

Hinds and me to 9,000 feet on the upper Nabesna Glacier below Regal Mountain (13,845'). We established a high camp at 10,800 feet, from which we made an ascent of Peak 12,454' (first ascended in June, 1955) via its east ridge (Alaska Grade 1). The next day, we climbed Regal Mountain up its southern slopes (Alaska Grade 2) after retreating from its striking southwest ridge. We then spent two days skiing 15 miles west over Mountaineers' Pass to an 8,000-foot camp below the north face of Rime Peak (12,741') and Atna Peak (13,860'), scrambling up Peak 8,560' en route. Cory, Wayne, Ben and Cathy then climbed the northwest face of Parka Peak (13,280') (Alaska Grade 1) via Mountaineers' Pass, only removing their skis for the final 700 feet. Cory, Elena, Wayne and Cathy then attempted the east ridge of Rime Peak (Alaska Grade 2) from the Atna/Rime col before turning back at 12,500 feet. Exposed snow and ice climbing up to 60 degrees made for exciting climbing. Future parties should be aware that all routes up Parka, Atna and Rime Peaks from the north are exposed to sometimes considerable serac avalanche danger. Our group also made ascents of Peak 10,060', Peak 8,500'+ and Peak 7,280' before our pilot returned for us on May 22, after 14 sunny days in the Wrangells.

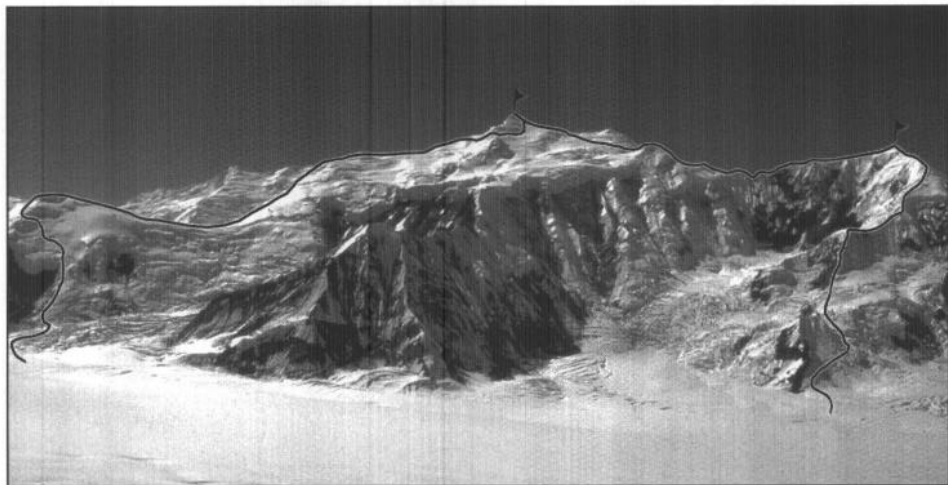
DAVID HART, *Mountaineering Club of Alaska*

## CANADA

### ST. ELIAS RANGE

*Northwest Cook to Mt. Cook, Traverse.* Climbers Greg Brown (Canada), Bertrand Eynard (France), Dave Hildes (Canada), and Alun Hubbard (leader, UK) and crew Chris Barnett, Armel Castello, Tobyn Ross (all from Canada) left Vancouver on June 14 aboard *Gambo*, a 46-foot steel ketch, to sail the Inside Passage up the west coast of North America to Yakutat Bay, Alaska, in 12 days. After a successful drop at the toe of the Hubbard Glacier, we ascended the 40-kilometer, heavily crevassed Valerie Glacier for four days and, by July 5, had established Base Camp at 1650 meters on the Seward Glacier by the foot of Northwest Cook. Carrying seven days of food and fuel, we climbed the 2000-meter north ridge of Northwest Cook using two daytime bivies at 2100 meters and 2700 meters to rest. The climbing was of moderate difficulty, mostly on poor, crusty snow and rotten ice of 30 to 75 degrees with the occasional chossy rock section. We summited Northwest Cook on our third night in ideal conditions; at the higher elevation, snow was firm. The weather had remained exceptionally stable (but very hazy) throughout.

We then followed the unclimbed ridge to Mt. Cook, with Bertrand leading through the crux of the route, a steep rock notch, during the fourth day. The next morning saw us finish the ridge, and we managed to locate ourselves at 4150 meters, immediately below the summit, at 10:45 a.m. on July 9 in rapidly deteriorating conditions. We set up camp in the lee of the summit ridge to wait out the blizzard. After 15 hours of being buffeted by severe winds, a promising clear patch appeared in the sky at 2:30 a.m. We emerged from the tent at 4 a.m. and jaunted up to Mt. Cook's broad summit to enjoy a glorious sunrise on July 10. For the next three days we were frustrated by short weather windows and hunger, but on July 13 we were back on the Seward Glacier at our BC. Our plan to descend by the Valerie was quelled by the amount of snow-melt on the tenuous snow-bridges on which we had ascended. Instead, a 50-kilometer ski down the Seward Glacier to where it meets the Malaspina allowed VHF



*Mt. Cook (center) and Northwest Cook, showing the traverse taken by the team. DAVE HILDES*

contact with Gulf Air Taxi pilots and we arranged for a pick-up. Return to Vancouver was made in ten days aboard *Gambo* with (mostly) favorable winds on the outside waters of Alaska and BC.

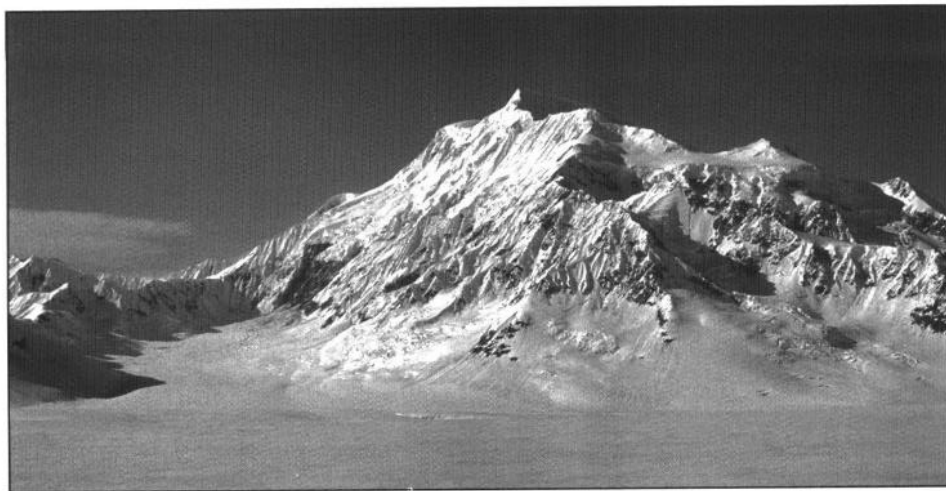
Sadly, David Persson, a good friend and original expedition member, fell to his death in late May while attempting to telemark down *Liberty Ridge* on Mt. Rainier. In memory of David, we have applied for Northwest Cook to be named after him.

