



The Taku Towers. The Main (North) Taku Tower is on the left, with the Magic Line (Ricci-Wolf, 2000) shown. Descent was mainly down the left ridge. The South Taku Tower is just to the right, with the South Ridge (first ascensionists unknown) shown. MICHAEL WOLF

CANADA

ST. ELIAS RANGE

Kluane National Park Reserve

Mountaineering Summary and Statistics, 2000. During the 2000 mountaineering season, 172 people comprised 45 separate expeditions within Kluane's Icefield Ranges. These parties spent a total of 2,790 person-days in the park. In spite of significant weather delays at the start of many expeditions, only one party was forced to cancel their mountaineering plans, although other groups modified their objectives somewhat due to time constraints. The weather this season was characterized by considerable unsettled periods, without the extended period of clear conditions that often occurs during the spring mountaineering season.

Mount Logan continued to be the most popular objective this season, with more than 65 percent of mountaineers spending time on it. Attention was divided almost equally between

the *King Trench* and the East Ridge routes. Climbers on the East Ridge reported excellent conditions. Although crevasses above the headwall on the *King Trench* route presented challenges for expeditions, the difficulties were surmountable. There was also some interest in the south side of the mountain, where a Swiss team repeated the *Thunderbird Variation* of the *Hummingbird Ridge* (see below) and another party made an unsuccessful attempt of an unclimbed ridge on Logan's southeast face.

There were a number of notable achievements on Mount Logan in 2000. The first party to reach the main summit achieved more than just a millennium first. Sixteen-year-old Jesse Terry became the youngest mountaineer to have stood on top of Canada. Shortly thereafter, another team assisted blind mountaineer Ross Watson in reaching the west summit of the mountain.

Parks Canada also maintained a presence on Mount Logan this season. National park wardens representing four different mountain rescue operations participated in a combined training expedition and patrol of the *King Trench* route. They successfully communicated with several expeditions, assessed the route for garbage problems, and placed members of the team on both the west and main summits of the mountain.

While there were no search and rescue operations required in the Kluane this season, there were minor problems with frostbite, crevasse falls, and medical illnesses. In April, park wardens observed a body along an exposed section of the *Hummingbird Ridge*. Recovery and identification were not attempted; the body was not visible during a subsequent reconnaissance of the site. The location is near where David Cheesmond and Catherine Freer had placed fixed line and a tent during their 1987 attempt of the route.

Satellite systems have continued to be the most effective means of communication for expeditions within the icefields. Although the Iridium system is now defunct, the new Globalstar system has performed well in our area. The prevalence of satellite communications can be both a blessing and a curse. While they are very useful for obtaining assistance when confronted with an emergency situation, they also allow parties to easily call for a rescue before attempting to solve the difficulty by themselves. We remind all mountaineers planning a trip to Kluane of the need for self-reliance in the high elevation and remote icefield areas.

The presence of significant amounts of fixed line on the East Ridge of Mount Logan continues to be a concern. While a quantity was removed this season by one expedition, large amounts still remain. We encourage all parties on the route to be diligent in removing ropes at the end of their expedition. Garbage problems were also an issue on Mount Logan this season. We remind mountaineers that leaving trash behind may result in prosecution under the National Parks Act, and may result in additional restrictions and fees being imposed on expeditions in future years. It is also worth noting that problems with ravens uncovering food caches have occurred recently. This has been a major problem in Denali National Park for years, and we remind groups to bury all caches and mark them with tall wands.

All parties interested in mountaineering in Kluane can request a registration package from the mountaineering warden: Kluane National Park, Box 5495, Haines Junction, Yukon, Canada, Y0B 1L0, Tel: 867-634-7279, Fax: 867-634-7277. Information is also available on the Internet: <http://www.harbour.com/parkscan/kluane/adventure/mountaineering/climb.htm>

STEVE MICHEL, Park Warden, Kluane National Park Reserve

Mt. Teddy, First Ascent, and Mt. Logan, Hummingbird Ridge, Thunderbird Variation. Paul Claus flew Christian Zinsli and I to base camp on the Seward Glacier at 1800 meters on May 28. Two days later, we had established Camp I at 2400 meters directly at the foot of Logan's

south face. The weather was good, and conditions appeared acceptable. In preparation for Mt. Logan, we climbed the unclimbed Mt. Teddy (3960m) via a couloir that draws a beautiful line through the 1300-meter east face directly to the summit. On June 1 at about 4:45 p.m. we left camp in order to arrive at the summit at midnight. Unusual sounds in the snow caused us to walk on the huge summit cornice single-file on a long rope. A marvelous view of Logan's massive south face and the giant Seward Glacier underscored our joy and a successful first ascent.

No simpler descent showed itself than the ascent we had just made, so we had no other choice than to descend the route we had just conquered on frontpoints.

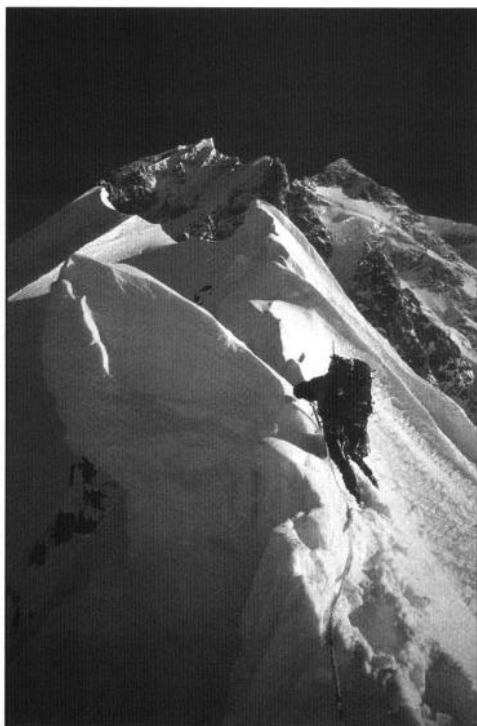
We began to climb the *Thunderbird Variation* of the *Hummingbird Ridge* on the evening of June 3. Our tactic was to climb with superlight backpacks, no sleeping bags, no tent, food for five days, and a minimum of technical gear to enable us to make a nonstop ascent. If possible, we wanted to descend our ascent route, so we deposited a cache in the bergschrund under Shovel Ridge.

Rockfall endangered us after only 200 vertical meters. We were able to take cover in eroded snow gullies. Nonetheless, Christian was hit on the back of his hand and his thigh.

Slope after slope allowed us to overcome the hanging glaciers, occasionally with snow and ice flanks up to 60 degrees. After six hours we reached the bergschrund, ate, and made the planned cache for the descent. It was meant to give us two days of food and fuel if the Thunderbird Couloir was too dangerous due to new snow or objective danger for a descent. After the bergschrund, the ice became steeper, and a large, overhanging cornice blocked the exit. Dry, deep powder covered the hard ice under the cornice, which was crossed via a delicate traverse to the left until I found an exit through to the ridge. A few minutes later Christian followed. It was the first ropelength we belayed.

Christian began to lead the exposed ridge ahead. To our surprise, the snow was knee-deep and soft. Tiring trail breaking began that tore at our strength in the ensuing hours. Rise after rise in the ridge followed. Often the only way forward was to shovel the snow away. Twice the cornice was interrupted with rock climbing in the fifth to sixth difficulty level. At 9 a.m. we reached a flatter piece of ridge that transitioned into a scoured ice field at about 4200 meters. We knew this was the point of no return!

Slowly but evenly, we climbed up the cold, glittering ice flank, which transitioned into a broken and difficult rock ridge. The rock, however, soon gave way to sharp cornices. The only



Christian Zinsli on the Hummingbird Ridge at ca. 4200 meters, approaching Shovel Ridge (visible in the background). WERNER STUCKI

belay possibility was to lay the rope alternately left and right over the ridge and to cross the traps carefully. At 10 a.m. we arrived at the first flat place on the ridge where one could have pitched a tent with little work. We cooked soup and tea and rested.

Slugging through the snow exhausted us more and more. A crust that broke through with each step covered the snow. We passed an aluminum pole, which was the only sign on the ridge that climbers had been this way before.

At 5 p.m. we took a break in a rock niche that was warmed with the evening sun. Our energy reserves were empty and my throat was raw from the increased breathing of the last hours. We decided to detour around the mostly rock ridge to the west. With the summit finally in sight, we started onto the ca. 55-degree summit icefield at 7 p.m. We had a good 800 vertical meters to conquer. We established a tactic: 20 steps ahead, then let your comrade pass, 20 steps and again a switch. We reached the summit plateau at ca. 5800 meters at around 11 p.m. with the last rays of the sun.

After 26 hours on the go, at 11:30, we crossed the highest point. No handshake, no photo! The cold wind guided our thoughts. We descended quickly to the col in the direction of the east summit. A large boulder provided some protection from the wind, and we slipped into our bivy sacks, forced down some food, and finished the last of our tea. The sky had become overcast, and the mountain was slowly swathed in clouds. At 4 a.m. it began to snow.

We left our bivy site at 6 a.m. We could scarcely see 100 meters, and the descent was totally unknown. We traversed the north slope of the east summit based on the recollection of our mental map of the day before and with the help of a simple map and compass. Suddenly, and in our judgment far too early, cliffs and ice walls arose below us out of the fog and snow. We assumed they were the ice walls and cliffs of *Warbler Ridge*. We agreed that this was not the correct descent and we climbed back up a half hour to 5200 meters. We searched for more than three hours for the descent to the East Ridge.

After another half an hour, we were happy to find a flag marker and old ascent tracks that led us to the East Ridge, which we followed down with a cheerful and lively pace.

