 ft.)

An easy scramble with careful route-finding from Fairy Meadows. The S side of the peak is the most difficult.
45) Southwest Couloir F.A.: Bill Buckingham party, 1960. Repeated.
46) South Ridge
Climb toward a triangular red spot on the ridge. Ascend both the first (350 ft.) and second (150 ft.) towers on their sides. F.A.: Alain Grignard, Renzo Lorenzi, 1977

Unicorn Peak (2140M/7020 ft.)

Prominent spire (actually a ridge viewed head on) visible left of the summit of

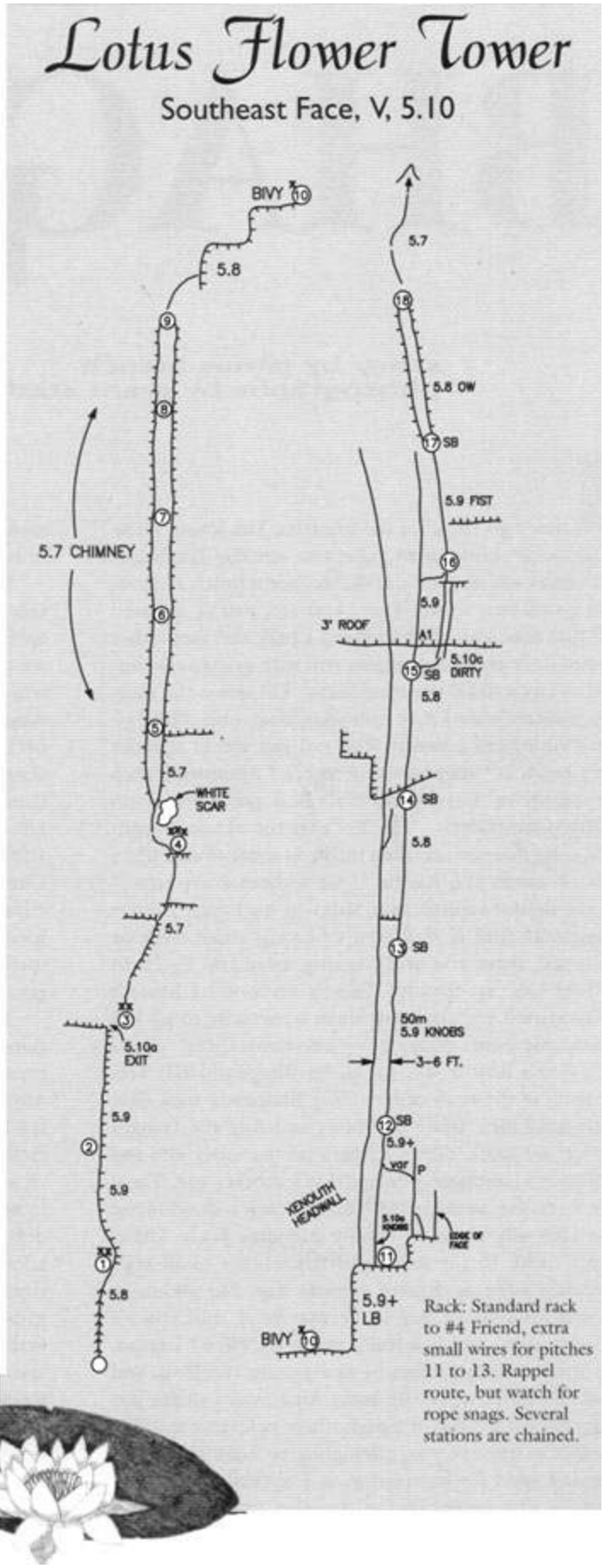


The Lotus Flower Tower. Photo: George Bell

Crescent Peak when viewed from the Cirque entrance.

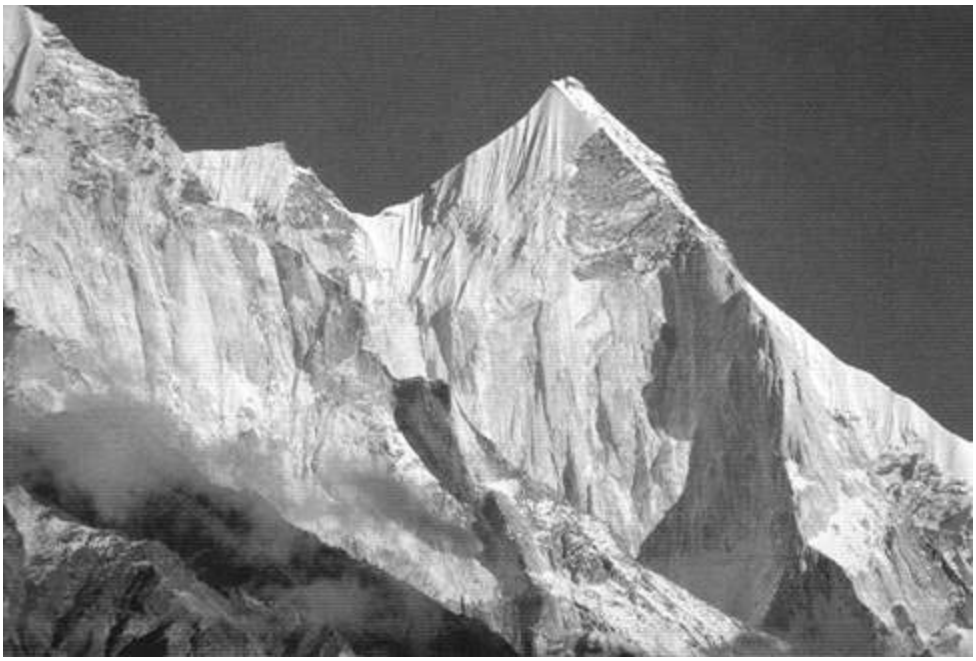
47) South Ridge (III, 5.9)

Follow easy ridge crest steepening to final crux pitch. Some rotten rock and an old piton (at the crux) were encountered in the first recorded ascent. Descent: scramble down gully and face left of the ascent route. F.P. (attempted?): L. Thaxton party (1979). F.A. (recorded): George Bell, Don Mank (1989). Repeated.



Chewing The Cud On Bhagi Rathi

Story By James Blench
Photographs By Grant Statham



I don't go there for the summits. You know, those capricious points in an otherwise sensible landscape. Summits are at best unreliable, sometimes a sham, always playing tricks. There you are, you've invested all that time and effort to climb a peak and they either cloud in or try to overwhelm you with gratuitous visuals and superficial sensationalism. ("Oh this is the most magnificent view I have ever seen, blah, blah, blah" -give your head a shake!) You can just see all at those silly peaks at "Summit Conferences," ruminating on a multitude of devious and diabolical games to try on naive mountaineers. "Ha! Let's try the old never-ending ridge routine and then throw in some clouds and a bit of wind! Ha, ha, ha.... Gets them every time," some sinister summit says, slapping his knees, glaciers giggling. And if they aren't playing some trick or another, there you are, working away and — Huh? What? On top already? There's no more? I haven't even started yet! And now there is nowhere to go but down and home. Summits — who needs them?

That's how it was for us on Bhagirathi III. You may recall the story of how King Bhagirathi took sixty thousand men and a few cows and dug the Ganges River and stuck Shiva's Lingam on the other side and called it a mountain, perhaps that's another tale. There we were, five weeks in the Gangotri, not a cloud in the sky. No silly cirrus or clumsy cumulus. Nada. Clear, calm, cold. In the middle of the mother of all high pressure systems. Except summit day. For about six hours on summit day to be precise. I told you -Tricks again. And is it really worth the effort? I mean, to finish twenty pitches of fine granite climbing, and then battle your way up some foggy snow slope, just to stand on the top of a peak where you can't see thirty feet in front of you, attempting to fulfill some misguided need for completion and resolution. Why? It seemed like a good idea at the time, but sure doesn't make sense now. But that's what I mean about summits.

But how could you not go? I mean to the mountain. If not Bhagirathi, some mountain. Certainly the spirit stagnates if you sit too long, and mountain trips are just plain good value, despite the cost. Remember when Bhagirathi III got to be cover boy on Mountain Magazine in the early eighties? A veritable neon sign beckoning you to the Garwhal — come on kids, lets climb! And the anticipation! There is nothing better than a Himalayan project hovering in your event horizon to keep you awake at night, lingering over lists and plans, dreaming like a small child before Christmas. With no end of reasons to meet with your climbing compadres, talk tactics, plans and build friendships. And this is all before you've left home or spent any money. In these days of fiscal fiasco that's good value!

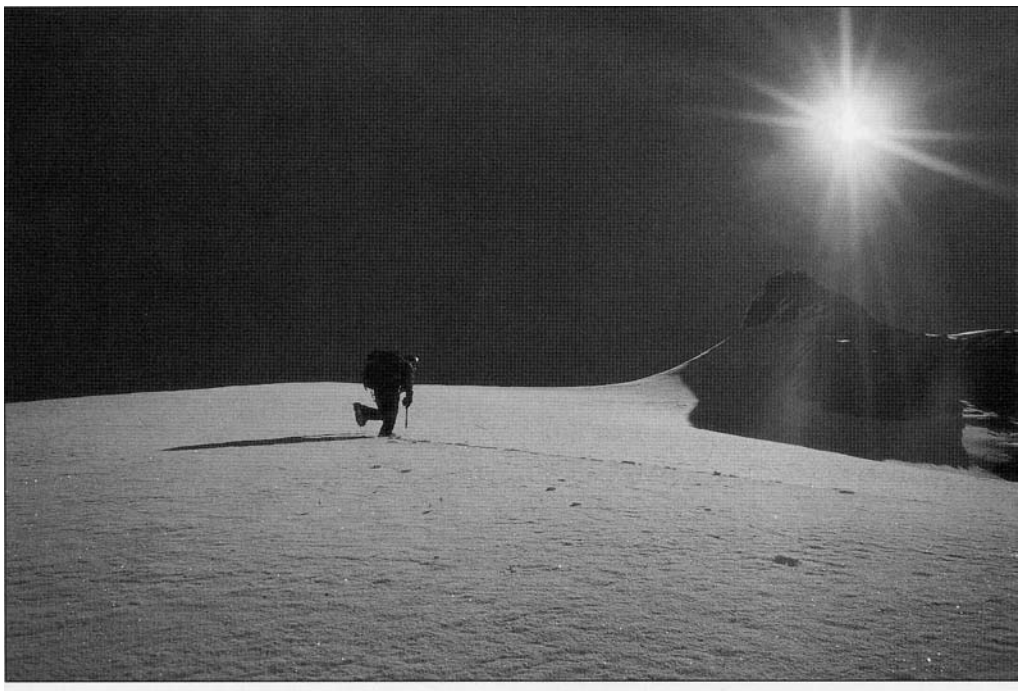
This trip was a sure bet. Not in the sense that the summit was a foregone conclusion, but rather that the event held promise of a high degree of success in other ways. Not every climb

needs to be a new route or at the limit of your capabilities. There is merit and satisfaction in competent action and the implementation of well-laid plans. Your adventure doesn't need to lie in nearly falling off or getting smucked. Success can be defined as a job well done, measuring the quality of effort, not according to some arbitrary physical location which bears little relationship to your level of growth or achievement. For our group — Grant Statham, Norm Winter, Paul Bernsten, Brian Webster and I — the biggest hurdle was figuring out how we would all get a good shot at the peak. Climbing in one team was impractical on such technical terrain with notoriously small bivi ledges. All you would do is jumar as a group of five. We settled on two teams with the group of three going first, focusing on making our companions' experience as good as our own and savouring each pitch as though it were the last of the climb.

What we found on the ridge was not really the climbing. Sure, there was nineteen or twenty pitches of moderate alpine granite (mostly 5.6 to 5.8 with a bit of A2/3) and some of the finest mixed terrain I have ever seen. And our team was capable of minor visionary experiences in the most benign of places. Most of my memories are of daylight sparkling on Shivling's east ridge; waiting in our bags 'til the sun baked us out, each of us trying to give someone else the lead 'cause the climbing was so good and the leading was more fun than jumaring; and watching Brian fight with obstinate Indian kerosene, making Grant and I a hot brew while I hacked and spewed. Oh, the joys of high places, tight bivis and fat-free air.

The spirit of the trip can be best described by one event. Grant, Brian and I had run out of mountain to climb and were on our way down. It had snowed the day before and we were carefully rappelling even very easy ground. We passed Norm and Paul who were on their way up. It was sunny, sparkles of new powder snow were making a slick coat on the greasy granite and three black Himalayan Choughs were playing dive bombers in the morning thermals. Paul was beaming on belay in the bright sunshine while Norm scratched and clawed his way up snow-covered rock, seriously placing pro on ground we had literally walked over two days before, conscious of how silly it seemed yet loving every second. Suddenly, without preamble, Norm cried out, triumphant arms in the air, "Look at me — I'm climbing!"

Like I said. I don't go there for the summits.



The team thanks the Canadian Himalayan foundation for its generous support

Goodbye Karakorum

Story By Andrew Brash

My partner John lay ill in bed. So, once again I was left on my own to go and find something to eat at one of the not-so-fine eateries of Islamabad. I couldn't shake my nervousness while walking down the street. Our expedition to Chogolisa had gone foul. I half expected, at any moment, to have Captain Ayub, our liaison officer, to corner me out on the street with his police buddies and rough me up a bit. At least. You might say that we hadn't parted on the best of terms. The debriefing at the ministry had gone well for John and I, but rather poorly for the captain.

I made my way into a bleak restaurant, where I was greeted by a very depressed-looking group of waiters, not a customer in sight. As I sat, the events of the expedition churned around in my head, but the thoughts were distracted by the ludicrous disco music playing in the background. I finished off my plate of massacred chicken and headed back to our guest house. In the street that afternoon, with the temperature scorching, things were quiet. I entered the house and saw the owner of the place sprawled on the couch in the common room, watching TV. Feeling lethargic after my lunch, I flopped down on the couch beside him. We sat in silence for some time, watching an Indian movie on Zee TV. The owner began to make small talk with me. Then he asked, "Are you in some trouble with the authorities?"

Not entirely surprised by his question, I tripped over my words. "Uh, well no, I don't think so. Well, I hope not. Why?"

He stared at me for a moment, and with his pudgy little hand, stroked the mustache on his pudgy little face. "You know, the ISI were here looking for you. You should be careful, they are following you everywhere that you go."

This was the final straw. The ISI are the Pakistani intelligence agency. What the hell were they following me around town for? I jumped up off the couch.

"That's it, I'm calling the Embassy back." My sudden anger startled him.

"No!, no!, wait — think about what you're going to tell them first."

"I'm going to tell them exactly what you just told me, that the ISI are following me around Islamabad."

"No, no, I didn't tell you that," his face suddenly being swept with concern.

"Sure you did, you just said it to me seconds ago."

"No."

A nervous smile quivered on his face. I understood completely. My frustration at the place was overwhelming. A straight answer from somebody? Sure! I could only think one thing: get me the hell out of Pakistan.

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The original plan had been for two guys, one John Climaco and myself, to climb in alpine style, a 7665m peak, Chogolisa, located along the upper Baltoro Glacier in Pakistan's Karakorum range. Ridiculous? Yes, it certainly seems so now. We knew from the outset that our plan had more chance of failure than success, but we were feeling lucky. Our first trip to the Himalaya had gone so well, the thought of failure had barely entered my mind. We arrived in Islamabad in mid July of 1995, full of hope and anticipation.

In Rawalpindi, supplies needed to be purchased. With Hassan from our trekking agency, and our cook Ishaq, out we went. Hassan led us further and further down suspect alleys, talking about a "special" event happening that day. We then witnessed some kind of Islamic ritual or celebration or protest, but it was truly an intense spectacle. Never have I felt more out of place, wading through throngs of veiled women and scowling men. The event worked as a sort of parade, the streets lined with spectators, and the "floats" being writhing groups of men beating themselves with their hands, sticks, ropes and other instruments of torture. Some were bleeding profusely, as a vehicle plastered with pictures of the Ayatollah Khomeni pushed through the crowd. Surprisingly, I stayed quite calm. John was bravely videotaping the action from close range, doing his best to ignore the stares from the crowd. I was asked if we were from CNN; who else would be stupid enough to show up at this thing? There was a medical unit set up to take care of casualties. Riot police were out in force. Boys were flogging themselves with cat-o'-nine tails. Blood was flying into the air and spraying the chanting onlookers. Eventually, on the advice of Hassan, we decided to leave. The crowd was really tight and we were simply pushed along, trying at all cost not to trip, until we spilled out into a walkable space. There we saw the final blocked street, covered side to side, end to end with men on their knees in prayer. At their head was a guy screaming fanatically into a blaring microphone.

We squeezed out along the side, and decided to call it a day. Unfortunately, that evening we still had the displeasure of meeting our liaison officer, Captain Mohammed Ayub.

Captain Ayub was a scrawny character with glazed-over eyes and a very pompous, dismissive nature. As an officer of the army, he felt himself superior in every way to all those around him. Holding up his new down jacket, his only comment was, "Have you no other colour?" Going through his kit item by item, he checked off the list with an extravagant stroke of the pen, held in his dainty little hand. I was already dreading this expedition. Captain Ayub was not satisfied with his kit, therefore we would not be leaving for the mountains quite yet. With some additional funds that we supplied, Ayub was to go out and find the extra gear that would satisfy him. In the end, he simply kept the money and made no further purchases.

During what became a two-day shopping delay, John and I decided to visit the city of Peshawar, near the border with Afghanistan. Despite being forbidden by Ayub to go to Peshawar, we simply did as any of the other three or four tourists in Pakistan are permitted to do, and forked over for a taxi for the day. The city was interesting and had a very rough frontier ambiance. While swerving our way back to Islamabad, we discussed with the driver our unreasonable liaison officer. In return, the driver told us that his brother had been murdered by the police for his part in some anti-government demonstrations. He asked us if we would like to see some pictures of his brother. He proceeded to pull three snapshots out of the glovebox and passed them back to us. While looking at several pictures of a man with half his head blown apart, lying on a morgue slab, we were pulled over at a police check-post. I was really beginning to wonder how this trip could possibly be worth it.

***

Lurching along the jeep track between Skardu and Askole, we were now several days on our way towards the mountains. We had taken the road from Islamabad, recommended in a book by Jim Haberl, but after driving the road, I certainly would not recommend it. We pulled into what we were told was the last police checkpost, at Dasso bridge. Just off the side of the road, inside the officer's bedroom-cum-office, the man in charge asked to see our peak permit. Still lying on his bed, he scanned the document. "Ah Ha!" he almost seemed pleased. "This permit has not been signed."

John stepped in, a little irate, in fact a little too irate. The policeman clearly did not like John's attitude.

"You bloody man," he snarled, "you will speak silently to me!"

And sure enough the room became silent.

"Your piece of paper is bogus! You must go back to Islamabad."

Oh God, no, please, not that. Despair flushed through my body. Naturally, our liaison officer was nowhere to be seen, so I began grovelling. I spoke in my kindest, softest voice possible and it didn't work. Only when Ayub came in forty-five minutes later, was the matter resolved. The two men went through their pitiful ritual of pretending to love each other, due to their mutual involvement in the army. We were soon on our way, the officer making sure we knew how lucky we were not to be sent back, and that only due to the captain were we being allowed to continue. Ayub was loving the moment and ushered us out of the shack.

Soon past Dasso the jeep track had collapsed, so we began walking. On day two I ran into an English climber, Alan Hinkes, who had just climbed K2. As we passed each other on the trail he warned me: "Nothing up there's worth that walk mate," and continued running down towards civilization.

We walked for days with nothing going wrong. I did my best to avoid Ayub along the way and things seemed fine. Crossing the Jola bridge wound up being an exercise in patience, thanks to an army platoon bullying their way past us, all guns and laughs, and taking our rope that we had been using to pull the small wooden trolley across. Captain Ayub vowed to report "the bastards." Also, commenting on the hermit who lived at the cable bridge, collecting money from all those crossing it, he came out with, "Inshallah, God willing, this man will be hanged." It seemed as though the Captain was coming on our side.

After the camp of Paiju, we mounted the Baltoro Glacier, and continued for an entire day without event. The following day we were making our way to Goro II, planning to spend the night there. Part way into the day, our sirdar asked us if we would mind continuing to Concordia, as the porters were running a little low on food. We agreed. When we arrived at Goro II, we were a little surprised to see camp already set up. After inquiring to Ishaq, we discovered that Captain Ayub had refused to go on. He was lying in his tent. The porters seemed restless. The captain emerged. "These Johnnies, they do not know what is best for them," he announced with a wave of his hand. "Only I know what is best for them."

We explained to the captain that the porters were running low on food. "This is not my fuck-up, this fuck-up is due to you. We should only continue "whatsoeverabsolutely" according to that rule and regulation." The Captain loved to use that word whenever possible.

Nonetheless, after a very lengthy discussion, Ayub agreed to go on. He went with a porter to take his tent down. I got up to get ready, and then Ishaq announced that the porters did not want to continue after all. John and I couldn't believe what we were hearing. Had we not just spent the last hour and a half arguing on Ishaq's and the porters' behalf?

But after a few minutes it became clear that they weren't going to budge. John and I just threw our hands up in the air. We simply did not understand these guys at all. We went over to tell the captain that in fact we were going to stay put. He had his tent half down when we told him. He did not take the news well. His eyes began to bulge out of their sockets, and his whole body began a tight shake of rage. When his first words spewed forth, the initial symptoms of fear coursed through me.

"What!? Are you joking with me!?"

Foam flew from his mouth as he leaned slightly forwards clenching his fists at his sides and went absolutely out of his mind. He had taken this the wrong way. He descended into some kind of total breakdown. He continued to contort and scream, and then began to beat his chest in absolute rage. "I am officer in Pakistan Army! Government of Pakistan has given me three stars!!"

What could we say to that? Silence reigned the moment. Captain Ayub continued to rant and punch his chest. Then he demanded to John that he would need this episode in writing. He screamed something at a porter that sent him scrambling towards the Army camp five minutes away. Soon, we had five soldiers, dressed in mismatching track suits, surrounding us with machine guns. I felt truly frightened for the first time in my life. Thinking back to the pictures of the taxi driver's brother's head, and watching this raving lunatic, the seriousness of our situation had me completely clammed up and nauseous.

Ayub began to write out what he referred to as a confession, written in John's name, and telling of the various crimes we had committed. Suddenly, things like the Jola bridge incident were turned against us. At the time, Ayub had vowed to report "the bastards," but now we were being accused of insulting the Pakistani army, and despite being forced by the army to leave our rope on the bridge, of endangering the army of Pakistan should that rope break. Also, there would be a fine for leaving behind "pollution." He wrote that we had taken photographs of army camps, which he said could disclose the location of those camps, thereby violating the Official Secrets Act, when in fact he had only ever witnessed us taking pictures of mountains near military camps. Every so often he would babble something to one of the ragtag army fellows and they seemed to be in agreement. In dramatic style, Ayub told John to surrender his film. John went and found his second camera, still containing shots from his sister's birthday party, and rewound the roll. Then he handed over two blank rolls. Ayub may have been

Captain Ayub and John establish their relationship. Photo: Andrew Brash

evil, but was certainly none too bright. Then he told John to sign the document. John refused. A tense hour passed with no one budging. Finally Ayub signed John's name for him. Then came the "contract," holding John, the cook, and the sirdar responsible for Ayub's life in case of "accident or poisoning." Again, no one would sign and the captain would lose control for several minutes, while the soldiers looked on in silence.

Ayub then announced that he would do anything in his power to make sure that we did not succeed. We would be detained in Pakistan for three to four months after the expedition, while the ISI looked through all our film. If everything was OK, then we would be permitted to leave; if not, we would sit before a judge in Pakistani court. The expedition was collapsing over a bizarre misunderstanding and a mentally ill person assigned to us at random to liaise. I decided to try and calm the man down. I took him aside and spoke to him for over an hour. I admitted to him how much he was frightening me and that I didn't want the expedition to end. This tactic seemed to be working. Four hours after the entire episode had begun, the letter and film had been dispatched to Skardu, but we were going to be allowed to continue.

The big problem then was the situation of blackmail that we were under. Since the "confession" directly concerned John, he was unsure whether or not to continue. He sent a letter back home to his father, with a group of Swiss trekkers, explaining our trouble. Our cook, Ishaq, had been forbidden to speak with us, and Ayub was to be consulted about everything.

Arriving at Concordia the following day, I slipped out a quick note to my friend Jeff Lakes, who was climbing on K2. I asked him to come and visit Chogolisa base camp after his climb. We needed the extra company rather badly.

The porters now saw us as vulnerable and hassled us nonstop. They refused to go as far as we wanted them to when we placed base camp, two days past Goro II. We went about paying off the miserable wretches as soon as possible. Ayub instructed me to lay the money out in piles on a jacket. He would then have each porter put his thumb print on the contract, and I would pay them off. I thought nothing of this, until John approached me and told me he had seen Ayub pocketing money! I felt incredibly humiliated. How could I be so continually gullible? As the last few porters stood in line, I could see that we didn't have enough money to pay them off. The night before, in my tent, John and I had counted through the money at least three times. We had enough. Now we were short 2,700 rupees, or one full porter wage, and we still hadn't paid the sirdar. My anger was frothing inside me. I had become a different person over the course of the trip. Killing someone was no longer out of the question. I knew though, that if we wanted to do any climbing, that we had to put up with him. I fantasized about taking him climbing, and slicing the rope just as he struggled up to a belay and watching him plummet into the abyss, down an unknown face.

We were the only expedition on base camp and the only team on the entire peak. After two days at that desolate location, Ishaq departed. He was simply too afraid of Ayub, and too proud to take his relentless insults any longer. Ayub went down to Concordia to find another cook, and I went to visit Gasherbrum base camp. John stayed alone at our base camp. Along my walk I began to gain a superb view of the northeast ridge of Chogolisa, our objective. It looked colossal and complicated. I still felt we could climb it and salvage the expedition.

The Gasherbrum I visited left me in much better spirits, and I arrived in base camp to find John feeling the same. Ayub sauntered in the next day with a fine man named Gulham, to be our new cook. John and I packed up to place some gear at the base of the route. When we returned, we found that Ayub had moved certain of our items into his tent, including a $600 shortwave radio, and locked them away. Half of our medical kit had been depleted. With our "confession" still waiting back in Skardu, we all realised that he was blackmailing us, so he walked around base camp saying and doing whatever the hell he so desired.

On August 13 we sat in base camp observing perfect weather. I looked across at K2's clear summit and wondered if Jeff was up there somewhere. Little did I know that seven people were in the process of losing their lives.

The following afternoon, we departed base camp with ten days' of food and fuel. We adopted the "climb at night" strategy. We picked our way through an icefall and climbed onto the ridge. The climbing was complicated and with our packs we moved slowly on steep terrain. Our sense of scale was completely blown as we climbed. Sérac bands that we had estimated to be 15 metres high turned out to be 60 metres high. During one zombie-inducing session, I tried to find firm snow to anchor to, only to have my legs burst through into wide open air. What a fine place for a belay, directly over a crevasse! The climb was proving to be tricky, but we were, at least, making upward progress.

At our third camp a few clouds rolled in during the day. John wanted to wait for a day to see what the weather would do. I wanted to continue, arguing that we would never be able to do the route if we weren't willing to climb through a few clouds. We disagreed. Bivied in our tiny Bibler tent, not speaking to each other, the expedition had reached a new low. At 6 p.m. we

made our daily radio call to our friends at Gasherbrum I base camp. Without saying a word, John got out of the tent and turned on the radio. I was fuming. We could hear Phil Powers's voice come over the airwaves: "Could you please tell us more about the K2 tragedy, over." My heart began pumping. I immediately thought of Jeff, and of Alison Hargreaves, whom I had climbed with in the Alps. John interrupted, asking Phil for the story. Seven climbers were believed to be dead, including Jeff and Alison. The other climbers were thought to be Rob Slater, a Kiwi, and possibly three Spaniards. All the information was still not fully known. I lay in the tent, not stunned, just monumentally numbed. What a curse! Why were all these deaths occurring to my friends? These climbers were superbly skilled and competent. I thought about my dear friend Richard Ouairy, killed the summer before by rockfall near Chamonix. Richard and Jeff had been two of my mentors, my big brothers. Now I was the only one left, the one that used to make them laugh as I struggled up a climb behind them. I felt my ambition die. John and I immediately began blabbering, mutually apologising. Our position at 6500 metres was far from being comfortable or safe. We deemed the retreat back down the ridge too difficult with our minimal gear. Black clouds began to roll in, and snow started to fall. I tried to go to sleep.

Our descent was completed in two days. We traversed the séracstrewn face to our right during the night. Reaching safe ground the following day, we stumbled into base camp in the evening. Ayub and Gulham had thought one of us to be dead, as John's headlamp had died, and they had seen only one light approaching them. After eating, I lay in my tent thinking about Jeff, Alison, Richard, and my family, and compounded my wallowing by listening to the saddest songs that I could find. The events of the expedition had worn my emotions to a fragile state. The weight of failure I found crushing, but I was happy to have my hide intact. The activity that I had based my life around had turned out to be a destroyer. Reckless and utterly wasteful. For the first time since I was a kid, I began to cry. I was really quite stunned by the quantity of tears that streamed down my face. The tears felt wonderful and warm, as though someone was there with me, comforting me. I listened to music for hours, strangely not being tired at all, finally falling asleep near morning.

Several days later I stood at the Gilkey memorial, at the base of K2. Base camp was deserted. A light wind rattled the plates lashed to the main cairn of the memorial. I spent several hours inscribing Jeff Lakes's name into a metal plate, brought from our kitchen. I felt terrible for Jeff. With the mountain abandoned, it seemed like the loneliest, most desolate place on earth to be left behind in. I attached Jeff's plate a little down and to the left of Nick Estcourt's. This didn't seem real. I had read about these things in books, and somehow, now, it had become me here. I said my good-byes and walked away from a clear and shining K2.

September had arrived, and snow was falling every day. We wouldn't have had a chance on Chogolisa. The walk out was proving to be the final kick in the teeth. The porters were frozen and miserable, and Captain Ayub continued his threats. He told John that because he was not in the army, he had no status and was nothing. He, himself, had status. He mentioned to me that I would not be permitted to continue on to Nepal after the expedition. "We cannot permit known criminals to travel to foreign countries." We walked back in dread of what might happen to us.

One afternoon walking towards Urdukas, a lone porter approached John along the trail. "Are you mister John?"

The man had a large package of mail for us. When we arrived in camp we riffled through a stack of magazines sent by John's father. A long letter was also included. In John's earlier letter home, he had asked his dad to call a friend of his from college, one Essun Khan. Essun's father was Admiral Saheed Khan, former head of the Pakistani Navy. Essun had communicated

The fine art of suffering. Photo: Andrew Brash

our problem to him. In the letter, Admiral Khan had invited us to visit him in Karachi, and stated that he would be very upset if all the hospitalities that he and Pakistan had to offer, were not fully extended to us. We had been saved.

Several days later, the afternoon light dwindling, I found myself on top of a jeep, jostling and squinting from the sandy wind that kept my well-greased hair skywards. We were leaving the big mountains behind. Looking across the arid gorge and then at Gulham, I couldn't help but smile. I knew that the captain would battle us to the end, but I felt that we were finally in the clear. What lay ahead could be dealt with, I was just very grateful to be alive.

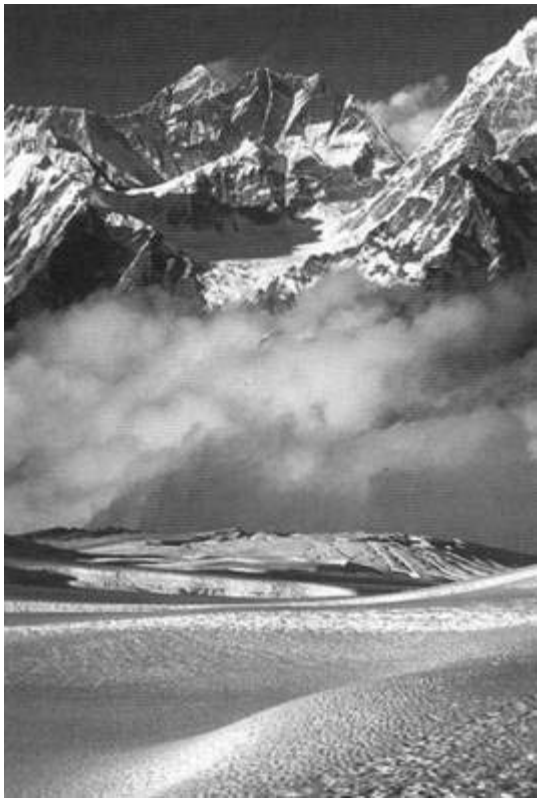
I waved good-bye to the hills, knowing that I wouldn't be seeing them again any time soon. Gulham joined in, "Good-bye! Good-bye Karakorum!"

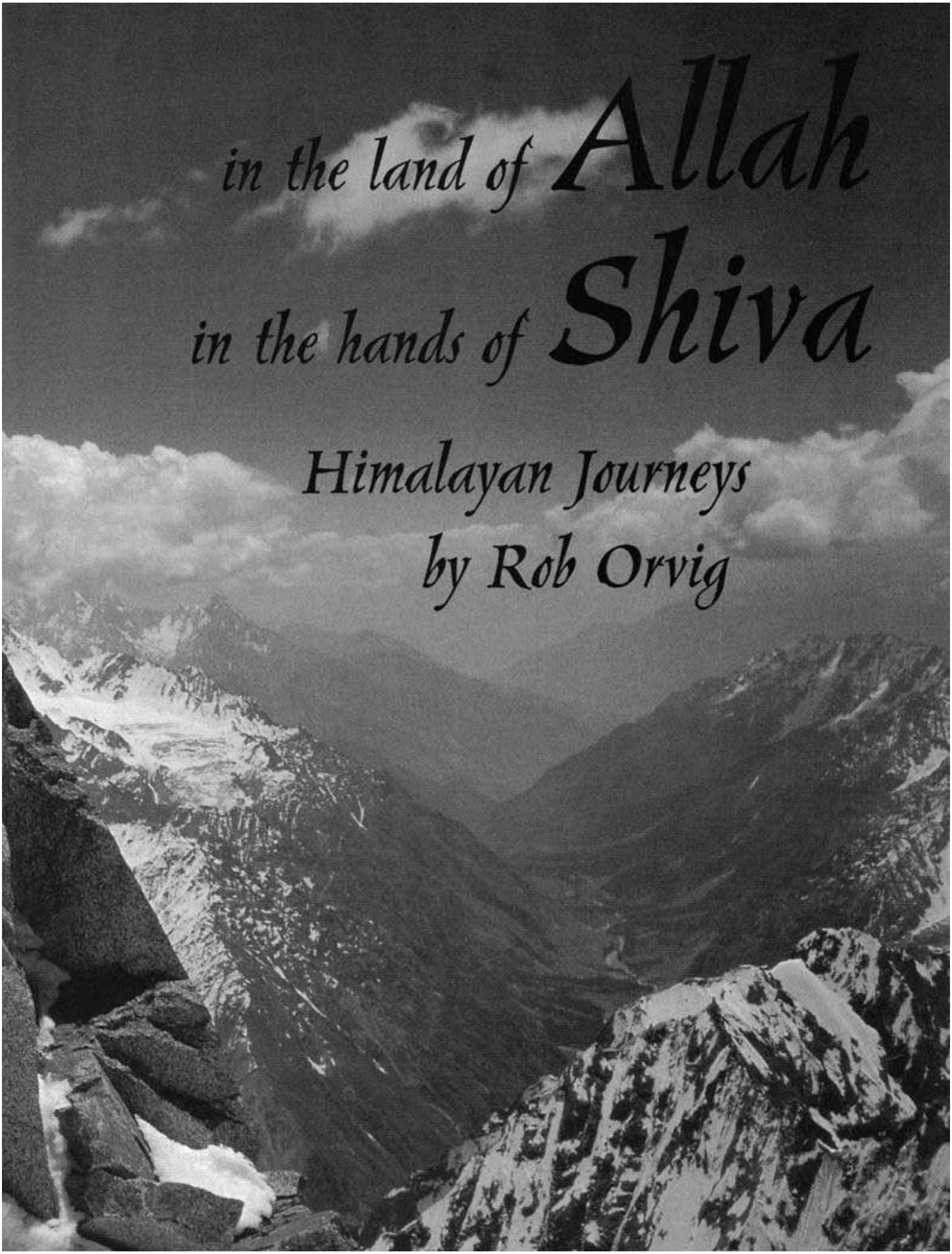
The team thanks the Canadian Himalayan foundation for its generous support

Please Speak Softly

as you walk through this ancient place.
Make no sound as your feet tread this holy ground,
and listen to the trees as they hum their sad chorus to the sky.
Yes, the trees are shivering in the twilight.
See them toil as they wrench their lives from the soil;
See them stand, battered but proud against a steady wind.
See the empty cathedrals thrusting towards the shifting sky.
See their tired walls crumbling as they heave,
and feel the low rumbling sighs as they beg for sleep.
Yes, the mountains are crying in the darkness.
Listen; they are alone;
Their chipped and broken bones spanning the centuries... the eons;
Let them teach you of place.
Yes, the moon is singing to us through the clouds. It sings of silence unimaginable.
It sings of a secret time between the future and the past; It sings of perfection that lies within our grasp.
It sings clear blue light down upon our sleeping eyes, and whispers golden riddles that illuminate our lies.
It sings to us of a dream which echoes up through the ages; the muffled chords of song which few ears hear. Let me hear this song tonight.

Mike Kammerer




in the land of Allah
in the hands of Shiva
Himalayan Journeys
by Rob Orvig

In The Land Of Allah, In The Hands Of Shiva

By Rob Orvig

Pakastani Possibilities

It would be hard to deny that the face of climbing in J. L the Himalaya and Karakoram is changing. The tightening regulations, soaring permit costs and "mediaisation" of mountaineering at altitude have left a sour taste in my mouth over the last few years. Without heavy sponsorship it is becoming impossible for a small team to go to a big peak. Forget the big peaks for a moment; there is a vast reservoir of high quality smaller peaks offering climbing at every level of difficulty. New route and first ascent potential make these "trekking" peaks an ideal low budget destination.

Pakistan is unique with respect to the smaller peaks; anything in an open area (i.e., not close to a border or in a tribal area) that is below 6000m is considered a trekking peak and is unregulated and free. This is not the case in Nepal or India. Nepal will issue low cost permits for a handful of trekking peaks (some of them being very serious climbing objectives) but you still need to have an outfitter's representative with you. Many other of Nepal's small peaks require a full fare permit or are closed. India requires a climbing permit for any peak. The permits are not overly expensive, however you are assigned a liaison officer and you need to cover all his costs as well as equipping him. It can turn into a bureaucratic headache.

The year was an experiment in personal stamina. Almost half of it was spent in Asia culminating in seven weeks' climbing in Pakistan with my wife, Alison Andrews. Our aim was to explore some of the wealth of sub-6000m peaks, all free, all legal.

June 1st. We landed in Islamabad with four duffel bags of gear and only a vague plan in mind. We had enough time to visit a few different areas and had settled on doing one trip in the Skardu area and another near Gilgit. After a few days of futzing around in Islamabad and Rawalpindi we had tickets on the Skardu-bound 737. Tickets for Gilgit are considerably more problematic as the flight is on small, dilapidated, prop-powered Fokkers. There is talk of expanding the Gilgit airport to accommodate 737s, but as yet there has been no action. The alternate route to either town is a 15 to 21-hour bus trip, but the flight is well worth the money. Sitting in a brand-new 737 and flying just below the top of Nanga Parbat is a spectacular ride.

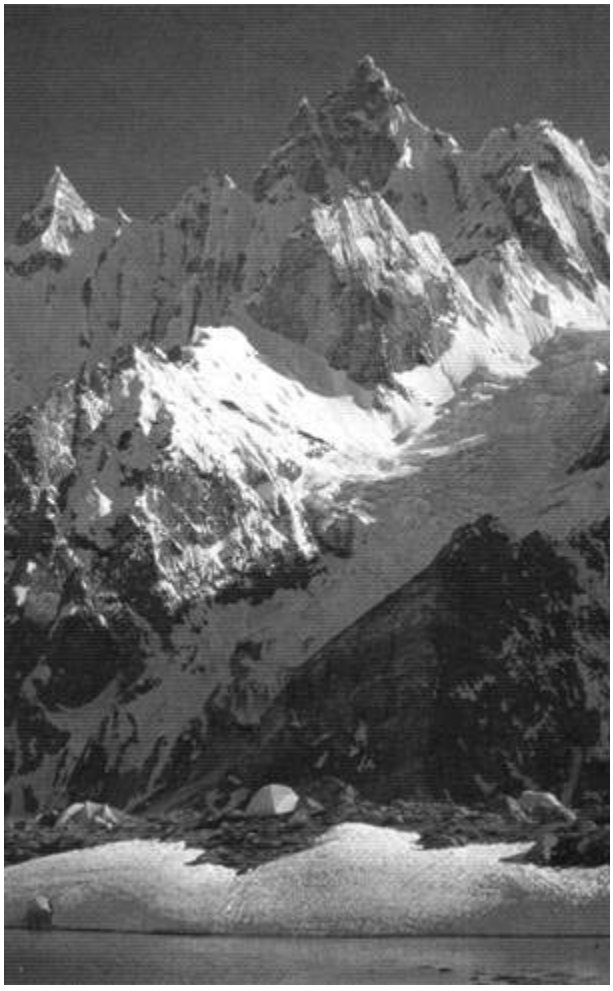
It took us less than two days in Skardu to buy food, hire a cook/camp watch/guide and decide on a destination. We had an article on a UIAA climbing camp in the Hushe valley, just south of Masherbrum, and had heard vague references to "good rock" in the area. It sounded as good a start as any.

One day by jeep had us in the village of Hushe, and one day walking brought us to a base camp at Dolsampa, in the Ghandagoro valley just south of Masherbrum. There is good rock there, unfortunately it was still early in the season and the inviting rock features were sprouting terrifyingly unstable-looking mushrooms and blobs of cornices. A satellite peak of Masherbrum caught our eye; it showed up on the map as Peak 5974 and had a striking snow and ice ridge on its north side. Over a four-day push we climbed the ridge experiencing some of the worst snow conditions either of us had ever seen. I still find it incredible that 70 cm of faceted snow can stick to 60° ice. Despite the snow, the position of climbing and camps on the ridge was fantastic and we found no trace of a previous ascent. Not that it matters a hoot anyway. The locals didn't think the peak had ever been climbed, and given how broken the glacier access was to the base of the route, that is quite believable. We dubbed the peak Hassan Parbat in honour of our cook.

We spent the next five days battling a strange stomach bug and going for short walks to scope other route possibilities. We moved up to a camp between Laila Peak, a beautiful 6000-metre mixed feature, and a 5670-metre spire to Laila's south, intending to attempt both. The weather deteriorated into snow and wind and after a few days of hanging in the tent we made a half-hearted attempt on Peak 5670 and turned back from the deep and scary trail breaking while still on the glacier. Three days later we were back in Skardu.

The road trip west to Gilgit is a mercifully-short seven hours. Compared to the strict Islamic community of Skardu, Gilgit has a positively cosmopolitan feel. Nice, fairly inexpensive hotels and restaurants seem to be the norm, rather than the exception. The improved living situation went a long way towards refreshing our energy level. There are many options for trips in the Gilgit area; just north of town is the popular Hunza valley with the Karakoram highway running all the way up it to the border with China.

We opted to visit the Naltar valley, the first break to the west up the Hunza from Gilgit. Most of the valleys in Pakistan tend to be very arid and barren, whereas Naltar is remarkably lush, with well-developed forests in its lower reaches. It would be a



Dolpsampa basecamp, Hushe. Photo: Rob Orvig

Alison Andrews on north ridge, West Twin. Photo: Rob Orvig

wonderful place for spring ski touring. It was only a few hours by jeep to the village of Naltar, then an easy one and a half days' walk to a base camp at Upper Shani. Unlike the granite of Hushe, the rock of the Naltar valley is decidedly sedimentary; it is not a destination for high quality rock routes. There is some excellent mountaineering potential however. Our base camp was directly below the north face of Khaltar (Shani Peak) 5885m. I had read of some attempts on the east and north sides of Shani. Perhaps later in the season it would be safe, even if not inviting, but in July it would have been nothing short of suicidal. After looking around for a few days, we packed up to attempt Shani from the southwest side as well as The Twins directly to the west.

Shani was straightforward mountaineering. After a two-day approach with heavy packs the route started with a wind sprint through an icefall and then wandered up the eastern edge of the southwest face. Pleasant climbing on snow and in ice gullies up to 55° led to the summit and a great view of the Rakaposhi and Batura groups to the north and the Hindu Kush to the west. The next day we were across the glacier in a position to climb the north ridge of the west Twin, 5800m. The ridge was quite reminiscent of our route on Hassan Parbat, only with marginally better snow conditions. Fun climbing required belays about 50 percent of the time. On our sixth day we staggered back to base camp and Hassan's French fries.

We had been eyeing up a gully route on a peak to the east of Shani. It was quite an unusual feature for that part of the world, a narrow water-ice climb with some great-looking mixed ground at the top. The peak did not show up on any of our useless maps but we figured it was around 5200 metres and that the route was 700 metres high. Wrong again. Eight hundred metres up our 700 metre route with the hardest ice below us (WI) and the mixed ground well above us, we bailed. The route was bigger than it was supposed to be, the sun was hitting the terrain above sooner than we had thought, the resulting falling rocks were larger than they were meant to be, and the idea of having to rappel the whole thing by headlamp was not appealing. We had had enough. On the way down I found some old pin scars and wondered if they got up it? It would be a great climb.

A few days of playing tourist in the Hunza gave me a bagful of ideas for another time. Predictably, the Fokkers weren't flying; 15 hours on the bus and we were back in Rawalpindi, psyched for our flight home.

I spent quite a bit of time before our trip trying to gather information on the trekking peaks of Pakistan, with only limited success. My impression is that quite a bit has been done but very little has been written up. While scant information goes a long way towards maintaining a feeling of exploration, if you are simply trying to find out which areas are worth visiting, it can be frustrating. Following is a brief summary of information I gleaned from articles and talking to people along the way.

Shivling from Nandanvan. Photos: Rob Orvig

Areas to visit

Skardu

Baltoro Glacier — An obvious choice. There is lots of scope for rock routes within a few days' walk of Askole. You will see lots of traffic as this is one of the most popular treks in Pakistan. It is a restricted area so a trekking permit is required, as well as use of a government certified guide, who will require a cook. This makes things more costly than other areas, but for a group of four to six, it would still be economical. Porter stages are set by the government and are quite long which helps to keep costs down.

Snow Lake — At the junction of the Biafo and Hispar glaciers. It can be approached from either the Skardu or Gilgit sides, though most people come from Gilgit. It is several days' walk with porters so costs will climb. It looks like a great place for technical climbing and maybe easy mountaineering as well.

Hushe Valley — Hushe is the gateway to several areas near Masherbrum. I can recommend the Ghandagoro Glacier for both rock and mountaineering (see High Magazine 137, April '94). It is also common to walk up to Ghandagoro Pass for the view of K2 and Concordia. The Charakusa Glacier offers fast access to the spectacular K6 and K7 area. Terrain there is quite convoluted and rock climbing on sub-6000m peaks is possible but a bit involved. Other glaciers accessible from Hushe are the Chogolisa, Masherbrum and Aling.

Saltoro valley, Bilafond Glacier, Sherpikanjj Glacier — Most of this area is presently closed due to the Siachen Glacier conflict with India. However it would be worth checking to see if closures have changed; it is a remote area that looks to have great potential.

Gilgit

Nanga Parbat — Some mixed routes have been done in the Mazeno Pass area. Access from Tarshing to the east.

Lower Hunza — There are several side valleys a short drive north of Gilgit: Naltar, Chaprot, Daintar, Jaglot, etc. Mostly mountaineering and mixed climbing. Lots of places to explore.

Upper Hunza — This is a hotbed of activity. Close to Karimabad are many places to visit. Popular ones with the "cheap" climbing crowd are the rock spire of Bublimoting

(Lady Finger) and the Hassanabad/ Muchichul glaciers. Across the valley are the Bualtar and Barpu glaciers; most articles make this sound more like an easy mountaineering area, but without being fully explored, who knows?

The porters in this area have a reputation for being quite troublesome. A bit farther up the Karakoram Highway are the towns of Gulmit and Ghulkin, accessing glaciers of the same names as well as the Passu. Gulmit looks like an excellent place to base out of and explore a wide range of mountaineering and technical objectives. This would be the spot I would visit on another trip. Slightly further north is the huge Batura Glacier. Two to three days' walk leads to Seiri Madan on the north side; there appear to be a number of easy, interesting snow peaks in a cirque here.

There are many other possibilities, these are just some of the areas that caught my attention. Porters are quite expensive in Pakistan and the set "stages" are often short, making transport of food and gear one of the biggest expenses. In an effort to make things cost efficient I have tried to describe places that are less than three days' walk from the road. High season is July and August.

India — Garhwal Himalaya — Shivling

After climbing Shivling (6543m) one and three quarters times in 1990, I decided that it would make a good guiding objective via the first ascent route, the West Ridge. April '95 saw us packing food and sweltering in the pre-monsoon heat of New Delhi. The guiding team consisted of myself and Alison Andrews of Canmore, Alberta and Nick Cradock of Wanaka, New Zealand. The climbing team was Dale Cote of Milo, Alberta; Don Friedlander of Ottawa, Ontario; Gene Nawrocki of Boston, Massachusetts; and Deborah Pratt of Bozeman, Montana.

By the end of April we were established in base camp at Tapovan and had begun to ferry loads to the base of the ridge. Tapovan was still covered in 80 cm of snow and the touring skis we had brought proved to be a valuable asset. For the first few days of May we had clear mornings and violent snow squalls in the afternoons. Soon the squalls stopped and we enjoyed warm, sunny days and mild nights for the duration of the month. By May 14 we had a camp established at 5400m on the ridge and had fixed rope to 6000m, at the base of the ice cliffs that pose the last technical obstacle on the route. The ice had changed dramatically in the last five years and now offered 90m of vertical and overhanging climbing. Tackling this was out of the question with a guided group, as was the exposed traverse off the ridge to skirt the end of the cliffs, so we decided to retreat. The next few days were spent stripping the route and hauling everything down to base camp.

Everyone had put in a strong effort and the first order of business was to enjoy a few days of rest in Tapovan, which was now free of snow. Having over a week left in our schedule we wanted to pick another objective and settled on a quick trip across the valley to Bhagirathi II (6512m). The exertions of the previous few weeks had taken their toll; Gene opted to head for home and Deborah decided to hang out in base camp and visit with Mata Ji, the female sadhu who inhabits Tapovan year-round.

On May 19 we headed off for five days. Across the Gangotri Glacier, up the Chaturangi to the Vasuki Glacier and the east slopes of Bhagirathi. Dale felt unwell and stayed at our last camp while Don, Nick, Alison and myself summited on the only foggy day we had experienced in weeks. The route was very similar to climbing Mount Lefroy from Abbot Pass.

A few days spent breaking down base camp, one long day's walk to Gangotri, and then two days on the road, saw us back in the 47° heat of Delhi.

The Inner Ranges

A walk around the neighbourhood

Stephen Legault

The last few steps are like being dragged across a bed of nails. I can feel razor-sharp spasms of pain shooting up my legs and into my knees as I stumble over the final few boulders, then emerge on the Lake O'Hara fire road. This is the end of it, the final walk of the week and I am happy to have it over with. Mount Narao, as its native name implies, has been a "punch in the stomach."

I suppose that's the wrong attitude, but its the only one that I can conjure at the end of the longest week of walking of my life. This calculated torture of movement has grown from a passion to know my home better. And to get a little exercise: 6000 metres elevation gain in a week adds up to a decent workout.

And there is this: I can feel the pressure of a short Rocky Mountain summer pushing at my back every step of the way. With each step I come to know my world in a new, more involved fashion.

Tessa Weber and I start the week by walking to Red Deer Lakes. On the second day of three in that area we climb Cyclone Mountain. A straightforward route ascends the southwest talus slopes of this peak and tops out just over 3000 metres. It's little more than a walk, but I suspect Cyclone Mountain is seldom climbed, as it is a 20-kilometre approach and is not well-known.

From the summit of Cyclone, we look out over the Drummond Icefield, a vast bowl-shaped glacier that is cradled between Pipestone Mountain, Mount Drummond and Cyclone Mountain. The view sweeps around in an endless realm of front range peaks. Molar Mountain dominates the skyline to the north, its broad U-shaped saddle clearly explaining the origin of its name.

Blowing snow, wind, and harsh temperatures chase us down the mountain.

Tess and I spend another day in the area, then walk out via Baker Lake and Boulder Pass. The three days in the back country, spent in restful appreciation of the beauty of my chosen home, restore me and whet my appetite for further explorations.

Walking is the purest form of meditation I know. Often I lose myself completely in thought while trudging over trails, thinking of faces and places come and gone. More frequently, however, I hone my attention to the sharpest of edges while gingerly picking my way over loose rock, with a drop of a thousand metres on either side. Walking centres my attention on details: the rhythm of my footfalls, the curve of the earth, the unmistakable border of the mountains piercing the sky.

Next morning I meet with Josh Slatkoff and we set out for Mount Andromache. Leaving Lake Louise at 6 a.m., by 10 a.m. we are sitting on the rocky summit of this peak. The view from 3000 metres is a reversal of the one I held only two days before. Again, Molar Mountain is in the scene, but today it is to the south. Mount Hector and its tentacle-like glacier is the predominant spectacle.

It's a warm morning and the sun is patiently shining through a patchwork of clouds. On the descent, we trip and fall and scramble our way over cement-like scree.

It seems strange to look upon similar scenes from opposing angles in such a short period of time. These views provide me with the first tentative understanding of my home: it is not the confines of the hamlet of Lake Louise, but a far larger world of rock and ice and time.

On Monday morning I go off on my own. I have to work in the afternoon, but the morning is mine. I want an easy walk, something that will satisfy my urge for movement but not pose any technical difficulties. I settle on Mount Field in Yoho National Park, with Mount Burgess as an option to lengthen the amble.

Around seven o'clock I'm making my way through the dark, lush forest above the town of Field. Starting at 1200 metres above sea level, this is a relatively long approach, longer than really necessary; why not just put the trail right up the side of Burgess Pass rather than messing around with all these switchbacks? In a couple of hours I reach the crest of the pass, and look out over Emerald Lake, the President and the Vice President. Mount Stephen dominates my view: the buttresses of its north face look like spinal columns of dark weather-beaten rock that taper near the top, only to give way to another series of columns. Endless: these peaks reach up into an immeasurable sky.

From the pass I

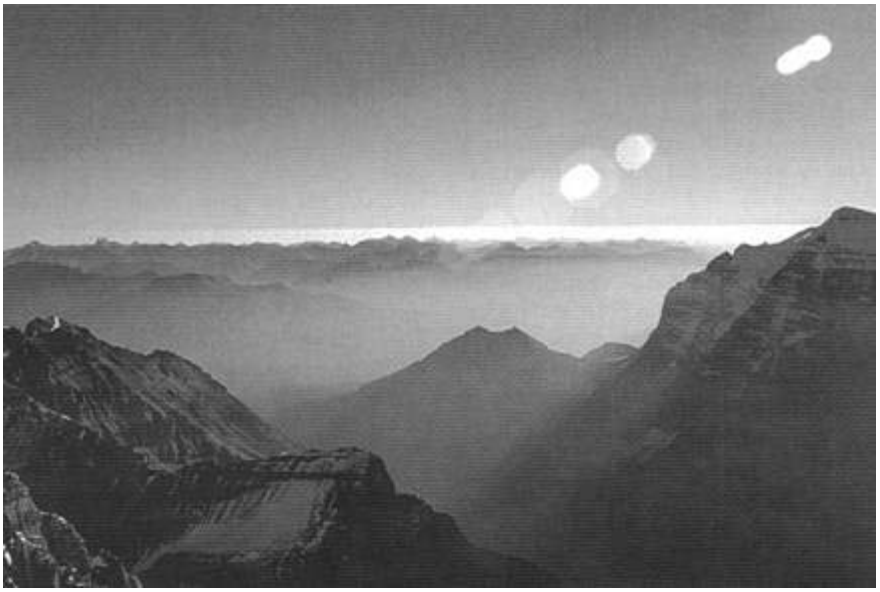
investigate Mount Burgess, but realize I've climbed too high to reach the fissure on its south side that gives access to the summit. I turn instead to the east and walk toward Mount Field.

Most people agree that Field isn't a mountain at all, but a ridge that has escaped the higher summit of Mount Wapta. Peak or no peak, I start up the loose fragments of stone that dominate its west flank, and in half an hour reach a set of cliff bands. I've taken a route too far to the left and end up scrambling over rock bands. There is no exposure, so I'm content to climb for a while. The rock bands give way to the summit ridge, and I step gleefully over the talus to the cairn marking the pinnacle.

Another great view. I find Graeme Pole's name in the register; he placed' the ledger here a few years back. Graeme's name appears in nearly every summit book I've signed in the past four years. Another restless walker seeking an understanding of home.

One rubble pile after another. "Real" mountaineers wince at the thought of so much unconsolidated rock: what's the point of climbing those heaps of gravel? I'll admit it's partly out of fear of the more technical peaks, but more it's a need to be fully bathed in the landscape. I want to drown in its splendours.

There is great satisfaction in the process of climbing these mountains. Besides the resplendence of the summit, there is an elation in the procedure: the motion of my body moving up and over so much landscape, the view unfolding into a panorama of peaks and sky, and the nearly holy union of body, spirit and landscape. These serve as a religion.



Mount Temple. Photo: Hans Hortenhuber

I give up on Mount Burgess, lacking the time and the energy to regain the 300 metres I overlooked.

Josh and I are back on the trail the following morning, tramping towards Boulder Pass — my second visit in a week. It's a good, easy approach for Ptarmigan Peak, and we're singing and shouting as we go.

At the trailhead we meet a Parks Canada researcher who tells us Bear 46 is in the area. "That's the one with two cubs, right?" I ask, a little concerned. "That's right," he says, "and she's somewhere between here and Boulder Pass."

Josh and I look at each other only a moment before breaking into a spirited chorus of song and dance. Nothing like the presence of ol' Griz herself to liven up an approach.

