

CANADA

YUKON TERRITORY

Saint Elias Mountains, Attempt and Ascents. From a base camp on a "virgin" glacier between Mount King George (3741 m) and Mount Queen Mary (3928 m), we took advantage of generally good weather to attempt the northeast ridge of Mount King George, make the first British ascent of Mount Queen Mary by a new route via the south ridge and of unclimbed Peak 3118m, and make the first ascent of Peak 3089m. Photos obtained prior to departure suggested that the main problem in our Mount King George attempt would be glacial breakup on the approach to the route. In the event, our glacier pilot, Kurt Gloyer, solved this problem by confidently landing in a small flat area (1990 m) on the virgin upper glacier bowl north of the mountain. From the plane we saw alarming-looking seracs barring the way on the upper part of our route.

We easily reached the start of the route (1960 m), which at first was a mixed rock and ice ridge. We then weaved around small seracs on steep windslab, using snow stakes to gain purchase. A traverse left under a larger serac at 2500 meters turned out to be on concrete-hard ice. We abandoned the traverse and camped under a stable section of serac, only to be blasted all night by wind and spindrift.

The next day we traversed lower down, and climbed between the seracs via more steep windslab to a shoulder. From here we climbed around another set of seracs—also to the left, on the ubiquitous "vertical windslab"—to a second shoulder from which we could view the rest of the route. Ahead a section of steeply corniced ridge led to a large serac climbable only by an abutting snow pinnacle. Above this an "impregnable" serac wall could be bypassed only by traversing well to the left onto the east face, under the seracs on icy-looking and avalanche-scoured slopes.

As we ascended to the corniced ridge the snow changed to a thin layer of sugar over concrete-hard ice. We retreated and camped back on the shoulder at ca. 3080 meters. In the morning we traversed well below the ridge and up a short rock step onto a slope leading back to the crest. The slope led on more steep windslab to a small lip marking the transition to another sugar-coated ice slope, this time topped with yet more windslab (ca. 3120 m). Having exhausted all reasonable alternatives, we reluctantly retreated. Our disappointment was tempered by a sense of relief once we had safely descended.

On May 14, we reached a col on the east ridge of the unclimbed Peak 3089 in two hours from Base Camp. After traversing an intricate but straightforward corniced ridge and ascending a slope between seracs, we reached the north summit in a further three hours. Another summit, possibly a few meters higher, lay one kilometer to the south, but the intervening corniced ridge was uninviting in the high winds and rapidly approaching storm.

On the descent we camped at ca. 2500 meters as the blizzard and poor visibility made further progress risky. After 16 hours of torrential snowfall we trenched our way down the slopes to Base Camp when the weather cleared early next morning.

On May 18, attracted by its appearance from Base Camp and the solid-looking rock at the base of the south ridge, we attempted Peak ca. 2600 meters. We climbed the slabby buttress in two 50-meter pitches at around Severe via a crack line. The main difficulty (apart from dubious protection) was the volume of rock falling toward the second. We continued up the pleasant mixed alpine ridge above to the foresummit, then along a corniced ridge toward the true summit on horrific avalanche-prone snow and vertical sugar. We were turned back 150 meters from the top by a large cornice running directly down the side of the ridge.



The northwest face of Mount King George, with the northeast ridge rising from the left. Paul Knott

Mount Queen Mary had previously been climbed only from the north and via the west ridge. From our Base Camp to the south there was no direct route, but we decided to attempt the mountain via the northwest ridge of Peak 3118 and the winding ridge leading from 3118 to the summit of Mount Queen Mary, a total of 11 kilometers to the route. Anticipating poor snow conditions we set off on May 21 with seven days' food and fuel.

On the first day we reached the col north of Peak 3118m, having enjoyed mainly superb snow conditions. The following day we made the steep ascent to a foresummit at 3440 meters, along some level ridge and up a further rise to a superbly open campsite on a serac at ca. 3560 meters. On the third day we reached the rounded summit in one and a half hours.

The morning inversion turned into a storm as we descended to the col by Peak 3118. After moderate overnight snowfall and in poor visibility we continued over 3118 and reversed our route of ascent. Several times we were forced to sit out whiteout conditions, and on two occasions we lost the route. Our rapid ascent had been fortuitous since the weather took a further two days to clear. On May 30, in the absence of an effective radio link, we signaled our wish to leave by stamping a message in the snow.

PAUL KNOTT, *Alpine Climbing Group*

Mount Kennedy, North Ridge, First Ascent. In 1968, Todd Thompson, Joe Faint, Philip Koch, and David Seidman made the first ascent of the north ridge (56 pitches, Alaskan Grade VI 5.8 A3) of Mt. Kennedy (13,905 feet) from June 26 to July 29, reaching the summit on July 23. The account was never recorded; the ridge still awaits an alpine-style ascent. We present a full account of their climb earlier in this journal.

Mount Kennedy, Northwest Face, A Pair of Jacks. In May, Jack Tackle and Jack Roberts climbed the northwest face of Mount Kennedy, applying mixed climbing techniques they had honed at winter crags in Montana and Colorado to link together a line on this awesome and intimidating face. A full account of their climb appears earlier in this journal.

St. Elias Mountains, Various Ascents. On April 9, our pilot, Paul Claus of Ultima Thule Outfitters, landed us in the remote mountain wilderness of the Canadian St. Elias Range to fend for ourselves for a few weeks. Bill Hartlieb, Ron Gregg, Carl Skoog, and I established three camps on the upper Anderson Glacier—one at our landing site (8,500'), another in a large basin made up of Mounts Strickland, Wood, Macaulay, and Slaggard (10,400'), and a high camp between Macaulay and Slaggard (13,500'). On April 13, we climbed the south slope of Macaulay from our high camp and skied from its icy summit. On the following day we skied to and from the summit of Southeast Macaulay (which we call Mount Maylon) via the easy northwest slope. This appears to be a first ascent of this peak, which provides a commanding view of Mounts Lucania and Steele as well as the sea of peaks to the southeast. After one day of cloudy and windy weather spent in the tent, we took the opportunity to climb Mount Slaggard via its east ridge. A day of powder skiing on the lower flanks of Slaggard topped off the adventure.

The previous year, Brian Sato, Cricket Griesman, Bill Hartlieb and I climbed four peaks rising from the Brabazon Glacier, just to the northwest. During that trip, also in May, we also encountered outstanding weather and climbed a new route on the southeast ridge of Solomon Peak, the north ridge of Mount Strickland, and skied North and South Gemini Peaks at the west end of the cirque. It is worth noting that the altitudes of many of the above peaks are approximately 300 to 800 feet higher than stated on the maps of the area. Our altimeter readings confirmed what Paul Claus has been telling us about the Wrangell-Saint Elias mountains for several years.