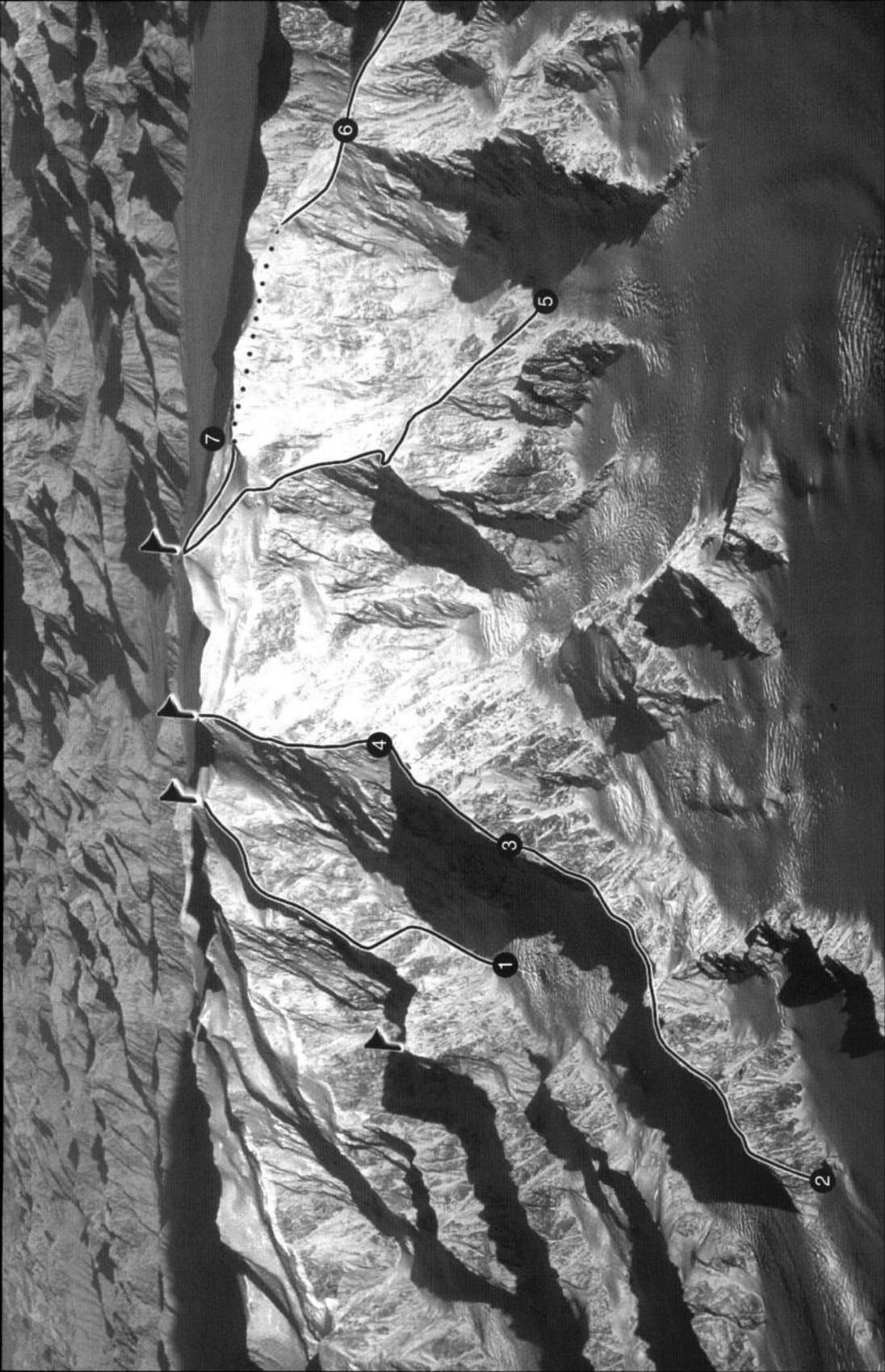
On the third day at 8 p.m. we reached the base of the East Ridge at about 3000 meters. The distance to our base camp was 40 kilometers over a mostly flat, snow-covered glacier, and we had neither skis nor snowshoes.

At midnight we started. The evening cooling had not been enough to freeze the snow. Twelve hours later, we moved as slowly as snails on the Seward Glacier. Our goal, the end of the *Hummingbird Ridge*, was still 20 kilometers away. The warmth and the soft snow sucked all the residual energy and moisture from our bodies. We both began having hallucinations. Suddenly Christian said, "Do you hear that? An airplane is flying."

Finally, we saw it flying at the cloud base at about 4500 meters along Mt. Logan's south face. It could only be Paul Claus from Ultima Thule! Quickly I unpacked the emergency radio, put in the batteries I had been keeping warm in my pants pocket and called "Hi Paul!

An aerial view of the south face of Mt. Logan (Mt. Teddy is the smaller peak in the left foreground. The Stucki-Zinsli route (2000) ascends the east face via the main gully). Routes are as follows. 1.

- South-southwest Buttress (Burgess-Elzinga-Jotterand-Lauchlan, 1979).*
- 2. 1978 Start to the Hummingbird Ridge (Stump) (did not reach summit)*
- 3. Hummingbird Ridge (Bacon-Coale-Evans-Long-Steck-Wilson, 1965) (route begins out of sight to the west/left).*
- 4. Thunderbird Variation (Creighton-Nettle, 1990) (route begins out of sight to the west/left).*
- 5. Warbler Ridge (Baumann-Bucher-Jones-Page-Thiessen, 1977).*
- 6. HubSew Ridge (Harrison-Hoeman, 1967) (joins the East Ridge out of sight, following the dashed line and climbing to the summit).*
- 7. The East Ridge (Collins-Monk-Ouellette-Roberts-Ross, 1957) (begins out of sight, following the dashed line where the route is hidden by the foreground ridge, then continues to the east summit. DMITRII ZAGORODNOV*



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Are you flying there?"

"Yes, I'm looking for you!" he answered. "Where are you crazy boys?" A few minutes later, Paul landed not far from us in his legendary Beaver, then flew us to base camp, where we spent three more days.

This was partially the second, partially the third ascent of the *Thunderbird Variation* of the *Hummingbird Ridge*. We chose the direct exit onto the ridge north of Shovel Ridge. The *Thunderbird Variation* leads out of the couloir to the left through a ca. 700-meter ice flank to the ridge. The route in total was ca. 3600 vertical meters from Camp I to the summit. The time of ascent in pure alpine style was 26 hours.

WERNER STUCKI, *Switzerland*

Mt. Baird, First Ascent. In July and August, Dave Hildes, Jay Burbee (Canada), and I planned to join up the ridge of peaks that connect Mt. Augusta to Mt. St. Elias on the west side of the range. The reality, after delays and team and transport problems, was that we found ourselves dumped on the upper Seward Glacier with about ten days on our hands. Mixed weather with much whiteout frustrated attempts to weave through the icefalls at the base of the north ridge of Mt. Augusta. Jay, who had been on the same ridge the previous year after a successful Logan expedition, marveled at the contrast in snow conditions while wading chest-deep through this icefall. After attaining a high point of around 2900 meters, it dawned on us that we were just too late in the season to navigate this maze of seracs and chasms that barred a relatively straightforward route to the summit.

Hence, we attempted to push a route through the icefalls guarding the Augusta-Baird col. Being considerably gentler in slope, the climbing (with some interesting overhanging cruddy snow/ice climbing) gave way to a fine camp at the col (ca. 2800m) after a couple of days. From this position, a straightforward 40- to 50-degree snow slog in varied conditions got us up the East Ridge (Alaskan Grade III) of Mt. Baird (3550m) for the mountain's first ascent. The final two pitches gave additional exciting climbing, but the summit arête was fortunately devoid of the cornices usually associated with exposed ridges on the west side of the range. From the summit, we continued along the west ridge and subsequently dropped onto the relatively safer east face to descend to camp at the col. With the weather deteriorating again, we backtracked down the icefall and headed back to our pick-up spot where, after a few frustrating days and some inspired (or desperate) radio repairs, our plane landed to claim us from impending winter. Short, sweet, and, compared to the usual epics, cheating?

ALUN HUBBARD, *United Kingdom*

Mt. Kennedy, North Buttress, First Alpine-Style Ascent. The 6,000-foot North Buttress of Mt. Kennedy was an obviously orgasmic and well-known alpine-style objective in the St. Elias Range. The buttress had been climbed twice before (1968 and 1977) using siege tactics. Andy Cave and I started up the route in good weather on May 25. By the morning of the 28th, one meter of snow had fallen and we had been stationary, on a slightly elevated spur, for two days. It was disturbing to be trapped in one place for so long with such nasty avalanches roaring past on either side. Andy calmed his nerves with deep and meaningful reading whilst I contented myself with Harry Potter books, with which my daughter had complained I was not conversant.

The snow moderated on the 28th and we continued, reaching the obvious crux, two-thirds of the way up, on May 29. The first (siege) ascensionists had recorded some A3 pitches some-

where around here and their photographs showed distressingly steep blank walls. We linked up some intermittent ice streaks to the right of the sieged line, and directly below the upper crest, to gain prominent dolerite bands leading to the base of the summit icefield. We found this section challenging due to both the steep ground and the return of heavy snowfall. But the gods liked us, and from a bivy below the icefield we were able to reach the summit in perfect weather at 5 p.m. on May 30. We managed our first contact with Kurt Gloyer, our pilot, from the top and arranged to be picked up from the Cathedral Glacier (on the south side of Kennedy) the following afternoon. Fortunately, the pick-up went according to plan, and we were back in Yakutat that evening. In retrospect, we both found the experience very pleasurable.

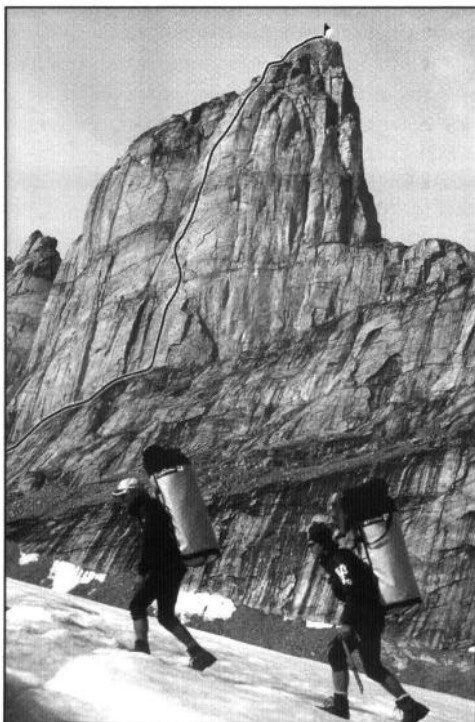
MICK FOWLER, *United Kingdom*

BAFFIN ISLAND

Polar Bear Spire, First Ascent. Gerhard Heidorn, Stefan Glowacz, Holger Heuber, and I arrived in Clyde River, Baffin Island, on August 7. In the months of August and September, the sea is normally free of ice and can be traversed by boat. We wanted to use our own power in historical Eskimo style, that is, by kayak, to reach the fjords lying 200 kilometers away. Moreover, we wanted to freeclimb a first ascent.

We had to distribute about 500 kilos of necessary material among four boats. Although we'd already sent most of our baggage (about 140 kilos of dried food for 30 days, the climbing equipment, and the kayaks) two months earlier, it still had not arrived. Only three days later, after countless telephone calls with the airline company, were we finally able to begin our odyssey. On August 10, we put to sea at Cape Christian, an abandoned former U.S. airbase about 12 kilometers away from Clyde River. An Inuit gave us his Winchester pump-action shotgun and ammunition so we could defend ourselves against polar bears. During the next 25 days, until our return to Clyde River, we had contact with polar bears more than 20 times.

It was supposed to take a good week to cover the ca. 200 kilometers to the end of Eglinton Fjord. Heavy seas, unfavorable currents, and winds thwarted our plans to press on farther north to Sam Ford Fjord or even Gibbs Fjord. Confronting a 20-kilometer-long passage over open, rough seas and paddling into the wind, it wasn't difficult to decide to turn west into Eglinton Fjord, especially since the thickly nestled contour lines on the map promised huge cliffs here, too.



Polar Bear Spire, showing Odyssey 2000 (Albert Glowacz-Heidorn-Heuber, 2000).