DAVE HILDES,\* *Canada*

\*Supported by a grant from the Shipton-Tilman Fund, Mount Everest Foundation, the British Mountaineering Council and the Polartec Performance Challenge.

*Mt. Vancouver, Attempt, and Mt. Seattle, Ascent.* On June 1-4 during a prolonged spell of unsettled weather, we had a minor epic trying to approach the East Rib of Mt. Vancouver (4812m) through the complex icefall guarding the route. We escaped in a dubious weather window with the aid of GPS waypoints. Cutting our losses, we opted to attempt Mt. Seattle (3069m), a complex mountain bigger and more serious than its height would indicate. The first and only previous ascent was by Fred Beckey and party in May, 1966, via the South-Southwest Ridge. We opted for the East Ridge to the North Summit, which forms the Alaska-Yukon boundary. This is the most direct route on the north side of the mountain, but the way is barred by a huge serac band near the summit ridge.

On June 7, we ascended from the glacier at 1100 meters via several unconsolidated snow mushrooms to a large 'schrund on the main ridge at ca. 1865 meters. On the ridge, facing the rising sun, snow conditions became dangerously slushy after about 8 a.m. and only consolidated after 1 a.m. The following day, we continued up exposed slopes with unnerving wind-slab that required snow stakes for upward progress to a second camp at 2480 meters. On June 9, we tackled the nerve-racking traverse below the seracs on mixed rock and hard ice. From the distinctively shaped North Summit, it was apparent that the South Summit is perhaps 30



*Mt. Seattle from the north. The North Summit is the highest point visible. Most of the east ridge, including the serac barrier at the top, is visible as the left skyline. PAUL KNOTT*

meters higher. The intervening ground was not technical, but we had insufficient time for the three kilometers or so of undulating snow ridge. After a camp on the summit ridge, we reversed the route without mishap, reaching the glacier on June 11. Ours was a new route, the first ascent of the North Summit, and the second ascent (and first British ascent) of the mountain as a whole.

PAUL KNOTT, *United Kingdom*

*Wrangell-St. Elias, Various Ascents.* During the 1999 season only three trips other than ours (see above) resulted in ascents that were recorded in the climbers' log in Yakutat. Apart from a glacier skills course, we were the last climbers approaching from this side to leave the range. This information obviously excludes parties flying in from Kluane. The West Ridge of King Peak was climbed June 4-9 by a Colorado team. A May 18-June 6 attempt on Mt. Kennedy from the Cathedral Glacier by an Idaho team failed on Hubbard due to weather. First ascents of four peaks from 9,300 to 10,700 feet in the North Watson area of the Fairweather Range were made from April 17-30; the hardest was 2,500 feet of 60-degree ice on the north face of Peak 10,700'.

PAUL KNOTT, *United Kingdom*

### Kluane National Park Reserve

*Mountaineering Summary and Statistics, 1999.* This year, even with the unusual weather conditions, there were 46 climbing expeditions comprised of 176 people that accrued some 3,005 person-days within the Icefields of Kluane. Overall, this was one of the busiest years on record for the Icefields.

There were 31 expeditions and 107 people on Mt. Logan this year, representing 61 percent of the persons in the Icefields. The *King Trench Route* (standard route) saw 18 expeditions and

65 people; the East Ridge had ten expeditions and 35 people. Other routes on Mt. Logan attempted this year were the *Catenary Ridge*, South Face and *Hummingbird Ridge*. Nine expeditions were successful to either the East or West peak of the mountain, putting the success rate at 30 percent for all expeditions on the mountain. Once again, climbers reported some large crevasses opening up on the upper *King Trench Route* above 15,000 feet, but these posed no major problems.

The major complaint this year was the weather. Storms forced long delays in getting in or out of the Icefields. Temperatures into the -40°s were common in May and some frostbite problems were reported. On the positive side, there were no search-and-rescue operations or fatalities within the Icefields, although some falls into crevasses were reported.

Other mountains that were attempted included Lucania, Steele, Kennedy, Queen Mary, Vancouver, Seattle, McCaulay, King Peak, Walsh, Pinnacle, Hubbard, Augusta and Mt. Baird. Interesting climbs included a believed first ascent of Mt. Seattle to North Peak (see above), and a route up the Northwest Ridge of King Peak.

A new activity within the Icefields this year was the establishment of the Icefield Discovery Lodge in the Divide area near Mt. Queen Mary. This camp is a trial commercial venture to allow more people to experience the true heart of Kluane National Park: the Icefields. Approximately 35 people flew into the area during the summer and spent at least one night in a comfortable heated camp on the glacier.

Park wardens spent some time in the King Trench area this summer monitoring use. Some of the climbers contacted expressed concern over latrines and human waste, especially at King Trench Base Camp and Camp I. Wardens noticed that the lower *King Trench Route* gets excessively wanded by the end of the summer as most parties do not remove wands upon completion of their trip. The onus seems to be left to the last team on the mountain. One group on a late season trip on the East Ridge of Mt. Logan reported quite a bit of older fixed line surfacing on parts of the route.

Of note is the use of satellite technology. More climbers are showing up using GPS units for navigation in the Icefields. And the satellite phone, especially the Iridium phone, seems to work very well in this environment and is a great improvement over the heavy HF radio system.

Anyone interested in climbing within Kluane should contact Mountaineering Warden/Kluane National Park/Box 5495/Haines Junction/ Yukon, Canada, Y0B 1L0 or visit the Kluane National Park web site at <http://www.harbour.com/parkscan/kluane/climb.htm> for a mountaineering registration package.

