

# CLIMBS AND EXPEDITIONS

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## 2003

*Accounts from the various climbs and expeditions of the world are listed geographically from north to south and from west to east within the noted countries. We begin our coverage with the Contiguous United States and move to Alaska in order for the climbs in the Alaska's Wrangell Mountains to segue into the St. Elias climbs in Canada.*

*We encourage all climbers to submit accounts of notable activity, especially long new routes (generally defined as U.S. commitment Grade IV—full-day climbs—or longer). Please submit reports as early as possible (see Submissions Guidelines at the back of this Journal).*

*For conversions of meters to feet, multiply by 3.28; for feet to meters, multiply by 0.30.*

**Unless otherwise noted, all reports are from the 2002 calendar year.**

## NORTH AMERICA

### CONTIGUOUS UNITED STATES

#### *Washington*

*Washington climbing, trends and new routes.* In recent years alpine climbing in the Washington Cascades has become less exploratory. First ascents are still being made but less frequently. However, speed ascents and enchainments have become more popular. Many climbs traditionally done over two to three days are now often climbed in under 12 hours. Speed ascents, as well as other activities, have focused on well-documented classics with easy access. “Select” and “Classic” guidebooks have concentrated crowds on certain routes, while other routes are ignored. Also, the amount of “beta,” including route conditions and gear suggestions, that is available for classic climbs has increased dramatically, partially due to the popular website [www.Cascadeclimbers.com](http://www.Cascadeclimbers.com).

Other trends have resulted from increased Forest Service and Park Service control of access, for instance by permit requirements for areas such as Boston Basin, The Enchantments, Mt. Baker, Mt. Rainier, Mt. St. Helens, and Mt. Adams. Furthermore, Mt. Rainier National Park doubled its climbing permit fee to \$30 per person, though the permit is now valid for the calendar year. The Fee Demonstration Program has been increasingly enforced by the Forest Service within Wenatchee, Mt. Baker, and Snoqualmie national forests.

In addition to the individual new-route reports below, the following shorter new routes have been recently established.

On July 19–20 Jens Klubberud and Loren Campbell established a route (12 pitches, III+ 5.6, glacier travel) on the northeast face of Mt. Formidable. The route leaves the Formidable Glacier at the lowest point where the face meets the glacier, on the right side of the face. It goes up for two dirty pitches before traversing left and up on ledge systems, into a delightful, hidden, firn couloir. The couloir, steeper than 50° at the top, leads up and farther left, to a point more or less directly below the summit. In six more pitches the route joins the North Ridge, just short of the summit. While the technical crux is on the ninth pitch, the first two pitches offer challenging climbing on dirty, loose rock, with few protection opportunities.

During summer 2001 a new II+ 5.9 route was climbed on the west face of Lichtenberg Mountain by James Nakagami, Dan Cappellini, and Ray Borbon. The climb began below a headwall shaped like Idaho, just left of a gully. After five 5th class pitches that link cracks systems, the route joined the Northwest Ridge, which was scrambled to the summit. Descent was made by a gully to the south.

Also in 2001 Larry Goldie and Scott Johnston established a route on Goat Wall above Mazama. It is a bolted route, established in full siege style. The eight-pitch route begins 500' left of Bryan Burdo's classic Promised Land, near the base of a prominent buttress.

On September 26, 2000 Tim Kelley and Gordy Skoog approached the toe of the north face rib of McAlester Mountain via the northwest talus fields. They made a new route (II, class 5) that starts left of the North Face Rib route on class 4 slabs and permanent snow, then goes up a loose gully and right on a slanting ramp to the North Face Rib. From there they climbed arrow-straight to the summit on good rock.

GORDY SKOOG, AAC, and COLIN HALEY, AAC

*Silver Star Mountain, Gato Negro.* On June 21, 2001 Larry Goldie and Scott Johnston, both of Mazama, WA, established a probable new route on the west face of Silver Star Mountain near Washington Pass in the North Cascades. The climb follows the line of weakness on a spire, named "Whine Spire" by the pair, that is separated from, and lower than, the true west summit of Silver Star, and south of, but adjacent to, the Wine Spires. Using the climbers' trail that leads from Highway 20 to Burgundy Col, the pair left the road at 5 a.m. and returned at 10 p.m. Of the 11 pitches climbed, five or six are outstanding 5.7–5.9 hand cracks. The crux fourth pitch involves a wonderful, but poorly protected, 5.8 chimney, a hard 5.9 offwidth, and is topped by a vicious overhanging 5.10+ double corner. A few other 5.10 pitches should entertain most parties. The route was climbed onsight and clean. Descent was by rappel and downclimbing in the gully between Whine Spire and the west summit of Silver Star. In the spirit of the Wine Spires the climb was called Gato Negro, rated IV 5.10+.

SCOTT JOHNSTON

*Sloan Peak, Northwest Buttress.* In late September 2000 Mike Preiss and I completed what we suspect is a new route on Sloan Peak. The Northwest Buttress (IV 5.8 A0) starts at the lowest rock on the far left side of the broad west face and ascends the dark buttress to one-third of its height. We found rap slings to the top of the seventh pitch, but no other human sign until we met the north ridge. The first pitch climbs just right of the sharp crest, then crosses the crest past a dead tree. Pitches two to four climb through trees to a gully topped with large chockstones

and finish at a detached pillar. Climb behind the pillar to a tree ledge and traverse right (unpleasant) until you can climb broken rock to the top of the lower buttress, a good bivy site. Climb a short rotten step and head slightly left onto the northern face. Two pitches of easy rock and heather lead to a nice chimney (5.8). Above the chimney, traverse to the right skyline on a narrow heather bench with an inspiring view down the vertical to overhanging section of the west wall. Climb left past a roof and blocks, then up a clean crack to a mantle onto a small, sandy shelf (5.8 and French free) to easier ground (fixed pin just above clean crack). From here we made a rising right traverse to more mid-5th class rock, with a 5.8 exit. Follow gullies and ribs to the north ridge, 200 vertical feet from the summit. We rapped and downclimbed the southwest ridge. A fast party that had the descent dialed could probably complete the route car-to-car in a very long day (we bivied once on the route). On the enjoyable 1,000m buttress we belayed 17 pitches on mostly good rock, with lots of running belays. Our rack included 8–10 wires and cams to 3.5"; pins are not needed.

MARK BUNKER, AAC

*Mount Index, North Norwegian Buttress, Voodoo Proj.* Over five days in mid-July Blair Williams, with William Tharpe, Todd Karner, and me, added a steep new route to the North Norwegian Buttress. Voodoo Proj starts 100 yards to the right of the Doorish Route and joins it at the top of the buttress, after eight new pitches. After having difficulties with the moat, we began the first pitch with a green Alien and continued with beaks and RURPs for 100' to the left side of a large, sloping ledge. This pitch combined aid with free climbing up to 5.8. The following day Blair traversed the sloping ledge for 30' before climbing a 10' head-and-beak seam. He then followed a left-leaning expanding crack, requiring blades, arrows, and beaks, before finishing the rope-stretching pitch with an A1 roof. While cleaning this, the crux, pitch, the second removed every piece before the A1 roof with one or two moderate yanks. The third pitch started with runout 5.10 on bad gear, before gaining a 120' dirty seam requiring multiple heads, hooks, and the occasional tied-off baby angle. It ended at a two-bolt belay below a large roof. Determined to minimize drilling, and acting against my recommendation, Blair started up the fourth pitch using a combination of offsets, blades, and arrows. An offset blew 10 feet up, and Blair fell 20' before stopping, upside-down, below the portaledge. Having gained his senses in the fall, he drilled three rivets to bypass loose blocks in the roof and continued for another 100' of moderate nailing. At this point, because of time constraints, Bill, Todd, and I had to rappel, but left Blair a luxurious portaledge camp two pitches below. Over the next three days Blair climbed the remaining four pitches solo, encountering moderate to difficult nailing. The eighth and last pitch, on which he placed two rivets, followed a 20' discontinuous crack to a large brow, and then traversed downward 100' to where he established a bolted belay parallel to the anchors on pitch seven. With threatening skies, Blair opted to airmail all but the portaledge and hardware to the snowfield above Lake Serene. He made four 60m rappels and reached the bergschrund in time to begin the long journey back to the car in a typical Northwest rainstorm. Blair and I feel that Voodoo Proj (VI 5.10R A4) provided some of the most challenging and interesting big-wall climbing we have found in the Cascades.

ROGER STRONG

## California

### YOSEMITE VALLEY

*Yosemite Valley, various activity.* While it has not been on the free-climbing cutting edge for decades, Yosemite still ranks as the world's premier big-wall arena. With new lines a rarity, this lately has meant hard free-climbing on the massive walls of El Capitan and other formations, while Hans Florine and others keep the speed-climbing flame alive as well.