Photo: Hans Hortenhuber

The bear in question never shows her face, and we reach the alpine meadows below the peak in an hour. Up over big blocks of talus and onto a notch between Pika and Ptarmigan Peaks. Halfway up the slope a storm materializes from the east — thunder and lightning, rain and wind and snow — so we seek cover beneath one of the larger boulders.

I take my metal ice axe for a long walk, and leave it a comfortable distance from our resting place.

Half an hour and it's clearing, so we push for the summit. The going is easy, and soon we're moving out over the summit ridge. The ghost-like forms of gendarmes greet us at the Pika/Ptarmigan col; clouds pour like milk over the mountain's northeast face.

The summit ridge narrows to a point where the mountain drops off 800 metres to the Skoki Lakes; Myosotis and Zigadenus. There is a glacier beneath us, half a kilometre below, it's blue circular form hugging closely to the walls of the mountain we are climbing.

We cross the exposed portion of the climb with no difficulty and reach the summit minutes later. Though described as a moderate climb by Alan Kane in his guidebook, I found no difficulty in the ascent.

The exposed traverse, a place I might have turned back from a few years ago, posed no trouble despite my vertigo-prone mind.

Our stay on the summit is cut short by snow, wind, and cold. July in the Rockies.

The week stretches out beyond the boundaries of normal time, beyond the average seven day period. Again, I am confronted with the peculiar reality that time is not a matter of clocks, calendars and schedules, but of sunrises, sunsets, and the mastery of the moment. With four peaks climbed in six days, I can hardly consider this a normal week: it has been an elongated stretch of chronology. Some people ask

me if I ever go to work.

With the pressure of a short summer closing in, and my own sense of urgency probing the crevices of my mind, it becomes apparent that in order to fully live life to its capacity, I'll have to adopt an attitude of strength and courage. Not only physical strength, but the mental resolve that so much landscape can instill. And from this resolve comes courage to look into the world all around seeking understanding: for better and for worse.

After dinner and beer at Bill Peyto's Cafe, Josh and I flip through the guidebook, thumbing over worn pages, looking for something to round out the week with. We decide on Mount Narao, a peak just under 3000 metres on the continental divide. It promises great views of Mount Victoria's implacable north face, and ensures "mostly casual walking" on a "moderate scramble." Dan Clark joins us for the climb.

When we reach the second major set of cliffs, Josh mentions that the word moderate has a flexible definition. The obvious route of ascent is a short gully, only 10 metres long, that seems to afford good scrambling with little exposure. But it's choked with ice. We approach it, over steep snow, and probe the gully with ace axes: it's a no-go.

Dan suggests an alternative, up a loose, blocky ridge that offers exhilarating exposure, but seems climbable. Dan has alpine climbing experience, and possesses a good head for other people's limitations. I realize now that guidebooks are not all they are cracked up to be. One person's idea of exposed and moderate is entirely different than another's. Conditions change. The gully that posed "moderate" scrambling is impassable, so we must move out over more technical rock. Each of us must take responsibility for our own abilities and actions.

Josh backs down. The airy drop into the valley below Mount Narao is a little much, and he says that he has to know he can draw the line somewhere. It's a decision I toy with: I know I can physically climb this, the question is of my mind. There is a profound difference between perceived and actual exposure. Our route will not expose us to the gaping maw of the east flank of the peak. But I know it's there, and the rock is loose and the handholds poor.

Push the envelope, I tell myself, and find my body moving up behind Dan, confidently, though not comfortably, climbing this spine of rock. A few more cliffs requiring hand and foot work, and we reach the false summit. Two massive glacier-choked couloirs plunge into the abysmal void below; we cross a ridge behind them and attain the apogee. If it were not for Dan's patience and support, I would not have reached the summit.

Now I am spellbound. This is my home, the place I have chosen to spend my life — at least the part that does not bend beyond the curve of my sight. This vast and indifferent realm of peaks and glaciers and valleys and grizzlies may hold all the secrets to my understanding of the natural world, and with every walk I take I come that much closer to discerning my own place in this landscape.

We humans are not unlike this panorama. The curve of the landscape is not unlike our form. And our minds too are not dissimilar: each roll of hills and dales presents new pathways to the secrets of our alliance with the land.

The margin between person and place is less distinguishable when that person is fully engaged in the discovery of themselves, and of their home. Measureless as that margin may be, it is more likely that we will see ourselves as part of the natural world if we are fully involved with the landscape, on its own terms.

From the summit of these peaks, I can admire my world, one I love with passion and intensity. I never expect to find the answers to the questions I seek in my walking; that does not seem important. What matters to me is this: in the effort expended in climbing these mountains I am realizing the vastness of the land, and that my place in it is small. I find great assurance in the apparent endless nature of these sweeping vistas: we have not reduced our entire world to memories

Awake In A Dream

walking
on a well worn hollow trail
across a plain
of long
yellow
grass
waving slowly in a warm wind from the hills
to the left
pausing
to study the distant night
and
feeling the presence
of an old friend
who has crossed
the distance
from the hills
and crossed
my trail
the message is unspoken
follow me.

Colleen Campbell

The Impossibility Of Walking Softly

Graeme Pole

One step forward, two back. It's the mother of all scree slopes. Although it cannot possibly be so, the upper third of the slope appears convex. It seems an act of defiance that fragments of rock can find an angle of repose here.

What remarkable rock fragments they are. Amber, purple and yellowish-green. The ocean floor of 540 million years ago. Once thrust to the sky, now falling from the sky; hewn by ice, gravity, frost, wind and water into this great barren whaleback ridge of colour.

By walking here I bring two other forces of erosion to this slope: my determination and my boots. The rock fragments are bound with mud. I plough a trough, desperately lunging skyward.

The first pangs of guilt strike. This is a seldom-travelled place, and few times have I been on a slope so uniform, so pristine. Repeated freeze and thaw cycles have created a smooth, inclined pavement of sorted fragments, packed by heavy snowloads; half a kilometre wide and equally as high. This is the work of centuries, probably of millennia. My utter disturbance of it takes but a greedy hour. How many winters, how many freeze and thaw cycles will it take to erase my ankle-deep bootprints?

I traverse the crest of the slope to the low point of the pass that separates the valley behind me from the two valleys that fork ahead. On the pass I pitch one of the most picturesque and wretched high country camps of my experience. There are trickles of snowmelt to provide a water source, but there is no level ground for the tent. I won't permit myself to excavate a tent pad. After half a dozen circuits of the available terrain, I convince myself that I have chosen the best place. This decision is purely self-deception. Five of the circuits were spent denying the obvious. There is only one site barely large enough to hold the tent.

I spend a few minutes plucking the sharpest rocks from where the tent will lie, to spare both the tent floor and my back. Now, where there were peaks there are hollows. I lay some of the extracted rocks back into place at angles that offer fewer protrusions, and achieve an environmental compromise that will deprive me of only half a night's solid sleep. The other half will be lost to the 10° slope on which the tent is pitched. More rocks go inside the tent to keep it from ballooning over the pass in the relentless wind. I have probably moved more rock on this slope in a few minutes than nature has moved in centuries.

With home established, my attention turns to water. The snowmelt spills over the screes in trickles too shallow to be collected. I excavate a trough in one trickle, intending to lay a water bottle in it to collect the flow. The water's descent into the excavation increases the trickle's velocity sufficiently to displace sediment upstream. Murky water funnels into the water bottle. I wait a few minutes, thinking that the sediment will clear. It does not.

I fill the excavation, naively attempting to return the slope's surface and the trickle's flow to equilibrium. In doing so, I create a series of diminutive dams that disperse the water across the shales. I have literally mucked things up. I abandon the first trickle, and from another extract water with the lid of a water bottle. Lidful by lidful, I fill water bottles and water billy, anticipating that the trickles will not be running in the cool of morning.

There are no animal tracks on the glacieret north of the pass. There are no goats scampering on the cliffs of the peak to the west. No pikas, marmots or chipmunks evidently inhabit the nearby boulders. This is good news, for being far above treeline, it is among those boulders that I will stash my food. However, it is strange that nothing seems to live here.

Photo: Hans Hortenhuber

The ridge to the east beckons, offering an easy stroll to a minor summit. Yellow draba and purple saxifrage are the only wildflowers on the ridge. Collectively, they cover an infinitesimal area. Two ground lichens — an incredibly yellow Cladina mitis, and a foliose species that defies my meagre botany — complete the flora. There are no extensive vegetation communities. No places where crustose lichen colonies have spiralled their signatures across rock in the lexicon of the ages. No cushion plants or mats of avens stabilize soils to the advantage of other plant species. Nothing of the sort.

Then it strikes me. This ridgetop is the domain of primary succession. It has been 8,000 years since it was last covered by glacial ice. These wonderful but so widely-scattered flowers and lichens are all that nature has so far produced here. Imagine a beginning measured in thousands of years. Imagine the process continued, and this place as an alpine meadow in some distant century. Perhaps.

I step carefully, oh so carefully, not wanting to crush the clumps of draba that are smaller than a nickel and possibly ages old. But what am I crushing that I cannot see? What processes are being murdered by my boots during this casual stroll before dinner? A fresh rain drums on the hood of my parka and drives this contemplation from consciousness.

I successfully test-fired the stove before the trip, and do not suspect that it can be to blame for the pathetic time required to boil the first litre of dinner water — 30 minutes. The wind sweeping over the pass must be robbing the flame of efficiency. I place the stove behind a rock, but this meagre windbreak and the stove's windscreen are ineffective. Hunger and thirst dictate a compromise. I construct a rock windbreak, aware as each rock is pried from the ground that I am exposing to daylight the dark places of centuries, disturbing things that I cannot comprehend, and my peace with this place.

The rock windbreak does not produce a significant improvement in the stove's performance. I am obliged to dismantle the stove to look for another cause. There is grit in the fuel line. The next litre of water boils in five minutes, without using the windbreak. I want to put all the rocks back to their rightful places, but didn't take note of such details during construction. So I kick the windbreak over instead. The rocks fall randomly. It seems the best compromise.

Dinner is awful. The Romano cheese sauce on the noodles is sour. I force down two servings, but can't bring myself to scrape the pot for every last morsel. I scour the pot and scatter the wastewater over the

screes downslope. Fragments of processed noodles and acidic cheese sauce now work their chemistry on ancient limestone. There is little hope that anything will scavenge the waste. Even the ravens I saw earlier today have forsaken this place. And me to it.

The clouds break after dinner, and I discover that although it is early summer, I have pitched the tent in a place of near-eternal shade. I hike east to the ridgecrest to enjoy the sun's last warmth. There are Vibram bootprints everywhere in the soft mud that binds the rock fragments. How can one person have left so many tracks in such a short time? A half-moon sails among the wintry-looking clouds to the south. Timeless. Cryptic. I contemplate the scene before turning in, but come up empty.

It rains hard before first light. Dawn finds me succumbed to gravity and to the remarkable slipperiness of synthetics, crumpled at the foot of the tent. My guts are foul from last night's repast and no sooner have I stood, than I realize an urgent call must be answered. There is no biologically-active soil here, so I do my business on a flat rock, away from the snowmelt. Afterwards, I smear the feces with a smaller rock. The theory is that the intense heat and ultra-violet at this elevation will cook the feces and render harmless any pathogen that I may have borne to this place. But this is a north-facing slope, and in my haste I have forgotten the shading. I wonder how much of the sun's intensity will be lost to those unfortunate rocks. I burn the toilet paper to dry it, and bag the charred remains to pack out.

The day looks miserable. My objective summits have their heads buried in a wrack of menacing clouds. A single rosy finch flits by, the only sound of life during my visit. It sings its happy song and is soon gone. The snow patches here are apparently devoid of the insect life the bird craves. During breakfast I vacillate about bailing out. Twenty seconds of weak sunshine bring a surge of optimism, and I assemble a day-pack. The brief blast of heat vapourizes a mountainside of percolating raindrops, and in moments a wreath-like mist forms. Visibility is less than 50 metres. Almost undeterred, I descend the steep snow slope north from camp. Where the slope ends at a rock bench I build a cairn. Traversing east over barrens, alternating between snow patches and rock benches, I leave a trail of simple cairns that may be required to guide me home.

On one rock bench there is a black limestone boulder that has been completely shattered by frost. An entire cubic metre of rock has been rendered into black dust by nothing more than heat and cold. And time. It now sits like a humble mound, like a hermit, like a Buddha, awaiting the eons more of rain and wind that will be required to carry it away. Awaiting the age when it will be no more, but will be part of everything again.

My cairn-building suddenly sickens me. This is a place where feet should not walk, where hands should not alter, where minds should not scheme. This is a place where rocks and snow and wind and ice and water and gravity should simply play out their chemistry unwitnessed. This is a place where the earth simply is. Where the earth should be left alone.

The visibility decreases. The summits will have to wait for another day. I am disappointed, not by having been deprived of my objectives, but by the feeling that I have left so much graffiti in so primal a place. I turn to look for the last cairn. It is too far away, but after a few minutes' search I find it. I do need the cairns to find my way back. Graffiti justified. I have kept track of their number, and knock each one over. Other black Buddhas in the mist witness my violence.

With camp packed up, I cross the pass and begin the descent south. Cloaked in cloud, the convex nature of the mother of scree slopes appalls me. I follow a purple stone stripe down into the mist where the slope breaks away. From the valley floor, distant and invisible, only the sound of a stream assures me that I am not walking off the edge of the world.

Alpine Dialectics

Jerry Auld and Brad Wrobleski

That damn alarm. I've been expecting it all night. I've slept poorly — tossing and cramped, too keyed up. Every short blackness ends abruptly with me upright, wondering at the silence. Except now. That was it, and with it's shrill beeping suddenly on then off, and the tension of waiting past, I finally feel relaxed enough to sleep. It's pitch dark.

Brad — I always hate alpine starts; the sudden jerk into consciousness, darkness and cold. My head always seems to be full of negative thoughts in the pre-dawn. Too much bad mojo — too many unanswered questions; how are the conditions? how will I do? how will Jerry do? Then I realize this will probably be the last thing we do together this long, great summer. And it's ambitious: linking up the north faces of mounts Fay and Quadra in a single day, we're going to have to keep strictly to the watch to make it before dark.

Jerry — So strange, lying here on the cold and empty foam bunks of the Neil Colgan hut; thinking about the past year. Last winter we messed about on some ice and I loved it. The sound of a good placement, the plasticity of the ice, the feeling of climbing on water as if you've stopped time: I was entranced. I had been bouldering for a few years and every frustration on the rock seemed to be solved on this new medium of ice. I knew I had found my favorite and pressed to explore it.

Then summer was upon us and we were always pushing to get in the best shape for August. In mid July we linked up the Northover/Three Isle/Turbine circuit in a one-day, 15-hour, 50-km mega-hike in Lougheed Park. We were ecstatic, and only thought to push harder.

We had such success. On Mount King Edward, Athabasca, on many scrambles, routes, and crags. Every time we went out we seemed to get something done.

My first route was Shooting Gallery on Andromeda. Grade IV, but Brad assured me I could do it. I had only seen the Icefields once before, and I was tired and intimidated by the time we had reached the route. Spindrift on the crux, hard ice on the upper slope, screaming barfies and whining calves. I had never felt such exhaustion; I feared falling asleep at the axe, but I could not rest. The day was warming and the route was beginning to earn its name. My head spun with exertion, and one thought became dominant: I don't want to die thirsty. I refused to stop and consider it; I might screw up, but no way was I going to give up. It turned out to be the first time Brad had been successful on the route.

The last two months have been hard though; so many retreats: on Edith Cavell, Foch, the Icefields, slides, rockfall, weather. August was a wash; too many accidents. Maybe that's why I'm so keyed up and can't sleep. And this will be the last alpine route of the season.

Brad — The hut is dark and cold as we put together our packs. Again, in the interest of speed we leave our stove, bags, and anything

excess. We'll come back up the glacier after looping around the three mountains to retrieve them. And then descend to the Fay hut, a trail I've never been down. So I figure we have to get back by three o'clock in order to find it by dark. If we're not back by then, we stay up here another night. With a set deadline. We move out fast into the dark night.

Jerry — The open ice field to the base of Fay is luminescent with starlight. As we round Little we see Fay's north face sloping up with the clarity of the false-dawn behind it. We're excited and talking, about the choices, the conditions. We plan to climb close together, ropeless, for the sake of speed, and have come ultra light .

Brad — The cold air on my face and solid snow beneath my crampons helps part of me to relax knowing that the face will stay put, at least for a while. "What line do you want to take?" I ask.

Jerry — "The second couloir looks good."

Brad — "No, too much snow. Too slow. Too much slogging."

Jerry — I get a flashback of Shooting Gallery: "Snow's good." I reply; snow's better for my calves, but Brad's thinking of speed and time, as ever. Picking the third couloir, Brad leads the bergshrund — a crumbly two meter overhang. Fresh strength makes it fun, placements difficult, and as I pull over and advance to the first screw, he is already testing the face.

Brad — "Névé!" I call down, grinning. It's thin, hard snow, with water ice beneath.

Jerry — I move steady, carefully. A few rope lengths up Brad is impatient to move, yet I'm growing indecisive as the exposure develops.

Brad — With every move upward the rope tugs at my harness, interrupting my rhythm. "You okay to solo this now?"

Jerry — I think hard. I want to. But I'm still uneasy about the drop. "I'd rather just simul-climb if that's okay." Wrong answer.

Brad — "Shit, we don't have enough screws for that." I reason, "Are you sure you can't solo this?", I yell back, pissed because he's going against our deal.

Jerry — The image of falling is too vivid. I'm embarrassed that I can't take it.

Brad — "You should have taken up the North-West ridge," I yell, referring to the easiest route we discussed.

Jerry — But I'm here, now. I try and compromise. "Let's just get around that knob, on the snow, then we'll solo." I call, pointing to the twist in the couloir twenty meters above, thinking if I have snow to arrest on I'll feel safer.

Brad — "But that's the top!" I shout back.

Jerry — I'm sure he's mistaking my coordinates. I swallow it. We started this as a team, we finish it. Weakest link in the chain or not, it's still our chain. "Climb on," I yell, "I'll keep up." But I'm insulted. Brad is always worried he's pushing too hard. He is years ahead of me in experience and the only reason I can be here is because of him, and I'm grateful, but I wonder if he knows just how much a low degree ice slope can shake me. But when we're on a route he is my only chance at survival so I listen. I've always told him to keep pushing me, since it's the best way to learn, but this is the first time he's insulted me. And I'm tempted to untie just to appease him, to get rid of him, but I'm too scared to do that. So I climb, pursed and boiling.

Photo: Brad Wrobleski

Brad — I want him to go faster. The only way we are going to pull this off is if we go fast. I know he can do it. Why doesn't he just try harder? How much should I push him? Mad with the fact that he won't stick to our agreement makes me question why I bring him. I'm torn between my understanding of his limitations and knowing how much ground lies ahead. Sometimes I envy his position, not having to make decisions — just enjoying the ride. I look down and see him working hard to keep going and I relax a bit. He's not fast, but he has the right attitude. He made it up Shooting Gallery, he held his own on the Mega hike and, although I am having trouble admitting it, here — now he is doing just fine. Deep down I know he can hold his own. With this thought I calm a bit and continue upward.

Jerry — Focusing the energy of anger to make every placement perfect, every kick as solid as I can. I am determined to be right; if there is any mishap it won't be because of me, I'll hold up my end. Just don't leave me.

Brad — Climbing with him is both frustrating and intoxicating. Often I tire of being the big brother, but we are the most successful partnership I have ever had. I don't know exactly what it is but we work well together. Me the experienced and him the inexperienced but keen. Perhaps his fresh enthusiasm helps fuel me.

Jerry — I'm rushing, trying to keep my presence on the end of the rope as invisible as possible. As I turn a screw with my bulky mitten, the carabiner snags and pops off. It hangs there a moment, suspended, and then it whips away before I can grab it. I watch it fly, bouncing, blue gate flashing as it spins, falling far too fast for me to feel wonderful about my own position. That was one of Brad's. Oops. NOW he'll be mad. I look up, preparing a stupid smile to follow my astonished 'did you see what the mountain just did to me?' face. But he's not watching me, only studying the ice in front of him like a greyhound waiting for the bunny to appear. I make a note to replace it covertly, and continue on embarrassed, fueling my placements on shame now, hoping he didn't see that fine display of clumsiness.

Brad — We run out of screws. I feel the anger begin to rise again when I realize what it is going to take to keep him and us safe. I place the final screw into the ice, clip in and start giving orders. "Clip to that last screw and untie. Then I'll pull up the

rack."

Jerry — I untie and he hauls up my screws. Full rack. He throws the rope down, for me to tie back in. He misses, and tries again. I'm three meters below the rope. "I'll climb up to it."

I'm calm and focused, but with my first step I become wildly aware of my exposure, of the fact that there is no rope. My picks and crampons suddenly feel magnetic to the ice, my limbs so much stronger. I move slowly, washed in a daze of concentration. I can smell the snow like a mingled wood-smoke and lip-balm. I can sense the ice and rock, I am apart from thought, just moving, living, a part of the existence of this face.

It's only three meters, and, as I tie back in, and the rope comes taut, I realize that for possibly the first time in my life, I have experienced a feeling unlike any other: the fantastic focus of being totally, entirely, and completely, free.

We move up, climbing strong now, and I feel an intoxication in that freedom that I never thought possible. Perhaps that is the addiction and commitment that the great climbers seem to hold for their lifestyle.

A couple of times one of my feet or one of my tools cuts free, and I shift my balance wildly, trying to cling, grateful that I'm on a rope. Faintly wondering if the mental reliance on the rope is making me climb less than my ability.

Brad — I pull over the top and set up a sitting body belay. The rope comes in fast and I smile. He is pushing. What he lacks in experience he makes up for in tenacity and hard work. With the amount of pressure I put on him., you would never know he is one of my best friends. I should give him more credit.

Jerry — I climb fast to give him slack. And, suddenly, magically, I am alone on the face. I pause a moment and revel in the position. The ice is dinner-plating and shedding with each strike, but it's holding, and with Brad secure above I feel safe and that gives me confidence. I start moving, humming in the silence and brightening sky, loving it.

I finally boost upright, standing into the first sun as dawn breaks the Front Ranges. I lumber over to his belay, shouting.

Brad — "Good work", I say to his grinning face," we made good time" -— I add unable to forget about the clock.

Jerry — Brad is saying something about making great time but I'm too high with the last pitch and the views to listen. Standing on a flat surface is always wild for me after a face, It's like gravity is all different; a gentler, kinder version of that indomitable force. We plod the summit ridge to the cairn and rest.

Laughing, clear mountains all around, we sit and snack and stare. Temple, Victoria, Neptuak, Deltaform, Biddle. Stunning. I want to describe it all, want to shout out the feeling of ascension, the victory over my fear.

Photo: Brad Wrobleski

Brad — The view is incredible — cloudless, cold and clear. I think about taking a photo but quickly realize the camera is back at the hut. This is nothing new, often I leave the camera behind on harder, longer routes to save weight. Sometimes I come to climb, other times I come to take photos. My brain has trouble focusing on each discipline at the same time so I am forced to do one or the other; wear a few hats. Today I am a climber. I will have to rely on my memory for the images. I glance at my watch and see that it is time to get moving. "Lets go," I say.

Jerry — I look down the shear, broken rock of the back side and I'm a little intimidated. I'm thinking we can rappel, but Brad bombs off down the hardest part on short rope and I'm forced to follow. I'm always surprised at how the distant rock looks unassailable but which invariably opens up into a route.

We rush the lower slopes as the warming ledges above start to spit rocks. But once again he's pulling me faster than I can push it.

Brad — I am moving fast down the slope, looking back every few steps to see if anything has come loose. I pull on the rope to get Jerry to move faster and hope he understands our situation. I hope he understands that speed is often safety. "We are almost down," I yell up to him as consolation to the pressure.

Jerry — We crash down the couloir and suddenly my right leg plunges to the hip into a hole in the ice. I'm not hurt, I just want him to realize to slow down. But I don't blame him, it is me that needs to move faster, be more sure, trust my boots and eyes. I promise for the seventeenth time to train harder and match him in everything.

Nevertheless, as we reach the bottom, I'm fuming again. Getting away from the risk above is not worth chancing a disastrous accident. Brad is waiting for me on the glacier and as I trot up his eyes are questioning me. Only our faces are exposed; our body language is too muffled by the packs and gear, so we communicate solely through expression. He can tell I'm pissed, and it takes me a second to swallow it. He might have just saved my life. Again. But my answer is still terse: "Just slow it down, okay? I can't move that fast." He seems to accept this, maybe a little to easily, so I fake a punch and it breaks the moment. Suddenly we're laughing that we're down and in perfect time and position for Quadra.

Brad — We scramble up the Fay-Quadra Col, and I strip down to the skin; changing my sweat soaked shirt. I feel good.

Jerry — As I reach the col I see the look on his face. He's cranked; focused and serious. Committed. The North face of Quadra rises beside us as we jump the 'shrund and traverse to the base. Brad checks his gear, he's going to solo; I'm too bagged and too aware of my own limits to join him. This will be his show.

Brad — I climb over the 'schrund and put in a screw off to the side, then bring him up. He clips into the screw, I untie and begin climbing. I like all forms of climbing, but going light and fast is my favorite. Light helps going fast and going fast helps subside my often raging impatience with boredom and stagnation.

Five meters up the feeling of freedom kicks in. The lack of rope and tugging is a welcome relief. The face is good, solid névé and I am able to get into the rare kick, step, swing, kick step, swing rhythm. All the frustration and noise in my head subsides. The terrain is so fast the only thing slowing me down is the capacity of my lungs. I can see the end of the couloir and for a moment have reservations about reaching it — we trained so much for this and I want it badly but I am slightly scared to achieve it because it will be the end of a dream and probably the beginning of another project — something more involved; more committing. The end of the sun-rimmed couloir comes up fast, its top crowned by a rock ridge. I put away my tools and scramble up the loose stone, my crampons scraping and squeaking against the hard rock edges. The ridge steepens to the point where good hand holds are a must. I tap and wiggle every hold before pulling on it. The steep rock demands more attention and I give it. A fall, even a slip would be bad. After a few moves the ridge angle lessens and I am back on easier ground — I can breath again. I stop at the highest point, panting, almost sweating in the mid afternoon sun. I look down and see Jerry far below, in the shadow of the north face. I wish he could be here now to share it all. He deserves it. Not wanting to leave Jerry tied into the screw too long I scribble a few notes in the summit register and leave the comfort of the sun to begin the descent. The down-climb goes by smoothly — and surprisingly takes only half the time of the trip up. Slowly, my constant preoccupation with the measure of time is replaced with the singular pleasure of the Now. Too bad it doesn't last. I'm soon back at the 'schrund, where the concern with time is reborn with the need to return to the hut.

Jerry — Brad ties back in, my pack is up already, and I coil in the rope quickly. But Brad strides, loping, down the easy ground between us and jumps a big hug around me. It's comical, we're too bundled with fleece and packs to even reach around each other, but we're laughing, celebrating the moment the way you can't truly do on a summit while you're still in danger and only halfway home. All that's left for us is the long slog over known ground around three mountains and down to the Fay hut. I draw back and look at him. Frost brushes his fleece and toque in the memories of wind-whipped breath, giving him a severe and immediate look. His eyes are impossibly grey. He's smiling, so wide and deep that it almost looks surreal against the face behind him; a strange contrast to the usually fierce concentration and impassive mask the man brings to the mountains.

Brad — "I am at peace."

Jerry — He does not lie; I haven't seen his eyes so focused and spacious all at once before. I feel satiated now too, tired yet exhilarated. The day is so perfect, so clear, so bright. I too have what I came for and more. Spindrift fills our ledge as we move out from under the face and into the sun. We gain the pass and pause to remove crampons, Brad is bent over resting beside me, breathing hard; I've also never seen him so exhausted before. I grin despite myself; maybe now I'll be able to keep up to him.

Brad — I am very, very tired, but it feels good, like the peace that comes after having overcome a big problem or made a big decision. I feel used to the point of satisfaction. With the peace comes the slight regret at having given him so much grief. But in the end I know that the pushing angst is what gets us where we want to go. Our frequent success is also because of our friendship. We understand each other and share the same goals; a weird synthesis created from compassion and tension. My now unhurried pace to the col evokes tranquility rather than anxiety and my slow-moving legs tell me it has been a long day.

Jerry — We drop down to the bowl of the benign oven-hot glacier, shed, clothes, pull out skin and eye armour, then move, ropeless.

Brad — I keep talking about the day, the climb. With all this show of enthusiasm I feel like a child on his birthday.

Jerry — Brad keeps telling me how successful we are together. I take his word for it not having anything to compare to. But it strikes me that it's like the dialectics of the Greek philosophers in arguments: a thesis and an antithesis compromise to form a synthesis that is logically strong. And so it is with us: the blend of his experience and my inexperience combine in a chemistry that forms a dynamic friendship and a very honest, intense, and successful, energy.

Turkey dinner awaits. For the first time we allow ourselves to think beyond the present, and let the thoughts of hot food lead us like cartoon characters floating on the smell. We hike, light and carefree, back toward the Neil Colgan hut, grab the bags by 2:30, well ahead of schedule; we're dead tired but pumped with success and bomb down the glacier to the eroded moraines and river valley toward the Fay hut. A four course meal with wine awaits us. As we round the corner to the hut, Peter Spear is there waiting. He thrusts cold beers into our hands. Beers that have been carried 12 kilometres taste like heaven after a 16-hour day. We are at home with friends. We finally understand the meaning of Thanksgiving.

Child Of The Wind

Bill Noble

She was pregnant. What would people think? I tried to say, "No," but a part of me instinctively supported her deepest desires. She desperately wanted to do it. For her, the trip to a group of unclimbed coastal peaks with John Clarke couldn't wait. So, with my five-month pregnant wife Saskia, I prepared for the second attempt to shoot the documentary Child of the Wind.

I first thought about making Child of the Wind eleven years ago during the good old days of cuts and calluses speckled amidst the white hands of a fine day's cragging at Squamish. Between sun-textured, granite escapades I envisioned what could be, and never forgot.

Over the years my motivation remained stoked by the fact that most media seemed to naively misunderstand and misrepresent climbing. Seventeen years of production experience within the entertainment industry produced a profound personal awareness of its tireless marketing mechanisms, deceptive artificiality, and useless schlock. Despite the odd good shot (or should I say good odd shot) I felt that ridiculous flicks like Scream of Stone, K2, and Cliffhanger misrepresented climbing. It seemed that, while these Hollowood productions lubricated the pockets of climber employees, they failed miserably in their portrayals of climbers and the world of climbing.

In 1993 I founded a production company and pursued Child of the Wind as a premier. After due consideration John Clarke humbly acquiesced to my cold-call introduction and proposal. We decided to shoot that summer. "There's a small cluster of unclimbed peaks just north of Bella

Coola," John enticed.

Preparation halted just two weeks prior to our departure. An awkward dependency on borrowed production gear, combined with the cavalier priorities of others (who shall remain nameless) in borrowed possession of said gear, stymied the first shoot. Calmly mumbling the adage, "Everything happens for a reason," I phoned John to explain. "Uhhh... the documentary? ... Oh... Yeah... Could the shoot wait until next season?" What a way to gain credibility with your subject! One more year to wait.

It was an important year. I nurtured my company, acquired the latest in digital editing gear and purchased the very best camera I could afford. Saskia and I relished our newfound country life just outside of Golden. The chroma of seasonal moons shifted imperceptibly from autumn's warm hues to winter's frigid Indiglo blue. Finally spring's sun-starred icicles dripped steadily from the eaves of our log home and we psyched for the approaching trip with John.

The long awaited season bloomed with black-speckled orange tiger lilies, bright canary arnica, and an unexpected catch — Saskia had developed two heartbeats! Her participation in the upcoming traverse was, well... worrisome. I manufactured night-marish visions of a doctor self-delivering her own preemie beside some remote tarn. True, it would have made an interesting documentary, but I wasn't about to see my life partner take any risky initiatives. Saskia tried to assure me that five months was the safest time during pregnancy to travel across a remote, unclimbed mountain range.

The development didn't seem to bother John much. It had been a tough spring for him in the Kitlope where, sadly, he encountered the first fatality of his lengthy mountaineering career. Somehow it seemed paradoxically right that his next trip should be with a woman carrying child. I fought my apprehension by securing a radio and obtaining permission to use B.C. Forest Service emergency frequencies. Just prior to leaving home, our dog gnawed the waist belt off my brand new frame pack. Was this a sign of things to come?

We picked up John in Vancouver and stopped on our way out of town at Mountain Equipment Co-op's design shop to have my amputated waist belt repaired. One hour of city life resulted in the broad daylight theft of a valuable microphone from our car. Seconds later, during an ensuing frantic search of the car, my previously doggy-abused, 25-kg frame pack r-r-ripped from its shoulder strap assembly. I stared with sweaty disbelief and shuddered at what might have been out in the middle of nowhere. Luckily, Mike Blenkarn's well-equipped wit and healing M.E.C sewing machines remained only metres away.

Heralded by commodious cobalt Chilkotin skies, we drove to Bella Coola through clouds of conversation and late May mosquitoes. En route we had the rare privilege of witnessing the front tire of a pick up truck pop off at 80 km/hr. The driver managed to keep the vehicle straight while sparks flew up like the wake of a power boat. In Tatla our team became complete with the arrival of the carrier of the holy tripod, Steve Sheffield. A dusty, early evening arrival at the Hotel Bella Coola induced squeaky, off-key renditions of the Eagles' "Hotel California." The weather remained spookily perfect.

I desperately needed some aerial footage of the Coasties at their best, so I accompanied John the next morning with the food drops along our proposed route. Three snowfield drops were marked by two-metre bamboo poles stuck in the névé. The only dry land drop was marked with our astute mental observations of sundry identical hummocky landmarks. It was an important drop because it held the tents, sleeping bags, and food for the first evening. This meant that we could thrash and crash up the first 1500 metres from the beach to our first camp carrying light packs. We popped the Jet Ranger door off for some delightful aerial videography and returned to Bella Coola enthused about what tomorrow would bring.

Summer solstice dawned crystalline as the Beaver's smooth engine feathered us to our low tide departure point at Jump Across Creek in remote Dean Channel. I was annoyingly psyched (someone should have slapped me) and set quirkily about shouting "Action!" and, "Could you do that once more please?" Later, fandangos in steep berry bushes eventually peeled all the nervous excitement from my brow.

We reached our target ridge around 9:45 p.m. In the distance John's white shape spirited around the hummocks in search of our crucial drop. I confidently remarked to Saskia, "By the time we catch up with John, he'll probably have the teapot on and the tents up!" As we approached, John hopped about in a confused elvish dance. With sudden concern I realized that our drop was amiss. A spectacular full moon rose indifferently in the eastern sky. To the west an electrifying Pacific wind ushered dark clouds like riders of the Apocalypse. John's bewildered, steely blue eyes strained with concern. We searched in the enveloping twilight until our only choice became imminent. Can you say bivi? First light silhouetted eerie shapes of surrounding hummocks diffused through drizzling fog. We were wet from the night's storm and needed to find our cache or face an embarrassing retreat back to Jump Across. We anxiously ferreted the unfamiliar ridge. Without expectation I turned in a draw and "Yahooooo... it's over here!" The rest of the day was spent luxuriating and coming to grips with "four cuppers heaped with creamy product." Stormbound for three days, I managed to shoot ten minutes of videotape during a brief lull. Drop Number One was entirely cooked, chewed, swallowed and metabolized.

Day four brought glycogen overload and resolve. We packed our gelatinous caravan and gleefully walked upright toward more food somewhere on the cloud-enshrouded icefield. Visibility soon varied between 10 to 20 metres and sleet soaked us. Encapsulated in a horizonless white world, our efforts to locate the next food drop became problematic. Between shivers, we devised another search procedure until John's infamous falsetto "Hooooooot!" rang

triumphantly through the patter of icy sleet. We frantically pitched our soaked tents and settled into the humidity of tight spaces. The sleet turned to heavy, wet snow and the walls closed in.

Five days later I had collected only three foggy minutes of videotape and Drop Number Two was nearly digested. It became obvious that reaching the next food cache would be very risky given the low visibility and accumulated wet snow. The route ahead involved a snow-laden bowling alley gully that dumped onto a glacier with menacing crevasses that ran parallel with our intended direction. After deliberations and spastic thought patterns, we concluded that the amount of grief we might come to by returning to Jump Across wouldn't even compare to the kind of grief we might encounter if we continued.

With one dinner and some leftover gorp, we retreated for two long days back to the deserted inlet where no one was expecting us. As we lit a signal fire, my mind churned at the depleted documentary budget and two unreached food drops that contained marooned production and personal gear. Our blue signal smoke was eventually answered by the welcome charity of passing prawn fisherman Joe Snyder, followed two days later by the lumbering pontooned Beaver. I vowed to return at summer's end and was amazed by John's commitment to complete the shoot.

By August Saskia's enhanced condition forfeited her participation in the return trip and Steve S. had made other plans. John recruited Bella Coola guidebook author Scott Whittemore and we set about prepping for another crack at shooting Child of the Wind. I flew directly from Golden to Vancouver aboard a friend's single-engined aircraft. John met me at the airstrip, we returned to his house to pack, and we were off... but not so fast. Upon pulling out of John's driveway I noticed that the brakes were flooring out. What a time for the master brake cylinder to go! Experience from our previous trip precluded panic or anxiety.

Fortunately John deals with the friendliest and most accommodating mechanic I've ever laid eyes on. After a leisurely sandwich and new master cylinder installation, we were all in much better working condition. From then on the intensity of our conversation directly coincided with the amount of weight placed upon the gas pedal. The more intense the conversation, the more pressure on the pedal and vice versa. Fraught with DQ burgers, the return drive to Bella Coola was pleasant although John's passenger seat springs caused the odd embarrassing squeal.

The second attempt to shoot Child of the Wind went exceptionally well thanks to good weather. Our second visit to the indifferent and now visible group of peaks resulted in plenty of footage of John doing what he loves most — first ascents. The formerly abandoned gear was eventually rescued and toward the end of the trip we happened upon the remains of one previously unreached cache. It had been smart-bombed by wolverines. Only a few scraps of plastic and a tooth-punctured videocassette remained amidst the scat of a multi-day feeding orgy.

Five peaks later our exit from the tiny range finally drew some heavy rain. Steep heather on the descent ridge became a problem with my 30-kg frame pack, so crampons were donned with preconceived notions of a snapped ankle. Cold and wet worked its way once more into the crannies between my lobes. At one point I found myself arguing with John about what direction to go in. Imagine arguing about directions with the King of the Coast Range. Whatta moron!

Endless sopped berry bush belays soon gave way to ancient crumbling deadfall suspended metres above the forest floor. Avoidance of prehistoric-sized devil's club forced Tai Chi upon us all. Just when we thought it would never end, our prune-like bodies delivered us to the long-abandoned Talleo cannery just in time for coffee and baked salmon, courtesy of Bill, the surprised, toothless, chain-smoking caretaker. The heat of Bill's giant cast iron woodstove soon had us steaming and nodding off in caffeine-induced stupors.

Despite our successful journey, further shooting was required in and around Vancouver later that summer. Roughly fifteen hours of raw material was collected before the challenge of meeting the Banff Festival of Mountain Films' September 25th deadline. Two weeks of editing resulted in a finished piece.

I hope the completed documentary sheds a realistic and worthy light on climbing. It is by no means a definitive piece about John Clarke. After all, how can the camera capture over 600 first ascents and thousands of kilometres of traversed Coast Range? Indeed, how can the camera capture a Child of the Wind!

Editor's note: Child of the Wind did indeed capture the spirit of a remarkable man, and also captured the hearts of the Festival, where it won the "Best Climbing Film" award.

Oil and Water

Paul Adam

They were the oil and we were the water. Rock jocks and glacier walkers. The two never mix except under exceptional circumstances. And these were extraordinary circumstances. The need to mix, to form a symbiotic relationship, was brought about by a piece of granite.

The glacier walkers knew the location of a spectacular needle that overhung on all sides, but lacked the skills needed to climb it. The rock jocks had the skills but not its location. And the plodders lacked any sense of pride when it came to deflowering virgins.

When a September 1989 close-up showed the plodders it was beyond their means, they took a print to the Squamish Rock Show. Showing no mercy and having no pride, they casually showed the picture to Dean Hart and said, "We were thinking this beast will go at 5.9. What do you think?" Drool appeared, followed by, "Where is it?" Being subtle, they replied, "Sorry, can't tell you. However we might reconsider if it is in our best interest." The pact with the devil was made. It was cemented when Dean recruited Randy Atkinson for psychological support, without telling him exactly what the game was.

Although we had met once or twice at social functions, we really only knew of each other by reputation. John Clarke and I knew Dean and Randy as two of Canada's best rock climbers. They, like every Canadian climber, had heard of John Clarke, super glacier plodder.

We met in Pemberton for Saturday lunch, then headed to Meager Creek Hot Springs. The gate beyond the parking lot was locked, so we filled the hole at its side and carefully edged Dean's car around it before driving to the road's end.

Having saved five kilometres, we had an easier slog into the woods and upwards a thousand metres to the Meager Obelisk. The tea time start had us to the camping area adjacent to the moraine shortly after eight. The only thing demonstrated was that rock jock and skier Randy was fit, John was in shape from his recent ski trip, Dean was in reasonable shape from training, and

I was showing signs of middle age spread.

Dean and Randy had been told that John and I were different. By the time we had arrived at camp, they were starting to think our weirdness was just a rumour, but looks of "you're kidding," "no you're not." Before John had the meat unwrapped, you knew from their laughter that they were going to make the meal legendary in Squamish immediately upon their return. Each did, however, down a litre of steak and veggie stew before heading to bed.

With his body harness draped over his body, John inquired as to how he was supposed to tie into it.

Dean raised his eyebrows to question how a man with John's experience would not know how to tie in..

Randy and John slept outside while Dean and I shared the tent. Dean, who had resisted the temptation (barely) to bring a ghetto blaster up, made up for it by playing loud music all night on the boiled steak.

The half-hour walk to the base of the Meager Obelisk the next morning involved a lot of eyeing and ogling of the route possibilities for the second ascent party. Upon reaching the base, enough gear was produced to start a store. With his body harness draped over his body, John inquired as to how he was supposed to tie into it. Dean raised his eyebrows to question how a man with John's experience would not know how to tie in. Having climbed with John on occasion, I looked at Dean and said, "Hill trampers and soloists don't use ropes." Having tied John in, I wandered past Dean saying, "You get to teach him how to rappel from up there." Dean's jaw dropped with surprise, yet with belief that I wasn't lying.

It was interesting to take note of the fashion show. Randy had tweed knickers (under which was lycra); Dean was wearing old faded lycra of a satin colour; I wore sweat pants; while John wore flashy, neon, powder blue lycra instead of his normal white Stanfield long Johns. Our question as to where and why an old mountain man like him had acquired a classic lycra faggot outfit was met with the reply that the former editor of the CAJ (Dave Harris) had forced them upon him because "he was tired of getting pictures of me in my long Johns in the Journal.'" It made sense.

Randy led the pitch up the only portion of the obelisk that did not overhang — a 5.9 off-width that sucked up all our #3 and #4 Friends. Climbing the crack, which actually split the pillar near its top, foot over foot, he was soon on top. Dean climbed it by doing the splits between the Flying Buttress and the Campsite, a three-sided feature on the main pillar. I chimneyed the Campsite. Three people, three styles.

Waiting for John on top, I started writing the summit record. Having no faith in John's technical ability I didn't put his name down. What a friend! But after a good deal of grunting and groaning and encouragement from Dean, John's right hand, with a bloodied finger, finally appeared at Dean's feet. As he stepped past Dean on to the summit and exposed a bloodier left hand and still bloodier white, cotton shirt, I put his name on the paper. It was now four people and four techniques.

Dean rerigged the belay area so he and Randy could top-rope the arête. Having put up a 5.10c route on the Flying Buttress's arête, Randy asked John and I if we wanted to climb the route. We smiled. Our ambitions had been satisfied just getting to the top; new routes weren't important to us.After a lunch break, they did two more routes on the main body of the pillar. While the rock boys made orgasmic sounds as they ascended the cracks on the beautiful, pink granite cracks, John and I watched. At one point, John commented that the rock was nearly vertical. To which Dean replied, "It's overhanging." John's retort, "Well, that nearly vertical." The routes: Campsite Crack — a physical grunt of 5.11e; and Twin Cracks — a perfect 5.11b fist jam.

As the two of us sat on the summit chatting, John commented that he was sure glad he was climbing on an eleven mil. Turning my head to see him I said, "Those are nine mils. The eleven is in the car." "Well, they looked pretty thick." In my mind I said, "That's because the thickest thing you take out into the back of beyond is seven mil."

Finally it was time to leave the flat, spacious summit. And what a lunch spot it was. I rap-off first. Then it's John's turn. Picking up the ropes, he asks Dean for instructions. By now Dean isn't surprised by the request for technical instructions. Having been reminded how to rappel, John starts down. It is impossible to put into words the first five metres of the rappel, and catch all the nuances and subtleties of the conversation between John and Dean. Let it be said that it consisted of many: "Lean back, John." "Let go of the rope." "Let go of the rock." "Get that hand off the rope." and such. It provided the three of us with a good laugh. Finally moving, John descends the remaining distance with the experience for which he is known. In quick order, Dean and Randy follow.

A quick return to camp was followed by ninety minutes of slipping and sliding down to Dean's car. We drove to the gate and lifted the car around it before heading to the hot springs. Following which was a late night drive to Vancouver.

The oil and water had mixed and had a good time doing it.

Unpleasant Place

Mark Bosomworth

Blast," I muttered, emitting also a great variety of other unprintable oaths. I was stuck. Very stuck indeed, I noted as I yanked unsuccessfully upon my imprisoned elbow. I shifted uncomfortably and looked down. My last piece of protection, a small wire, was five feet below my left ankle. Below that, two cams and a stopper, then the uplifted and somewhat amused face of my belayer.

Scott and I were enjoying the sun and the warm rocks at the Skaha Bluffs in Penticton, B.C. The day before, we had endeavoured to explore the area from the north parking lot, as opposed to the usual one neighbouring Skaha Lake. We had become hopelessly lost for close to half the day, finally managing to struggle up one or two routes nearer to the end. The next day, however, was far more successful from a navigational point of view, finding us only mildly out of our way for an hour or two at the beginning.

Finally, finding our crag of choice, we decided upon an "easy" 5.9 on the east face. This, as I soon discovered, was a mistake. The 5.9 was about thirty feet to our right, and I, foolishly volunteering to lead it, was in the middle of an unbolted 5.10a, having a lovely time with my nuts and cams, and spoiling my career as a pianist.

"I'm having a little trouble," I yelled down, noting with chagrin the enormity of the understatement.

Laughter from below. "Really? I would never have guessed." Scott was eating his lunch, consisting of a peanut butter and pickle sandwich, waffles, and a bottle of grape juice. Soon, it seemed, he would begin on the chocolate fondue which was carefully tucked away in the bottom of my pack. Action had to be taken to rectify the situation, and soon, judging by the looks of my tortured, bleeding arm. Falling was not so much the issue, as this seemed to be

nearly impossible due to my intimate relationship with the section of off-width crack I had been staring at for close to an hour. My painful arm, the longing for food that would soon be eaten, and the fact that I had to pee quite badly made my situation most disagreeable.

"My elbow's stuck," I shouted.

More laughter. "I'll pass you up some butter," answered my terribly sympathetic belayer.

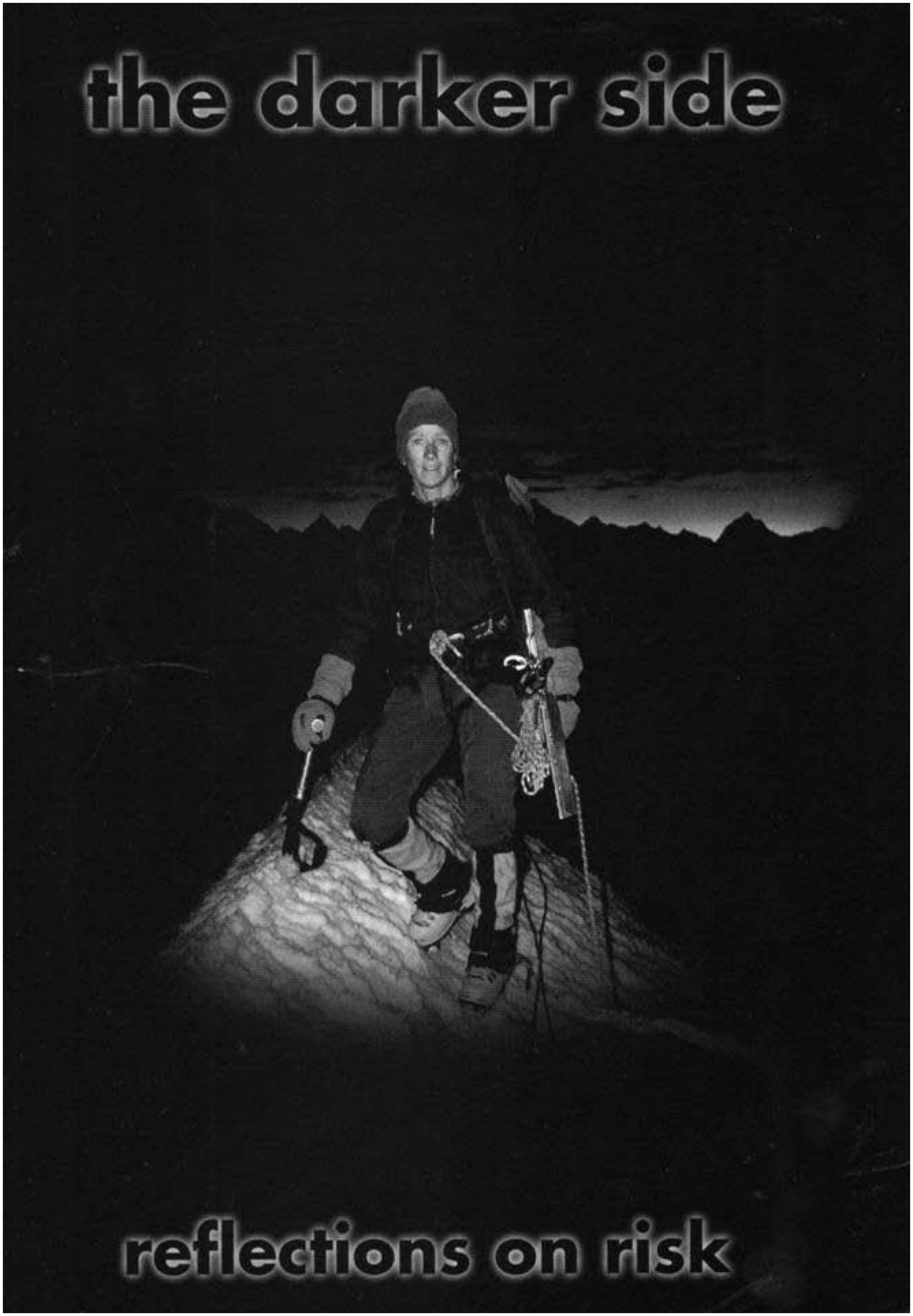
I sighed and reached once again for my chocks. Previous attempts with the wires had been decidedly unsuccessful, but they seemed my only choice, in light of my present predicament. I could not go down, due to the situation with my arm, or traverse, for the same reason. It seemed to me that the only way to liberate my beloved appendage was to continue up, a most disconcerting thought to me at the time.

I groped blindly above my head with my left hand. Nothing. I brought it down, cursing, and selected a larger-sized nut with my teeth. Tried again. Still nothing. More cursing. An even larger size. Up above the head and... wait... what was that? Yes... and it stuck! I brought down my hand, shaking, and reached for a quickdraw. I clipped it to the wire loop and began to pull rope up in short, quivering lengths. Finally, it was in.

"Clipped!" I yelled happily. A sandwich-muffled exclamation from below, followed by tightness on my harness. I reached up again with my free hand and grasped the quickdraw firmly by the webbing, tugging experimentally. It held, in sharp contrast to my most morbid expectations. I braced myself, hissing air through my teeth, then yanked with all my might with my left hand, at the same time scraping my feet madly on the rock below me. My right arm popped free, and I gratefully swung it around in an effort to get the blood flowing and the nerves in my fingertips back in operation. I then clamped it also only the loyal piece of machinery above me and did a painful chin-up, gaining a pair of large jugs to my right. Another five minutes of moves that rendered both my piano playing skills and six years in the orthodontist's office useless, and I was on top of a 5.10a, relieved of my fingerprints, a lot of protection, and most of the skin on my right arm.

Gratefully clipping in to the bolts at the top and putting my partner on belay, I made a mental resolution to consult the guide much more closely in the future, both in light of our miscalculation the day before and my most recent embarrassment. It would be more pleasant that way.

"Come on up!" I yelled to Scott, "It's easy!"


the darker side
reflections on risk

Deeper Into Mystery

Bruce Hendricks

"Our life is a faint tracing on the surface of the mystery."

— Annie Dillard

Distant and indistinct, I hear the guttural rumblings of some long-frozen ice creature coming to life. Another avalanche is pulling loose somewhere in the valley. I begin to move up and across the runnel to the base of the snow cone when something inside urges me to stop. The rumblings grow louder, echoing from walls across the valley. In an instant of awareness, sickening reality wells up. Oh no. Run! Move! Struggling, knee-deep in snow, I look up, certain of what I will see. The black rock band above rears back to meet a screaming blue sky; but I know there is more. With frightening speed, the white wave explodes into view, angular, airborne chunks of ice beautifully highlighted in the rich morning sunlight. Understanding now that I cannot reach shelter, I hurl myself face-down into the snow, desperately plunging the shafts of both tools into the slope.

In an instant time slows to a crawl. The wait is agonizing. I can feel the sparkling chill of snow beneath my face slowly melting in contact with my warm skin. Why is this taking so long? I am grimly certain about the brutality to come. Barreling down a prehistoric limestone reef, a tidal wave of snow is about to wash my existence away. It will bury me alive or it will effortlessly sweep me from the face, hurling me into the nether world below, a world of ice-falls, crevasses and dark mystery. In less than two seconds I have prepared to die.

"Let's get on with it," I think to myself.

The violent impact crushes the wind out of me, twisting and distorting my body. Shrieking ice meteors smash into my pack, then into my fragile limbs. I go numb with a surge of adrenaline — one last, sweet rush before the onset of oblivion. Unexpectedly, a sudden resolve to live surges through me. Muscles clench up; my inner being intends to fight. Resonating through my stomach and chest, the slope vibrates with shock waves; shudders under the impact of debris falling from 3,000 feet above. Wrenching force rips me downward, but strangely, I feel it through my harness. Suddenly, I realize that Sheila is on the other end of the rope; we are moving together across this snow slope! Panic engulfs me.

Through the insidious tether of the rope, we have both been taken hostage: till death do us part. I picture the debris slamming into Sheila, catapulting her headlong until the stretch of the rope is exhausted. Dangling like a rag doll on the end of a tightened, elongated string I imagine her as she takes hit after hit. I come alive with new motivation. The panic evaporates. Only desire and action remain, life compressed. The string yanks at my waist pulling me toward the confusion below. Dragged like a sea anchor, my feet carve furrows through the snow; light, dry crystals compress into hard, weight-bearing platforms. Blinded, face-down in whiteness, I come to a surprising stop. Somehow, I have held Sheila. If only it were over.

Caught in the impact zone, the wave continues to pound me relentlessly. Every violent cycle of impact is followed by another. Finally, the random collisions begin to recede, their sound and fury muffled by a growing mantle of snow upon my back. Now, squeezed and submerged in suffocating darkness I wonder how long I can hold my breath. All my strength and will cannot make my chest expand. Darkness — total darkness. This is it.

Then, like Moses's parting of the Red Sea, the walls of snow draw back, allowing air — and hope — to rush in. The burden of snow which pins me in place slides off, washing into the void. Exposed and confused, I struggle for a moment to understand what has happened. In that moment I am hammered by another onslaught of debris. Again the violent beating, the pressure, suffocation and darkness. The second surge completely buries me before I realize the tugging at my harness has disappeared. Somewhere, somehow, in the void below, Sheila has found shelter. Perhaps one of us will survive after all. That, or the rope has broken.

"This can't last," I think to myself. "I can't last."

More impact, more violence, more pressure, and then — grace — a long moment of emptiness with no sound, no impact, just a gentle dusting of snowfall. The contrast is overwhelming. I cautiously nudge my head and shoulders up through the shallow, overlying snow. Nothing but stillness. In an adrenaline-induced daze I stand up and look out into an ocean of white. Throughout the valley, billowing snow crystals cloud the air like steam. Slowly, blue sky bleeds through the scatter of brightness. Tentatively, the morning sun and its warmth return. With them, life seeps in. Deliberately, but urgently, I begin to walk down the slope wondering where Sheila is, knowing full well it may not yet be over. I half expect a blast of disaster to hit me from behind; the finishing touch.

I hear voices, first distant then closer. Sheila, Mike and Geoff come into sight round the corner ready to search for my body under tons of debris. Trying to knock out the compressed snow from between my head and my helmet I greet their incredulous looks with an anemic smile. "I think I'm ready to go home," I say in a subdued tone.

Propped against the wall like a drunk I listen while the three fill me in on their experience. An instant after my world exploded they too were enveloped in darkness. Geoff's diabetes had necessitated a short respite to shoot up some insulin and down a bit of food to fuel his blood sugar. It was an auspicious stop. While they were packing up beneath the rock band I went ahead punching steps toward the ice. When the rope stretched tight Sheila began moving up the snow slope. An instant later the wave launched itself from the top of the face; by the time Sheila saw it, it was too late. Trying to run for safety she was caught from behind. During a momentary lull Mike and Geoff looked out to see Sheila dangling from the end of the rope, plastered in white like a wedding cake decoration. For a second time that day Geoff's timing was impeccable. Only an arm's length away, he reached out, grabbed Sheila and pulled her to safety beneath the sheltering wall. The torrent immediately roared to life again erasing the impressions left in the snow by Sheila's body.

When the avalanche echoes fell silent Sheila, unable to see me, shouted up. No answer. The three of them were fearing the worst when they came around the corner to search for me.