RICK STALEY, *Mountaineering Warden, Kluane National Park Reserve*

*Mt. Slaggard, Mt. Macaulay, Southeast Macaulay, Northwest Steele, Mt. Strickland, Ascents and Attempt.* On April 16, Paul Claus of Ultima Thule Outfitters flew Paul Barry, Jim McDonough, Shawn O'Donnell, Kirk Towner and myself to 10,500 feet on the upper Anderson Glacier in Kluane National Park. After placing a high camp at 13,300 feet, we repeated the 1959 first ascent routes up the east ridge of Slaggard (15,575', Alaska Grade 1) and the south ridge of Macaulay (15,400', Alaska Grade 1) (see 1960 AAJ, p. 132). We then moved camp three miles southeast over Southeast Macaulay (14,500') to 11,900 feet on the ridge toward Northwest Steele (13,845', Alaska Grade 1). Our hopes of making its first ascent were dashed when we discovered faint crampon imprints in the ice on the northwest ridge just below the summit. Rangers later confirmed an earlier party had climbed Northwest Steele the prior summer—could their tracks have lasted that long? We descended back to Base Camp

where Paul and I attempted the unclimbed east ridge of Mt. Strickland (13,800', Alaska Grade 2). We reached 12,500 feet before turning back due to dangerous snow conditions and steep ice. Our pilot returned for us on May 2 after 17 days in this seldom-visited corner of the Canadian St. Elias Range.

DAVID HART, *Mountaineering Club of Alaska*

### Fairweather Range

*Northern Fairweather Range, Various First Ascents and Descents.* On April 18, our group of seven climbers and skiers (Jim Earl, Tiffany Scrymgeour, Chris Erickson, Anne Sherwood, Brendan Cusick, Chris Trimble and Hjoerdis Rickert) were flown from Yakutat to our Base Camp in the northern Fairweather Range. This was located about 12 miles north and very slightly west of Mt. Fairweather itself, at 8,000 feet on a small side lobe of the glacier that runs north from Mt. Watson toward Mt. Lodge. (This glacier eventually becomes the Grand Pacific Glacier). Immediately after setting up BC, Brendan Cussick and I headed up to climb the ice face to the saddle between Peak 10,620' and Peak 10,891'. This climb was always between 60° and 75° and always icy—a classic alpine calf pumper (IV 75°, 2,800'). We reached BC the next morning at 7 a.m. after a night of rappeling, downclimbing, and postholing around the backside of Peak 10,620'.

Two days later, Tiffany Scrymgeour and Hjoerdis Rickert made the first ascent of "Cerro Solo" (Peak 9,400'+, II low fifth class). The same day, Chris Trimble and I climbed the north



Peaks of the Fairweather Range. From left to right: 1. "Cerro Solo," showing line of ascent. 2. "Ski Peak." 3. "Little Debbie." 4. Peak 10,620'. 5. Cussick-Earl route to saddle. 6. Peak 10,891'. JIM EARL

face of "Mt. Dan Fox" (Peak 10,891', III 80° 5.4), which is one and a half miles immediately south of Cerro Solo. We named the peak after Dan Fox, a counselor and climber who died of lung cancer in Missoula, MT, two years ago.

Several days after this, Brendan, Tiffany, Hjoerdis and I climbed the east buttress of Point 10,397', which is a sub-peak of Peak 10,755' one mile to the northwest. This climb involved 1,600 feet of climbing on 5.6 rock, iced-up corners, and 60-degree snow. The same day, Chris Trimble, Kris Erickson and Anne Sherwood climbed, then skied and snowboarded the south face of Cerro Solo. Following this, the weather changed and it dumped six feet of snow on our camp.

Kris, Anne, Brendan and Chris did a variety of other serious ski, snowboard and telemark descents, including lines on the south face of Little Debbie (Peak 10,590') and the 60-degree southeast face of "Ski Peak" (Peak 9,200'+, located half a mile west-southwest of Cerro Solo), of which Kris, Chris and Brendan made the first ascent.

Everyone except Chris Trimble and myself left on April 30. The two of us remained, waited out several days of bad weather and approached the north face of Mt. Watson (12,500'). We began climbing this face at 4 a.m., reaching the north ridge after 12 hours on ice and snow up to 80 degrees. The summit ridge, about one kilometer long, was not straightforward: it involved 1,000 feet of 75-degree traversing on the knife-edge ridge. We summited just before dark and scurried down the East Ridge (line of original ascent by Walter Gove and party in 1974). After one rappel on a rocky part of the ridge past a serac barrier, we stopped and brewed up some hot liquids. In an hour, it was light enough and we were rested enough to continue descending across the plateau just east of Mt. Watson, then back west to our camp at the base of the mountain by mid-morning. We each suffered slight frostbite on our toes from the cold temperatures, which we estimate to have been -15°F. It was the first ascent of the North Face and Ridge (V 80° 5.7, 4,500').

JIM EARL, *unaffiliated*

## NORTHWEST AND YUKON TERRITORIES

### RICHARDSON MOUNTAINS

*Richardson Mountains, Traverse.* In August, we completed the traverse of the Richardson Mountains above the 68th parallel. Peak 5,550' at the western rim of the mesa highlands was our mountaineering focal point. Our route proceeds from the Mackenzie River southeast of Mt. Gifford to the Bell River headwaters and across the western perimeter ridge to Bonnet Lake above the Porcupine Flats. Dioramic displays of tundra wildlife were witnessed, with wolves and grizzlies in extraordinary abundance. An impressive natural arch was found and explored above the Almstrom headwaters.

DENNIS SCHMITT

### LOGAN MOUNTAINS

*Vampire Peaks, New Routes.* Pike Howard and I flew to Summit Lake in the Vampire Peaks area on July 8. Our intentions were to explore the peaks west of Mount Mulholland on the



Moraine Hill Glacier and continue the exploration of the Vampire Peaks. We established Base Camp at the foot of the Phoenix in rainy weather near the terminus of the Moraine Hill Glacier. The rain continued for seven days and deposited several inches of snow on the glacier and nearby faces. Hoping that time and good weather would stabilize conditions, we headed up to the Vampire Spires, which had escaped much of the snow. A window of good weather opened as we hiked and for the first time we saw blue sky. Not wanting to waste the opportunity, we rushed toward the Canine, an 800-foot, free-standing granite tower, and glassed a line for the next day.

The Canine had been attempted by the Childers party in 1998 (see 1999 *AAJ*, pp. 269-271), but they were forced to retreat in the face of poor weather. We found predominantly moderate climbing, although loose and unsavory at times, on our route, *Rabies Shot* (IV 5.10 C2+). A long (180'+), loose, and lichenous offwidth was the first major obstacle. Having grunted our way up that, Howard battled a bizarre corner formed by the convergence of two plates of rock (5.10 C2+). Protection in this section was difficult as cams would hopelessly umbrella in a chimney behind the façade of an otherwise normal-looking crack. A final pitch that included 5.10 face and crack climbing ended on a spacious ledge 15-18 feet below the true summit. Alas, the summit block was composed of rotten, vertical, and decomposing stone. I tried to lasso the summit, but that trick ended when the flake I snagged nearly chopped the rope after it peeled off the wall. We decided against a bolt ladder, and I drilled a single bolt for a rappel. This was the only bolt or piton used on the climb. Considering that fact and our alpine location, we felt justified in our restraint.