Tommy Caldwell returned to the Salathé Wall this year, perhaps to prove to himself that his loss of an index finger is no drawback to his aspirations. Caldwell, who free-climbed the Free Salathé Lite\* in 1999, returned to tick the first one-day free ascent. Climbing with wife Beth Rodden, Caldwell scaled the wall in only 19 hours. In 1998 Alexander Huber climbed Free Rider (another variation to the Free Salathé Lite, it avoids the 5.13 headwall pitches) in a day. These two ascents, and Lynn Hill's 1994 ascent of the Nose, were the only one-day free-climbs of a major El Cap route. (The West Face and East Buttress routes don't count as major.) That soon changed.

Dean Potter continues to redefine what's possible in a day. He, with Timmy O'Neill, had linked Half Dome, Mt. Watkins, and El Capitan in a day. The speed demon has now turned to free-climbing walls, but with his characteristic endurance twist. Not content to merely be one of the "El Cap Free In A Day" crowd, Potter freed the Regular Northwest Face of Half Dome (23 pitches, 5.12a), apparently via a variation (whether a new variation, the Higbee Hedral variation, or the Huber Hedral variation is unclear) and followed it with a free lead of Free Rider (34 pitches, 5.13a), all in 23 hours, 23 minutes. He freed the crux pitch of Free Rider at night, wearing five headlamps in order to see the holds. After this ascent he said his immediate goal was to "concentrate on becoming a better free climber."

While Potter was busy with 24-hour free-climbs, Hans Florine continued to focus on speed. He welcomed the competition from Potter and O'Neill, who climbed the 34-pitch Nose in a blistering 3:24 in October 2001. The 38-year-old Florine devised a new strategy. In the past, speed records had been set by leading the route in four or more blocks. Florine now set off to do the route as one continuous pitch, and he partnered with Japanese speed demon Yuji Hirayama. Hirayama led the route as one pitch, pulling up gear on a 40-foot, 5mm cord. Of the 3000' of climbing, all but 400' were simul-climbed, the 400' being short-fixed. The pair regrouped once, after the King Swing. Remarkably, the route was devoid of other parties, and the pair turned in the jaw-dropping time of 2:48. Florine says this record might last another ten years; his 4:22 record set with Peter Croft in 1993 stood for nine years before broken by Potter and O'Neill.

Hirayama's visit to Yosemite enhanced his reputation as the best crack climber in the world. Prior to his Nose record, Yuji climbed the Free Salathé Lite in 13 hours. Showing a mastery of the route and no apparent tendency to get pumped, Hirayama turned five pitches into two. He said his goal was to climb from ledge to ledge, without hanging belays; he considers this the purest style for free ascents. First, he linked Sous le Toit ledge to the stance over the Salathé Roof, a section normally done as three pitches (5.11b, 5.12b, and 5.12a). Hirayama then climbed in one pitch the 70m headwall, normally two 5.13b pitches and originally done as three by Skinner and Piana.

The Salathé and Nose records are now so fast that 5.13 free-climbing skills are required to even get close. Hirayama and Jim Herson, the only persons to redpoint every pitch on the Free Salathé (as opposed to the Free Salathé Lite) and the holder of the Salathé and Half Dome records, lead the Salathé and the Nose sans aiders, since they can French-free the most difficult sections, even Harding's overhanging bolt ladder.

Ammon McNeely solidified his position as one of the Valley's elite speed climbers with three records, each with different partners. With Chris Van Luevan and Eric Walden he did the first one-day ascent of Born Under a Bad Sign (VI 5.10 A5). They completed the sixth ascent in 22:22. With Flyin' Brian McCray, McNeely blasted up New Jersey Turnpike (VI 5.8 A5) in 14 hours. Finally, with Cedar Wright he climbed the Tangerine Trip (VI 5.8 A2+) in 10:24.

Nick Martino capped an excellent season of speed ascents with a new record on the South Face of Washington Column: he and Matt Wilder climbed the 12-pitch route in 1:19. This Column record, like the Nose and the Salathé records, can be attributed to free-climbing. Wilder had recently pulled off the first free ascent of the South Face, a popular route frequently done as a climber's first wall. The route is moderate free-climbing, save for the three pitches above Dinner Ledge. Wilder's crux was the Kor Roof, which he rated as a boulder problem. His rating of V10/V11 translates to the first pitch rated 5.14 on a Yosemite wall route, though the two crux pitches on the Nose could well be 5.14. Wilder broke the next, long, left-angling aid pitch into two, using a no-hands stance for the belay. These went at 5.12c and 5.12a. The Stopper Pitch, which sucks up stoppers when being aided, went at 5.12b. Because he had waited at the Kor Roof for an ideal temperature, Wilder led the Stopper Pitch in the dark with a headlamp. His next project was to try to free the West Buttress of El Capitan. He has not yet pulled it off, but he believes the great traverse pitch will be 5.14a when free.

Washington Column was also the site of two new free routes. The outstanding new route put up in 2002 was Rob Miller's all-free Quantum Mechanic. This traditionally protected crack climb is just right of Astroman and perhaps a new-wave alternative for top crack climbers. The crux pitch is 5.13a, but the route sports a handful of 5.12 pitches as well. In October Hirayama nabbed the second ascent, onsighting it.

Alexander Huber pieced together Crosstown Traffic (5.13a) on Washington Column. This route connects parts of the Prow, Electric Ladyland, Afroman, and Astroman. After an earlier aid ascent Huber,



Jacek Czyz on the fifth pitch of Quo Vadis, El Capitan.  
Szczepon Glogowski

with Ben van der Klooster, redpointed every pitch on May 24. With Scott Franklin, Huber freed Half Dome, via a new variation to the Regular Northwest Face route that he calls the Huber Hedral. This a one-pitch variation to the Ericson–Higbee free variation is said to provide cleaner climbing.

Speed climbing aficionado Cedar Wright also directed his talents at free climbing new and existing routes. With Jake Whittaker, Wright freed the Psychedelic Wall on the north face of Sentinel Rock at 5.12c. The route sports three 5.12 pitches. Also on Sentinel, Wright teamed with Jose Pereyra for the first ascent of the Uncertainly Principle (V 5.13a). Wright also freed a new route on Higher Cathedral Rock's north face. The 1,000' route's most striking feature is the 50' Gravity Ceiling (5.13a), believed to be the biggest roof free climbed in Yosemite.

Jacqueline Florine, Hans' wife, became the first woman to solo the Nose, with her June 17–21 ascent. Bev Johnson was the first woman to solo El Capitan, via the Dihedral Wall route, in 1978.

On September 14 Hans Florine teamed with Steve Gerberding to climb the Dihedral Wall, hammerless, in a record time of 14:06. This was the 100th ascent of El Capitan for each but the first time the two had climbed together.

Jim Beyer put up a new aid route that is a candidate for the “hardest route on El Cap.” Dubbed Martyr's Brigade (5.11 a5cR—his own twist on the rating system), the line was put up over 20+ days of stormy weather. The line is located near the North American Wall, between Reticent Wall and Space. One of the radical aid moves involved using an ice axe, taped to a long stick-clip, to blindly hook a block 20 feet away. In *Alpinist* magazine (Issue 1) Beyer wrote, “I drilled a lot of bolts, but chopped about an equal number on surrounding routes. Creating hard pitches, destroying pathetic bolt ladders (Early Morning Light)—it seemed to balance out in the end.”

We also lack details on a new free route called Gates of Delirium, a 19-pitch 5.12c route on the right side of Ribbon Falls. After the opening 5.12c pitch the route is mostly 5.10 and 5.11 cracks and is supposedly of Astroman quality. The first 10 pitches are in one spectacular dihedral, and the route is equipped so that it can be rappelled from the top of this corner.

On Yosemite Falls Wall, Eric Kohl soloed a new route, called Reign in Blood, over five days in late August. The route follows the Falls' fall line and tops out in the Falls' notch. Needless to say, the climb is only possible when the Falls are dry, preferably when no rain is expected. Continuing the trend of meaningless ratings, Kohl rated the route PDK: Pretty Damn Klaus (Kohl's nickname is Klaus).

Finally Jacek Czyz finished Quo Vadis (VI 5.9 A4/A4+) during the night of November 20. The 22-pitch route, located near the Muir Wall and the Dorn Direct, has 16 new pitches.