GERHARD HEIDORN

Our dream mountain rose up before us in a 20-kilometer side valley connecting Eglinton Fjord and Sam Ford Fjord. The steep granite tooth towers over a glacial basin, about 1000 meters above sea-level and ten kilometers from our boats.

August 19 was our third day on the mountain, and Stefan, Holger and Gerd started climbing the wall for the first time. On August 23, we all reached the summit via a wonderful free-climbing route. The route, *Odyssey 2000* (5.12b, 12 pitches), goes up the 500-meter-high east face of "Polar Bear Spire" and was climbed in redpoint style. Those wishing to repeat the route will need around 15 quickdraws, two sets of Friends up to size number 3, and a double set of stoppers. The beautiful shape of the tower, the excellent quality of the rock, the technically challenging and complex climbing—and all in a wild, isolated environment—fascinated Holger and moved him to shout spontaneously, "My most beautiful route!"

Although we didn't think our route would enjoy much tourism, we made it "repeater-friendly." All belay anchors and climbing cruxes have solid Petzl Long-Life bolts, and even normal pounded-in pitons and dubious protection were replaced by "unnecessary" drilled pitons—so that the eternal complainers will have something to talk about! That is just our climbing style, and it's incomprehensible to me that again and again one meets people who get excited about these drilled pitons, usually either without ever having climbed the route or having technically "muddled their way up."

The trip back to Clyde River too was an odyssey in the truest sense of the word. We hauled the boats and our gear for four days along a ca. ten-kilometer-long stretch over a pass to reach Ayr Lake. The Kogalu River begins at the lake's eastern end, then flows 40 kilometers into the sea. During our 40 kilometers, we shot several sets of rapids up to grade 3 before reaching the mouth of the Kogalu and two Inuit wilderness shelters. Around the last bend in the river there lay before us the infinite expanse of the ocean: more than 70 kilometers of shoreline completely exposed to breakers all the way to Clyde River! After Stefan capsized some 300 meters from the shore in 3°C water, he and Gerd opted for the rocky and painful overland march. They packed their backpacks for lightweight "survival" travel, set the GPS for "Go to Clyde—30 kilometers," cinched their straps and dragged the empty kayaks behind them. Holger and I once again packed our two-man kayaks full of all the remaining gear and put out to heavy seas. Two days later, our odyssey came to a happy end in Clyde River.

KURT ALBERT, *Germany*

Sam Ford Fjord

Sam Ford Fjord, New Routes and Various Activity. Four Norwegian climbers, Bjarte Bo, Halvor Hagen, Torkel Roisli, and I, visited the Sam Ford Fjord in May and June. Arriving in the fjord in the evening of May 6, we decided on a line that started up the north face of Polar Sun Spire and then took the east pillar to the summit. May 8 to 10 was spent fixing the first four pitches. The ice was left May 11, and the first wall camp was set at some small ledges atop pitch four. The top of the first pillar was reached on the 17th after 15 pitches of challenging climbing. The crux of the climb (A4) was found in this lower part of the route. This was a very loose pitch with many skyhook moves and other thin stuff. The lower pillar was about 700 meters high, with highly variable climbing and rock quality. The line was fairly continuous, with only one pitch of extensive drilling. All but three pitches on this part of the route were overhanging, very much so in parts.

On May 19, the 300-meter section of snow slogging to gain the headwall was done, and we were ready to start climbing on the headwall. May 20-25 was spent climbing to a point two pitches from the summit ridge. The climbing in this upper part was quite a bit easier than in the lower section. At 8 a.m. on May 26, all four summited after climbing the last three pitches from the top of the fixed lines. The same day we were back at the highest portaledge camp (Camp IV), having cleared all ropes on the way. After a night of bad weather, we continued the descent all the way to the fjord, having climbed the Norwegian Route (VII 5.10 A4, 30 roped pitches).

Bo quickly got bored with base camp life, so just a few days after coming off Polar Sun he free soloed the South Ridge of the Beak. This route had climbing up to 5.8. It's not known if it had been climbed before.

After this, Bo and Roisli went on a ski tour into Stewart Valley, while Hagen and I climbed a ten-pitch new route to the south summit of the Turret (which we believe was unclimbed). *Insomnia* (IV 5.10+ A1, 1,500') climbs the south face of the south summit. Most of the route was free climbed, but we wore plastic boots due to the conditions, and all will go free in warmer conditions with rock climbing shoes. The route was climbed in about nine and a half hours. Descent was by rappel just west of the route. This is probably the fourth route on the Turret massif.

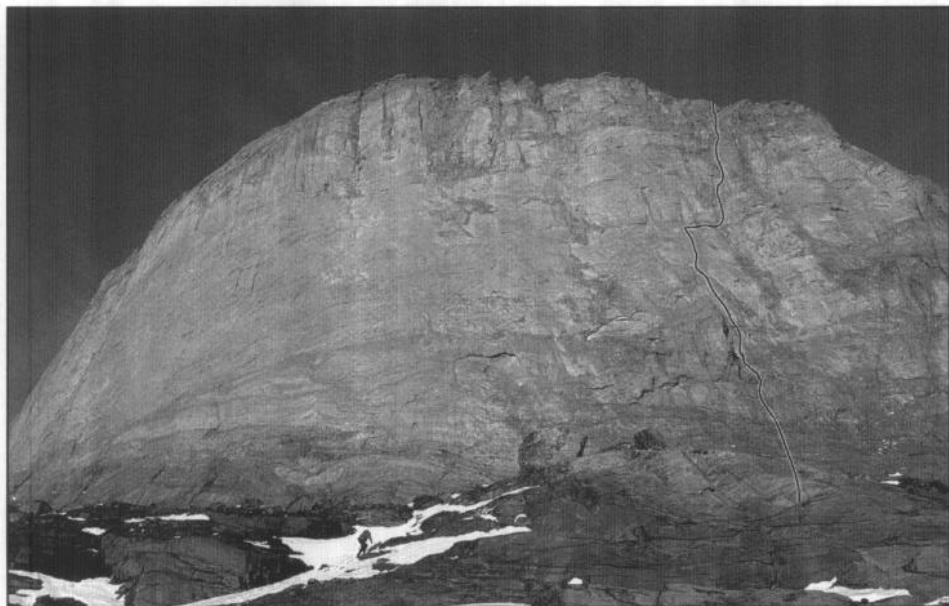
Some days later, Bo and Roisli started a new line on Great Cross Pillar in very warm conditions. They climbed 18 pitches, mostly free up to 5.11 in rock boots, with some very good climbing. They called the route *Helluland Revisited* (V 5.11 A1). The pair relaxed for a few hours during the night, but finished the roundtrip in about 36 hours.

At the same time, Hagen and I went to do Broad Peak from the south. This ended up being mostly skiing in quite bad snow conditions due to the warm temperatures. I gave up after skiing to Broad Peak's south col, while Hagen pressed on to the very summit. The route was scree slopes from the south col to the obvious summit snowfield 100 meters below the summit, then hard snow for the final 100 meters. This is probably the easiest way to the summit and was probably first done in the 1970s.

After this, Hagen and I went to find a line on the Walker Citadel. Hoping for a possible free line, we ended up doing a snow gully on the south face. This gully was about 1000 meters long, and was climbed in the night for the best possible snow conditions. On the highest summit we found a cairn, one that wasn't made by any of the big wall expeditions that have been on this complex mountain. Therefore, either the gully line has been done before or there is some other "easy" route to the summit. This route was soloed both up and down. For lines, etc., check out the Baffin section of www.headwall.com.

ODD-ROAR WIIK, *Norway*

The Fin, Earth, Wind, and Choss, New Route. On May 7, Russel Mitrovich, Mike Libecki, and I, plus expedition camera crew Peter Mallamo and John Middendorf, departed from Clyde River on a 120-mile dogsled journey over the frozen Baffin Bay. We hired two native Inuit dogsled guides with Qulliklut Outfitters for team transportation, and we sent a gear cache ahead by skidoo. The original plan was to explore the mountains, valleys, and passes inland from the northeast coast of Baffin Island in hopes of finding an unclimbed big wall jewel, but an unusually cold, dry, and windy winter had swept the earth clean of snow, making conditions poor for land travel with dogs and sleds. Continuing north for five days on the wind-scoured sea ice allowed the team to explore the coast line of Sam Ford Fjord and the



John Middendorf approaching the 2,500-foot Fin. Earth, Wind, and Choss (Helling-Libecki-Middendorf-Mitrovich, 2000) is shown. JOSH HELLING

Walker Arm until we found a wall that inspired a new route. On May 13, we established a base camp at the base of The Fin. This three-mile-wide, 2,500-foot wall was one of the steepest formations in the area, with its only previous ascent coming from a Spanish team in 1998.

The next ten days were spent scoping a line of ascent, hiking gear loads up the loose 800-foot talus slope to the base, fixing 400 feet of rope, trundling loose rock from the hauling path, and hauling way too much stuff up to Wall Camp I. On May 23, Russel Mitrovich, Mike Libecki, John Middendorf, and I committed to a capsule-style climb, and we began living on the wall. Cameraman Peter Mallamo stayed on the ground to film landscape, wildlife, and cultural footage. From CI we began fixing pitches up what we hoped would lead us to one of the only consistently featured crack systems on the entire wall. Our goal was to climb a steep clean line with as little drilling as possible, but as Mike led pitch five, the loose corner he was climbing brought him directly into loose blocks the size of doors that were miraculously sitting on top of many other detached flakes that all rested on a single chockstone the size of a soft ball. With no way around it, and certain death to attempt to climb through it, Mike lowered down to the belay, and we rappelled back to our portaledges, pulling our ropes as we went.

As we climbed up a new system from CI, our new route set a consistent pattern of loose and unknown. Some pitches were beautiful cracks while on others we wrestled with loose blocks. On June 6, Russel, Mike, John, and I ascended 800 feet of fixed rope above CIII to our high point. I climbed 150 feet of mixed aid, free, and snow until it was over the summit. Without much debate we all agreed a fitting name for the route would be *Earth, Wind, and Choss* (VI 5.10 A2+) We all had done much harder, and more technical, A5, but this was the most dangerous climb we had ever done. It just goes to show that putting a rating on a climb means very little.

JOSH HELLING

Scott Island

Wall of Clouds, Aularutiksanga, New Route, Previously Unreported. Phil White, Jr., and I left Clyde River on or about May 2 and returned on roughly June 20, 1999. We traveled with our guides Ilko, his son John, and Lamaki for a few days, checking out the formations in the Scott Inlet, the Gibbs Fjord, and the Clark Fjord, but we were really just hunting for seal. Back at the Ship's Prow (our original objective) on Scott Island, we set up a base camp within site of Mike Libeck's. We spent about two weeks there dodging storms, playing on icebergs, and putting up a couple of pitches right by the bow of the prow. Mike, Phil, and I visited Jon Fox and his soon-to-be-leaving partner down-island a couple of miles; they had moved to try a tower-like formation that Jon called "The Raven" (see 1999 AAJ, p. 39: the slender middle formation of the three in the photo is the Raven). My eyes and psyche were drawn to an incredible-looking wall to the left of the Raven.