After a rest day, we started up the Vampire Spire. Our route took a direct line up the center of the south face on clean, golden rock. The first three long leads (5.9, A2+, 5.10/A1) follow a large dihedral before meeting *The Infusion* below a difficult (5.10+) offwidth. No bolts were used on the direct start, which we called *The Undead* (IV/V 5.10+ A2+). After a day off due to rain, we headed back up, hoping to summit via the final pitches of *The Infusion*. Sleet and rain once again sent us fleeing for the tents just before a pendulum onto easier ground. The next morning, we awoke to six inches of snow. Having only one day's food left, we headed down to our food cache to eat and dry out. To our surprise, our metal bear box containing two weeks of provisions and our radio was gone. "Into Thin Air" was a fitting title to that chapter of the trip as we searched fruitlessly for our provisions. A large grizzly had eaten our canned goods and simply walked away with a 60-pound food box. Seven days of rain, snow and hunger followed until a break in the weather allowed us to hike back up to the Vampires and retrieve our gear. Luckily, our bush pilot Warren LaFave flew in to drop off a crew from Colorado. On the fifth day of good weather out of 23, we wished the newcomers good luck and flew away. I wish only that Mother Nature had been more hospitable. Future parties are warned against the unpredictable weather.

JACK CHILDRESS\*

\*Recipient of the Boyd Everett Fellowship Grant

*Vampire Spire, New Routes.* During the first three weeks of August, Colorado climbers Pat Goodman, Nan Darkis and I traveled to Canada's Northwest Territories to the Vampire Spires. Located 25 miles north of the Cirque of the Unclimbables in the Logan Mountain range, this group of steep granite peaks was rumored to offer excellent potential for new routes. This proved to be true and we established Base Camp in a plush meadow, a 30-minute hike away





from the spires, and immediately scoped a new line.

Taking advantage of 75° weather, our team succeeded on a seven-pitch line during the first three days. *The Lair of the White Worm* (V 5.11 A2+) ascends an obvious, continuous crack system on the east face of the 1,200-foot Vampire, 150 feet to the right of the 1995 route, *The Infusion*. The climbing involved everything from face to thin nailing to offwidth and chimney, with one bivy on a good ledge at the top of the fifth pitch. *The Lair of the White Worm* will go all free at around 5.12c; however, it took five days of perfect weather to completely dry some crucial sections.

After regrouping for one day and still in the midst of unbelievably stable weather, we began work on another great-looking line conveniently on the same spire. *Sanguin Solution* (V 5.11 A2+) added 500 feet of new climbing to *The Infusion*, and the three of us again summited after three days. We finished just as the weather deteriorated into an exciting electrical storm.

Both the Vampire Spire and its towering neighbor, the Fortress, still have potential for new lines, especially hard nailing. Located three miles south is the Phoenix, an interesting, steep, 2,500-foot formation with only one existing route and potential for several hard nailing routes. Golden Wing Buttress, a steep, clean-looking 800-foot wall, stands two miles to the east of the Phoenix and is also relatively untapped.

BRAD JACKSON, *unaffiliated*

## BUGABOOS

*North Howser Tower, Armageddon.* "That shifty, nibbling sonova...!" The sun wakes us instead of the watch we had set for our alpine start. A nearby pika must have had a midnight snack of my salty watch wristband. A full-moon approach brought us here to Applebee Campground in the heart of the Bugaboos, the Hounds Tooth erupting from the glacier, purple shadows dancing.

The morning opens clear, August 25. Snowpatch Spire lights up with alpenglow, its golden snow-cup precariously perched. We decide the pika was right and continue our leisurely morning. Coffee jump starts and we make our way across the glaciers, over crevasses, through notches and up and down drainages. The toe of the mammoth tower finally comes into view in early afternoon: the west face of the North Howser Tower. We climb 1,000 feet of granite to a fine bivy perch. Then night moves in, windless. An endless horizon of purple peaks poke into the pink, gliding clouds. Mike and I wake with staring smiles. The headwall looms above. Our path continues up a soaring right-facing dihedral with a few roofs splitting it, the first dihedral to the right of the *All Along the Watchtower* corner. The yet-unascended terrain bounces back thoughts of impossibility. The idea of climbing it is hellishly evocative, the other options creating only a pale when compared to the *Armageddon* (our name for the route). We figured we packed just enough in our one backpack to keep us alive through the worst, through an Armageddon event.

We look up. Finger locks—it's gotta be, all the way, until that roof anyhow. And, oh yeah, that shellfish, scalloppini-looking pitch. Oh, and, can you see... Ahhh! Let's go, whose lead?

It's going. It's going. Fingies, flares, arm bars, your lead, my lead.... Arghh! A pecker and

*The Southeast face of Vampire Spire, showing 1. The Undead (Childress-Howard, 1999). 2. Sanguin Solution (Darkis-Goodman-Jackson, 1999). 3. The Infusion (Benge-Epperson-Hollenbaugh, 1994). 4. Lair of the White Worm (Darkis-Goodman-Jackson, 1999). BRAD JACKSON*

a blade; damn, we have to aid climb ten feet of the thousands that we've freed. No problem though. Our goal is to go up, so we do.

The sun's angle lowers with the route's. Mike's final block of pitches leads us to a devilish horn of rock protruding from the wall. It's dark. The moon is silenced by the advancing army of clouds. As the wind picks up, the bivy sacks and sardines come out, no sleeping bags of course (just enough to survive Armageddon, remember). Lashed to the horn, we sit inside our sacs.

"Sacremen!" we yell, trying to communicate over the wind's howl. French-Canadian blasphemy comes in handy when trying to laugh through a sleepless night. Armageddon has come.

Morning arrives all too slowly. Hail is now surfing the currents of wind. The bivy sacks are hard to leave, but sitting on our numb butts doesn't entice either. We go! Snow falls; fingers numb. We continue up dihedrals, around corners and over some ice. A bit of gendarme navigation and some ridge-work finally takes us to the summit. It clears, and we get the views. Good God! *Armageddon* (VI 5.11+ A2) has ended. The feeling that comes to mind is flight. Great! Now we have to get off this thing.