KAJ BUNE, *unaffiliated*

Kluane National Park Reserve Icefield Mountaineering Statistics, 1996. During the spring and summer of 1996 there were 45 mountaineering expeditions, comprising 161 persons, that ventured into the Saint Elias Mountains of Kluane National Park. The weather was typical of the Saint Elias area: unpredictable. Some groups hit it lucky and had only one storm day on their entire Logan trip, while others waited out long periods of snow and wind. One group waited nearly as long at Base Camp to fly out of the Icefields as they did to climb the East Ridge of Mount Logan.

As is the norm, most climbers attempted Mount Logan (68%, or 109 persons), with 43% (70 persons) attempting the King Trench route, and 21% (34 persons) on the East Ridge route. Mount Logan was attempted 27 times with Mount Steele and the Hubbard/Kennedy Massif being next in line with three attempts each. Of those groups who summited on Mount Logan this year it took an average of 22 days for the East Ridge route and 23 days for the King Trench route.

A heavy snowfall in early June made extreme avalanche hazard throughout the area. This resulted in two avalanche-related fatalities and a couple of close calls. A Czech climbing team lost one of their members on the East Ridge of Mount Logan and a Mexican team lost a member on the Southwest Ridge of Mount Saint Elias (U.S.).

Parks Canada Wardens did a climb/patrol of the King Trench route on Mount Logan this year. The objectives were to monitor the use of this route and record user impressions, garbage, human waste, natural hazards and to familiarize and train search and rescue personnel. The patrol was

able to contact 14 of the 17 climbing groups on this route this year. Some garbage, old caches, fixed line, and old wands were found. Human waste was found to accumulate at both the King Col and Base Camp areas. Although the route was relatively busy, the climbers contacted did not feel there was too much use. Wardens observed that most of the climbers on this route travel unroped over much of its length, and a number of close calls were noted, particularly in traveling over dangerous crevassed areas between King Col and the 5,200-meter level. One climbing group was charged and convicted for failing to register and pay climbing fees prior to entering Kluane National Park. Persons interested in organizing an expedition into the Saint Elias Mountains of Kluane are required to contact Kluane National Park Reserve at Box 5495, Haines Junction, Yukon, Y0B 1L0 to obtain a registration package.

RICK STALEY, *Senior Park Warden*

Northern Selkirks, Various Ascents. In August, 1995, Steve Sheriff and I gained a high point beneath Mount Sorcerer by following logging roads through clearcuts above Bachelor Creek. We then bushwhacked directly toward the peak for a kilometer or two, crossing several large gullies and rock ribs to gain the lower tongue of the northeast glacier. We ascended the glacier to the base of the northeast face, then climbed the face on moderate snow and some ice to the summit cornice and ridge, which we followed without gaining much additional height for a few hundred meters to the true summit. We later discovered that a similar line had probably been followed by Canadian climbers the previous summer, but had not been reported. This route is a moderate one, but ease of access will probably make it the standard route on this classic Selkirk peak.

A few days later, Sheriff and I climbed the true north face of Mount Iconoclast. We bushwhacked up Benedict Creek and then ascended moraine, cliffs, and meadows for about six hours to a bivy beneath the north face. The following morning, we simul-climbed and belayed several pitches of ice followed by lower-angle firn directly up the face to the summit ridge, and from there walked a short distance to the top. It is an excellent climb, but a difficult approach.

In July, 1996, Sheriff, Mike Kehoe, Guy Pinjuv, and I climbed the northwest ridge of Mount Remilliard. From a camp on a small alp about a kilometer from the north face, we followed a complex line over the Remilliard Glacier and up snow and ice gullies to the rock ridge. Several pitches of excellent diorite with climbing up to 5.9 took us to the summit. We descended by the Remilliard Icefield and crossed the Remilliard Glacier again to return to camp.

GRAY THOMPSON

BOUNDARY RANGE

Coast Mountains, Traverse of the Taku-Whiting Divide. Jan Palaty, Steve Sheffield, Dave Williams and I spent four weeks traversing the Taku-Whiting Divide on skis in April and May. From Juneau we took a floatplane to the confluence of the Taku and Wright Rivers, several miles inland from the mouth of the Taku River. We skied alongside the Wright River to the lake at the base of the Wright Glacier. The lake was partially unfrozen but we were able to outflank it along the south shore. Once we gained the Wright Glacier travel was fairly straightforward with only minor crevassed sections to circumvent.

We reached our first and only food cache on the third day of the trip. This was located about 10 miles above the snout of the Wright Glacier. From a base at the food cache we climbed the following peaks west of the Wright Glacier: Peak 6882* via the east face and south ridge, Peak 6134 via the north side, Peak 6443 via the southwest side. We also attempted Mount Fremont

Morse but were turned back short of the summit.

We continued up the Wright Glacier, crossing into British Columbia. Our packs were now much heavier as we were carrying 21 days of food for the rest of the trip. The upper part of the Wright Glacier is a ski mountaineer's paradise with numerous peaks that can be climbed or approached on skis. From two different base camps we climbed the following peaks: Peak 2200* (grid reference 970787), Peak 2160 (014793), Peak 2240 (031727), Peak 2280 (039692), Peak 2120 (966655) and Peak 2080 (987648). Our packs now much lighter, we continued on the traverse. From the head of the Wright Glacier we descended a steep headwall to reach the gentle glacier feeding the Sutlahine River. A huge climb on rock-hard snow the next day took us up Peak 2040 (174743) in the next mountain group eastward. Continuing eastward we climbed the outstanding peaks southwest of Tunjony Lake, Peak 2304 and Peak 2345, as well as the lesser Peak 2040 (208750).

On Day 16 and 17 bad weather confined us to our tents. The weather continued to be poor the next day. We felt like making some progress so we bypassed the next mountain group by traveling in a lightly forested valley to the north. In the valley spring had begun and we had some interesting moments skiing along partially snow-covered beaver dams.

We regained the alpine east of North Chechidla Creek and traversed this range in a southerly direction. We climbed Peak 2200 (427624), Peak 2110 (403599) and Peak 2384 (381588). From near Peak 2384 we dropped eastward into an unnamed valley. We followed this valley southward, enjoying views of the impressive north face of Peak 2470. From this valley we made a long side trip to climb the attractive pyramidal Peak 2346 located 14 kilometers northeast of Whiting Lake.

The final leg of our traverse led eastward toward the mine and airstrip at Bearskin Lake. In this range we climbed Peak 2629 south of Tatsamenie Lake. On day 27 we descended to the mine. The crew there was very friendly and fed us a very hearty lunch before we were picked up for a flight back to Juneau.