After returning to base camp, we decided to move. Upon waking, we hitched a ride for our gear from an Inuit named Sam, and as the next storm hit we set up our tent. Over the next couple of weeks, we fixed rope. I spent 24 hours over four days on pitch three, which entailed 130 feet of bolts, rivets, and holes in chossy, steep rock. I had forgotten to buy new liners for my plastics, so I continually had frostnip upon return to base camp.

After four more days of climbing and other days taking care of logistics, we committed to the wall, put up one more pitch and established CI. We spent about 16 days on the wall. The camp was moved once, and many of the 12 pitches are long. Pitches three through eight are quite steep and the gneiss rock is high-quality choss. The climbing consisted of beaks and peckers interspersed with other thoughtful placements. The rock over the last third was better. The strata we passed through were incredible to behold: veins of mica, quartz, feldspar, and different granites. After topping out, then hauling our gear up, we postholed around Scott Island for a long time trying to find a way down, but the gullies were avalanching. We decided to rappel the Raven. We called the formation Wall Of Clouds and our route *Aularutiksanga* (The Gull).

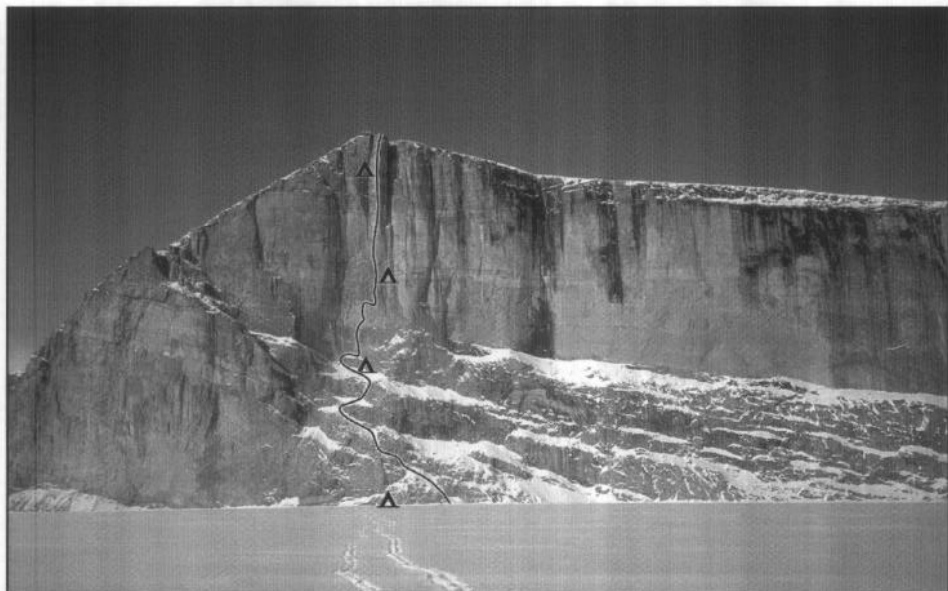
JOHN SEDERNEYER

Gibbs Fjord

Cat's Eye Wall, Out of the Pan and Into the Fire, New Route. After ten tedious days of airports, northern homeless shelters, and the coldest skidoo ride of my life, Jason Robinson and I found ourselves in Scott Inlet. Our guide, Ilko, pointed out a wall he thinks is 3,000 to 4,000 feet high that had had one free-climbing attempt the previous spring (the party was forced off due to the severe cold). Our sights were set on the tallest, most prominent feature: the overhanging arête of a pillar that was detached from the main wall.

We sieged the wall with force, and after five days it was great to be off the ground above the snow slopes and ice. We hauled to Camp I at 1,200 feet with nothing but rock above. The 24-hour daylight and calm bluebird skies made the bitter cold bearable, if you kept moving. Aid pitches were taking ten to 15 hours to lead; the belayer sat in Gloria, a legless patio chair slung up for belays.

We started rope soloing above CII so the belayer could sprawl out to eat and sleep in the portaledge in relative luxury. For almost two weeks, and using the constant daylight to our advantage, JR and I only saw each other in passing at the end and beginning of our shifts. The



Scott Inlet's "Cat's Eye Wall," showing Out of the Pan and Into the Fire (Methot-Robinson, 2000).
JASON METHOT

climbing was mostly thin and always steep. By CIII, we could taste the top.

Baffin is a serene, arctic desert. Except for one guy who dropped by, the only people we saw were the odd hunters slowly passing by below. In the arctic silence I heard an odd flapping sound above. Instinct told me it was probably ice or rock falling from the top. Boy, was I wrong! As it fell closer it took the shape of Lee, the solo BASE jumper we had met in town. His canopy roared open right in front of us amidst our cheers and excitement, and he seemed to float off as quickly as he arrived.

On day 31, JR led the final free-climbing pitch, with the token offwidth finish, to the 3,400-foot summit. We called our route *Out of the Pan and Into the Fire* (VII A4 5.10 WI3).

Thoughts of abundant food and space in base camp kept me going for the 20 hours it took to slog off the top. Back in civilization, I missed the simplicity of wall life—but working and paying bills is all worth it if it means I can fund another adventure.

JASON METHOT, *Canada*

Ursa Major, Midnight Watch, New Route. Ben DeMenech, John Millar, and I explored Gibbs Fjord near Clyde River on Baffin Island in May. With the help of our Inuit friends, Ilkoo and Jake of Quillikut Outfitters, the trip in was an easy 12 hours. We passed the Ship's Prow, Jushua Tower, and several 2,000- to 3,500-foot formations before picking an unclimbed, north-facing, 2,800-foot, continuously overhanging wall with an extra 500 feet of slope below.

Within six days, we had carried all our gear up the 500 feet of snow slopes and talus to the base and fixed six pitches to Camp I. From here, we committed, establishing two more wall camps before summiting in 18 days (25 days total, including time for gear shuttling and fixing). Our route, *Midnight Watch*, took us up the center of the wall; it followed an obvious pillar split

down the center by a multipitch crack and ended at the highest point of the mountain, which we named Ursa Major. Most pitches were 55 to 60 meters long, and every pitch but two of the 18 had hard aid. The rock was mostly hard gray granite with large amounts of quartz. The cracks and corners were dark red, slammed-shut shallow seams with endless stacks of crumbling plates inside. One pitch involved over 14 birdbeaks, and another was an offwidth that had to be free climbed through a roof. Some highlights included a glacier that let loose massive pillars of ice beside our wall every four days or so, a 50-foot roof with nerve-wracking death blocks, and, at 2,500 feet up, a splitter crack (which we called "Proud to be Canadian") out in the center of a dark-red, tidal-wave looking wall. With the addition of only four storm days and, despite lots of close calls, no injuries, the climb turned out to be a dream come true.

MATT MADDALONI, *Canada*

Mt. Thor, West Face, Attempt. In late July, August, and early September, I spent 39 days on the west face of Mt. Thor, climbing 20 pitches to a high point two pitches above Hurgnir Ledge. The route is extreme with three pitches of modern A5, three pitches of A4+, five pitches of A4 and one and a half pitches of 5.10 face climbing. Forty-one bolts (mostly at single- or double-bolt belays) have been drilled to date. No "bolt ladders" (which I define as three bolts, rivets or bathooks in a row) were drilled. The route currently has two pitches harder than anything on El Cap's *Reticent Wall*.

On August 28, temperatures dropped 30 degrees to 10° F, and a six-day snowstorm stalled me on Hurgnir Ledge. The temperatures were not to warm again in the following two weeks. On September 6, I began traversing off the face in "Colorado winter conditions" and reached base camp two-and-a-quarter days later after two additional nights out without bivy gear. I plan to return to Thor next summer, traverse onto the face and complete my route.

I determined that Japanese soloist Go Abe died not because his rope "broke" but because a large hanging flake he was nutting blew and chopped his 10-mm lead line on its first impact with the wall. His portaledge and some of his camps appeared to have been destroyed by an earlier rockfall. He was a warrior.

Although by alpine standards I failed on Thor, my dream of putting up the hardest techno aid route in the world is still attainable. If I survive another year of "training routes," and complete the remaining eight pitches on the upper headwall (looks like three A5 pitches), then I will indeed have attained my goal.

JIM BEYER*

*Recipient of a Helly Hansen Mountain Adventure Grant and an AAC Lyman Spitzer Climbing Grant

LOGAN MOUNTAINS

Bustle Tower, Beppin, New Route, Previously Unreported. From late June to mid-July, 1999, Makoto Kuroda and I were in the Circle of the Unclimbables. On July 2, we found a beautiful crack line in the center of the southeast face of Bustle Tower, and we attempted a new route up the crack. The next morning we started climbing and finished fixing rope on the first three pitches of slab and chimney climbing.

On July 5, we jumared up the fixed line and tried the fourth pitch. The beginning of the pitch was an easy, grassy chimney, but above, in the middle of the pitch, we used three points of hooking and did delicate face climbing. The fifth pitch and beginning of the sixth contained very loose rock and expanding flakes, so much time was required. Above, in the middle of the sixth and on the seventh pitch, we enjoyed serious aid climbing with hooking and nailing, include birdbeaks. On pitches eight to ten, we climbed a beautiful crack that varied from thin to fist width. But since we had to climb while cleaning mud and moss, we had to aid it with cams and nuts. I hope someone will free climb the beautiful crack next time. We called the vertical pitches from pitch seven to ten "The Headwall." Above the tenth pitch, the inclination became gentler. We climbed in a chimney and easy face for the 11th and 12th pitches. The 13th and final pitch, a corner and overhanging crack, led us to the shoulder of Bustle Tower. We found a route that was possible to easily climb to the summit, but we decided to go down because we expected it to storm soon.

Naturally, we didn't fix any protection except for each belay anchor. We stayed two nights each in the portaledge at the end of the fourth and eighth pitches. We rated the difficulty 5.10a A3.