JONATHON COPP, *unaffiliated*

*Snowpatch Spire, South Face, First Free Ascent.* With true and conscious minds, Micah Jessup and I entered into the realm of the mighty Bugaboos, bent on exploring new pathways in the vertical world. After brewing in the rain for several days, attending Kain Hut yoga classes and developing bad symptoms of cabin and wet-tent fever, blue finally chased away the white. Several masterpiece routes were climbed following standard early- to mid-afternoon starts, but then ambition reared its dominating head.

"We must challenge ourselves. We must explore. We must go where no one has gone before. We must try the complete South Face of Snowpatch Spire!" Assuming white rock is of the best quality (not so true in the Bugs), and after being blessed by a mountain goat on the approach, Micah drew the first pitch. We could not see an obvious line past the first pitch on the lower half of the face, but... there appeared to be potential.

Micah struggled for a full 55 meters on the first pitch, ignoring the rope drag, runout and little bit of moss. The second pitch had me searching three different options before I cut out right and up an open corner. New England Boy almost needed a puff on his pipe to figure out the third pitch; dropping down and underclinging the blocky roof was not apparent until he was committed. Three more *largos*, only the last of which was obvious, and we plopped onto the mid-way ledge.

Finally, after a full day of route finding up runout and quite featureless rock, we arrived at the start of the Upper South Face, the Tom Gibson and Rob Rohn extravaganza, six pitches directly above where we started. We continued up the upper part of the route the following day. We were surprised at how stout and sustained the Rohn-Gibson is—definitely a masterpiece of the era.

No pins nor bolts were placed, though we certainly wished we had them at the time, and they may be a good idea for any future ascensionists. Grading? On the lower half, Australian 24 with a capital R. Bump up the Rohn-Gibson part to French 7a+ and add an extra pitch to the topo in the guide book.

GUY EDWARDS, *noncorporate and independent*

*Bugaboos, Various Ascents.* On July 6, Todd Offenbacher, Jay Sell, Bob Schultz and Nils Davis arrived at the CMH Lodge. The four of us met Paul Bingham, a British friend of Todd's living in Vancouver, who joined us for the first four days. The group chartered a helicopter and flew in to the west side of the Howsers, a.k.a. the East Creek Basin.

The first afternoon and following day it snowed one foot. The subsequent five days provided incredibly clear and dry weather, allowing two teams of two to complete a significant amount of climbing. Jay Sell and Bobby Schultz scoped and began fixing on a line on the South Howser Minaret between the *Italian Pillar* route and the Southwest Pillar route. We could hardly believe this line had not been done and spent much time studying the guide and the Minaret to discern this possibility. One pitch up, they discovered rap slings and nothing further. Prominent crack systems proved to be bottoming runnels and seams, providing aid climbing up to A2+. They fixed five ropes, at which point they were stopped by weather for approximately four days. The two then juggled to their high point, climbing 600 feet of new ground (in which lay the crux A3 pitch) to join the Southwest Pillar route. They finished on the last three pitches of this route. *Doubting the Millennium* (VI 5.10 A3) is seven new 50- to 60-meter pitches.

Todd and I completed a new line on Pigeonfeather's Southeast (right) Peak in three days of climbing over four days. The route is eight pitches, mostly 60 meters in length, with extremely high-quality rock, cracks and free climbing. *Wide Awake* (V 5.10+ A2) is virtually all clean and would possibly go all free in drier conditions. There was a significant amount of snow and ice on the routes, with water running copiously from the cracks due to the huge amount of precipitation in 1999. The route was characterized by a 220-foot, four-inch crack reminiscent of Indian Creek on the fourth pitch.

Very unstable, cold, wet weather predominated for the latter two weeks of our stay. Todd and I (nearly) completed a new route on the west face of the Central Howser Tower in this poor weather over six days. We encountered moderate free and aid climbing; the route is mostly clean, with three large pendulums and a long section of hooking on the seventh pitch that gave it the A3+ rating. The initial three pitches are comprised of a large corner/chimney system. The main wall is gained on the fourth pitch and with it came exposed, clean, quality aid and free climbing.

We backed off 20 feet from the summit in a blizzard, in the middle of the night, with no bivy gear and one functioning headlamp. *Fear and Desire* (VI 5.10 A3+) is nine 50- to 60-meter pitches.

NILS DAVIS

*Central Howser Tower, West Face, Chocolate Fudge Brownie.* In early August, Brian Webster and I slogged over to the backside of the Howser massif to add another route to the west face of Central Howser Tower. We missed out on the first ascent of this remote and neglected face by one week. Our line begins by climbing the first three pitches of *Fear and Desire* (Offenbacher-Davis, 1999), then, where it doglegs left to gain the center of the wall, our route continues straight up the right-hand pillar. *Chocolate Fudge Brownie* (VI 5.9 A2) climbs nine long pitches of easy aid to reach the south ridge, one pitch from the summit. The main excitement occurred on pitch 5 when I encountered a five-foot by 15-foot "floating flake" precariously pasted to the wall. Not wanting to even breathe on it for fear of scraping both of us off the face, I copperheaded thin seams and riveted blank rock several feet to the right for the route's only A2 section. We named the intimidating feature "The Pillar of Despair, Touch if

You Dare." The route is named for the huge one-foot by one-foot chocolate fudge brownie a baker friend of Brian's gave us. It kept us sugar-buzzed for the whole trip.

SEAN ISAAC, Canada

## CANADIAN ROCKIES

*Canadian Rockies, Various Activity.* The summer of 1999 was a frustrating one in the Canadian Rockies. From sport climbs to big alpine routes, wet rock was the norm through mid-August. The Front Ranges were somewhat dryer and saw the most activity. The Ghost River area continued to be the focus for the development of long rock routes on impeccable limestone, with Andy Genreux and Keith Haberl being the main activists. New route activity in the Ghost encompasses a variety of styles, from bold onsight ground-up ascents to rap-bolting, with the majority of routes being put up on lead with a power drill. This style has yielded some of the finest multi-pitch rock climbs in the Rockies. While the 1999 season saw mostly shorter routes go up, unreported from the summer of 1998 is *The Ardent Heart* (5.10d, 300m) by Haberl, Brian Spear and Ken Wylie, the first route to top out on the impressive formation known as The Prow in the Waiparous Creek area north of the Ghost proper. In the best tradition, it was put up onsight, with all bolts drilled by hand and with Haberl leading the last 5.10 pitch in a downpour.