Sheila's first thought upon being yanked to safety was, "What a kind thing to do." She had similar feelings toward Paul Giesenhagen, a friend who had saved my life when I slipped, unroped, at the top of a crag in California. As I slid over glacier-polished granite toward an overhanging

drop, Geese dove head first down the slabs and managed to grab a small fold of skin on my forearm. It was enough to slow me down and spin me around feet first. One foot caught in a shallow dish three feet above big air and I came to a stop. Though my stance was exposed I was stable. Nonetheless, Geese asked me at least three times if it was all right to let go of my arm so he could throw me a rope. He kept staring at my wedding ring. I remember how shaken Sheila was by Geese's story. Now I had tasted it too — the aching fear of almost losing someone.

Chunks of ice and snow litter the slopes below us for 800 feet to the moraine. I can't believe tons of that stuff actually landed on me. The thought fuels an afterburner of adrenaline. We agree to take it easy on the descent, we don't want any screw-ups now. Geoff sagely snaps a few photos before we begin the descent. They will conjure up vivid memories. Plunge-stepping down the scoured snow, winding our way through crevasses filled with fresh debris, I ask myself why it happened, what set the whole thing off. We had planned so diligently, monitored the conditions, turned back on several previous attempts; we hadn't been rash.

Hobbling down the crest of the moraine my emotions blister into rage. My anger is a reflection of my own powerlessness. Despite our best efforts we almost died. I am furious and frustrated because we should never have come this close. I am utterly amazed we have survived.

Uninvited, my leg and arm throb their way into my awareness. With the pain, my thoughts turn to the fragile gift of life and how strangely thankless I am to be alive at the moment. Barren of gratefulness, I am overflowing with self-reproach, bitterness, and a sense of being victimized.

"Both of us, killed at the same time! Kern and Logan could be orphans," I think.

When we reach the gravel flats below the moraine I am awash in seething emotion. Even my sight is affected. A vague and persistent object begins intruding into the margins of my awareness. Transfixed in a perceptual game of cat and mouse I gaze away from the thing, looking down valley instead. As I do, an arresting image gathers shape in my peripheral vision, one that has visited me before. A round-arched doorway, poised on the edge of perception, pierces the sky. Its purpose is clear: it is a passageway into another place. The door leads to a world both alluring and frightening; a realm few willingly visit but one which all must eventually explore. The door hangs slightly ajar, and it beckons.

From within, I can vaguely hear what sound like voices punctuated by laughter. In the background I can also hear music. Eavesdropping for a moment I am over come with longing loss and sadness mixed with a strange tinge of joy. The voices bring back powerful memories, visions from the past.

The pastel walls and freshly-waxed floors of Mineral Springs Hospital echoed our footsteps as we walked toward Matt's room. Turning the corner I saw him sitting on the bed. It served as a reality check; he was alone. His face was cut and scabby, dark purple bruises mottled his face and arms.

"Hi you guys, come on in." Matt's slight drawl reminded me of his Southern roots. He was as cordial as ever.

Our five-year-old son Kern was with Sheila and me. He knew Matt's wife Julie had been killed in the fall that had injured Matt.. I didn't want Kern to be insulated from death, but I didn't want him to be overly afraid of it either. Kern looked on and listened as Matt described how he and Julie were swept 1500 feet down the Aemmer couloir by a collapsing chunk of cornice. Kern's nervous and silly behaviour told me he didn't quite know what to make of it all.

"Just before we were hit Julie looked down at me and said how great it was to be in the mountains doing what we loved and doing it together," Matt related.

He and Julie had climbed numerous alpine routes together in South America, Canada and Alaska. Having guided with him in Ecuador both Sheila and I knew Matt was careful and aware. He had been the only one of his party on Dhulagiri to turn back because of avalanche conditions; he was willing to make the hard call. Because of that his next statement hit me hard.

"It's one of those things that we all know can happen. It's a roulette game when you venture into the alpine."

I cringed from the harshness of that image, I wanted shelter from its truth. Doing something that was both random and potentially fatal with someone you loved didn't seem reasonable to me. I reassured myself that the risk could be reduced by careful planning, skill and... Matt's voice cut my thoughts short.

"I don't know if you guys remember," he went on, "but you met Julie down at the guides meeting in the Valley. After we talked with you she commented on how she admired you two for all the things you were able to do together in the mountains. She set her sights on developing a similar kind of lifestyle."

In hindsight it struck me as a bittersweet success; the dream which Julie strove for and achieved gave her life, but it also took life from her — and from Matt.

As we were leaving the hospital Sheila and I were talking with Kern. Sheila asked if he was ever scared when we went climbing together. He said yes, sometimes he was.

"What are you afraid of?" Sheila asked.

"I'm afraid you might die."

Before I can reassure Kern with a touch or a word my vision of the hospital and Matt begins to evaporate. Ignoring my sense of longing to comfort Kern the memory fades, lost to its own wispy rhythms. Distraught, I watch as one apparition departs and another appears. This time I am standing in the entry way of a familiar home — waiting.

"I am so happy," Bill said to Karen. "When I get home we'll go out to dinner and celebrate." Karen had just received a clean bill of health; the cancer she had been fighting for years was in complete remission. Bill gave Karen a gentle kiss and we headed out the door on our way to work a professional development course in southeastern British Columbia.

On the second day of the course Bill and I struck out along the Toby Creek trail, watched over by tall stands of fir and spruce. He and Sharon had marked an activity location the previous day so all we had to do was find the flagging tape and put up a rope. We soon became engrossed in one of those deep, personal conversations which so characterized Bill. Mostly we talked about the importance of relationships and our thoughts about death. Bill was no stranger to the transition beyond life. In Britain he had been actively involved in mountain rescue, repeatedly seeing the outcome of adventure gone wrong. He had also climbed in the Himalaya, where the statistical chance of dying is greater than that of a soldier going to war. On one occasion, while traversing a slope, Bill had watched horrified as an avalanche swept past his boot toes carrying several teammates to their deaths. They had been no more than ten steps ahead of him.

"I've seen friends and family die linger-

ing deaths, incapacitated and in pain," Bill said as we walked along. "When I die I just want to up and go." It was a statement filled with foreshadowing.

Somehow Bill and I hiked past the flagging tape. While I stood listening to the smooth murmurings of the creek he headed back around the corner to find the spot. It was a beautiful day: breezes through the trees, dancing water, and dappled, strolling clouds.

Suddenly, I heard a groaning, growling sound and turned round half expecting to see a bear. Instead, I saw Bill lying outstretched in the middle of the trail forty feet away. My first, brief thought was that it was a first aid scenario. As I approached I could see Bill shaking with convulsions, his eyes fixed in a stare that didn't notice me. Though he had a pulse Bill was breathing in fitful gulps. I opened his airway and monitored his vitals all the while talking to him as I normally would. I started praying too. In a strangely appropriate way it all seemed an extension of our conversation on the trail. It wasn't long before things changed: first his breathing stopped, then I lost his pulse. For the next seventy minutes I became a CPR machine. After only twenty of those minutes I was pretty sure of the outcome. On Bill's chest, in the place where I rested my hands for compressions, a depression developed. The skin had lost its elasticity and had changed color from ashen to light blue. It didn't occur to me to stop. Like Geese, when he tenaciously gripped my arm, I understood the consequences of letting go.

An hour later I was on the phone with Karen. Sobbing, she desperately wanted to know what had happened. Though I could describe to her the events I couldn't explain why they had happened; Bill had been vibrantly alive one minute and crumpled, dying in the trail the next. As I slumped against the pay phone I felt devastated by the tragic irony of the situation; Bill's son Tony was entering his teen years and Karen had just beaten cancer. In many ways life was just beginning. With a click of finality I hung up the receiver.

Like Karen's voice, the vision of my last hours with Bill grows dim, then ceases altogether. Somewhat disoriented I come to my senses back beneath the doorway, the sky, and the silent ice. Standing on flat, windblown snow I gaze back at Slipstream's shining form draped down the face of Snow Dome. Chunks of debris still lie scattered over the slope reaching down to the moraine. I feel I have awakened from a dream within a dream.

Looking around, Sheila is nowhere to be seen. I feel completely alone — utterly isolated. Like the sky which it pierces, the door calls out of me an expansive, lonely, and beautiful lifescape. The memories of a moment before are set like characters upon that landscape; characters that are beyond reach. Unbidden, emotions are resurrected from internal burial places — sadness mostly, and feelings' of being cheated. Cheated out of time with people I wanted to know better or laugh with more or climb with once again. A husband cheated out of a wife and family, a wife cheated out of celebrating life anew. But among my ghostly feelings are recollections of joy as well, shared experiences with those once-tangible voices: conversations over coffee, drives up the Icefields Parkway, evening phone calls to lay plans — ordinary moments, memories that elicit joy and longing. Today it could have been Sheila who passed beyond reach, or me — or both of us. Instead, we were left at the doorstep.

For what seems like a long time, I sit quietly at the foot of the doorway and try to soak it all in. I find it hard to simply be and to experience; I try to grasp some thread of meaning, piece together an understanding. I am anxious for those beyond the door. I suffer from an ominous sense that the other side includes not only joy but also potential darkness. This disquietude profoundly disturbs me; I wish it would go away, but I know it will not. My thoughts and feelings drift, weaving themselves amongst the music and the voices; like prayer flags blown by the Spirits' wind, each one is transformed into an offering. Unlike my conscious, daily communication these gifts seem able to pass through and trade meanings with those on the other side. Once again I hear laughter — joyful laughter — as if someone were opening a present. Perhaps the gifts have been received.

Eventually, my time on the doorstep seems complete. Slowly, I stand up and renew the descent. As friends' voices recede beyond hearing a new resonance gradually grows to take their place. It is the music I heard faintly from the doorstep. Its lyrics echo off the same walls as did the rumblings of the now-silent avalanche.

There you go, swimming deeper into mystery.... Another step deeper — into the darkness, Closer to the light.

Bruce Cockburn's refrain repeats itself over and over inside my head and I have no desire to drive it away.

The searching and waiting now over, Sheila watches from the riverbank as I cross the Sunwapta's frigid waters, runoff created from the snow which not long ago washed over us. The blue-black current slides beneath suspended shorelines of ice and sparkles over shallow gravel bars. As I finish wading the braided channel and trudge up the last few steps to the road I gaze back at Sheila; we're together again.

It is as Annie Dillard has said. "The vision comes and goes, mostly goes, but I live for it, for the moment when the mountains open and a new light roars in spate through the crack, and the mountains slam."

The mountains cracked violently and the light's brilliance burned, but that day on Slipstream was one of life's rare moments. I live for moments of awareness and encounter, but I fear them as well; they can be too costly. We were spared that day; when the mountains slammed, Sheila and I

Surfing Slipstream

A speck under a spring faucet
I've been buried by the pulsing,
grainy flow
Beaten by the blackness blotting out
the glow of eastern sky
Been racked and limply carried by an
ocean weight of snow.

A thunderous crack I paused
Twice paused as time ran still,
Saw ice explode with wall of snow
And white cap start to spill

I turned and ran for shore
A rocky buttress downslope offered
hope
A puppet on a slender thread I bore
the blackness and the dread
Danced limply to the rhythms of the
rope

A speck under a spring faucet
I feel older now, been cleansed
My hungry living leads to death but
still I starve and fight
Exposed in life I trust in death, the
mystery never ends
Death waits in place, a mundane part
of consecrated life
I've borne this weight, then paused
to let the darkness offer light.

Sheila Hendricks

were left on this side of the door. One day we will hear its closing from the other side, perhaps together, perhaps alone; though it is inevitable, I am in no hurry. There are many imperatives that anchor our hearts here on the familiar side. For now, we two have awakened from a dream within a dream; the fragile gift of life — life together — has been renewed. It is a precious wakefulness that lies wrapped in folds of the eternal. Still, in its time, there remains one further awakening — the passage through the doorway.

An Egoistic Misinterpretation

Glenn Reisenhofer

In the cold, night air, there exists a tension that otherwise does not belong there. Something feels strangely out of place. Then it happens. A groan escapes your partner's lips and you know the precise meaning. An upward pull is expected. Nothing. Realization sinks to the depths of your being. The expected moment arrives and you are flung off your feet. You witness the belay disintegrate. The sickening feeling is indescribable.

My partner and I knew about the successful ascents of the infamous Grand Central Couloir last autumn. Unfortunately, we could not manage to match our schedules before winter had arrived in the Columbia Icefields. Determination (and a deep hatred for bivis) formed the delusion in our brains that we could do the route in one day, car to car.

Somewhere along the icy morning approach, we found ourselves disoriented and none too sure about the proper glacial access. Valuable time was seeping between our fingers as we waited for the clouds to lift. One and a half hours later, we were able to make sense of the terrain and how we had to deal with it. Witnessing the early morning light dancing on the séracs a thousand metres above us was a fascinating spectacle. It seemed a lure to help us forget the snow we were breaking a trail through. My partner was feeling the pangs of the flu bug he was carrying, so I became intimately involved with the knee- to waist-deep medium. Our delusion persisted, even though an immense portion of the day was spent reaching the undernourished crux pitch. The crux was coated with a vertical veil of ice. Sublimated ice clung up the corner and across to the Doyle/Blanchard variation. It had the appearance of perforated cheese, a hooking nightmare. The first satisfactory piece of protection was placed two-thirds of the way up the pitch.

The angle relaxed after this pitch, but our fatigue increased. More often than not, our heads would be resting on the alpine surface. Arriving at the Sorenson Direct we lost our allotted daylight. Spindrift migrated toward our stance, as if it were a bowling ball and we were the pins. At this moment my partner hinted at the possibility of a bivi. I revolted against this nasty option. I explained that we wouldn't survive in such an exhausted state. I then pulled out my trump card; it should never have been used. I reminded my partner of his ability and that it was well within his limits to get us off the climb. We discussed the fact that once we were over the Sorenson Direct we would be close to the top and that no summit cornice existed. In our advanced state of disorder, we agreed to continue.

The Sorenson Direct proved to be in a greater state of chaos than the crux pitch. Another batch of aerated, perforated cheese climbing delivered us on top. The angle relented and our spirits were rekindled. We progressed upwards and the summit ridge came into view of our headlights. However, the surface had changed from hard ice to crusty snow. The belay was established twenty-five metres below the top and consisted of one well beaten and buried Stubai, one useless ice screw, and an equally useless ice axe.

Escape off the climb seemed guaranteed; we would not freeze. My partner headed off toward the top. He started to struggle with the overhanging summit cornice (which, supposedly didn't exist). It appeared as if his ability to decipher the best way off was absent. He did not check to the right or left for an easier alternative. In his exhausted state he chose to tackle the problem directly. The seemingly inevitable happened; his tools ripped out of the overhanging cornice. There was no upward pull on the belay. The two screws my partner had placed in the cotton candy surface pulled out. The feeling of dread was staggering. A lone figure fell into the abyss. The climax occurred when the rope stretch stopped and the belay received the full force of the fall. I watched helplessly as one tool flew out from the belay and the ice screw torqued outwards ten centimetres; thankfully, the well-bashed Stubai remained.

A lot of yelling ensued. My distraught partner was uninjured. The fifty-metre fall left both of us shaken. The fall had injured my hand and torn a two-centimetre strip of sheath directly off the rope.

Several problems plagued this ascent. I never should have pulled out the trump

card. I had pushed my partner into a dangerous realm that he didn't care to be in. I used our years of climbing together, and my knowledge of his ability, as an excuse to get us off. The results were too close to being fatal. My partner, with all his wisdom, shouldn't have given into such foolishness. He probably knew better, but succumbed to my irrationality. Severe fatigue, which led to poor judgement, almost delivered us to our demise.

Delusion was replaced by reality; we had to bivi. We carved a ledge and awaited the coming dawn. Two hours of work afforded us shelter, so that we could sit and keep our heads out of the spindrift. We made a promise to each other not to look at our watches. We didn't want to know how long we would have to wait and freeze. We shivered and moaned at the night air. In the early morning light we saw an easier alternative off to the left.

Accident À Bon Echo

Jean-Claude Neolet

Le 4 septembre 1995, Matthew Czerny et moi-même sommes tombés d'une hauteur d'environ 40 mètres dans le lac Mazinaw, lors d'une escalade au parc provincial de Bon Echo en Ontario. Matthew a perdu conscience en frappant la surface du lac et s'est noyé; j'ai survécu miraculeusement malgré une grave blessure au dos, dont je ne devrais pas garder de séquelles.

Matthew et moi avons fait connaissance la veille du long congé de la fête de travail. L'amitié fut instantanée. En quelques minutes, nous avons entrepris un tourbillon de conversations aussi passionnantes les unes que les autres, en particulier sur le cinéma (qui était son sujet d'études), l'art en général, et les nombreux problèmes de l'homme dans la société moderne.

C'est naturellement que Ton décida de faire équipe pour grimper durant les trois jours suivants. Chacun son tour conduisait une longueur ou une voie dans un silence interrompu seulement par les communications nécessaires. Mais dès que nous prenions une pause, la conversation reprenait de plus belle. Ceci est étonnant étant donné notre différence d'âge, moi 47, lui 22. J'ose espérer qu'il a eu ce genre de conversation avec son père, ce dont je ne doute pas.

Même si je ne l'ai cotoyé que pendant quatres jours, j'aurai à jamais le souvenir d'un jeune homme enthousiaste, intègre et extrêmement déterminé dans tout ce qu'il entreprenait. Matthew était un de ces rares individus qui était généreux de son temps et de ses talents. II était curieux et possédait une attitude positive dans l'escalade comme dans les moments moins glorieux de la vie.

Pas plus que quiconque, je n'étais prêt à ce que ce fabuleux congé de trois jours prenne fin. Surtout pas de façon tragique. Comme j'aurais préféré que le sort permette une plus longue connaissance mutuelle pour que l'on puisse un jour se taquiner l'un l'autre de nos défauts respectifs. Le hasard accidentel de la grande roue de la vie en a décidé autrement.

La responsabilité de cet accident est à partager entre Matthew et moi. La société actuelle a tendance à nous déresponsabiliser des erreurs que nous commettons; je ne suis pas d'accord avec ce point de vue. II est primordial que la confrérie des grimpeurs prenne acte de mon manque de jugement lors de cet accident, dans l'espoir que la leçon serve à tous, et qu'un tel malheur ne puisse se reproduire. Pour ma part, il est essentiel d'assumer pleinement le fait que j'ai survécu, afin de continuer à vivre le plus sereinement possible et de la façon la plus productive qui soit.

Les premiers pas de Matthew en escalade furent parait-il un peu téméraire. J'aimerais témoigner que si Matthew avait encore quelques points techniques à polir, c'était un grimpeur prudent et dispose à écouter les conseils de ses compagnons. J'enviais sa façon de grimper. II avait la souplesse et l'aisance d'un chat, et ses mouvements étaient planifies comme le sont les pièces d'un jeux d'échecs.

Matthew considérait l'escalade comme une expression artistique du mouvement physique et il y percevait une analogie spirituelle avec la vie. Je suis persuade que Matthew voyait dans les obstacles qui se dressent dans la vie, des occasions de dépassement et des motivations au progrès personnel. Je ne suis pas croyant, mais s'il existe un monde de l'au-dela, j'ai la conviction que Matthew nous y attend pour y vivre de passionnantes aventures.

The Quarrel

Climbing in sullen silence
past treeline where blasted
spruces drunkenly incline,
we stumble on two racks of caribou.
Clasped in a deadlock neither
bull could break they bleach beside a
frigid Yukon lake, amateurs who
never locked horns with you.

Destruction Bay, Yukon

Tim Murphy

Photo: Rob Orvig

Waiting For Never

What brought me to this alien place?
No summits in my repertoire.
A city kid, only the corporate ladder climbed.
Yet here, amidst the Himalayan giants
Under a clear, cold, unforgiving sky,
I wait.

My friend is climbing Chomolungma,
Slowly inching up the mountain's northeast ridge.
Since dawn we've watched his snail-like progress
Through the telescope at Base Camp.
"Far too slow," the experts say.
"He'll never make it up and back."

Not 'til sunset, even with his partner's help,
Does he reach, at last, the highest place on earth.
And there, in exultation he embraces
That elusive summit's cone.
No fear written on his face, only jubilation,
As he gazes out in wonder at the spectacle below.

"Impossible to bivouac at that height and live."
I listen to the talk throughout the night, but still —
Buoyed by his success, I'm sure my friend will be all right.
I don't climb mountains — my friends don't die.

What drives a mountaineer to take such risks
I'll never understand.
Scant sleep. We start to watch again at dawn
But there's no movement at the top.
We wait for five long, agonizing hours before
We see them, slowly, slowly moving down.
And gradually a knot of fear begins to form.
Others have perished, this season, on this mountain.

The minutes seem to crawl, yet hours flee while huddled
'Round the radio; we urge them to move faster.
Too long in the Death Zone.
Time running out.
So close through the glass, I feel we could touch them,
But twelve thousand feet below, we cannot help.
Night falls again and still they're far from safety.

Then, from high above near Chomolungma's
Second Step, the radio comes alive.
My friend,
Exhausted, blind and numb with cold can go no further.
I cannot comprehend this news.
My friends don't die.
"Help him," my silent scream implores. But no one can.
Understanding slowly dawns.
He won't be coming back.

The full moon rises and the wind subsides.
In the darkness of a million stars,
I feel the life go out
And all my tears can't put it back.
No more Bach and brandy shared,
No next year's expedition planned for.
We won't go trekking in the Khumbu.

The wheel turns. The Mother Goddess watches
As friends gather round a cairn.
They say the smoke from burning juniper
Will speed his soul to heaven.
I read the Prophet's words on death and wonder —
Has he really just begun to climb?

Months slip by, now years, and still
From time to time great waves of desolation hit.
I guess they always will.
And in the blackness of despair,
I wait, For never.

In Memory of Michael Rheinberger

Susan Foster

Sport Climbing In Wildlands

Christoph H. Gnieser

Seeking "freedom in the hills" has become the most recent passion among the affluent on this planet, and rock climbing, an increasingly popular leisure activity with the makings of a mass sport, has earmarked one of the last frontiers — the "carta blanca" of the third dimension.

In the tradition of Euro-American history, complete dominion over this vertical "resource" has been sought utilizing the most convenient means contemporary technology provides. The recent proliferation of fixed protection anchors or "bolts," has introduced the latest episode of climbing history and a new style of trailblazing on the crags — sport climbing. Its extraordinary popularity among ever-widening circles of recreationists, should not come as a surprise: sport climbing is arguably the epitome of post-modern, pre-packaged adventure — it is predictable, uniform and wonderfully gratifying.

However, the unbridled, often indiscriminate commodification of ever more remote crags for sport climbing as well as the sheer volume of participants raise serious concerns about the long-term sustainability and appropriateness of that style of climbing in wildlands. At the core of these concerns is the recognition that cliffs and canyons constitute indispensable habitat for innumerable other species, of which comparatively high numbers are rare or endangered. Spatially and seasonally intensive recreation in these habitats bears the potential to severely disturb resident as well as transient species and strains ecosystem resilience to natural disturbances.

Although wildlife response to recreational disturbance varies greatly among species and individuals of a species, disturbance is a likely consequences of climbing at popular crags. Plants on cliff faces or near the base of cliffs are trampled or intentionally removed, and on top of the primary impact this deprives other species of perching, nesting and foraging sites. Species loss and habitat fragmentation, both indices of consumptive use, occur where carrying capacities have been exceeded, although the process may go unnoted by those responsible. Eventually, wil-deorness, the inceptive Anglo-Saxon term for the "place of wild beasts" (Nash, 1982), recedes into scenery, concealed by an activity that generates an attractive illusion of wildness and freedom.

Preservation of the ecological integrity of cliff habitats and intensive recreational use appear to be mutually exclusive concepts. Indeed, this recognition has recently led to the closure of several hundred climbing areas in Germany where an emerging biocentric recreation ethic is putting preservation before recreation. Eventually, a similar shift in management paradigms will likely be implemented by public land agencies in Canada and the United States. Sport climbers would be well advised to prepare for new realities.

In response to access challenges, the climbing community is assuming increasingly more collective responsibility, and access lobbies are promoting self-regulation as a mechanism for conflict avoidance. To be ultimately effective, however, self-regulation will have to become a truly proactive process through which climbers as a community and as individuals accept the onus of assessing the appropriateness of their activities on the basis of expected localized and cumulative ecological impact. Seasonal climbing restrictions or area closures should, in fact, be self-imposed where and when appropriate before regulations by higher decree become necessary. In turn, this presumes improved interaction with administrative land agencies and the scientific community prior to the establishment of new climbing areas or, in some cases, individual routes. Deeply rooted mistrust that is currently encumbering communication will have to be overcome.

If self-regulation is to be accepted as a credible and responsible process, ignorance of ecological impact among the sport's practitioners becomes untenable. Sport climbing is hardly a "minimum impact" activity, and this recognition should be reflected honestly in discussions over access issues concerning crags in wildlands or ecologically sensitive areas.

To date, access lobbies and climbing magazines argue almost exclusively from an egocentric perspective, a position which will soon become inappropriate or, at least, ineffective. The latest membership application of the Climbers' Access Society of British Columbia proclaims that "the quality of [the prospective member's] life would be seriously compromised if [he/she] could no longer get out onto the face of living rock, seeking every secure crevice …" Such reasoning is untenable in terms of responsible environmental citizenship, and sounds reminiscent of arguments used by supporters of the ultra-conservative Wise Use Movement.

Self-regulatory processes will also have to address the issue of long-term sustainability of sport climbing. Pragmatism dictates periodic replacement of fixed anchors as a result of bolt fatigue, corrosion or induced rock weathering. Although it seems inherently inappropriate to assign specific replacement intervals for fixed anchors in practice, it is nonetheless reasonable to assume that most bolts on sport routes will provide adequate protection for about 10 years or less depending on use and environmental parameters. Granted that the initial replacement anchor may be accommodated in the initial bolt hole, renewed drilling will, nonetheless, become a likely necessity for the third generation of bolts on any particular route. It follows that within 50 years (a time frame within the lifetime of most current climbers) a minimum of five bolt holes will have been drilled proximal to each original anchor placement. Assuming a minimum distance of 10 cm between replacement bolts (an unrealistic presumption given the heterogeneity of most rock surfaces) the future "bolt shuffle" will inevitably alter movement sequences on most sport routes. In turn, current test pieces in sport climbing, which represent evolutionary references in the history of climbing, are arguably ephemeral in nature.

If sport climbing is, indeed, non-sustainable in the long term, serious questions about its appropriateness in wildlands seem legitimate. From a biocentric perspective, it appears frivolous to sacrifice unique wild-lands ecosystems and species for short-term recreational benefits. It seems more befitting to preserve the backcountry crags and associated ecosystems so that future generations will have opportunities for exploration and discovery.

The Canadian Himalayan Foundation

The Canadian Himalayan Foundation is dedicated to supporting Canadians in mountain-related activities throughout the world. These endeavors have ranged from expeditions to the Himalayas, to scientific research, to cultural projects in Canada and abroad. We can provide support in the form of cash grants, use of our equipment caches in Kathmandu and Calgary, and can give access to the knowledge of experienced mountaineers.

In return for our support, we require a detailed trip report to be submitted to us, a sample of slides which give a flavour of your trip and which can be used to promote the CHF, and the submission of an article mentioning CHF support to a recognized mountain journal, such as the illustrious Canadian Alpine Journal. Any presentations or other publications must also recognize our support. Finally, only Canadian citizens and residents are eligible for support, and they must all be members of the CHF prior to the award being made. Membership costs $20 and is for life (not necessarily a long time in this game we play...).

In 1995, our support focused on expeditions, with the CHF providing support to four trips ranging from a climb of Mount Steele in the Yukon commemorating the centennial of the RCMP, to Jeff Lakes's tragic attempt on K2. By the end of January, 1996, we have already received applications from eight future trips.

In order to cope with this increase in interest, the Board of Directors of the CHF has spent a lot of effort improving the processes we use to evaluate and track an application and follow up after a trip returns. New applications are now assigned a CHF liaison person who will act as the main contact with the trip members from start to finish. We have also developed a rating procedure to guide us in evaluating applications. We feel it is important to be as fair and consistent as possible, especially given the increased interest we have been seeing, and our limited financial resources.

In other matters, we have finally decided to move our library out of a private home to the library at Mount Royal College in Calgary. While there are advantages and disadvantages to this move, we feel a mountaineering library is most valuable when it is used. At MRC, it will be professionally catalogued to allow easy access to information, but the ownership will stay with the CHF. The CHF library contains books, periodicals and reports which can be used as a resource in planning a trip. For those who live in the Calgary area, the CHF collection will be available whenever the library is open. In theory, the goods news is that the collection can now be made available across the country through inter-library loan, although this still needs to be worked out. We have a list detailing the contents of our collection which can be sent on request. The board of directors thanks Mount Royal Collage for giving us this opportunity.

Finally, the Board of the CHF is extremely pleased to announce the start of the Lauchlan Memorial Award. This award is the direct result of the vision and hard work of a sub-group of the current and previous board, including Joe Josephson, Chic Scott and Brad Wrobleski. The board felt we had no mechanism to appropriately support those rare expeditions which stand out for their boldness, vision and their desire to push the limits, so a special award has been created in memory of John Lauchlan, who possessed those characteristics.

Bill Durtler, President, CHF

The John Lauchlan Memorial Award

Applications are now being accepted for the John Lauchlan Memorial Award. Administered by the Canadian Himalayan Foundation, the John Lauchlan Award will be an annual cash award to help support young, motivated Canadian mountaineers and explorers. This is the first award in Canada to specifically promote and help develop upcoming Canadian mountaineers. The award will be given to those who possess the following characteristics:

- Innovation
- Are developing climbers
- Is an environmentally sensitive trip
- Show boldness and exploration
- No commercial funding.

The applications will be judged by a distinguished panel of Canadian mountaineers, and the award will be announced annually at the Banff Festival of Mountain Films. The award will be given only to trips and climbers which fully meet the criteria, so it may be possible that no awards are announced in a given year.

Applications detailing the applicants and their proposed trips should be sent to the Canadian Himalayan Foundation by July 31.

Donations and sponsorships are being accepted now to help finance the award. For details contact the CHF at Box 61063, Kensington Postal Outlet, Calgary T2N 4S6.

Science & Safety

The Glaciology Is Back: Vertical Style

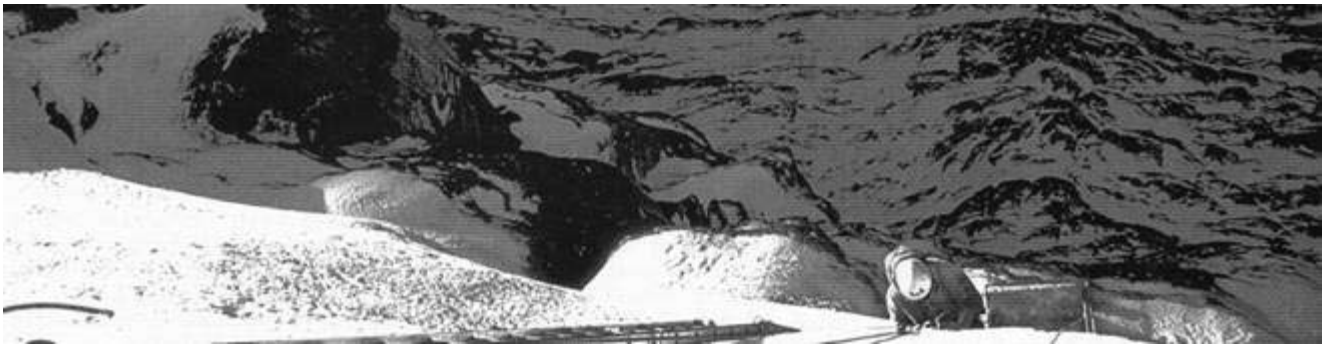
For those of you who did not follow the Journal politics during the 1987 editorial transition (it was more like a quantum step) from the staid Moira Irvine to the stylist David Harris, here is something of what happened: There were some punishingly harsh words[1] for glaciology and in one stroke there was no Earth Science section, which had previously been dominated by glaciology articles.

For the record, there was an unpublished exchange of alphanumeric machine gun fire on the above subject. During a temporary truce, it was explained to me that the real target was the glacial geology material, and that I was caught in the crossfire. This was hardly acceptable to me, but, since I had previously submitted a report "Logan Glaciology, 1986," which had got zapped, I decided to add the more recent work on Mount Steele done in 1987, to see if these reports would really make it to the typesetter. Well, to my surprise, they did [2] but one of them[3] was inexplicably

1 CAJ1987: editorial by David Harris (source of the words: "no more bloody glaciology")

2 CAJ 1988: new Science section

3 *CAJ* 1988: p. 57 "Mount Steele Glaciology, 1987". A short summary of the omitted text follows: "We climbed the southeast ridge sampling snow in pits dug at regular intervals. The upper camp was placed on the col between Mounts Lucania and Steele. Snow pits were dug up to a point near the summit of Steele (tough snow!). Three of us climbed the rime-encrusted summit of Mount Steele. We could not obtain satisfactory results with the radar ice depth sounder on the col (4,400 m). The important isotopic data obtained are incorporated into the first reference of note 5.



On the ice ladders, with the "box" below. Photo: Gerry Holdsworth

truncated at about the halfway point, effectively eliminating all the glaciology material.[4] This had the effect of looking like another warning shot but on closer inspection it would appear that room was needed for a short and interesting note by Don Serl. As a result of these events, I temporarily ceased contributing to the new Science section, until a more opportune time. That time has now come.

Meanwhile, on the glaciology scene, there were two more trips to Mount Logan in 1988 and 1989, in order to locate a second deep ice core site on the plateau. This resulted in the selection of a new site between Prospector's Peak and Russell Peak (PR Col) where the ice is up to 200m thick (as determined by radar). In June 1989, the automatic weather station that was left to winter-over at 5320m was found to be missing the anemometer. It must have rimed up (according to the data) and then a wind blast must have carried it off. The minimum temperature was only a cool -56°C, far from the Yukon (and North American) record of-62°C.

Government cutbacks have forced a shelving of a new drilling operation up there. Hopefully, this is not the end of the project. For those interested in some of what has been accomplished on this endeavour see the end note references.[5]

Closer to home, and more up-to-date, is an account of some glacialogical work conducted on Snow Dome in the Columbia Icefields in Alberta. This is an example of glaciology done in the vertical dimension. First some background.

David Donald (Project Leader in Regina), Jim Syrgiannis (Regina) and R. Crosley (Calgary/Canmore), all from the Ecological Research Division of Environment Canada, and David Schindler (University of Alberta), are hot on the trail to find a source of organochlorines turning up in unexpectedly high concentrations in the ecosystems of glacier-fed lakes in the Rockies (such as Bow Lake). Organochlorines come from aerosol pesticides such as toxaphenes and DDT. The accusing finger pointed to the glaciers, still releasing contaminated water derived from currently melting 1960s to 1980s vintage snow. A study site was needed: Snow Dome was the best candidate[6].

In March, 1995, the Environment Canada group and some Yamnuska Mountain School guides selected a crevasse on the eastern slope of Snow Dome (3150m) for a sampling site. Because of the concentrations of the contaminants, conventional ice cores would not provide enough sample, so crevasses or ice cliffs were the only alternative to obtain large samples.

Between May 24 and 29, the Environment Canada group, a Yamnuska group (Albi Sole, Paul Valulius and Joe Mackay) and the author from the Arctic Institute, worked the 28-metre-deep crevasse using a manually-propelled swing stage suspended from two catwalk bridges laid across the three-metre-wide crevasse. Sampling was done using strict field sampling protocols and snow or ice was sealed in ultra-clean 40-litre containers. Unfortunately, we could only access ice back to 1984. Because the usage of modern pesticides spans about four decades, it was necessary to look elsewhere for older samples. Elsewhere meant the ice cliffs on the other side of the dome.

We opted to come back in early September during an Indian summer and try our hand at something more ambitious. The ice cliffs were studied by Holdsworth through binoculars from the summit of Nigel Peak and some possibilities were seen. We had an aborted attempt at returning to the Dome in late August. Finally, on September 19, after a day's wait to let the weather clear, we finally struck good conditions. There were Jim and Bob (who remained at the lower levels), then Albi, Reid Christopher and Karl Nagy from the Yamnuska Mountain School, and myself.

Albi and I made a quick helicopter reconnaissance and selected a section of ice cliff to the west of and quite near the top of Slipstream (a well known ice climbing route). The annual banding here was quite prominent, and we would have a marvellous view.

The first task was for the "Yams" to rig the ice cliff and for Karl and I to descend in Albi's "box" to tag the annual layers. As expected, we found the 1971 ice layer with the Kinbasket Lake forest fire ash [6]. This calibrated our annual layer count, and allowed us to estimate at least another two decades further back in time. The samples were sealed in the ultra-clean, 40-litre metal containers and later slung-loaded down to the highway.

The sample containers were then rapidly transported to Calgary, from where they are being shipped from the Environment Canada Laboratory to various other laboratories. The melt water will be analysed for organochlorines[7] and some lesser contaminants.

J. Syrgiannis, G. Holdsworth, R. Crosley, A. Sole

4 See map in Holdsworth, G. and B. Sawyer (eds), 1993, Mount Logan map, research and reference folio, Arctic Institute of North America, Calgary

5 . Holdsworth, G., S. Fogarasi and H. R. Krouse, 1991, J. Geophys. Res. v. 96, D4: 7483-94; Bradley, R. S. and P. D. Jones, 1992, Climate since AD 1500, Routledge, London, p. 483

6 Holdsworth, G., H. R. Krouse and A. Shakur, 1985, Reconnaissance of an ice core site, Columbia Icefields, Alberta, Nat. Hydrol. Res. Inst., Open File Report

7 Levels of organochlorines in Bow Lake trout are up to six times the safe Health Canada limit of 100 ppb. (source: Environment Canada)

Tombstone Blues: Rock Climbing In The Yukon

Andrew Richardson

"And I'm in the kitchen with the tombstone blues..."— Bob Dylan

Granite walls up to 2000 feet high. Mostly unclimbed — not many climbers have been up there," Myk Kurth said casually and matter-of-factly on a hot May day in Dawson City, as he described the nearby Tombstone Mountains. Before flying to the Yukon I'd spent a number of days climbing on the immaculate granite at Squamish, and Myk's words gave me lusty visions of a multitude of northern Chiefs.

Alas, such dreams were overly optimistic: on most peaks the rock was quite crumbly and fractured — I soon found out that climbing there could be a real horror show! Consequently, in the summer of 1995, I frequently cursed the Yukon's Tombstone Mountains. Too many times we were lured into humping big loads up long valleys, through dense jungles of willow thickets (prime grizzly and mosquito country) and across eternal talus fields, to the base of our intended climb, only to discover all too soon that the rack wasn't worth climbing: "Looks good from far, but it's far from good!"

I made four eminently unsuccessful and frustrating climbing trips to those mountains, but my disappointment has largely been forgotten in the intervening months. I look back at my photographs and remember those days as the most splendidly beautiful of my summer in the north. Whatever blues remain are simply the product of my wanting to be once again surrounded by the spectacular Tombstones.

I was on a short hiking trip a week after first talking to Myk when I got my first real glimpse of the peaks in the Tombstone Range, which lie about 60 kilometres northeast of Dawson City. I'd driven about 58 kilometres up the Dempster Highway with a couple of friends from Dawson, and we had hiked in several km along a ridge on the north side of Grizzly valley. Through swirling clouds and light snow I could see numerous steep faces and pinnacled ridges about 8-12 kilometres to the west. The knobby nipple-like spire on top of Mount Monolith was bizarre and ominous, and the dark, wet rock looked evil and intimidating — Tombstone seemed a fitting name for such a sombre area. But I was excited by the possibility of some new routes, and I was anxious to return to the range.

In the coming weeks I made numerous trips up the Grizzly valley. Early in the second week of June, Ian Marriott and I climbed an easy 18-pitch route (5.4) on loose, lichen-covered rock (on what might best be described as the indistinct "north ridge") to the minor north summit of the 6500-foot peak south of Grizzly Lake. At this point it began to rain and we decided not to continue along the narrow ridge leading to the main summit. After two abseils we walked down the northeast ridge and then back to our camp through deep, wet snow and soggy, unfrozen bog.

The next evening, after a day of solid rain, we left camp after dinner and then climbed four pitches (5.5) of occasionally good rock up the south face of a short, blocky spire 1.5 kilometres northwest of Grizzly Lake. It was well past midnight when Ian and I elected to turn back within one pitch of the summit: it was very cold and the rock above was both crumbly and covered in thick rock tripe lichen.

A week later, Ian, Mark Senyk and I climbed a five-pitch route (5.3) on the rotten east ridge of the 6400-foot peak just east of the spire. We found an old Simond knifeblade after one rope length on this route.

Mark and Ian found good rock on the south face of the 6300-foot peak west of Grizzly Lake, and completed a six-pitch route (5.6) there. The three of us had previously attempted this climb but had been rained off midway through the second pitch.

In early July, Myk and I hiked in to make a quick attempt on Mount Monolith (7100 ft.), perhaps the most impressive peak in the entire range. We departed Dawson on Friday evening, hiked in 15 kilometres that night, and then bivied on the small receding glacier below our climb. Our route began on excellent rock just below the narrow notch beneath Monolith's north face. The beautiful, clean, sharp granite didn't last long, however. After three pitches, we decided to retreat; we could see that ahead lay hard, unprotectable climbing on ridiculously-loose flakes. The rock was so rotten that setting up a bomber rap anchor was a major challenge. It began to rain as we rapped back down. Disappointed, we elected to return to Dawson that night rather than attempt another climb. For years Myk had been looking forward to climbing this peak — we were greatly frustrated by our miserable and exhausting attempt.

Tombstone Range, Mount Monolith (7100 feet). Photo: Andrew Richardson

A month later, in early August, our Yukon summer was quickly coming to an end. Ian returned to Dawson after five weeks of picking mushrooms, and soon Mark showed up in town after some firefighting down around Whitehorse. We hastily arranged one final trip, hoping to find better quality rock at the far southern end of the range, around Tombstone Mountain itself.

After a one-day wait for the weather

to clear, Ian, Mark and I helicoptered into the mountains with a monstrous load of climbing gear and food for 10 days. From the air, we picked out a beautiful campsite near some fantastic walls, with running water close by, and a good "kitchen rock" a couple of hundred metres from the tent.

Unfortunately, after a week, the climbing gear still hadn't seen much use: the most technical bit of climbing we'd done was either a short hooking traverse (aid bouldering at its finest) along one side of our kitchen rock, or the fourth-class scramble up the southwest ridge of the 5300-foot pyramidal outlier of Tombstone Mountain. However, we'd also explored a number of nearby valleys, checked out lines on some of the biggest faces, and hiked up to the ridge crest of the Cloudy Range, which lay to the north, across the Tombstone River.

But we really hadn't climbed anything yet, and it didn't look like we would get anything climbed. I, at least, had come to accept the fact that the walls around us would defeat us. Honestly, sitting there as the rain drizzled down on day seven, with three of us squeezed into a festering two-man tent, I realized I had long since lost my passion. I thought to myself, "This sucks. I can't wait to get back to Dawson, have a shower, enjoy a beer or five, have a burger, sleep in a bed... "I was a pathetic adventurer.

Early on in the trip, we'd ambitiously contemplated three of the larger faces near our camp. Our dreams were big, and included the 2000-foot east face of Tombstone Mountain (7191 feet). I can't say we really "attempted" any of these climbs — on the first two we backed off after a couple of moderate pitches, on the third we literally never got off the ground. Our attempts were halfhearted at best: on Tombstone, we ascended a steep snowfield, then climbed one pitch of very loose rock, looked up at the heinous steep wall above, gulped, and quickly rapped down. Bad rock had a lot to do with it, but so did mentality.

What was wrong? Speaking only for myself, I know that I didn't have the ambition and courage required to commit myself to a big new route on a very remote face. I wasn't prepared for the risks. Add to this the problems of the predictably miserable weather each afternoon, and the ugly rock, and I happily accepted defeat — I was otherwise content with my life, and wasn't in need of a good scare. It wasn't the kind of climbing I wanted to do — doing a really gnarly new route wouldn't have helped exorcise any of my demons.

It may seem remarkable, but all in all it was a pretty good trip — we had the area almost entirely to ourselves (once we did see one group hiking several kilometres away), we ate splendidly (thanks to Mark's culinary ingenuity), we got along well as a group, and we were surrounded by some of the most spectacular peaks in the Yukon. Although Mark and I were both suffering from acute internal distress the last two days of the trip, the walk out to the Dempster Highway was thankfully easier than we had anticipated — we found a number of well-travelled game trails, and managed to get by without much bushwhacking.

Ultimately it was a major let-down to get back to Dawson. The easy small-town life was stale after less than a day. I missed the open valleys and towering walls of the Tombstone Mountains. I didn't care whether or not I climbed, I just wanted to be back there again, among those beautiful mountains. The vast scale and tremendous emptiness of the Yukon wilderness is remarkable in its own right. Add to it scenery like the Tombstones and you end up with a very special place. In Dawson, the comforts of home were no compensation.

Sitting here in the kitchen in Ontario, writing this article six months later, I find myself once again feeling the tombstone blues. I miss those mountains. Like Robert Service in The Spell of the Yukon, "I want to go back, and I will."

If I do go back, though, I'll leave my climbing gear at home.

Kluane National Park Reserve Icefields Mountaineering Statistics For 1995

During the spring and summer of 1995 there were 40 mountaineering expeditions, comprising 169 people, who ventured into the St. Elias Mountains of Kluane. As is often the case, April and early May were exceptional for weather, but my mid-May the late spring storms set in with a vengeance. Quite a few of the expeditions attempting Mount Logan during this time were, more often than not, tent-bound. Very high winds and heavy snowfalls were reported by many of the returning groups, especially on the King Trench and East Ridge routes of Mount Logan.

Once again the vast majority of people who visited the glaciers of Kluane this year headed for Mount Logan, 74% (125 people) with 53% (89 people) on the King Trench, and 17% (28 people) on the East Ridge. Those travelling and climbing on any other route in the icefields would be unlikely to cross paths with (or even see in the distance) another polypropylene-clad biped.

The increased concentration of users on these two routes, although still low in numbers compared to other popular climbing areas, is resulting in some noticeable build-up of waste. Many groups have complained of coming across remains of old camps with bags of garbage, food and fuel caches and abandoned fixed lines. This problem is particularly evident on a route such as the East Ridge where specific camp sites are used over and over during a season and in subsequent seasons. Groups that leave unwanted equipment, food and other material on the mountain, thinking that it will be buried by the snow and gone forever, are unfortunately leaving an eyesore for the next group that digs in for a night's stay. Since all groups come fully prepared with all the provisions that they will need for their climb, it is not justifiable to leave food or fuel as an emergency cache on the route. In other words, carry out everything that you carried in.

The first solo ascent of Mount Logan was made this year. Canadian Derrick Stanbury successfully climbed the King Trench route from May 5 to May 20.

One expedition was involved in an avalanche at approximately 15,500 feet on the East Ridge of Mount Logan. No one was seriously injured, however they lost a great deal of equipment and requested an evacuation. A rescue team of park wardens and a helicopter were successful in slinging the four Austrians off the mountain. The climbers were insured and were able to pay the costs for the evacuation.

Persons interested in organizing an expedition into the St. Elias Mountains of Kluane are required to contact Kluane National Park Reserve at Box 5495, Haines Junction, Yukon, YOB 1LO to obtain a registration package.

Andrew Lawrence

In The Name Of Sam

Brad Wrobleski

Climbing to Camp I. Photo: Brad Wrobleski

Until Pat Morrow called, the name Steele was only a fragment of memory left over from elementary school and a vaguely remembered peak somewhere up north. Pat asked if I wanted to come along on an expedition to shoot photos and hump a few kilos of video equipment. At first I was skeptical: I knew little about the mountain and less about the team. From experience, I knew that expedition climbing could be a stressful game and that knowing your partners and what they might do if the things got hairy was an untold prerequisite. Still, after nipping through a few old Canadian Alpine Journals to scope the route and knowing Pat would be along, I committed to join the 1995 Mount Steele Centennial Expedition.

When I first met Constable Pat Egan, at the Whitehorse airport, he had the look I associated with the R.C.M.P.: tall with a husky build, thick mustache and a firm handshake. The guy beside him, however, Constable Dave Olson of Surrey, B.C. — a bicycle policeman — had a look I never would have thought to be that of a cop: under six feet, wiry, with an face that looked about half his probable age. Both were friendly with wide grins; a stark contrast to the people who wore the pants with the yellow side stripe that I involuntarily dealt with during the wild years of my youth in rural Saskatchewan.

After a two day blur of receptions, handshakes, fine food and the infectious hospitality of the people of Haines Junction, me and the rest of the eight member team flew via a bright yellow chopper to the base of Mt. Steele, a 5073m peak on the northern edge of the St. Elias mountains. In years of mountain helicopter work, the skillful aerial acrobatics of pilot Doug Mckonnen was the best I had ever seen. I've decided Heli-alpinism is the ticket — no skis, no slog approaches; just drop and go.

The first few days of the trip were spent getting to know my climbing companions and humping loads up a long slope made of big boulders. It was May, but the temperatures were hot enough to make you think you were in the Rockies in July. On one of the sweaty slogs to Camp One I was joined by Andrew Lawrence, a young warden from Kluane Park. He was not a highly experienced climber but he had the quiet disposition that I suspected hid a reservoir of strength — a trait I often see in many of the best climbers.

Camp I sat in a windscoop straddling the east ridge at 9100 feet. It was a great spot to stay out of the wind and enjoy the incredible views of the St. Elias. As we were on the edge of the icefields, the panorama offered a unique mixture of winding rock moraines, rolling hills, steep faces and a look at the curves of the Steele glacier; a sheet of ice that was termed a 'galloping glacier' during the 1960s, because of its rapid downward slide.

After more than a dozen carries we had established Camp Ie. During the next few days of scouting a line to Camp II my worst fears turned real. With heavy loads and icy terrain it soon became apparent that most of the members on the team were less than competent on crampons. Most had worn them fewer than a dozen times. With visions of being yanked over a sérac by a fallen rope-mate I gave a few lessons in self-arrest and crampon techniques, then we moved slowly, cautiously upward.

Our expedition was a unique one. We were not the typical small group of climbing friends here to challenge ourselves with a difficult line or new route. We were a team of eight brought from far and wide to climb Mount Steele in honor of 100 years of Royal Canadian Mounted Police service in the Yukon. Our goal was to get everyone to the top and rededicate the mountain in the name of Samuel Benfield Steele, one of Canada's first R.C.M.P and a pioneer of law and order in the Canadian west.

Our team was built from the relationships of the Yukon R.C.M.P.: an Alaska State Trooper, an Alaska Park Ranger, two Kluane Wardens and two R.C.M.P. Constables made up the group. Pat and myself were there to shoot photos and create a video.

After a few days of near-cloudless weather we made our way up the snowless, ice ridge to the sight of Camp Two, a large, thick cornice hanging off the north side. Our plan was to rest here for a couple of days, then establish Camp III, and move everything upward. The couple days off rest turned into five. Heavy snowfall and high winds brought a quick close to our great weather window. So, we spent many hours talking about climbs and climbing, hearing nerve twitching stories from the police front lines, playing craps and reading about Sam Steele.

From the sounds of it, if Sam Steele were alive today he would have made a hell of an alpinist. Disciplined, tough and

determined, I'm sure he could have soloed this ridge in a couple of days, probably in leather boots and shouldering a pack big enough to break the back of a prospector's mule.

The oldest guy on our team, ex-Kluane Warden Ron Chambers, was a descendent of one of the men who worked under Sam Steele. It was great hear his many Sam stories first-hand, as well as his many jokes.

One day during our storm-bound wait I had my 30th birthday. To celebrate the occasion each team member dug through their food bag for a gift; cheese, chocolate, dried fruit and coffee came pouring through my tent door. My favorite gift was a can of Sardines. I sat in the sun on my Therma-lounger chair outside the tent and ate that can of stinky fish, enjoying every second of it. It was a great day.

After the snow settled and the slope above camp two gained some stability we plowed our way to camp three, close to 13,000 feet. At this point the good weather seemed gone forever. Periods of snow, cloud and high winds slowed our progress.

Once, during a load haul, a few members of the team reported seeing a UFO hovering near the summit. Their confession of the sighting provided the rest of us with a good supply of ammo to give them a hard time.

Then, for Paul and Sean, the unimaginable happened. They ran out of coffee — in fact, we were running out of everything. So Andrew, Dave and myself made the trip back to basecamp, filled our packs with food and headed back up. The look on Paul and Sean's faces would have been worth a photo when we jokingly told them we forgot the coffee.

Above Camp III a steep, crevasse-sliced slope offered the only way back to the ridge and the road to the top. In an attempt at the summit the entire team roped up and plodded upward through mist and snow. After a few hours we reached a steep blue-ice slope that fell off to the valley below. Scratching their way up the hard surface, on wobbly crampons the technical climbing proved too much for a few members of the group. With a lively exchange of words in the gusty winds we turned and went down.

It was time for a decision. We sandwiched all eight of us into a tent and with calm voices and solid reasoning, worked out the plan. In the end it was decided that the four of the strongest climbers of the group would give the top a try. In six expeditions and countless shorter alpine trips I have never seen such a difficult decision come about without a clash of egos and intense arguments.

View from Camp III. Photo: Brad Wrobleski

Under a broken sky we left the tent at 8:00 p.m. — Pat Egan, Andrew Lawrence, Paul Randall and myself. Paul and I would be partners. Paul often entertained us with his many stories from his police work as an Alaska State Trooper. His animated, energetic story telling seemed at total opposites to the quiet, almost shy other side of his personality. I could see a deep strength in his eyes. I was glad he was my partner.

Dave Olson and Sean McGuiness — the thick mustached, easy-going park Ranger from Alaska — generously re-broke the trail up the steep slope out of camp. We followed. At the top we thanked our support crew and continued along the ridge.

As the earth rotated us into the twilight night of the Yukon we worked our way slowly upward; across the ice pitch, around crevasses, through the thickening cloud toward the top. By 10 o'clock we had made it through the crevasses to the base of the long summit snowcone. Andrew and Pat were somewhere behind. We put in a wand. In the darkness of night through the dense cloud we searched for a way up. Left then right, then left, then finally a ramp appeared. We headed for it. Step after step, breath after shallow breath the ramp never seemed closer. Finally we reached it and turned upward. The moving cloud, darkness, blowing snow, altitude and lack of sleep created a surreal dream like landscape. For some reason, every time I blinked, a ring of light outlined whatever I was looking at. Half of me was living in the oxygen deprived, night-snow slog of the present and the other half lost in a world of strange shapes, weird thoughts and a feeling of being outside my body. Often Paul was just a distant silhouette somewhere in the mist. At one point I wouldn't have been surprised to see the UFO land next to us.

There was no perspective of time; just one foot being placed in from of the other and wide-mouthed breathing. Inhale, exhale, left foot, then right and on and on. No thoughts just movement. The slope steepened from walking to French-stepping to front pointing. I pulled over the lip and crawled a few meters to the flat table-top summit. I bet Sam wouldn't have crawled, he would have probably walked upright, proud and distinguished. I crawled back and pulled up the rope for Paul. In a fog of blowing ice crystals I tried to take his picture. No go — the camera was frozen. We mumbled a few words in the name of Sam and headed down. After a few stumbles on snow drifts we passed Andrew and Pat, wished them luck and continued down. At the top of the crevasses we tried to stop for a break but the raging blizzard forced us back onto our feet. We stumbled on in the deep snow, with almost no visibility, looking for the way down-looking for a wand.

I knew I had screwed up when the clouds

Camp III with summit behind. Photo: Brad Wrobleski

parted and I was looking straight down past my boots at the valley below. I was standing at the edge of a sérac. I headed back in the direction I had come. I hate to think what would have happened if the clouds hadn't thinned. Back and forth we weaved through the labyrinth of crevasses until we found a wand and the way home. Once below the clouds we could see the red flashing light of Mckonnen's chopper trying to get in close to give the CBC News crew a shot of us.

Back at camp we ate mounds of Purdy's chocolate, slept and waited for Pat and Andrew. We didn't know it at the time, but the two were holed up at the base of the snowcone, waiting for Andrew's eyesight to improve. The blowing snow and cold had impaled his vision. At around 11 a.m. they dragged themselves into camp safe and sound. They slept away the rest of the day with big grins spread across their faces.

I was too wired to sleep, so Pat and I packed up our gear and dropped the 8000 vertical back to fresh food and the comfort of base camp.

It's not over till it's over... The tranquility we hoped for at basecamp was not to be. In raging winds and blowing snow we scrounged though the remaining food stores for something of substance — a large block of cheese. Then all eight of us sat out the storm playing craps in Andrew and Pat E.'s tent.

The next morning Doug and his bright yellow chopper dropped out of a clear blue sky and took us back to showers, clean clothes and a full-blown Haines Junction reception to celebrate our success. The cold beer and home-made food sure tasted good that night. I never did see that UFO.

Few of the members of this expedition knew each other before the trip. Not to mention having climbed together. Despite the lack of initial team bonding we did well. We didn't complete a new route, or a difficult route but, in my mind, we accomplished something even greater. We, as a complete group of strangers, overcame the obstacles, worked as a team and, in the name of Sam, became quite good friends.

When we arrived in Haines Junction we found a pile of climbing equipment large enough to start our own Mountain Equipment Co-op. With a lot of hard work by Pat Egan and incredible support from many Canadian companies our expedition was well supplied.

Thanks to all who generously supported our trip, including: Trans North Helicopters, Banff Designs, Osprey Videos, Cascade Wear, Leisure Time Distributors, Purdy's Chocolates, The Canadian Himalayan Foundation and the many businesses and kind people of Haines Junction

Mount Logan Adventure

Matt Sondeno

With two Eds on the team, we immediately resorted to ednames for everyone, and this produced our expedition name and helped fulfill our goal of having fun whether or not we made the summit. Everyone arrived in Yakutat, Alaska, on various schedules during a period of clear weather in early May, 1995. Kurt from Gulf Air flew everyone into the Hubbard Glacier east of Logan, and by May 12 we were all assembled at basecamp at 2380m between the Hubsew and East ridges. After years of trying to assemble an appropriate team, it was gratifying to finally be on Logan. Our original goal was to make the third ascent of Logan's Hubsew Ridge and the first ascent of Hubsew Peak enroute. Concern over snow conditions on the side of Hubsew Ridge caused us to switch to our backup, the East Ridge, with plans to try Hubsew Peak on our return.