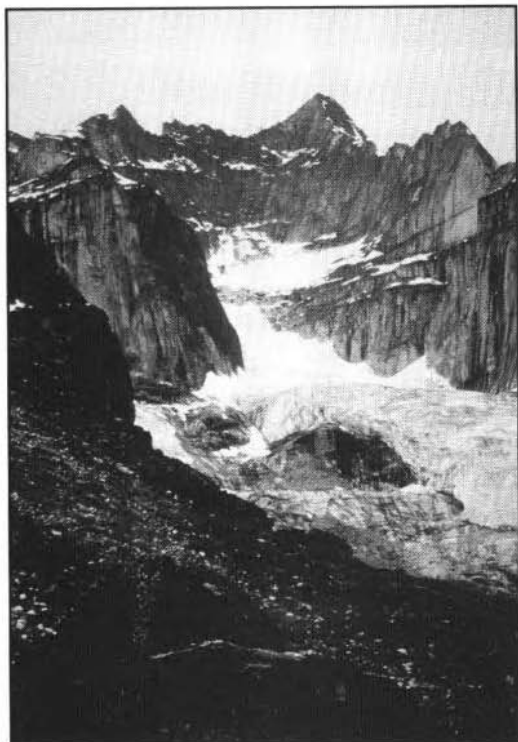
This ski traverse connects with a north-south traverse of the Stikine Icecap (from the Great Glacier to Bearskin Lake) that Sheffield, Williams and I, along with three others, completed in 1993. This provides a continuous alpine traverse, mostly on glacier between the Stikine and Taku Rivers.

MARKUS KELLERHALS, *Alpine Club of Canada*

*Elevations from American maps in feet, Canadian maps in meters.

Ragged Range, Mount Nirvana, East Face. While sitting atop the summits of the Cirque of the Unclimbables in 1960, the late Bill Buckingham noted a particularly fine group of peaks 20 miles farther to the south. The central peak of this group is Mount Nirvana, which at 9,097 feet is the highest mountain in the Northwest Territories of Canada. This then led to Buckingham's first expedition to this portion of the Ragged Range. After completely circling Mount Nirvana, Buckingham and Lew Surdam found a weakness to the north and made the first ascent in 1965 (*AAJ*, 1966, pp. 33-37). This route was repeated only once, in 1975 (*AAJ*, 1976, pp. 320-325). Nirvana has apparently been unclimbed by this or any other route in the past 21 years. Two expeditions have viewed the walls and ramparts of the east face, but both decided against attempting an ascent.

On July 13, Jack, Dan, Tom and Hope Bennett landed on an unnamed lake about 20 miles east of Nirvana and began a rugged five-day trek over two high passes to reach a summit camp at the foot of the Nirvana glacier. Our ascent, the first from the east, took place on July 19. We easily

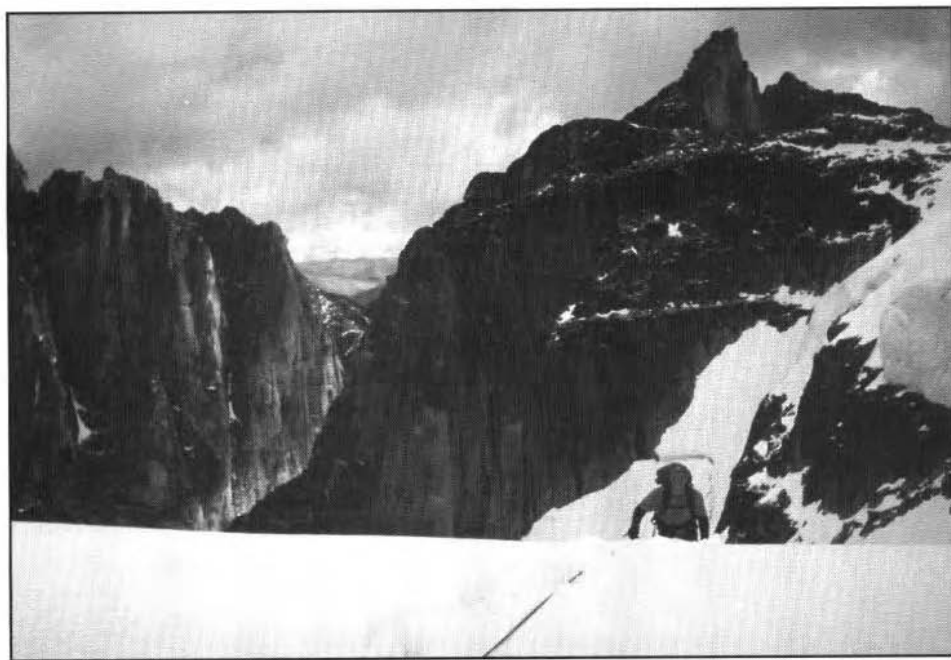


climbed the glacier, crossed the bergschrund, and mounted the lower portion of the face. The most difficult section was a near-vertical 500-foot high band of granite leading up to the left end of a broad snow ledge. The crux was a delicate traverse right to reach a new crack. After moving 150 feet right on the ledge, a moderate series of cracks led diagonally up to the left toward detached flakes. With a final strenuous pull-up in a chock-filled chimney, we reached the south ridge. From here an airy walk along a knife-edged snow arête led to the summit and the cairn built by Buckingham in 1965.

The summit of Mount Nirvana stands at the apex of three razor-thin knife edges, falling away in great arcs, curving like outstretched arms around the deeply gouged cirques below. For Buckingham

Left: Mt. Nirvana from the east. Below: Tom Bennett topping the nunatak north of Nirvana. The peak behind him is Hydra; the rampart to the left is the east face of Warrior.

Jack Bennett



31 years ago, a rainbow appeared momentarily to accentuate the beauty of this supremely wild and forgotten domain.

After rappelling down the face in the blue-gray of the near-arctic night, we crawled into our sleeping bags 28 hours after leaving them. On our trek out, we made the second ascent of Nightwind Peak, and also climbed two other unnamed mountains east of Nirvana.

JACK BENNETT

Mount Proboscis, Grendel. From mid-July to August, Chris Righter, Greg Epperson, Chris Kalous and I established *Grendel* (VI 5.10 A4) on the southeast face of Mount Proboscis, which followed a thin seam between *Yukon Tears* and the *Original Route*. The route was climbed over eight days capsule-style. Fifteen pitches were climbed, eight rivets were placed and 60-meter ropes used. The team attempted a second new route but got shut down by 16 consecutive days of snow and rain. This was the fifth route on the southeast face and the last obvious line.

KEVIN DANIELS, *unaffiliated*

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Traverse of Axel Heiberg Island, Northwest Territories. In July, 1995, the traverse of Axel Heiberg Island was accomplished between Mokka Fjord and Strand Fjord, crossing the Princess Margaret Range through the canyon lands and across the mesas and polar icefields. Peak 5500 of the Interior Divide was climbed from the eastern glacial arm to the southeast ridge. With unusually warm temperatures in the high 60s, the glacial rivers were ominously difficult to cross. Unfossilized tertiary tree trunks were found and mapped on the Strand River along with a number of gargantuan waterfalls. Climbs in the bizarre salt peaks of the east coast were accomplished as well. The expedition included ten members. It was led by Dr. Ruthmary Deuel and Dennis Schmitt.