In the Bow Valley, Raphael Slawinski and Rodger Debeyer made the first free ascent of *Orient Express* (5.11d, 510m), the original 1976 route on the North Face of Ha Ling (formerly known as Chinaman's) Peak above Canmore. Slawinski also teamed up with Eric Dumerac to make the likely first free ascent of *Remembrance Wall* (5.11b, 555m) on the same face. The latter route in particular is highly recommended, offering sustained and varied climbing. Further west, unreported from the summer of 1998 is a 12-pitch route (IV 5.10R) on the Stanley Headwall, put up by Slawinski and Marcus Norman. It is the first route to top out on this impressive rock wall, better known as a destination for hard ice/mixed climbing on routes such as *Nemesis* and *The Day After Les Vacances de Mr. Hulot*.

An extended period of high pressure in late August/early September made up somewhat for the summer that never was. The visiting Salt Lake City climbers Chris Harmston and Seth Shaw timed their road trip perfectly with the weather. They warmed up with a rare ascent of the serious *Above and Beyond* (5.11c R A0, 305m) on Mt. Yamnuska. Moving on to the Icefields Parkway, bolting on-lead with a power drill, they put up the stellar *Salt Point* (5.11+, eight pitches, 400m) on the vast expanse of perfect rock next to the Weeping Wall.

Indian summer also brought some alpine routes into condition. Classic north face routes such as the Greenwood-Locke (V 5.9) on Mt. Temple and the Beckey-Chouinard-Doody (IV 5.7) on Mt. Edith Cavell were climbed, with the latter seeing multiple parties on a single day! In the Columbia Icefields, the *Andromeda Strain* (V M5+ WI4) received at least two ascents by Scott DeCario and partner, and Dumerac and Slawinski. This superb alpine mixed route is now routinely freeclimbed, with the crux 5.9 A1 going at well-protected M5+ drytooling. The short but stout *Sidestreet* (III M6) nearby also received a number of free ascents in the spring and fall (neither route is particularly recommended mid-summer).

Winter seemed to arrive early, and by early October new ice routes were going up in the Front Ranges. However, by the end of the month, unseasonably warm weather descended on the range. With rain falling high up in the alpine, many routes fell down. Several spectacular

lines formed on the 500-meter high face of the East End of Rundle above Canmore. They were attempted, but rapidly melting ice forced retreat before they could be completed.

The 1998-'99 ice climbing season was highlighted by several multi-pitch mixed testpieces going up, the work chiefly of Kefira Allen and the tireless Dave Thomson: *The Real Big Drip* (V M7+ WI6+, 200m) in the Ghost River area, *Nightmare on Wolf Street* (V M7+ WI6+, 185m) on the Stanley Headwall, and *Rocket Man* (V M7+ WI5+, 350m) on Mt. Patterson (home of *Riptide*). (Note that while both alpine and ice routes are given commitment grades denoted by Roman numerals, the two use different scales.) Unfortunately, this season none of these spectacular routes formed up, and no comparable new ones went up. Perhaps it was the initially poor ice conditions that set the tone for the season of 1999-2000, which was marked by an explosion in technical standards, fostered chiefly on short, often bolt-protected, drytooling testpieces. With many locals climbing at a high standard, friendly rivalry led to a frenzy of activity, with routes up to M9+ going up, the work chiefly of Ben Firth, Will Gadd, Sean Isaac and Slawinski.

The skills acquired at the crags were also applied to "traditional" routes. Rob Owens and Patricia Deavoll put up *Stuck in the Middle* (V M7- WI5+, 145m) on the Terminator Wall. After a pitch and a half of sustained mixed climbing, it joins Alex Lowe's *Troubled Dreams* at the crux of that route. This excellent variation received several repeat ascents. Dave Marra and Eamonn Walsh climbed the often-looked-at ice in the gully above *Ice Nine* on Mt. Wilson on the Icefields Parkway to produce *Eh Spring Chicken Named Logan* (V 5.8R WI5, 500m). Also on Mt. Wilson, Cory Balano, Dave Edgar and Marra made a likely first ascent with *Suntori* (VI M6+ A2 WI6), spending two nights out on the route. Linking ice smears and mixed gullies, *Suntori* gains 1500 meters in elevation to top out on spectacular white quartzite towers. Edgar and Marra also put up *The Ice Cream Man* and *The One-Eyed Kid* (V 5.9R WI5+, 500m), a long route in a big setting on the east side of Mt. Stephen near Field.

In April, Blanchard, Steve House and Joe Josephson made another attempt on a new line on the Emperor Face of Mt. Robson. Described as "the big daddy of faces in the Rockies" by Sean Dougherty, author of *Selected Alpine Climbs*, the Emperor Face has only two established routes, the Logan-Stump (1978) and the Cheesmond-Dick (1981), neither of which has been repeated. They reached a point some five pitches below the *Emperor Ridge* before being forced down by a storm. Their previous attempt three years ago was cut short at the same point when they dropped the pump to their stove. After coming down, Blanchard and House attempted the rarely climbed *Sphinx Face* on the northeast side of Mt. Temple, but bad weather once again shut them down.

On the solo front, the prolific Guy Lacelle enchainned the *Weeping Pillar* (V WI6, 315m) and *Polar Circus* (V WI5, 700m) on one of the shortest days of the year. Mike Verwey later duplicated this feat. *Slipstream* (VI WI4+) remained a popular solo objective, but lived up to its reputation with hazards ranging from cornice fall on the route to crevasse danger on the descent.

Two ice routes with a big reputation came in unusually thick this season and received numerous ascents: *Riptide* (V WI5+, 200m) sported only short sections of its trademark "weirdness" and was nowhere near its original grade of WI6+/7 R. Similarly, *Gimme Shelter* (VI WI5+, 300m) has yet to be repeated in the thin conditions of the first ascent. Nevertheless, the sustained vertical ice and dangerous serac barrier overhanging the route made it an exciting outing. Most parties climbed the waterice in several hours and rappelled from below the seracs, but near the end of the season Dumerac and Sean King, after a comfortable bivy in a sheltered cave several pitches up, continued over the seracs in another four pitches, including a difficult pitch on glacier ice.



*Howse Peak, East Face, M-16.* On March 23-27, Barry Blanchard, Scott Backes and I climbed a new route that follows the exciting-looking ice formations on the east face of Howse Peak in Alberta, Canada. The route consisted of about 15 pitches and we ended at the top of a striking couloir, some distance below and to the south of the summit.