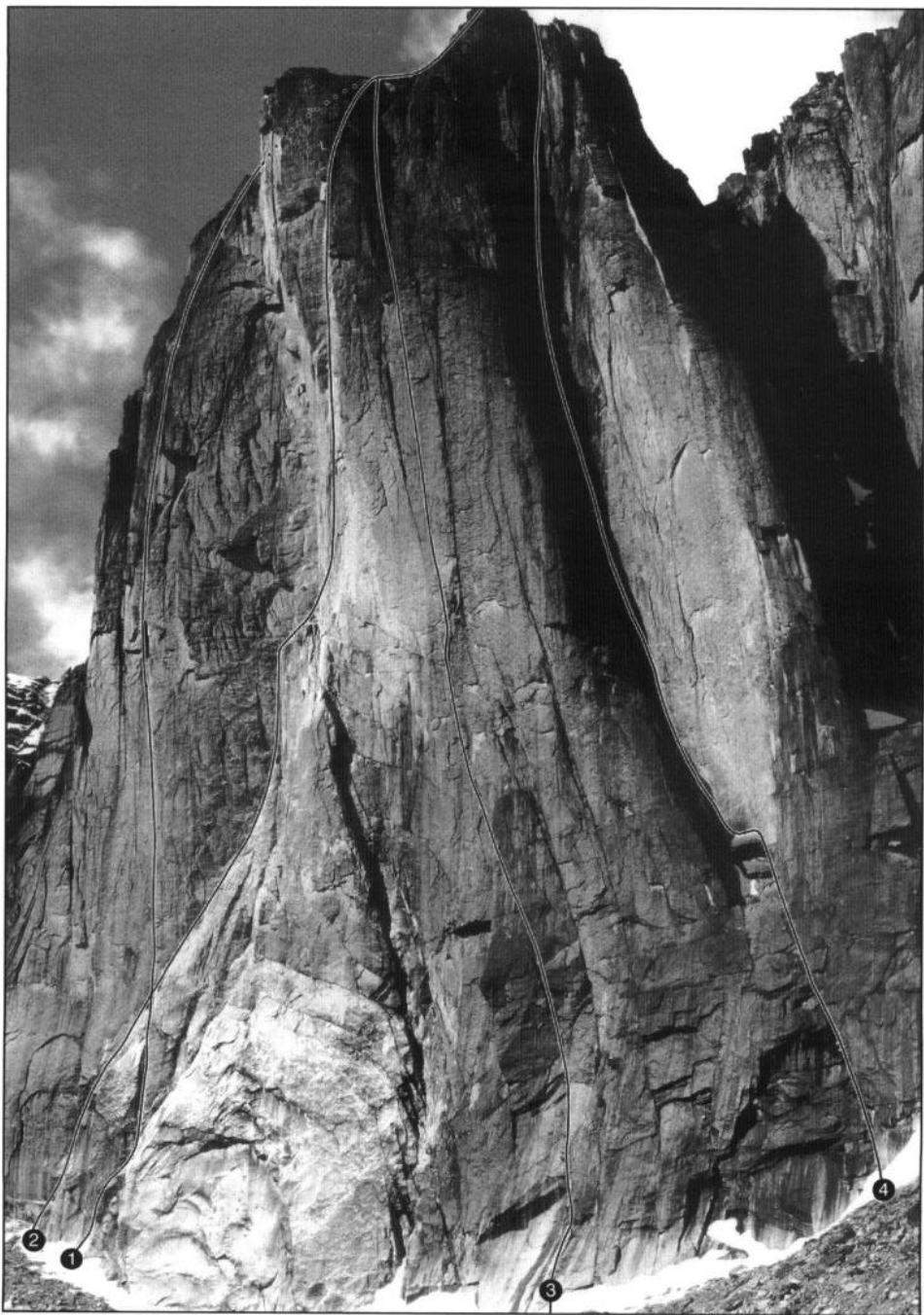
SHOGO KADA, *Japan*

The Minataur, Run for Cover, New Route. On July 20, Chris Van Leuven and I were dropped off in the Cirque of the Unclimbables in Canada's Northwest Territories. We spent 11 days in the Cirque, during which we climbed the Lotus Flower Tower, before we were flown into the Ragged Range for some exploratory climbing.

On August 2, Chris and I were picked up from the Cirque. Our first attempt to find the east sanctuary of Mt. Nirvana brought us to an area to the east with no flat ground to land on and a distinct lack of appetizing peaks. We would later learn that this area was aptly called "Valley of Chaos." After aborting that flight, we went back the next day with better directions. We landed on an incredible alpine meadow on the east side of Mt. Nirvana, the highest peak in the Northwest Territories.

According to Jack Bennett's 1997 *AAJ* report, Buckingham and Surdam were the first to climb in this area, summiting Nirvana in 1965, and a couple of parties have since climbed in the region. Still, the area is rarely visited. Our objective stood out like a beacon in a storm. The untouched south face of the Minataur rose dramatically out of the glacier for almost 2,000 feet. We were experiencing the best weather of the trip at this point and immediately began humping loads. There was a beautiful line that split the south face and continued to the summit corner systems. After a five-hour approach, we fixed the first two pitches of the route. We returned the next day with plans to blast the wall in two days. The climbing turned out to be a frightening/loose/awesome mixture of free and aid. The steepness of the wall dictated hanging belays when the rope ran out. We bivied about 1,000 feet up the climb after the first day. That night the temperatures plummeted and a storm dumped over a foot of snow on us, forcing retreat the next day.

After we gathered our wits and rested for two days, the weather finally looked like it would give us a shot. Being familiar with the terrain allowed us to gain our high point earlier and get one more pitch in before dark. As we were setting up the portaledge, snow began to fall again, but we woke up to a cold, clear morning. We hightailed it out of camp and raced for the summit, gaining a chimney and corner system that split the upper wall. The climbing was consistently loose with iced-up wide cracks that were often unprotectable. Chris contin-



The southeast face of Bustle Tower, showing the approximate lines of 1. Club International (V/VI 5.10+ A2, Isaac-Taylor, 1997); 2. Southeast Face (VI 5.10 A1, Collar-Ramouillet-Lorenzi, 1977; all but 200 feet were freed by Mark Wilford and Bill Wylie in 1980); 3. Beppin (V 5.10a A3-, Kada-Kuroda, 1999); 4. Southeast Dihedral (V 5.8 A2, Ammerer-Mochacek, 1977). SHOGO KADA



The south face of the Minataur, showing Run for Cover (Childers-Van Leuven, 2000). Mt. Nirvana is the steeped peak left of center. MATT CHILDERS

ued to step up with bold free climbing as we aimed for the top. The weather was alternating snow and sun all day. As I pulled the summit mantle it was dumping snow, but by the time I set up the anchor the weather had cleared. The summit offered a brilliant view of Mt. Nirvana and the surrounding peaks. We rapped the route and touched the ground without placing any holes on the entire route. We named the route *Run for Cover* (V 5.10 A2).

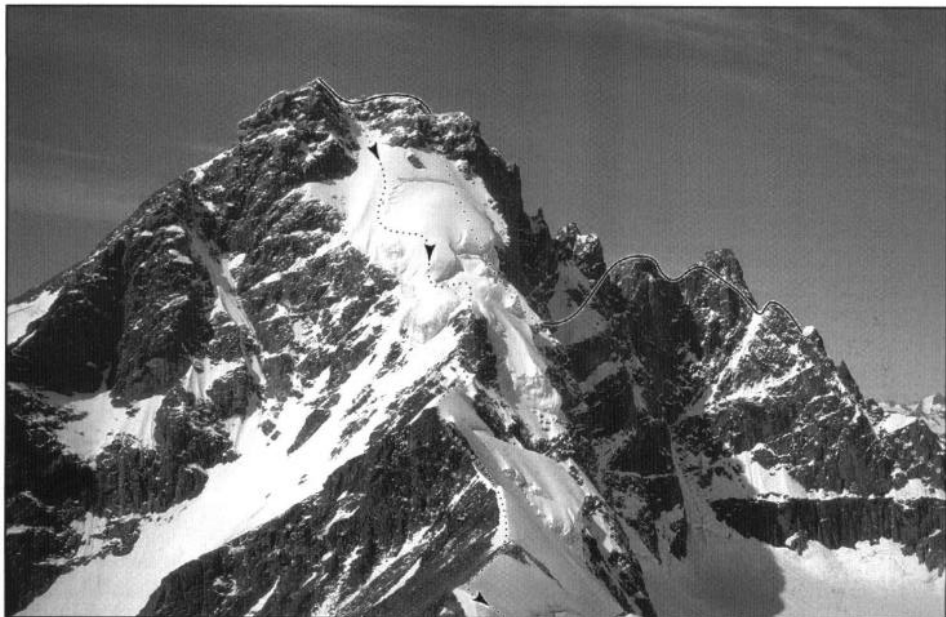
MATT CHILDERS*

*Recipient of an AAC Lyman Spitzer Climbing Grant and an AAC Mountaineering Fellowship Fund award

COAST MOUNTAINS

Mt. Monarch, North Ridge, New Route. From August 4-7, on my fifth attempt of the route (the first way back in 1983), Bill Durtler, Bruce Fairley, and I finally made the first ascent of the North Ridge of Mount Monarch (3573m), the "big" peak south of Bella Coola. The 900-meter route presents itself as a tower-studded rock ridge (and there are in fact several pitches in the 5.8-5.9 range), but the majority of the climbing was on steep ice and mixed ground on ramps and gullies weaving amongst the towers. Three days were spent reaching the summit, and a third bivy was made on the descent. *En passant*, we also climbed Monarch's North Summit, at about 3250 meters likely the highest unclimbed subsidiary peak in the Coast Mountains.

DON SERL, *Canada*



Mt. Monarch, showing the North Ridge (Durtler-Fairley-Serl, 2000) and line of descent. DON SERL

Mt. Combatant, Perseverance, New Route. On the evening of July 29, White Saddle Air choppered Alan Kearney and I to a precarious little spot in the icefall of the upper Tiedemann Glacier directly below the immense east face of Waddington. This approach allayed our concerns of serious problems in the icefall and gave us excellent access to Combatant. The ample snow coverage gave us non-trivial access to the base. After a very rough scope of the route, we carried loads on July 30, but were unable to actually get on the route due to weather. The next morning we left early and climbed. Going with just one pack between the two of us and the second jugging, we were able to climb the route in four days and rappel the route back to base camp in one day. Our route was 17 pitches long to the huge terrace that splits Combatant at mid-height on the southwest side, where we joined the previously climbed *Kshatrya* (5.8, 12 pitches) to the summit. The route climbs the last major unclimbed buttress on Combatant, the one left of Child, Collum, and Mascioli's 1994 route *Belligerence*. The weather was intermittent for the first two days, but we were blessed with beautiful weather for the remainder, thus the name for our route: *Perseverance* (VI 5.10c A2+).

BRENDAN CUSICK

Mt. Tiedemann, New Route. From August 4-7, Britons Simon Richardson and Doré Green made the first ascent of the South Pillar (VI 5.10+ WI3, 1400m) of Mount Tiedemann (3848m). A full account of their twenty-nine pitch route and an overview of the climbing on the Combatant-Tiedemann-Asperity Wall appears earlier in this journal.

Tellot Glacier, Various Activity and New Routes. Dead. Not even a flicker when you turn it

on. It was time to go home—not the planned time, not the scheduled time, but nonetheless, it was time.

Mike Spagnut, Mark Hartley, and I were flown to Plummer Hut on the Tellot Glacier and packed a week's worth of food to a beautiful sheltered campsite on a rock knoll above the Cataract Icefall. We were a disjointed group for most of the trip: Mark was brooding over his love life and seemed ambivalent about the climbing, Mike was suffering from altitude but was still really driven to do a big route, and I was on holidays. The first week was low energy; we climbed the East Ridge of Stiletto, the West Ridge of McCormick and a short new route on the southeast side of Shand. The week culminated in an 11 p.m. start to get solid ice for the Northeast Face of Sera III—and it was well worth it!

After the mid-trip trudge back to the hut to get our cached food and run up the ultra classic West Ridge of Claw Peak, a day enlivened by my plunge 15 feet down a crevasse, we looked at our options. We chose a shorter line that we thought would go in one day, and Mike decided to sit it out and take a rest day.