DENNIS SCHMITT

CANADIAN ROCKIES

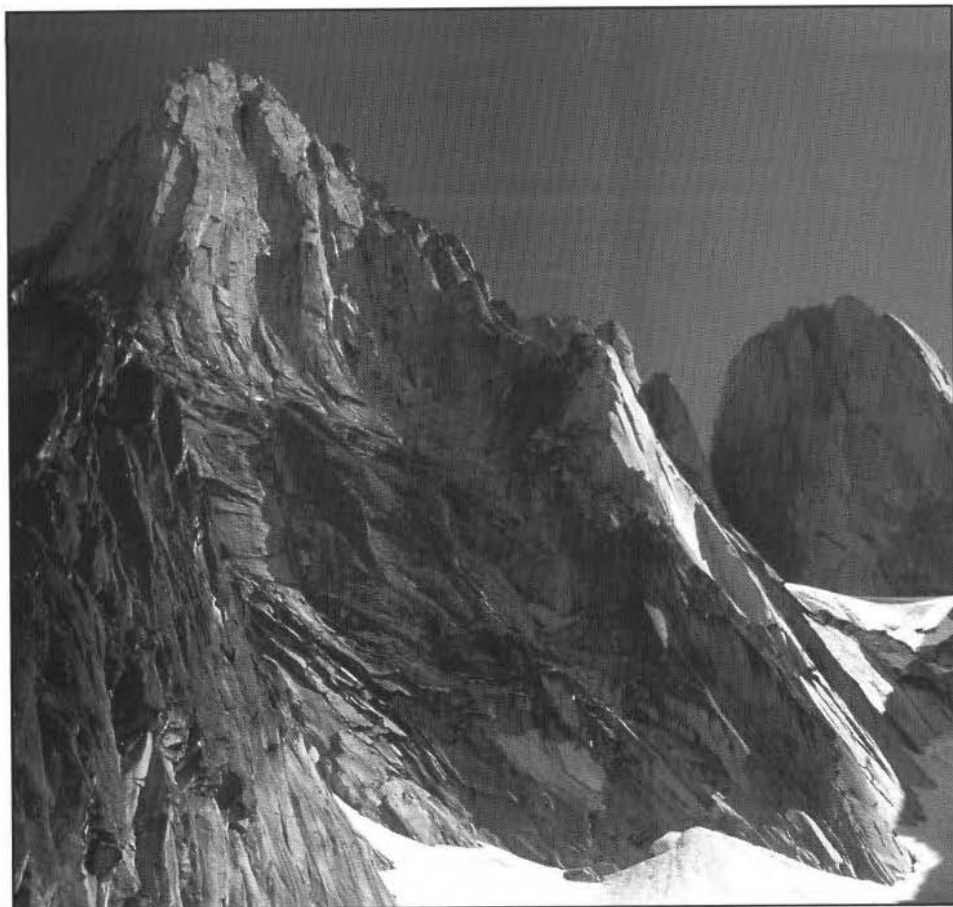
Eastpost Spire, South Face. Urban Golob and Slavko Rozic (Slovenia) climbed a new route, *Mountain Fairy Tale* (300 meters, 5.9 A3) on the south face of Eastpost Spire and dedicated it to the late Vanja Furlan.

MIHA PETERNEL, *Planinska zveza Slovenije*

Crescent Tower. On the Crescent Tower, Urban Golob and Slavko Rozic climbed a new route, *West Side Story* (270 meters, III 5.10a).

MIHA PETERNEL, *Planinska zveza Slovenije*

North Howser Tower, West Face, First Free Ascent. On the evening of August 14, Kennan Harvey and I hiked to the Bugaboo Snowpatch Col on the way to the remote west face of the North Howser Tower. The next morning we descended to the base of the face. Prior to our attempt, a two-week dry spell left the rock relatively dry and perfect for free climbing. At the base of the face, a family of goats stood at the bottom of *All Along the Watchtower*. We climbed the first 10 pitches (up to 5.10) through nice cracks. We traversed off the *Watchtower* route to bivy at a snowpatch that provided water. The next morning, instead of downclimbing to the route, we did a long pitch of exposed 5.10 face climbing to reach the *Watchtower* dihedral. The corner that had not previously been entirely freed is 800 feet long and turned out to be sustained



North Howser Tower, Topher Donahue

5.11 with one 30-foot 5.12 section. From the top of the face, a long ridge leads to the summit. We spent a second night in the middle of the summit ridge. Six rappels down the east face finished the climb. The day we summited, our friends Mike Pennings and Cameron Tague climbed the route in one day from the Applebee Campground. They climbed everything except the crux section free. We all found the route to be one of the finest free climbs we'd ever done.

TOPHER DONAHUE, *uninhibited*

Snowpatch Spire, Power of Lard. We arrived at the Bugaboo parking lot late in the afternoon of August 23 and had our first view of the Spires. The no-see-ums and black flies ate us alive, but we didn't care. The next morning we got up early, pulled the gear out of the car and hiked up to the camp. Two days of strenuous load hauling ensued. Seventy-pound packs filled with a gasoline powerdrill, 30 bolts, two sets of friends, 800 feet of ropes and endless shit like quick-



draws, natural pro, pitons, crampons, ice screws and ice-axes (you never know what you might need!?) beat us into a work-a-day rhythm. After searching for two days and convincing ourselves it was possible, we settled on what seemed a ludicrous line. Right of the aid-route *Tom Egan's Memorial* (5.10 A3) was a slightly overhanging pillar with a lot of crack systems gaining the northeast shoulder of the Snowpatch Spire. It was an amazing wall with easy access, too. We started our project with a 5.8 off-width. All the possible free sections turned out to be wet, so Gunter started nailing up his first aid climb on *Tom Egan's Memorial* to have a look at the possibilities there. He did a great job for somebody who had never aided before. Pitons kept pulling out slowly under his body weight like a time-bomb, forcing him to react quickly with another manky piece. After finishing the pitch his nerves were frazzled; he declared himself happy to never aid climb again. Upon jumaring the pitch to clean it, I thought his variation was more A3 than A1 (I was really glad that I could hang on the rope and not on these doubtful devices).

Getting off of *Tom Egan's*, we finished four pitches when a small lightning storm persuaded us to rappel. The next day ended similarly when we got washed out of the big dihedral on the sixth pitch by melting snow. After a rest day, we decided to try the first pitches free and to aid the wet dihedral. The freeclimbing attempts worked well. Gunter redpointed the fourth "Voor die Rokers" (For the Smokers) pitch (5.11c) first go. My attempts on the third pitch (5.13a) always ended after the crux moves in a dirty crack.

Motivated, we attacked the upper pitches. The fifth pitch turned out to be an excellent stemming corner at about 5.11b. Leading half way up the sixth pitch I got washed out again: a water-fall forced me to rappel. Hence we named the pitch "El Cano" (wet crack). Because of this we had our doubts as to whether the route would go. Would the pitch ever be dry enough to free climb? We rappelled down to clean the third pitch again and with a little bit more concentration I managed to do the first ascent of "The Man-Sized Weedkiller." Everything was now free climbed to the sixth pitch!