*\*Please note: “Free climbing” the Salathé Wall is more complex than it first seems. As with many of the big-wall routes on El Cap, significant variations are used to free-climb the route, and not every climber takes the same path. The different variations are explained at [www.wwwright.com/climbing/?report=news/FreeingBigWalls.htm](http://www.wwwright.com/climbing/?report=news/FreeingBigWalls.htm).*

BILL WRIGHT, *Satan's Minions Scrambling Club*, AAC

*El Capitan, Quo Vadis.* During the night of November 20–21 Jacek Czyz, solo, finished Quo Vadis (VI 5.9 A4/A4+), a new route near the Muir Wall and the Dorn Direct, with which it shares a couple of pitches, and left of the Nose. Of the 22 pitches, 16 entered new terrain. Four



pitches are rated A4/A4+. The sixth pitch is the crux, involving about 30' on skyhooks and a 15' pendulum to a crack climbed with RURPs and copperheads. A further 13 or 14 pitches are A3. The climb took 25 days, and Czyz's return to the base of the wall took two additional days of rappelling. He left 40 bolts, 30 as belay anchors, and used 40 rivets. Jacek Czyz is a Polish climber residing in Chicago and an AAC member. He has climbed El Cap 16 times, including solo ascents of the Reticent Wall and Zanyatta Mondatta.

WLADYSLAW JANOWSKI

*Salathé, one-day free ascents.* In December 2001 I was in a hospital bed after severing my left index finger in a home-remodeling accident. The digit had been reattached but wasn't looking good. There were stitches and pins protruding through the skin here and there, and the surgery point was swollen to the size of a golf ball. There had been a constant drip of blood from the end of my finger for two weeks, causing me to lose over half of my blood.

During my time in the hospital I did a lot of thinking. Some of the time my mind was full of doubt about whether I would ever again be able to climb near my previous potential. But as the days went on, something else grew inside me. I realized how much climbing meant to me and how I wanted to be as much a part of it as possible. I felt driven as I had never felt before. I decided not to let this injury slow me down.

In March my fiancée Beth Rodden and I headed to Yosemite. I had decided that the Salathé, free in a day, would be the first big test of my recovery. On May 15, after a few warm-up climbs, we started up the Salathé. The lower part of the route went fast, and at 3 p.m. we were approaching the headwall and the hardest pitch.

The first headwall pitch is one of the most beautiful I have seen. It is 180' long, overhanging, and shockingly exposed. As I climbed my forearms swelled. Fifteen feet from the top I stopped and tried to recover, placed my one remaining piece and furiously shook one arm at a time, trying to relieve my pump. If I fell here, that would be the end of my energy, and I would have to accept defeat. I jammed my fingertips as hard as I could and pulled the last few moves to the anchor. A few hours later we were on top. We arrived just as the sun set. It was a huge victory for me. I knew I had overcome my injury.

A few weeks later Yuji Hirayama arrived in the Valley, also to free-climb the Salathé in a day. During one week he tried the route twice. Although he came close, a complete free ascent eluded him. In September he returned with a bigger goal: to combine some of the crux pitches, thereby eliminating all hanging belays except one at the lip of the headwall roof. He succeeded on his second try, in 13 hours and 20 gigantic pitches. Yuji's style bumped the grade of the hardest pitch from 5.13b to 5.13d. It was a truly proud ascent.

TOMMY CALDWELL, AAC

*El Capitan, The Nose, speed record.* Events leading up to the record speed ascent of the Nose in 2 hours and 48 minutes: September 2001, Hans Florine and Tommy Caldwell climb the Nose in 4:31. They miss the nine-year-old record of 4:22 by only nine minutes. Mid-October 2001, Timmy O'Neill and Dean Potter climb the Nose in 3:59, breaking the record. Later in October 2001, Jim Herson and Florine climb it in 3:57. November 1, 2001, O'Neill and Potter set a blazing time of 3:24.

In June 2002 Yuji Hirayama came to Yosemite to work on hard, long free-climbing routes. With his partner Tamotsu he twice ran up the Nose for training, once in nine hours, once in seven hours and change. Yuji and Florine tried to hook up for an attempt at the Nose record, but Yuji's focus on free-climbing the Salathé in a day had priority. Hans and Yuji had climbed the Nose twice together in 1997, to explore the free climbing possibilities; they did it with a bivvy both times.

In September 2002 Yuji returned to Yosemite with plans for more long free climbs and to give the Nose speed record a go with Hans. On September 23 they ran up the route in 3:27, passing seven parties. Having missed the record by only three minutes, plus having to pass all those parties, the two thought it would be well worth their time to give it another whirl. Time allowed on September 29, and the two raced up the route in 2 hours, 48 minutes, and 30 seconds. No other parties were on the route. On both of these ascents, Yuji led the entire route. It was thought this method was best, as trading leaders mid-route would cause a lull. On their first go they made it to Sickle Ledge, four pitches up, in 19 minutes. On their second go they made Sickle Ledge in 16 minutes. On their first go they made Camp 4 in 1:52, on their second go in 1:28.

HANS FLORINE, AAC

*Free climbing.* Yosemite 2002 was the setting for what I can only call a dream season. In the spring Jake Whittaker and I freed the Psychedelic Wall on Sentinel Rock—solid 5.12. This route was first ascended by Boche and Hennek in 1966. Memorable sections include a 5.12c sloper crack traverse, a 12c slab boulder problem, and a 12' roof that goes from squeeze to offwidth to fists to hands to fingers.

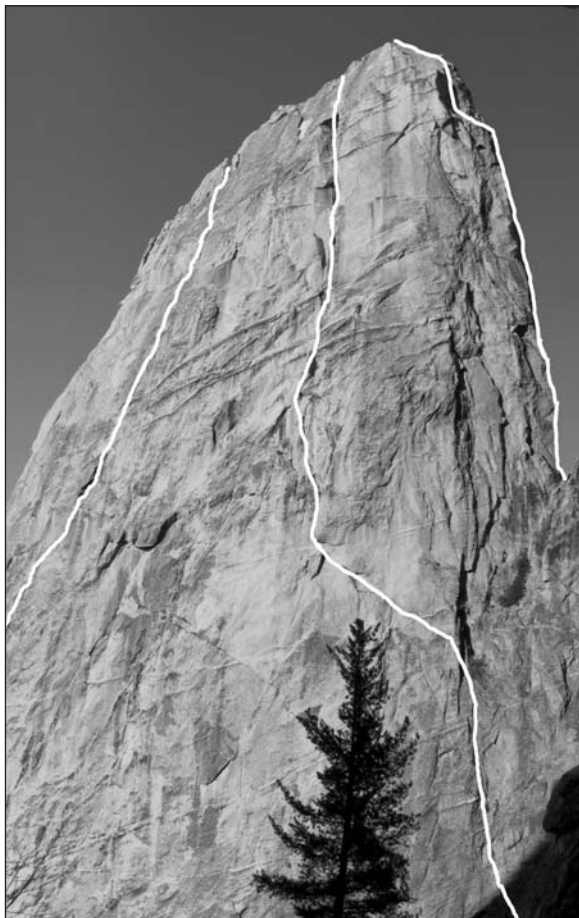
In the summer José Pereyra and I freed The Medicine Wall (a.k.a. The Uncertainty Principle), also on Sentinel. This entailed five completely new pitches, but also freed existing aid pitches of several routes, including the first three pitches of a line first attempted by Steve Roadie and Ben "Wa" Zartman, and four pitches of Early Times (FA by Bryan "Coiler" Kay and Josh Thompson). The route joins with the North Face (FA Frost and Robbins, 1962; FFA Thaw and Wainwright, 1995) for one pitch in the middle, and for the two summiting pitches.

We rated the Medicine Wall 5.13a, or really hard 5.12. The crux pitch was bolted on the lead and provided 80' of brilliant, slightly overhanging face climbing. But perhaps the finest pitch is the second, which starts with 100' of 45° overhanging hands, leading to a short, hard offwidth section, to tight fingers, and finally to an overhanging, run-out boltless face. Both the Medicine Wall and Psychedelic Wall were redpointed, no falls, in a day, after being freed from the ground up over weeks of effort, using fixed lines. On both routes I swapped pitches with my partner and had the pleasure of leading the respective cruxes.

As fall gave way to winter, I managed a three-pitch variation to the Northeast Buttress of Higher Cathedral Rock. I redpointed pitches one and three, but managed only a pinkpoint of the prize pitch, a 50' roof 800' off the ground. This pitch, the "Gravity Ceiling" (5.13a), and the preceding one were first aid climbed by Brian Kay, Mark "TBag" Garbarinni, and Johnny "B" Blair. The Gravity Ceiling is, hands down, the single most impressive pitch of freeclimbing I have ever had the pleasure of playing on, and seems destined to become a megaclassic.