The next dawn, Mark and I started up the prominent 650-meter buttress on the northeast face of Shand. We found many pitches of fourth- and low-fifth-class leading to where the buttress narrows and becomes more defined. It was good rock with solid pro and relatively clean for six to eight pitches (up to 5.9). The crux was high up in a right-facing corner: an unfortunate moss mantle in an otherwise stunning pitch. The rib ends in a small gendarme that marks the "Kitty Litter" pitch, which is a broad horizontal band of poor-quality rock that crosses the entire face. Mark, being a Rockies climber, merrily trundled across this to the base of the final headwall. Some ledges and 80 meters of 5.8 squeeze chimney led to the summit rim. A short walk down the central snowfield dropped us back to our tracks on the glacier and the trail home.

After that climb we had time left, but no motivation. We hiked back to Plummer and tried the radio to call for a pick-up, but it had been left on. Bailing wire, duct tape, a Petzl headlamp battery, two double As, and some prayer....

"Plummer Hut to Whitesaddle?" (Please work, please work, please work!)

"Whitesaddle to Plummer. Go ahead."

LORNE HOOVER, *Canada*

Mt. Plinth, North Face, New Route and Ski Descent. On February 11, Jia Condon, Sean "Woody" Tribe, Chris "Beeker" Rameski, and Darrel White snowmobiled 50 kilometers to Meager Hotsprings, where they spent a relaxing night. Way early the next morning, they backtracked about eight kilometers and then continued up the Lilloet River drainage to 6,700 feet below the summit of Mt. Plinth. It took about three hours of skinning and about six hours of climbing through deep snow to ascend the north face. Due to a building storm, they spent a few anxious moments on the summit and then the next hour skiing down the north face, negotiating 55- to 60-degree sections to their sleds. From there, it was back to Meager Hotsprings for more lounging and whisky.

JIA CONDON, *Canada*

Squamish

Squamish Chief, Grand Wall, First Free Ascent. On July 18 at 7 a.m., Annie Overlin and I



The north face of Mt. Plinth, showing the line of ascent and descent. JIA CONDON

embarked on what would become a historical day. Our plan was to make the first free ascent of the Grand Wall. I planned on red-pointing every pitch, and Annie would follow carrying a 70-ounce Camelback and four assorted energy bars. I carried an extra shirt, five cams and two stoppers.

We arrived at the base at 8 a.m., Annie feeling great and me suffering from nerves. With a 70-meter rope, my plan was to link pitches to obvious no-hands rests. I believe that to use hanging stations is cheating and poor style and doesn't count as a free ascent.

Once boot hit rock, my confidence soared, and I fired the first two pitches of *Apron Strings* in one pitch. I quickly ran up the two-pitch *Mercy Me* in similar style. We did a short pitch to the belay below the bolt ladder to the right side of the Split Pillar. Taking the sporty start to the left-side 11c crack, I traversed right via a 12b move to gain the Pillar's right side. Though very capable of the traverse, Annie agreed to just swing across to save time and shade. I then led a long pitch to the large ledge about one-third of the way up the sword pitch, the same place where the Hamish Fraser route *Geni Loci* ends.

From the ledge, the "Underfling" that had provided many anxious moments in my restless pre-climb sleep loomed out right. After nearly slipping off the rest stance, I powered past the old hanging station and with a mantle and a hard crimp pulled onto a large no-hands rest, completing what I felt to be the first true ascent of that pitch (all other ascents used an unnecessary sling belay). I also felt that the pitch is now solid 13a. Annie swung across and joined me. After three falls and a few frustrated outbursts, I pulled my rope, stopped taking it so seriously, and focused into the hard, easy-to-blow crux, barely redpointing the gently traversing final link. Annie joined me at the station, where we hugged and I apologized for my outburst, and this time screamed a victory shout over the sleeping town. We cruised up to Belly-Good

Ledge, arriving tired, red-tipped, and nearly out of food and water.

Still determined to do things right, we dragged butt up the last four pitches of the Roman Chimneys, taking the easiest line. On top, we smoked the peace pipe and praised the gods for our good luck.

Previous to my redpoint, I worked the route eight times from the ground up. I never rappelled in to work the cruxes. We added a bolt to supplement the two old fixed pins in the Underfling and added the new station. Finally, I added a bolt to the last moves of the final traversing link. In keeping with local tradition, I named the final traverse The Chief after my half-Indian friend Peary Beckman, whose friendship, support, and vision led to my success. I'd also like to thank the wonderful community of Squamish for their friendship, support, and good vibes. You have my humble regard.

SCOTT COSGROVE

Squamish Chief, The Fortress. In September, Hamish Fraser and I completed a new free route on the Sheriff's Badge, a 1,000-foot formation on the northern section of the Squamish Chief. This was the last of the three main walls to go free. *The Fortress* (V 5.12, 9 pitches) starts on the *Daily Planet* and climbs the big corner in an amazing 60-meter pitch that exits that route via a foot-swinging roof to the left, where the *Planet* jogs right. Bolted face climbing followed by thin cracks leads several hundred feet to the "Big Roof." Arapiles-like jugging out the roof lands you at a cool belay at the lip. The last two pitches basically follow left-leaning corners.

Hamish, Greg Foweraker and I spent a number of days that summer exploring upward and hitting deadends until finally breaking through to the lip of the "Big Roof" that cuts across the entire cliff. I came back later with Dave Humphries and aid climbed the last two pitches to the top. Some days after that, Greg and I rapped in and dug and scrubbed these last two in lousy weather. We hoped that the rain would wash away the residue that our efforts had scattered. It didn't work out that way.

On my last available climbing day before flying home to California, Hamish and I went for the big push. Things went smoothly until we cleared the Roof and met the unfreed last two pitches. The crux 5.12 holds were wet and above that the route was slathered in muck. Easy sections were hard and hard sections were absolutely pooping. We topped out as night fell.

On the down side, there was no shining summit, I had to yo-yo the wet 5.12 pitch and, worst of all, Greg wasn't there. On the up side, we got buttered in mud and after finishing our climb after sunset, had to feel our way down in pitch dark, on all fours, like bugs. Perfect.

PETER CROFT, *unaffiliated*

Squamish Chief, Bald Egos, New Route. In June, Conny Amelunxen and I braved rain, long falls, the unknown, and more rain in an attempt to put up the longest aid route on the Squamish Chief, *Bald Egos* (5.9 A4). We climbed the wall in impeccable Squamish style using an "anything goes" combination of siege tactics, fixed lines, and capsule-style pushes, climbing the wall in ten days spread out over a three-week period (anything to insure that we always climbed in the rain, for which we achieved a remarkable 80 percent success rate).

Our route links 1,500 feet of discontinuous features over two distinct walls, venturing onto a previously unclimbed section of the Chief for the second part of the route. It was here that we committed to capsule-style climbing when a friend who had joined us for the two previous pitches rapped down, taking our two extra ropes with him from halfway up the wall. It

seems that the extended forecast of rain promised more good times than he could bear. Conny and I spent many hours discussing this mystifying behavior that night as the rain hammered down on the ledge.

We topped out after a day of climbing perfect straight-in knifeblade cracks in beautiful sunny weather, which tainted the experience and completely ruined the summit photos. But you can't have everything.

What I learned on the route? Two things. Copperheads will work in wet granite and always bring TWO umbrellas, not just one.

ADAM DIAMOND, *Canada*

THE SELKIRKS

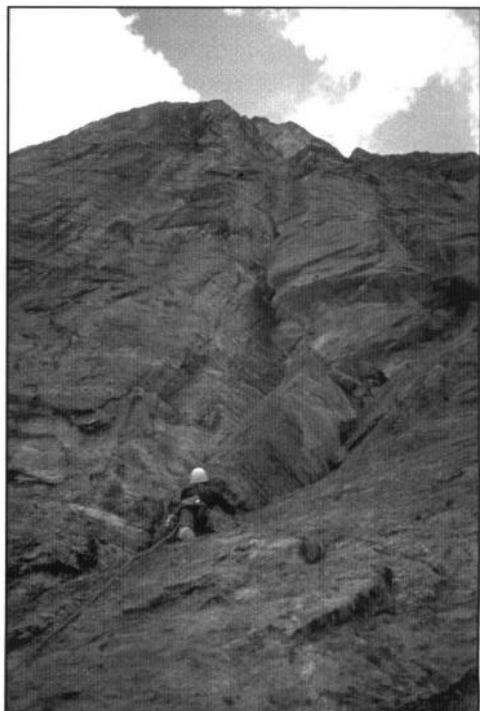
Mt. Dag, Ankles as Far as the Eye Can See, Ankles Me Boy, New Routes. On August 1, Jason Magness, Sam Price, Mike Brown, George Ortiz, Craig Clarence, and I all met in Slocan, British Columbia. Our goal was to put up a new route on the north face of Mt. Dag, a 2700-meter peak in Mulvey Basin of Valhalla Provincial Park, in honor of the late Alex McClure, a great climber, spirit, and friend who was killed in an avalanche two summers ago. We knew almost nothing about the area and were basing the entire project on a small picture of the face from an old AAC guidebook.

August 2 was spent packing essential gear and hiking into the steep valley below the wall. The approach took 12 hours and involved steep snow, vertical jungle, miles of bushwhacking, and a very physical 150-foot free-hanging rappel.

After scoping out the wall the following day, we decided on a change of tactics. Instead of one team of six, two teams of three would ascend the wall following separate lines. Around noon, Jason, Mike, Craig, and I hiked out to retrieve additional gear and food, while George and Sam remained to hump loads to the base of the wall.

August 5 saw our return to camp after a much-needed rest day. We used an alternate approach that involved a treacherous traverse across slabs, but avoided the rappel. August 6 was spent preparing for the ascent.

The next day saw the climbing begin in earnest. The "alpine team" of Mike, Jason, and Sam planned on traveling light and fast and taking a line up the northeast face. They took only 15 liters of water, a tarp, one sleeping bag, three Powerbars per person per day,



Jason Magness on pitch 14 of *Ankles as Far as the Eye Can See*. MIKE BROWN

and a summer sausage. My group, the "aid team," decided to haul, and took a bit more gear. We hoped to follow a gully to the right of the face to a big ledge at one-third height, where we'd traverse left and climb directly up the north face. The only previous route, *Sweet Judy Blue Eyes Buttress* (VI 5.9 A3), by Roskelly and crew in 1974, also ascended this gully and continued up the face off the right edge of the ledge.

The alpine team completed their climb, *Ankles as Far as the Eye Can See* (VI 5.11 A1) in three days. The 23 long pitches included three of 5.11 and nine of 5.10. The climbing was varied, with an emphasis on slab at the bottom and stemming and lie-backing at the top. Several hard squeeze chimneys and offwidths were also encountered. Two bolts were placed atop the ninth pitch; one was placed on the 13th. A small pin rack was occasionally used at belays, though no pitons were left on the wall.