Steve unfortunately contracted the flu and flew back out on May 14, leaving the five of us to continue the route. We moved to CI at 2680m on the East Ridge May 14, CII at 3160m on a large mushroom-shaped sérac May 17, and CIII at 3600m May 20. The ridge section from CII to CIII was steep, narrow and icy in many places. We moved to CIV at 3930m May 22, a slow section over more icy traverses and narrow ridge sections.

Enroute we met a party of two Californians returning from just short of the summit. By this time, we had also formed a loose partnership with Mark Stanley and Chris Robertson of Calgary, enjoying their company while we tried to outdo each other with cross-border jokes. On May 24, Chuck, Gigi and I moved to CV at 4625m in degenerating weather. To this point, weather conditions had been surprisingly warm and clear with occasional light snowstorms. Our party became separated in the ensuing blizzard with Chuck, Gigi and I shoveling nearly nonstop for seven days at CV without knowing Brian and TrailEd were just 500 feet below us in a snowcave after they lost their tent. We had one of our two tents go down at CV during the storm as well. By no small miracle, our team was reunited on May 30 when the storm finally broke, and moved to CVI at 5100m the same day. The Calgary team had descended for lack of supplies as had another team on the route, and Brian and TrailEd had been without food for the previous four days — Logan had reinforced the perspective that humans are of limited significance in the universal sense. After a rest day, we left for the summit June 1 in poor visibility. Going was slow and we waited over an hour at one point in the -10° temps, nearly returning to camp, before being able to continue above the clouds. With improving visibility, we crossed the southeast shoulder of the East Summit and completed the seemingly

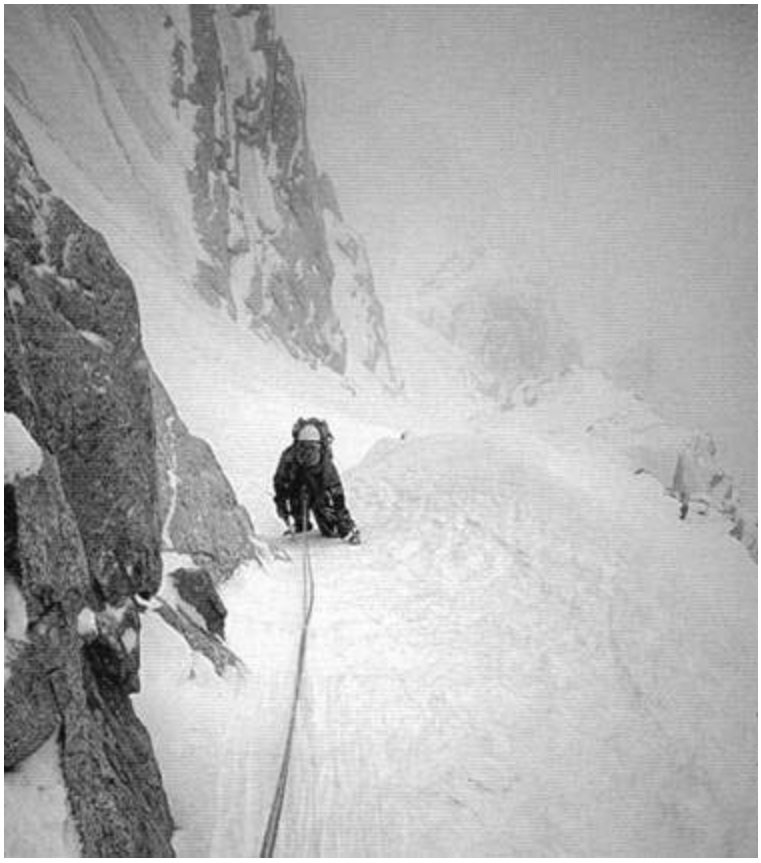
interminiable summit ridge to Logan's main summit by 8:00 p.m. We had a good view of the ocean and the magnificent St. Elias range from the summit although our stay was made brief by the -20° temps and gusty 20-50 mph winds. A couple members sustained limited frostbite by the time we began our descent. We returned to the warmth of our sleeping bags 22 hours after rising, very tired but pleased. Strong winds, ground blizzard and much new snow hampered our descent over the next week. We seemed to be the only remaining party on the east side of Logan. Recovering our caches required determined shoveling, but we found basecamp on June 8 and recovered much needed skis and supplies in the two to four feet of new snow. We had no time to try Hubsew Peak and had heard earlier a pair of climbers from Whistler, B.C., had ascended it while we were high on Logan. We groped our way to near the LZ and the weather improved on our scheduled pickup day of June 9, allowing Kurt to retrieve the team without further delay, and keeping us from missing our date with beer and cheeseburgers in Yakutat.

A Traverse Of Mount Alverstone

Carl Diedrich

At noon on May 19, Bill Pilling and I arrived at the summit of Mount Alverstone (4439m). Our ascent was made in five days, during a period of unsettled weather, via the previously unclimbed west buttress.

Our route was primarily on snow and ice interspersed with several multi-pitched rock steps. The crux of the climb was the steep middle section of the buttress, which required two days of sustained effort and one very exposed bivouac.

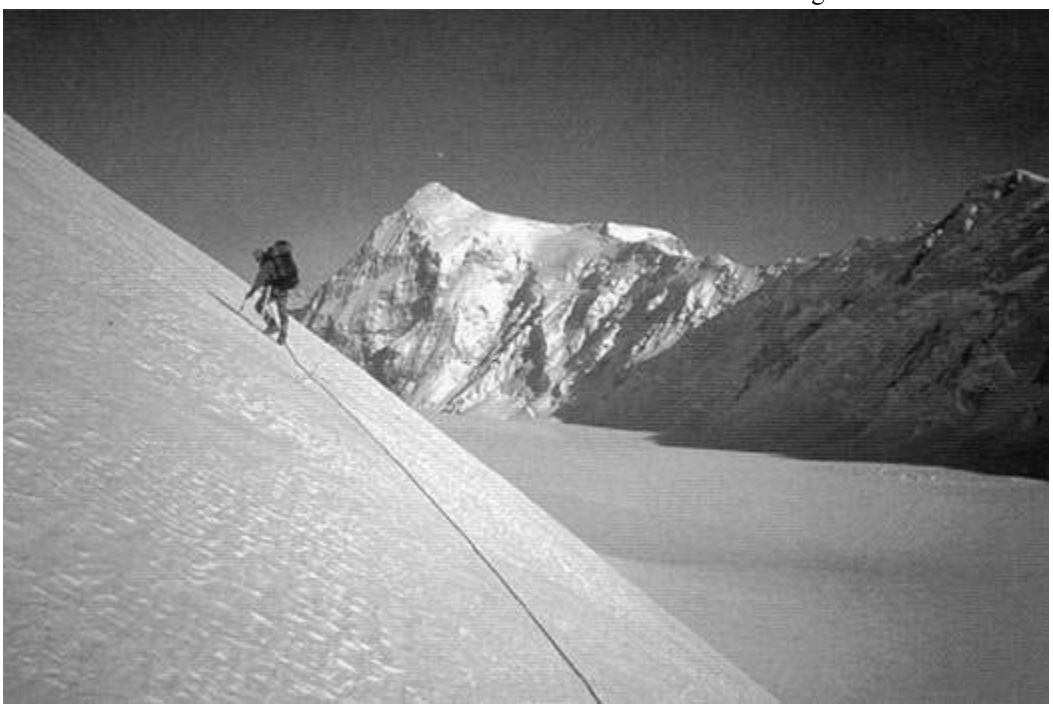


Iceramps on Day Three. Photo: Carl Deidrich

We spent two nights at our first bivouac because of blowing snow and conditions which were too miserable for fun climbing. Much to our surprise, on the summit day the weather cleared and we were blessed with brilliant, calm weather for the remainder of our outing.

Our descent was made via the north face of the mountain to the Great Shelf Glacier and then to the Dusty Glacier. This route was pioneered in July of 1966 by Fred Beckey, John Rupley, Henry Mather, and George Lowe (AAJ, 1967). Once on the Dusty Glacier, we continued westward until we were able to ascend the north slope of P 3592m. From the summit of P 3592, we descended the southwest slopes back to our base camp at the head of the Alverstone Glacier.

Our trip was made possible by a generous monetary contribution from the Mugs Stump Award. Many thanks to Michael Kennedy of Climbing Magazine and to Kurt Gloyer, our pilot, from Gulf Air in Takutat, who was able to add another pin to a most impressive chart of landing sites in the St. Elias Mountains



N. Face Mount Kennedy from head of the Great Shelf Glacier. Photo: Bill Pilling

Waddington Circumski

John Baldwin

Ever since I first heard about a ski traverse around Mount McKinley I have been fascinated with the idea of a circumski: there is a certain appeal to starting and finishing a traverse in the same place, emphasizing the fact that you're not really going anywhere. The only trouble was that this idea did not seem to readily transplant to the Coast Mountains. Most of the big icefields here seem to hang from the shoulders of the highest peaks, and the only things big enough to circumnavigate appear to be some of the coastal watersheds — which would be like skiing around a big hole. But then there was Mount Waddington. Though there didn't seem to be a likely route there either — the Franklin, Tiedemann and Scimitar Glaciers radiate out from the summit like the spokes of a wheel, and the huge uplifts of mountains between the glaciers seemed to prevent any kind of circular travel on skis — still I kept wistfully looking at the maps until last year I was convinced a route could be worked out.

Gordon Ferguson, Brian Sheffield, and I flew into the Scar Creek logging camp on the Homathko River at the end of April. The most obvious place to begin was the Tiedemann Glacier. Our original plans called for us to carry two weeks' worth of food and our skis up the Homathko River for two days to reach the snout of the glacier. This idea was not entertained for long when Brian found out that a helicopter was stationed at the logging camp. We quickly decided to put in a food cache at the Plummer Hut, but as the pilot flew me and the food up the Homathko River, I realized that by the time we got past Waddington Canyon to Murderers Bar, Gordon and Brian might not be in any better mood than the rampaging Indians that killed surveyors there in the 1870s. They readily agreed, so we cancelled the food cache plans and after a 10-minute flight we spent our first night camped at 885 metres on the snout of the Tiedemann Glacier. Near dusk, Waddington loomed out of a gap between pink clouds at the head of the glacier.

This trip was to be another in the "Krazy Karpet Express Series," and the next morning we loaded as much weight as we could into the sleds. Under a grey sky the steep moraines on the side of the glacier contrasted starkly with the forest that grows on the benches above the glacier. The only colour was the light blue of an occasional surface pond. We worked our way up the glacier in deteriorating weather before camping at 1500 metres in a snowstorm. A small yellow bird flew through the tent while we were setting up camp.

It snowed all the next day but the day after we moved up to the Plummer Hut.

Across Tiedemann Gorge to Grenelle. Photo: John Baldwin

A layer of cloud formed a ceiling over the upper Tiedemann basin, and the surrounding icefalls on all sides formed the walls. As we reached the point where we had to leave the gentle trunk of the main glacier and start climbing the steep slope up to the hut, there was some discussion about what to do with the Krazy Karpets, but as they were too heavy to place on top of our packs we just continued dragging them. Though they constantly rode the fall line, they pulled surprisingly well as we grunted up the 900-metre climb. The clouds thinned the higher we got, so that by the time we reached the hut we could see the incredible series of icefalls that rim the entire south side of the deep trench of the Tiedemann Glacier from the summit of Waddington east to Marcus Smith. If there was ever a scene that could show so little difference between summer and winter, this was it. We sat on the porch in the afternoon sun and watched a huge powder avalanche pour off the northeast flank of Waddington.

Our arrival at the hut coincided with a storm, but as the hut was missing a window and was half-full of snow this gave us some time to clean it out and do some repairs. Occasional lulls in the storm gave wintry views of the Serra Peaks plastered with snow.

We began to wonder about our chances of completing the trip, but the morning of our fourth day at the hut dawned clear and cold. With shrieks of delight we were out into the fresh powder and climbed across the head of the Tellot Glacier. We parked the toboggans near Dragonback and had some fantastic skiing in the basin immediately north of Serra III. Clouds and thin snow bridges made route-finding a little tricky as we continued across the upper Tellot Glacier with our loads. From Cataract Col we swung east in afternoon sunny periods to work our way past the flanks of Heartstone and onto the Sunrise Glacier. From the Schultz-Despair col we dropped northwest down the eastern branch of the Cataract Glacier into the spectacular cirque at the base of Mount Shand. The upper portion of the glacier was smooth and the Krazy Karpets easily skipped sideways as we cruised down the open slopes. Immediately north of Heartstone, however, we bypassed a shattered icefall by hugging steep slopes on the side of the glacier. The toboggans were more trouble here and it required considerable concentration to keep them under control. The séracs in the icefall all had mushroom tops from the winter snowpack. That evening it felt like the trip was finally underway.

To reach the Scimitar Glacier we climbed through a col north of Unicorn Mountain on day 8. From this col we had a superb view of the main trunk of the glacier with Mount Geddes towering beyond. The slope below hadn't yet had the morning sun so we clattered off slowly on the 900 metres descent to the glacier. We had loaded our Krazy Karpets on our packs and, at the expense of our shoulders, the extra weight helped our edges bite into the icy slope. Lower down we descended adjacent to the spectacular icefall on the Radiant Glacier. On the Scimitar we slurped up surface meltwater and basked in the sun. Like the Tiedemann Glacier, the Scimitar also lies in a deep trench, and from our feet the valley walls rose almost 2500 metres to the summit of Tiedemann, just visible above the highest séracs in the Radiant Glacier. After lunch we skied up the Scimitar Glacier. The snow glistened in the afternoon sun, contrasting with the shaded rock walls lining the valley. We camped that evening in the tremendous basin at the head of the Scimitar Glacier walled in by the icefalls and séracs that tumble almost 2000 metres from the northwest summit of Waddington.

Our route continued over Fury Gap, and though the steep slopes looked somewhat intimidating from our camp, the climb to the head of the Franklin Glacier was not difficult the next morning. The steepest part of the slope reached an honest 45° and we carried our skis for the last 300 metres, kicking steps in a foot of soft snow. Once over the crest of Fury Gap we crossed some tracks and came upon a large party of skiers and climbers from Vancouver Island. An offer of homemade banana bread at their camp lower down was not refused! It turned out that only a couple of them had skis, as most of the group were using snowboards. This looked like great fun except for the slogging around on snowshoes. The planned highlight of our trip was to be a ski ascent of the northwest peak of Waddington, which seemed to fit naturally with our circumski. The crux was going to be reaching the Angel Glacier, which we thought we could do via a snow gully at the head of the Dais Glacier. We waited till the morning sun was well onto the glacier before weaving up to the left of the main icefall. As we climbed higher we could see south to the icy Whitemantle Range as well as beyond to a dark band of clouds. Opposite the base of the south face we found our snow gully, which led easily through a band of cliffs. We walked up the narrowest part and skied onto the high shoulder above. The gully had avoided the entire climb of the long northwest ridge from Fury Gap, and had taken only a few hours of skiing. Everything to the west from Klinaklini Peak to Monarch was spread out below us, but the clouds had already capped the northwest peak and were moving in quickly from the south. From our high point at 3440 metres we could look directly across to the ice cliffs on the lower part of the Angel Glacier. There appeared to be a feasible route across a ramp above the ice cliffs, but with the wind tearing at our jackets it was an intimidating view. There are some summits you can climb in an approaching storm but this was not one of them! Reluctantly we turned and headed down. On the Dais Glacier we threaded our way through the crevasses from memory, feeling our way over the smooth rolls in a white-out. We had scarcely reached the tent and finished a bowl of soup before it started to clear up. Late in the afternoon the sun broke out and we had some superb spring skiing on the lower slopes of the Dais Glacier with the summit of Waddington peering down on us. Close but no cigar!

Across Tellot Glacier, Mount Munday behind. Photo: John Baldwin

The clearing was short lived and on the morning of our second to last day we packed up quickly in deteriorating weather and scurried through the col north of Jester. Our last view of Waddington was of the southeast face rising into the clouds. We crossed Ice Valley as it started to snow and managed to reach the Agur-Munday col before camping in a total whiteout. An hour or two later we heard strange noises and looked outside to see two Americans, John Harlin and Mark Jenkins, groping along our fading tracks. They camped and joined us for tea, entertaining us with stories of bottles of rum and Penthouse magazines flying from the sky.

On day 12, our last day, we awoke to several inches of new snow and zero visibility. John and Mark, eager to get home, roped up and compassed toward the Bert Glacier. Reluctant to wallow around in the fog we dozed for another hour. When it stopped snowing we followed their tracks, and joined them south of Martello. Together we dropped down the long ridge to Scar Mountain, skiing in the trees lower down, above the main trunk of the Waddington Glacier. Just west of Scar Mountain we dropped down the steep slopes to Scar Creek and walked the five kilometres to the logging camp where a hot meal and showers waited. That evening we all sprawled in luxury on the moss beside the runway south of the logging camp, surrounded by the mountains we had just descended. The air was alive with the sound of running water and rustling leaves and the rhythms of spring. A plane picked us up the next morning bringing an end to another wild trip in the Coast Mountains

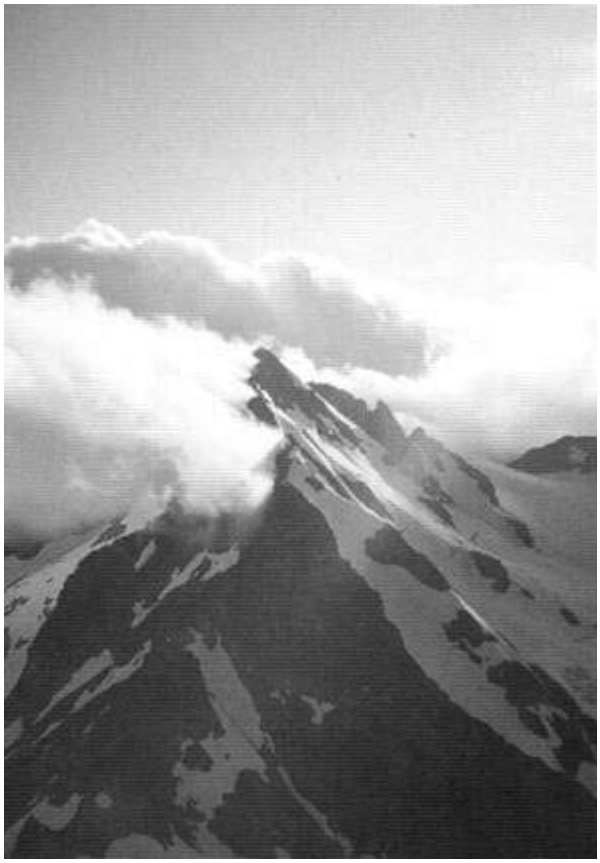
To Mass Or Not To Mass?

Joe Fillipone

The author of a magazine article on mountaineering on the west coast recently concluded that the local sport has chronically lacked "critical mass." Although the story was informative, it is difficult to fathom the need for such a concept. Critical mass is sometimes referred to as the measure of organic material which is required to initiate an effective composting bin. A televangelical gathering might be implied, though this seems even further from the elusive connection to west coast moun-

taineering. It was only upon writing this article that I realized that there may be something to the notion after all. Critical mass simply needed definition.

The Tantalus Range is a lofty sentinel of everything wild and formidable about mountaineering on the west coast. When viewed from the passenger seat of an automobile hurtling down Highway 99 from Whistler to Squamish, the glaciated northern slopes of the Tantalus Range present an alpine vista matched by few others in the Pacific Northwest. In recent years aircraft traffic into and over these mountains has undermined wilderness values in the area. Rather than make a long-winded spiel on wilderness preservation, the intent of this article will be to update access in the area so that more self-propelled hikers and climbers will be able to appreciate what remains valuable in this spectacular mountain range. It is hoped that a definition of critical mass among west coast mountaineers will follow in these footsteps and not in the exhaust of turbine engines.



Serratus Peak SW from Alpha. Photo: Joe Fillipone

Access to the range begins at a trailhead just one hour from downtown Vancouver. Here one would expect an early indication of congestion among urban-dwelling mountaineers. Surprisingly, one was likely to see more alpinists departing sea level seventy-five years ago than one would today. According to Fairley's guide all of the major peaks in the Tantalus Range were climbed before the end of World War One! The extent to which use of the area has been neglected by local mountaineers is evident in statistics gathered by B.C. Parks during July and August of 1995. Of 261 visitors to visit the area, only 39 were self-propelled and out on a mountaineering trip.

The first and most pressing obstacle to Tantalus access remains crossing of the Squamish River. Without a doubt, the crossing of this waterway has been a key factor in keeping the number of visitors down and wilderness values high. Ironically it has also lead to the growing preponderance of air-supported access. Among self-propelled stalwarts canoes are commonly used at a crossing just 1.5 km north of Cheekeye on the Squamish River road. A second method involves use of cable-car which exists at the same location. The car is locked on either side but the cable itself can easily be traversed. Minimal climbing gear is all that is required for a rather unusual and inspiring way to start the day. Simply drape some strong chain links or a large steel carabiner over the cable and secure this to your climbing harness. A long prusik can then be attached to the cable and used to haul yourself across.

A jaunty three- to twelve-hour hike on a well marked trail leads to the shore of Lake Lovelywater. Here the Tantalus hut provides elegant shelter and use of a rowboat or canoe for those who make advance reservations through the Alpine Club. Along Lake Lovelywater's northern shore the brushy trail to Lambda Lake has recently been cleared of most obstacles. This facilitates hiking access to all of the major mountaineering objectives in the Tantalus Range. (It is worth noting that little time is saved by use of the boats kept by the Alpine Club.) Though not maintained or described in two of the most recent climbing guides to Southwestern B.C., an old trail leads above Lambda Lake to splendid camping in a glacial basin below the Crescent Glacier.

At this point, visible trails end and route-finding adventure begins. If you get this far everything you would ever really want to know about critical mass and west coast mountaineering should now be securely lodged on your back. This will be especially pertinent when greeted four or five hours later by an air-supported party on the flanks of Mount Tantalus. Stand tall on wobbly knees and do not accept primitive offers of liquid or sugar-coated reconciliation. Well okay — maybe "one for the road." Whatever transpires do not even consider the possibility that passenger space may be available on the next flight out. Remember that Tantalus was an errant Roman god who was punished by greater mythical deities by being immersed up to his neck in water. Above him lingered a bountiful feast and whenever old Tantalus bobbed up for a bite — the water receded. If not too careful one might find wilderness receding at a comparable speed.

Ha-iltzuk

On page 66 of last year's CAJ, we published an article by John Baldwin entitled "On Wobbly Legs." Mr. Baldwin wrote about a journey on the Ha-iltzuk Icefield, and a few readers wrote in to express their confusion about this glacier, which is not recorded in Gazeteer of Canada: British Columbia. Mr. Baldwin responds to our query:

"With regards to Ha-iltzuk: It was first used in the CAJ by the Mundays and the origin of the word and various spellings are given in an article on the first ascent of Silverthrone Mountain. I guess people don't like the hyphen! Though I don't know if the name is official, it has been used in several other articles in the CAJ (e.g., 1983), as well as in two editions of my ski guide to the Coast Range, so for lack of anything else, it's probably just as well you left the spelling as it was."

Coast Ice Update

Don Serl

The publication of West Coast Ice in November 1993 codified a long, slow accumulation of routes in an area not especially noted for cold, icy winters. The guide also evoked, as might be expected, greater interest in the sport, which in turn has increased the 'critical mass' of participants and social interaction (i.e. rumor-mongering). Most particularly, a small but especially keen group has come

into being in Whistler, from which vantage conditions are more apparent and ice is more accessible than in Vancouver. As well, the presence of the ever-keen Lyle Knight in Lillooet cannot be overestimated as a source of information and stimulus.

One outcome has been an increased awareness of, and drive to do, such new routes as form; and luckily, while the recent winters have been unpleasantly warm and wet out on the coast, these same conditions have led to really good ice formation in the colder areas. The Birkenhead, the Duffey Lake road, the Bridge River, and Marble Canyon have all seen considerable growth in available routes, and scattered routes have also popped up elsewhere. While the following listing is by no means definitive (much less complete), the time seems ripe to update the information contained in West Coast Ice — all you ice climbers out there have my express permission to photocopy the following bumpf and to stuff it into the back of your copy! Routes are described in sections, as per the guide.

VANCOUVER

Previously unreported, Graeme Taylor climbed a set of pleasant flows in — of all places — a gully on the north side of Burnaby Mountain during the remarkable cold spell of winter '92/3.

HOWE SOUND

A couple of self-described (and anonymous) '"bumblies" climbed a set of thinly-iced flows (Two Over Par) on a bluff above part of the golf course at Firry Creek. Watch for the groundskeeper, and please don't walk on the greens in your crampons.

SQUAMISH

Robin Barley and Blob Wyvill plunged into the bush bordering Oleson Creek behind the Chief, and climbed the big line in the corner which is so prominent from the top of the Chief, and which has intrigued locals for many years (3 or 4 pitches, to WI4). Brian Kelsh and Matt McEachern crossed the Stawamus River directly to climb the waterfall on Ray Creek, finding a couple enjoyable pitches low down, and a superb upper column in an impressive amphitheatre (WI3+).

WHISTLER

Blackcomb & Whistler have yielded a few new lines worth investigating for those in possession of passes. As well, numerous other routes have been done in the area, most of which are listed by John Chilton in the next article. Of particular interest are the numerous routes done across the Cheakamus from the Cal-Chek campground, about 10km south of Whistler, and the Mystery Roach Hotel area left of the Wedgemount Lake trail approach road, both of which have become very popular practice areas. The numerous other routes left of the highway north of Wedgemount, and the big finds on the crags across from Nairn Falls campground would also seem destined for popularity.

Elsewhere, Rolf Lutjie and Kelly Mortensen somehow talked a friend(?) into swimming the frigid Green River just upstream from Psycho Pillar. They then equipped the crossing with a Tyrolean. Half a kilometre north, they climbed Sunday Driver (120m WI3), which starts with a "small Scottish style off-width" 60 or 80m above the river.

PEMBERTON

North of Mount Currie, Graeme Taylor (with Sheila Sovereign and/or others) found a clutch of moderate routes. Measured from the BCR crossing, they are: Candlewax (75m WI3; high on the eastern hillside at 9.7km — almost certainly previously climbed); Hollow Quest for Glory (50m WI2; 5 minutes up the creekbed to the east at 11.5km); and Class In Session (a long WI2 creekbed at 13.5km which was climbed with Jim Orava and an FMCBC class back in '93).

Routes on the Pehota Palace, west of the highway, are described by John, as are a couple things further north towards D'Arcy, and the superb lines up the snowed-in logging roads in the upper Birkenhead valley, below Cerulean Lake. See also his article for details of one of the highlights of the season, Medicine Man, high on the cliffs northeast of Mt. Currie townsite. He gave the upper pitch 5+, but a subsequent attempt by a pretty competent crew didn't even come close, and described the pitch as "sicko" — it's gotta be close to 6.

MOUNT BAKER

About 100m right of Pan Dome, Tom and Laurie Bridge climbed the thin, technical Fool's Gold (25m WI4). There is a 30m WI2 practice gully of dubious worth between the above two lines. Tom also reports that Death Picnic deserves 5+ or, more likely, 6. It overhangs more than 2m in the first 12m, then goes vertical for a while, and is rarely in good form. To the right, in a broad indentation, he and Greg White scratched up the thin ice of the often-unclimbable Slap and Tickle (75m WI4).

FRASER VALLEY

Greg Foweraker and Don Serl jumped off the plane after a business trip to the Orient into a (typically short-lived) cold snap in early January 1995, and fought off the effects long enough to solo Jet Lag (120m WI3) in preparation for the considerably stiffer pencil on The Cure (90m WI4+) just to the right. Both routes lie above and right of a gravel pit about 1 km west of the Flood exit (which serves The Mousetrap). Their attempt the following morning on Carpe Diem, the 2-pitch system of flows and columns at the right end of the granite bluffs left of The Mousetrap was aborted by rain — such is coastal ice climbing.

PAST HOPE

Tom Bridge from Bellingham has caused a bit of a stir in January 1995 by teaming up with Greg White to climb As Seen On TV, the unclimbed roadside curtain on Jarvis Bluffs. The 50m main pitch pulls through an overhang onto the poor ice of the vertical central pillar, which it follows for 25m before angling left onto easier ground and a tree belay. A short pitch leads to the top. Tom gives the route the coveted WI6 (the first such grading in the guide area); as he's been climbing ice for a decade and has done a few of the Rockies 6s, the rating might well stand the test of time. Unfortunately, the torrential rains at the end of November 1995 took out the bridge just north of the bluffs, so the longer approach from the tram station will have to be taken by ambitious would-be second-ascentionists. Tom and Greg also climbed a much easier, independent line at the left side of the same curtain (Black and White; 48m WI3). An ancient rappel sling on the top made it obvious it had been climbed before, but it was not caught in the trolling for guidebook info.

Tom, with his wife Laurie, also found the long, severely avalanche-threatened Deneau Creek waterfall in acceptably safe condition, and established The Honeymoon (180m WI3) the day after climbing the above two routes.

The next year (Jan/Feb '96) Tom was back, climbing several other hard lines including the big chimney on Jarvis Bluffs, and a couple more sixes. See "Beyond Hope" elsewhere in this Journal for

details.

Don Serl ignored his own guidebook advice and flailed thru the "nightmare of bush and boulders" into Box Canyon with John Irvine in early December 1995 for a look-see. Desperate to find something to climb to bring the suffering to an end, they quit at the first icy slab encountered on the right, above an especially attractive alder penetration test zone. The slab (Snakes and Ladders) sported about 15m of two-inch thick, 70° ice; a tricky little mixed dihedral waited in the forest above (how about WI2X ?). Hidden to the right in the forest was a pleasant 35m WI3

(Labyrinth), while a hundred metres left a long, ribbed, low-angled line (The Yellow Flow, 80m WI2) was soloed up and down. A subsequent ascent of the latter route revealed an old rap sling on a tree on the left at half height, so the route has plainly been done before, but not reported in the guide. 'Fess up, someone...

A great deal more got done in Box Canyon later in January and February — see "Beyond Hope" for details.

FRASER CANYON

The initial version of this update read "nothing to report", but that changed in a big way late in January and into early February. See "Beyond Hope" for details.

THOMPSON

Mark McKay and his fiancée, Kathy Palmer, hiked the gully above the Goldpan recreation site about halfway between Lytton and Spences Bridge to climb a series of WI3 steps in both the right (Happy Boy) and left (Energizer) branches.

MARBLE CANYON

This is an incredibly compact area, with perhaps the finest ice for the longest season of any area in the guide. Despite the seemingly limited scope for new routes, the concentration of activity has resulted in a fair amount to report.

Some confusion has resulted from my lack of specificity in my description of the lefthand route. Waite for Spring climbs the WI4 flow-on the main face; the usually considerably more difficult ice in the dihedral to the left is a separate line, whose history I am completely unclear on. May I suggest the incredibly imaginative name of "The Dihedral" for this feature?

Deeping Wall Direct (move right at half-height and continue straight up the near-vertical pillar to the top) now gets TR-ed reasonably frequently, but very few visitors are made of the stuff to lead this 40m 85 to 90 °WI5 pitch.

The same is true (well, except for the TR-ing part...) of Iain Stewart-Patterson's sport-ice opus, No Deductible, which climbs ice blobbed onto the wall 20m left of Icy BC past 5 bolts to gain a vertical pillar leading into the trees (40m WI5+, 5.6, "A-tree"). This was a strong, bold lead, and finding the bolts would likely be a minor part of the difficulties in doing a repeat.

A couple variants to Icy BC exist, and are worthy of note (and climbing). The lefthand dihedral on the first 15m is superb whether lean or fat, and (as for Deeping Wall Direct or Iain's route) can be turned into a full-value 40m WI5 (the First Tier Direct) by staying left to finish up the vertical pillar plunging out of the trees. Again, TR-ing seems to be the rule, with precious few (if any) leads — as for the other nearby lines, lean ice (which is typical for much of the season) would turn the top half into a very serious 5 R (or even 'X') lead. Considerably better protected is Air Care (40m WI4 +), the Mike Down/Lyle Knight/Mark Savard creation which climbs the iced dihedral to the left of the upper tier of Icy BC before traversing right to finish. It's best done as two short pitches.

A final note: ignore the suggestion on page 116 of the guide that Oregon Jack can be reached from Marble Canyon via Hat Creek. The road does cross the pass, but this is snowmobile terrain most of the winter, and you'll almost surely regret any attempt to turn it into a wheeled shortcut.

LILLOOET: CAYOOSH

Not previously reported are the creek gullies which lie immediately above the roadside 2km north of Channel Ck, about 58km east of the junction in Pemberton. They were much-used by Peder Ourom and friends as a practice/instructional area in days of yore, and are worth a look if you are on your way to spend a day introducing neophytes to ice on The Rambles, which gets considerable traffic.

Sheila Sovereign and Graeme Taylor discovered the short, easy Acute Falls (20m WI2) a few hundred metres up the Gott Creek main, which branches off the Duffey half a km north of the creek crossing.

John Chilton, Jia Condon, Trevor Peterson, and friends from Whistler were incredibly busy during the fine freeze-up in December 1995, and accomplished even more when the second freeze hit in late January and early February. The most major new routes are The Waiting Game, left of Carl's Berg (Jia with Dave Gauley), the Swiller Pillar in Cinnamon Creek (Dave Alexander and Trevor), and Tres Burly (pronounced "tray — burr — lay"), an awesome WI6 in Copper Creek (the tre dudes themselves).

Not made obvious in the guide was the fact that the superb WI4 flow above and right of The Rambles had been climbed by Steve Smaridge and Trevor when they did the rest of the easier stuff in this popular area. Also not mentioned in the guide, by the way, is the obvious feature by which to identify the parking area for The Rambles — a foot/snowmobile bridge across the Cayoosh.

The long (6 pitch) south-facing WI3 gully directly above the Synchronicity bridge (Twilight Tiers) which got done by John with Bill Stiles, and which is described in John's article, lasted only a couple weeks before attempting to kill a subsequent party with melt-induced rockfall as the cold snap came to an end. Future would-be ascentionists take note.

The excellent, 5-pitch stepped gully line a couple hundred metres right of Carl's Berg) (thin 4/4+ on pitch one, and WI4 again on the 4th) fell to Jim Bullock and Conny Amelunxen. This seldom sets up, but is worth watching for.

Just over a kilometre south of the Cinnamon Ck site (i.e. 2km north of Carl's Berg), the relatively new Buddy Creek roads break east from the highway. At the first switchback, 300m up, a spur leads right into a cutblock, at the far end of which easy tramping gains a pleasant 45m WI3+ in a sunny groove. The series of moderate steps higher in the gully were climbed by Jia and Peter in '94/5 (Wet Lady); just who did the lower groove is not yet clear. Good for cold days; ignore it when it's balmy.

A couple hundred metres north of Cinnamon, a stiff little 35m 3+ ice-wall spews into a tree-masked basin just above the road. Lyle Knight thinks he got it first with Garnet Mierau in '94/5, but it sounds from Johnny's listing that it fell to Stevie Smaridge, Trevor, and The Swede in '93 (The Tube).

Rumor has it that a party from Seattle climbed the Synchrontron, but details are totally lacking.

LILLOOET: BRIDGE

Old Dogs (New Picks) (40m WI4; Lyle Knight, Kevin McLane, Robert Nugent, and Don Serl), A New Leash on Life (40m WI4; Peder Ourom and Don Serl), and The Gift (6 pitches WI5; Lyle Knight and Don Serl) are reported elsewhere in this volume.

Iain Stewart-Patterson made solid attempts on Unleashed, the probably-WI6 tier above New Leash, and on the for-sure WI6, massive pillar left of The Gift (q.v.). Lee Purvis and his friend Tuan actually got a pitch onto this monster, but bailed in the face of extreme difficulty and time pressure. Maybe next year?

Lyle Knight tramped up the descent line for Silk Degrees (which has consistently failed to touch down in recent years) to climb several pitches of WI3 to 4 ice high above with Kevin McLane.

As well as more difficult routes, Lyle Knight and friends opened a couple superb, easily-accessible, fun practice areas: Hell Ck Falls (50 to 80m WI2 to 3+ depending on line) lies at the end of a fascinating ice-ramble up the drainage between Capricorn/Plan B and Old Dogs. The other, Cedarvale Falls, is noted under the Carpenter Lake climbs described below.

Who had done what out at Carpenter Lake was, I must admit, pretty much beyond my ken when the guide was published. Together with a couple new routes, the situation can now be pretty well clarified. Distances are referenced from the Terzaghi Dam.

Only a couple hundred metres east of the dam, Lyle Knight thrashed up the screes to solo Terzaghi Falls (2 pitches WI3) in December 1994. He returned in early January with Greg Foweraker and Don Serl to climb the similarly-soloed narrow column which provides a lefthand variation first pitch. Avoid these routes in anything except the coldest weather — they get lots of sun, and turn into party drinks with little provocation.

Ice is visible up Boulder Ck, just half a kilometre west of the dam, but the combination of steepness and exposure to the sun has seemingly left things discontinuous most of the time. Whether this is really what Garry Brace and co. climbed, as claimed in the guide, now seems extremely dubious to me.

At the very least, the guidebook description contains elements of Marshall Ck (see below) too. Steps were definitely involved, so if Marshall really never freezes, Bighorn seems a likely alternative guess.

The Viera and Sebring Ck drainages, 5 and 6km from the dam, seem bereft of ice. Not so the next drainage. Cedarvale Falls (40m WI2+ to 3+) lies a short distance up the creekbed 12 1/2 km west of Terzaghi Dam, and is excellent and varied.

Falls Creek, just under 2km west of Cedarvale, sports a 35m WI2 pitch below the road bridge. Bighorn Creek, a further 31/2 km down the road (18km total from the dam) empties out of a narrow canyon right off the road. There are 10m and 15m WI2 steps to play on.

Trevor Peterson, 2nd pitch, Tre's Burly. Photo: John Chilton

Jones Ck, at 20km, and just a few hundred metres before the Marshall Lake junction, is fall-less. Marshall Ck, on the other hand, displays 3 attractive steps from the bridge a kilometre beyond the junction. Lyle claims the steps never freeze, and I guess he should know. West of that, there's nothing else to report; or at least, nothing to report yet — I'll bet Lyle's got a secret or two tucked away somewhere for just the right winter.

West Coast Ice — Continued

John Chilton

A chance to rest? Shit, who wanted a chance to rest? True it gave us a chance to catch up on some of the necessary chores of life in our society that had been totally neglected for the last month, but it also meant the magic had ended. The formation of waterfall ice in the southwest region of British Columbia is sporadic at best. Rarely fat, always interesting, the climbs form and fall at the whim of the weather. Cold northern high pressure fronts send the coastal ice climbing clan into a frenzy of activity until the inevitable return of the dreaded Pineapple Express. When these warm wet fronts come in from Hawaii psyche levels and frozen pillars come crashing back down to earth.

Happily the rest would be short, a quick chance to catch one's breath, and even as I write the adrenaline junkies are back out getting a dose of the insatiable fix. Heads that hung low-through the wet gloom were now cast upwards hungrily searching the bluffs for new ice. The magic was back. The second cold snap of '95-96 became one of the best yet and before the dust settled there were 50 new routes, including half a dozen WI5s and the Sea-to-Sky corridor's first WI6.

Some of the new climbs listed here (especially those in the Duffey Lake area) use well-known, longstanding climbs like Synchronicity, Loose Lady or Carls Berg as reference points. These coastal classics are listed in Don Serl and Bruce Kay's, The Climbers Guide to West Coast Ice. That book is an indispensable companion for anyone hoping to venture into the realm of coastal ice climbing. The one notable difference I have made in describing these new climbs is in the distance given for the route. Rather than give the total vertical height gained, the distance listed for the climb is the actual amount of ice to be climbed. It is after all a list of ice climbs not gully grovels. Where there are sections of snow or rock between ice pitches it is mentioned in the route description and the overall elevation gain is given when significant.

WHISTLER AREA

BLACKCOMB MOUNTAIN

These climbs are accessed from within the boundaries of the Blackcomb Mountain ski area.

Occasional Drips of Madness 35m WI4 F.A.: John Chilton, Billy Stiles. December 1995

On the north side of the valley almost directly across from Another Day at the Office. Cross Blackcomb Creek at the bottom of the first steep section of the rescue road and contour around the south-facing slope.

Night Shift 20m WI4 F.A.: Jia Condon, John Chilton. December 1994

A little steeper and longer than its neighbor, this route is just left of Another Day... and is an excellent compliment to that route. Unfortunately its formation is rather sporadic.

Spanky's Drool 35m WI3 F.A.: Jia Condon, Trevor Petersen, Dave Sarkany. December 1995

A short ice-choked chimney on the left side of the flats just before the rescue road begins.

Raven's Breath 30m 5.10 WI4 F.A.: Paul Blunden, Aaron Clements. November 1995

This tough mixed route is located in the big left-facing corner on the rock wall directly below the Crystal traverse road and can be seen on your left while riding Blackcomb's Glacier Express chairlift.

Dilithium Crystal 35m WI3 F.A.: Eric Pehota, Rich Prohaska. 1993

The icefall to the left of Raven's Breath.

WEDGEMOUNT

Fast Eddies Apprenticeship 50m WI3+ F.A.: Rich Sanford, Trevor Peterson, Peter Mattsson

Approached from the Wedgemount Lake trail. Go left at the first rockslide and the route exists in the obvious corner at the top of this slide.

Mystery Roach Hotel 25m WI4 F.A.: Trevor Petersen, Rich Sanford, Peter Mattsson. December 1993

Just before the Wedgemount Lake trail parking area there is a gravel pit to the left. Cross this, then continue another 1/2 km along the powerline. The climb is on the right side coming off the obvious bluff.

On the west side of Highway 99 across from the Wedgemount turn-off there are two routes a couple hundred metres up in the trees.

Fat Giblets 25m WI3+ F.A.: Aaron Clements, Greg Ringham. December 1995

Lacy Giblets25m WI3+ F.A.: Aaron Clements, Greg Ringham. December 1995

Lefty 70m WI4 F.A.: Jia Condon, Dave Alexander. January 1996

Park at the first pull-out past the Wedgemount turn-off heading north on Highway 99. The route is about 300m up the hill on the west side of the highway. Climbed in 2 pitches, the first is WI3, the second WI4.

Diamonds in the Rough 25m WI3 & 4 F.A.: Trevor Petersen, Jia Condon. February 1995

A little farther north on Highway 99 from Lefty, about 1 km south of the Soo valley railway crossing. There are two short routes here on the west side of the highway about 300m up the hill.

Panty Stains 30m WI4 F.A. Trevor Petersen, Rich Sanford. December 1993

From the Wedgemount parking lot head northeast through the logging cut and the timber beyond for about two hours to Mystery Creek. The main falls here seldom form and remain unclimbed but the stains nearby provide entertaining routes.

Firryview Estates 70m WI4 F.A.: Trevor Petersen, Jayson Faulkner, Chris Kettles

About 28 km north of Whistler on Highway 99, directly above the railway crossing on the west side, lies The Green River Bastion and the classic winter test piece Blue Moon on Rye. Firryview Estates can be clearly seen to the left of this.

THE MOANING TREE WALL

Due to the incredibly casual access this wonderful little crag is destined to become very popular with the local Whistler crowd. Turn off Highway 99 at the Cal-Chek camp-site about 10 km south of Whistler. Follow this plowed road to a Bailey bridge over the Cheakamus River. About 1 km past the bridge the climbs can be easily seen on your left. There are seven routes here listed from the climber's left to right.

Take Me to the Cleaners 25m 5.6 WI3 F.A.: Billy Stiles, Trevor Petersen. January 1996

Just left of the big moaning fir tree. A couple of dry moves lead to WI3 ice.

The Moaner 25m WI4 F.A.: Jia Condon, Reid Crooks. January 1996

Stem off the fir tree onto thin sheet ice following the thin, dubious line up and right.

Vegetable Alley 25m WI4 F.A.: Trevor Petersen, Billy Stiles. January 1996

Thin, funky, cauliflower ice to a short, vertical exit.

Easy Money 25m WI4 F.A.: John Chilton, Trevor Petersen. January 1996

The column running down the middle of the crag with steep steps at the top and bottom.

The Smell 25m WI4+ F.A.: John Chilton, Jia Condon. January 1996

The thin, stinky, little hanger just right of Easy Money.

Get off the Couch 25m WI3 F.A.: Trevor Petersen, John Chilton. January 1996

The big fat line on the right side of the crag.

The Couch 25m WI2+ F.A.: Trevor Petersen, Jia Condon. January 1996

The thinner but easier drool to the right of Get off...

ACROSS THE GREEN

This area, located on the east side of the Green River about 29 km north of Whistler on Highway 99 directly across from the Nairn Falls campground hosts the best long routes in the Whistler area. Would-be climbers need to be prepared with a means to get across the river. The first ascent party was nearly taken out when an ice damn upstream broke loose and the resulting flood threatened to capsize their rubber dingy.

The Eagle 240m WI5 F.A.: Trevor Petersen, Bruce Kay. February 1996. (First four pitches Trevor Petersen, Peter Mattsson. February 1995. Direct start var. Dave Alexander, John Chilton. February 1996)

This is the longest and most obvious route on the wall. When the pillars on the first and last pitch are formed this is an amazing five-pitch climb directly up the middle of this wall (4+, 2, 3, 4, 5). In leaner years this route still offers a fine four-pitch climb by using the easier WI4 start to the right and then exit right on the ramp which cuts under the final pillar.

Desperado 100m WI3 F.A.: Trevor Petersen, Peter Mattsson. February 1995

Located to the left of The Eagle.

The Mole 150m WI4 F.A.: Dave Alexander, Jia Condon. February 1995

The prominent line to the right of The Eagle. Three pitches of moderate ice (3, 2, 3) lead to a final steep WI4 curtain.

Microrave WI3+ F.A.: John Chilton, Trevor Petersen, Jia Condon. December 1995

About 12 km up the Black Tusk

microwave tower road there are two 20m seeps on the left. These short easy climbs are hardly worth accessing, unless of course you happen to own a snowmobile.

Prospectors Secrets WI3+ F.A.: Aaron Clements, Lon Akerley. January 1996

Also accessed from the Black Tusk microwave tower road, then about 8 km up the rescue trail on the south side of Cheakamus River, followed by a scramble up the Helm Creek gully. There are two 25m routes in an aesthetic lava amphitheater. The first ascent party accessed these climbs in fine style walking the entire way (three hours in, three hours out), but again, the use of a snowmobile would make this more reasonable.

DUFFEY LAKE HIGHWAY

Boxing Day 35m WI3 F.A.: Dave Alexander, Trevor Petersen, Peter Mattsson. December 1995

Park just before the bridge over Gott Creek. The route is about 400m up the steep hillside on the north side of the highway.

Closet Secrets 80m WI4 F.A. Jia Condon Peter Mattsson. December 1995

About 5 km west of Carls Berg, 28 km west of Lillooet. This climb, on the south side of the highway, lies hidden on the left, inside the deep closet-like slot that houses the infamous, and still unclimbed dagger. This sick thing has repelled several attempts by some of the Coast's finest. Closet Secrets makes for a fine consolation prize after backing off, giving two nice pitches of WI4.

Sergeant Pepper 90m WI4 F.A.: Jia Condon, John Chilton, Peter Mattsson. December 1995

Cross Cayoosh Creek at Carls Berg and continue right on this road which makes its way up the Downton Creek drainage. At the 26 km marker (a couple km past Carls Berg) the route can be seen 200m up on the right. A 40m WI2 step followed by a very beautiful WI4 pillar.

The Waiting Game 140m WI5 F.A.: Dave Gauley, Jia Condon. January 1996

200 m left of Carls Berg. Climbers have been watching and waiting on this one for years. The pieces of the puzzle had never quite joined up, until the winter of '95-96 when Mother Nature finally produced this remarkable line. Climbed in five pitches it goes: 25m WI4, 30m WI5, 30m WI3, 30m WI5, 25m WI4.

CINNAMON CREEK AREA

This Forest Service campground 20 km west of Lillooet has been nicknamed "Ice Station Zebra" and is a good reference point for some of the more spectacular new routes in the Coastal Range.

Deep Throat 130m WI4+ F.A.: Trevor Petersen, John Chilton. February 1995

In a deep, narrow slot gully between Carls Berg and Loose Lady (about 1 km west of Cinnamon Creek) on the north side of Cayoosh Creek. Three steep pitches of ice separated by short snow ramps. The first pitch is 50m of 4+, then another 50m of 4, finishing with a wild 30m section of 4+.

Wet Lady 160m WI3 F.A.: Jia Condon, Peter Mattsson. February 1995

On the east side of the highway across from Cinnamon Creek. In February 1995 the first pitch of this climb was not formed so the first ascent party climbed loose rocks on the right to access the gully higher up. If formed, this first pitch will likely produce about 40m of WI4. The route then offers 160m of WI3 broken up with occasional dry sections. Total elevation gain from the highway to the top of this route is about 500m.

The Tube 40m WI3 F.A.: Steve Smaridge, Trevor Petersen, Peter Mattsson. March 1993 This climb is just left of Wet Lady.

Swiller Pillar 200m WI5 F.A.: Trevor Petersen, Dave Alexander. December 1995

This spectacular piece of work can be clearly seen up the north drainage of Cinnamon Creek from the Cinnamon Creek campground. Ford the Cayoosh and head on up the Cinnamon drainage. Takes about an hour. An imposing 70m pillar climbed in two pitches of WI5 followed by 130m of rambling WI2 and 3 ice.

Sweet Cinnamon 120m WI4 F.A.: Dave Alexander, Peter Mattsson. January 1996

Up the same drainage and just left of Swiller Pillar. This climb offers an easier alternative with two pitches of WI3 and one of 4.

COPPER CREEK

Copper Creek is the next drainage east of Cinnamon, flowing into the Cayoosh from the north. There is a green mileage sign, 20 km west of Lillooet, that reads: Pemberton 80 km. There is a bridge across the Cayoosh here, which can be used to access this drainage. Early exploration has produced some very encouraging results.

Tre's Burly 150m WI6 F.A.: John Chilton, Jia Condon, Trevor Petersen. February 1996 (first pitch & 1/2 Jia Condon, Dave Alexander, Jayson Faulkner. January 1996)

The top two pitches of this climb can be seen from the Duffey Lake highway as a large seep coming from the big southeast-facing wall above Copper Creek. Total elevation gain is about 400m. The first pitch is reached after a pleasant 30 min. walk up the drainage. This awesome 55m "Rockies-like" WI4 pillar is followed by a large 200m snow gully leading to a stunning 85m piece of ice clinging to the wall above. The second pitch of the climb is 45m of WI5 to a belay alcove on the left side of the feature. Above this is a 40m pitch of WI6 leading to the top. The first complete ascent was on the third attempt when conditions were very good. Parties attempting to repeat this climb are strongly advised to bring a bolt kit and a strong bit. Pitons are useless here but a bolt station could be made on top. The first ascent team's bit broke and jammed in the awl, which meant rappelling from the top of the formation off a single screw. On the first visitation Jia and Dave built a bomber bolt belay in the cave on the left halfway up the second pitch. This wonderful safe haven can be just reached from the top with two 55m ropes. This station may also be useful for climbing the WI5 column when the upper portion is not in shape.

Red Wall Wanderers 150m WI5 F.A.: Jia Condon, Dave Alexander. January 1996

This outstanding climb is another hour up the Copper Creek drainage on the west side.

Long approach but worthy. Total gain about 500m. Two 40m pitches of WI3 lead to an awesome 45m WI5 pillar followed by 20m of WI4. There appears to be a couple of short, thin WI4 pitches above this point.

Back on the Duffey Lake highway between Loose Lady and Synchronicity about 15 km west of Lillooet there are a couple of formations hidden in the trees on the south side of the road. These routes are difficult to spot but if one drives slowly and keeps a keen eye out they can been seen through short breaks in the trees.

The Straw 35m WI4 F.A.: Trevor Petersen, Steve Smaridge, Peter Mattsson. February 1992

A nice pillar about 150m up the hillside.

Duffeys Delight 125m WI4 F.A.: John Chilton, Billy Stiles. March 1995

About a kilometre past The Straw. Keep your eyes peeled. This climb can only be seen through one slight gap in the trees. It offers good value with virtually no

approach. Put your crampons on a few steps from the road and scamper up the creek for 200m on mostly low-angle ice with some WI2 bits. This ridiculously gentle approach is rewarded with 75m of WI3 followed by a nice 50m section of WI4.

SYNCRONICITY AREA

Mixing with Mike 130m WI4+ F.A.: Reid Crooks, Mike Martin. February 1994

About 14 km west of Lillooet, 500m up on the south side of the highway directly across from Syncronicity. In February of '94 the dagger on the first pitch was not formed so Mike and Reid did some mixed climbing to reach the upper two pitches (40m of WI4, then 50m of WI3). Then in March of '95 the dagger touched down producing a wonderful 40m pitch of 4+ (F.A. John Chilton, Jia Condon, Trevor Petersen)

Twilight Tiers 250m WI3+ F.A.: John Chilton, Billy Stiles. January 1996

13 km west of Lillooet on the Duffey Lake highway lies the bridge crossing and pull-out used to access Syncronicity. Twilight Tiers can be seen from here high on the wall on the north side. Follow the approach to Syncronicity along the north bank of Cayoosh Creek for a hundred metres then head straight up for about 45 minutes. Climb a 25m WI3 step, then up a 50m snow ramp. From this point the route is five continuous pitches of ice, all of which are WI3 or 3+. A very enjoyable ramble up this picturesque wall with views to sate your needy soul.

About 7 km west of Lillooet, Three Ring Circus can be seen in the cutblock on the south side above Cayoosh Creek. Hidden in the forest below is Lost Boys 30m WI 3 F.A. Reid Crooks, Mike Martin February 1994.

MOUNT CURRIE
THE PEHOTA PALACE

About 1 km past the Mount Currie township on the road to Darcy, hidden in the bluffs on the west side. These bluffs are on private property so check with the owners before climbing here. (They're cool — they just want to know what people are up to on their land) There are several routes ranging from WI2-5 with a couple of interesting-looking mixed lines. We found an old cord beside a tree halfway up the WI2 gully — efforts to discover where it came from have proved fruitless. We gave names and grades to the two routes done here, but until the owner of that cord is found the first ascents remain a mystery.

Eric's Envy 20m WI4

The nice steep pillar on the shorter right side of the crag.

Fixed Grip 40m WI5

A sustained, steep, chandaliered line of beautifully-colored ice up the center of the crag.

From the village of Xclawlaw there is a power line road which heads west to the Birkenhead River and passes under a large, steep south-facing slope with a monumental piece of ice smack dab in the middle of it.

Medicine Man 165m WI5+ F.A.: John Chilton, Aaron Clements. January 1996

From the power line road, thrash through the birch and alder to the main central drainage off the south slope and on up to the base of the climb (about an hour). The views alone of Mount Currie's north face and the natural kingdom that unfolds below are worth the effort, and it only improves as one moves higher. 55m of WI3, a little scrambling, and another 55m of WI2 lead to the base of a 55m sustained vertical to overhanging formation. With a 60m rope this can be climbed, as it was on the F.A., in one mind-blowing pitch. There appears to be a possible belay site on the right side at the base of the upper column that would allow this to be split into two 30m WI5 pitches, the lower being more difficult.

Roadside Attraction 40m WI3 F.A.: Trevor Petersen, Peter Mattsson. February 1994.

A few km past Mount Currie the road to Darcy crosses a Bailey bridge over the Birkenhead River and a railway crossing shortly beyond. Roadside Attraction is above here on the right.

Fourskin 90m WI4 F.A.: Jia Condon, John Chilton. December 1993

High up on the west side of Birkenhead River in the Hondu flats area. 25m of WI2 followed by a 40m section of WI4 and another 25m of WI2.

PEARLY GATES

This area lies half-hidden on the north side of the valley, above the first railway crossing past Gates Lake. Five routes were done here ranging in difficulty from WI3-4 and 20-40m in length. F.A.: Trevor Petersen, Peter Mattsson. December 1993

CERULEAN FALLS

Accessed from the Birkenhead Lake to Tranquille Lake road (snowmobile access) on the south side of the valley. These falls, located at about 1500m in elevation, can be counted on to consistently produce. They form into two fine routes. The right side giving three 50m pitches (4+, 4, 4+); the left is a mixed 100m line going at 5.7 WI4. F.A.: Trevor Petersen, Eric Pehota, Rich Sanford, Peter Mattsson. January 1994.

Beyond Hope

Don Serl

As the initial version of the Coast Ice Update (above) went off to the editor during the brief warm spell in the third week of January, a long-hoped-for Arctic outbreak overwhelmed the coast, with temperatures falling to -10ºC in Vancouver and plunging into the -15C to -25C range elsewhere in southwestern B.C. The season had already been the best in recent memory, but this secondary freeze led to conditions extremely seldom encountered on the "Wet" Coast, and by the end of the first week of February, as Spring arrived and the rockshoes came out of the closet, the face of coastal ice climbing had been irrevocably changed: a final total of more than 30 new routes had gone up in the Squamish/Whistler/Pemberton/Duffey Lake Road corridor, just over 20 others had been done in other areas, and WI6 had clearly and firmly arrived.

John Chilton has covered most of the developments along the sea to sky highway from Whistler to Lillooet (including the stunning WI6 Jia Condon, Trevor Peterson, and he put up in Copper Creek, 20km west of Lillooet). Less bounteous but equally significant developments have also taken place beyond Hope, particularly in Box Canyon and north of Yale, which I will detail in this note.

While John Irvine and I had an early December foray into the canyon that yielded three climbs well under a kilometre from the highway, it was really a series of successive weekend trips in late January and early February by Bob Koen, Graham Rowbotham, and a variety of other folks that truly revealed the wealth of ice — much of it at very moderate grades — that awaits those persistent enough to plow through the snow-masked boulders and alders that defend the middle and upper reaches of the canyon (or canny enough to wait for someone else to pound a trail in first). By the time the seasonal tally was complete, about a dozen new routes had been done, two-thirds of them WI3 or 3+.