As winter rolled around, I found my world crushed by the news that José Pereyra had passed away. José was not only one of the best finger-crack climbers the world has known, but he was the most realized, spiritually in-tune person I have known. I am very thankful that he





The west face of Castle Rock Spire, showing, left to right: Cinco de Mayo (V 5.10+ A3—Bindner-Thau, 2002—only the upper half is shown). West Face (IV 5.9 A4, Beckey-Borson-Hempel-Rowell, 1969). Spike Hairdo (IV 5.10 A3, Bindner-Coomer, 1996). Brandon Thau

Starting left of the prow we worked up steep cracks and corners for a few hundred feet before Micha found a traverse down and right, onto the arête. This put us right on the beautiful edge, which we climbed to the top, racing a thunderstorm. We lost the race, but tagged the seldom-visited summit pinnacle as the rain and hail tapered off to the north.

DAVID HARDEN, AAC

*Castle Rock Spire, Cinco de Mayo.* Bruce Bindner and I completed a 12-pitch route (V 5.10+ A3) on Castle Rock Spire, slightly to the right of the north arête, over May 3–4. The route parallels the north arête, 150' away. It features excellent, mostly moderate climbing up steep features, with less than 200' of aid. The quickest descent is off the south arête, down Spike Hairdo.

BRANDON THAU, AAC

and I shared the experience of freeing the Medicine Wall, before he moved on to bigger and better things. I dedicate all of these climbs to José; may his soulful, honest, penetrating spirit inspire climbers for centuries to come.

CEDAR WRIGHT, AAC

## SIERRA NEVADA

*West Fuller Butte, The Twisted Bit.* Doniel Drazin and Brandon Thau completed an eight pitch route (IV 5.12b) on the blank 1,000' face of West Fuller Butte on November 9, 2001. Aside from one splitter-crack pitch, the route is mainly consistent 5.10/5.11 face climbing, with one crux 5.12 pitch. A semiremote Sierra environment adds to the quality of the route.

BRANDON THAU, AAC

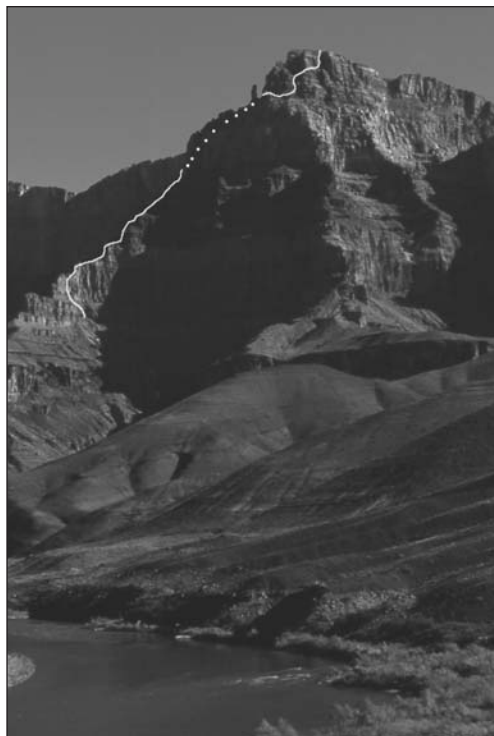
*Third Recess Peak, Serving Detention.* The northeast side of Third Recess Peak features two striking arêtes that merge near the summit. In July Micha Miller and I climbed a new route (IV 5.10) that followed the left-hand arête for ten pitches.



Nikolay Petkov low on the Comanche Ridge. The route follows the arête above. John Harlin III

## Arizona

*Grand Canyon National Park, Comanche Point, Comanche Ridge.* In November 2000, while hiking the Escalante Route, I couldn't take my eyes off the long skinny arête ascending from Tanner Rapids on the Colorado River all the way to the Grand Canyon's South Rim on Comanche Point (7,073'). As the river lies at 2,700' at the rapids, the full ridge is about 4,400' tall and spans over 1.5 horizontal miles. Alas, the lower buttresses can easily be bypassed, and only 2,500 vertical feet require technical climbing—in about half a horizontal mile. On inquiry, a local desert rat (who had paraglided from Comanche Point to the Colorado) told me that no one had climbed from the inner canyon to the rim anywhere in the entire multimile-long Palisades of the Desert. A prominent 200' spire near the top had been climbed (Comanche Point Pinnacle, A1 or 5.12) by rappelling in from the rim. He said that on my proposed route



The Comanche Ridge route leading to Comanche Point, as viewed from the Colorado River. John Harlin III

I should expect “a lot of rotten rock, and a really good adventure.”

As it turned out, the rock is often solid sandstone and limestone, with a liberal sprinkling of decomposing layers. Comanche Ridge came in at about 17 belayed or simul-climbed pitches, plus considerable 3rd and 4th class scrambling. On October 6, immediately following the UIAA General Assembly meetings in Flagstaff, Anne Arrans (U.K.), Roger Payne (U.K.), Nikolay Petkov (Bulgaria), and I (U.S.) hiked the Tanner Trail to Tanner Rapids and spent the night. The next morning we gained the wall at about 4,600', at the back of the scooped wall just above a rockslide. The entrance overhang had a 5.10 move, followed by scrambling, a 5.8 corner, then easy 5th class along the ridgecrest. The knife-edge part of the ridge (Annie's Arête) was broken by short buttresses (50' to 250' each) offering 5.7 to 5.9 climbing. We bivied on a huge ledge in the middle of the red band after about nine pitches. At the top of the red band we bypassed a couple of beautiful 5.11-looking cracks on the buttress via a 5.7 corner to the left, then scrambled to the left side of the huge greenish buttress, which we climbed in three full pitches of 5.9 to 5.10 (we bypassed the dangerous sofa-sized Monster Pillar via a thin crack on the left). We then moved left to steep scrambling, crossed the ridge at Comanche Point Pinnacle, and continued to the summit via 5.7 to 5.8 cracks, with a couple of sections of scrambling. We arrived on top just as the sun went down on the second day of climbing, thus avoiding a waterless night out. Six or so miles of cross-country and dirt road in the dark led back to Desert View. I think the route is well worth repeating by anyone with a taste for big alpine-style ridges in a spectacular desert environment, provided they don't mind some portable handholds.

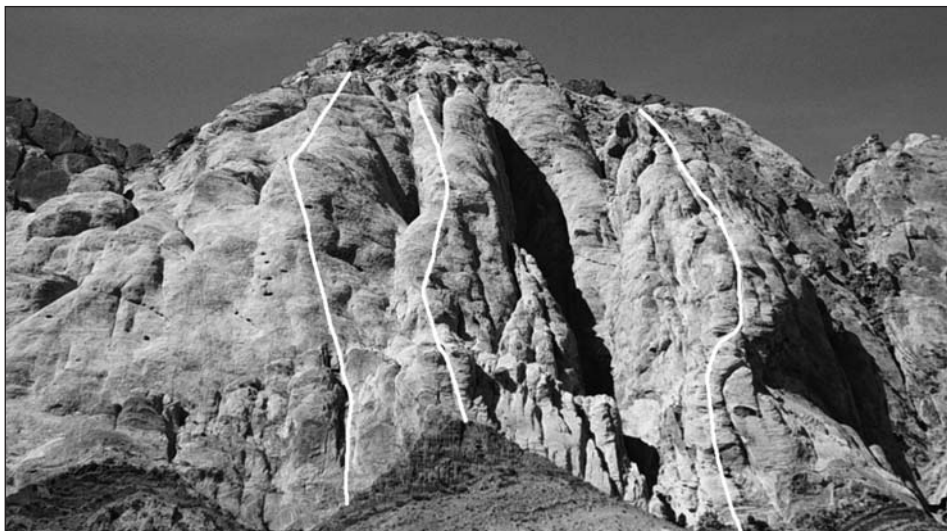
JOHN HARLIN III, *Hood River Crag Rats*, AAC

*Lost Horizon, first free ascent.* On January 29 Ty Mack and I made the first free ascent of the stunning Lost Horizon route, located in Lost Canyon in Sedona, AZ. Lost Horizon follows an impeccable corner system for four long pitches. The climbing is both strenuous and technical. We added three protection bolts where natural gear was not possible. The four pitches are rated 5.12c, 5.13a, 5.12c/d, and 5.11. Lost Canyon, also the location of the ultraclassic five-pitch 5.12, Shangri-La, now features a stellar concentration of hard long free climbs.