Two days later the dihedral was dry for the first time and the climbing was easy enough to finish the pitch in the first attempt. This was the turning point of the route and the free ascent was saved. Above this was an overhanging left facing corner, the last pitch of "Hobo's Haven" (A4). Although his first aid-climbing experiences hadn't been too encouraging, it was Gunter's turn to aid again. We expected a difficult aid pitch, so we backed the belay up with four friends to start Gunter off confidently.

I started with butterflies in my stomach on the last pitch of 5.13c. In the middle of the crack I got stuck. I made a mistake by leaving the jams and starting to lieback too soon. I reached a painfully good fingerlock in anger. Though there seemed to be no difference between this attempt and all the others before, after five more minutes of jamming I found myself at the end of the pitch, the end of my strength and the end of our route—*The Power of Lard* (V 5.13c).

TONI LAMPRECHT, Germany

Canada, Various Ice Ascents. In Bridge River, B.C., Kevin Normoyle and Quang-Taun Luong put up *The Theft* (V WI6R), an 800-foot route climbed in six pitches (5+R, 5R, 4, 5+, 6, 5). In Banff, Dave Thompson and Karen McNeil established *Deadeye Dick* (5.10 WI 5+) in four pitches of thin ice. The route lies between the *Weeping Wall* and *Mixed Master*. In the Canadian Rockies, Alex Lowe established a solid M7, *Troubled Dreams*. A 6+ first pitch leads to 10 feet of overhanging underclings to 15 feet of gently overhanging three-quarter-inch ice. The third

pitch is 90 meters of Grade 5. In Ontario, on the northern tip of Lake Superior, lies a 12-mile gorge named Orient Bay. The area is emerging as a new site of water ice activity. Centered around the town of Nipigon, Orient Bay has some 150 named routes. Nearby sites such as Kama Bay and Ice Station Superior offer another 75 routes.

Mount Geikie, North Face. A new route was established on the 4,000-foot north face of Mt. Geikie in the Canadian Rockies. From July 23 to August 2 Scott Simper and Seth Shaw climbed continuous crack systems through the overhanging headwall to the right of the Lowe/Hannibal route. Two ledge systems split the route into thirds. The first section was mostly fourth-class climbing with a few pitches of 5.9. The second section was nearly vertical with sustained free climbing and some aid. The third section was overhanging but with moderate climbing of A1 with a few hard spots. The currently nameless route goes at VI+ 5.10 A3+.

Canadian Rockies, Winter Ice Activity. The 1996-1997 winter in the Canadian Rockies turned out to be perhaps the most prodigious season ever—not for the new route total (which was less than half of each of the previous three seasons), nor for the number of established routes formed (most venues north of Lake Louise were well below average), but for the mass of climbers that descended upon the area beginning in early February.

By late October *The Terminator* (150 meters, V WI 6) formed for the first time since 1986 on Mount Rundle near Banff. Added to the mix, the *Troubled Dreams* (WI 6+ M8) start to *The Replicant* (145 meters, V WI 6+) formed up as easy Grade 5 ice. And if that wasn't enough, by mid-December the ephemeral *Sea of Vapors* (165 meters, V WI 7+) came into being with nothing but fat, solid ice, thus becoming the easiest line on the wall (WI 5-). Other Rundle plums like *La Goute* (50 meters, IV WI 6+) and *Shampoo Planet* (190 meters, III 5.9+ WI 3R) also formed alongside several new mixed routes. An early report in *Climbing* magazine and endless raving on the Internet brought the visiting climbers by the busload. The early reports stated it was a banner year for the Rockies. Yet aside from The Rundle area and The Vermilion Pass region in Kootenay Park, the rest of the range was rather dry. Combine this with extended periods of high avalanche hazard, bitter cold and deep snow, and the throngs were confined to a rather small selection of routes that centered around the Rundle Wall. As soon as the cold spell snapped in early February all three of the major Rundle routes had line-ups virtually every day of the week for the rest of the winter. The carnage was so great that by mid-March climbers were leaving the car by 1 a.m. only to shiver in the pre-dawn dark for three hours just to lay claim to their route of choice. The Terminator area has for years been known as simply The Terminator Wall or, more recently, The Rundle Wall. However, after this season's circus a more appropriate name became required and was applied by Tim Pochay. It is now known as The Trophy Wall.

After everyone realized all three Trophy Wall routes were easy picking, the obvious challenge became to do all three in a single day. First up to the queue were Ken Wylie and Keith Haberl. In order to beat the crowds they employed blockers. While they ascended *Troubled Dreams* via headlamp, they had friends get onto *Sea of Vapors* (referred to as "Sea of Anchors" by the end of the season). While the pair made their way up *The Terminator*, their friends kept the ensuing hoards off *The Sea* until they were down and ready to complete the triumvirate. An unfortunate, but necessary tactic considering the crowds. In March, François Damilano and Guy Lacelle repeated the effort—but they had no crowds to worry about. The weather kept all other suitors away as the temperature in Banff that morning was -27°C! A week later when it warmed up,

Lacelle soloed all three in five hours. It's fascinating to note that Lacelle has now done the first solo ascent of the route and he also did the first one-day and overall second ascent of the route with Alain Chassie way back in 1986. That ascent still remains, by the way, the only time anyone has climbed the entire *Terminator* including the five challenging approach pitches. A few weeks after Lacelle's solo, Bruce Hendricks repeated the effort.

Some of the best mixed routes of the last three years were put up on the complicated walls to the left of *The Terminator*. These were *Ten Years After* by Keith Haberl and Ken Wylie and *Two-Piece Yanks* by Stan Price and Steve House. *Ten Years After* (150 meters, IV 5.8 WI 5+) is in such a rare and beautiful position it can not be ignored and the few parties that climbed it all considered it one of the top ten. Several ascents came throughout November and December until an extended arctic front curtailed all activity. By the time the temperatures cooperated, what ice not knocked off earlier had mostly ablated away into a thin veneer. Price and House were perhaps the last party up the route in early March and thought it solid grade 7 with virtually no protection between belays. This, however, was only the warm-up for their route on the impressive cliff above. Overall, *Two-Piece Yanks* (200 meters, VI 5.11 WI 7) is perhaps the hardest multi-pitch route in the range, surpassing last year's *Troubled Dreams* (M7; FFA: Alex Lowe). It takes the unlikely looking streak way above *Ten Years After* and to the right of *Sam Goes Trekking* (WI 4). Where *Ten Years After* has only this once had ice on it, *Yanks* seems to be around more often and could be considered the route for those interested in proving their metal in the modern era of mixed climbing. It is good, hard, and safe. The third pitch was the scene of a tremendous fall when Stan Price pitched off and ripped the entire pitch back to the belay, seriously mangling House's hand. Price immediately got back on the pitch with a bit more control and managed to find good protection, some of which is still there. After completing the pitch, the pair came down for a "rest day," during which they established the often-looked-at connector pitch between *Red Man Soars* (55 meters, 5.9+ WI 4+) and *White Man Falls* (90 meters, WI 6) to create *White Man Soars* (5.9+ WI 6). The following day, they climbed around *Ten Years After* and completed their climb utilizing a fixed rope from the first attempt. They didn't have to worry about crowds on this one.