The first route done was a pretty, 3-pitch

From Left: Kryptonite Column, The Riddler, Mister Freeze. Photo: Don Serl

line directly across the valley from The Grim Reaper, Rigor Mortis (3+). The lefthandmost of three low-angled flows to the left (lower-center in the photo on page 109 of the guidebook) was climbed to the trees, and a couple hidden pitches above added to produce Happy Harvester (WI3). The easy, mushroomed ice at the left edge of the main wall another hundred metres left (see again page 109) was climbed to produce Festering Toadstools (WI3). Once the upper portion of the wall came in, Graham and Darren Melnychuk varied this line out to the right and added a second pitch to the rim (Fear-O-Fungi, WI4). Darren and Harry Kettman added the two-pitch Comfortably Numb (4+) on the central pillar to the right on the same ice wall. A late start from town netted Bob and Robert Nugent the two-pitch Sleeping Dog (3+), up to the right only a couple hundred metres into the canyon. Good snow, a track in, and a much earlier start allowed Bob and Graham to reach the legendary' back end of the canyon, where they climbed Make It So (WI3), hidden in a west-facing corner on the right, and Engage!, a fine line in a chimney on the left (three short pitches, 4+). Robert and I snuck in one week later, just as the warm weather hit, to snag the pitch-and-a-half 4+ which lies on the shady side of the valley up the hillside a few hundred metres before Engage! is reached. All day we were treated to the sound of ice falling from the still-unclimbed monster lines on the Emerald Wall at the back end of the canyon and from the stuff next to Mister Natural. It'll take special conditions indeed to get the right combination of groundwater flow, freezing temperatures, and lack of sun which'll be needed before these super-steep, south-facing lines form and stay safe.

Meanwhile, the lower altitude weeps surrounding Hope and Yale were coming in. Greg Foweraker, John Irvine, and I skipped out of work on the last Thursday of the month to meet Tom Bridge and have a look. We found more ice than we could believe, and settled on a couple stunning lines up the slopes 1km north of Sawmill Creek. Tom and I climbed a three-pitch line facing the highway, which finished with a spectacular 45m curtain capped by an enormous roof fringed with 10m icicles (Under the Big Top, WI5). A couple hundred metres up the slope to the left, Greg and John also did a 3-pitch WI5 route, producing the beautiful and sure-to-be-popular Water Music.

The weekend produced several more routes. Tom Bridge teamed up (on his third attempt) with Brendan Cusick to climb Northwest Passage, the massive chimney line on Jarvis Bluffs. Significant open water, some hard mixed climbing, and a couple extremely sketchy belays were entailed before the superb ice of the final three pitches was reached. Tom grades the route "hard"; something like 5.9 A2 WI5+ might be appropriate. While this was going on, Peder Ourom and I were climbing a line spilling over the broad wall just north of the Sailor Bar tunnel. From the road, we thought it'd go at 4, 3, 4, but we were deceived. The bottom lefthand wall was tricky WI5, then a pitch and a half of 3+ led to the base of the final column, which was too hard for us. We finished The Riddler with the WI2 avoidance ramps to the right.

I came back the very next day and joined Tom and his friends at the same wall. Tom assaulted the half-pitch, hollow column immediately to the right of the previous route, overcoming 10m of pretty much unprotectable vertical ice and persisting through the cracking of the entire column just below the band of overhangs at the top of the steepest section to produce Mister Freeze. Following confirmed that this was by far the hardest piece of ice I'd ever pulled, and Tom declared it WI6 for sure, and harder technically than some of the Rockies 6s he had done. Short it may be, but a WI5 climber would be most unlikely to escape unscathed, so 6 it remains until someone authoritative climbs it and says different, or until someone comes up with a way to distinguish between WI6 difficulty and a WI6 pitch.

Such quibbles do not effect the next route; the following weekend produced the biggest prize of all: Tom got together with Greg White to climb the awesome, roof-capped corner to the left. The initial 50m WI6 pitch took Greg three hours to overcome, then two short moderate pitches up and right established them beneath the even more fearsome upper columns and overhanging tiers. Amazingly, by weaving an intricate line out left, then back right, Tom found a way thru at 5+, and after a short easy finishing pitch Kryptonite Column was theirs.

The Superheroes Cirque (as this area now seems to be named) acquired one final route before the grip of winter passed: Tom (again) climbed the lovely-looking flow/column/left slanting gully/open wall line half a kilometre up the hill with Justin Sjong to produce Where is Ultrawoman (five pitches, WI4+). Days later, after three weeks of winter, the temperature was in the teens and the remaining routes were on the ground. Being a coastal ice climber is totally beyond hope.

The Gift

Don Serl

Just over a decade ago, Carl Austrom and a variety of his friends discovered and knocked off most of the big routes in the Bridge River canyon, roughly 40 kilometres northwest of Lillooet. This was followed by many years of nearly complete inactivity (in the winter it's six or more hours' drive from Vancouver to the Bridge, the most "remote" ice climbing area in southwestern B.C.), but Lyle Knight's work-related move to Lillooet in the early 90s opened another phase of exploration. By the time West Coast Ice was published in late 1993, it seemed there was not much of significance left to be done in the canyon.

Or so it seemed. Ironically, the warm, wet winters of the past two or three years, which have seemed so discouraging to Vancouver-resident, putative ice climbers, have allowed more weepage than usual in the higher, drier, colder, east-side-of-the-Coast-Range country surrounding Lillooet. This has led to the formation of several

The Gift. Photo: Don Ser1

superb routes which otherwise would almost certainly have fallen to Carl and his coterie long ago. Instead, the opportunity has come my way to be involved in the first ascents of three of the finest lines in the canyon.

Two of the routes are short. Old Dogs (New Picks) sports short, challenging vertical sections in a 40-metre WI4 pitch, all of 30 paces off the road, less than a kilometre beyond Capricorn and Plan B. It certainly remained unclimbed only because the pillar at half-height only vaguely pretended to form most winters. The winters of 94/95 and 95/96 have seen it fat, and, given the prevailing conditions, Old Dogs is now far and away the most frequently climbed piece of ice in the canyon.

If the TR-ing hordes drive you away from Old Dogs, the other shortie offers an excellent option (and, in fact, complement: it's easy and pleasant to climb them both in a day). A New Leash on Life lies a couple of hundred metres up the eastern slope about five and a half kilometres beyond Old Dogs just before the "big bend" in the canyon. Once again, a 40-metre pitch of fine WI4 ice is on offer and, exactly as for Old Dogs, a convenient tree to the left is equipped for the rap.

The third route is not short. Six long pitches of pillars and flows sweep up the cliffs facing the road at the "big bend," four kilometres before the dam. The first pitch (which is pretty much hidden in the trees in the view from the road) is definitely the "main event." Superb weaving through huge overhanging bosses of ice leads to a ledge at 15 metres. A vertical, chandeliered chimney opens onto an 85° wall before the angle eases at 35 metres. An Abalakov thread at the belay confirmed the suspicions aroused by bootprints at the bottom that the pitch had been climbed in the previous few days (although by whom remains a mystery), but the rest of the route was obviously virgin ground.

The column on the second pitch is only maybe 12 metres tall, but it provides the technical crux of the route: frighteningly-bad, vertical ice improves enough by half-height to make installing screws something other than a waste of time and energy. The third tier is shorter, with better ice, and continues through delightful, solid bulges to a stance below the mouth of the upper basin. A short step and easy ground leads to a sheltered tree belay on the right, then the fifth pitch soars up superb, knubbly, forgiving WI3 flows. The final column is a bit shorter and considerably more solid than that on pitch two, but as it was encountered considerably after nightfall and at the end of something like nine or ten hours of climbing (oh, God, not another one...) it felt like the most physically challenging of all the pitches — in fact, I thought I was off for sure a couple of times, and the trees on top were mighty welcome, even though the warmth and security of the car still lay many hours of thrashing away.

And as for the name? Well, first off and most obviously, it was the Christmas holidays. Also, my wife and family had not only given me the time to run out on them (yet again!), but, despite the stresses that my absences cause, had presented me with a set of new tools to add to my enjoyment. Not to mention the call from Lyle that brought me up to do the route with him. Which brought to mind the other friendships which had contributed so much to my days out on these and other routes. And finally, there was the gift of life and time and perseverance and — despite advancing years — retained abilities which conspired with something akin to fate to present me with the opportunity to do these routes at all.

I came away feeling supremely privileged to have been one of the agents of creation of this fine route — what else could it be but The Gift?

Where The Icefields Have No Name: A Ski Trip In The Nass River Country

Markus Kellerhals

The Nass country is eagles, bears, endless rain, dripping rainforests and huge clearcuts, pine mushrooms and devil's club, salmon and eulachon, lava flows, waterfalls, mountain and glaciers and a native people still fighting for their land; in short a microcosm of B.C.

Tucked between the Nass River and Observatory Inlet, on B.C.'s north coast, lies a small icefield with ridges radiating outward toward the coast and toward the interior. The peaks there are quite subdued, rising to just below 7000 feet. Despite this, glaciers extend as low as 2000 feet, maintained by the huge winter snowfalls that this area is known for.

We set our sights on visiting this area in the spring of 1995. At the end of April, Brian and Betsy Waddington, Dave Williams, Matthias Jakob and I drove to Greenville, a village located along the Nass River, not far from the coast. Our first view of the area was uninspiring; from the Nass Highway we looked up to a group of rounded snow bumps. Brian expressed our sentiments perfectly, "We drove for two straight days just to ski the Squamish-Cheakamus divide?" However, as we neared the coast, the topography became much more rugged, and the peaks we spotted appeared to be acceptably spiky.

In Greenville we met John Clarke, our sixth team member. John had arranged for two locals to drive us to Kwinamuck Lake, at the northeastern end of the range, where we would start our trip. From there we would ski southwest for 12 days to reach the coast at the mouth of the Nass River, where we had arranged to be picked up by boat.

We spent our first night on a logging spur above Kwinamuck Lake. Dave sorted our boxes of food into six huge piles that were unfortunately destined for our respective packs.

The next morning we plunged right into the lovely, but very steep and slippery forest of old growth hemlock. Fatiguing quickly, we set up camp as soon as we reached the ridge above treeline. The huge Nass River valley, crisscrossed with logging roads and clearcuts of various ages, was spread out below our camp.

Over the next few days we skied southwest toward the main part of the icefield, climbing several gentle peaks on the way. The logging roads and other signs of civilization were soon left behind and the peaks became more rugged as we moved into the centre of the range.

From a base camp on the east side of the icefield we climbed a 6600-foot peak above Shumal Creek and several subsidiary summits to the southwest. From the same camp we traversed a rugged ridge between Shumal and Anudol creeks to climb a 6200-foot peak overlooking the Nass. On the return to camp a thick, clammy fog enveloped us quite suddenly. I managed to get totally disoriented before resorting to the compass. A kilometre or so from camp we broke out of the fog and were back under a broiling sun. It was as if we had left the walk-in freezer and entered the sauna. That evening tendrils of fog reached toward camp but never quite surrounded us.

The following morning we packed up and moved camp to the west, stopping to climb the 6800-foot peak in the centre of the icefield. That evening four of us ascended the icy 6600-foot peak immediately west of camp. Matthias headed alone up the steep 6700-foot pyramid at the head of Stagoo Creek. The descent from our peak made heroes of us all. On the perfect, slightly sun-softened surface we could do no wrong. Only at the very bottom did the snow consistency shift toward the gooey-oatmeal end of the spectrum.

Weather was again perfect the next day. We skied to the northeast corner of the icefield and climbed the two peaks east of Kelskiist Creek, both of which gave us superb views down to the inlets below.

It was time to move camp again the following morning, but first we retraced Matthias's steps up the 6700-foot peak above Stagoo Creek. This is probably the most spectacular peak in the area, rising from low valley footings on two sides. The seemingly inaccessible west peak almost certainly involves some fine rock climbing (which we, unfortunately, were not equipped for).

When we finally got started with the packs, the sun had been softening the snow for some time. This made for a rather harrowing descent to the next glacier. Several of us were accompanied down by our own private avalanche, fortunately of the slow-moving variety.

After setting up camp we finished off the day with a jaunt up a 5300-foot bump to the west which gave views of the divide heading toward Peak 6577 — the next section of our route. From a distance the route appeared difficult. Several steep sections on the ridge appeared as if they might be tricky to bypass.

However, when we reached that part of the divide early the next morning, our worries proved to be unfounded. It was one of the most scenic sections of the trip, with stunning views into the deep valleys on either side. Steep slopes dropped off

Skiing off Peak 6600. Photo: Markus Kellerhals

on either side of the narrow ridge but the crest was largely skiable. Later that day, we scrambled up Peak 6577 from the west. From the peak we watched threatening, grey rain clouds move in from the coast.

That evening we camped on the glacier southwest of Peak 6577. Brian and Dave skied up the nearby 5600-foot peak before dinner. Shortly after dinner, it began to rain for the first time on the trip.

Next morning the rain had stopped but the clouds still looked threatening. As we traversed around the east side of Peak 5600 my skiing began to feel strange. I looked down at my feet and noticed that one binding was almost falling off the ski. I hobbled across on one ski to the col where the others were waiting. When we got to a spot out of the wind, I inspected the damage to my skis. The top plate on one had broken and was separating from the ski along with the attached binding. I remounted the binding, put in extra screws and lots of epoxy and hoped for the best.

On a narrow section of the ridge we were hit with an intense rain squall that soaked us to the skin in a matter of minutes. We quickly set up the tents on two small snow ledges and took shelter within. A break in the weather late that evening allowed us to dry some clothes.

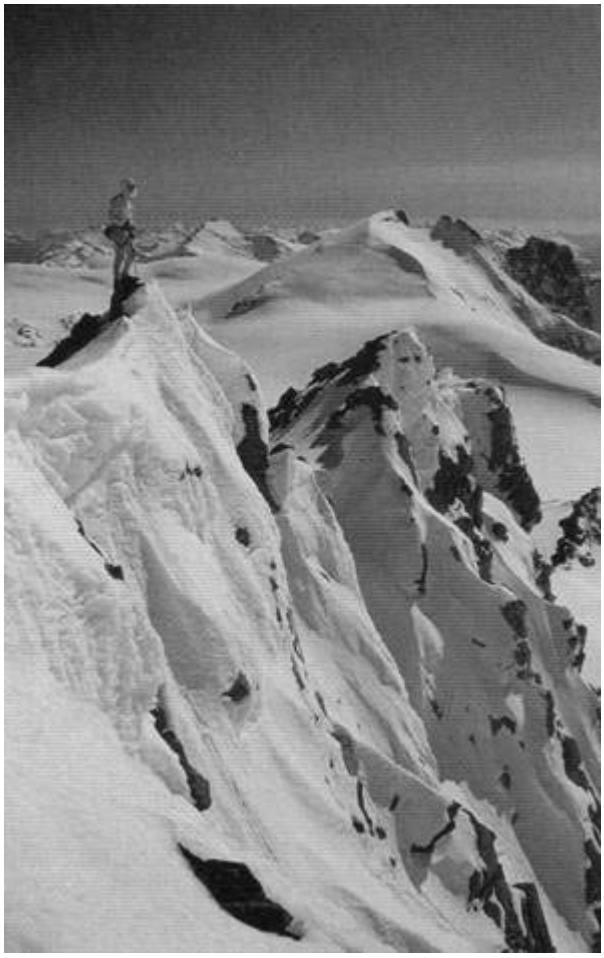
During the times we were stuck in the tent on this trip we were well entertained. John shared stories from his 30 years of Coast Mountain explorations. We even got him to agree to publish a book to be called "The Remaining Unclimbed Peaks of the Coast Mountains"; the only problem being that he will only publish it when he's finished climbing them all! When John was not entertaining us we could usually count on Matthias to keep us amused with his degenerate, Bavarian sense of humour. My bad luck with equipment continued the next day. While digging in my pack I dropped my Therm-a-Rest and watched it roll over a cliff band below. About an hour later, I reached the area into which it had fallen. Finally I recovered it from the base of a cliff where it was lying a few feet away from a deep moat.

After travelling a few kilometres, we were pinned down by weather again. It now appeared that we were going to be at least one day late finishing the trip.

When the weather was still marginal the next day, we discussed other options for finishing the trip. It was possible to bypass the remaining ridge by dropping into the Iknouk River and then finishing the trip with a bushwhack out to the coast. We had no illusions about how pleasant the "green hell" in the valley below us would be. The only question was how long could we afford to wait for the weather. Miraculously, as we sat around discussing, the clouds began to break up. Within a few minutes our decision was made.

The day that followed was magical. We traversed all day along ridges just above fog level. Our final camp was on a heathen' knoll at the end of the ridge. It was just above where we would have to drop down into the bush the next day. From our vantage we watched the evening light play on the fog layer below us. Across the Nass, to the south, were row after row of peaks that even John couldn't identify.

The next day all we had to do was descend to the Iknouk River and then bushwhack out to Nass Bay. We skied down into the forest to about 2000 feet before the snow thinned out. From there we reached the shore after a few hours of choice bushwhacking. There we found a note, dated the day before, from



John Clarke on Peak 6600 Photo: Markus Kellerhals

Alex, our boatman, which said, "Back to pick you up tomorrow p.m."

Sitting on the beach all afternoon, waiting for the boat, I had lots of time to think about the trip. Though the area may not be as spectacular as some of the more rugged parts of the Coast Mountains to the north and south, it had an appeal of its own. The lush valleys that were usually visible below formed a superb contrast with the snow- and ice-covered ridges that we travelled along. Certainly, some of the appeal lay in the remoteness of the area. During most of the trip there were few hints that the six of us shared this planet with six billion others. We left nothing behind us but a few ephemeral ski tracks, while the mountains left us with powerful memories of beauty, silence and shared adventures.

By 10 p.m. we had pretty much given up any hope of being picked up that day, and were going to bed. Some of us were already in the tents when we saw the lights of a boat at the edge of the tidal flats. We packed in record time and stumbled across the muddy flats to the boat. The trip back to Greenville in the dark, with a rising southeaster blowing us along, catching snatches of music from the stereo, seemed a fitting finale to another excellent Coast Mountain journey.

New Route — Rufous Mountain, Northwest Face

With class postponed for another week and the weather looking promising, Fred Beckey easily persuaded me to join him on a fall trip into the Tchaikazan. The road to the trailhead proved to be a challenge for my soon-to-be-muffler-challenged, 18-year-old Toyota station wagon. A section of slumped road provided one of the more interesting obstacles on the drive in. A pleasant walk into the fall splendor of the Tchaikazan valley led past an outfitter cabin to our final camp on the opposite side of the river. A pre-dawn start found us struggling up the loose scree under a bright, fall moon which left a soft, red glow on the peaks across the valley just before dawn.

A short climb up the melted-out glacier at the base of the northwest face led into the narrow, snow-filled gully on the far left. With Fred in the lead we climbed the initial soft snow into the moderately-angled gully surrounded by extremely rotten rock walls. We roped up as the couloir steepened and belayed up the hard snow and ice with the odd pin driven into the crumbling rock wall on the left. We exited onto the upper snow shoulder at the top of the north face with moderately-angled cramponing leading to the summit. The view into the headwaters of the Tchaikazan were enhanced by the clear fall air and a fresh skim of snow on the high peaks. Descent down the long scree slopes under a blazing sun was tempered by a near swim down the Tchaikazan River when I made a poor choice of river crossing. After catching up with Fred on numb feet, we soon heard the ringing bells of horses in the meadow signaling the return of two guide outfitters from Spectrum Pass. I wandered over to their fire for an evening visit, and with the offer of a hot cup of coffee, an enjoyable last evening in the valley was spent talking about wildlife and the growing traffic congestion in Vancouver.

Rufous Mountain, Coast Mountains. New Route on the Northwest Face.

F.A.: Steve Sheffield & Fred Beckey, Fall, 1994.

Steve Sheffield

New Routes Out Of The Buckler Glacier

Don Serl

Jim and I had wavered between the Radiant and the south side in our planning for a spring trip into the Waddington Range. But when telephone conversations with Mark Jenkins made it apparent that he had discovered the "secret," unclimbed Buckler Glacier face on Waddington, and that he and John Harlin were intent on climbing it, we decided to stake our claim to the route which had been on our minds for the previous couple of years, and to join Mark and John in Ice valley, rather than simply vacating the field and potentially watching from the sidelines as they climbed "our" couloir. As it turned out, they had their eyes on a line farther to the left, so we each got to do the route of our choice, and new friendships — rather than competition — resulted.

Jim Elzinga on ridge traverse, Mount Munday. Photo: Don Serl

Second Step Towers couloir. Photo: Don Serl

Mark and John were seeking adventure, so after visiting in Vancouver, they carried on to Campbell River, from where they were flown into the logging camp at the head of Knight Inlet. They then plunged into the bush of the Franklin River, reaching the glacier on their third day, and their Ice Valley basecamp a couple of days later. By the time we flew in a week behind them, they were already high on the mountain, and rather than simultaneously climbing separate routes, we found ourselves simply greeting the lads as they stumbled back into their high camp after a 20-hour summit day. Their route, Cowboy Way, runs into the upper right corner of the highest basin of the Buckler, then follows gullies and a low-angled, ice-filled chimney onto the ridge crest just east of the summit tower. In a remarkable display of force and fortitude (not to mention incredible luck with the notoriously fickle Waddington weather), they found themselves on the summit only a week after leaving the beach, having opened the first route on the true south face of the mountain to boot; the famous original South Face route of Wiessner and House actually faces southwest, and even nearly due west in its upper sections.

We lazed around together the following day, then Jim and I set off for "our" route, and Mark and John headed down and out. We traversed the upper bench of the glacier a few hundred metres right, then set off directly up into the huge couloir delineated by a pair of magnificent rock towers on its left. Firm, avalanche-burnished névé slashed upward for 450 metres to a 30-metre-high, mist-shrouded, WI4 waterfall pitch, breaking past frosted roofs into the upper couloir. A broken pick curtailed my efforts to reach a niche on the left, and Jim led through to battle the vertical, spindrift-swept upper section. Once up, a pleasant belay and two undulating, icicle-fringed, upper pitches were his reward, then two snow pitches put us onto the stormy east ridge. We had a brief view, through a gap in the clouds, of the Tooth and the summit tower a few hundred metres away while we grabbed a bite, but the top was not to be ours that day, and we bailed. Three hours later we were back in camp.

Snowy weather overnight cleared enough by late morning to let us descend, and repetitions of the pattern the following couple of days kept us from doing much except ski touring in Ice valley. Finally a clear morning let us get away early for a line we had spotted which splits the rocky western buttresses of the westernmost subpeak of Mount Munday. An hour of skiing, an hour of tramping up steepening slopes to the 'schrund, and another hour of fine flat-footing up scoured slopes saw us into the mouth of the gully. Six or seven pitches of moderate, undulating snow, ice, and mixed put us into the top of the left branch of the couloir, which we called the Starship Couloir because of the huge, V2-shaped, pale rock excrescence which guards its left flank. A steep rope length of superb dry-tooling on snow-crusted blocks brought us onto the crest to the right, and a moderate rock pitch led to a belay in front of a tower. This was passed high on the right by a thin, balancy traverse (5.8). Beyond, the rock quality deteriorated, but Jim — the old Rockies hand — simply knocked the junk off the crest till climbably-firm conditions were achieved. A final wind-swept snow crest curled to the top, where we basked in the lee in the warm afternoon sun for an hour or so before setting off down the west-facing glacier to regain our skis.

Unfortunately, a pulled calf muscle, resulting from a bad landing on a short crevasse-leap, put paid to any further climbing plans for me, but it had been a great trip already, and I'll admit to not being totally bummed when Reto's chopper pulled us out early. I always look forward to sipping a coffee, grabbing a shower and a shave, and getting back to the family, and the pleasure is that much more intense with week in the backcountry and a couple of fine new routes in the bag.

Spring Break

Bruce Kay

The original idea was the Bugaboos in May. The previous spring Larry had had a highly enjoyable trip to the Adamants with some friends and was eager to repeat the experience. The scenario he described was unbeatable; sun-soaked granite one day, perfect mixed the next, all minus the hordes of summer. We would pitch a camp up high to capitalize on potentially short weather windows, and keep the approach marches to a civilized minimum. The prevailing philosophy would be: climb for fun and camp in style. After all it may not be Club Med but we're still on holiday. Helicopter access would be required but the total costs would still be half that of a typical Yukon or Alaska trip, and with "The Robson Master" along for a more or less fair weather guarantee — how could we lose?

Before long Larry had sold the idea to a handful of fellow Canmorons and one Whistlerite, but as is often the case, the numbers dwindled over time and the location changed — to Waddington. Ultimately only two of us disembarked from the Whitesaddle shuttle on to the Tiedemann Glacier, blinking and gawking as the storm cleared off of Club Wadd.

We first set off up the glacier to see the sights. The north face of Bravo looked nice but a week's worth of new snow clung to its flank, and besides, all that sunny granite on the other side of the valley was a bit too distracting. Many potential lines beckoned but we inevitably found ourselves eyeing up Tiedemann's fantastic south ridge. Big, clean, sunny and safe, it is certainly the classic of the valley. Before long we knew we had to give it a go given the obvious high pressure ridge moving into the area. That evening we packed a couple of overnight packs with a light wall tent, three days of food and fuel, and eagerly set the alarm for an early rise.

What followed was a magnificent journey up a granddaddy spine crafted from the finest of Coast Range granite. Much of the rock was still choked with the snow and verglas of winter thus conditions were less than optimum but the climbing was still tremendous and we certainly made the most of it. The leader chose plastics or rock shoes and hauled his pack on the steeper pitches while the second usually followed contentedly on jugs. The pace was steady but not particularly hurried. At

Bruce Kay on the "Hairline Hose," Waddington. Photo: Larry Stanier

Larry Stanier on 2nd Tower, Tiedemann. Photo: Bruce Kay

the top of each pitch the leader had a precious moment or two to absorb the fantastic position we had climbed into. Flawless cerulean skies, rugged rock and glaciation enveloped us. Waddington brooded down at us from across the way, smoking under a bitter north wind and periodically spitting séracs to the valley below. Our south face lay windless and basking in the warm spring sun in stark contrast to the blue shadows of the north wall facing us, where winter lingered on.

Our first evening found us creeping around into the col behind the first tower where we managed to scrape out a reasonable bivouac. We slept soundly and arose a bit late, but before long we were on our way up the prow of the second tower finding more of the same fine solid granite, perhaps even a tad finer. The cruxes for us were the chimneys, stuffed with snow and ice. My wet Ninjas were soon staining my feet a toxic shade of green that would stay with me for a month. By noon we couldn't stand the sodden things any longer and strapped on the plastic boots for the remainder of the climb.

Late in the day Larry set off up our wildest pitch. I had soon lost sight of him as the rope inched slowly out and the haul line dangled further and further out in space, but as the odd exclamation of glee drifted down I could picture Larry grinning away under his curly walrus mustache, much as he always is. When the time came I followed his magical mystery tour up through a strange ice-glazed, diagonal chimney, onto a steep Al headwall and around to the belay where Larry sat grinning, snapping photos and jabbering excitedly about the friendly terrain just above.

At dusk we traded the steep rock of the second tower for a big, flat bivi site, grateful at last to unharness and stretch our legs at ease. From our tent we could gaze up at the steep rock pillars of the final summit ridge, one of which the first ascent crew had had the audacity to climb. It wasn't until now that we felt committed to an upward escape and with only one day's food and fuel left we were perfectly content to avoid the whole issue up some ice gullies we knew lay hidden on the right.

The next morning we did just that, arriving on the summit ridge in cloud before noon. We elected to forgo the summit. I had been there twice before and Larry was perfectly happy to go up, down, or sideways, so down we went. The descent took the rest of the day, most of that in the Asperity-Tiedemann couloir which after a while seemed to be the proverbial up escalator. By the time we had collected our skis and rolled back to Rainy Knob we were well and truly knackered though very content, especially as there was a distinct change brewing in the weather.

In the morning clag choked the valley but little did we care as we leisurely plundered our reserves and deliberated over nothing more complicated than the appropriate tune selection. Better yet Mike King soon appeared with Alan Dennis and a large Canadian Avalanche Association field research team. This was good as after four days the clag was still there and camp life was getting a little old, thus the extra company was most welcome. However, with Larry around we knew the weather had to clear at some point and when it did the logical choice was of course the Wadd. We had had enough of overnight packs so with the return of high pressure we arose early and went day-tripping up the standard route. Perfect early morning conditions saw us skinning most of the way to Spearman col, with a bit more hiking putting us at the summit tower by 10 a.m.

The Southeast Chimney route was in excellent shape; no loose rock and liberally dosed in ice. Incredibly, the stiff gale that had assailed us most of the way up died down to a whisper for the summit. Larry tried to call home with his radio but failed to connect with the BC Tel repeater over on Vancouver Island, despite receiving them crystal clear. Next we tried Whitesaddle but Jen was in Palm Springs or somewhere, and no doubt Mike was out tinkering with his bikes again. Finally we yelled at the CAA crew down at the Waddington-Combatant col but they were too intent on their close range observations of avalanches in motion to pay any attention to us. Alas the moment was ours alone but by late evening we were all safely down in the valley trading tales over a hot brew.

Another two days of clag then it

was time for Bravo. Two weeks of little precipitation and a few melt/freeze cycles had whipped it into fine shape providing some wonderful ice and mixed climbing, first in a three-pitch intrusion of basalt, then on the final headwall of firm granite. On the summit we napped away a couple of hours while the Bravo cirque settled down from the afternoon heat. The next day the Whitesaddle shuttle was due and our time was up.

As I snoozed in the warm afternoon sun I felt a certain contentment that seems so rare in everyday life. I now knew one place, or more precisely a state of being, where it is quite reasonably attained. This sense of contentment runs strong like a river through the thick of battle or as then, in peaceful reflection and is as close to a sense of perfection as I am likely to experience. At that moment at least, such was the case. The only glaringly obvious improvements that immediately sprang to mind were a nice hot shower and a Bruno Burger.

Mount Tiedemann, south ridge, 1500 metres, second or third ascent (or incomplete depending on how you look at it). May 6-8, 1995.

Mount Waddington, southeast chimneys with "Wadd Hose" variation. Three pitches up northeast face couloir of the summit tower, WI3. May 13, 1995.

Bravo Peak, northeast face, 880 metres, IV 5.8 mixed WI3. F.A.: May 15, 1995.

All climbs Larry Stanier and Bruce Kay.

A Day At The Beach

Drew Brayshaw

Around the end of June I quit my job and decided to spend the rest of the summer climbing — sounds good, doesn't it? In truth, it was more like I was told "Here's your cheque, don't come back," but the net effect was the same. Cam had been tormenting me with his stories of all the routes he was putting up at our "secret area" in Cheakamus Canyon while I was working, so I called him up and said that we had to go climbing. A long weekend... good weather... why crag when there are unclimbed routes in the mountains begging to be done? We thought about destinations for all of two seconds and decided to go to the Coquihalla.

Actually, we ended up going before the weekend had started. Wednesday morning I threw a few things into my pack: wire brush with half the bristles missing, four pins, shitty VOC alpine hammer, third tool with a hammer head, water bottle, Gatorade bottle wrapped in duct tape, bug hat, lime green bush pants, 10.5mm rope, helmet, rack, map, etc. — the usual stuff. About the only thing I left at home was the kitchen sink.

Cam drove over and picked me up in the afternoon. We filled up his truck with my junk collection, plus another fifteen or so of the Ten Essentials, and headed off on Highway 1 through rush hour traffic. It was good to pass through the hordes of scurrying drones, rushing home from their 9-to-5 grind, and to know that we were doing something different. As we drove east, the cars thinned out and the air began to smell like the back end of a cow. This made us hungry, so we stopped in Chilliwack and gorged ourselves before continuing on our travels.

We passed through Hope quickly, like a bad meal through a diseased infant, and found ourselves squirted out of the greasy sphincter of the Lower Mainland and into the beautiful Coquihalla country, where granite domes bulge in Freudian fashion to disturb climbers' bivouac dreams. Some bastard had locked the gate on the pipeline road which cuts around the back of Needle Peak so we had to pay the highway toll like law-abiding citizens.

Turning off onto the upper Coldwater road, the mountains were just black silhouettes on a starry sky. We were a bit surprised to find road work occurring on the logging road. A bunch of waterbars were in the process of being cut or filled in (who could tell which?), and there were huge mounds of dirt piled across the road like the leavings of an incontinent giant. Cam had to switch into 4x4 to get over the last one and I was glad his truck had rollbars as we roared up and over at a dangerous angle. Last year, even a Camaro could have made it up this road! Finally we got to the end of the road and set up camp. A beautiful night: warm, quiet, and scented with the smells of fireweed. A few meteors blazed their lonely trails across the sky as we inflated Therm-a-Rests and pitched Cam's tent.

In the morning, of course, the real situation made itself clear. It took us a while to figure out that it was daylight because the tent was completely covered by a horde of mosquitoes and blackflies. I had heard about the summer bugs in the Coquihalla, but now I was getting some first-hand experience. These were the type of mosquitoes that land on a runway and get filled with fifty gallons of aviation fuel before the mechanic realizes he isn't dealing with a Bell 206! We choked down breakfast (oatmeal for me, Ichiban for Cam) while psyching up for the day. End of June and still a big dump of snow everywhere; so much for the north side of anything at all. We drove up a spur and headed for the south face of Vicuna.

The approaches in Coquihalla country are sweet, especially for out-of-shape rockaineers who haven't been in the mountains in a month or so. Barely an hour after leaving the truck we were out of the trees and into the heather and block zone. We wormed our way through house-sized, moss-covered boulders, over stunted trees, through blueberries (yum), and onto a great smooth slab below the south face, with rivulets of running snowmelt to drink from. This gave us a nice "Class 1" approach to the base of the face, although I nearly stopped to put on my rock shoes at one point, since my blownout Hi-Tecs had less grip than a Thalidomide tot. Cam told me I was being weak and pitiful, so I left the "hiking slippers" on. When we got to the base of the face, we began scoping.

The dominant feature of the south face is a huge zawn. On the right, we could see some nice-looking lines, but closer scrutiny showed that they might be (gasp) third class for the first pitch or so, so we vetoed them (the fact that they looked way blank higher up had nothing to do with this decision, of course). We hiked "around the corner" to see what was on the southwest face and our eyes were drawn to an obvious corner and crack system which shot up just left of the big zawn, and right of a grim gully.

Soloing up to a heather ledge, Cam set up a belay off a pencil-thin tree while I changed into my rock shoes and hung various useful items off loops and webbing. I had this feeling that somewhere up there I was going to need the kitchen sink I had left at home. I began by pulling up on some crumbly left-facing lieback/smear bulge-type-thing, jamming in the usual cams in case some hold decided to jam out on me. Above, the corner turned into a perfect face crack on excellent stone. A few moves, a nut, a sling, a few more moves... sunshine, snow and sky. "This is the crack I dream about!!!" I yelled to Cam. Then I looked at my hands. The perfect quartz crystals inside the crack were giving me the Jaws treatment — blood everywhere! I continued up the crack until it died out, and set up a belay off big cams jammed in a wide crack

Cam Campbell on Vicuna Beach. Photo: Drew Brayshaw

behind a bulging roof.

Cam rushed up towards me. By the time he was close he had about eight or nine pieces on his rack. I didn't like the roof above me so I told him to head left. He pulled over the edge of a right-facing corner into a face crack, starting off a small ledge down and left of my belay. I offered him the rack but he declined it; he figured he had enough gear for the lead already. "OK, man, you're on." He took off out of view. Underneath the roof I couldn't really see what was happening, so I just fed out rope when told to. Suddenly a big chunk of dead wood came flying through the air past the belay. I heard cursing and bitching, but the rope stayed loose. Eventually the "Off belay!" came floating down to me.

On top-rope now, I cleaned the anchor and pulled left around the roof. "Fuck, I wouldn't have wanted to lead this," I thought to myself, butt hanging in space, feet scraping in the lichen, hand stuffed deep into a wide crack filled with seaweed-like growths. Eventually my groping hand closed on a big, wobbly jug and I hauled over the lip. It was only 5.8, man! Above, a big crack led up to Cam: 2"-2.5", about the same depth, and flared as hell. Most of the gear Cam had was nuts and tiny cams; he only managed to get in a few pieces in the full-length pitch. The crack succumbed to gastons the whole way up; halfway, a big clump of heather stuck out and presented a barricade that had to be stretched around. A stump showed where the falling wood had come from; the last gear had been about thirty feet below. "Good lead, man!" I arrived at the belay — a tiny one-cheek ledge Cam had enlarged with his pack. Once at this rest, he had been able to get at the "spare gear" he was carrying, and get enough to craft an anchor.

Above the belay, the crack pinched into nothingness within a metre or so. Lichen-frosted knobs and crystals led upwards over a bulge. A tiny finger traverse seam led off rightwards. Cam tried to persuade me to head right but I didn't think it looked good. I stuck a cam in at Cam's head level and started climbing straight up. Forty feet later I was at the bulge. The rope hung down from my waist to the belay in a single smooth arc like some period photo from the 1930s. I shifted weight back and forth between my feet and pawed at some crumbly, suspect knobs sticking out of the lichen — they wobbled. I looked left into a sand-filled gully about twenty feet away, left and down, and considered jumping. My knees were knocking in time with the nervous clenching of my sphincter. Yeah, I was gripped. My fall line passed directly through Cam's helmet — not good. In front of me was a wobbly flake crater where something had fallen out not long ago. At its right edge was a thin expando crack. I tried to place an RP; it fell out when I yarded on it. Same result with a #0 TCU. In desperation I forced my fingers behind the flake, pulled out, and jammed a pink Tri-Cam in. It worked — sort of. The crack still expanded but the Tri-Cam just flexed with it. Still, better than what I had before. Envisaging a long "cheese grater" of a fall, I pulled up on some suspect nubbins and began the lichen dance again, like a kid running along the edge of the beach and jumping back when the surf comes crashing in — for sure I knew that I didn't want to get my feet wet! Another forty feet and I tucked in my other pink Tri-Cam — this one was bomber. It was easier from there to the belay and I didn't need to place anything more. Just as well because I couldn't have even if I wanted to. I sank more gear into the anchors than I had used on the pitch and screamed down an "Off belay" to Cam out of sight below.

The next pitch looked grim and black, choked with lichen, so when Cam arrived at the belay, after assuring me that the pitch I had just led was only 5.7, he headed up and right along a ledge system. Just above the belay he asked me how good my anchors were.

"Good. Why?"

"Because there's a big block here. Get ready."

"What?!"

"I'm going to trundle it. Look out."

"OK, 1,2, 3, ROCK!!!"

The rock came flying down, tumbling and dancing as it broke apart into a cloud of chunks. A previously unnoticed groove in the slab channeled most of it right by me. I did a sort of "Russian Cossack with his pants around his ankles" dance to avoid collisions. Most of it missed me but I got smoked in the hip by a head-sized piece. Looking down I noticed that one of the three cams in the belay had pulled out during my exertions: "Fuck! Can I take you off belay for a second?" Eventually Cam finished his lead. As I was getting ready to second, a huge chunk of cornice went crashing down the north face of Alpaca, just across the way.

We were near the top of the face now. One more pitch of traversing and stemming took me onto the summit ridge. I belayed Cam up and we scrambled to the summit. Down in the Anderson River drainage some members of the resource extraction sector of our thriving economy were doing something with heavy machinery

and a helicopter, making lots of noise and smoke. Cam checked out the clearcuts appreciatively — he's in forestry, after all.

We scrambled down the southwest ridge and eventually began rapping. Two ropes were mandatory, the longest rap being 45 metres. A few old slings marked the most reliable anchors. The Kubik/Zenger Route was heavily furred with grey lichen; it made our route look clean by comparison! From the base, a long schuss through snow-covered meadows, followed by an hour of traversing, brought us back to the car. Dinner time!

The bugs were horrendous by the creek. Although we had planned to stay for several days, we ended up leaving the next morning, driving back to Vancouver (with a quick detour up the Skagit Valley to look for a field that wasn't there), as most of the Lower Mainland headed out to enjoy Canada Day sitting by a lake and drinking beer. We ended up deciding to call our route Vicuna Beach, partly because of the sand and sun, the driftwood, the crashing "surf from Alpaca, the seaweed; and partly because it sounded like Laguna Beach in California: "Life's a beach, DUUUUDE!"

Vicuna Beach (II, 5.7), a new route on the southwest face of Vicuna Peak, in the Coquihalla Pass area. Climb straight up cracks and slabs for three pitches, starting immediately left of the obvious big zawn and right of a loose gully. Traverse right for two pitches below summit ridge until lichen relents and permits access to summit. Climbing is mainly clean (lichen is tolerable), rock is good, some long run-outs. A wide range of cams and nuts are useful (RP's to a #3 Camalot), especially Tri-Cams. Pins were taken but not used. Bring extra slings for the rap descent.

F.A.: Drew Brayshaw and Cam Campbell, June 29, 1995.

Karma Strikes

Bruce Kay

A lot can be said for the delights of duking it out on a desperate north face in the dead of winter, but I tend to think much of it would be unprintable in a family rag such as this. As the years plod on and I grow long in the tooth, the attractions of freezing at a belay for hours while your partner does battle, seemingly about to pitch off at any moment under constant waves of spindrift, become ever harder to embrace. Such times, followed by the inevitable retreat under duress, offer plenty of opportunity to contemplate sunnier climes, preferably at more southern latitudes. Of course the true irony of it all is that once back down on the ground washed, warm and fed, the rats crawl back with a renewed vigor and complete short-term memory loss, with promises of glorious plastic ice, great pro, and pure mindless, kinesthetic pleasure of movement so dear to us all.

Fortunately we can have our cake and eat it too — all it takes is to wait for the spring. Last spring Dan Mannix and I patiently waited until the end of the standard winter season then whisked ourselves via Vancouver Helicopters up to within strolling distance of the west face of Tantalus. Now I know this particular means of transport won't endear us to some, but as I said before, we are getting on some and time being at somewhat more of a premium than in the olden days, it does present certain attractions. A lot can be said for humping straight up six thousand feet through slag, alder and a million isothermal post holes before even seeing your objective — but, I digress.

The view from the air says it all. Glorious plastic ice, great pro etc. We quickly put down, unload and wave bye to Ed. We hoot and yell, congratulate ourselves on our brilliant planning, then I glance down at our little pile of gear and am suddenly consumed by an intense sinking feeling in my gut.

"Where the hell are my tools and crampons?!"

I won't go into excruciating detail as to the ensuing stream of emotions felt and expressed over the following few minutes, as I'm sure it can be easily imagined. How could this happen? We hadn't pulled off any fly's wings lately. We wailed, pulled our hair and gnashed our teeth. God was truly a cruel mountaineer.

No doubt some who read this are now contentedly stroking themselves and muttering "serves the buggers right," but the really important point I would like to address here is that it wasn't me. This may be hard for some to believe but evidently I had met my match in the short-term memory department. I won't speculate as to what twisted and abusive upbringing good old Dan experienced to result in such a deteriorated cerebral capacity, but suffice to say the diagnosis has been confirmed through further observation through the course of the summer.

It was apparent that Ed was not coming back any time soon. (He was shortly on the phone to Suzanne wondering if these things we forgot in the back were "important." By that point, no.) Weak suggestions of traversing the range or some such other rot met with little enthusiasm. It seemed that we must either have at her or slit our wrists right there.

The short traverse to the start of the route managed to wash the foul taste out of my mouth and upon rounding the bottom of the rib and gazing up at a few pitches of WI3 ice hose all evil thoughts were banished forever. Of course I had to content myself with following Dan up on jugs, but before long there we were, firmly established on a beautiful alpine wall in very comfortable conditions. Soon the sun swung on to the face forcing us onto the flanking rock for a few pitches of quite descent rock climbing (in T-shirts no less) allowing me a ride on the sharp end.

Late in the day we cut out a little niche and settled in for the night. We spent the evening brewing up and arguing over who really forgot the tools, but I managed to fall asleep reasonably confident in my innocence. The morning brought the only experience remotely resembling discomfort as we broke camp and continued up the shady west face. A short rappel put us in an icy gully bypassing the gendarme and placing us at the base of the crux pitch described in the 1968 route description. This looked formidable but turned out to be a true delight of classic alpineering. A traversing line of chipped footholds, good pro, and positive edges and flakes led to a steep verglassed wall that went easily at Al or 2 (Dan even booted off the loose blocks for those who followed). Another mixed pitch put us on the rimed-up summit cone where two further pitches saw us on top by 3:00.

A glance down the east face quickly redirected our efforts down the north ridge. This led to the only flaw in our plan as we then embarked on the long, tedious traverse, broken by another bivouac, contouring around the great eastern basins heading for Lake Lovelywater. A couple of pairs of skis would have been nice. By the time we crested the Alpha Serratus col my right knee was screaming from dragging it up and out of one post hole to the next. However once Lake Lovelywater was in sight the going was largely downhill with terra firma appearing under foot not far below tree line.

Dan and I parted company in Squamish,

both rather smug in how pleasurable the whole experience had been. Certainly starting an alpine route feeling fresh and full of energy was a delight, as was the warm spring sun after a long winter. Sated for now, the rats withdrew contented and I could enjoy the pleasures of spring in the valley. All I had to get out of the way was the seemingly endless explanations of how, no, in fact it was not I who forgot my crampons and tools.

Tantalus west face, F.A.: new variation, IV A2, + 5.8, WI3. 17 pitches.

F.A.: Dan Mannix, Bruce Kay, March 24-25, 1994

Rack: set of wires, cams to number 4, pins KBs to 3/4 inch angle (heavy on LAs), 2 screws.

The route begins in a groove system left of the lowest rib on the west face of Tantalus.

It crosses the 1968 route at mid height and angles up a ramp on the right flank off the prominent gendarme to a gully (25m rappel) leading to the col behind the gendarme where the crux pitch is. Three more pitches lead to the summit. Descent via north ridge to Rumbling Glacier.

And Yet More West Coast Ice

Sbreddie 130m WI5+ F.A.: John Chilton, Jia Condon Feb.96

About 5km W. of Carls Berg 28km W. of Lillooet. This is the infamous "unclimbed Dagger" in the slot beside Closet Secrets. Jia and I called home from the pub in Lillooet after the climb and heard the news of Trevor's death. We had really felt he was there with us on this climb when the thing went down much easier than expected. Shreddie was Trevor's nickname. 25m WI2; 50m WI4. 55m WI5+.

Cut Throat 130m WI6 F.A.: Bruce Kay, Aaron Clements Feb.96

Between Carls Berg and Loose Lady on the N. side of Cayoosh Creek 200m W. of Deep Throat. It took some work, but Bruce finally relented and admitted this was a 6. A beautiful piece of work. 3 pitches, WI4, 5, 6.

Suicide Games 110m WI4 F.A.: Billy Stiles, John Chilton Feb.96

About 30km N. of Whistler on Highway 99. on the W. side right above the tight switchbacks which climb "Suicide Hill." Several lines here: Suicide Games climbs the right side in 2 pitches of WI3, followed by 2 side-by-side Grade 4s. Good value with a short approach.

John Chilton

Editor's Plea: Okay, you guys, you've had your fun with your wonderful season of ice. Please keep in mind however, that we also have ice here in the Rockies, and that every time you run out, do a new route, and write it up for the Journal, it means I have to spend time putting your #@!#H report in this rag. Which, of course, means I don't get to go out and do any climbing myself. So next year, how about a normal winter, where you only get rain and more rain?

Your humble secretary, Ed.

New Route, Mount Aragorn

I've noticed a few older, male climbers take on 20-year-old girlfriends to keep their climbing enthusiasm strong. I, on the other hand, prefer to stay with experience, but climb with young bucks that will carry the heavy loads, break trail, and set a good pace. Consequently, when off-duty, Outward Bound instructors Simon Greening, Graeme White, and Colly Blenkinsop invited me to attempt the unclimbed north side of Mount Aragorn with them I jumped at the chance. It was great to have them trot ahead on the arduous bushwhack up Phelix Creek, smashing down the stickers and devil's club. I was even caught up in their youthful optimism as we toiled up the untracked drainage, until finally we were at the campsite under the face and proposed route. Even with my ancient eyes, however, I could see that the north face line they proposed was much more involved than our time, equipment and my commitment allowed. The 300-metre face sported overhanging cracks that binoculars revealed were more seam than crack, and full of vegetation to boot. After some searching, I saw an appealing line a little to the right, in a more broken and less continuously-steep grade. Graciously, Colly agreed to climb with me on this line while Graeme and Simon stuck to the original proposal.

As is often the case, the most dangerous climbing was the upward traverse on the icy glacier protecting the north face. Sporting a set of instep crampons over running shoes and one ice hammer, one of us led the way and belayed the others to the safety of a rock ledge and the start of the "real" climbing.

Although Colly and I did not have perfect rock, our route was solid for a larger mountain and we found the climbing very pleasant and rewarding. A five-metre section of 5.10a liebacking provided some sweat, but otherwise the rock had lots of positive holds on a steep, direct line. Slightly over six pitches later, we belayed onto the summit ridge, not 20 metres from the summit.

Simon and Graeme were not destined to enjoy a summit, finding the difficulties exciting but too time-consuming, and after two and a half pitches they rappelled off. The cracks were very tricky and the upper pitches would prove to be just as demanding, plus heavy gardening would be required. They did find the same solid granite that we found however.

Satisfied with our new route, back at our campsite, I was ready for a cup of tea and a relaxing night at camp, after all it was 6:30 p.m. when I noticed, much to my dismay, that the kids were packing up as though they were not planning on staying the night (to leave sensibly the next morning). Instead, their desire for beer, fresh food, and girlfriends easily overcame the fatigue and prospect of a night bushwhack. Why they would sacrifice a pleasant camp in the alpine for what seemed to me inconsequential reasons only brought home the fact that there is indeed a generation gap. I reluctantly packed up, wondering what causes youth to dismiss the finer points of alpine climbing! Northwest Face, Mount Aragorn , 5.10a. Coast Range, B.C. F.A.: Jim Miller, Colly Blenkinsop, August 20, 1995

Jim Miller

Chamonix Of North America

Bruce Kay

If you thought the Columbia Icefields was the epitome of easy access to classic alpine climbs, then come on up to Blackcomb. That's right, the ski hill just up from Vancouver, a ways past Squamish (most climbers know where that is). OK so there's not too many Grand Central Couloirs but at least you'll be moving over stone instead of sketchin' on slag. There is all manner of destined-to-be classics such as The Darned Gendarme (our version of the Grand Capucin), The Southwest Rib on Blackcomb Peak (similar to the Walker Spur), and the Spearhead Range which of course has the Mont Blanc Range beat hands down. All this and more a short stroll

Keith Reid skating "Turfs Up." Photo: Bruce Kay

from the ski lifts and village of Whistler, the "Chamonix of North America."

All pretense aside, it's worth a visit for the novelty alone. The rock is generally solid with ample edges and cracks, although not quite up to Bugaboo or Chehalis standards. The quality climbing is to be found in the winter or spring. All the slimy bits are frozen into good, sticky pick placements and the numerous positive edges and flakes provide good hooking. Plenty of cracks abound for protection, offering little excuse for whining. In the spring lovely runnels of ice form, allowing for the friendliest conditions. The best climbing found so far is on the prominent Northwest Buttress of Spearhead Peak (similar to the Eigerwand only better) flanking the often skied Husume couloir on the right . Climbing routes are concentrated on the triangular lower face, above the lower ice or snow apron, but can be combined with the upper ridge for the complete experience. A classic 4th and low 5th class line ascends the right flank of the buttress to the sky line north ridge leading to the summit of Spearhead Peak. Lots of exposed but fun scrambling can be found on the final knife edge, with great views into the Spearhead Range.

A worthwhile summer route, Kona Bud (a.k.a. Chamonix of North America), was found on the left-hand rib of the lower buttress, starting just up and left of the lowest point of the face then following the right-facing corner and arête system above. Clean and well protected climbing (generally 5.7-5.8 some 5.10-) leads in four long pitches to the top of the face. This would make an interesting winter route. A normal nut and cam rack, plus a few KBs and LAs, should suffice.

29 Forever (5.8 mixed, WI3) is best later in the spring and follows the obvious right-arcing gash for four pitches. The first crux is on pitch two, consisting of two body-length ice bulges. Pitch 3 usually presents a bizarre overhanging snow mushroom best avoided to the left to access the enticing ribbon of ice above. A rack of nuts, cams to number 4 and pins are useful.

Turfs Up (5.10 mixed) takes 29 Forever then branches left at the start of pitch two, heading up a vague weakness aiming for a cornice blob left of a prominent granite pillar, with a further pitch hidden from view for a total of five pitches. Great 5.7-5.8 mixed climbing with good gear leads up to 10 metres below the cornice where a heinous stemming boulder problem awaits, fortunately with continued good protection (could be easily aided). The usual rack, a bit heavy on the LAs works fine.

Pineapple Express (5.9+ mixed, WI4) starts the same as for Kona Bud but veers right after six metres up a right-angling ramp for a long mixed and thin ice pitch. An easier pitch close to Turfs Up leads to a traverse into the final corner of Kona Bud, guaranteed to provide a sustained and exciting thrashing. The final ridge pitch finishes the route.

All these routes are easily accessed by walking across the Blackcomb Glacier in the summer (crampons may be needed); ski or snowboard in winter. In winter contact the Blackcomb Ski Patrol before leaving as avalanche control could be conducted in this area at any time. On that note keep an eye peeled for avalauncher duds, bright orange, bullet-shaped objects. An unlikely find but one you shouldn't tamper with. These would most likely be found during the summer melt out on the snow or ice benches and gullies (dud search and

Keith Reid on 3rd pitch. Pineapple Express. Photo: Bruce Kay

recovery is a routine procedure through melt out). If found please notify the patrol of the location before heading home so that they can be safely destroyed. Contact Blackcomb Ticket Office for low cost one-way lift tickets.

Northwest ridge, Spearhead Peak F.A.: Paul Berntsen, Lisa Richardson. Summer 1989

29 Forever F.A.: Bruce Kay, Suzanne MacLean. May 1, 1991.

Kona faka Chamonix of North America). F.A.: B. Kay, Richard Barry. July, 1992.

Turfs Up F.A.: B. Kay, Keith Reid. March 27, 1995.

Grimfacized

Mark Bosomworth

Sitting on a boulder and staring up at the south face of Mount Grimface in the Wall Creek valley, Scott and I thought we had discovered what would pass for a rock climber's nirvana. The wall yielded a multitude of climbable-looking cracks carved in sheer granite on the mountain's formidable south wall. Camping in the valley below, we had good access, with only a short walk up to the edge of the cliff, where we planned to try one of Fred Beckey's routes to the left of the face, and, if we so desired, put up one of our own.

The walk up Wall Creek (where the Centennial Trail crosses the Ashnola River Road, near Keremeos, B.C.) was the opposite of the quality of the wall. Twelve

kilometres with heavy packs, fine. Most of the trees lying down over the train, still okay. But drink three cups of coffee and a bottle of Jolt each, and then ride in a car on a winding road for two hours beforehand, and you get some pretty unhappy campers arriving at the base of McKeen Ridge. Upon viewing the size and quality of the rock, however, we underwent a mood swing so violent it could only be described as schizophrenic. We pitched our tent and began to scope out the cracks, already beginning to think of names for our heroic new route up the imposing blank surface in front of us.

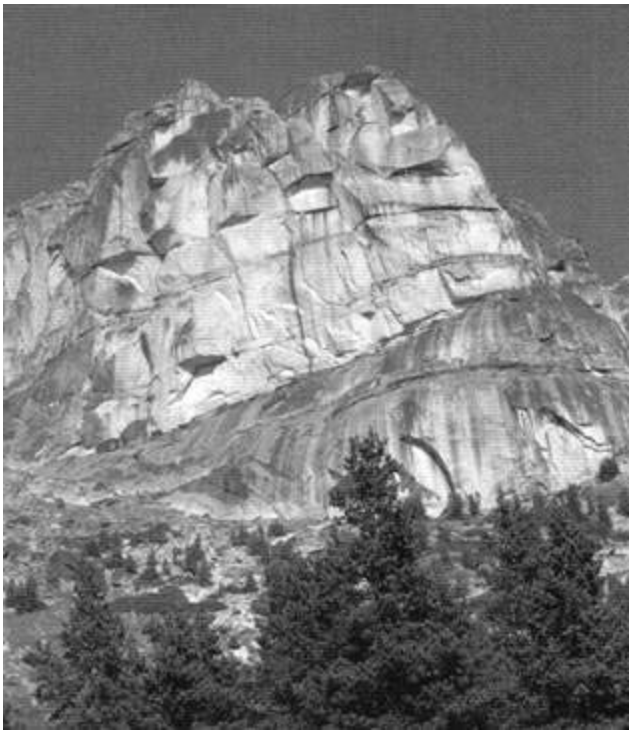
No so.

We woke up the next morning to a beautiful day. The sun shone through the rapidly thinning mist, surrounding the peak with a halo of light and casting early morning shadows upon our prize. We untangled ourselves from a tent full of rather smelly gear and clothes, (Scott found that my #2 Camalot had invaded his pants as he slept). We ate our mush and ran to the base of the "cubby hole" to the left of the face, where four routes began; two of them four-pitch 5.7's. I racked up and began to climb.

We made it a collective total of six metres. I noted quickly that the rock was quite featureless and also bloody cold. (The sun hadn't made it to where we were and the wind was howling inconsiderately.) We were also not sure as to the starting point of the climbs, and the two cracks we began seemed to have a disturbing habit of petering out just out of view of the ground. The sun outside just looked too inviting. We decided to crag for the day and look for a new line tomorrow. (Looking in a cave/crack at the base of the mountain, we found a neat little aid line — a six-metre crack topping out on a perfect, flat ledge. We called it Crackling, A1. A good place for lunch or a game of chess.)

The next day was better in all respects. Vowing to never again climb in shade when there was sun, we went instead up the gully to the east. (See Fred Beckey's Cascade Alpine Guide for a diagram.) We wandered up this until we found an easy crack about three-quarters of the way up with sun shining on it, that we hoped led to the top of the mountain. A description of the route — it turned out to be excellent — is as follows:

The first little way was scrambling, followed by a 5.3 bit on broken rock. This led to a large ledge where the really good climbing began. (Of course, we were in the shade again, damn it.) The next pitch measured approximately twenty-five metres and was probably one of the best chimneys I have ever done. (Body jam would be more accurate — I was able to place only one piece of wide crack gear nearer to the bottom. However, this was not a problem. A bit of me seemed to be wedged somewhere most of the time, the difficulty being to free the appendages.) The pitch was approximately 5.7 and gradually lowered its angle until it was little more than a gully, ending by a group of large boulders. It is necessary to crawl underneath one of the rocks to get out of the gully. We hauled the packs up the slab to the right, (don't wear 'em on this one) and continued on our way.