MATT CHILDERS

## Utah

*The Desert, various activity.* Significant new routes were established on the Navajo Sandstone of the Colorado Plateau in 2002. Paul Ross, age 65, has been extremely active on the long slabs of the imposing reef at the eastern edge of the San Rafael Swell, known as the San Rafael Reef. Ross writes of his activity, “Just too much unclimbed rock in the desert; it's enough to tire an old guy out. My climbing mate, Layne Potter, added up the footage of the slabs we have climbed in the Swell area since March 2002, and it came to over 23,000'. No wonder I'm wearing out my Tricouni-nailed boots.” Some of his longer and better routes, established with a variety of partners, are Reefer Madness (1,780', 9 pitches, III 5.9R), Surfing the Swell (1,400', 7 pitches, III 5.9R), Slipnot Slab (1,400', 7 pitches, III 5.7R/X), Tsunami (1,200', 7 pitches, III 5.9R), Sinister Slab (1,200', 6 pitches, III 5.7R), Slab Happy (1,360', 5 pitches, III 5.8 R), Sunshine Slab (1,520', III 5.6R) the North Ridge route (2,000', III 5.6) on North Peak, and Hot Tin Slab (1,390', 6 pitches,



The Triple Slab Buttress in the San Rafael Swell, showing (left to right): The Giraffe (1,130', 5.9R, four stars), Jack Russell Buttress (980', 5.6R), Mellow Yellow (1,060', 5.9R, four stars). Paul Ross



The Eastern Reef Slabs (the climbing area is about six miles long), showing (A) Triple Slab Buttress area, (B) Surfing The Swell formation (1,800', 5.9), (C) Reefer Madness Slab (1,700', 5.9R), (D) North Peak and North Ridge route (2,000', 5.6R). Paul Ross

III 5.8R). "The route was climbed in extreme heat, hence the name. The temperature in the shade at 2 p.m. was 105°"

In the northern San Rafael Swell, Ross and Paul Marshall (U.K.) established Brits in the Belfry (310', III 5.9 C1) on Belfry Spire.

In April, in the Lost World Butte section (covered in the new *Desert Rock IV*, by Bjornstad) of the Island in the Sky area west of Moab, Paul Ross and Paul Marshall established The Gift



(360', III 5.8 C2) on The Tombstone. The route ascends an open book 100' left of Keswick Lads' Day Out.

In the Fisher Towers in May, Stevie Haston made the first free ascent of Sundevil Chimney (previously VI 5.9 A3) on The Titan. Haston's impressive ascent included five pitches of 5.12 or 5.12+ and a crux 5.13-. As with his free ascents of Echo Tower, The Hindu, and The Mongoose, Haston climbed clean, with a basic free rack—no pins or hammer.

In the west desert, on the north face of Notch Peak, Jim Howe and Dave Shewell established an intimidating 20-pitch line which Paul Ross calls "The best effort in the Southwest in 2002." The route was established ground-up and reportedly goes at run-out, loose 5.11+.

Two major new routes were established in Texas and Arch canyons of southern Utah. Cameron Burns describes the area as "a wildly remote area of spires, buttes, and mesas. It is easily one of the most beautiful areas in the desert southwest. The rock climbs are true wilderness experiences that require hard driving, long approaches, and difficult, sometimes scary, climbing." In June Paul Ross and Jeff Pheasant put up a route on the east face of Texas Tower, the most popular of the dozen-plus towers in these remote canyons. In Arch Canyon, a new route was established on Dream Speaker via its north face (280', III 5.9 C2) by Paul Ross, Andy Ross, and Paul Marshall in October.

*Compiled primarily by* ERIC BJORNSTAD

*San Rafael Swell, Mudstrosity.* In March Strappo Hughes and I climbed the Mudstrosity (350', V- A3+). This tower is in the southern San Rafael Swell, located 10 miles northwest of Factory Butte (the summit of which provides a wild view of the whole area). It is approached by a confusing series of washes and old roads (high clearance required). USGS maps refer to the area as Salt Wash, just south of the Moroni Slopes. From a distance the Mudstrosity looks like a pint-sized Titan. Our route starts on the left side of the southeast face, at a relatively prominent crack. No free climbing here; this is some of the rottenest stuff I've ever climbed on. Every non-vertical surface is deeply rotted. Luckily, vertical faces hold some higher quality rock. Sustained aid, using everything from birdbeaks to lost arrows and specters, nuts used as "stopper-heads," and various cams, led to a two-bolt hanging belay just below the south shoulder. This excellent 200' pitch evolved as a two-day joint effort. A short nasty pitch across the shoulder led to a small ledge below the



Mudstrosity, living up to its name. Steve Crusher Bartlett

headwall. Several bolts and thin nailing gained a mud-choked offwidth-size crack, which splits the summit. The summit is the size and shape of a pair of motorcycle seats, end to end, with a 300' drop-off on each side. The summit vibrated like an old motorcycle as I cleaned pitons 40 feet below. We left three mediocre bolts and a register for the hordes who will flock to repeat this route.

STEVE CRUSHER BARTLETT, AAC

*Potash Road/Wall Street, Desert Spindrift.* In the middle of September Nathan Martin and I climbed a new route that went to the rim overlooking Potash. Our route began with an existing route called Pinhead (5.10). We then continued up the prominent crack system above for five very sandy pitches to create Desert Spindrift (200m, IV 5.10 C2).

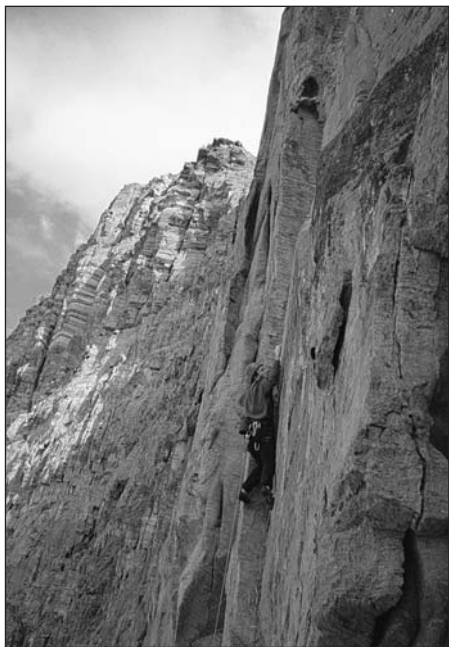
JOSH GROSS, AAC

*Fisher Towers, The Titan, Sundevil Chimney, first free ascent.* The Fisher Towers represent a Daliesque dream barely metamorphosed into rock. The highest tower, the Titan, is the highest free-standing tower in the U.S. and, in my opinion, is unique in the world for its haunting majesty. Because of the soft nature of the Cutler Sandstone and the dangerous nature of the climbing, artificial techniques have predominated. Many of these aid routes are dangerous and technically taxing, but the continual piton use is eroding the cracks. This is beneficial in only one way: it has led to the possibility of free climbing some of these magnificent routes! Over the last 12 years Laurence Gouault and I have visited these towers, sometimes to just stand and stare, and sometimes to slip and slide on their sandy skin.

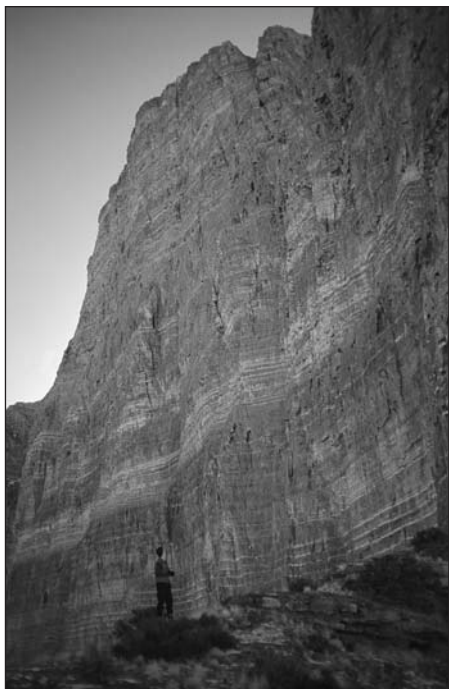
In the spring we spent an extended period of time on Sundevil Chimney, using wire brushes and toothbrushes to clean cracks and ledges. We experienced many falls on sometimes run-out pitches of bad or sandy rock—it cannot be described as simple climbing. The climb had previously been aided clean by Andy Donson, who free-climbed the penultimate pitch and who gave me the nod. The Sundevil was originally done at A3+ by H.T. Carter and friends in 1971, when it was primarily a mud climb, but is now clean enough to be free-climbed by people who enjoy the challenge of fearful odds. The first pitch is a brilliant combination of crack and face climbing on yellowish rock. Be careful to belay at two bolts where you can balance with your hands off the rock and not at the original belay higher. The next pitch is long and one of the best crack pitches in the desert; it ends just short of the Mud Chimney. These first two pitches can be looked at as the cream of the route. They are clean and well-protected, except for one section of the first pitch where you could take a big one (I took three). The climbing may be easy 5.13, but it is hard to tell when you are not relaxed. The next section, in the chimney, provides perhaps three pitches of 5.12, but again it is hard to tell, as the hard bits are either insecure, wide, or both—good luck. You then arrive at the first place to sit. (I took a nap.) The next pitch is dirty and wide, with a nasty twisting fall before you get to the wide section. The last pitch is a 5.7 chimney, but if you are lucky, you will top out at sunset, as we did, and have to rappel at night without a head torch. Clean-aid or free-climbing these routes represents a less destructive method of climbing, which seems in keeping with the times. For people with more ability than us, the Sundevil might just be a brilliant climb. For us it was much more.