The adventure began with a three-hour ski approach. We soloed up about 1,000 feet of steep snow and easy ice to the base of the first difficulty, a WI6 pitch that Scott led. This pitch introduced us to the unique brand of "snow-ice" that we would find on much of the face. This material, while fairly good for climbing, was bad for protection and anchors, which caused us to use rock gear almost exclusively throughout the climb. We climbed some fourth-class snow and ice to the base of a WI7 pitch that spindrift erosion had left overhanging and concave. The first night was spent in a narrow, two-pronged snow cave of the "torpedo tube" variety that Barry, Joe Josephson and I had perfected three years earlier on Robson.

The second day we climbed only five pitches, of which one was very difficult. I led that pitch in three and a half hours. It consisted of an easy mixed traverse to a very narrow, thin, steep and delicate ice runnel with reasonable rock gear every ten feet or so. We bivouacked in a second, somewhat longer torpedo tube two pitches above that crux.

The next day it was snowing considerably and the face was running with spindrift all day. We waited it out in the cave. The morning of the fourth day we saw stars at 6 a.m., but by the time we were out of the cave at 8 it was snowing and avalanching again. After a brief trip back into the cave to discuss options and eat the last of the food, we decided to go for it with minimal gear because we knew the major technical challenges were behind us. The weather improved briefly and Scott led the incredibly spectacular "Peruvian Traverse," which climbed horizontally for 800 feet in and out of snow runnels and ridges. The traverse ended above the couloir that George Lowe had incorporated into his variation of the Northeast Ridge some 30 years earlier. We rappelled into the "Lowe Couloir" and left a rope fixed there for our return. We then climbed approximately five pitches of entrancingly beautiful grade 2 and 3 ice to the top of the couloir.

The exit from the couloir was blocked by a large cornice, but a traverse out and under it looked feasible. After some discussion of whether to exit the face and traverse the peak, or reverse the route with rappelling, we decided to rappel. We quickly made eight or ten 100-foot rappels and, combined with some down climbing, regained our fixed rope. During this descent we heard a helicopter, and with Barry's VHF radio we were able to talk to the park wardens, who had been concerned about us being on the face during such weather. We assured them we were OK and on our way down.

After Scott re-led the Peruvian Traverse in reverse, we were on our last rappel to the snow cave when the hazard caught up to us. Scott was inside the snowcave and I had just arrived and called "off rappel" when a cornice or snow mushroom from the face collapsed and hit Barry. Barry was clipped into a screw in the snow-ice, which was tied to a piton driven just underneath a small overhang. When Barry was hit with the snow blocks, the ice screw pulled out and he was swung below the piton. This probably saved his life, since more snow came down and continued to work him over. He lost his pack and had snow forced into all the openings in his clothing as he got repeatedly pummeled. It took me some time after the snow had subsided before I contacted Barry. He slowly rappelled down under his own power. When he arrived at the cave he was quite shocked, sore and scared. Inside the cave he got into a sleeping bag with Scott and a hot water bottle, which I used the last of our fuel to make. After an hour, we were able to ascertain that his injuries were in fact mostly minor, with his chief



*The east face of Howse Peak, showing M-16 (Blanchard-House-Backes, 1999). STEVE HOUSE*

complaint being a sore and unflexing right knee.

The next morning the storm had subsided and we began our rappels at first light. I led first, Barry came second with help from Scott and Scott rappelled last. Sometime during the first rappels, Barry called the park wardens on his radio to ask for assistance on the trip from the base of the face to the car, a distance of six miles in variable snow conditions. By late morning we had gained the lower part of the face when we heard the helicopter approach. Barry's radio was no longer working properly because it had become wet during his accident. We had no way to communicate with them and a park warden named Mark was soon getting slung onto the face. When he came in, we clipped him to our final rappel anchor, a spare pick driven behind a flake. Solid, but unconventional. Mark assumed that we all wanted to go out but upon explaining the situation to him, we decided it was best for him just to take Barry out and allow Scott and me to continue under our own power to the roadhead, which is what we did.

That day was not without significance as it was also Barry's 40th birthday and his wife Catherine had planned a wonderful party with nearly 100 people in attendance.

We named the route *M-16* in reference to its difficulty and seriousness and in allusion to Barry's experience of being "under the gun," and also partially in objection to the "new" sport of mixed climbing on bolted crag routes, which alpinists have been doing for centuries, just not at the crags and without the bolts.

STEVE HOUSE

## BAFFIN ISLAND

## Stewart Valley

*The Citadel, The Endless Day.* Mike "Twid" Turner, Louise Thomas, Jerry Gore and Shaun Hutson made the first ascent of "The Citadel" in Stewart Valley via their 900-meter route, *The Endless Day*. (The climbers note that the peak may already have an official name.) The climbers were gobsmacked at the potential of the arctic valley; all members thought it was as impressive as Yosemite. The 25-pitch route was climbed in some of the worst weather the team had experienced anywhere else in the world. The climb took from midway through May to the middle of June. After fixing 500 meters of rope, the team moved up in capsule style to establish a hanging portaledge camp at half-height. Eight nights were spent living in portaledges during freezing conditions; it snowed most days. From the portaledges, the team climbed up an impressive corner to the summit of The Citadel. Fate was on the team's side: as they climbed over the top of this impressive wall, the clouds cleared and the sun came out. The breath-taking view rounded off a very successful expedition. The final push took a 36-hour day to climb to the summit and return to the camp. The endless light of the arctic allowed sun on the wall from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. This was the first all-British team to make a new route in the frozen fjords of Baffin's east coast.

MIKE "TWID" TURNER, *Wales*

## Scott Island

*Ship's Prow, Solo Ascent.* From April 23-June 3, Mike Libeck made the first ascent of the north face of the overhanging Ship's Prow via *The Hinayana* (VI 5.8 A3+, 600m). An account of his solitary adventure can be found earlier in this journal.

*Scott Island, Ascent and Attempts.* Three of us arrived in Clyde River on a Monday afternoon and waited two days for one member (the first to leave) to feel up to the trek. We left Clyde with two snowmobiles and komatiks. About ten hours later, we arrived at a hunter's cabin on the Clark Inlet, across from Scott Island (or Piliktua, as the Inuit call it). The view from here is great, but belies the distance between the formations quite well. There are about ten peaks in the area with 3,000- to 4,000-foot walls boasting natural lines. Many more peaks have stunning 2,000- to 3,000-foot walls. Most of the formations in the area require some form of alpine approach.