Mount Grimface Photo: Myrna Bosomworth

After the chimney, we were able to walk across a large, flat, rocky ledge where all the dihedrals below came to a stop. The ledge ended in a near vertical cliff with a pitch of (surprise, surprise) excellent face-climbing with evenly-spaced and amply-sized belay ledges. The pitch (about 30 metres, 5.7) follows the most obvious and hopeful-looking line a little up and to the left of where the chimney finishes. Far to the right are a group of leaning columns, and to the left the plateau ends, presumably the top of some of the more evil-looking cracks we saw from the bottom.

At the top of this pitch, (just follow the easiest route you can find — edges and knobs twist up through the towers, leading to easier steps above) there is a perfect ledge with several natural chockstones for an anchor. Belay from here; the view is terrific. Following this, the crack to the right yields an interesting, yet short, aid on slightly overhanging rounded granite, probably close to impossible to free. The cam placements are, however, a tad deep, and the hands take a scraping. Sizes three to four Friends work just fine.

Following the aid pitch, all one has to do is walk to the summit, it being around a knoll to the right, and descend the tourist route on the west ridge. The path is well-marked as residents of the Cathedral Lakes Lodge often hike up for a picture or two of the view. A fantastic scree run took us right back to the valley bottom.

This route is one of the easier ones up Mount Grimface, save for the west ridge. Beckey's and those done by the Outward Bound staff in the 70s seem to us to be underrated, but I don't want to argue with those more acquainted with the sport than I. Our route does not require rock shoes; the edges are not small and boots jam quite nicely in the chimney. And, for the sake of cleanliness, it might be a good idea to leave the chalk bag at home. (The white blotches on the rock are places where small animals habitually urinate — scientifically termed "pika piss.") The route is easy by any standard, and presents an interesting and enjoyable climb for those of almost all abilities.

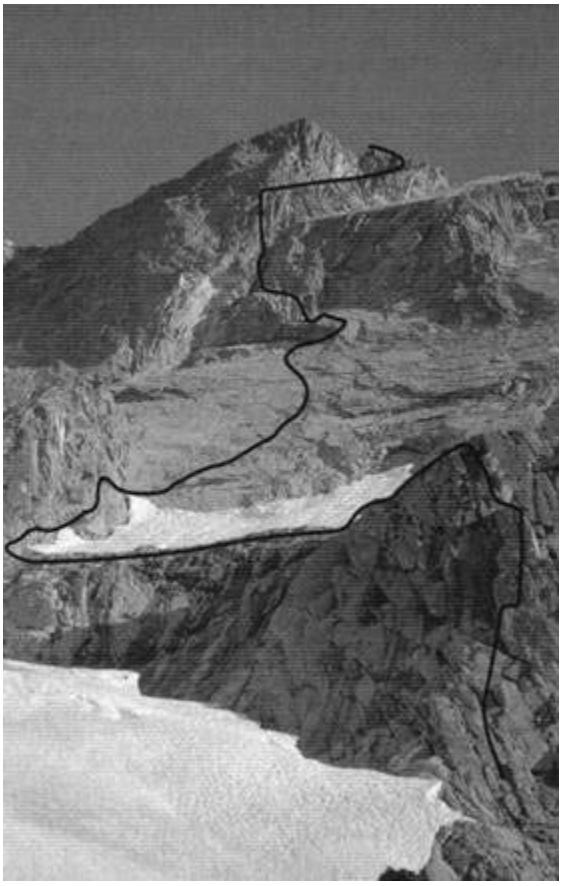
The Itchy and Scratch Show, 3-4p, (5.7, Al) Mount Grimface, B.C.

Time from camp: 4-5 hours F.A. Mark Bosomworth, Scott Aspinall, August 25, 1995

Viennese Peak, New Route

Tom Johnson

In August of 1990 Mark Sheek and I went into the Chehalis Range to climb the North Face route on Viennese. Upon reaching the wonderful base camp below the north face I couldn't help but wonder what the climbing might be like on the huge face above the large rectangular snowfield. Its light colour told me it was



North Face of Viennese Peak with route marked. Photo: Tom Johnson

definitely clean. The next day, high up on the North Face Route we took in the views and contemplated the North Ridge Route of Clarke. We finally broke onto the lower of two large, white slabs high on the route and were impressed with how incredibly clean and solid it was. A desire to be the first person to set foot on the upper slab was beginning to form in my head. It was such a predominant and unusual feature in an area so full of parallel running corners.

The next year I returned to the Chehalis, this time with Jason Henry, to climb the North Ridge of Clarke. After reaching the bivi site below Viennese I pointed out the new line I had been eyeing, which would climb the large face directly above, then break through the steep headwall and up onto the higher sheer slab. He agreed the colour of the rock indicated it would probably be the cleanest route in the drainage, and shared in my enthusiasm for the line. He also shared my concern for protection on the large face, and my fear of the imposingly-steep headwall above it. Nonetheless, I knew I had found a partner to return with. The next day we found the North Ridge of Clarke well-guarded by a maze of séracs. We ended up climbing a direct line up the north face of Mount Clarke which begins right of the North Ridge and regains the North Ridge Route one pitch from the top.

After another year of contemplating the possible Viennese route we returned in July ready for action, yet full of doubt and intimidation. We were to give it a go, with the attitude that we would climb as far as we could get, and not regret trying. With binoculars we narrowed down the possibilities.

The next morning, we crossed the snow-field directly above the bivi site and climbed the short buttress above leading to the lower right corner of the large rectangular snow-field. Not bad. About 5.7. We walked left to the other end of the snowfield and did a two-pitch rising traverse on rock above the snow-field — a little harder about 5.9. A couple of tricky moves put us out onto the large face and up an easy ramp. Jason aimed for the largest of the small tiered roofs in the middle of the face and traversed just right below it then up to a belay.

After some good protection, just off the belay, I climbed up and a little left for some distance searching for an RP or knifeblade placement. After passing a wonderful stance about 50 feet out I began to realize there probably wasn't going to be any protection for a distance. The holds grew smaller until I found myself four feet below a big ledge. So close and yet so far! I pieced together the final moves completing a 100-foot+ runout in which I should have placed a bolt right in the middle of. The next party to do the route should.

Another pitch later we were at a reasonable bivi site below the large arched roof under the steep headwall. After ten pitches of totally solid and clean rock, we had a couple hours of daylight to soak in the views, level out the bivi site, and place a needed anchor bolt, the only one placed on the route. We were elated with the quality of climbing so far, yet concerned of what lay ahead. Perched above was the steep headwall which we knew was quite improbable.

The next morning we traversed right back out onto the face and up to the base of the headwall. Jason led up a short corner which led to a horizontal boundary between steep rock below and the vertical rock above. He traversed left across this boundary almost to the base of a steep corner. One hard move of 5.10a was the crux of the climb. I led up the corner to a point which most people would believe to be a dead end. The corner kept going but the holds and protection didn't appear to. I decided to do a short pendulum left off a bomber #10 stopper. I reached onto an arête and found easier climbing and a good belay. Jason led up left into another corner until he reached another dead end. He claimed he stopped because he was running low on gear. Immediately left of the belay, however, was a horizontal crack splitting that side of the corner. A short hand traverse led out of the corner and into a perfect hidden hand crack. We followed the hand crack and an arête which broke out onto the gorgeous sheer upper slab. Vertical walls bordered the left side of the slab and nothing but sky bordered the right. This slab was the icing on the cake. Three and a half pitches up the easy slab led to an easy corner up to the summit ridge only 50 feet below the summit. This is an incredibly clean and solid climb, even for the Chehalis.

We quickly realized we had climbed a route that is destined to become the classic of classic long Chehalis routes. The route has 20 long pitches of mostly face climbing on perfectly clean and solid rock. A few small Lost Arrows were used for belays. Most were left fixed. Currently, two #1 and one #3 Lost Arrows should do the job nicely.

PITCH BY PITCH ROUTE DESCRIPTION

Cross the snowfield directly above the morainal Viennese bivi site. Ascend the nose of small buttress which leads to the lower right edge of the large rectangular snowfield (scrambling to 3 pitches to 5.7). Walk across to the left edge of the snowfield and set up a belay. Two traversing pitches above the left edge of the snowfield lead to the upper left corner of the snowfield (5.9, 5.9). Traverse right onto huge face via a tricky move across large horizontal break and follow the easy ramp to corner crack leading directly up to another easy ramp (5.10a). Follow ramp rightward to belay. Follow weaknesses in face to the largest of the small multi-tiered roofs above and belay 20 ft. up and right of the roof (5.9). Move left from belay (good pro just off belay) and follow weaknesses in face up and a little left to ledge (100-ft.+ runout 5.9) and ascend leftward-trending crack to belay (5.9).

Continue up left-trending crack/weakness to huge dish below large roof (5.5). (Decent bivi site for two — one bolt for belay/bivi.) Traverse up and right out of dish and follow major weakness leftward to base of steep rock (5.8 — fixed pin at belay). Ascend corner to horizontal border between the lower steep rock and the upper vertical rock and traverse leftward to belay (fixed pin belay — 5.10a). Traverse up and left into steep corner until too difficult to continue and protect. A #10 fixed stopper serves as an anchor point for a 12 ft. pendulum left onto arête which is climbed up to easier corner and belay (5.9+). Continue up and left to steep corner climbing until again very difficult to climb (5.9). Belay here. A short, exposed undercling/hand traverse directly left leads to sharp arête and perfect hidden hand crack which are both followed up and then right to lower left corner of the huge higher rectangular slab (5.9), easy climbing up major weaknesses on slab for 3 1/2 pitches leads to a steeper left-trending corner above slab to summit ridge (5.6). 50 ft. of easy ridge climbing (lichen-covered) leads to summit. 20 long pitches to 5.10a.

Extremely solid and clean granite throughout the route. Quite possibly the best long route done yet in the Chehalis. Predominantly face climbing. Time 25 hours up. 2 days round trip from base camp. Ideal rack for the route: two #1 and one #3 Lost Arrow for belays; hexes # 8, 9, 11; one full set of stoppers; RPs #1, 2, 3; TCUs 0,1,2,3 ; Friends 1 1/2-3 ; #1 Camalot; one bolt for 100-ft. runout pitch recommended — good stance!

North Face Direct, Viennese Peak, Chehalis Range 5.10

F.A.: Jason Henry, Tom Johnson. July 18-19, 1995.

The Dalgleish Face On Mount Waddington

John Harlin

One routine day in January 1995 I checked my e-mail and this is what it said:

You and Me.

Waddington.

New Route.

May.

And so it was. Mark Jenkins, who had researched the mountain, touched a soft spot in my soul. Waddington was high on my list, but I had no idea that there was a new route to be had, let alone an unclimbed face, which is what Mark had discovered in his literary sleuthing. Who could resist? We decided to climb from the sea, completely unsupported since we were as keen on wilderness travel as the summit itself; besides, it seemed the fair thing to do. From touch down, the adventures came roaring at us non-stop. The first five days brought us heavy packs; a black bear at 100 feet; lots of brush; mountain goats in unbelievable places high overhead; half a day trying to figure out how to cross the Franklin River, followed by a surprisingly moderate ford (hip-high rushing water); dangerous morainal talus to get onto the Franklin Glacier; tortuous icefall navigation; light rain for three days and finally sun; snow pluming off the summit high above. Sixth day: half day up icefall to high camp; sunshine. Seventh day: 20-hour round trip to summit (4,000 feet vertical) climbing a new route on the unclimbed "true" south face, which we referred to as the Dalgleish Face in honor of the man who died thereon in 1934. The route involved about 1500 feet of simulclimbing on moderately steep snow, 4 leads on water ice with occasional short steep bulges—generally mellow terrain except for spindrift avalanches occasionally sweeping over us. The shoulder below the summit pinnacle offered the funniest mountain experience we'd ever had—a four-prop bomber dropped a bubble-wrapped package containing a bottle of Captain Morgan rum, a copy of Penthouse International "Girls of the World" edition, and a note identifying the intended recipient (whom we later discovered to be on a military climb training for Gasherbrum 4 - they didn't make it up Waddington). The summit spire proved much taller than we'd anticipated. Being blinded by-lust, I chose a direct start that involved mixed 5.9 climbing with marginal "protection" in really bad rock. This was followed by seven pitches of mixed water ice and rock along the standard route. We reached the summit at 5:30 pm in intense wind and cold. Seven long rappels took us down to shoulder; this was followed by 2,000 vertical feet of snow hiking down the shoulder as the peaks turned blood red with alpenglow; then four long rappels into the dark unknown, including three vertical ones; then six long rappels down a couloir to reach camp at 12:30 am. 8th day: rest. 9th day: down the icefall and a long ski up into a whiteout on Mystery Pass; compass navigation; stumble over camp of 3 skiers including John Baldwin, the local ski-guide writer, they have circumnavigated Waddington massif; join them for tea and camp. 10th day: 4 inches of fresh snow and still falling; total whiteout; skiers decide to stay; we head out with compass and map; begins to clear; skiers eventually catch us; we drop and drop and drop (8,000 feet will be lost today); finally in trees, separate from skiers who have lighter packs and better skills and gear; tighter and tighter tree skiing; we fall in several tree wells; remove skis and drop down steep forest; steeper and steeper; Mark takes off pack and it falls 150 feet into a steep creek; I carefully navigate to last tree and rappel; we make our way down steep talus/gully/creek to logging road; hike logging road for 1.5 miles until a grizzly wanders into road 200 feet ahead and lies down while looking at us; we scout trees; get bored; take out pots and pans and bang and yell while we walk toward the bear; bear wanders into woods; we hike another 1.5 miles to Scar Creek logging camp and dinner in the mess house; fly out the next morning. Never been happier in our lives. It was the Cowboy Way.

Mount Waddington. Photo: J. Baldwin

The Cowboy Way IV, 5.9, AI3 Mount Waddington, Coast Range Mark Jenkins and John Harlin May 2-12, 1995.

Chance Meeting: A Climber's Progress Or A Tale Of Two Climbers

Steven M. Horvath

It was early January and my No. 1 ski buddy — aka our No. 2 daughter — and I were enjoying some of the best powder skiing of early season when the perfidious weather changed to our usual January monsoon. Within minutes the powder turned Whistler-like and we were soaked. Time to visit the mid-mountain lodge. Alas, it seemed that we were not the only skiers blessed with that spectacular insight. There was no place to sit down, but a voice from my past kindly invited us to share an already crowded table. It was X and his son, classmate of No. 2. He seemed to be worried, a surprising departure from his usual self-confidence. His doctor just told him that the lingering discomfort in his hand was in fact a fairly serious case of wrist tendonitis, most likely the result of a combination of old injuries and too much climbing. He was unsure if he was ever going to be able to climb again, so our talk soon turned back to our once and future ski tours.

First Contact

It was summer of 1984 and access to Valhalla was still blocked, so Paul, Derek and I decided to do something rather uncouth and phone our local helicopter pilot. His quote was sobering, so Paul checked around and soon rounded up three strangers eager for a trip to our secret piece of paradise. Thus reality forces compromises on us.

Once there Derek and I dashed off to Gimli for our long-awaited try on its east ridge. We were lucky indeed as the result was the marvellous String of Pearls (CAJ 1984: and we did beat uncle Fred to it by a few years).

Paul's Concern

Early on next morning we were downclimbing back to camp in high spirits despite rapidly deteriorating weather. It seemed though that not everyone was enjoying the day as much as we did. "This way!" Like f— that way!"— these and other pleasantries were drifting down from somewhere high up on the north face of Wolves Ears. Paul filled in missing details later — "that #*%#@ of X, I'll never climb with that #@*&! again, not if I want to have a long life anyway."

Bad Weather

Then it started to rain as it can during our all too brief summers. Derek and I had to be content with catching up on our reading and experimenting with different interior design possibilities of my tent. Our three new companions were snug and warm inside the hut playing cards and consuming copious quantities of various combustibles. They conscripted Paul as the fourth for their bridge games and things seemed to settle down.

Two days later Paul stumbled out of the hut into another wet and gloomy morning as Derek and I were just about to leave for a stroll in the fog. "Those guys are getting owly. I hope the weather clears up, for if they run out of their stuff and won't be able to go and climb something scary, soon we'll be in trouble."

A Walk In The Storm

We were in our piece of paradise that we thought we knew well. This morning though we saw things that we never noticed before during our somnolent and silent approaches. All we could think about then — if think is not too fancy a term to describe our mental state — were the new lines waiting for us in the morning sun. Today we saw the lush green of thickly-matted grasses, delicate tracery of cobwebs stretched between wet huckleberry bushes, and intricate patterns of small streams on slopes so steep they seemed suspended in green air. We talked, stopping now and then to look and investigate, and slowly the weather seemed to clear, the wind picked up, and we found ourselves sitting on the high point of the ridge connecting Asgard and Gladsheim. To our left was the faint outline of spectacular lines of the Trireme Wall, and right in front of us a vast indigo cloudmass speckled with lightning. Lightning in the mountains always makes me nervous, even though it seems to give Paul some sort of excuse for jokes at my expense. Not this time though. The lightning exploded seemingly right on top of us, or rather where we were just planning to have our lunch, and we ran down a boulder-strewn gully, jumping from wet boulders onto slabs running with water. The air was filled with the bracing smell of sulphur and the enormous sound of thunder echoing crazily between Asgard and Gladsheim. Abode of the gods indeed.

X Goes On To Bigger Things.

We did not climb together again, X and I, even though to his credit he asked me out more than once. To tell the truth, his climbing standard had improved to a level that I neither could, nor wished to attain anymore. We kept in touch and he told us about his annual trips to Yosemite, Smith Rocks and other new climbing Meccas. Derek started a family and quit climbing, and Paul and I continued eking out time for climbing in our mountains between steadily-increasing family and work commitments.

Our Injuries

The Law of Averages caught up with all of us. Paul damaged first his back, then his knee at work. X had his scare climbing, or to be more exact, falling in Leavenworth. As for me I escaped death in the Gothics by inches but somehow managed to confound my doctors' predictions and was on skis in five months, in pain, but out in the mountain air again.

Summer '95

This was the year that our daughters decided that skiing was not enough, ski touring and climbing were cool too. My wife was mildly concerned; I was delighted and we sat down to plan our summer. A few sessions at Kinaird slabs and then time for No. 1's first real mountain. We settled on Devils Dome, a fine medium Class V in the heart of Valhalla. It was at the end of a typical Kootenay approach, down-sloping slabs, mosquitoes, alder, fresh bear droppings, more mosquitoes, then a tent site at the edge of a hanging valley looking across the fast-darkening Gwillim Creek valley at the impressive north and west faces of Mulvey group.

At about noon next day we stopped for a snack above the crux moves of the east ridge. Relaxed, we were enjoying the view, playing spot that peak, when I realized that X and I had crossed paths yet again. According to local gossip he should have been across the valley from us, attempting a first ascent of the south wall of Gimli. I

Schrund Peak and the Big Eddy Glacier. Photo: Steven Horvath

pointed it out to No. 1 and we soon got lost in the age-old argument about the strange reasons that drive us to climb.

The sun was about to set when we finally finished our dinner. No. 1 was glowing with a quiet satisfaction — her first real summit and eight rappels to get down — Wait till I tell my friends!

Across the valley the south face of Gimli was thrown into sharp relief by the westering sun, its never-ending smooth granite walls reaching into the evening sky. My thoughts turned briefly to X, probably hanging about or on that face where I spent so much of my time when the world was a bit younger and (perhaps) more innocent. No, (to paraphrase Faust) I would rather be here and now than anywhere else.

As for our "obligatory first ascent" Hamish Mutch and I flew north of Revelstoke at the start of August. We set up camp on a spectacular meadow above the Big Eddy glacier south of Cat Peak. Weather was crummy. We got snowed off Cat Peak but somehow managed to sneak up Frenchmans Cap. Just as well (that we were so sneaky) as the peak was a bit of a disappointment. Its lines, so fine and inviting from the Columbia valley, proved to be frighteningly loose, steep rubble with fresh goat tracks at the summit. Hamish's ever-so-dry sense of humour got the worst of him again when he — in all seriousness — suggested that we write to whatever commission it is that decides on place names, and ask them if they hadn't screw up again and misspelled the name of the peak. Frenchmans Crap, not Cap! Somehow I don't think that the commission will take a kind view of his suggestion, not in this year of the neverendum.

Weather closed in again and prevented us from attempting a first ascent on a fine-looking peak south of us, but we enjoyed a marvellous day of exploring the glaciers following veritable goat highways. It was like a climber's version of Hansel and Gretel — just follow the trail of goat turds; all possible shades of green on summer snow, red with algae growth. We had no idea that a foggy day on a glacier could be so colourful.

We used our one and only perfect day to finally get our first ascent. We crossed the Big Eddy glacier, went up a glacier north-east of Schrund Peak, then turned right and gained a small subsidiary peak north of it. From there we gained the east ridge proper via a short but steep snow couloir and then walked to the summit. The views were tremendous, huge glaciers and névés south and north of us. Continuation of the ridge looked unpleasant, downsloping, rotten, and knife-edged, so we dropped down the ridge immediately south of the summit to the large glacier which we traversed to its end only to find ourselves on the edge of a huge escarpment. Hamish muttered something about buying a map next time and set about retracing our steps to where we could regain the east ridge via a steep snow couloir. From there it was but one lead of medium Class 5 on frighteningly loose rock to the ridge. Then a walk to its end and down the glacier on the north side of Schrund, navigating two crevasse fields before putting our minds in neutral again.

Hamish tells me that the Beglinger party (CAJ 1994, p. 96) apparently climbed parts of the east ridge to the summit, but ours is a first traverse, thus a first ascent (of sorts) and a marvellous longish day of general exploratory mountaineering, something that we are beginning to enjoy more and more (again).

Bugaboo Glacier Provincial Park Summary 1995

The number of climbers visiting the Bugaboos in 1995 was low compared to previous years, with the infamous Bugaboo weather forcing many climbers to visit alternative locations. August saw accumulations of up to a metre or more of new snow over three weeks.

Only two new routes were climbed in 1995: a 5.9/A2 route on the Pigeon Feathers and a 5.6 mixed climbing route on the North Face of North Howser. The Howsers saw very little climbing traffic as winter conditions persisted throughout most of the summer. Snow and ice were present on the majority of routes in the core area and persisted until mid-September. Routes were in good condition only for short periods.

One serious accident occurred in 1995. A climber required a helicopter medivac after being injured from glissading over a bergschrund. The accident occurred at the base of North Face of North Howser. As well, a 6 m fall down both the ladder and stairs of the hut was experienced by one individual. Ouch.

Garth Lemke

Into The Heart Of Wilderness

Mike Vincent

It is pouring rain. Nothing new for the summer of '95 in this part of the Rockies. The trail is slick with deep mud and even the dog gives me that "I hope we are not going to be out here long" look. Little does she know that we are attempting the wildest (in a true wilderness sense) traverse that the east slope of Banff National Park has to offer. The route travels from the David Thompson Highway at Siffleur Falls in the north, through many untrailed river valleys connected by high passes and ridge walks, to eventually emerge at the popular Johnston Canyon.

Banff Park has received a lot of bad press lately, some of it justified. Ever since people first started coming here in the 1890s the wilderness aspects of the park have taken a back seat to management issues and development policies. Banff is the most highly-developed, commercialized national park in North America. This trend continues even today with townsite growth, ski area development and highway twinning. All this development has not gone unnoticed. National Geographic magazine did an article in June of 1995 on Banff entitled "Rocky Times in Banff." David Suzuki of "The Nature of Things" also did a program on Banff last spring called "National Parks: Forever Wild?" This program highlighted the difficulties in maintaining the dual mandate of Parks Canada for preservation and recreation. Most of the attention is focused on one valley, the Bow River. As I write this, there is a two-year study underway, trying to chart the future direction of the Bow valley.

Yet even in the backcountry, almost every major river valley has a trail built in it, allowing easy access to riders and hikers. Warden cabins are sprinkled here and there. I have always wondered if there are any valleys left in their original state, where whole river drainages have no trails, no campsites, or any evidence of modern humans. Are there high alpine basins that few people have been to and that even park wardens rarely see from helicopters? Hopefully this is where "The Line" will take me.

Packing the night before the trip, the forecast looks dubious. But I am committed. This being the first week of September, I am counting on that classic weather "window" that the fall air can bring us. A couple of partners have come and gone, so it's back to the way it was planned: a solo. The longest solo before this had been four days. This time I am carrying food for nine. Trying this type of trip alone adds a commitment level that is very similar to climbing an alpine route; there is little room for error. If I were to bust a leg on day three, no one would be looking for me until my registration was due on day ten. Not that I would be completely alone: Mistaya the Wonder Dog (she wonders what the hell I'm getting her into this time!) would accompany me. Finally my pack — nicknamed "The Pig" — is ready and weighs in at a respectable 48 pounds.

The first two days of travel are a repeat of part of a line I did in 1988 through the heart of the Ram River range. Travelling south from the Siffleur River, up a nameless creek to tree line, I wander through the headwaters of the White Rabbit River and over four passes to be deposited along the Ram River near its head. The morning of Day Two dawns bright and crisp and I smile to myself knowing the "window" has opened. I look forward to reaching a special place today at the source of the river. As I crest the last terminal moraine, I can finally see the beautiful Ram River glacier. On the shores of a small tarn sit two A-frame huts. This is the abandoned Ram Glacier research station. Built in 1965, it was used often until 1975, and now rarely, if at all. One hut is the storage shed full of stuff like survey rods, old cans of food, rolls of tar paper and even an old pair of skis. It's not going to last too many more winters up here.

The other hut is in much better shape, but I notice a couple of holes in the roof and a broken window. When I was here in 1988, the sleeping hut was still in almost pristine condition. There was an old food cache (thanks for the Tang and candy) from 1975. Books, research data and photos lined the walls. There were foamies on the bunks, curtains on the windows, Coleman lanterns, and a stove with lots of utensils. It was positively decadent. So back in 1988, I spent the evening reading the daily hut journal started in 1965. I read stories of raiding wolverines and wild helicopter landings. As I open the door seven years later, with all these fond memories of this place, I am unprepared for what I see.

The place looks gutted, almost like a fire has gone though it. Foamies, books, curtains and photos are all gone. The floor is chewed up and covered in four inches of debris. Pack rats. Their crap is everywhere. How do they find these places? I am not impressed and start looking for them inside and outside the hut. Mistaya, being a Siberian Husky, loves to hunt so I give her free reign on the rats. I give up, but the dog persists. I spend the next three hours pulling everything I can out of the hut and cleaning it out. Piling the garbage into an oil barrel, I will light it into a huge bonfire later. Sweeping the floor, I find the journal miraculously spared but for a little water damage.

Retrieving the tar paper from the shed I replace the floor and later fix the roof and window. Finally we settle in for the night, Mistaya with an ear cocked for intruders, and me for dinner and journal reading. It turns out I am the first person to sign (or find) the book this year. Over the last ten years one can easily count the folks that have been to this hidden place. There are not many. I am tempted to take the journal back to Lake Louise and put it in the archives before it is destroyed; but there is still room to write in it. Sealing it in double zip lock bags, I leave it hanging from a string in the middle of the hut for others to find and enjoy.

Again the day starts clear and cool and I cannot use the weather as an excuse to stay another night at the now newly-renovated Ram Hilton. The pretty pink line on my topo takes me out of the Ram basin, which forms part of the northern border of Banff" Park, over a high pass and down Malloch Creek to meet the Clearwater River. This pass is the first of the unknowns on the trip. Topo maps really only give a rough guide to the terrain and you never know if the route you have picked is going to "go" until you see it. I have seen lakes and glaciers that do not show on maps, or cliffs where none should be.

The pass is steep as I approach it. As we reach the base of the scree, Mistaya's nose leads us to a well-maintained trail. These game trails have been used for generations by goats and sheep to reach separate parts of their range. They make my life a lot easier getting up these high-angle piles

of rubble. We descend into the treeless upper basin of Malloch Creek passing huge, perched boulders. Lower down, the dog finds a massive full curl ram skull in some bushes; a victim of predators or old age perhaps. After many hours and a detour around a small canyon, we are close to our rendezvous with our first major river crossing. Near the river we come across the first bootprints in days. They are on the Clearwater River trail, which we cross at 90°. After a chilly thigh-deep crossing of the river, we continue almost due south up a drainage I call Slab Creek, aptly named after the enormous thrust sheets that dip from the summits right to the valley floor. By noon on day four, a moderate bushwhack has us in the high alpine headwaters of the creek with numerous side valleys and lakes. I could explore here for days.

Another superb goat trail takes us up a pass and over to a drainage that will flow into the Red Deer River. At the top of the pass, I have what could only be described as an "aesthetic arrest." To the north, Slab Creek flows away to meet the Clearwater, with lower Malloch Creek in the distance. To the south lays a huge tundra valley stretching down to meet McConnell Creek. I spend an hour on this remote pass scoping for wildlife and enjoying the fact that I have two whole river valleys to myself. In the late afternoon glow, we descend into the meadows.

Time is slowed to the basic elements of day and night. Days flow into each other as we continue our way south. I can hardly believe it when I wake up every day to frosty mornings and steel blue skies. Imprints in the mud attest to the presence of bears and wolves. We meet some residents of this place including goats, sheep and a marten. I watch two golden eagles lock talons high in the sky and tumble toward the ground. Each crossing of a high pass reveals another magnificent east slope vista in muted fall colours. I feel a part of the landscape and at ease with my solitude. Day seven is the crux. Four steep passes and lots of terrain to cover in order to entertain any remote hope of making it out on day eight. At the top of pass one, I see the entire Bonnet Glacier traverse laid out to the west. The next three passes put up good defenses. One is ice-choked, there's steep scree on another, and cliff bands on the last. By day's end, I still have not reached my goal of the Cascade River after a 12-hour push. At least all the big passes are over, I hope.

Morning coffee and scrambled eggs start our exit day. Mistaya's feet have been shredded by endless scree slopes and she is limping a little. My feet can well relate to that at this point. Heading down the valley to reach the Cascade River, we travel through an old burn. The valley is a sea of glistening red berries, Shepherdia canadensis. Buffalo berries are the major fall food source for bears in this area and the Cascade River valley traditionally has the highest concentrations of grizzlies in the park. The dog is antsy and seems nervous and I believe we are going to have our first close encounter of the furry kind. Descending the creek, I am shouting every couple of minutes. After all, it is not polite to arrive unannounced. We come across some scat but otherwise pass without incident.

Headwaters of the Panther River. Photo: Mike Vincent

At the Cascade River my well-laid plans run into a wall; a 400-foot cliff to be precise. I have my pretty pink line on the topo going right up this cliff band to get to the Block Lakes. Studying it with binoculars confirms the obvious: Not bloody likely! The only other way out is to take the trail over Badger Pass then out Johnston Creek. However, this will take me well into day nine and, more importantly tarnish the integrity of the route. I look closer at the cliffs and Block Mountain. I notice a narrow ledge that runs from the Block Lakes plateau, right across the face of the peak for half a kilometre to meet an avalanche path to the north. Having to head that way anyway, we go to have a look. At the top of the path we turn a corner and see the ledge. It is a 30° scree slope, 20 feet wide, ending with a 300-foot vertical drop. Right on the edge is a goat trail six inches wide. Mistaya, sensing what I'm thinking, makes her move, delicately walking one step from disaster. Not to be outdone by the dog, I follow, having my most adrenaline-filled 15 minutes of the trip.

One last pass delivers us to a creek that drains into the Mystic Pass trail. We hit this trail just as darkness descends. We headlamp it down though the Ink Pots and Johnston Canyon, both of us exhausted and limping. As we reach the trailhead, there is a person on the phone and their voice sounds strange. I smile with the realization that this is the first human I have encountered in eight days. Not only have I not seen people, there has been little, if any, evidence of man; excepting, perhaps, the trails of jets high in the stratosphere.

The next day I take a good look at what we have done. The route is approximately 160 kilometres long, 20 kilometres of which is on trails. More than 70% of the line stays above the tree line crossing 14 passes. Researching old Canadian Alpine Journals at the archives in Banff, I find a similar traverse done in 1969 by the dynamic duo of Andy Kauffman and Bill Putnam. They too started at Siffleur Falls crossing six passes to exit Johnston Canyon. They passed east of Mount Willingdon and traversed a high bench east of Cataract Peak. I too have walked this bench on a trip in 1990 and it would make an excellent variation to the centre leg of this traverse. For the east slope, this route is the backpacking equivalent of a trip like the Columbia Icefield to Lake Louise ski traverse. In the words of Bruce Fairley this trip is indeed "Mountaineering in the Horizontal Mode." Another statement also rings true for me: Traverses will continue to appeal to those whose quest is for new experiences; the exploration of unknown country both in the mountains and within themselves.

For the experienced backpacker or the mountaineer looking for something a little different, this route is one of the wildest, remotest, and visually-stunning trips this place has to offer. Even with all of Banff's historical flaws and problems, this

place can still inspire and challenge. The true wilderness heart of this great park still beats. You just have to get far enough oft' the beaten path to be able to hear it.

Just Kidding Around

Masten Brolsma

The usual scenario — a Wednesday night call from Wayne asking if I have any plans for the coming weekend. Having both a wife who climbs and a young child, Wayne usually gets to spend only one day of the weekend in the mountains. Consequently, Wayne always wants to take full advantage of his day of "freedom" which means a full day in the hills. The usual definition of a full day is based on how many hours of daylight there are, and whether or not you can approach/descend by headlamp. When Wayne asks if you are interested in a "full day" it usually means he has an adventure in mind.

Some will argue that part of the attraction of climbing is the feeling of adventure, whether this be in the form of exploring new mountains, routes or personal limitations. While you are gaining experience, the amount of adventure you are willing to accept at one time sometimes depends on your ambition level or what your partner is willing to drag you into. Hopefully after a few years, and not too many changes of underwear halfway up the route, you have built a solid foundation and begin to explore new and sometimes unclimbed routes. Searching for new adventures inevitably leads to thumbing through the plethora of guidebooks now available for most climbing areas. Depending on the publication date, extent of route description, date and persons credited with the first ascent, one can generally get a good idea of how much adventure can be had on a particular route.

Aesthetically, ridges often offer a spectacular day of climbing due to continuous exposure and great views. One such ridge, which dominates many geology texts and Alberta road maps, is a south-facing ridge/buttress on the south peak of Mount Kidd in Kananaskis Country. Located just to the left of the Kidd Falls waterfall ice climb, this ridge gently curves in an "S" to a level spot three-quarters of the way up. A final chimney/gulley system brings one to the top of the buttress. A ridge with this aesthetic a line had to have been climbed. So, coupled with a desire to try and salvage another soggy Rockies summer and an enquiry from Wayne as to whether I was interested for the coming Saturday, we began the search for background information.

Route descriptions that consist of scarce sentences in a guidebook and the first ascent credited to two local guides back in the 1980s generally means that the "adventure factor" should be fairly high. Enquiries through the grapevine indicate that only one additional party has been known to have done the route. So, armed with the knowledge that it is a 15-pitch route, mostly rated 5.6 by a guide without the benefit of rock shoes, or mostly 5.7 with one pitch of 5.8 by the more recent guidebook, we come to the sensible conclusion that an early start and plenty of pitons are probably in order.

During final packing at the car early Saturday morning I look at Wayne's pack and wonder why it looks so bulky. Oh well, maybe for once I have packed more efficiently than he. The approach to the base of the route goes quickly and we are ready to start the first pitch a little after the sun has hit the bottom of the ridge. The first two pitches go by rapidly and we are at the base of the first steep wall. Crumbly rock with minimal protection quickly changes to clean, prickly limestone and better protection. The good quality rock continues for another 10 pitches making for enjoyable climbing with spectacular views and increasing exposure. Route finding is straightforward for the most part, the belays comfortable and the sun is shining. Life could be a lot worse.

Almost at the top of the lower buttress the rock quality begins to change back to poorer quality. I am two-thirds of the way into the pitch when an apparently sound-looking incut hold breaks off when I place weight on it with my right hand. Normally, I check my holds with a quick tap or light tug but having just climbed 10 pitches of excellent rock I have been lulled into a false sense of security. The broken hold lands on my left hand resulting in a pulpy-looking pinky finger but at least I haven't let go. While Wayne is seconding the pitch I yell down to him that I have a surprise for him as he had heard neither my yell nor seen the falling rock. Wayne doesn't like surprises at the best of times but especially when he is only partially up a route with no easy descent readily available. Neither the condition of my finger nor the look of the next pitch puts a smile on his face. The next pitch consists of an unprotected traverse then delicate moves up good rock to a piton placement. Thirty feet out from the belay with a thousand feet of air below his cheeks, Wayne negotiates the "Kelloggs" traverse and then up to a good belay. The pitch turns out to be the crux of the lower buttress. Another half pitch and we are at the top of the lower buttress with only easy scrambling left to the three-pitch upper buttress.

The Fold, South Peak of Mount Kidd

With reportedly only one 5.8 pitch on the upper buttress and an easy walk-off from the top, the decision is made to continue up. Now it is Wayne's turn to relax at a comfortable belay and regroup his thoughts while I try to lead a poorly-protected pitch. All those years of doing exposed, unprotected pitches on Yamnuska are put to good use as I begin the lead. A half-driven piton provides the mental protection needed to get up the loose corner and back into better rock. Mentally exhausted and with my finger throbbing I forget the art of stemming and cram my body into the corner and thrutch my way to the top of the corner and finish the pitch at a good belay. Wayne leads a well-protected 5.8 pitch to an alcove belay to place us half a pitch from the top with less than an hour of daylight left. Knowing that I have had enough "adventure" for the day, Wayne keeps the rack and leads the decaying 5.8 pitch to the top of the buttress.

By the time we are both standing at the top of the route the sun has set and we have fifteen minutes of light to scope out the "easy" walk off to the west. The only bright side to the situation is that there is a full moon this weekend. After scrambling up small slopes and sideslipping across the loose scree for over an hour we reach a point where we debate whether to ascend to the top of the south summit of Mount Kidd or cut below the summit block towards the scrambler's ascent route. Wayne isn't too

keen about steep scrambling by moonlight and I'm not sure that traversing below the summit block will work. We agree that our "full day" has now ended and that stopping is in order.

Some friends of ours maintain that stopping and resting for a few hours during the night doesn't actually classify as a bivi. Wayne and I joke about this as we set to building a wind break on a flat point in the ridge. Wayne begins to unload his bulky pack pulling out not just extra clothing but a bivi sack. Apparently Wayne agreed with my opinion that I didn't think there was enough daylight to do the route in one day. I on the other hand decided to rely more on extra desserts and beer at the wedding reception from the night before to provide my extra insulation. A dubious choice for a skinny guy! I endure a cold night shivering in Wayne's bivi bag while he entertains himself chasing local rodents away and doing jumping jacks. Our adventure is capped the next day with a spectacular sunrise followed by a three-hour trudge back to the car.

In the parking lot, the Sunday hiking entourages are assembling for an assault of Galatea Creek. Ignoring them, Wayne and I take a last look at the ridge, grin, and drive away to make phone calls and get breakfast. Nothing like a "full day" to help salvage another wet Rockies summer.

The Fold, South Peak of Mount Kidd, Probable 3rd ascent, W. Shackleton and M. Brolsma, September 9-10, 1995.

The Drummond And Bonnet Icefields

Glenn Reisenhofer

Innocently enough, I asked Mark if he would like some oatmeal. Yuck! was the strong reply that his stomach shouted at me. I was to learn that his breakfasts consisted of chocolate Powerbars and powdered fruit juice crystals. "Can I please have some more hot water?" asked Mark, as I noticed the Markill Stormy in a state of perpetual depletion. "Sure, anything to satisfy that growling belly of yours."

Mark's partner had cancelled out on a traverse Mark was aching to do when I happened upon the scene. The next thing I knew I was wearing a pack and breaking trail up North Molar Pass, but enjoying it (there may be a sickness here that doctors might want to capitalize on). We were planning to ski across the "not-so-forgotten"

On the ramp to the Drummond Glacier. Photo: Glenn Reisenhofer

Drummond and Bonnet Glacier systems. I could only hope that Mark's stomach and the food that I brought along would become friends. I was a bit doubtful about Mark's stomach, but confident in the traverse, for the last person we met in Calgary was Don Gardner. What luck!

As soon as we were in the Pipestone valley, a beautiful feeling of remoteness overcame us. We were only one valley away from the Banff-Jasper Highway, but you could sense the difference. It felt like true wilderness as we set up camp in the Fossil Creek valley. There were no signs, trails, or people, only ungulate tracks in the fresh snow.

The access onto the Drummond Glacier is well-designed. From below, it appears to deceive the viewer. It forces you to believe that there is no entrance, only rock walls and steep glaciers. A steep approach delivered us onto the ramp that sneaks its way beautifully below the rock wall. This is truly a marvel of nature.

I was battling technology inside me. I found that in this magnificent environment I was scheming up a plan which would bring Mark's altimeter watch to a quick demise. Mark was keeping me informed of the progress being made, but I was not interested in knowing exactly, in metres, how much more trail I had to break going uphill. It was 1140 metres from the valley floor to the top of the Drummond Glacier. But Mark wouldn't let me near his watch, so I resorted to sticking Powerbars in my ears.

The top of the Drummond was splendid. I heard that in the past they used to hold ski camps up here. It was hard for our imaginations to conceive of a camp here. It seemed so far and removed from everything. You couldn't imagine a building of any kind. You could only see Mother Nature and some great turns down to the Red Deer River where our camp would be.

A pattern was emerging with the weather. During the day it was either snowing or cloudy, but during the night, the sky was filled with stars. Not only did the overcast sky play havoc on our tanning process, it also stimulated a fair bit of fluffy stuff that we needed to bust our skinny little legs through.

Day number three was definitely the toughest for us — snow, and lots of it. When we ventured to the meadows above the Natural Bridge we wanted to knock on Sir Norman Watson's door. All that was left of Sir Norman's dream was a pile of timber. He wanted to create a "Little Switzerland" that had cows with bells around their necks. All we saw was moose tracks and I'll be darned if they'd let anybody put bells around their necks.

After an eternity we made it to the snowfield that leads to the Bonnet Icefield. Here the overcast sky descended to the ground and this is where my body wanted to lie. A rest break was in order, with the hope that visibility would improve. As I was lying on my pack, my brain deceived me. I motioned to Mark to also look westward. Through the whiteout, it appeared that two mammals were headed our way. I did a double take. I looked at my pack. Yes, it was there and in focus. I again peered to the west. Yes, there was something there. It was two skiers headed our way. Mark and I were relieved. We now had somebody else who could break trail.

These two folks were on an adventure to climb Bonnet Peak. We joined forces for a brief time until our objectives changed

direction. Before Alister and Gail departed for their journey they left us a small present to carry us on our way. It was a decadent chocolate Easter egg. We were touched. We really should have broken trail for them.

The method in which the clouds drifted in and out made the Bonnet Glacier a surreal place to ski. We sought our way, as a camel to water, to the col that led to Badger Pass. The col illuminated the essence of a mirage. It looked so close. At one spot we guesstimated that the col was only twenty minutes ahead. One and a half hours later we arrived late and beaten. It seemed the worst time of the day to descend this col, so we chose to descend via "the crawl along the rock wall" method until we were sufficiently low enough to be out of harm's way.

We found climbing a cornice in a white-out to be particularly challenging. This was the state of Badger Pass when we were there. Thick, wet snow skiing delivered us to Johnson Creek and our final camp. Of course it cleared up again toward the evening; it always did. We spent a quiet night around the fire dreaming of in which restaurant in Banff we would consume a large quantity of food. We didn't really want to know if our truck had been moved to Johnson Canyon for us, not just yet. We'd worry about that when it came.

Our last day started with clear skies as we followed wolverine tracks to the Ink Pots. Soon after, we started to run out of snow. Who would ever guess we would run out of the white stuff? On this traverse we had had too much of it. We were saddened on our arrival at the parking lot, because there was no truck in sight. "#*%#@+," was soon converted to "Oh well," as Mark headed to the highway to start hitchhiking.

Once he left I was alone for the first time in days. There was a wonderful feeling of contentment as I lay out on my foamy. We had travelled through beautiful country from which we could see no highway or building. This trip is highly recommended for those with an adventurous spirit. I know that one day we will both return to the Drummond and Bonnet Glaciers.

Fochian Foolishness

Jeff Everett

What about Karl?" Dave asks."Huh?" I reply. "He was the one who told me about the routes," Dave says.

"But I've known there were routes at the base of Mount Foch for six years. Besides

EMF, a "modern" ice route. Photo: Dave Campbell

it says in Joe Josephson's book that there are unclimbed routes there. Don't you think that that makes them fair game? And what does Karl care? He's in South America climbing routes bigger than you or I will ever see."

Dave (his conscience still not appeased): "Whatever."

That was how the conversation that began our forays into Elk Lakes Provincial Park went. After that came the pain, discomfort, and usual worry interspersed with terror. The following is a brief recount of our adventures in that little-visited yet beautiful part of the Rockies.

Typically we began each day with a visit to Robin's wherein we found a nice little woman to whom I would say: "One glazed cinnamon bun, one apple fritter, and a coffee with two cream and two sugar, please." Robin's always gave us enough glucose to keep our pancreases entertained for the next eight hours, as well as a little caffeine and lots of vegetable oil (good for the coats). Who needs carrot sticks!

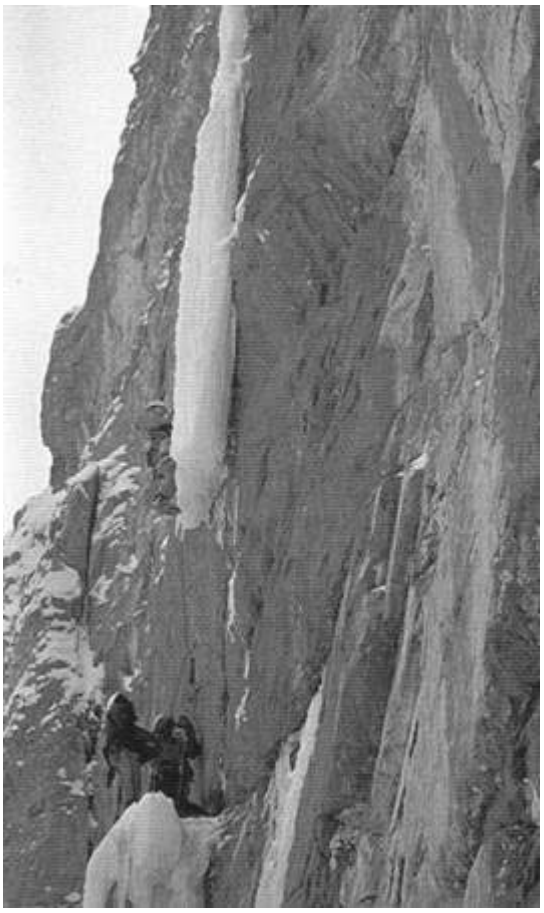
Once in the Elk Pass parking lot in Kananaskis Provincial Park, we would slip from the car into the icy, dark winter air. Onto the skis and the next thing we knew the morning light was illuminating the world's most boring ski trail, the hydro line that takes you over the divide into B.C. Buzzing with energy, the hydro line's wires effectively load you up with more than enough emfs for the day's activities (watch your friends jump when you arc electricity into their moist tissue from your fingertips!). Having grown weary of the powerline and beer-can-strewn snowmobile tracks, we hung a right toward the park. We were always happy to reach it, as Elk Lakes Park is extraordinary in winter. It is very quiet, unadulterated, and always deeply blanketed in snow.

On our first two trips into the park we simply skied across the upper lake to the climbs. This became inadvisable on our third trip because the tails of ours skis (our gear-laden packs made us somewhat heavier towards the rear — although with me it probably had something to do with many years of doughnut consumption) were dipping into the lake. While experiencing a sinking sensation, I recalled the term anoxia, defined as a condition whereby respiration becomes difficult, especially under ice in winter. We quickly opted for a ski along the shore.

Given the exquisite surroundings and amount of ice, it's surprising that the routes Dunlap and Elk Tear have not had more ascents. However, given the anemic and dangerous appearance of the other routes in the area, it is not surprising that no one has been doing much there since 1987. But this is the nineties, and now ice climbing relies on mixed technique. No reason to avoid the anemic and dangerous! (Personally, I think it kind of gets away from the essence of ice climbing when you scratch and claw your way up a frost-covered cliff and call it an ice climb; it's kind of like doing telemark turns in T2s, Tuas, and Rivas and then thinking that you have something in common with a Norwegian ski pioneer.)

On our first trip in, Dave and I were attracted to a one-pitch hanging pillar to the right of Dunlap. Pleasingly, it didn't reside below or above any appreciably avalanche-prone terrain. Unfortunately, it wasn't until we were about a hundred feet from it that we noticed that the thing had more water running down it than the first pitch of Professor Falls on a spring day. Since it was one of the few routes that either of us had seen that overhangs and since neither of us are speed climbers, we turned our attention yonder. As it turned out, a cold shower in the outdoors on a winter day wouldn't have been so bad after all.

Just about the same distance that Elk Tear is located left of Dunlap, we found a line left of Elk Tear, or kind of a line any-



"Uh oh, I just dinner-plated the screw out!" Photo: Glenn Reisenhofer

way. I mean, it would have been a really good line if it wasn't for the iceless blank section half way up and the fact that too much of the ice resembled frozen stalactites hanging from an eaves trough. At least the slopes were safe, kind of.

But that really didn't concern me. You see, I had my own projects; this was more Dave's thing. Hence, he would be leading while I was wrapped comfortably in a down jacket, sipping tea, and enjoying the view. But, alas, my dreams were shattered after I climbed up to Dave, who was at the bottom of the second pitch.

Dave looked up at the ice and then me and grunted "Unh-uh." "You have to!" I said. "No way." He was firm. Putting my supremely-muddled brain to work, I thought: "Hmm. Either I try it or we go home." Oblivious to the possibility that I might be leaving the park in a Stokes Litter, I volunteered: "Well, I'll go up a little ways and see how it looks — but you'll owe me one!"

La-la-la-la-la. An hour and a half, two bolts, and a rather narrow pillar later I was fastened to the belay. Unfortunately, given the day's proximity to the winter solstice, by the time Dave joined me on the belay, our daylight was beginning to fail. Leaving a rope strung from the belay and our gear stashed in a hole, we zipped back to the luxury of the big city. On the return we were accompanied by a protégé of Ansel Adams, Glenn Reisenhofer, who was replete with a ten-pound tripod; and another good-humoured and well-muscled defier of gravity, Bob Lee (no relation to Bruce).

Well, the long and short of this day included: (1) my bolting of the crux for a subsequent and semi-successful Paul Piana-style red-point by Dave, (2) a comedic tool placement by Dave that exposed over half of the screw that he had just clipped, (3) my follow-the-leader wriggling through a hole in the ice a la Winnie-the-Pooh, (4) Glenn the photographer's shouts from below: "I need more profile," and "now give me a pout — OK, now a smile"; and (5) Bob Lee's enjoying the climb a bit too much.

Not being satisfied with the pain inflicted upon us by fourteen hours of skiing with what felt like someone sitting on your shoulders, Dave and I returned a couple of weeks later to have a go at the pillar we spied on our first trip. After all, it had been -30°C so it should be a little drier. Unfortunately, it was also snowing, so the approach and return each took three and a half hours.

When I heard: "Unh-uh," "You have to!" and then "No way," at the base of the pillar I had a strong déjà vu. But when I heard myself say "Well, I'll go up a little ways and see how it looks — but you'll owe me one!" I knew I'd been in this situation before. (Mind you, at least this time Dave had an excuse, which had something to do with free beer the night before.) What I did not realize though was what was lying in store for me at the top of this rather innocuous-looking one-pitch climb.

As I approached the top of the pitch, I began encountering bigger and bigger holes in the ice through which I was able to view the cliff. The problem was the cliff was moving farther away the higher I climbed. This, along with the rather worrisome timbre resulting from my tool placements, was cause enough to ask: "What exactly am I climbing towards?" Well, it turned out that a small stream was pouring down into and hollowing out the pillar, causing the pillar to become more like a big tube. This revelation was terrifying on two accounts. First, my last screw was at least thirty feet down (why put in another screw when the angle starts to ease off?), and second, the tube's icy skin tapered to nothing at the top. Luckily, a little frozen willow reached down from above. I pinched, then grabbed its skinny arms and moved upwards until I was perched on the top of the tube. Just as I was stepping across to a slimy, wet ledge, the top of the tube collapsed and went careening down deep inside. My forward crampon caught the ledge and scraped to a halt. At that point I probably looked like a flamingo escaping from the jaws of a hungry African beast. Gadzooks!

Dave's subsequent examination of the waterfall's superstructure helped him finally understand why it was that I was making so much noise yet knocking nothing down. Everything went down inside. (It all makes me curious as to how much of that pillar was attached to, or even touching, the rock over which it flowed.) We thankfully rappelled off the roots of my pal the willow, and had Dave and I had tails, we most certainly would have left the park that day with them neatly tucked between our legs.

Since there are still a number of challenging unclimbed routes in the park I suppose we'll be going back. What exactly the lure of an unclimbed ice route or for that matter rock route or peak is I do not know. Frankly though I wish I'd been born later so that there would be nothing to climb and nothing to be drawn to. But then again, countless others besides myself have always been able to find something foolish to do...

EMF 120 metres, A0, WI6. F.A.: Dave Campbell, Jeff Everett, and Bob Lee. December 1995.

Anoxia 50 metres, WI5.F.A.: Dave Campbell and Jeff Everett. January 1996.

Mount Gagnebin

Steve Byford

The alarm saves me from my dreams. Of Mormons and waist-deep water. Stumbling about in the dark, clutching a cold Pop Tart. Tom takes pity on me ("you are pitiful", he said), offers me his coffee, but I have no cup. He finds an empty grapefruit juice bottle. I am saved again. Pop Tarts and a bottle of coffee. Life is good.

Tom makes his living as a planner. He is a natural-born planner. For breakfast he eats poppy seed muffins he has packed in Tupperware. He has made sandwiches the

night before. He has brought a headlamp so he can actually see what he is eating.

In the shadows of the half-moon we lace our boots. Take time for one last yawn. We are soaked in minutes, wading hunchbacked through the willows. Thrushes begin to call from the timber. Where the willows thin to gravel flats, the morning downslope wind reaches us; blows through us like we're not here.

Boulder-hopping with big packs. Up past a waterfall. A ledge system blanks, forcing us alongside a second falls. Wet holds. We reach the lower basin with the morning's first rays.

Bushwhacking. Tom leading, me following. I play mind games. I am convinced bushwhacking with ease is a state of mind; the art of elkzen. I picture the graceful elk, the shin-tangle. See the elk. Be the elk. Head down I walk with grace into the back of Tom's pack. Give myself a scalp wound on his crampons. Before I can refocus, we are at tree line.

Valerian. Forget-me-nots. Paintbrush. We see the face for the first time. Side by side, outstretched arms, pointed fingers. The steeper gully? The lower rock band gives way to a seemingly endless series of ramps and ledges.

The natural-born planner occasionally shouts up directions as he recognizes this buttress or that snowpatch. I am in no position to argue. The rock is rotten higher up. Having fun. A hundred feet of treadmill brings the summit.

No cairn. Endless blue sky. We search the horizons for a sense of place in our world. Our world. Assiniboine and Ball to the north, Haystack and Snowcrest in the south. The Leaning Towers, the Divide.

Tom starts ranting about the intensity of a patch of orange lichen. I threaten to slap some sense into him. But I have seen it too.

The pound down. Hours and hours. Lost in thoughts as shattered as the stone. Evil bushwhacking and grizzlies. Downclimbing the waterfall is gross.

There it is. Almost imperceptibly the sensation settles on me; flows through me like a fix. Overwhelming me, almost. Physical and emotional blend. Wretched fatigue and warm satisfaction. And something else, not so familiar. I am aware. I want badly to be home with Heather and Diane.

Like a couple of rag dolls a long way from home we bounce around in the cab. The truck seems to make its own way down. Deliver us safely to our doorsteps.

Mount Gagnebin is located in the southern Rockies about 2 kilometres south of Mount Harrison in the Quinn Range. Elevation about 9550 ft

Fifty-Two At 52

Rick Collier

It's all in the title: I finally managed to haul this rapidly-deteriorating, flesh-and-blood carcass of mine up the last of the classic 52 over-11,000 ft. (3350 m) peaks in the Canadian Rockies mere days before the calendar ticked off another year in my life span and I turned an immodest and disrespectful 53. I just couldn't resist the symmetry of it — 52 big peaks in as many years.

It may be difficult to define what peaks truly belong in the 11,000-foot- plus collection; and, consequently, it may be impossible to substantiate any claim to having ascended all points above 11,000 feet in the Canadian Rockies until such a definitive list of these points has been compiled. What remains, however, is the fact that the original guidebooks list only 52 named peaks over 11,000 feet. It is this group of peaks that I would like to recommend to the climbing community as constituting "the classic" set of high summits in the Rockies, a kind of historically-sanctioned goal that unrepentant peak-baggers can aspire toward.

Nor is this feat of my feet a particularly noteworthy event in itself since it's already been done — Don Forest, as most of you know, ascended all 52 of these summits many years ago; and, although the Old Goats Group and I made all our summits without the use of helicopters, access today is considerably easier than it was even a decade ago. Since logging roads now go virtually everywhere, most of the 11,000-foot peaks in the Rockies can be climbed in a three-day weekend (well, some of these might be fairly sleepless weekends). But the point is that part of the game plan of the 90s for climbing what I've called the classic 52 - if anyone is contemplating this aspiration - is to use only automobiles and feet.

But another reason I've wanted to write this article derives simply from the crustiness that accompanies advancing years; even though I haven't frozen my appendages in the Himalayas or done any 5.11 north faces, I seem to be, simply through the passing of time, evolving into one of the elder-statesmen of the Rockies, and perhaps that gives me the right, yea, even the obligation, to reminisce.

Mount Temple (11,626 ft., 3543 m), August 24, 1974, solo climb

"My first big mountain in these godforsaken, crumbling hills... doesn't it ever warm up around here?... doesn't the sun ever shine?... started out Friday afternoon in a thin drizzle and got to my bivouac by the little lakes under Sentinel Pass by 6:00.... wet all night... clammy down bag... up at 5... white-out and intermittent rain... probably could climb this tourist peak in a day in good weather... easy scree and scrambling until high in the cloud... thoroughly soaked, and ice is coating my knickers and anorak... high wind... is this typical around here?... I feel like I'm in Patagonia... reached summit about 10:00... knew it was the summit only because everything sloped down on all sides... couldn't see a damn thing... I always worry about walking off cornices by mistake when the view from a summit is only six feet."