STEVIE HASTON, *France*





Jason Keith freeing the fifth pitch (5.12-) of *Appetite for Destruction*. Jim Howe

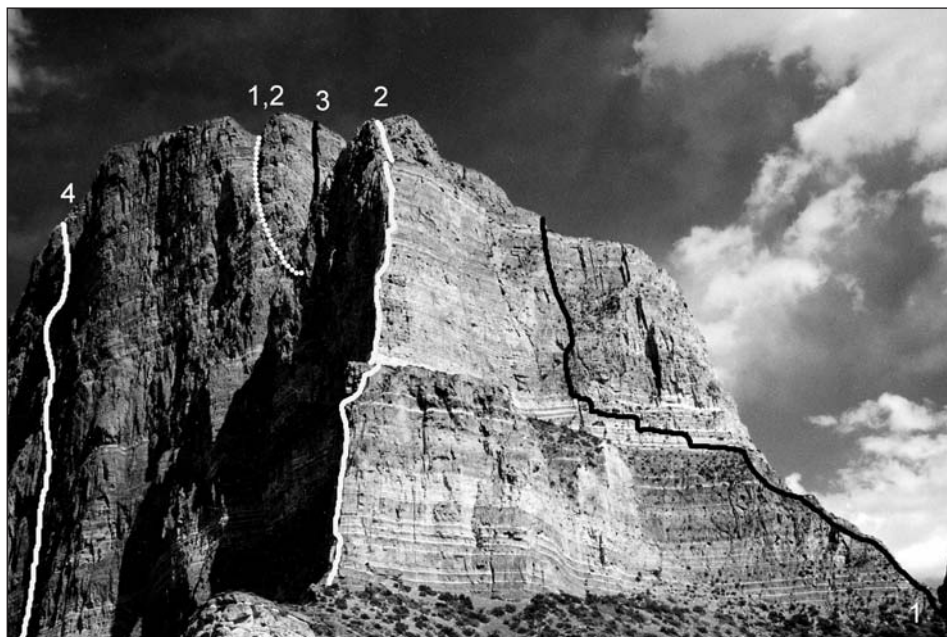


Under the 2,000' north face of Notch Peak. Jason Keith

*Westwater Canyon, Arch Tower, Dry Heaves.* In June Bill Duncan and John Burnham made the first ascent of Arch Tower, naming their route *Dry Heaves* (400', 6 pitches, III 5.10 A1). To reach this remote spire, float the Colorado River from Loma to Mee Canyon. Hike three miles up canyon and the tower will be obvious. Another wilderness experience!

ERIC BJORNSTAD

*House Range, Notch Peak, Appetite for Destruction, La Fin du Monde, and Empty Sky.* Notch Peak is located approximately 45 miles west of Delta on U.S. 6/50. Directions to it are given in James Garrett's *Ibex and Selected Climbs of Utah's West Desert*. Dave Shewell and I climbed *Appetite for Destruction* (IV 5.11 A0 or 5.12-) on Notch Peak over six or seven days, finishing in May 2001. We did this 300m route in ground-up style, hanging from hooks when necessary for bolt placements. A set of cams (TCUs to 3.5") is mandatory, to supplement the 50 protection bolts. All belays are bolted. *Appetite for Destruction* ascends the lower north face and tops out on the large band leading across the north face and around the northwest ridge. The route has four pitches that are 5.10 or harder. Jason Keith eked out the FFA of pitch five with the draws hanging. Mortals can aid that pitch or avoid it with a 5.11- variation. The route is approached as *Book of Saturday* is, but is reached after only 50 minutes of hiking up the drainage. It is marked by a cairn in the drainage. The wall remains hidden until the last 10 minutes of hiking before the cairn. Bolts are visible 20' up. The first two pitches ascend the left side of the lower band. The route crosses a large, low-angle band to the center of the face and is marked by a threaded red sling. Climbing is sustained through the first six pitches. The final two pitches are moderate and allow you to walk off or exit to the upper north face. Beware of the final moderate pitch, originally going in and around the chimney that splits the final wall. It



The north and west faces of Notch Peak (9,725', House Range, Utah) as seen from the top of Appetite for Destruction (IV 5.11 A0 or 5.12- ; a route on the lower north face). Note that in this foreshortened angle, routes 1 and 2 appear to finish atop a buttress, but they traverse to finish on the left, as indicated. See p. 177, 2001 AAJ for another perspective. 1. Empty Sky (III 5.8, Howe-Keith, 1998). 2. La Fin du Monde (400m, III/IV 5.10, Howe-Shewell, 2002). 3. Road to Perdition (3-pitch variant finish, 5.10+, Howe-Howe, 2002). 4. Book of Saturday (IV 5.11-, Lyde-Price, 1999). Not shown: Swiss Route (V 5.10+ A3, Deinen-Koch, 1986). The exact location of the Swiss Route on the north face route is unknown, beyond, "...right of center to a prominent chimney, mostly on poor rock." (1987 AAJ, p. 178). Jim Howe

is loose, even by Notch Peak standards. A safer alternative is a left-facing corner system 60m to the right (5.7). By combining this route with one on the upper headwall, a limestone route of 18–20 pitches can be climbed! In June Dave and I climbed Appetite and La Fin in one push of 11 hours.

In April 2002, also from the ground up, Dave and I established La Fin du Monde (a.k.a. Northwest Ridge Direct, 400m, 9 pitches, III/IV 5.10), visible as the right skyline in the photo in the 2001 AAJ, p. 177. This beautiful route, on the extreme right side of the north face, nearly follows the crest of the northwest ridge. It gets more sun and has an airier feel than the north face routes. There are 17 protection bolts, placed on lead. Most of the belays are fixed. The route is accessed as Book of Saturday is, but head right along the base of the north face instead of left. La Fin starts right at the base of the northwest ridge; a bolt is visible about 30' up. La Fin joins Empty Sky (which begins to the right, or west, of the northwest ridge) three pitches from the summit, where both routes traverse to an exit chimney/gully over the north face. Descent is best done by abseiling from the top of Book of Saturday, which is not easy to locate unless you have been on that route.

In September Tommie Howe and I hiked up the back side of Notch Peak and abseiled 130m to the base of La Fin's final headwall. We led this, placing ten protection bolts and pins. This variation (Road to Perdition, 3 pitches, 5.10+) gives another two pitches of 5.10 climbing and is a worthwhile alternative to La Fin's exit chimney. Its start is marked by fixed anchors 40m

from the crest of the northwest ridge. The belays are fixed, but the variation includes a sporty, 30' runout on 5.10- terrain. Tommie and I summited in deteriorating weather and raced down the backside, only to spend a rainy bivouac huddled in a shallow overhang. We remain happily married.

The original route, Empty Sky, was established in February 1998 by Jason Keith and me, after we searched for a nonexistent ice route on the north face. In a 23-hour round trip from Salt Lake City, we climbed this route, made about a dozen abseils to get off the peak, and were stopped by the highway patrol in their quest to stem the flow of drugs through the Utah corridor. The route begins a few hundred yards right of the northwest ridge, in a notch between a large pinnacle and the west face. It follows the line of least resistance toward the north face. Expect moderate climbing and plenty of simul-climbing, with only a few short 5.7 and 5.8 bits. The crux is in the exit gully over the north face. We found a few pins, probably marking the descent route of the Swiss after their ascent of the north face in 1986 (1987 AAJ, p. 178).

Notch Peak provides high adventure. The rock quality is generally poorer than the classic limestone of the Dolomites and Yarnumka, but for those unfortunate souls attracted to this type of rock, these routes are entertaining. Do not take them lightly; though the pitches are often moderate in difficulty, they require competence in this type of terrain. Notch Peak has its loose rock, unappealing strata, and rockfall (particularly during and after rain and melt-freeze cycles). Divots and craters along the approach bands inspire you to contemplate the value of a helmet. A rescue here, if it ever came, would be long and arduous. That said, Notch Peak is a rare, remote place in the heart of the west desert offering beautiful position, grand vistas, a true summit, and good adventure value.