The crowds seemed to be the main topic of conversation this season. Many of the locals became bitter and disillusioned with the amount of competition for routes from visiting climbers and sometimes large, guided parties. This was unfortunate, because there seemed to be a lack of creativity and commitment as everyone went after the high profile climbs and/or the ones with well-established trails. Areas like the Yoho Valley Road and Jasper saw little activity despite quality routes. The brilliant route *Shampoo Planet* was in uncharacteristically great shape clear into March but saw hardly any activity as everyone just had to go around the corner to the Trophy Wall. The original pitch of *The Replicant* (WI 6+) also formed, but it saw only three or four ascents as most folks opted for the easier Grade 5 ice to the right.

The Field area in Yoho National Park has been a consistent producers of new routes since the early 1970s and this season was no exception. *Mossey's* (35 meters, III 5.10 mixed, by Andrew Shephard) and *Quivering Buttcheeks* (35 meters, III 5.9 A1 WI 5, by Barry Blanchard and Jack Tackle) take variations to the right of the popular *Massey's* (WI 4). The complicated gullies left of *Super Bock* produced two superb and aptly-named routes called *Home Brew* (80 meters, III 5.9 A1 WI 5) by Grant Statham and Larry Stanier and *Old Milwaukee* (70 meters, III 5.10+ WI 6) by Steve House and Bill Belcourt. Perhaps the most-forgotten-about venue in the range, the Yoho Valley Road, produced *It Ain't Ouray* (50 meters, III WI 6 R) and *Snowy's Revenge* (150 meters, III WI 5) and is now home to two dozen routes.

The Stanley Headwall had above-normal activity as *Nemesis* (160 meters, V WI 6), *Killer Pillar* (50 meters, IV WI 6) and *Suffer Machine* (200 meters, V WI 6+) were in better-than-average shape. The rest of the Headwall, however, saw limited action despite all the routes being there. This seems simply a function of harder climbing and a non-established trail to the base. I have yet to hear any one say "Been there, done that!" about the ice of the Stanley Headwall.

Having said that, the usual group of hard-core locals and regular visitors made rare ascents of *Acid Howl* and *The French Reality* (145 meters, V WI 6+). Tim Pochay completed an audacious solo of *Acid Howl* (320 meters, Grade V WI 6) with plastic conditions in early April. Despite strong attempts, the 1994 route *The Day After Les Vacances de Monsieur Hulot* (160 meters, Grade V 5.9 A2 WI 6) remains unrepeatable.

Another important aspect of the season was the meteoric rise in overall standards and the firm entrenchment of water ice grade 7, if not grade 8. No less than half a dozen new climbs or existing climbs in grade 7 shape were completed along with another dozen in the serious grade 6 to 6+ range. Aside from the usual under grading/sandbagging, there is somewhat of a resistance to the new M grade introduced in Colorado a few years ago. Perhaps this comes from the Rockies' long tradition of alpine mixed climbing. Few of the mixed climbs in the Rockies differ greatly from pitches already found on the hard alpine routes like *The Beast Within*, *The Wild Thing*, the east face of Fay, the north faces of Kitchener and Cromwell, *Humble Horse*, and the *Andromeda Strain*, among others. The new "cragging" mixed climbs are, however, considerably steeper, usually have better protection and are much easier to get at.

It's curious to note that sport climbing started on the small cliffs and is moving onto big walls, while mixed climbing started on the big pigs and is now finding a home in the canyons. As a result, many of the Rockies activists feel the YDS rock grade combined with a WI grade still best describes the conditions you'll encounter. When pressed for a comparison of *Two-Piece Yanks* with the M grades at Vail, Steve House, in classic Rockies sandbagging form, called the route M6. "Let them choke on that," he said.

Dave Thomson is one of the few locals to employ the M grade to his mixed climbs. And since Dave Thomson has been for several years the most prolific contributor to the hard new route scene, it seems certain the M grade will become firmly established. In October, in the company of Tom Wolfe, Thomson climbed *Suffer Machine* (first free ascent), second ascent of *Ten Years After* with a new direct start, second ascent of a 5.10 mixed line right of *Sacre Bleu*, and then rounded out the month with a Halloween ascent of *The Terminator*. Almost single-handedly, Thomson has developed one of the best ice venues anywhere up Storm Creek. Alongside his 1993 routes *Tinkerbelle* (WI 4) and *Sinister Street* (WI 5), Thomson, Wolfe and Sean Isaac added *Fleshlumpeater* (90 meters, IV 5.10 WI 5+), *Crash* (90 meters, IV WI 5), and the awesome *I Was a Teenage Yachty* (90 meters, IV M6). Thomson calls the first pitch of this latter route "the best mixed pitch in the Rockies," which is no small compliment. It is truly mixed in that rock and ice are used simultaneously most of the way with excellent three-dimensional climbing in chimneys and stringers of ice that actually take screws.

The two-mile stretch of road west of Vermilion Pass in Kootenay National Park now gives access to a collection of routes almost unparalleled in North America. Alongside Storm Creek and the 150- to 300-meter nasties of the Stanley Headwall, there is the nearby Haffner Creek Ice Flows, which offer 10 to 20 top rope problems from WI 4 to a variety of free-hanging daggers. But it was Thomson's efforts across the road in Marble Canyon that really stand out. Known for years to contain a variety of steep, chandelieri and brittle pillars, this narrow canyon coughed up one of the most technical short climbs in Canada. *Fantasy Shower* (30 m) took Thomson

numerous efforts of "working the moves" before he succeeded at redpointing 12 meters of very overhanging rock (bolted) to reach a fragile icicle. The route began to see instant top-rope traffic and Thomson's grade of "M7 plus plus" is proving to be a major sandbag.

JOE JOSEPHSON

BAFFIN ISLAND

Polar Sun Spire, North Face. The Great and Secret Show (VII 5.11 A4 WI3) on Polar Sun Spire rises up the 4,400-foot north face of Polar Sun Spire. Mark Synnott, Jeff Chapman, and Warren Hollinger established 1,000 feet of fixed line in three long efforts. Above remained the 2,000 foot crux of severe aid up constantly overhanging rock. Ten days were needed to aid the first 700 feet of the crux. Lower-angle climbing led to the top of the wall. The route consists of 34 pitches. Eight of the pitches required between eight and 13-and-one-half hours to lead. The group spent 39 days climbing and 36 nights on the wall. A full account of their climb appears earlier in this journal.