Snow Dome (11,322 ft., 3451 m), May, 1974, large ACC group

Mount Edith Cavell (11,033 ft., 3363 m), July 22, 1978, with John Northwood

Mount Kitchener (11,400 ft., 3475 m), April 14, 1979, large ACC group

Mount Athabasca (11,452 ft., 3491 m), June 30, 1979, large ACC group

Mount Lefroy (11,230 ft., 3423 m), July 28, 1979, with John Northwood, Len Gottselig, Bill Leach, and large ACC group

Mount Victoria, South (11,365 ft.;,3464 m), July 29, 1979, same group as above

Mount Huber (11,051 ft., 3368 m), July 29, 1979, John, Bill, and I

Mount Robson (12,972 ft., 3954 m), August 7, 1979, with Linder Armitage, as part of a larger ACC group

"Jesus, this mountain is big... 10,000 feet of altitude... and a long, long way in... I'm quite intimidated by this wall of ice (Kain Face)... it looks huge and steep and there's a bulge just to the right, and all I've ever front-pointed is a few little waterfalls... Help!... but Linder and I look at each other and decide to go for it, no matter what, just as if it were K2... so we start up, using too much pro at first, but soon just bottom/top belay anchors and moving fast... and we top out on the ridge in bright sun... and, good God! there's still thousands of feet to go, up the Roof... but we make the summit at last, just as clouds obscure the view... get teamed up later with three idiots descending the face — enough screaming and cursing

on the woman's part to make a sailor blush — and we travel slowly... night falls along with much snow and the temperature... once back at the base of Kain, the other three bum some food and water from us... Linder and I follow our steps back to camp, arriving just as another party is about to start out... what an epic!"

Mount Resplendent (11,240 ft., 3426 m): August 8, 1979, large ACC party

North Twin (12,200 ft., 3719 m) and Stutfield West (11,320 ft., 3450 m), April 5, 1980

Mount Joffre (11,316 ft., 3449 m), April 13, 1980, ACC group of eight

Mount Sir Douglas (11,174 ft., 3406 m), July 27, 1980, with Ken Hewitt

Mount Columbia (12,294 ft., 3747 m), May 22, 1983, with a large ACC group and my dog Homer.

"Another summit in a whiteout... but Homer thinks it's great up here — he keeps digging his nose into the snow and barking... and so do I; after all, I paid my dues — this is my twelfth attempt; but it pisses me off, too - Homer made it on his first try."

Mount Hector (11,135 ft., 3394 m), March 12, 1984, ACC group, including Phil Sigmund, ex-girlfriend, and dog Lyell3 [Ernest] (11,520 ft., 3511 m) and Lyell 2 [Edward] (11,528 ft., 3514 m), April 7, 1985, part of an ACC group of ten or so, making the traverse from Saskatchewan Glacier to the Wapta Lodge

Deltaform Mount [Saknowa] (11,235 ft., 3424 m), July 13, 1985, with John Northwood, Len Potter, and Bob Saunders

Mount Assiniboine (11,870 ft., 3618 m), July 20, 1985, with John Northwood and Herb Kariel, along with a larger ACC party

South Twin (11,700 ft., 3566 m), May 17, 1987, with Carmie Callanan and six other ACC section members

Mounts Andromeda (Northeast — 11,300 ft., 3444 m; Southwest — 11,300 ft., 3444 m): September 12, 1987, with Reg Bonney

Mount Woolley (11,170 ft., 3405 m) and Mount Diadem (11,060 ft., 3371 m), August 5, 1989, with Bob Saunders

Mount Alberta (11,874 ft., 3619 m), with Bob Saunders, John MacKenzie, J. A. Owen

"Decided to plod up to Woolley Shoulder to see if conditions on Alberta might be improving... peak is grim — dark, brooding, cruel, and draped in new-fallen snow... but we push on to the bivy on the flat-topped buttress... fog in the morning and we lose some time bumbling around trying to find the route... this peak is intimidating, oppressive, and today water is sluicing down everywhere... the black walls rear up endlessly... I've only felt this way a few times before — like this mountain is a psychopath — it wants to kill me... at last we find the elephant butts... lots of falling rock from the water... head-sized block catches my hand on ninth pitch... dizzy from shock, but hang on... blood spurting from knuckles... figure two fingers broken... wrap them in duct tape and push on despite pain... 13th pitch brings us to the summit ridge in late afternoon... John and J. A. two pitches behind... cloud and thunder growling in the west... Bob and I just look at each other and then do what we do best — dash, unroped, for the summit to north along the twisted, broken, narrow ridge... cross the icy notch just before 4:30, thunder closer... 30 seconds on the summit, then back to the rap station in record time... here Bob spots a gash in our auxiliary rope just before I drop into the abyss on the first rap... probably saved my life... something screams in terror inside me for hours afterward... in four more raps it's dark... and so, like so many before us, we spend the night nailed onto a tiny ledge on Mount Alberta... the storm never hits despite much lightning...finally, there's light and we do the last two raps... back at camp by 8:00... pack up and head out... but the retreat is slow, and we reach the Sunwapta after dark, and it is marvellously swollen with the recent runoff... crossing the main braid with a heavy pack and feeling my feet lift off the stones may be one of the most dangerous things I've ever done, except for driving all the way back to Calgary that night."

Mount King George (11,226 ft., 3422 m), August 6, 1990, with Reg Bonney, Kelly Adams

Mount Brazeau (11,386 ft., 3470 m), March 30, 1991, with Reg Bonney and a large ACC group, led by Kelly Adams

Mount Goodsir, South (11,686 ft., 3562 m), August 2, 1990, with Reg Bonney, Bob Saunders, and Bill Hurst

Mount Goodsir, North (11,565 ft., 3525 m), August 4, 1990

"This is the great dreaded tower that defeated Bob, Len Potter and me six years ago with a terrible thunderstorm and blizzard near the summit... we spot another party heading up to the lower leg of the V, but they turn back... not a good omen... we take the rock ridge, a long grind, but solid, to the narrow traverse leading to the apex of the V, which is still filled with snow and ice; won't be a dawdle... some waning of enthusiasm here; this is an intimidating mountain... crampons and step-kicking to the upper couloir... the wall at the top is difficult... somehow we've missed the easy ramp... I manage to lead it with two pins for pro... three pitches above of incredibly rotten rock... then a snow crest to the summit late in the afternoon... coming down, a rock tower breaks out from under me and I take a tumble... thank God for the rope!...

Mount Willingdon (11,066 ft., 3373 m), September 1, 1991, with Reg Bonney

Recondite Peak (11,010 ft., 3356 m), September 27, 1991, ACC trip, led by Orvil Miskiw, and including Andre Kerkovius.

Mount Alexandra (11,114 ft., 3388 m), March 8, 1992, with Bob Saunders, John Northwood, Carmie Callahan, Frank Campbell

Twins Tower (11,900 ft., 3627 m), April 19, 1992, with Alistair Des Moulins

"We ascended North Twin easily, but then gaped at the tower; it's awe-inspiring, with the ridge looking impossibly steep and narrow, and the exposure on both sides running several thousand feet... we swallow hard and crampon down to the col... from here the ridge looks more manageable and, in fact, the snow is perfect for step-kicking... the summit is one of the finest in the Rockies."

Lyell 1 — Rudolph (11,505 ft., 3507 m), May 12, 1992, and Lyell 5 — Christian (11,150 ft., 3399 m) and Lyell 4 — Walter (11,160 ft., 3402 m) May 14, 1992, with Bob Saunders, Jim Tanner, Reg Bonney, Robin Tivy

Mount Forbes (11,852 ft., 3612 m), May 17, 1992, with Robin Tivy

Mount Bryce Southwest (11,507 ft., 3507 m) and Centre (11,100 ft., 3383 m), August 3, 1992, with Bob Saunders and Jim Tanner

"This has certainly turned out to be one of Bob's epics. not his fault, really, but rather that of the #©$#&!! who wrote the guidebook... six hours it said from car to the southern high col. 14 hours later and after one of the worst brush thrashes I've ever experienced (aggravated by eating too many unripe huckleberries), we were still 1000 ft. from the col and utterly exhausted... ascended to high col the next day, but thunderheads and residual weariness kept us from our objective, the grand traverse of the three summits of Bryce... just lay

around on the scree in the sun and slept like a family of gophers... later on we bashed all the way back to Feuz's camp at 5000 feet... John Northwood decides he's had enough, but the rest of us resolve to arise early and push for the summit despite an intense display of electrical fireworks that evening... 1500 feet of ugly steep bush in the dim blue light of dawn... quick work up to the glacier and beyond, probably 2500 feet in less than two hours... crampons for soft ice near the top... then the great snow bowl that holds the peak's main summits... easy rock, snow, and ice to summit ridge... wow! steep, narrow, exposed; man, that north face looks rugged... and then, amazingly, we're there on the summit, and not so amazingly we can't see a thing — last 200 feet are in whiteout... back down to the bowl and Jim elects to wait while Bob and I scramble the 1000 feet of the centre peak... 1.5 hours later we retreat quickly and efficiently down the south glacier, but still have to fight back to Feuz's camp in the dark. Whew! Over 7000 feet of vertical."

Mount Hungabee (11,457 ft., 3492 m), August 16, 1992, with Reg Bonney, John Northwood, Alistair Des Moulins, and in company with Cam Roe and Andre Kerkovius

East Stutfield (11,100 ft., 3383 m), May 23, 1993, with Reg Bonney, Christine Grotefeld, James Haston and three others.

Mount Tsar (11,232 ft., 3424 m), August 9, 1993, with Reg Bonney, Bob Saunders, Ken Parker, and Jack Buck

"The Sullivan River road pushes way up into what used to be pristine wilderness... I have mixed feelings about this — the access in now quite simple, but so much has been spoiled to make this possible... we camp fairly high above the glacier and a ways from Tsar, and push a new route the next day on Sommerville, which gets us back after dark... we start disrespectfully late the next morning (for which we will pay) and reach the boardwalk at noon... some ice on the occasionally-exposed ridge above... snow slog across upper glacier, then northwest snow ridge to summit at (yup, I check my watch) 6:00... Leading back up to the ridge from the glacier on our return, I rush things and unexpectedly jam my left leg into the moat, which swings me around, twisting my knee at an unbearable angle... Bob pulls me out and thank God it's not broken, but it sure as hell is sore... there's nothing for it but to continue despite the discomfort, and we reach the boardwalk at 9:00, when lightning begins to bang all around us... I increase the speed of my limp and we're down to the col by 10:00... have to negotiate across the glacier by headlamp in a driving, freezing rain... we're all soaked and unable to discern where to exit the glacier for the bedrock ascent to our camp — it all looks so different at night, pouring with water... we tramp up and down the glacier for over an hour, shivering; finally Reg finds the right route and, cold and hungry, we stumble into camp at 1:30 a.m."

Mount Clemenceau (12,001 ft., 3658 m), August 12, same group as for Tsar

Mount Cline (11,027 ft., 3361 m), September 26, 1993, with Reg Bonney, John Northwood, John Holmes

Mount Harrison (11,020 ft., 3359 m), October 10, with Bonney and Saunders

Lunette Peak (11,150 ft., 3399 m), July 17, 1994, with Reg Bonney

Mount King Edward (11,400 ft., 3475 m), July 24, 1994, with Reg Bonney

Mount Fryatt (11,026 ft., 3361 m), July 31, 1994, with Reg Bonney

Whitehorn Mount (11,139 ft., 3395 m), August 3, 1994, with Reg Bonney

The Helmet (11,200 ft., 3414 m), August 6, 1994

"It's damp all the way back to Emperor Falls Campground... but magically, as we are sorting gear and disconsolately discussing the wisdom of leaving The Helmet for next summer, the clouds part, sunshine comes pouring down, and as we dry off, our spirits rise... off along Berg Lake and up the trail to the Robson Glacier... we reach the bivy site under the Extinguisher just at dark and just as it starts to rain, again — at my suggestion, we seek shelter under the glacial ice in the exit tunnel nearby... we even lay out our bedrolls and start the stove, while the subterranean torrent thrums beneath us... maybe we can spend the night here... after all, a few drips are better than a downpour, right?... but twenty minutes later something huge crashes down nearby, but out of sight in the gloom, and we think better of this plan, and besides, it's not raining all that badly anymore, really!... we spend the night on the gravel flats outside and start across the glacier about 6:00 the next morning, but run afoul of the impenetrable crevasse matrix... we're too far down the glacier; so we retreat and climb higher toward Robson, cross easily, and finally find a welcoming meadow in the Waffl/Rearguard col... at 4:00 the next morning we're off up the upper Berg Glacier — what a wild, teetering chunk of snow and ice this is: avalanche debris, yawning crevasses, séracs, blocks of ice, and over everything towers the great north face of Robson... but we reach the bowl between The Helmet and Robson fairly early... and just like Bill Corbett had told us, there is indeed a huge 'schrund cutting across the steep west face... to climb it directly means nailing up overhanging ice... but Bill had said to peek over the col toward the Kain face... and, yeah, it's steep, but it looks like we can downclimb on one side of the 'schrund until it fuses, cross over, and climb up the other side, back to the level of the col, and then ascend the south ridge... and we do this... as usual, the maker of these hills has put the summit at the far end of the ridge, and the cloud is rolling in around Robson and we can hear thunder growling in the distance and I hurry more than I should because this is the last of the summits and I want it so badly now that I'm so close that I start pulling Reg on the end of the rope, and belaying and being safe and taking it slowly and carefully seem ridiculous and if that thunder gets any closer we'll have to turn back and I just don't want that to happen, not now, not when we're so close, and then there's no more height to be gained and well, what the hell, this must be the summit and I bring Reg up and we grin and slap each other on the back and hug and take some pictures and we did it and it's all over.

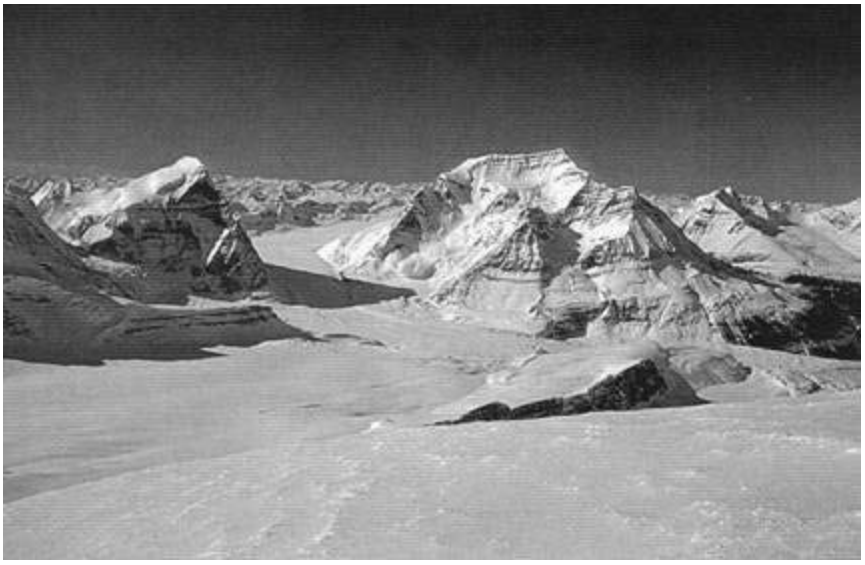
Alpine Club Of Canada— GMC — Clemenceau Icefields

Wayne Vibert

Porcupine-proof the vehicles. Into the helicopter. Buzz the waiting group and then picture-snap as we zip over river gorges, endless glaciers and monstrous icefalls. Ten minutes of exhilaration to make us forget three hours of dusty driving from Golden to the departure site.

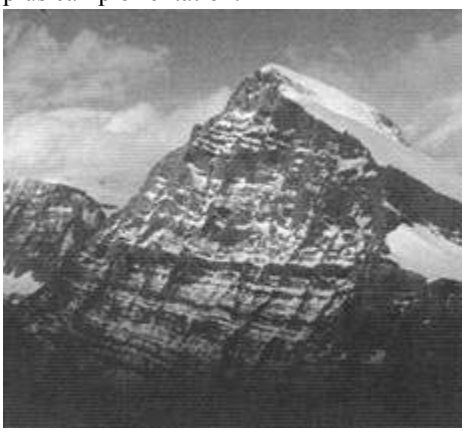
Brad Harrison and crew await on the green oasis. Their set-up week was fraught with driving rain that shredded the tea tent. However, we brought cloudless skies with birds chirping, squirrels scurrying and marmots whistling.

The pilot—who summed up his training, "Blunt-end forward, twirly thing up"—hauled five passengers or a sling-load of gear on each trip. The afternoon was filled with moving supplies, assigning (and finding) tents, and the eagerly-



Avalanche on Mount Clemenceau. Photo: Greg Horne

awaited climbing schedule. The evening re-introduced us to fabulous Harrison-fare plus camp orientation.



Mount Tusk, during 1995 GMC. Photo: Brian Gibson

Suddenly, it seemed, it was 4 a.m. and Brad was calling climber's names as he passed their tents. Within the hour we left camp, the rising sun glinting off hulking Mount Tusk. Four hours later, we had covered the kilometres (eight?) around moraines and up the Clemenceau Glacier. By then, we had roped up and had gained almost half of the requisite 1700 metres.

The searing sun meant a good shot at the peak, but it brought concerns about eyes, skin and deteriorating snow conditions. Long, tedious, ever-rising snowfields brought us into a spectacular bowl with a face-like rock formation looming above. We heeded Brad's warning: "Not too far to the right," (based a 17-hour unsuccessful summit attempt on the one good day the previous week). We headed for the snow wall, with underlying ice, immediately to the left of the rock face. We drove straight up, occasionally testing our crampon-enhanced rock climbing abilities. Over the ridge onto another long snowfield, we eventually paralleled an array of ramps from which (it seemed) we could choose a summit. Just before noon, the peak snagged a cloud bank that would white-out our summit experience.

At 2:15, the summit. As at every rest stop, Karl's "Let's rock and roll," rang out too quickly. We were off the peak at 2:45 and shortly back into the sunshine to plunge-step and crevasse-hop for two and a half hours back to the moraine at the Clemenceau Glacier.

Forgotten were the altitude-induced headaches, the sunburns, and the fatigue as we turned our faces toward three more hours of trudging down the slushy, sloppy glacier.

We had climbed the jewel of the camp.

Mount Clemenceau — 3658m (12,001 ft.) July 16, 1995

"Nats Peak"

Unnamed (Nat's Peak) 2749 m, 5 km south of Badger Pass

Start from Johnston Creek trail, climb the southwest side to the col, then follow the ridge to the summit. A pleasant climb with no difficulties.

Patrick Gillespie

Correction: The Vice President

On page 89 of the 1994 CAJ, I shamelessly reported an ascent of a previously unrecorded route on the Vice President as a first. After publication I was deluged with phone calls and letters from a variety of readers, each claiming progressively earlier ascents of the route. Mea culpa, but hey, let's remember that this is exactly what the Journal is supposed to be: a record of achievement. If you do something, write it up if it means that much to you. If you don't, you lose.

For the record, the earliest ascent claim goes to Ted and Doug Rixon, writing from Kingston, Ontario, for their 1951 ascent of the route. Reading their description, however, I think our route was 5 metres to the left, so according to modern ethics of firsts...

Geoff Powter

New Summits/New Routes: The Old Goats Group

Rick Collier

Mount Queen Mary (3245m/10, 650 ft.): August 14, 1994 (possible new route).

Bill Hurst, Martin Kripple, and I met at km 57 on the Albert River Road and hiked southeast and northeast for four hours on a reasonable (but steep) trail to our bivouac at the east end of Ralph Lake. The next day we ascended southeast to the obvious pass, and then scrambled the west face of the objective, trending left (north) when necessary and finally ascending steep couloirs to the northwest ridge, where we intersected with the Aemmer, Hogeboom, Waterman route of July 1922. The account narrated in CAJ, Vol.13, p.102 is unnecessarily complex; we used rope only once on an exposed section near the summit. Fred Beckey's record of the 1975 ascent of the northeast face was still in the register.

Mount Prince John (3236m/10,620 ft.): August 14, 1994 (possible first ascent)

Despite one or two deep notches and some very loose rock, the ascent of this summit is a straightforward traverse southeast from Queen Mary, and therefore Prince John hardly seems to warrant being listed as a separate peak. However, we found no sign of register or cairn along the entirety of the ridge.

On May 16, 18, and 19, 1995 various subgroups of a large touring party made what we feel may be the first ski ascents of the following three peaks in the West Lyell and Mons Icefields area:

La Clytte Mountain (2898m/9509 ft.):

Bob Saunders, Reg Bonney, Rick Collier, Jim Tanner;

Lens Mountain (3158m/10,360 ft.): Bob Saunders, Reg Bonney, Rick Collier, Jim Tanner; and

St. Julien Mountain (3091m/l0,140 ft.): Bob Saunders, Reg Bonney, Rick Collier, Jim Tanner, Sandy Briggs, Mike Sharp, Don Berryman.

Pigs Tail (2822m/9260 ft.): June 10, 1995 (possible new route)

From the 8050 ft. col to the east of the objective, Reg Bonney and I ascended the southeast ridge of this minor summit, that crouches in the shadow of Mount Birdwood, to its intersection with the north ridge, which we followed to the summit. Although exposed and, at this time of year, occasionally icy, we placed only two or three pieces of pro during the entirety of the climb, the rock being unusually firm.

Spike Peak (2918m/9573 ft.): July 8, 1995 (first ascent)

Mardy Roberts and I, along with Alistair and Gail Des Moulins, entered this western section of the Van Horne Range on July 6 via Redburn Creek and a high col (7850 ft.) to northeast that drops down to a barren glacial plain. On the July 8, Alistair and I ascended the 8200' ft. col above the northwest fork of the east branch of Glenogle Creek and descended the adjacent valley for 1.1 miles. We scrambled scree and interlocking couloirs and cracks on the south buttress of the long ridge that forms Spike Peak for about 1000 ft. to the crest; one airy step on the precipitous north side, and a nasty bulge was surmounted. Then a delightful ridge scramble with some ledge walking on the south face, up and over a series of false summits, and in about two-thirds of a mile we reached the main summit, where we found no cairn or record of ascent. Sadly, our pleasure at attaining this summit was dampened by the view we had of the extensive clearcutting in Glenogle Creek to the southeast and south. While in this area, we also ascended Mount McBeath (about 2900m/9500 ft.), and made a complete ascent of the south and southeast ridges of Redburn Peak (2850m/9350 ft.).

As a result of this multi-day trip, we would certainly like to correct the headnote in the guidebook (Boles et al, Rocky Mtns of Canada — South] that introduces the Van Horne Range: "This is an unimportant group with little interest to mountaineers." On the contrary, this is a delightful area, with many fine summits, new routes available, and superb pockets of true wilderness.

Mount Soderholm (2950m/9682 ft.): July 16, 1995 (possible new route)

From the Cross River Road, Reg Bonney, Bill Corbett, Carmie Callanan, Christine Grotefeld, and I bushwhacked up the obvious drainage on the north and northwest of the objective (southeast of the road) to the glacial ledges about 1200 ft. below the col, where we bivouacked. On July 16, we ascended the remainder of the drainage, turning west just before the col to climb a steep couloir to benches slanting northwest. By following these benches, we made our way to the north Soderholm snowfield and glacier, which, although steep in places, was easily followed nearly to the summit. While in the area, we also made the second ascent of the Sharkfin (2819m/9250 ft.) via the west face.

Mount Mangin (3058m/10,030 ft.): August 27, 1995 (possible new route)

John Holmes and I bivouacked at Aster Lake on August 26. The next day we made our way past a grizzly and over the rock, moraines, and snow of the Mangin glacier to the col between Joffre and Mount Mangin. We followed the southeast ridge of the peak (very loose rock), contouring around towers, for most of the way to the summit. The only difficulty was a 300 ft. couloir/chimney, which was icy and cold on this wintry day; slings used for pro, pitons for belays. We descended the 1990 route on the northwest ridge and northeast face (one rappel).

Shatch Mountain (2884m/9460 ft.): September 10, 1995 (possible new route) Carmie Callanan, Christine Grotefeld, Mardy Roberts, and I packed in to near Sylvan Pass on September 9, bivouacking in meadows near the headwaters of Joffre Creek. The next day I ascended alpland, scrambly couloirs, and ledges to the southeast col. Complex towers and teeth on the ridge led back northwest to the main summit.

Mount Gray (3000m/9850 ft.): September 24, 1995 (possible first ascent)

Christine Grotefeld, Carmie Callanan, and I ascended from the Beaverfoot Valley, first to Dainard Lake and then to High Lake, where we bivouacked. The next day we ascended scree, glacier, and arêtes to a summit at 51.7/63.6, which on the map and by altimeter was 9850 ft. It was the highest point between Wolverine Pass and the unnamed 10,000+ foot summit further south along the Rockwall. It would appear that the ascents of Wilkens, et al. (1971) and of O'Connell, et al. (1974) actually achieved a lower summit of about 9550 ft. (we could see the huge cairn below us and to the north). Although the ascent of that summit is undoubtedly much more difficult than ours, it would appear — if both the guidebook elevation and the contours on the topo map are correct — that the name Mount Gray has been misapplied to the lower summit.

A Tale Of Too High Adventure

Look up, way up. Far above the Hole-in-the-Wall on Mount Cory there sits a pretty little arête. Mrs. Arbic's little boy had said there would be heaps of serious 5.10 up there. That son-of-a-Jo named Joe had said it would have to be rap-bolted. Jon Martoon, Mark Wayloon, and the Russian peasant from Quebec had not yet shot it with their big guns and the wardens hadn't found a landing spot.

Obviously it was big game. So in the spirit of the Maker, Stoner's Highway, the Bachar-Yerian, and Grillmair's Chimney, we psyched ourselves up for a mighty adventure. Weighted down by 1500 pitons, 100 cams, 4 nuts, and no bolt kit, we started the walk in the predawn. Perhaps we should have bivied in the hole-in-the-wall; it's a lovely place for a romantic interlude or a pagan ritual.

We topped out at 10:30. That is 10:30 a.m. It had taken almost all we had to drag that huge, stupid rack up two nice, slabby 5.7 pitches and some contrived scrambling above that. Yahoo, another local mega-classic that takes longer to approach than it does to climb.

Too Hard for Arbic 5.7*****

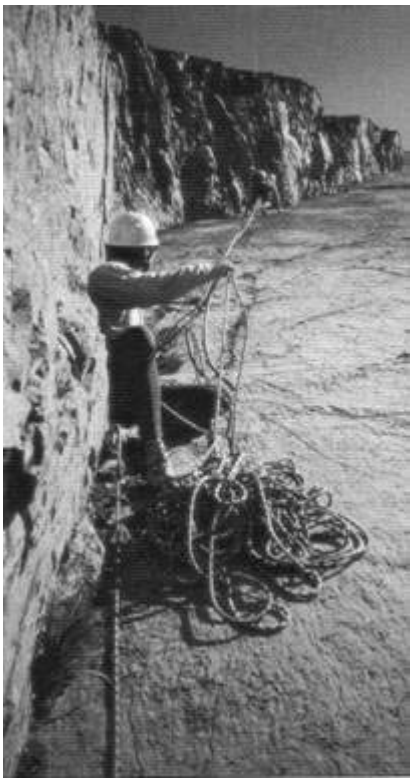
Larry Stanier

New Route — Mount Indefatigable

Geoff Powter

Urs Kallen has a respected eye for new lines, and an encyclopedic knowledge of the Rockies, both well-earned through his years of experience in the range. Urs proved himself again this past summer, when he invited Peter Gatzsch and I to join him for an attempt on a new route on Mount Indefatigable in the Kananaskis.

Seeing the route from the bottom of the scree slope — after a very pleasant (almost downhill!) 25-minute approach along the north side of Upper Kananaskis Lake —



High on the route. Photo: Urs Kallen

we had to admit Urs seemed to have picked a gem. The vertical sweep of the clean slab was magnificent, changing from low-angle at the base to apparently vertical through the last third. After a quick scramble up the scree, as we sorted our gear, Urs reiterated his plan that he and Peter would lead the lower-angled sections, saving me as hired rope-gun for the obviously much harder pitches at the top.

The plan to use me as the ringer on the team proved laughable almost immediately. Urs and Peter have a combined sixty years climbing experience between them, and they betrayed the miles with a style and grace that was a pure pleasure to watch. The pair is enjoying a renaissance in their climbing lives, back at it again after sidetracks of career, family and other bad habits, and our route was only one of a series of grand schemes they had hatched over the past few years. Both of them flew over the lower pitches, which proved to be a joyous mix of corner and slab, with stunning views down onto the lake and over to the Royal Group. The climbing went much faster than the view from the bottom let on, and we soon discovered that the "steep" upper pitches were indeed no harder than the lower: where the climb became steeper, the rock and the gear improved to make up the difference. The climb simply never got as hard as it looked it might.

After twelve pitches on the slab proper, we crested onto a blocky ridge, and 4th-Classed this west to the top of the buttress in three pitches. After a brief spell in the meadow on top, we traversed north for 100 metres, then slid down a snow gully to gain the tourist trail back to the parking lot, getting to the car in less than 45 minutes. With the wonderful climbing (save for some loose rock which will disappear after a few ascents), the easy grade (the route never gets harder than 5.6), the short approach, and descent, there was only one thing to call it: Joy!

Joy, Mount Indefatigable S. Face, British Military Group. 5.6

10-12 roped pitches on face after low-angle scramble. 3 pitches 4th Class to top.

From North Interlakes parking lot, follow the Three Isle Lake trail about 2.5 km to the base of an obvious, wide scree slope. Above, the SSW face of Indefatigable is a series of tilted overlapping slabs. The route takes the narrowest slab, on the far right edge of the face, with a thin right-facing corner framing it on the left. Follow corner or face as you prefer. Take a modest rack; we placed only one pin, and only for posterity's sake.

F.A.: Urs Kallen, Peter Gatzsch and Geoff Powter, June 1995.

Rockies Sport Climbing Update —1995

John Martin

Despite poor summer weather, 1995 was another busy year for sport climbing in the southern Rockies, with several new cliffs being developed in addition to the usual consolidation at existing areas. In all, about 90 new routes were established and 25 existing climbs were retrofitted.

At most of the established areas, only a couple of projects were completed. Typically these were in the harder grades. Highlights were Naissance de la Femme (13b) and Army Ants (13b) at Acephale; an extension of Telltale Heart, at Raven Crag, into a 30-metre, 13a enduro problem; Cup o' Joe (13b), right of The Wizard at Carrot Creek; and Vapor Trails (13a), a long-standing project right of Crimes of Passion on Water Wall at Grotto Canyon.

Heart Creek was one of the few established areas to see development at moderate grades, with 12 new routes being completed in the 5.6 to 11b range. These were mainly at First Rock and at Bunny Hill, a previously undeveloped, north-facing cliff just upstream from the Blackheart area. As well, the TAB-VAR (The Association of Bow Valley Rockclimbers) retrofitting of First Rock was completed.

At Steve Canyon, the TABVAR retrofitting project begun in 1994 was finished and 6 new climbs (5.9 to 11a) were added, bringing the area total of sport routes to 24.

The Grassi Lakes area experienced a flurry of activity resulting in the addition of 20 new climbs. The hardest of these (both 12b) were at The Ghetto, a cliff which, surprisingly, had not previously been explored, despite offering overhanging pocket climbing less than 100 metres from the parking area. Another newly developed cliff was the big north-facing wall across the canyon from White Imperialist. Named Hermit Cliff, its eight routes, all in the 10+ to 11+ range, include some real standouts. Routes were added at all the previously developed Grassi Lakes cliffs and some existing climbs were refurbished. The area now has 36 climbs ranging in difficulty from 5.5 to 12b, but concentrated in the 10a-11b range.

Paradise Wall, a south-facing cliff" with 14 routes ranging in difficulty from 10c to 11e, is a new destination in the Lake Louise area for those wanting to clip bolts on quartzite far from the madding crowds at the Back of the Lake. Paradise Wall is reached by hiking up to the Saddleback.

A totally new climbing area has been discovered in the valley of Prairie Creek, the next drainage west from Moose Mountain. The cliffs are generally overhanging, sometimes exceedingly so, and are riddled with solution pockets ranging in size from shallow monos to both-hands buckets. The 21 routes completed during 1995 are mainly in the 11c-13a grade range, although there are a few easier warm-up climbs.

On the guidebook front, sport climbs in the Kananaskis, Bow Valley, Lake Louise and Ghost River areas were combined in a single volume in 1995. The beleaguered sport climber now needs only one guidebook to go anywhere in the Canadian Rockies (except Jasper). Trouble is, with well over 100 new routes or route revisions happening in 1995, it is already out of date! Look for a revised edition in 1996.

And, finally — ho hum, another year, another tedious Rockies bolt war. This time, 25 hangers were removed from climbs developed at Heart Slab for instructional purposes by Chris Miller, a Canmore guide, in response to potential

conflicts associated with instructing in more popular areas. As well, one to three hangers were reported missing from each of Raptor at EEOR, Crashcourse at Cougar, Sea of Dreams at Guides Rock and Duck of Death at the Back of the Lake. The Raptor case was particularly mean-spirited: three consecutive hangers were removed on the eighth (!) pitch, forcing at least one party to bail out from that point. The pattern of removals suggests that yet another tired "ethical" (read "style") pseudo-issue may be involved, but so far no one has had sufficient courage to claim responsibility and submit his views to public scrutiny. Whatever the rationale (if any), the result is sabotage.

Howling

Larry Stanier

The route is visible from 82 O/4 882 540 on the approach and the upper part is visible from the top of the Great Divide lift at Sunshine ski area. From Sunshine Village, ski across the meadows to Citadel Pass. Descend from the pass to the Simpson River. Good ski terrain, but threatened by large avalanche slopes on a variety of aspects. Head northwest from base of pass through bush or on horse trail for approximately one kilometre. Then ski more-or-less directly to the basin below the route through rolling forest. Good camping sites in forest at the edge of the basin. Ski and walk up 150 m slopes to base of route. This slope reaches 45 degrees near the top and is threatened at the bottom by big terrain above and right. The route itself is on a faint buttress and is only threatened by steep pockets on the cliff above and possibly by a large cornice far above the route. Approximately 4-7 hours with decent snow conditions.

The route from Citadel Pass. Photo: Grant Statham

The route was done as four 55 m pitches and one 25 m pitch. The first pitch was thin and had two difficult-to-protect WI6 sections and ended at a fixed two-pin belay on the right. This was followed by a thin WI4 pitch and two sustained WI5 pitches on good ice. The last pitch was 25 m of WI3. Rappel the route off ice anchors except the last rappel off the two pins.

Ski home the way you came in or slog over Simpson Pass and out Healy Creek to the Sunshine parking lot. First ascent party skied in and climbed the route in a long day and skied out the second day. It would be possible as a huge day trip, but would require strong climbers, strong skiers, and a strong snow-pack. Good Luck.

The Howling *** 250m V WI6 F.A.: Grant Statham and Larry Stanier, April 3, 1995

The Auger Sanction

Larry Stanier

An alternate view of the above report. — Ed.

It was a typical Canmore party. The kids were going wilder than the parents, with the exception of Tim Auger. He was laying on his back on the porch in the dark, reenacting a transcendental experience he had when he fell 900 metres off the East Ridge of Mount Logan and came to rest at Sunshine Village. Later in the evening after Tim had regained his footing and I had started to lose mine, I cornered him for some information. Grant Statham and I were off to climb a rather remote waterfall in Tim's neighbourhood and he, of course, would know all. I popped the question and he made a funny little horizontal swimming motion with his hand and said something like "Oh yeah, I just saw it from the air. Maybe WI2, WI3, two or three pitches. Might be interesting if it was thin." I was a little surprised as we thought this was the backcountry Nemesis and did not want to ski seven hours to do Roman's Gully.

After a little reflection, Grant and I thought we would go for a look and bring along a rack suitable for something a little burly, just in case. Tim is the master of 5.8 and perhaps this was a winter trait also. His lovely route on Mount Louis, Homage to the Spider, is easily the hardest 5.8 on the planet. Toys in the Attic has a 5.9 move that has stopped cold at least two very strong parties. An Auger 5.10 would be a truly daunting prospect. Perhaps the Nose by a short girl would be an Auger 10c.

Well, I guess it was an Auger 2+. It felt like a 55 m WI6 pitch, a 55 m thin WI4, two 55 m WI5 pitches, and a 25 m WI3 pitch, but what do I know? Whatever silly number you attach to it, we thought it a grand route in a grand place with a grand name.

The Auger Sanction 250m V WI6 (Auger 2 +)*** F.A.: Grant Statham and Larry Stanier, 1995

The route is visible from the top of the Great Divide lift at Sunshine Village. Ski across the meadows to Citadel Pass. From the bottom of the pass travel down the Simpson River Valley a couple of kilometres and then ski more-or-less directly to the route through rolling forest. Good camping at forest edge below route. Walk up to route via one large piece of avalanche real estate. The route itself is not threatened except perhaps by cornices far above the top of the route. Descend by rappel and ski home the way you came. One huge day trip or a pleasant camping trip.

Broad Peak

Andrew McKinlay and Shelley Ballard

Sitting in front of the computer here at home in Saskatoon, looking back on the adventures of our summer, it's hard to believe it really happened.

July 3 - 4

Andrew

Shelley, Murray, and I leave Saskatoon early in the morning to meet up with the rest of the expedition members in Toronto. Already the first snag in the trip occurs as one of Murray's bags (with critical climbing gear) doesn't even make it to Toronto. As we go through security, Jeff is made to unpack his carry-on luggage and in the rush, his camera is left behind. We fly on to Pakistan. Because of a lightning storm over Islamabad, we sit in the airplane on the runway in Lahore for a few hours before eventually arriving at Islamabad airport. The one advantage of arriving late, in the middle of the night, is that the customs officials are less than zealous. After asking us several times if we have any alcohol they wave us on. We are glad not to have to start opening our 30-some pieces of luggage. We load carts and head for the parking lot.

Driving into Rawalpindi in the dark with the windows down in the sticky heat, the main impression is the smell. It's a not-so-subtle blend of cooking spices and open sewers. The hotel isn't exactly the Holiday Inn either, but it's air-conditioned (most of the time).

July 5-7

The old city of Rawalpindi is grimy and dirty with open sewers and smog. There are people everywhere! Mostly men. The few women we see have their hair and faces covered with scarves. Although we try to blend in, we feel uncomfortably out of place. Traffic is crazy! Trying to get stamps at the local post office is like being in the middle of a riot. At the money changer, it's not until we've been there a few minutes that we notice a man with a shotgun sitting unobtrusively on the stairs.

We spend the days finalizing government requirements, stocking up on expedition food, kitchen equipment, and various other necessities. Everything is packed into 25-kg porter loads.

After numerous phone calls back to Canada, Murray's bag finally arrives in Pakistan.

July 8-10

The next stage of the journey was the infamous Karakorum "Highway" to Skardu. It follows the Indus River, the deepest gorge in the world. Most climbers who come this way swear it's the most dangerous part of the expedition. Take poorly-maintained vehicles, drive them way too fast down a precipitous one-lane road, through landslides, washouts, over shaky bridges... you get the idea. For a little extra excitement the driver gets through 25 hours of continuous driving with the help of copious amounts of hash. If you're lucky you'll be sick as a dog like I was and you just won't care.

July 11-13

Skardu lies in a big dusty valley overlooked by an old fort on the hillside. There's not much else there. We grumble about the poor condition of the hotel and the bad food service. After a day to arrange porters, we leave by jeep. Now that the road goes all the way to Askole it only takes a week to walk in to K2 and Broad Peak. It's not that many years ago that you started walking from Skardu and it took three weeks or more to reach base camp.

We are barely out of Skardu when a cow bolts in front of the lead jeep. It's a hit-and-run as the driver doesn't even slow down and, when Shelley and I pass by in the second jeep, the cow is flailing on the ground, and shrouded in a cloud of dust.

"Road" is a generous term for the rough track we drive in on. There are many switchbacks which require the drivers to back up, go forward, back up, go forward, to get around. The steep cliffs below the road don't have to be very deep before we start to visualize what could happen. At one point a sandslide has obliterated the road. But locals with shovels soon have it passable. We cross numerous rickety suspension bridges. Holes in the wooden bridge decks have been patched with flat rocks. It doesn't work very well. We try to avoid looking when the wheels hang over the edge of 300-metre drops.

Eventually, we arrive in Askole and set up camp for the night. We've been told the "stages" on the trek are easy — maybe three hours of walking per day. Of course, no one mentions the scorching heat, total lack of shade and scarcity of water. And the three hours? We don't know where that came from. The first day is a grueling 10 hours capped by two river crossings. The first in a wooden box hanging on a cable. The second in water so cold that our feet feel like lumps of wood by the other side and the current threatens to sweep us away at every step. We sleep well that night!

July 14

Today is only seven hours. Again the heat is the worst part. This brings us to Paiju — the last camp before we get onto the Baltoro Glacier. The porters take a rest day at Paiju, a tradition carried over from when it used to take much longer to reach here. They spend the day cooking chapattis and chopping a yak into small pieces. Word soon gets out that we have two doctors and Grant and Fred spend the afternoon looking at various porter ailments, and handing out aspirins. At night the porters have a big party, singing and dancing.

July 15-18

Three more days takes us to base camp. There are incredible views of some of the world's most famous mountains: Trango Tower, Cathedral, Paiju Peak, Uli Biaho, Nameless Tower, Gasherbrum IV, Mustagh Tower, Chogolisa and, eventually, Broad Peak and K2. In our first view of Broad Peak we see an avalanche tumbling down the slopes which we believe is our route. It's a bit unnerving. The last day to base camp (at 4900 metres) we really begin to feel the altitude. I have to work hard to find a balance between my pace, gasping for breath, and my pounding heart.

We pass a Korean expedition holding a memorial service for one of their team members. Four of them had summitted Broad Peak a few days earlier. On the way down one of them fell to his death off the narrow summit ridge. We try to make light of it — joking that he'd taken a trip to China without a visa.

Our two Pakistani cooks (All and Musa) arrive at base camp first and pick out a spot for us. Shelley and I search for a good tent site — after all, this is "home" for the next six weeks. Base camp is a busy place. As well as our team, consisting mostly of Canadians, there are four other groups including an American group with three

Nepali Sherpas.

We are roused the next morning by Ali and Musa bringing us tea in bed — a pleasant surprise. We spend the day around camp, moving slowly. Most of the route can be seen from base camp and we watch people from the other expeditions crawling up snow slopes far above us.

July 19

Nick, Waldek, and Kris go up to Camp I to check out the fixed rope (it's awful) and to find us some tent sites. Camp I is situated on a tiny outcropping of rock. With four other groups on the same route as ours, space is at a premium. Shelley and I are feeling pretty good (unlike many of our group) so we go across the glacier and up to the start of the fixed ropes. The route is quite well marked with wands and cairns, but there is one major stream crossing. One of the other teams has rigged a rope across it for a Tyrolean traverse but the ice screws are melting out and we belay across it. Later it's beefed up with more anchors and a second rope.

Aaron Lish ascending fixed rope between CI & CII. Photo: Andrew McKinlay

July 20

Shelley

The weather finally breaks. We take refuge from the rain in our tents. We know it's likely we'll spend many days this way. We pass the time reading, writing postcards and entries in our diaries, sleeping and eating.

July 21

Finally we get the chance to start climbing. Some of the group still aren't feeling well so only half of us go up. The route is straightforward — a steep gully followed by a moderate slope leading up to a long steep section. The first few hundred feet of fixed rope are 6mm polypro. It feels about as secure as a bunch of shoelaces tied together. We nickname it "the thin red line." The snow conditions are good. As the sun comes up it gets very hot and we plaster on the sunscreen. Although the route seems long (about a 1000 metres vertical), we make good time. Andrew arrives at Camp I in four hours, Fred is close behind, and I make it in five. We stay until 2:00 hoping some time there will assist in acclimatization. We soon discover we've left a bit too late as the snow is now very soft, wet, and slushy. Coming back across the glacier seems like the hardest part of the day. Lots of up and down and back and forth through the séracs, and then the Tyrolean to cap it off.

July 22-24

The second half of the group goes up and we have a rest day before going up to sleep at Camp I. Andrew spends the day with nausea and diarrhea. He recovers by next morning but now I am not feeling well. I go up to Camp I anyway and spend the afternoon clutching my throbbing head. But Dr. Grant gives me some Decadron and I manage to have a comfortable night's sleep. The plan for the following day is to carry a load to Camp II and come back down. However, we awake to snow and whiteout conditions. We retreat to base camp before the weather gets worse.

July 25-30

We spend the next six days at base camp waiting for the weather to clear. After getting two feet of snow at base camp, an afternoon snow ball fight ensues. The Sherpas and Ali and Musa have the best throwing arms! One day we trek up to K2 base camp, an hour and a half away, to meet our fellow climbers on K2. There are a few big names here: Alison Hargreaves, Peter Hillary, Rob Slater and Canadian Jeff Lakes. They are all very friendly and invite us in for tea.

July 31

Finally the weather clears and we carry to Camp I and come down. The second half of the group stays up for the night. Early in the morning the stream is running slowing and some of us don't clip into the Tyrolean. Andrew jumps across hanging onto the rope with his hand. With his heavy pack he loses his balance and falls back into the stream, getting soaked to the waist. (I, of course, learn from this experience and clip in.) With Fred's help we stop and wring out his wet clothes and he puts them back on. Andrew speeds ahead to try to keep warm until the sun comes up. We stop at Camp I so he can dry out and warm up. Jeff and Fred continue to Camp II. We head back down to base camp.

August 1-2

We go back up to Camp I, spend the night, and then make a carry and sleep at Camp II. The route to Camp II is interesting as it winds in and out of rock bands. The tents are on a narrow ledge beside a long drop. Finding a place to go to the bathroom is treacherous.

August 3

The first hour up to Camp III is an awk-

ward scramble through a steep section of mixed rock, ice, and snow. Crampons scratch and grate against the rock. There are a dozen old fixed ropes and it's difficult to know which to use. It's not much fun. The next section is two fairly easy snow slopes which go on for ever and ever. The weather is clear and from Camp III we can see Nanga Parbat far in the distance. We get our first view of Masherbrum which was hidden by other mountains on the trek in. We go back down to Camp II for the night to help acclimatize before sleeping at Camp III.

August 4-5

Our first night at Camp III produces more headaches and restless sleep. Aaron is especially bad with fever and chills and we worry about getting him down. In the morning the weather turns bad again so we put Aaron on the rope between us and spend a long day retreating to base camp through whiteout conditions. We're thankful for the fixed ropes that show us the route down.

August 6-9

Four more days stuck in base camp in bad weather. It is so easy to sink into an unmotivated state during these spells of bad weather and it becomes hard to imagine getting going again. Once we get on the mountain again it will be okay.

August 10

As the weather clears, we prepare to make our summit bids. Waldek, Kris, Jeff, Fred, Aaron, Andrew, and I go straight to Camp II from base. Murray, Ellen, Monica, Grant and Nick go to Camp 1. Barry and Ken aren't feeling well and stay at base camp. Tomorrow we will proceed to Camp III while the second group moves to Camp II.

August 11

Andrew

The trip from Camps II to III takes four hours today instead of the three it took me last time, probably due to a heavier pack. Shelley was even slower. There are suggestions she should wait for the second group. I think the best chance at the summit is with the first group. It's stronger and at least a day ahead. But I don't relish the heavy carry to set up Camp IV and I'd rather stick with Shelley. It's funny, but right now I'm not that obsessed with the summit.

Shelley

The rocky section above Camp II always seems long but again I manage to cut some time off it. The snow slopes above seem to stretch on forever and I slow to a snail's pace. I arrive in Camp III just in time for the noon radio call. Nick and Waldek speak at length in Polish. I hear my name several times in the conversation. Waldek hands me the radio and Nick asks how I am doing. I gather that Waldek is concerned about me slowing the group down. Nick suggests I sit out tomorrow and wait for the second group. I struggle between anger and disappointment. Yes, I am moving slowly but I am feeling fine and I will not commit to staying behind. Andrew and I discuss the situation at length. The weather will not hold like this forever. We will stick together and go for it.

August 12

We leave Camp III very early in the morning hoping to get lots of rest in the afternoon, as the following day will hopefully be summit day. It's extremely cold and we soon stop to put on more clothes. Despite our frantic wriggling of fingers and toes, we wonder if we might get frostbite. It's easy to see how it might happen. (A couple of days later my toes start to tingle and turn black. Luckily it's a relatively minor case of frostbite.)

Andrew

No one has been above Camp III since the last snow, and we have to break trail. The higher we get the deeper the snow is. At over 7000 metres it's hard going. I feel guilty at not doing my share as Shelley and I are at the back of the group. When the others stop for a break I continue on and take over the lead. The slope is getting steeper and every step requires a major effort. I go 15 metres and collapse in the snow while someone else takes over.

I get to Camp IV about 1 p.m. Seven hours to do 500 metres. The camp site is a good one, well-sheltered by a rock wall, but all the good tent platforms are taken. I spend three hours digging a platform with little help from my exhausted tent mates. The back of the platform turns out to be hiding a crevasse but I am too tired to be concerned. We are at 7500 metres. It has been too long and hard a day before summit day and I find myself almost wishing for bad weather.

Shelley

The day is hard on all of us. At 4 p.m. I am the last to arrive and I feel like I can barely stand up. Andrew and Aaron have already chopped out a tent platform. There is a crevasse on one side and a big drop on the other. I am not comforted. Again, finding a place to go to the bathroom is difficult.

Andrew spends the afternoon melting snow. We have to force ourselves to keep hydrated. Aaron and I almost fall asleep in the middle of supper. At 8 p.m. we go to bed.

August 13

The alarm goes off at midnight. Again we melt snow and rehydrate. The American group gets away by 2 a.m. Jeff also manages an early start and the rest of us, including the three Germans, leave about 4 a.m. We are surprised to see Fred and Kris moving slowly ahead of us. They have been two of the strongest climbers up till now.

Amazingly, I feel great. I take the lead of our group and Andrew is right behind me. The day is clear with little wind — cold, but not brutal. We reach the col in three hours and wait for the others. Fred is feeling better as the day goes on. Aaron is feeling awful and moving slowly. Waldek brings up the rear.

Andrew

I'm worried about my feet after the problems yesterday. Shelley and I put "toe warmers" in our boots. Hopefully they'll help. After the last couple of days I'm concerned how strong Shelley will be. I take a pack for the two of us and she carries a fanny pack, but for some reason she is strong today. I should know better than to underestimate her. She passes everyone and I struggle to keep up with her. It's a demanding, slow-motion exercise to pass people since it means breaking your own trail around them. But everyone is struggling so much that I don't have the heart to ask them to step aside. We ascend the short stretch of fixed rope to the col and Shelley takes my picture as I pull over the lip. My feet are cold and I put on more "toe warmers." I take the lead now and we set off up the summit ridge.

Shelley

The summit ridge is mixed rock and snow. It's narrow and exposed. Some of it has old fixed ropes on it and the American group ahead of us has put in some new

ones. We are all thinking about the Korean who fell here a few weeks before and we move carefully and cautiously.

Just below the false summit there is a small rock step with a crack in it the perfect size for a foot jam. I jam my foot in perfectly. Fred waits patiently behind me while I try to get it out. Eventually he comes up and pulls and prods at my foot for a while. He unfastens my crampon and I hang on to it for dear life. By this time, Andrew has come back to see what is taking me so long. I hand him my crampon as Fred undoes my boot and I pull my foot out. I climb the last metre to the false summit in my sock and Fred rescues my boot.

Andrew

At noon I step onto the false summit at a little over 8000 metres. My brain is slow and I'm not sure if it's the false summit at first. In any case, it doesn't seem to mean anything. It's not until the others arrive and start hugging each other that it sinks in. I finally feel some measure of excitement. The weather is changing. Clouds are swirling in to engulf us and it's starting to snow a little. We continue on. I take the lead again and step onto the summit about 1 p.m. After so much worrying about how I'd handle the altitude, it doesn't seem too bad. Moving slowly, of course, but the final stretch is almost level and it doesn't seem too bad at all. Still, I'm glad to stop and sit when I reach the top. It's too bad the clouds block the view, but it doesn't really matter. I'm sitting on top of an 8000-metre peak! It's hard to grasp. I guess I never really expected to make it.

Shelley

It takes us another hour to reach the main summit. We pass Jeff and the Americans coming down. The weather has been getting cloudier as the day goes on. The true summit is only 10 metres higher than the false summit, but a long way horizontally. We walk around a big bowl, heavily crevassed on one side. We can see the Nepali prayer flags the Sherpas have put on the summit and this spurs us on. Andrew reaches the summit first, Fred and I a little later. We hug, congratulate each other, and take some photos. The views are not great. In fact, there is no view. We can only see a short way down the summit ridge. Eventually, the Germans, Aaron, and Waldek also arrive at the summit. Kris has stayed at the false summit. Probably Aaron should have as well. He can barely stand up and is losing his vision. Andrew

It's almost an hour before the last of the group straggles in. Everyone heads down, Aaron lagging behind. The weather seems to be getting worse. I'm anxious to get down but I don't think he should be descending alone so I stay with him. A couple of times he slips and falls, but luckily not where it's exposed. Shelley

Although I am outwardly feeling fine, my body begins to tell me that things are not well. Without warning, I have a sudden attack of diarrhea. Feeling mortified, I let

Andrew McKinlay on Summit ridge Photo: Shelley Ballard

the others go by and I stop and clean up as best I can. Andrew tells me to hurry up as the weather is deteriorating. When I explain what has happened he sticks close by me and turns Aaron over to Kris.

As we descend from the false summit, Waldek and Fred are in front, Andrew and I in the middle, and Aaron and Kris bring up the rear. The weather deteriorates and we have trouble keeping both the two in front of us as well as the two behind in sight. By the time we get to the col it's snowing hard, the wind is picking up and visibility is dropping. We wait for Kris and Aaron but eventually we decide we'd better not wait any longer and head down.

On the way back to camp, Andrew and I travel close together. Visibility is down to a few metres and we lose sight of Waldek and Fred ahead of us. The storm is raging. The fresh snow is piling up deep and unstable. Blowing snow blinds us. We move as fast as possible in an attempt not to lose the trail which is rapidly being obliterated by wind and snow.

Andrew

Ice is building up on my face and glasses. We have to be careful to stay close so we don't lose each other. I start to get worried when we lose the trail. There's a steep section near camp with fixed rope but we can't find the top of the ropes. It's getting dark. We finally find the top of a rope but it doesn't seem right. We head down anyway. At the bottom we're lost again. We have no idea where to go until a break in the weather gives us a glimpse of camp not far away. We barge into Waldek's tent, covered with ice and snow.

We had taken our tent down in the morning because we had no extra pickets or axes to anchor it. So Shelley and I struggle in the storm to erect a tent frozen into a misshapen lump without freezing our fingers. Eventually we succeed. We crawl in out of the storm and pull our gear in after us. Everything is covered with snow. I find the stove, but no pot. We need fluids but we're too tired to go back out for a tent-to-tent search. Crawling into our sleeping bags is much more attractive.

Hours later, there's still no sign of Kris and Aaron. The storm is still raging. I wonder if they'll survive the night. Aaron stumbles in about 11 p.m. He'd missed the fixed ropes and fallen down the slope above camp. Miraculously, he'd landed at the feet of the Germans and together they'd made it back. Around midnight we hear cries for help from Kris. Waldek goes out and brings him in. He'd gotten caught in a small avalanche and fallen into a crevasse near camp, losing his ice axe in the process. Finally, we are all safe in camp, which luckily is well-sheltered from the storm.

And this is the part of the trip I'd like to forget, because I heard Kris calling and didn't go to help. It makes me ashamed. Oh, there were reasons. I was exhausted. I was afraid to go out in the storm. It was unsafe to go out alone, and my tent mates were in no shape to go back out. And eventually Waldek went out and got him. But that doesn't excuse me. I think back on it, and I wonder, what if he hadn't made it. How would I have lived with myself. Some climbers say it's everyone for themselves

on the high ones. And there's some truth in that, but I don't have to like it.

August 14

Shelley

We sleep late into the morning. It's a big relief to see the weather is clear again. I am a wreck. I have lost control of my bladder during the night and am totally spent. Andrew again melts snow for hours and encourages me to get some fluids back in. Finally, at 3:00 p.m. we are packed up and on our way down to Camp III. Although Andrew is carrying part of my load, I am moving excruciatingly slowly. I continue to have no control over my bladder and bowels and seem to have lost my sense of balance as well. I stumble and fall every five minutes. Andrew follows close behind urging me on.

Andrew

The day dawns clear and calm. We quickly forget yesterday's close calls with the storm. I track down our pot and start melting water. People are stirring, but everyone is in rough shape. Shelley has had a bad night. On top of yesterday's sudden diarrhea, she's lost control of her bladder. We make an attempt at breakfast but no one eats much. I try to get Shelley and Aaron to drink but they keep falling asleep on me.

I fire up two stoves outside and start pushing water on everyone. We all need it. It's a battle getting Shelley and Aaron moving. I'm worried about Shelley, she's really shaky. I scrounge up some rope and fix the steep section below camp. I don't trust her not to slip. I ask one of the others to help me get her down. He's one of the strongest right now, and yesterday he'd asked us for help. He doesn't answer me and soon after, disappears down the hill. I don't see him again until base camp.

Getting down is one of the most frustrating experiences I've ever had. On the steep parts, 50 metres of fixed rope takes us an hour. Shelley keeps losing her footing and every time she does it takes five minutes to get going again. On the easier sections she falls just as often but I can stay right behind her and talk her into getting up. Yesterday she was so strong, today she's a different person. I take more of her load and my body complains. We watch as the rest of the team disappears below us. All we want to do is get down. I feel pretty good, but at this rate, we won't even make Camp III by dark. Luckily we have the other's tracks to follow. We descend the gentle slopes above camp arm in arm to keep Shelley from falling. We're the last ones down. Even Kris, who's in bad shape too, has passed us. Just above camp, Nick comes up to meet us with some hot chocolate. He takes Shelley's pack and we lead her down to a tent and push her inside. I dig out our bags and we crash.