JAMES HOWE

*Texas Tower, East Face.* Texas Tower has a big reputation, as it is one of the tallest pure sandstone towers in the desert southwest. The only existing route, first climbed in 1987 by Tim Toula and Kathy Zaiser on the west face, still seems to see as many failures as ascents. It was originally 5.10+ A1, but was free climbed in 1990 by Derek Hersey and Steve Bartlett at 5.11cR.

The east face was just as formidable looking and was an obvious desert project. As Ross (AARP, ex-pat Brit) was now in his 66th year, and seeing how the young lads of today did not seem too keen to leave their single-pitch routes, he recruited a not-quite-as-old friend from his New Hampshire days, Jeff Pheasant, now retired in Hawaii. The pair spent a delightful two days on the spectacular east face.

The seven-pitch route went smoothly at 5.10 C2. It may go free at a higher grade. Nobody fell off, died, etc. The worst pain was hangovers at our campsite.

PAUL ROSS

## ZION NATIONAL PARK

*Kolob Canyon, Nagunt Mesa, Cos the Boss.* In late October and early November 2001 I did a new wall route in Kolob Canyon with Steve Gerberding and Scott Cosgrove. The formation is called Nagunt Mesa, and we made the first ascent of the east-northeast face, following an obvious big corner system in the center of the face. The route involved nine pitches on the wall, plus a 5.9

pitch on the approach. The approach is serious, with loads of 3rd and 4th class slabs. The previous year Cosgrove had climbed 2.5 pitches of the wall solo, before bailing. We re-climbed those pitches, then continued. The climbing followed obvious systems and required minimal drilling. Most pitches involved aid on high-quality sandstone—good for Gerberding and me, the sandstone rookies. The climbing was never desperate, with most pitches logging in at A2 or so. We didn't bivvy on the wall, but had fixed five pitches before we finished the route in a long day. We rappelled more or less the line of ascent. We've had a hard time coming up with a name, but it's probably gonna end up Cos the Boss (V 5.9R A2+).

ODD-ROAR WIIK, *Norway*

*IdiOdyssey.* In April James Garrett and I climbed a new route (V 5.10 A2+) via a crack system on the 1,000' wall left of Swoop Gimp. This route, which I began with Brian Cabe, climbs the first two and a half pitches of Swoop Gimp, then branches left via a bolt ladder (placed during a previous party's attempt) to a narrow ledge. One more pitch took us to another ledge, below a steep, improbable-looking corner; from there we descended.

Returning with James, I found the spectacular corner much easier than it looked and continued to a sling belay. The next two pitches, mostly free, followed an ever-widening face crack to a large, brushy ledge. Luckily, a 1.5" crack ran parallel to an offwidth section of the main crack, allowing us to avoid the offwidth. From the brushy ledge we traversed 40' left to another face crack, which we followed, mostly with aid, for two and a half pitches to the top.

BRIAN SMOOT

*Big Bend Gendarme, Mean High Tide.* This route climbs the obvious crack system on the southwest face, facing the Big Bend shuttle stop. It can be recognized by the rubble stack in the fifth-pitch chimney. It reaches the top of the spirelike formation in six pitches, with lots of wide climbing. The fourth, Banana Pitch, is reportedly a "go for it" pitch. Begin descending using two sets of rap anchors left of the route, then continue by rappelling the route. First ascent by Joe French and Brody Greere, Spring 2001; FFA Joe French, Nate Brown, and Dan Carson, fall 2001 (IV 5.10+).

ERIC DRAPER

*Angel's Landing, Mostly American Route.* It's getting harder to find a new route on Angel's Landing. This face inspired some of the first big routes in the park and contains the park's greatest concentration of wall routes. We had eyed a route on the north face for years. We debated whether certain features would go, and how many features would have to go for the route to be worthy. Eventually we (Bryan Bird, Nate Brown, Eric Draper, Jon Sedon) climbed the route (V 5.9 A3+) in May 2001. Some of the features were climbable; some were too thin and delicate, and we drilled. We consoled ourselves by noting that our route had less than half the holes of the popular Prodigal Sun and by comparing it with Valley standards. And the route turned out to be good, climbing a steep, beautiful section of wall that was previously unexplored.

After climbing the first two pitches of the Swiss-American route, we went left and up into a pink corner. We followed the crack until it disappeared. We climbed rivets until a new crack

appeared, then hooked out left to a belay. We climbed the Cyclop's Eye to a right-leaning beak and RURP crack. The last pitch, out a roof, makes it all worth it! Our route then rejoins the Swiss-American route.

ERIC DRAPER

*Mt. Moroni, Voice from the Dust.* In November Garrett Kemper, Tommy Chandler, and I climbed a new route (IV 5.11c) on the far south end of the southeast face of Mt. Moroni. A 200' splitter hand-and-finger crack, starting 60' above the ground, had caught my eye. In the winter of 2000 Garrett and I tried to get to that crack from below, but a cam hook that I was standing on pried off a block, causing a short fall. Not wanting to use aid, we discovered a secret passage of a chimney 30' to the right. A ledge, hidden among huecos, led me to the start of the crack. Garrett led the steep one- to two-inch crack above, at 5.11. Two more 5.11 pitches took us to the top of a prominent pedestal, a great ledge. The climbing was so excellent that we decided to call it good, and descended.

As time passed, the lure of getting to the top of the wall proved strong, and we found ourselves back for another attempt. From the pedestal we followed the prominent crack and V-slot above for two 5.10a pitches. The next, loose section led to a steep, clean corner sporting a long offwidth. We avoided this by climbing a beautiful left-facing corner to the south. The last pitch followed an easy diagonal ramp up and right. On the summit we found a cairn, possibly left by the climbers doing the Southwest Face route in 1971. We descended by rappelling our route in fading light.

BRIAN SMOOT

*The Sentinel, Farmer Brown.* This route (V 5.10+ A3+), by Nate Brown and Joe French, climbs a thin crack system on the pink buttress right of the Streaked Wall waterfall. Approach as for the Streaked Wall. Climb seven pitches of mixed free and aid, with the upper half of the route being steep, thin aid. Rap the route. The first ascent party does not recommend this route, suggesting it is better just to look at it.

ERIC DRAPER

*Bridge Mountain, Estrogen Enterprise.* This route climbs the finlike buttress on Bridge Mountain's southwest face, below the saddle on the right side of the mountain. The route reaches a ledge in two pitches. It then heads up and right toward an obvious splitter. After eight pitches of climbing it reaches the saddle and finishes with 1,200' of 5th class to the top. Rap the route. The first attempt was made by Joe French and Brody Greere; the first ascent, by French and Kevin Riechle, was made in fall 2001 (V 5.10 A2).

ERIC DRAPER

*Left Mary, The Insider.* The Insider (IV+ 5.10 A1), established by Bryan Bird and me in 2001, entails nine pitches on the southeast face, in a prominent crack system running parallel to and left of the Gentleman's Agreement. The upper half of the route ascends the obvious gaping



chimney. The chimney pitches inspired the name of the route. No bolts were placed. Rap off pine trees to the east into a notch. A few more raps down a gully get you to the ground. We recommend the route, but with a warning of a few “dodgy” pitches.

ERIC DRAPER

## *Colorado*

### ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK



The Cathedral Wall in Rocky Mountain National Park, showing Sublime Buttress. Ryan Jennings

*Notchttop area, Special K; and Forbidden Peak, Garmar.* On June 24 Krista Javoronok and I climbed a new route on the smaller spire to the right of Notchttop. Special K (600', III 5.10b) climbs this spire in six pitches. The route starts in the middle of a buttress, climbs a 5.10 wide crack, goes through a steep, somewhat loose, 5.10 roof, and aims for the prominent right-facing corner below the summit. Though this spire had no recorded ascents, we found an old sling around a chockstone in the prominent corner and another old sling around a block lower down. We found nothing on the summit and suspect that a previous party may have taken a different line, farther right, joined our route-to-be for the corner pitch, and rappelled before the summit. After summiting, we rigged four rappels between Notchttop and this smaller spire to the ground.