An unnamed, unclimbed, 2,000-foot formation in the Gibbs Fjord, where Hollinger, Synnott and Chapman made an exploration prior to their ascent of Polar Sun Spire. Mark Synnott

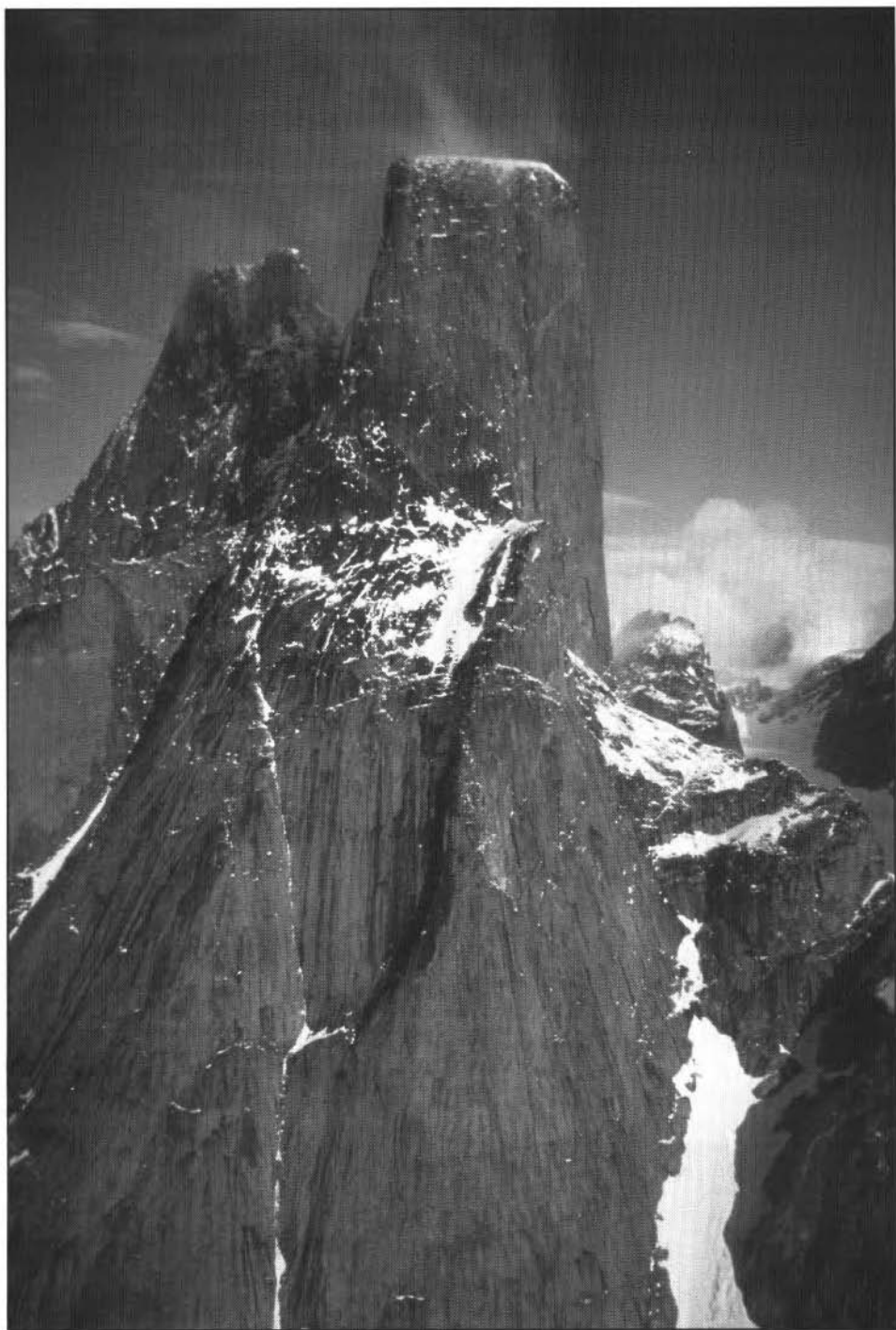
Mount Asgard, North Face. Spaniards Txus Lizanaga, Raoul Melero, Miguel Berazaluce and Natxo Baniciso climbed a new route on the north face of the peak. *Nunavut* is 800 meters long and was rated VI 6a A4. The team spent 17 days on the wall climbing capsule style. They returned to civilization using a raft to cross Summit Lake and then descended Weasel River. They were in the area from June 30 until August 11. They summited on July 21. (*Desnivel*)

Mount Asgard, Northeast Face and Mount Frigga, West Pillar. John Rzeczycki and I spent 50-plus days in the Asgard region of Baffin Island from late June through late August. After arriving at Base Camp via helicopter, we spent 20 days establishing a new wall route on Mt. Asgard, *Exiles From Valhalla* (VI A5) on the northeast face of Asgard's north tower, just to the right of the Valkarie. Climbing was sustained aid on steep rock up a thin discontinuous line. After summiting and rapping the route, we spent 17 days establishing the first wall route on the overhanging west pillar of Mt. Frigga, *Slith, the Frightful* (VI A5), named after a river in Norse mythology that was so cold it burned. Again, the climbing was sustained aid on steep and overhanging rock up thin features. We spent the next six days hiking double loads out the Weasel Valley to the fjord where we radioed for a boat which took us back to Pangnirtung.

WALLY BARKER, *unaffiliated*



Mount Frigga, showing west pillar and west face, above; and (right) the east face of Mount Asgard from Mount Frigga. Wally Barker



Mount Asgard, Bavarian Direct. A group of five climbers (Christian Schlesener, Mani Reichelt, Toni Grad, Luck Guscelli and Markus Bruckbauer) opened a new line, *Bavarian Direct*, on the west face of Mount Asgard. The party reached the summit on August 21 after 12 days of climbing. The first 350 meters of the route negotiated a 70-degree ice field, followed by 650 meters of technical rock climbing up to A3. The route was of high quality on steep to overhanging granite.

Auyuittuq National Park, Gauntlet Peak. It was reported that the Italian team of Mario Manica, Danny Zampiccoli and Giorgio Nicolodi climbed a new route, *Momenti Magici* (475 meters, 5.11c A3+), on Gauntlet Peak in Auyuittuq National Park. The trio had intended to climb in the Sam Ford Fjord, but 15 days before leaving were forced to change their objectives as the logistical costs of travel to Sam Ford Fjord were prohibitively expensive. At the entrance to Auyuittuq National Park, and three hours from their base camp, Gauntlet Peak became their new objective, and they began climbing on May 29. They started in the very center of the pillar, following a logical line of dihedrals and cracks, and managed to free most of it at up to 5.11 c with some aid at A3+ before the weather took a turn for the worse. They descended, leaving most of their gear at the base of the pillar, and spent five days in base camp, then, sensing a turn for the better, left early on the morning of June 3. In eight hours they had climbed half the wall.