August 15

Shelley

It is time for Nick, Grant, Ellen, Monica, and Murray to try for the summit. They leave early for Camp 4. Andrew spends most of the morning melting snow and forcing me to eat and drink. I have trouble summoning the energy to do anything. I notice that the big toe on my right foot is turning black and all my toes are tingling. I silently cry in self-pity. The smell, the mess, and the whole situation I have put us in is horrendous.

We get another late start heading down. Waldek stays at Camp III to assist the second group when they come down. Kris has some frostbite on his fingers and needs help getting clipped in to the fixed ropes. Again, I am very slow and Andrew is carrying even more of my load. I am amazed at his patience with me! Jeff and Fred are feeling good and make it all the way down to base camp. Aaron gets to Camp I. Kris, Andrew, and I spend the night at Camp II.

Andrew

In the morning we stay in our bags waiting for the sun to hit the tent. I find some granola and munch while I wait. Our only water is half frozen so I get up and borrow a stove and pot and start melting. I force Shelley to drink. She's had another bad night. We finally get away at 2 p.m., not much earlier than yesterday. It's not far to Camp II.

I take even more of Shelley's load today in hopes of moving a little faster. It doesn't seem to make much difference. We crawl down. I suffer in silence from a heavy load and a large dose of frustration and impatience. I can't believe we can be going this slow. I just want to get down. Finally we make it to Camp II. I melt water and cook for the three of us. Shelley and Kris compare frostbite damage.

August 16

Shelley

Another horribly long, slow day but the three of us, along with the three Germans make it back to base camp. I feel better as we get lower.

It is such a relief to get back to base camp, safe in the knowledge that we have made the summit, don't have to go back up again, and have a few days of rest before the trek to civilization. Jeff brings tea to our tent and our good mood is shattered as he tells us of the deaths on K2. Alison Hargreaves (UK), Rob Slater (USA), Jeff Lakes (CAN), Bruce Grant (NZ), and three Spanish, Javier Escartin, Lorenzo Monson, and Javier Olivar, have perished in the same storm that we encountered on summit day. Two other Spanish climbers have made it back to base camp badly frostbitten and are awaiting helicopter evacuation.

Radio contact has been made with the members of our team still on the mountain. They have abandoned their summit attempt due to avalanche dangers on the upper slopes caused by the fresh snow. Murray is one of the few in this group still feeling good and is very disappointed.

Andrew

So many deaths, so close at hand. It's a rude awakening, from our relief at being down and our sense of triumph, to such a tragedy. Not that it's so surprising. We know how much the storm had threatened us. But it's the first time we've been so close to it. We'd sat and chatted with these people a little over a week ago. It's hard to grasp they are gone. They aren't going home. It makes us wonder at our own feelings of invincibility. In the end, we rationalize it by looking for some mistake they made. The weather was going bad by early afternoon, yet they pushed on, not summitting till 6 p.m. A fatal mistake — in hindsight. If they had made it, we would have admired their determination.

Friends and family often ask us why things like this don't make us give up climbing. I don't really have a good answer for them. I tell them I can't imagine giving it up. I tell them we are "safe" climbers — we don't take chances. But it's hard to deny the risk factor in what we do. All I can say is that, to me, the rewards exceed the risks.

August 17

Shelley

The rest of the group straggles into base camp throughout the afternoon. Monica is suffering from snowblindness, and Ellen from exhaustion. Nick has carried down a pack weighing over 45 kilograms It's great to have everyone "home" again.

August 18-19

The mood around camp is somber as we watch the army helicopters headed for K2. We spend our last days in base camp washing ourselves and our clothes, and stuffing as much food into our bodies as possible.

August 20

Today is my 33rd birthday and our last day at base camp. As soon as I wake up I dig out the birthday card my father sent along with me at the beginning of the trip and I head down to the cook tent for breakfast. Andrew takes so long to follow me I begin to wonder if something is wrong but eventually he shows up. After breakfast I find our tent full of brightly-colored balloons along with cards from Andrew and his mother. He has made my day!! That night, after a pseudo birthday cake for supper, we settle into our sleeping bags. We talk softly and Andrew apologizes for not getting me a birthday gift yet but he wonders if I might consider marrying him. We have been life partners and climbing partners for almost 10 years. Despite having looked after and cared for each other all that time, the past few days of hardships have brought us even closer together. I answer "yes."

August 21-22

The route out via Askole will take at least 10 days due to washouts on the road. We opt for the shorter, but harder, route over the Ghondokhoro Pass to Hushe. The first day is very long but the terrain is reasonably level. My feet hold up better than expected but cold rain and snow make for a miserable afternoon.

The weather improves overnight and the porters insist on getting an early start in order to get off the pass before the heat of the day. We get up at 2:30 a.m. and start off by headlamp. The pass is surprisingly steep and heavily crevassed, and no one is roped up. All and Musa are keen on showing their climbing ability and break trail through the deep snow for four hours. At the top of the pass the skies clear momentarily and we quickly take our last pictures of K2 and Broad Peak.

The descent is down steep rock bands covered in loose rock. My toes get jammed in the front of my boots with every step. By the end of the eight-hour day, I can barely walk. One of the porters gets hit in the leg by a falling rock and Nick stitches him up.

August 23

Today is sunny with just a few clouds. We cross a variety of terrain from glacier to boulder fields to grassy plateaus. The first few hours are almost pleasant.

Soon Ellen, Monica, Andrew, and I are left behind by the rest of the group. Ellen has little energy left and Monica is looking after her. We have all lost a lot of weight but Ellen is the worst. Back in Vancouver a few days later, she weighs in at 44 kilograms!

The day goes on and on. At one point Andrew tells me that if I move any slower we'll never get there. I am so exhausted I almost cry. Twelve hours after starting, we arrive at our campsite in the village of Hushe.

August 24

The jeep ride to Skardu is pleasantly uneventful. The road is fairly decent, some of it is even paved. The scenery is lush and green, a wonderful change from rock and snow. We stop and pick fresh apricots off the trees near the road.

Back at the hotel in Skardu we have our first hot showers in six weeks. The hotel conditions we grumbled about earlier in the trip suddenly seem luxurious.

August 25

Ali and Musa invite us to their village, a short drive from Skardu, for lunch. They both have four very photogenic children and Ali's four-year-old son clings to him. His seven-year-old daughter has the most gorgeous smile I have ever seen. Only Ellen, Monica, and I are allowed to meet the women in the family, Musa's wife, mother and sisters. They all have the beautiful clear features typical of the few Pakistani women we have seen.

We are almost back to Skardu when the brakes fail on our jeep. Luckily we are not in one of the many areas along the road where there is a sharp drop on one side and a sheer rock face on the other. The driver turns into the hillside to stop the jeep and it flips over. Kris gets a cut on his head, Nick hurts his shoulder, and my arm sustains a "lateral hematoma" (according to Drs. Grant and Fred — a bad bruise to the rest of us). They don't think it's broken. It's very swollen and sore for the next week. We're all thankful that no one was injured worse.

August 26-September 4

We have 10 more days till our flight home but everyone except Andrew and I is anxious to get home to spouses and loved ones. In the morning we see the others off on the long bus ride back to Islamabad. (Once there, they bribe their way onto the next flight out.)

Andrew and I spend the next few days travelling further north on the Karakorum Highway to Gilgit and Karimabad. Being a tourist in Pakistan is inexpensive and we enjoy great views of Nanga Parbat and Rakaposhi.

However, travelling on the local buses is somewhat frustrating. Many areas of Northern Pakistan are war zones and as obvious foreigners we have to get off the bus at the many police checkpoints, show our passports, sign their book and state why we are there.

Back in Islamabad, a couple of days of shopping and buying gifts rounds out the trip. We are very happy to head home.

NOTE: After checking with the Pakistan Ministry of Tourism and the American Alpine Club, we believe Andrew is the second Canadian and Shelley is the first Canadian woman to climb Broad Peak.

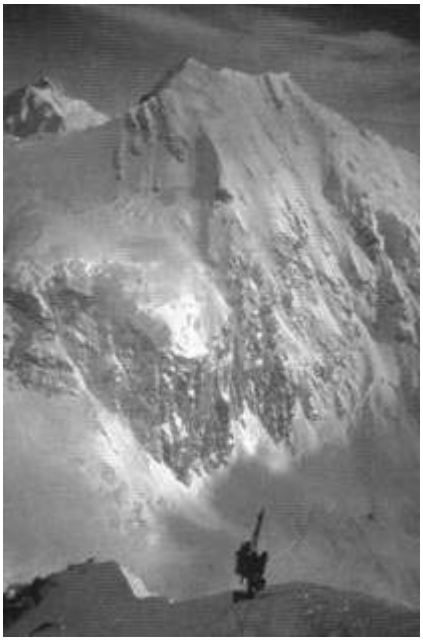
TEAM MEMBERS: Nick Cienski (CAN) — leader, Waldek Soroka (POL) — co-leader, Krzysztof Tarasewicz (POL), Andrew McKinlay (CAN), Shelley Ballard (CAN), Grant McCormack (CAN), Ellen Woodd (CAN), Murray Hainer (CAN), Monica Bittel (CAN), Barry Narod (CAN), Fred Ziel (USA), Jeff Alzner (USA), Aaron Lish (USA), Kenichiro Suzuki (JAP).

A Denali Spell

Jean-Guy Lavoie

I was staring at my boots and at the rope leading to Rob. When he got within 20 feet, I broke out of my trance and looked up. The snow was easily finding its way behind my glasses causing me to blink constantly. It was like watching an old black-and-white movie with the picture disappearing at regular intervals. It was windy, cold and snowing; a miserable day for the rescuers. Beings were no longer. Their blood was frozen and their hearts silent. Only their dreams would survive. This was Windy Corner on Denali, where three Americans died in a storm.

The timing was dramatic for us. A lull in the storm allowed us to leave the camp at 14,300 feet, satisfied that we were sufficiently acclimatized. It was time to move back down and face our objective: the West Rib of Denali. We had been tentbound



for the past five days and I was somewhat concerned about the effect that this tragedy might have on our determination. But in the end we managed. We dealt with this the same way most men deal with their emotions: We didn't talk about it.

By mid-May I felt like a manic depressive who had just found some long-awaited cure: climbing to get away from the headaches of city life. Top on my black list were the credit card dudes who had been calling everywhere wondering where I had moved to and if I would please consider making a down payment on my balance. By the time we hit the road I felt an intense pleasure as I stuck my arm out through the sunroof and gave the big town the big finger!

We had digested many pounds of books and stared at many thousand words of photos. But now we were in the story. Rob Turner, my brother Jean-Pierre, and myself were Alaska bound with dreams of Denali.

The drive took three full days. People told us that the Alaska Highway was in good shape but obviously those people were not going to pay for the new suspension! The road trip was tiring and we knew that the literature recommended arriving in Talkeetna well-rested. So we figured that an appropriate rest could be found at the Crazy Horse Saloon in Anchorage. A few hours and a few drinks later we eventually remembered vaguely about our climbing plans, and crawled out of that fine establishment in the early hours of a new day. Upon leaving Anchorage we had our first glimpse of the three big ones 135 miles away: Denali, Foraker and Hunter. They were so huge, so much bigger than anything else around. I calmed myself down by reasoning that it looked big only because of some northern solar refraction. In any event, consolation could be found in the fact that it would certainly look smaller in a whiteout!

Talkeetna was only a few hours away and we planned to spend a few days there in order to rest from the previous rest. As we averaged 160 pounds each, we had to be polite with the locals, as the women there looked like men and the men looked like bears. Our plans were to change quickly as we were told about a weather system moving in, possibly preventing any flying to base camp for a few days. We debated whether it would be more beneficial to acclimatize while waiting out the storm at 7000 feet or to do the same in a local pub. Common sense failed us and forty minutes later we were taking off, headed for the land of snow, rock and ice.

We chose to acclimatize on the more popular West Buttress before retreating down to 8000 feet, from where we would climb the West Rib in its entirety. The West Buttress can sometimes be an environment rich in abnormal human behaviours. One climber that stands out in my mind was a soloist who logged an impressive mileage between base camp and 11,000 feet. His eyes saw bigger than his determination could manage. He would climb until he'd see a cloud in the sky, at which point he'd hurry back to base camp with thoughts of giving up. Then, upon arriving at base camp, the sunny sky would convince him to turn around and give it another shot. He did this for a couple of weeks; the Guinness Book people ought to know about this guy. Another highlight was to listen to some guide as he casually explained to his clients the merits of not stepping on the rope with their crampons. We simply watched the lesson, speechless and incredulous. It was nevertheless nice to meet people from all over the world and we enjoyed making new friendships.

At 14,300 feet we became tentbound as soon as we set up camp. During the following storm six feet of snow fell. This was a very big snowfall even for Denali. We spent a week in that camp. We kept busy by reading, shovelling around the tents, and removing hairs from our soup. We didn't manage to acclimatize up to the high camp at 17,200 feet but after that week we were satisfied that our acclimatization was sufficient. That last night in the storm, one thousand feet below us, the three Americans were struggling to stay alive at Windy Corner. By the time we awoke, it was all over. Our offer to assist was turned down so we continued down.

I felt I had pretty much skied to the safety of the tent by the time I got to Ski Hill, just above advance base camp at 8000 feet. But all the new snow rendered my 10 years of experience on hard-packed snow useless. I was getting totally trashed from extricating myself from the seemingly bottomless snow after every fall. I tried everything: skis, no skis, skins, no skins, riding the sled, carrying the sled. It became a ridiculous, desperate situation as I could still see the camp a few thousand feet below. I even considered digging a hole and waiting a few months for the stuff to thaw. Eventually I figured that the only way to make it down within the same season was to set off downhill as fast as I could, thereby covering more ground between falls. On a particularly serious wipeout, I fell head first at high speed effectively burying myself after a gracious airborne session. I painstakingly lifted my head up and through the snow filling my goggles I saw a party of two coming up the hill on snowshoes. I begged, "Fifty bucks for the snowshoes." The leader simply shook his head no, but said, "You're pretty gutsy." Stupid came to my mind.

At 8000 feet our camp was at the door of the Valley of Death. As the valley was still too busy with avalanches we tripped to base camp and back to fetch food and we relaxed in the sun until conditions improved. On May 28 two Americans opened the route in the valley and camped at the base of the icefall at 10,000 feet. We left camp the following night at 3:00 a.m. and passed them in the early morning to take the lead in the icefall. These two guys would be our only company on the West Rib. They would stop at 16,300 feet when one of them developed symptoms of pulmonary oedema. The icefall, which can be quite straightforward if open, became nerve-wracking for us. The fresh snow covered the smaller man-size crevasses and that meant continuous prodding and the occasional faux pas. We eventually made it to a camp at 11,100 feet, at the base of the access couloir. We were finally there, at the base of many dreams. All the fresh snow had made the valley impassable without skis. Most parties simply abandoned them at the bottom of the Rib, not willing to tackle the steep ice in the couloir burdened by heavy skis. We had other plans after Denali so this was not an option. We couldn't abandon

the skis and we weren't willing to retrace our steps through the valley later to fetch them.

We carried them up to 16,000 feet where they were cached and picked up on the way down before traversing back to the West Buttress. This added substantially to our already heavy loads and was to slow us down somewhat.

We left the following day with approximately seven days of food and fuel. We climbed in one continuous push. Rob initially took the lead in the couloir. It was all ice as it had avalanched, and that made the ascent more technical, with heavy packs on steep, blue ice. We nevertheless simul-climbed to the top. At one point, during my lead, I felt a sharp tug on my harness as the rope became tight. The weight of Jean-Pierre caused my crampons to scrape through the ice and left me hanging by one ice tool. I quickly solidified my position and looked down. Jean-Pierre was already back on his crampons. My last pro was at his feet. It would have meant a 150-foot fall had I not held on. A slip was not common for him and I knew that he felt badly enough about losing his concentration. Nothing was said. We climbed on, knowing that he owed me a beer. We knew that we were in "no mistake land" and from that point on we found the common heartbeat required for success.

Topping out on the Rib felt like discovering a new land. The exposure to the west was simply breathtaking. The clouds and the blue sky, combined with countless peaks around, made for a very dramatic feeling. The day was far from over though as we still had to climb over the two domes before setting up camp at 13,300 feet. The domes are not very steep but were all ice at the time, left bare of snow by the strong winds. Later, in camp, sleep came easily after hours of brewing in the midnight sun.

We moved on the next day in poor weather to set camp at 15,300 feet on an exposed bench of ice. The final slope below that camp was all ice again and proved to be much work, but the camp was comfortable. The wind had done its work again and a platform had to be axed out of the ice. We set up the tent in bad weather and when morning came it was a pleasant surprise to find Mount Hunter perfectly framed in the door.

That day would take us through some easy mixed terrain to the Balcony at 17,000 feet. This is the highest camp on the West Rib and is a great stepping stone to the summit. It is a very exposed one however and can quickly become a nightmare in high winds. The American duo stopped at 16,300 feet and that turned out to be their highest camp on the Rib. We carried on despite the falling snow, determined to make it to the Balcony to be in good position for a summit bid. The camp was comfortable but snow blocks were next-to-impossible to find. This was an altitude record for all of us and it affected us all somewhat. Light headaches and irregular breathing were the norm for that first night. I personally experienced some very scary biological changes: The lower altitudes had been conducive to wild sexual fantasies (no change here), however when I moved past 14,000 feet, all my thoughts of lightly-dressed women were replaced by an intense craving for pizza. I was so worried that a medical evacuation was considered!

The forecast was for some more bad weather for the following few days and Marc Twight's funny reporting on the radio did little to alleviate our concerns. He was volunteering with the Park Service at 14,300 feet on the West Buttress. The next day became a forced rest but no complaints were heard from anyone. No plans were made either for the fifth day on the route as more bad stuff was expected. We all lay buried in our down palace that morning, when Jean-Pierre looked outside. "I can see Foraker!" We all knew what that meant and no more time was wasted. It was now or never. We quickly packed for what was to become a perfect summit day. We removed the poles and flattened the tent with rocks to ensure it would resist the wind. Then tragedy struck: Rob's pee bottle was crushed. Friendship usually goes a long way but I had serious doubts when Rob later begged, "Could we share your pee bottle tonight, please?"

"I don't know who you slept with, man. Only if you promise IT won't touch the rim!"

We left camp June 3 at 10:30 a.m. in -25°C. After 30 minutes of climbing both Jean-Pierre and I had to stop to warm up our toes. That quick stop did wonders and we then progressed steadily and worry-free. Some straightforward manoeuvring through the rocks led us to the end of the Rib itself and onto the Orient Express, the final slope before the summit plateau. The Orient Express was to be up to its deadly reputation a few days later. Three Spaniards, crossing from the West Buttress onto the Rib from 14,300 feet, found themselves at the centre of a major rescue. We met them on our way down from the summit and felt that they looked very tired. Two of them were rescued from 19,000 feet, altitude sick and frostbitten, while the third one fell 4000 feet to his death, down the Orient Express.

The step-kicking was hard work and I slowed the pace down considerably as we approached the plateau. The slope was getting steeper and the air definitely thinner. It was hard to remain calm as I knew we were going to make it. Just before reaching the plateau, I broke a long silence. I looked down at my partners and decided to test their sense of humour. "Hey guys, I can't do it. We'll have to try again tomorrow."

If looks could kill, that would have been the end of me. I'm sure they felt this was a record for the highest, bad joke in Alaska!

At 19,000 feet, we paused for a chocolate break and to put our parkas on. It was a decent day as far as Denali was concerned, but a very cold one as far as we were. We wore every piece of clothing we owned. The walk over the final ridge was a slow one as the thin air was dictating the pace. At one point I found myself ripping the wind-breaking, neo-prene mask off my face as I was gasping for air. The wind was burning our faces but we didn't care. The dream came true.

We spent approximately 30-40 minutes on top of North America. We locked a few memories on film, exchanged warm hugs, and headed back down. We took great care to leapfrog down the Orient Express as this was the end of a long day and no mistake was allowed. Back on the Balcony we were later greeted by Marc Twight, Alex Lowe and Scott Backes. The three were accompanying a ranger on a routine patrol. Backes stimulated us with talk of a Denali Special Pizza. We later had the things flown in and it was definitely worth the 90 dollars paid for the feast.

The descent to base was a long one. Denali was not giving up. It snowed some more and visibility was poor, making the way down very tiring. Our success had certainly been a matter of the right place at the right time. During a stop at ABC we struck gold. An all female, guided expedition to the Buttress had set camp beside our cache. As we were reorganizing the loads, Rob tested his long unused charm and successfully negotiated a dream meal: a rice, chicken and vegetable feast surrounded by a dozen beautiful women interested in our boring stories. Who could have foreseen that Advance Base would

become our favourite hangout in Alaska?

We spent the following few days at base camp, content and already making other plans and forming new dreams. We really hadn't accomplished anything for mountaineering but it was nevertheless a great personal achievement. It opened our eyes to the many future possibilities. We were floating on a cloud.

I had no idea that this formidable high would become, in part, the cause for the following depression. I was just about to go back home to the "normal" life, and hit rock bottom. It would start with my girlfriend giving up on me, leaving me terribly missing her love and her two kids. For months I would have no home. I would also have to go back to work only to become sick of dealing with the wife-beaters, the robbers, and other various scums of the earth. This mountain cure was ending and I felt it. Maybe I really was too weak to deal with the headaches of the "normal" life.

As I was sitting there at base camp, taking the positive energy of the sun, I somehow sensed what was coming. I was silently letting go of the control I had over my life and I was turning it over to destiny, trusting my faith blindly. I looked all around at the infinite beauty and wondered: Were these mountains really a catalyst to my personal growth, or were they rather the pretty monster that was slowly destroying me?

Again I looked at my dear friends Rob and Jean-Pierre and at the glorious smile on their faces. My mind kept wandering to the future and back. I too, simply smiled, and felt an intense joy as I bathed in those mixed emotions. It didn't matter anymore. "High mountains of the world, I am under your spell."

Reviews

Climbing Mount Everest; The Bibliography

Compiled by Audrey Salkeld and John Boyle. Sixways Publishing, 1993

Bringing her extensive knowledge of mountaineering literature, Audrey Salkeld has collaborated with John Boyle to compile this comprehensive bibliography on Mount Everest. John Boyle's library is said to have the most comprehensive collection on Mount Everest to be found anywhere in the world.

This bibliography has three useful sections, all of which are well arranged: the bibliography, Everest history and Everest articles. The bibliography lists authors alphabetically followed by a chronological list of their works. All known editions of a work are listed and grouped together by language with English editions listed before foreign-language editions.

The Everest history section provides a chronological list of expeditions to Everest with their principal sources of reference. The only details given on the expeditions are the leader and the outcome (for 1922 British Expedition: "Norton reached 8580m; Mallory and Irvine lost"; or for 1986 Canadian Expedition: "From N, 1 man, 1 woman to top"). Scant information but sufficient, since a list of book references from the main bibliography and journal references from the last section are also included.

The last section is a selection of Everest articles to be found in magazines and journals. These are arranged in the same manner as the books in the main bibliography. There is a single page list of booksellers at the back of the last section which lists only major booksellers of mountaineering literature. The only North American bookseller listed is Chessler Books in Colorado; the remainder, all in the UK, reflect the bias of the compilers.

This is a serious title for all Everest aficionados and collectors of mountaineering literature.

Bev Bendell

Witch's Fang

By Heather Kellerhals-Stewart. Polestar, 1994.

It is good to see books with a mountaineering theme, which are written for young people, receiving good press. Witch's Fang has been very favourably reviewed by a half dozen trade publications in the publishing world.

Witch's Fang is a well-paced piece of fiction centered around a teenager's struggle to overcome the results of a serious car accident and regain his confidence in his first love, climbing. It has all the elements of a good story: a hero (Todd), a goal (first ascent of Witch's Fang), an antagonist (a peer rival), and a good climax involving the characters in their race towards the goal. Young people will be able to relate to the personal inner struggles of the main character and will be caught up in the adventure.

Kellerhals-Stewart's knowledge of mountaineering is conveyed to her readers and lends a sense of authenticity to the story. Some sections are somewhat contrived but can be accepted because of their role in setting the realistic tone of the book.

Your kids will love this book.

Bev Bendell

Heather Kellerhals-Stewart is generously donating all royalties for Witch's Fang to the Alpine Club of Canada, Environment Fund

The Boardman-Tasker Omnibus

Forward by Chris Bonington. Douglas & Mclntyre, 1995.

At well over 800 pages long, this is both an enormous and a very good book.

The book contains alternating sections written by Peter Boardman and Joe Tasker. The mountaineering exploits recorded are by two very well-known climbers, both tragically lost in the same Everest attempt. What first strikes the reader is simply the very good writing. Boardman and Tasker have managed to be both clear and dramatic at the same time. In addition, unlike some mountaineering books, the writers have successfully managed to contain their own egos. This is no mean feat for many in this sport and profession.

The chapters report in excruciating detail the physical and mental struggles in the various alpine and other attempts recorded in the book. Punches have not been pulled on failures either. More than once I was both surprised and somewhat comforted (as a very low-level rock climber) that even adventurers of this calibre have great misgivings at times. I can recall at least three times when, quite early into the particular exploit, the writer quite wished to be back off the mountain and in safe, familiar surroundings.

One of the best features of the book is the very informative illustrations. Production people have taken the time to provide something like three-quarter-view-style line drawings which give a much better sense of approaches and on-mountain lines of attack attempted, if not always achieved. They have to be equally congratulated for the excellent black-and-white photos. I only wish that there were more, both for the historical value and the simple viewing

pleasure.

Perhaps one of the best closing comments for this review might be drawn from the foreword by Chris Bonington, world-known mountaineer, on the pair's disappearance on the Everest attempt: "... when Pete and Joe out for the final push on the 17th May, (1982) I had every confidence that they would cross the Pinnacles and reach the upper part of the North Ridges of Everest, even if they were unable to continue to the top. Their deaths, quite apart from the deep feeling of bereavement at the loss of such good friends, also gives that sense of frustration because they still had so much to offer in their development, both in mountaineering and creative terms. This compendium is a tribute to that ability and a fascinating cross reference of shared experience, collected together under a single cover."

Greg Conchelos

Ed — It should be pointed out that the volume is an omnibus of previously published books by these authors, and so, readers who already have Boardman & Tasker's individual books will find nothing new here. This certainly doesn't detract from the appeal of the volume for the new reader.

Mountaineering in the Andes - Second edition

By Jill Neate. Expedition Advisory Centre, Royal Geographical Society. London, 1994. 256 pages.

I was excited, but soon sad, as I dove into this book. Excited, because I have used the first edition extensively while researching climbing information for future trips to South America, and sad when I read that the author passed away in 1994. Although well-known around the world for her books Mountaineering Literature, 1968, and High Asia, an illustrated history of the 7000-metre peaks, her first edition of Mountaineering in the Andes was poorly distributed and roughly produced.

This book, like all her others, is truly a labour of love. The first edition took seven years to complete and the second edition builds on that solid background. The Andes, from Venezuela to Tierra del Fuego, are covered in eleven sections. Within each section there is a general introduction to the country or region, including a geographic and historical overview. Major mountain ranges are then described in more detail, including excellent historical summaries of the significant mountaineering events that occurred in that particular range, generally up to the 1970s. After that decade, it seems historical summaries are often missing or very thin. Readers wanting to know if more recent routes have been completed need to check the peak list which follows next, or consult alpine journals and climbing magazines.

Neate's peak list documents significant summits including their height, first ascent year, and often the route taken plus other published routes. The first edition also cited the reference source of this route information but this has been dropped in favour of selected references of the range. Depending upon what the reader is looking for in terms of additional detail about a particular route, this change between editions could be frustrating. This book encompasses some pretty obscure terrain that should please the most demanding off-the-beaten-track climber.

A very basic map is presented for the most important ranges. Don't expect much from these maps other than very general orientation. Although a vast improvement from no maps in the first edition, more peaks could have been labelled on most maps.

All said and done, this edition is a vast improvement over the first, it is much more user-friendly — better organized and properly typeset. However, without an index readers must know their geography in order to directly look up details of a particular peak. Neate's work is not a guidebook but a reference to direct the reader to the guidebooks, topo maps and journals that describe in detail the world's longest mountain range, the Andes. Highly recommended for all addicts of South America, I know my copy will be well thumbed.

Greg Horne

The Burgess Book of Lies

By Allan & Adrian Burgess. Rocky Mountain Books, 1994

One has to admire Allan and Adrian Burgess. They discovered their passion for climbing while they were still teenagers and turned it into a way of life. Everything they do in their lives revolves around climbing. The Burgess Book Of Lies documents their colourful climbing careers.

The Burgess Book Of Lies is an enjoyable book with the exception of the last section and its blatant sponsorship. The main tale is full of interesting tales and anecdotes. While it is easy to criticize Alan and Adrian for their more sordid activities (i.e., the chapter "Hoods In The Woods"), their sincerity is obvious in this book. They come across as down-home individuals who do not play the political game.

Chapters are individually written by either Allan or Adrian. While their writing styles are very similar, and they have done a lot of climbs and activities together, they also have gone their own separate ways. Allan covers high involvement on the Canadian Mount Everest expedition. He wrote the official book on the expedition which saw two Canadians reach the summit of Everest as well as two tragic deaths.

One has to wonder what it would be like to have as a climbing partner someone who has known you since Day One. For Alan and Adrian Burgess, having a twin as climbing partner has probably pushed their standard up a couple of levels, because someone you were born with is on the other end of the belay. Whether you like the Burgess twins or not, The Burgess Book Of Lies is worthwhile reading.

Rod Plasman

Sport Climbs in the Canadian Rockies

By John Martin and Jon Jones. Rocky Mountain Books, 1995

Rocky Mountain Books has another winner in Sport Climbs in the Canadian Rockies. In the last several years, sport climbing has become a very popular form of climbing. This guidebook addresses that market.

The format of the book is in keeping with the usual style of guidebooks from Rocky Mountain Books. Book size is such that it fits nicely in a plastic zip-lock bag for inclusion in your pack. The introduction is full of pertinent information for sport climbing in the Rocky Mountains. Climbs from Back Of The Lake (Lake Louise), down to the Highwood Junction area are covered in this book. The location maps and the illustrations are first rate. The format of the individual areas is a topo of the area as well as a cross-referenced list of the climbs indicating the difficulty of the climb. There is also a two part index of all of the climbs in the book. One part is an alphabetical index showing the originator of the route and the other part is by grade, and within grade it is alphabetical.

Due to the rapidly changing nature of available routes, two areas included in the book already have addendum sheets: Heart Creek and White Imperialist. A good place

to get updates is at the Canmore Climbing Centre. A book of this nature will become a lifetime project if the authors wish it to be. Each season sees a plethora of new routes. This book is highly recommended for anyone wishing to sport climb in the Canadian Rockies.

Rod Plasman

The David Thompson Highway; A Hiking Guide

By Jane Ross and Daniel Kyba. Rocky Mountain Books, Calgary, 1995. (256 pages, $16.95}

Hiking Alberta's David Thompson County by Pat Kariel and Eric Schneider. Greenways Press, Calgary, 1995. (158 pages, $13.95)

It never rains but it pours. After a long time without a hiking guidebook to the central part of the Alberta Rockies1 eastern slopes, now there are two.

The David Thompson Highway: A Hiking Guide provides thorough descriptions of 69 trips along Highway 11. It covers the area from near the small town of Nordegg, west to the Kootenay Plains, and into Banff National Park. Many of the hikes presented here are short ones (less then 10 km return), but there is a good selection of longer options, including several backpacking trips. Each description offers a quick overview of the standard information, (distance, elevation gain, route synopsis, etc.), followed by a detailed account of the trail.

Numerous sidebars enliven this book, mainly under four headings: What's In A Name?, Geofacts, Florafacts, and Historical Footnotes. Always interesting, they show the comprehensive research the authors undertook, and their passionate curiosity about this little-visited region they have so intently explored.

There are many black-and-white photographs, among them intriguing archival images. The maps are generally well done, though there is a mistake in the one on page 107 in which Littlehorn Creek is marked where lies the Bighorn River. Some of the practices mentioned in this book — feeding wildlife, unnecessarily adding rocks to cairns, running from bears — are archaic or dangerous. Nevertheless, The David Thompson Highway: A Hiking Guide represents a valuable resource for those wishing to become intimately acquainted with this often overlooked part of Alberta.

The second edition of Hiking Alberta's David Thompson Country has been long awaited. First published by Lone Pine in 1987, this guide was out-of-print for several years before the authors brought out this version of the book themselves.

Kariel and Schneider describe more then 60 trails within a large area from the Ghost River, not far north of the Trans-Canada Highway, all the way up to the Brazeau country bordering on Jasper National Park, over 200 km to the north. The hikes are organized into seven main areas, and range from easy, half-day, family trips to strenuous extended backpacks.

The new maps in this edition are a big improvement over the originals. There are comprehensive introductory notes, with background on human history as well as information on climate and hiking season, plus tips for hikers and backpackers. This book includes nearly all the excursions elaborated upon in the Ross/Kyba effort, plus many more rugged options that the first book only mentions — if at all — in a brief appendix. The Kariel/Schneider publication does suffer, however, from dated or vague descriptions— such as the statement that the route over Paradise Pass between Lake Minnewanka and the Ghost River "is reported to be steep, marshy and difficult." (It is an adventure that requires route-finding skills and tolerance for bushwhacking.)

Although you are unlikely to greet many other hikers on most of the trails in this neck of the woods, something to keep in mind is that you may well meet travellers on horseback and ATVs. With that possible caveat, these two books will whet your appetite for visits to the fascinating foothills.

Mike Potter

Icefields

By Thomas Wharton. NeWest Publishers, 1995

Thomas Wharton begins his elegant historical novel, Icefields, with a disclaimer. He wants the reader to know that his work contains deliberate historical and geographical inaccuracies. He wants to make it clear that he has used the history of Jasper as a creative backdrop for an innovative story he wants to tell about glacial ice. I must admit that this disclaimer stimulated in me the historian's usual trepidation about the twisting of historical fact. Most people in the Rockies have trouble enough keeping the real stories straight. I didn't think we needed to add further confusion to the accounts of who did what and when. The overwhelming reality of the Columbia Icefield is difficult enough to comprehend. Fiction is not going to help. Three chapters into the book, I changed my mind.

Spare and simple, like the glaciers and frozen peaks he describes, Wharton's writing mirrors the beauty of the high alpine landscape. Only the important features relating to the nature and character of place stand out. Wharton's characters are similarly constructed. They are reduced to the elemental spareness of the ice over which they wander. Subject to only the most fundamental emotions, we see them come to grips with themselves by coming to grips with the ice and rock and pure light of the icefield upon which his remarkable story unfolds. This, however, should not imply that the characters in Wharton's novel don't live on the page. Wharton's remarkable capacity to control dialogue actually makes his historical characters more alive than they may have seemed in the journals they left behind of their travels.

Wharton has chosen historical figures who mean a great deal to the history of Canada's mountain national parks as the prime movers of his spare but haunting story. One of his prime characters was drawn from the adventure narratives of the Earl of Southesk, who travelled through the remote wilderness of what is now Jasper in 1859. Wharton then superimposed Southesk's narrative on the adventures of Norman Collie, who with Hugh Stutfield and Herman Woolley, discovered the Columbia Icefield in the summer of 1898. The narratives of these two figures also overlap with those of a famous woman mountaineer, American climber C. S. Thompson, a poet horseman from England, an entrepreneur who initiates snowmobile rides on the glacier, and the leader of the 1925 Japanese Expedition to Mount Alberta.

The key character in Icefields is Dr. Edward Byrne. The story begins when Byrne falls in a crevasse on the Arcturus Glacier and discovers the image of a frozen angel in the ice. He returns to England haunted by his accident and by the remarkable woman who has tended him during his convalescence in a settlement near Jasper. After abandoning everything that formerly mattered in England, Byrne returns to the mountains to pursue a growing passion for glaciology. In time he learns enough about the motion of the Arcturus Glacier to deter-

mine when the angel of the ice and the pack he lost in the crevasse might emerge at the terminus. Twenty-five years pass before Byrne finds his pack, Meanwhile some interesting things have happened to the angel in the ice, to his Jasper friends, and to the landscape in which they live.

It is not often that you come across a locally-written classic. Not since Sid Marty wrote Headwaters and Men For The Mountains has the theme of the Jasper mountains been handled with such clarity and elegance. With Icefields, Mr. Wharton has amply demonstrated that literary craftsmanship, outstanding storytelling and a profound knowledge of subject can still contribute enormously to a well-expressed sense of place. If you want to further articulate why you love these mountains, read this remarkable book.

R. W. Sandford

George Kinney and the first ascent of Mount Robson

an Internet Site by James L. Swanson http://www.cadvision.com/db/spiral

In 1909, George Kinney and Donald Phillips claimed they climbed Mount Robson, British Columbia, the highest mountain in the Canadian Rockies. In 1913, Phillips said it wasn't so. Phillips's story has stuck: the official first ascent of Mount Robson is credited to Conrad Kain, Albert MacCarthy, and William Foster, who made the climb at the 1913 ACC camp at which Phillips confessed. George Kinney fell from grace: although he was a founding member and an official advisor of the ACC, in the 30 years since his death the Canadian Alpine Journal has never published an obituary.

This Internet web site investigates Kinney's claim, the circumstances surrounding Phillips's confession, and the until-now near-universal acceptance that Kinney's claim was a lie. According to evidence presented by Swanson, Phillips's confession was not "artless, spontaneous, and ingenuous," as Elizabeth Parker characterized it, but rather was sophisticated, planned, and deceitful. Also suggested as untrue is the legend that Kinney recanted his claim in old age — Kinney's daughter has written that the family believes George made it.

The site asks for more evidence placing Kinney in the social context of the early Alpine Club of Canada. He was an outsider, ill-educated though a clergyman, pompous and boastful — and a man of iron. On route to Robson from Edmonton in 1909, Kinney swam his horse outfit across mountain torrents near Jasper, out-distancing the two companions he had picked up prior to meeting Phillips. He and Phillips spent days exposed at 10,000 feet on Robson. When a child in his parish got burnt, Kinney donated two dozen patches of skin from his thighs — sliced off without anesthetic.

One also wishes that the personal papers of Arthur O. Wheeler, founder and first president of the Alpine Club of Canada, were in public hands. Lacking them, we are left with frustrating speculations. Kinney's papers, also, are lacking — the family doesn't know of any. The majority of the resources referred to are at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies in Banff.

On the downside, the hypertext structure of the Internet makes for potent footnotes, yet this potential is barely touched in this site. The graphic possibilities of the Internet are also underutilized — there must be lots of photos of Kinney. This site barely touches on the potential of the Internet for scholarly and specialized publications.

Did Kinney make it? Maybe so.

Seamus O'Hooligan

Jeff Lakes

1962 — 1995

"Calgary climber Jeff Lakes died on August 13 after an heroic descent from the upper reaches of K2 that fellow team member Peter Hillary called a 'marathon of survival.'"

Those are the words that will echo through my consciousness forever. Jeff's sister phoned Cindy and me at 7:00 a.m. She had been up since 4:00 a.m., when the call from Matt Cominsky at basecamp had come. We were shocked, unbelieving: how could this be true?

Tragically it was; Jeff was gone. As the news trickled in, we and the world learned of the disaster on K2. "Horrible storm with seven dead" stared at us from the media and on-line services. It was not until we talked to Peter that we knew what really happened to Jeff, and how he had died in an epic descent from a summit bid in the face of appalling conditions.

Peter told us that he and Jeff had gone up to Camp IV with the rest of the climbers. Warm temperatures and deep snow caused them to delay their summit attempt until that night. Leaving early, Jeff and Peter broke trail to somewhere near the Bottleneck. At this point clouds started moving in and light snow began to fall. Peter and Jeff talked about their chances, about the weather, and vacillated about continuing while other teams caught up and passed them. Jeff decided to go on while Peter turned back. Apparently Jeff" stopped just short of the summit, fighting the storm that was now upon the mountain. Jeff retreated to Camp IV to spend the night. Camp IV was swept by an avalanche that night, but Jeff survived, bivying with no gear. Jeff descended only to find Camp III swept away by sérac fall. With no harness, ice axe or crampons, Jeff was forced to continue down to meet the team at Camp II. It is testament to his technical ability and willpower that Jeff was able to reach Camp II in a storm, alone and unequipped. Peter said Jeff was incredibly happy to be back with the living, and amazingly, without frostbite. Jeff and the others decided to catch a few hours sleep before heading down. Jeff never woke up.

Jeff's climbing career began on the granite bluffs near his hometown of Trail B.C., and quickly moved to the larger arena of the nearby Rockies. Jeff" developed a penchant for ice climbing, and he was soon ticking off many of the classic routes between finishing an apprenticeship as a sheet metal worker. Over the years, his skill, safety and competence as an ice climber became highly regarded. Jeff had an innate ability to hold it together while leading on the kind of" ice where a fall would be the end.

The drive to climb hard did not stop Jeff from teaching many beginning and aspirant climbers. He would often spend weekends taking friends out on moderate climbs, carefully instructing them in the ways of the mountains. He had a genuine personality that touched all who knew him, and brought him an ever expanding circle of friends. That he could drive 2500 kilometres, or fly around the globe, and be welcomed into someone's house is a testament to how well he was liked. Jeff" enjoyed the social aspect of climbing as much as the activity itself, and was always quick to lend a hand and would often put himself out for perfect strangers; such was his compassion for others.

My affiliation with Jeff started about fifteen years ago, when we met to go ice climbing. While the intent of the trip was to do some serious climbing, we spent much of the time simply having fun. Jeff's nature made it easy to become fast friends.

For me, an event which defined Jeff more then any other was a ride back from a trip to Leavenworth. Jeff was driving, and as we passed through a tunnel, Jeff swerved back and forth violently. I looked at Jeff expecting an answer, but he just looked back and said "I just wanted to know what that would be like..." This action typified Jeff's insatiable curiosity' about the world, and exemplified his quest to explore it as completely as possible. This is what led him to the high mountains of Peru, Bolivia, Alaska, Nepal and Pakistan.

Jeff had a remarkable climbing resume: it includes solo ascents of the Canadian Rocks ice testpieces Nemesis, Pilsner Pillar and Ice Nine (all WI6s); notable ascents in Peru and Bolivia (including the SW Face of Chacraraju, a solo of the West Rib of Huascaran, the SW Face of Alpamayo; the SW Ridge of Ama Dablam and attempts on other major Himalayan peaks, including Lhotse, Everest and K2, first in 1993 then finally again last year; and several 12a's and b's on rock. Jeff was an all-round climber who could easily move from one discipline to the next.

Alpinism also allowed Jeff to explore his considerable photographic talents. Jeff had some slides shown in a showcase of the Kootenays at Expo '86, and I can still remember the pride Jeff had in his voice about that achievement. Jeff amassed a considerable portfolio of outdoor-oriented photographic art, with his shots appearing in several magazines as feature and commercial art.

Sometimes a parent or a friend is perplexed by the drive that manifests itself in explorers such as Jeff. They might hope that the passion to be in the high and wild places will pass and a more conventional lifestyle will be adopted. For Jeff though, climbing was what defined him. Jeff would not be Jeff had he not followed the course in life that he did. He was at his best when on a sharp lead where his skill and concentration was all that would save the day. Yet he never took chances that he thought were unnecessary, and never lost sight of what was important in life.

Just a few short months ago, Jeff, Cindy and I were walking together and he told us that he had a chance to return to K2. In his usual giving way, he asked if I wanted to come along, knowing my desire to climb in the big mountains with him. I couldn't go, and he was worried that he couldn't either; as usual Jeff was having to scrape together the finances for one of his big adventures.

Over the next four months, Jeff became more organized and focused than I had ever seen him. This was his dream coming true; he felt he had a real chance for the summit and prepared accordingly. Still, right to the very end, he had to struggle to make the trip happen, and when it seemed right before he was to leave that he might have to back out, I felt he hit an all-time low.

Seeing his pain, his family agreed to help out. Even though it meant he had to sell his beloved IROC with its 600-watt stereo, he was on his way, and the harried phone calls we received told us the old Jeff was back.

Jeff left for K2 once again, but this time the mountain kept him. I know that Jeff would not want us to be sad for him. I think he would say "Thank you for helping me to achieve my dreams, and for the chance to reach my goal. Please don't feel recriminations." He rests now in the cradle of" the mountain, far from us in body but not spirit. We will all remember Jeff in different ways. He was a grandson, a son, a brother, a lover. To me he was a friend who became a brother, and I will miss him as such. I picture Jeff sitting

high in the throne room of the mountain gods, and I know that he has gone to a better place in the universe.

He was my friend.

ERIC HOOGSTRATEN

Trevor Peterson

d. 1996

You are my hero
You are my mentor
You are my friend
Remember when we howled

"I can just hear 'em now, Johnny Foon and Trevor. What a scary thought that is. Jesus, those too'll kill themselves for sure." You bellowed. We howled back at the wind with our simple, sick laughter. Nobody could get us. We had no plans for death.

Where the hell did you go? I don't get it. You were coming home. You were already on your way to heaven.

Do you know how much it meant that you made a place for me in the Dog House? Man, we had such good times in the Dog House.

Do you know you were there on "Hooter Summit?" Hanging from that one tool, skis scratching uselessly on 65-degree ice, totally pumped. I needed something to keep me from pulling off, stop me from cartwheeling down to the 'scrhund below. I thought of you, and your strength saved my ass.

Do you know we climbed The Dagger?

Do you know we called it Shreddie?

Do you know?

Do you know?

Do you know I love you?

"Atta boy!" That was what you said whenever I'd done something good. It was your approval. Sometimes you'd say it after a climb. Sometimes you'd say it after I'd been on a date. "Did you get laid," you'd ask. "Aw, c'mon, tell me..." It mattered to you. You cared. You were always so concerned about others around you. You needed to know we were happy. It's really quite remarkable. You were one of the world's most famous skiers, but never blinded by the lights of stardom you stayed true to the old values. You lived your life and did your thing for reasons of the soul. So pure of heart. So perfect in an imperfect world that you were always trying to improve for the rest of us. Your perfection remains with us in many ways. Kye and Névé, your perfect children. Tanya, your perfect mate. The Empress, you called her; the heavenly ruler. Tanya is so strong, she is inspiration for all of us feeling pain now. The weight will remain, but it will, I think, in time get less burdensome to carry.

The last few months were amazing. We were possessed. There was so much going on, so much being done. It was a magical time. We were going off. It kept coming at us and we kept meeting it head on. Riding the crest of the wave; on top of the world. Man, the energy was so thick you could taste it. It surrounded us; we all felt it. It was you; your force, your energy that drove the astounding machine to the sky.

There's so much left to do, Shreddie. I need to see you again, damn it. I only need patience now, to know I'll find you again. As Richard Bach wrote: "Don't be dismayed at goodbyes. A farewell is necessary before you can meet again. And meeting again, after moments or lifetimes, is certain for those who are friends."

I'll go back to the mountains. To some of the old places, to some new ones, and you'll be there. Your spirit has always been there for me. Remember how sure we were of Stevie's connection to the Ravens? How could I ignore the last words you spoke to me: "Right on. Take care bro', see ya soon."

And then you cawed. On February 26th, 1996, Trevor Peterson made one last run, down the Glacier Ronde in Chamonix before coming home. The narrow, steep chute fractured and Trevor was taken from this world. All who know Trevor know he did everything possible to minimize the risk, but the risks cannot be eliminated; nor should they be: they are a part of the power of the games we play.

Elsewhere in this Journal, 51 new ice climbs in B.C. are reported. Trevor was on the first ascents of 23 of them. In the 80s Trevor first ski descents of many coast classics set a new standard and brought extreme ski mountaineering to B.C. and the rest of North America. In the 90s he reset the standard with extreme first from Alaska to Greenland and beyond.

Perhaps there is some correlation between the hole that must have been made in this existence to take him from here, and the hole that's been left in our lives. So many of us got to stand on and look over the edge with Trevor. His passion for life was perhaps only exceeded by his desire to share it with others. We may no longer be able to follow him, but he most certainly will be leading the way.

JOHN CHILTON

Up on the hills, or on rivers of white
New snow in the mountains
Ice forming at night
He'd rise in the morning
His partners would know
A good strong coffee
And off Trevy would go
He took climbing and skiing to heights few would
On rivers, fish hesitate, in places he'd go
In films that he worked, he brought laughter and cheer
And made people feel safe with his presence at near
He played with his children on beaches so white
Sat around fires with friends telling stories at night
With skill and precision, he planned every day
To make the most of this life we all love to play

DAVE ALEXANDER

Scott (Brian, Bert) Ebert

d. 1995

Known to his family and friends back east as Brian, on his birth certificate as Scott, and to his friends out west as Bert, or even "the guy with the big hair." Only he, with his subtle sense of humour, could have so many names. Bert was an excellent instructor and guide, a fantastic mediator, a genuine listener, a person with time for

Brian Ebert. Photo: Grant Smith

everyone, and even an outstanding writer. There aren't enough words that can do justice describing Bert's personality, so, instead, I have chosen a particular writing of his that has been inspirational and consoling to me. I do know that one of his main goal's in life was to be happy with every living moment. I know this because of his ability to focus intently on everything he pursued. There were definitely a few more objectives in his life that he wanted to achieve, but Bert was content with what he had accomplished. I sure would love people to say the same about me when I die. What a great achievement.

Thanks for letting me be an important part of your life and to continually learn from your wisdom. I miss you. Every day I'm out there "shredding," I see your crazy hair and smile right beside me. Every movement I make on rock, I feel your supportive voice egging me on. Every time I'm in the mountains, I feel your presence in the wind, in the clouds, in the warmth of the sun.

"Life, it is the most powerful possession I have. Like wealth which is meaningless unless measured against poverty, life too has no value unless contrasted with death.

"I've never felt as alive as when I've been close to death be it perceived or real. I've never valued my life more than when it was almost taken away from me. "I'd never squander my life, only risk it calculating!}'. But I'd never waste my life either by trying to protect its spark from ever being blown out, only to prevent it from ever catching fire, and to come to the end of that life only to look back on a faint glow and pine for the blaze that could have been." — Brian Ebert

LINE GILLESPIE

Junichiro (Jun) Nishiyama

1919-1995

A tragic accident in the Tonquin valley claimed the life of Jun Nishiyama this past summer. After he and a longtime friend had gained the summit of Surprise Point, Jun fell and was killed instantly on the descent. Jun had been a member of the Alpine Club of Canada since 1974 and a member of the Edmonton Section for many years. He attended Edmonton Section camps in Assiniboine, Rogers Pass, Little Yoho, Lake O'Hara, Hilda Creek, Tonquin valley and Waterton Lakes. He also attended several general mountaineering camps and had many successful climbs to his credit.

Those of us who have had the pleasure of knowing Jun will remember his gentle manner and his quick smile. Although he was not fluent in speaking English, he understood most of the conversations going on about him and enjoyed the comradeship at the camps. He was an accomplished climber and a member of the Japanese Alpine Club where he actively promoted the Edmonton Section camps to his fellow members. As a result, we have had

Jun Nishiyama in the Tonquin Valley

numerous Japanese Alpine Club members attending the various camps over the past few years. In 1990 Jun arranged a trip for Millie and me to hike with him and his climbing partner in the Japanese Alps and to attend a meeting of the Japanese Alpine Club. In addition, he arranged a hike with the women's section of the J.A.C. to Lake Oze. Although he did not take part in that hike himself, all the arrangements were meticulously detailed to ensure that our trip was as pleasant as possible.

Jun was born in Yokohama and graduated from the School of Medicine of Keio University in 1945. The following year he was named assistant professor of the medical faculty. Ten years later he received a Ph.D. degree from the same university. From 1947 to 1953 he was on the staff of the Tokyo Metropolitan Ebara Hospital and from 1953 to 1958 with the Ageo Municipal Hospital. He married Kancko Toyoda in 1956, an opthalmologist who opened her own practice in Yokohama in 1957. A year later Jun established a practice in internal medicine at the same location. He retired in 1991 and was then free to engage in his pastimes — mountain climbing, reading, photography, gardening, listening to classical music and attending symphonies. As a physician he was respected by his patients and had a special rapport with older people. Jun will be sorely missed by his wife Kaneko, his brother Keiichi, his sister Kyoko all of Yokohama, and by Kaneko's brother and family in Nagano, Japan and her sister Mitsi and family in Idaho, USA. He also leaves many friends in the medical fraternity in Japan and the Japanese climbing community.

Those of us in Edmonton who knew Jun will miss his yearly visits but are heartened in the knowledge that he died doing what he loved doing and in the Canadian Rockies which were so much a part of his life. Rest in peace, Jun.

GEORGE STEFANICK

John Tewnion & Bunny Tewnion

1930-1995 1924-1995

Bunny, who was stricken with cancer for almost a year, died on July 20, 1995. John, after an overnight trip to Twin Falls, sustained injuries in a motor vehicle accident east of Field on September 20; he died four days later. Thus ended the lives of one of the Alpine Club of Canada's most enduring and colourful couples.

Bunny (Margaret) was born in Bannockburn, Scotland in 1924; John in Aberdeen in 1930. Throughout their lives they were intensely proud of their birthplace. During WWII, Bunny served as a radar officer in the British Army and afterwards studied art at home and in Italy. John followed his father into the building trade, was certified in construction and architecture, and qualified as a journeyman stonemason.

As a teenager, John began climbing with his brothers, Sydney and Sandy. John made seventeen new routes, most of which he led. Tragically, his brother Sydney died from hypothermia when caught out in a winter storm in 1951. Bunny met John at his climbing club, the Etchachan, and they began to go out together.

Bunny and John were married in 1952 and emigrated to Canada the same year. Between 1956 and 1964 their children Alisoun, Fergus and Angus were born. They joined the ACC in 1960 and came to love the Club. Bunny was an executive member of the Edmonton and Banff sections, and John was president from 1976 to 1980. He helped build the Ralph Forster Hut on Mount Robson and climbed the mountain. He was the first chair of the Camps and Expeditions Committee. After managing the General Mountaineering Camp for eight years, he was awarded the Service Badge. John earned his Silver Rope at the Yukon Alpine Centennial Expedition in 1967 where he led two first ascents with Bunny as one of his seconds. Both were Life Members. Bunny was appointed the first Arts and Crafts Supervisor for Alberta and developed craft centres throughout the province. In time she became a valuable member of the province's artistic community. She was a sessional lecturer in Fine Arts at the University of Alberta and established the first pottery program at the Banff School of Fine Arts. She strongly influenced John's taste in the arts so that both were founding members of the Walterdale Theatre in Edmonton for which she designed costumes. Bunny was also a founding member of the Edmonton Stitchery Guild and a board member for the Embroiderers Association of Canada. Always modest about her own work (one had to ask), her art is owned by the Alberta Art Foundation, private collectors, and the family.

Late in the Fifties, John enrolled at the University of Alberta and graduated as a civil engineer in 1961. From 1962 to 1977, he was employed at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology where he set up its construction department and later was appointed Director of Continuing Education. From 1977 to 1984 he was vice president of Campus Development at The Banff Centre, responsible for its capital projects. In 1984 John became a full-time consultant to the University of Calgary as Coordinator of Olympic Projects and Director of the University's Olympic Planning Office.

John was an excellent organizer, even though he professed that as deadlines approached "nothing was going well." The camps he planned began shakily, moved hesitantly, and always ended successfully. Exceedingly persuasive, people would work readily for him, having faith in his leadership. He listened to concerns and explained his reasons for every decision. He thought of everything, everyone and all eventualities. His ability, enthusiasm, persuasive personality and hard work greatly influenced the successful completion of the Olympic Speed Skating Oval for the 1988 Winter Olympics.

Following the Olympics, John began a consulting practice in construction management. Among his clients were the Canada 125 Trans-Canada Trail, the Whyte Foundation, the Canadian Alpine Centre in Lake Louise, and the Calgary Zoo. He served on the Board of Alberta Theatre Projects and The Olympic Arts Festival. He was also a founding member and Past President of the Alberta Association for Continuing Education and served for six years on the Minister of Advanced Education's Policy Advisory Committee on Post Secondary Education. He completed two terms in the Senate at the University of Calgary. His achievements were attained with Bunny's whole-hearted support.

In the pursuit of mountains, John and Bunny were equal participants. Small in stature, she possessed the motivation and energy to keep up. Although accustomed to seconding John, she was knowledgeable in her own right and held firm opinions on routes, weather and so on. For them, the mountains were their spiritual home.

John and Bunny were a vital, spirited, and highly entertaining pair. Down-to-earth, they were totally forthright and without pretension. Despite strong wills and equally strong opinions, they held few grudges with those who disagreed with them. Neither had enemies nor detractors. John, in particular, had the common touch. And he loved a good story, especially his own, never restraining himself from laughing just as he reached the punch line and before anyone could get the gist of it; his own hilarity was the funniest thing of all.

John and Bunny shared an inner harmony not evident by their verbal exchanges. Both held opinions which they were incapable of keeping to themselves. These exchanges were dismissed as "natterings" by Bunny, not to be taken seriously. "Don't be daft, John." still echoes in our ears. John, on the other hand, insisted, with a chuckle, they never fought but "discussed things heatedly from opposing points of view." In any event, whatever their seeming differences, they were intensely loyal, steadfast and mutually respectful of each other.

This loyalty extended to their friends. For many years in support of this, they organized a spring ski trip to the Wates-Gibson Hut in the Tonquin Valley. They worked to maintain their friendships and they deserved them. John confided shortly before Bunny died that more than any others, it was the "alpiners" who, at the end of the day, called and helped them most.

PHIL DOWLING

Ian Barton Kay

December 7, 1917 - April 10, 1996

Just after midnight on April 10th, my father, Ian Kay, passed away suddenly at home at the age of 78. Ian will be fondly remembered by many of the Vancouver mountaineering community both young and old. As one of the post-Munday generation, Ian enjoyed an active and adventurous life, particularly through the 50's when the pickings were still good for the prime virgin summits. Many a summer vacation was spent deep in the Coast Range, approaching for days and miles through bush, bugs, and raging alpine creeks with friends like Herman Genshorek, Howie Rode, or Elfrida Pigou. Ian could be a quiet and reticent man, most often keeping his thoughts to himself. But with a bit of prodding from his friends, his spirit and warmth would rise up easily, and his sense of humour was legendary.

On more than one occasion I have seen an otherwise controlled and sedate gathering reduced to rolling in the aisles under the relentless barrage of one of his famous dissertations, dry as toast yet positively crackling with wit.

Though saddened by his passing, all who knew Ian will keep fond memories. Farewell Dad.

BRUCE KAY

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