The aid team spent four days and three nights on the wall. It took the first day and a half to climb and haul up the gully over fourth- to moderate fifth-class terrain. The rest of the climb was an even mix between free climbing and aid, with nearly each pitch having some of each. The crux involved aiding behind thin, hollow flakes and easy but unprotected free climbing. Two bolts were placed on this pitch. The route *Ankles Me Boy* (VI 5.9+ A2) involved 11 long pitches above the ledge and innumerable shorter pitches up the gully.

ANDY MAGNESS*

*Recipient of an AAC Mountaineering Fellowship Fund award

Recent Ascents in the Selkirk Range. During the last 25 years there have been only six brief reports of new routes in the Selkirk Range published in the *AAJ*. Based on this publication history, readers might easily conclude that there is little activity of note in the range. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is a small group of Selkirk aficionados who have been very active throughout the area. Researching new climbs for a revised guidebook to the Selkirks, this author has compiled a list of over 200 first ascents that have not been previously reported. Many climbs are relatively easy, general mountaineering routes, and many peaks have remained unclimbed.

Despite the growing network of logging roads that penetrate most major valleys, approaches in the Selkirks often require significant bushwhacking to reach the alpine climbs. Alternate access is provided by helicopter, usually with the services of Don McTighe Alpine Helicopters in Golden. However, there remain many fine new routes within a stone's throw of the TransCanada Highway.

R. Cox, R. DeBeyer and K. Sellers climbed the imposing Northeast Buttress (V 5.8+) of Sir Donald. There has also been considerable activity further afield in the Battle Range to the south of the Rogers Pass. Perhaps the most outstanding route is on the 230-meter high Yes Please Spire, located on the northern margin of Ohno Wall, Moby Dick. G. Foweraker and T. McAllister climbed the northwest and west face (IV 5.10) of this spire on a sea of chicken heads.

The northern Selkirks have also yielded a number of fine new routes. C. Ellis and C. Molder climbed the Direct South Face of Mt. Tupper (IV 5.10+). In the same area, R. Beglinger and G. Tannis made the first ascent of the North Buttress (IV 5.10a) of Hermit Mountain.

Peaks in the Bigmouth drainage to the north have also seen activity. In the Argonaut Group, A. Bowers and B. Thomas climbed the west ridge (IV 5.10a) of the Unnamed Pinnacle on the west ridge of Argonaut.

This past summer saw considerable activity in the Adamant–Gothics area of the northern Selkirks. G. Foweraker and T. McAllister forged a new line, *Virgin Sacrifice* (IV 5.10c A2), up the south face of Montezuma's Finger, while T. Craig and P. Oxtoby persevered for four days on a new route (VI 5.10 A2) up the south face of Adamant. The elusive summit of the Stickle was gained by T. Pochay and D. Scott, who climbed a fine line on the south face and east ridge (IV 5.10 A2).

Gibraltar saw G. Foweraker and T. McAllister climb the Southeast Buttress (IV 5.10+ A2). These and many other new routes will be more fully documented in revised guidebooks to the north and south Selkirks, the first of which should appear by late spring 2001.

DAVID P. JONES, *Canada*

PURCELL MOUNTAINS

The Bugaboos

The Bugaboos, Various New Routes and First Free Ascent. Between July 24 and August 16, Patience Donahue and I lucked onto a weather window and scored three new routes and one first free ascent. The most significant route is *Cameron's Pillar* (5.11+, 1,500'), a fantastic line on the south face of the South Howser Tower named after our friend Cameron Tague, who was with us in spirit during every perfect jam. The first ascent list should read, "FA: Patience and Topher Donahue and the Spirit of Cameron Tague." We did not go to the summit, but rappelled after reaching the end of the steep climbing and the top of the pillar, where we scattered Cameron's ashes.

On the southwest corner of the East Pigeon Feather, we found *Finger Berry Jam* (5.12-, 900'), a route so fine we had to return and climb it twice more after the first ascent.

At the end of our stay we free climbed the *Tower Arête* (5.12-, 1,000') on Snowpatch Spire. We fixed one pin and followed the aid line almost exactly.

TOPHER DONAHUE

CANADIAN ROCKIES

Mt. Chephren, Leftover Rib, New Route. The east face of Mt. Chephren, a graceful pyramid with a multitude of rock ribs sweeping down from the summit, towers nearly a vertical mile above the Icefields Parkway. It received its first ascent in the summer of 1965, when a crew of Vulgarians led by Art Gran climbed the central rib. Then, in the winter of 1987, Barry Blanchard, Ward Robinson, and Peter Arbic pioneered *The Wild Thing* up a steep mixed gully to the right of the Gran Route. But that left a lot of unexplored ground.

I got my first taste of the east face in 1998 when Jim Sevigny and I climbed the Gran Route. A few years earlier, Jim and Ken Wylie had attempted a new line on the east face, but Jim and I were going alpine climbing together for the first time and thought it better to stick to an established route. Last August found us once again glassing the face from across Waterfowl Lake. Our objective was the line Jim and Ken had attempted earlier: an obvious rib left of the Gran Route.

A pitch or two of scruffy corners got us to the base of a large ramp. We unroped and

scrambled upward, Jim stopping only to retrieve the anchors he left while retreating in a snowstorm from the previous attempt. We put the rope back on for an easy but loose gully; above, we continued simulclimbing up more pleasant ground. A traverse back right and it looked like some "real" climbing was in order. We changed into rock shoes and started pitching it out. A few ropelengths of 5.8 (made more interesting by packs full of all the toys we thought we would need), and we arrived at the large ledge below the upper face. The direct line looked too hard to climb with packs and we don't like hauling, so we did the typical Rockies traverse. Once around the corner we spied a chimney capped by a chockstone that looked like it might go. It went a lot more easily than expected and soon we were back in boots and simulclimbing until we bumped up against the final steep wall.

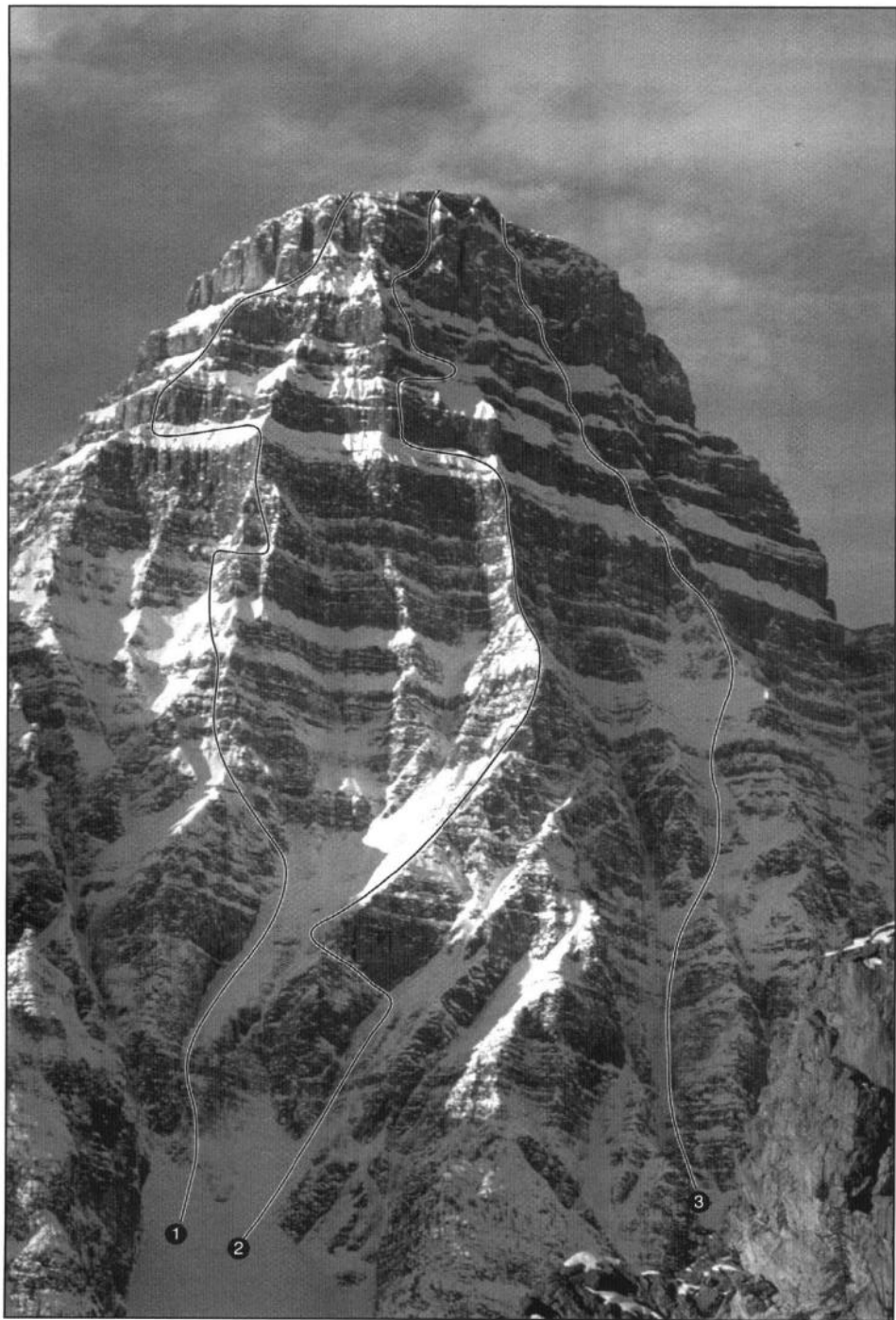
I changed back into rock shoes and wandered up for a look. At the top of a teetering pinnacle, I managed to get a pin into the compact rock above, and set out on some excellent if somewhat runout climbing. Another pitch and we were off the face. A cold wind was blowing and we had only an hour of daylight remaining, so we didn't linger. We knew where to go from our Gran Route ascent and, after some high-speed glissading, were back at Chephren Lake at dark. We ate the rest of our food, hoisted packs full of aid and bivy gear we never needed, and set off on the few hours of wretched hiking still separating us from the comforts of Jim's Eurovan.

RAPHAEL SLAWINSKI, *Canada*

Canadian Rockies, Various Activity. For the past few years, most of the new multipitch rock routes to go up in the Front Ranges have been in the Ghost River area. Owing to its secluded location, this region has not been developed as extensively as the Bow Valley. It also has generally better limestone. Using a mixture of bottom-up and top-down styles, and with power drills playing a prominent role, some fantastic routes have been put up. But though they offer excellent climbing, none of the recent additions can be called truly alpine.