Over the next five pitches snow and ice complicated the ascent. At the end of the last pitch an overhanging cornice blocked the way to the summit. The climbers were forced to move to the edge of the pillar to attain the top, which they did on June 4. (*Lo Scarpone* 12)

ELLESMERE ISLAND

Ellesmere Island, Ski Tour and Various Ascents. Flying from Resolute on the last day of June, Californians Les and Bev Wilson (leaders), Sergio Aragon, Gary Bard, Jane Koski, Ellen Lapham, Jeff Tarmy, and myself, joined by Alex Jolles of Switzerland, discovered the only clear patch of sky in the Canadian arctic approximately seven miles east of Barbeau Peak. With our landing site thusly dictated, we established our initial camp at 81° 55'N, 75° 42' W in unsettled weather. Our location fit with our overall goal of a two-week ski traverse over the Barbeau range, across the ice cap, and out to Tanquary Fjord.

Our first days were devoted to local ski touring and perfecting our load-hauling system, which split our supplies between packs and lightweight plastic sleds. We then placed a camp on a ridge three miles west of Barbeau at 81° 55'N, 75° 26' W at 6,600 feet. Our clear views of the ice cap north to the British Empire Range were short-lived, as we spent the next 30 hours holding down the tents, which bowed under the load of high winds. Abandoning the ridge, we traversed over a saddle immediately to the southwest of Barbeau Peak. The route appeared so easy that we mockingly named the feature "Killer Fang Pass." To our surprise and consternation, the descent of the opposite side down steep, icy slopes in high winds while maneuvering our laden sleds convinced us that this pass was more appropriately named than we had realized.

Our next camp at 81° 53'N, 75° 02'W afforded us views of the south side of the range and a base for mountaineering endeavors. On July 6, Sergio, Alex, Jane, Ellen, Jeff, and I climbed an eastern satellite of Barbeau at 81° 54' 39" N, 74° 58' 20" W at an elevation of 7,810 feet. We were unable to continue on to the main peak, as the winds precluded standing upright. We have been unable to find any record of any climbing or skiing activity on this side of the range. The peaks along the entire Whistler-Barbeau ridge appear more technically challenging from the

southern exposure. Later on the same day, Jane, Sergio, and I ascended a strikingly pyramidal summit at $81^{\circ} 54' 46''\text{N}$, $74^{\circ} 43' 16''\text{W}$, 7,280 feet southeast of the main range we referred to as "Mount Woodmont" (in honor of the Wilsons' travel organization).

As we continued south across the ice cap, the lifting cloud cover aided our exit down the Adams glacier, whose surface melt water channels gave us and our sleds great challenge.

Once off the ice, we followed a route along Atka Lake, down the Lewis River valley, and finally through the MacDonald River drainage to Tanquary Fiord. Burdened by sled loads that were now consolidated into our packs, we trudged slowly over rocky ground and forded rivers with uncountable frequency. During this trek to the fjord, we were graced with the wide presence of arctic flowers and wildlife, including a musk ox encounter. As we arrived at the Tanquary encampment in the brilliant, warm sunshine of the 1:30 a.m. arctic morning, the multitude of peaks with their accompanying glaciers curling down to the fjord revealed themselves with perfect clarity. Despite our fatigue and pains, our departure from Ellesmere was accompanied by hopes for a future return.

DAVID GRABER

Ellesmere Island, "Our Peak," and Other Activity. Although mountaineering was not our sole reason for visiting Northern Ellesmere Island National Park, it was certainly one of the things that Howell Martyn and I intended to do while there. Physically getting to Ellesmere was surprisingly easy—a commercial flight to Resolute followed by a Twin Otter charter to Lake Hazen Camp, our base. We arrived with a group of 11, of whom most were hikers and uninterested in climbing. It was late July, 1995, and the sun never set. Our goal was to climb Mount Barbeau (2616 meters), the highest mountain in eastern North America. It quickly became clear, however, that this would not be possible. Unusually warm and sunny weather had increased glacial runoff to the extent that the Henrietta River, which crossed our intended route, was not passable. As an alternative, we decided to hike in the other direction and onto the ice cap to check out the nunataks in that area. The park's Senior Warden had informed us that, to his knowledge, all the peaks there were unclimbed. We traveled east across the Snow Goose River to the Abbe River Valley, then north to the Abbe Glacier which is part of an ice cap covering the northwestern half of the Park. The high point was crossing the swollen Snow Goose River whose current was rolling boulders that could be heard from some distance. At the Abbe Glacier we skirted the imposing headwall and found an easier route onto the ice from its southwestern flank. The ice cap was easy hiking. It had a hard, smooth surface broken by occasional melt water lakes and streams with little apparent crevasse danger. The area was marked by many small unnamed peaks protruding 500 to 1000 meters above the ice.

After two and a half days of hiking, Howell Martyn and I were eager to climb something. The highest peak we thought we could complete that day was picked and we set out for the summit which was reached without difficulty in a few hours. This unnamed mountain was approximately 1740 meters high and located around 15 kilometers west-southwest of the Seven Sisters Range. We henceforth referred to it as "Our Peak." We camped on the ice cap in anticipation of making additional climbs, however, visibility the next day was poor due to fog and low cloud cover. Good visibility was important for route planning since topo maps of the area are not well-detailed (1:250,000 scale with 500-foot contour line intervals). Not knowing how long this weather would prevail, we decided to head back.

Our return route was via Glacier Pass and the Snow Goose River valley. This time we crossed the Snow Goose where it fanned out before entering Lake Hazen, a much easier, if less interest-

ing, crossing. We had seen no traces of prior human presence except for the area within a few kilometers of the Hazen Camp. While it was not the most challenging of climbs, it was great adventure for a couple of old guys!

FRANK CABRON, *unaffiliated*

GREENLAND

Stjernebannertinde, Ascent, and Exploration of Kaffeklubben and Oodaap Islands. In July of 1996 the American Top of the World Expedition set up a base camp near Bliss Bugt on the north slope of Johannes Jensen Land 30 miles east of Kap Jessup. The expedition had two significant goals: 1. To trek from Greenland to Kaffeklubben and Oodaap, the two northernmost islands in the world. 2. To climb Stjernebannertinde, the highest peak in the H. H. Benedict Range. Both of these objectives were accomplished.

From a point on the Greenland coast, four miles off the South Cape of Kaffeklubben, the expedition set out across deteriorating sea ice, negotiating a maze of lakes and channels to reach this cape. In a kern atop Kaffeklubben we found a note from a 1982 Sirius Patrol expedition. The note outlined the failure of that expedition to find Oodaap, the newly discovered northernmost island in the world. We set out across the sea ice in a northeasterly direction, finding it 1.6 kilometers from the kern but buried under water. Following that episode we returned two more times to these islands. On the third excursion we found fissures forming in the sea ice into which the deep pools of water we had encountered earlier were draining rapidly. Oodaap, on that day, had emerged as an island three and one half feet above the sea. Our three days of observations clarified Oodaap's status as a variable island-sea mount. Kaffeklubben then is the northernmost permanent island in the world, and is graced by the world's northernmost flowering plants: purple saxifrage.



The conquest of Oodaap Island. Steve Gardiner