We decided on a 4,000-foot south face of a formation on the east shore of the mouth of Clark's Fjord that faces the widest section of the Clark Inlet. After we set up camp, a small storm blew through and the first member of the expedition left with the guides when they returned to Clyde.

We spent several days scoping the wall, trying to pick out the easiest way through the mixed-up lower section to the spectacular overhanging pillar above. We opted for the more stable left-trending ramps that led through the "Airplane," then back right to the main wall under the pillar. After I led two climbing days and fixed 400 meters of rope to the beginning of the rock climbing, my partner said he did not want to continue. We cleaned the ropes as we retreated, leaving the anchors in place.

After some rest days, we summited "Lone Wolf Point" (named for a wolf that visited our camp) on April 29 via a 600-meter couloir topped with 2,000-foot-plus vert of second-class talus on the peak's western flanks. I built an Inukshuk (a large cairn) on the summit. In the following days we decided that we should pick a smaller objective. The guides were not able to move us for a week, so we decided to start a route on the formation's west buttress. We finished two pitches on the fantastic white granite before Qulliklut guides moved us ten kilometers to Piliktua's 2,000-foot formations. We set up camp below the wild geology of the 1,800-foot "Raven," which we named for a couple of ravens that roosted on the formation. After I led the first two pitches in three climbing days, my second partner felt he couldn't go on. We had been there three weeks and had started three routes. I was determined to complete a route with or without a partner. I decided to stay and solo my route.

I hauled all my rack and ropes to the high point and continued to about 750 feet (four pitches) before taking to the wall. I continued up the wall to a high point of 1,600 feet before losing momentum and my psyche. After ten days of living on the wall, I retreated, fixing 460 meters of static line back to the ice. The route is currently rated 5.7 A3, with the difficult aid involving many thin pins on an exfoliated and expanding headwall at the high point.

JON FOX

## Gibbs Fjord

*Jushua Tower, Zen and the Art of Leadership.* On May 14, Steph Davis, Brandon Kannier and I arrived in the small village of Clyde River. The next three days were spent traveling by snowmobile with Jushua (our Inuit guide) across the six-foot-thick frozen ocean to the Gibbs Fjord. We estimated our objective to be more than 2,500 feet tall; it sported many large roofs and a sizable ledge a quarter of the way up with snow on it.

The journey began with 600 feet of moderate free and aid climbing. From a big ledge, I led a 60-meter A1 pitch that landed us on a small snow- and rubble-strewn shelf. This ledge would become Camp I as we committed to a capsule-style ascent. From the small snow ledge, Steph led a very loose and dangerous free pitch (5.11) that ended under a small roof. Over the next four days we aided and free climbed through small roofs and thin knifeblade cracks. Snow, strong winds and very cold temperatures were our constant companions for the 22 days that we spent on the wall. Day 6 was spent hauling our massive amounts of water, gear, food and living quarters 800 feet to CII. From CII, Steph gracefully floated up a very steep and difficult face climb with tricky and marginal protection. On the next pitch, we encountered some of the infamous red loose rock for which Baffin is known.

With only 600 feet of rope fixed, we moved home again to establish CIII. On the next pitch above CIII, Brandon had the wretched luck of blank rock. Steph and I agreed this would be a good day to polish off the rest of the whiskey. Sixteen hours later and only 100 feet of vertical gain, Brandon at last arrived at a feature. He was so exhausted from drilling that he called it a day, drilled some more for the anchor and rappelled back home.

By day 14 everyone was beginning to feel the effect of a poor diet, lack of drinking water and uncomfortable sleeping conditions. Brandon and Steph ascended a short 40-foot pitch to a large ledge. From the ledge, the wall was severely overhanging and sported a large thin flake in the center and a very thin corner on the right. With a big ledge below, this pitch definitely looked like hard aid. I was forced to climb the overhanging A4 head seam with a busted chisel.

The following day we moved the camp; we were now 2,500 feet up the wall. The next

pitch saw Steph free and aid climbing through large roofs and even larger chimneys. The next day, Brandon and I ate a quick breakfast, jumared up and I began my lead. Three hours later I was yelling with joy to be on the summit. When Brandon and Steph arrived, we hiked the 300 yards to the true summit. Once there, we broke out the cigars and began flying the kite that we had hauled up this 2,700-foot cliff. Brandon rappelled back down to the portaledge while Steph and I cleaned the fixed ropes. After a long sleep we got up and organized the 18 rappels back to the sea ice. Eighteen hours later we were at last down on the scree ledge. We called the route *Zen and the Art of Leadership* (VI 5.11 A4).

With six days still left before pick-up, we took a hike to some surrounding walls and relaxed around camp. On our 35th day in the Gibbs fjord, our Inuit guide arrived. On the ride out, one of my Baffin dreams came true. I saw a polar bear. Jushua said it wasn't a large bear, but it was quite impressive in my eyes.

RUSSEL MITROVICH, *unaffiliated*

## NEWFOUNDLAND

*Blow Me Down Provincial Park, Ice Routes.* On January 1, Arthur Haines and I took the ferry to Port-aux-Basques, Newfoundland. Our plan was to climb ice routes rumored to be located above the large inland fjords within Gros Morne National Park. However, severe weather and poor snow conditions prevented us from reaching this area. Instead, we concentrated our efforts around the city of Cornerbrook. On January 3, we climbed a 1,000-foot snow-and-ice route (WI4) located in Blow Me Down Provincial Park. This area lived up to its name with gusts up to 70 m.p.h. and temperatures in the teens.

On January 5, we followed the north side of the Humber River to the base of a large cliff called The Old Man. We climbed a steep ice flow that splits the cliff (WI 5-) for 500 feet. Temperatures rose to 45° F and a strong southern wind blew the melt water up the flow, making for poor visibility and extremely wet climbing. We climbed several shorter flows to the west of Marble Mountain Ski Area on January 5-6.

Although we found no evidence these routes have been climbed, they are the most striking lines and I'm sure, because there are ice climbers living in the area, they have been climbed. I did not find any record of ice climbing in Newfoundland in any of the *AAJ* or some *CAJs* I looked through, but I know climbers have visited the area. Overall, this area has a fair amount of easily accessible ice; however, climbing later in the season would provide longer days and potentially better ice conditions.

DAVE ANDERSON

## GREENLAND

### ROOSEVELT RANGE

#### J. V. Jensen Land

*Avanarsuasua, Exploration.* Our exploration of extreme north Greenland continued in July. Our interests were once again broadly based. Dr. Ko deKorte and Peter Baldwin completed