Though long the focus of local attention, the Bow Valley still offers possibilities for major new routes. Most activity on the Goat Wall just west of the ever-popular south face of Yamnuska centers on the proud line of the *Goat Buttress* (5.10d, 375m). Until recently, the large expanse of rock to its right lay largely forgotten. But over the past two years, Peter Gatzsch and Bulent Tezcan established two new routes, *Gotcha* (5.10a/b, 515m) in 1999 and *Goatman* (5.10 A0, 480m) in 2000. However, the highlight of the alpine rock season was a new route on the northeast face of Windtower farther west, home to the classic Homer-Wood route (5.10a, 570m). Visiting the Rockies from Quebec for a rock guide's course, Remy Bernier and Francois Roy put up *Le Jour Le Plus Long* (5.11, 500m) over two days in June. Remarkably for a new route of this magnitude on Rockies limestone, they climbed it entirely clean! They also put up a new route on Mt. Edith (5.10, 300m) west of Banff.

Summer alpine activity continued in a familiar vein, with established classics seeing much traffic, but little new-route activity—this in spite of the fact that many prominent features remain unclimbed, and some major routes still await second ascents. As usual, the Greenwood-Locke and Greenwood-Jones routes (both IV 5.9) on the north face of Mt. Temple above Lake Louise each received a number of ascents. Although easier technically, the Elzinga-Miller (IV 5.7) has considerable exposure to serac fall, which may account for its recent drop in popularity. On one of the few (only?) ascents it received last summer, leading local ice climbers Steve Holeczi and Eamonn Walsh attempted the final ice cliffs directly. Finding them highly unstable, they were forced to make a long traverse beneath them to reach



Mt. Chephren, showing 1. Leftover Rib (Sevigny-Slawinski, 2000). 2. The Gran route (Art Gran et al, 1965). 3. The Wild Thing (Arbic-Blanchard-Robinson, 1987). JIM SEVIGNY

easier ground. Raphael Slawinski, local connoisseur of the obscure, teamed up with Rodger Debeyer to repeat the loose Northeast Buttress of Mt. Sarrail (III 5.10a) in Kananaskis Country, and the intimidating *The Kafir Strikes Back* (III 5.10c) on Mt. Edith. The latter, a classic Dave Cheesmond creation, offers sustained traditional climbing and deserves to be climbed more frequently.

In September, Jim Sevigny and Slawinski climbed the north face of Mt. Cromwell in the Columbia Icefields, generally following the line of the Robinson-Arbic route (V 5.7 mixed). Much of the ice on the face was less than substantial, requiring circuitous route finding and insecure drytooling up to M5. Nevertheless, this little-known face is highly recommended, as in better conditions it offers beautiful ice/mixed climbing. Later that month, Rob Owens and Walsh took advantage of a cold spell that saw nighttime temperatures drop to -17°C , and got a jump on the ice climbing season with the first ascent of *The Wild Bunch* (III 5.7 WI6 R/X) on the northeast face of Mt. Beatty in Kananaskis Country. The first pitch was the crux, involving steep and thin ice climbing with minimal protection. Above, easier climbing led to a scenic summit.

Always a good bet for early season ice, Kananaskis Country coughed up its share of new ice/mixed routes. Kim Csizmazia, Will Gadd, and Holeczi hiked for four hours to the appropriately named *Shut up and Walk* (WI5+ R, 100m) on the Big Sister above Canmore. The approach, and the fact that the crux pillar fell down when Gadd kicked it on the rappel, insured that there were no repeats. With only a two-hour approach, *Imaginary Goat* (5.7 WI5 R, 150m) on Mt. Warspite along the Smith-Dorrien Trail, climbed by Owens, Slawinski, and Walsh, was comparatively casual. Owens and Slawinski later returned to add *Spite* (M4 WI4, 80m). This is the prominent line directly below the summit, and could be extended to make a varied alpine route.

The ice season was a freakish one, with areas like the Ghost coming in unusually fat, while others, like the Stanley Headwall and Mt. Wilson, were unusually lean. However, armed with the motto that "it does not have to be formed to be formed" (and with power drills), climbers were not deterred. On the Stanley Headwall, bolting behind the rarely formed *Killer Pillar* (WI5+, 55m), Sean Isaac and David Thomson put up the powerful *Thriller* (M8+/M9- WI5, 65m). On the same wall, Eric Dumerac and Slawinski added two bolt-protected dry tooling pitches to link up the unformed *Acid Howl* (WI6+, 320m) and produce *Stairs and Flowers* (M8 WI5+, 200m). In keeping with a strict free-climbing ethic, they returned after equipping the pitches to redpoint the route in a single push. In the Waiparous Creek area north of the Ghost proper, Shawn Huisman and Isaac completed their two-year project *Cryophobia* (M8+ WI5, 250m), which links thin smears and daggers on the spectacular wall to the right of the classic *Hydrophobia* (WI5+, 125m). Owens, Scott Semple, and Mike Verwey contributed *Haunted By Waters* (M8 WI5, 165m), a bolt-protected direct start to *Sea of Vapors* (WI5, 165m). Owens and Semple next teamed up to put up *Mixed Emotions* (5.9 A1 M5 WI6, 145m) to the left of the *Upper Weeping Wall* (WI6, 155m), one of the finest of the new mixed routes. Traditionally protected M5 and 5.9 pitches led to a bolt ladder through a roof, finishing on a skinny dagger with wild exposure. Ben Firth and Slawinski made the second ascent, freeing the aid onsight at M8. Farther north, Roger Chayer, Csizmazia, and Gadd added the surprisingly moderate *Call of the Curtain* (M7 WI6, 120m) through the huge roof to the right of the upper pillar of *Curtain Call* (WI6, 125m). Holeczi, Semple, and Walsh made the second ascent, confirming the high quality of the route.

In contrast with the bustling mixed scene, the winter alpine scene was rather quiet. Some half-hearted attempts at first winter ascents of major alpine routes did not get very far. The

highlight of the winter alpine season came in early April with *Sans Blitz* (V 5.5 WI7), Barry Blanchard, Rolando Garibotti, and Steve House's addition to the east face of Mt. Fay near Moraine Lake (see note below).

RAPHAEL SLAWINSKI, *Canada*

Mt. Fay, Sans Blitz. Barry Blanchard, Rolando Garibotti, and I skied 17 kilometers into Consolation Lakes on April 13, hauling our packs on sleds and fretting over the two sets of ski tracks in front of us. There had been much talk about climbing this route on the local scene; it had been a well-known objective for several years. This year, it could be seen touching down and visibly blue-tinted from the Lake Louise Ski Area lodge. At mid-day we turned into Consolation Valley and made out two climbers on *Gimme Shelter*. YIPPEE! We set up a base camp at the upper lake and skied up to climb and fix the first pitch.

This was the crux (WI7), and complicated to protect (over half the gear was in rock). The ice was steep, smallish mushrooms attached to a half-inch-thick veneer of ice that was two to five feet wide. Thankfully, there was an excellent rest at halfway, under a small roof. I fixed both ropes at the top of this pitch, and we enjoyed a little powder skiing back to Consolation Lakes.

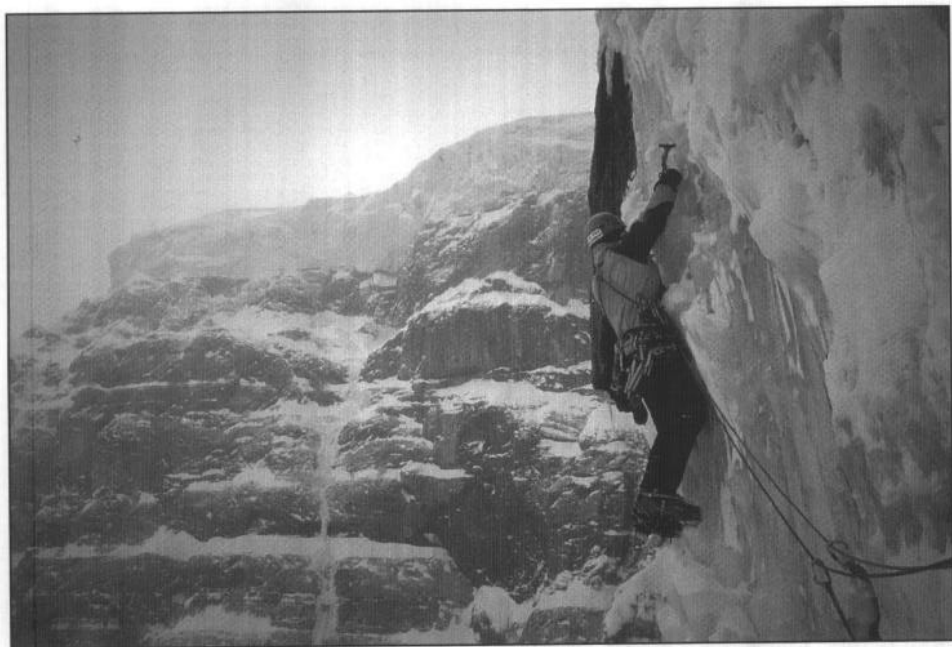
At 4 a.m. the next morning we skied from camp. Toward the base of the route, Rolando became aware of other headlamps being turned on intermittently. It was Eamonn Walsh and Raphael Slawinski. Unbeknown to Barry and me, Rolo put his head down and raced them to the base, beating them out by several minutes.

It was awfully crowded in the predawn gloom at the base of such a serious route. Recognizing this, Raphael and Eamonn bowed out gracefully. We ascended our fixed rope, and Barry led the second pitch and belayed after just 35 meters because the serious climbing had



The east face of Mt. Fay from Consolation Lake. Sans Blitz takes the obvious ice ribbon.

STEVE HOUSE



Barry Blanchard leading pitch 2 on Sans Blitz. STEVE HOUSE

taken its toll on him. I took over for the next three pitches (all WI6-ish), and Rolo and Barry seconded with our two 20-pound packs. (We carried a titanium stove, two gas canisters, cup-soups, a shovel blade, and a lightweight guide's tarp for survival gear. We used it all.)

The climbing was sustained, technical, and traditional; building anchors usually took me over an hour. We carried no bolts. Rolo and Barry took to seconding in alpine mode, hooking biners whenever they could. Rolo got bicep cramps from trying to follow quickly.

Barry led the sixth pitch (WI5+/6) and sat on a screw when he felt too pumped to continue without falling. Rolando linked us to our exit ice gully via a 5.5 traverse. I led two more stunning WI5 pitches into the night. This put us in the snow gully where Rolo took over by headlamp. By midnight, Barry belayed, while Rolo cooked soup, and I used the shovel blade to dig a 60-meter, three- to six-foot trench along the rock wall, through the faceted snow that topped the gully.

At 4 a.m., Rolo dug us a small cave at the top of the east face. We alternated brewing and dozing for a couple of hours until it started to get light. Feeling pretty good, Barry led off up the ridge that separates the east face from the south face at 7 a.m., but floundered in waist-deep faceted snow three rope lengths higher. We bailed from 10,000 feet, rappelling a gully on the south face that we would have downclimbed in a normal snow year.

Our descent was made by traversing the Quadra Glacier and descending the large gully at its east end. Thirty-six hours after leaving our camp, we were back. Barry believes that *Sans Blitz* is the hardest ice climb that he has ever done. The name is for our friend, Jonny Blitz, who had climbed with us for the week prior and would have been with us had he not had to go back to work landing jets.

STEVE HOUSE, with BARRY BLANCHARD, Canada