On June 6 Zack Martin and I put up an amazing route in the Andrew's Glacier cirque. We climbed the Garmar in nine pitches, establishing the second route on Forbidden Peak. This



unique alpine route begins on the central east face with a splitter crack passing through a roof, and continues up for five long pitches of 5.9 and 5.10 to a false summit, which we called the Gargoyle (a beautiful orange plaque of rock). After a 30' rappel from the Gargoyle, the Garmar follows a 5th class ridge for two pitches, then climbs a steep 5.9 corner and reaches the summit via an airy ridge. It's a great mix of steep face, thin cracks, and beautiful ridge climbing. The route does have a few spicy sections, but this aesthetic line is highly recommended. This was my last climb with Zack, and his spirit has been with me since. His unbounded energy and glowing spirit touched the lives of so many. Thanks, Zack, for sharing your motivation and sharing one of my most memorable climbs in the Park. We will all miss you dearly.

KEITH GARVEY

*Cathedral Wall, Sublime Buttress.* In May Ryan Jennings and I completed the first free ascent of an unreported route we had established five years earlier on the Cathedral Wall. Climbing the tallest, cleanest piece of Cathedral Wall, this should prove to be a modern classic—seven loooong pitches of wildness, ending in a steep hand crack that takes you to the summit. The second pitch presents the technical crux (5.11+), going over a roof. This pitch was the only one not originally freed onsight. The route has four bolts, all at belays. The first three were placed while we were retreating from a nasty ice storm on a winter attempt; they now serve as cairns to let you know you are on route. The fourth bolt was placed on rappel after the original ascent, to improve pitch six's marginal anchor, as Ryan inspected a direct finish. The direct finish, which we climbed on our free ascent, pulls a 5.10 roof and is steep and exposed. (Our original finish ducks around the corner, hard left, for two pitches.) No pitch is a gimme; all require route finding and proficiency with natural protection. In Boulder Canyon all the pitches would be R/X, but really, it's just a good day in the mountains.

BRENT ARMSTRONG

*McHenry's Peak, The Kidnapper Van.* In the Glacier Gorge cirque, Justin Dubois and I climbed a new free route on an unclimbed tower on the North Ridge of McHenry's Peak. Our route followed a fairly direct line of discontinuous cracks and corners on the east face of this "Shameless Tower" (the lower, or eastern, of two obvious pillars on the north ridge). The best way to find the start is to locate a large worm-shaped pillar at the start of pitch two. Start below and right of this pillar on a ledge 20' below a right-facing corner with a left-angling splitter on its right wall. A bit of 5th class gets you to this ledge, angling in from the right. The second pitch climbs the left side of the worm pillar and the splitter hand crack above it. The final, crux, pitch climbs an obvious dark, right-facing dihedral to the tower's summit. This pitch is 190' long and features sustained jamming and stemming. The Kidnapper Van (730', III 5.11+) was climbed on August 4, in four long pitches: 5.9, 5.10, 5.10+/11-, 5.11+.

JASON SEAVER

## BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON NATIONAL PARK

*North Chasm View Wall, Fuzzy Dice.* Fuzzy Dice (IV 5.10d/11a) climbs a crack system up the far left side of the North Chasm View Wall (left of the Plunge Pillar, right of the North Pillar). FA: Mike Pennings and myself in one day in the fall.

JONATHAN COPP

*Hair in My Cheeseburger, CrystalVision.* In April Paul Emrick and I headed down the S.O.F.B. Gully on the South Rim of the Black Canyon to try a new route, The route, which shares the start of 2001's Stay Puft Buttress, was done in a day with no bolts. The route was awesome until it became a total bummer. Eight pitches of fine, clean cracks, and then a wrong turn led to bushy, discontinuous choss. The route, Hair in My Cheeseburger, is rated 1,800', IV+ 5.10.

After further research an alternate finish was discovered just right of the Shining Buttress (Ingalls–Kor). In early May Paul Emrick and Brent Mitchell rappelled from the rim to establish this four-pitch variation. Paul led a beautiful crystal-covered slab with just three hooks and a hand drill, establishing what would be one of the route's cruxes. He placed three bolts.

On May 30 Paul and I returned to link Hair in My Cheeseburger's lower eight pitches with the four new upper pitches. The second pitch, which had originally been led with no bolts, was deemed really dangerous—a 50' runout on a 5.8 slab with ground-fall potential—so we added a bolt. The runout is now only 25 feet and not as serious. The result is one of the best routes I've done in the Black, easily on par with the Cruise, only a little more serious. We named it CrystalVision (1,800', IV+ 5.11-).

JOSH BOROF

*Great White Wall, Super Wuss and Gouldy Variant.* In October Kevin Cochran and I climbed a new route on the eastern side of Fisherman's Gully. Super Wuss (IV 5.11-) tackles the giant red arête just left of the Great White Wall route; it can be seen from Balanced Rock Overlook. The route was climbed clean, without pins or bolts (apart from rappel anchors on the first three pitches left by a previous party). First ascensionists are biased, but I believe Super Wuss to be the best route in the gully. Look for a topo at the North Rim ranger station. In Fall 2000 Chris Basset and I climbed a new, direct finish to the Great White Wall route. The Gouldy Variant, taking the obvious wide system at the top of the cliff where the Great White Wall route traverses off left; consists of two long pitches with difficulties up to 5.10+R.

JOSH WHARTON, AAC

*Great White Wall, Death Camas Dihedrals.* "Back in the saddle," I mused, as Andy Donson and I took aim at a line across from Balanced Rock Overlook. Yet saddle sores remained several months later. Blackened and battered, I harbored the memory with utter ambivalence—grateful for the ongoing recovery but pained by the cause. Having been thrown and kicked, I was anxious and excited about the day's launch, nearly from water-to-rim. I wanted to reacquaint myself with all that is the Black, with living.

The distinct upper dihedral pitches were striking, adjacent to the arête. Less clear was the

lower half. We approached via Fisherman's Gully on May 11, almost as far down as the turbulent flow and cooler air. The features we hoped for, while engaging, unfolded with relative moderation. After four pitches we ate from the varied greenery of the halfway terrace, where Andy introduced me to a flower I couldn't identify. I reached to bend the slender stem and have a whiff when he suggested I not touch the death camas (*toxicoscordion venenosums*). Agreed.

The next pitch looked to be a groaner; two obese cracks with an appetite Andy's rack could not satisfy. Rather than grapple and groan he simply stemmed. A traverse left to a solid face up which we wandered was especially pleasurable. The prominent corner and arête remained. The final length of the dihedral, overhanging in places, had us toeing our way up a pinnacle on the arête. Position and climbing were equally exhilarating. Fortune had found us today. Death Camas Dihedrals (IV+ 5.10R/X).

TERRY MURPHY, AAC

*South Chasm Wall, Burlgirl.* In March Mike Shepherd and I had a vision of free climbing Bull Girl (5.11 A4). We thought we'd need a lot of time to clean and find a way to free the aid, so we spent two nights on the 2,000' climb. Three pitches up we face-climbed to the left for one pitch and gained a steep dihedral system, which gave us three variant pitches to the original A2+ section of Bull Girl. Mike led a steep, overhanging fist and offwidth corner to a ledge (5.11+). The next pitch was an arrow-straight corner with an RP seam that took just enough gear and provided just enough edges to go free at 5.12a. A steep face with incut crimps led us back onto Bull Girl. Following Bull Girl till the next A4, we found exciting steep corners, roofs, and face-climbing.

On our third day we were faced with finding a way past this hard A4 pitch. I traversed 50 feet out of the corner, hammered in two shady pins, climbed into a technical face section (5.11), and stopped at a stance where I could drill. Past this bolt I climbed more technical face, with 40' runouts on 5.11 and 5.10 climbing, finding just enough funky gear placements till I found a solid crack for a belay. Four more pitches, and we arrived at the summit. We had cleaned several sections of the climb but didn't complete the route all free.

In October Topher Donahue and I returned to the Black and completed the route, all free with no falls, in a day. Mike was unavailable but will return soon to try his own free ascent. Seven pitches are 5.11 and one 5.12, with several 5.10s and 5.9s. It's a fun route, but you have to be ready for serious runouts. We added three bolts: on the first traverse pitch, on the crux traverse, and on the 5.11X pitch. We climbed four new pitches and freed the pitches of Bull Girl we climbed to come up with Burlgirl (V 5.12-X).

JARED OGDEN, AAC

## Wyoming

*Enclosure, Prospect of an End.* Sune Tamm-Buckle ("The Young Swede") and I departed late for a bivy in the moraine, where we proceeded to "get dizzy." Sune, bringing only a bivy sack, shivered the night away while I slept, warm and cozy in my down bag.

We woke at 3 a.m. on September 1, made our way to the Lower Saddle, crossed the Valhalla Traverse, and arrived at the Enclosure Couloir at 6 a.m. to find it, despite popular opinion, full of ice. We climbed three 60m pitches up the couloir, with some simul-climbing, and arrived at

the start of our proposed route.

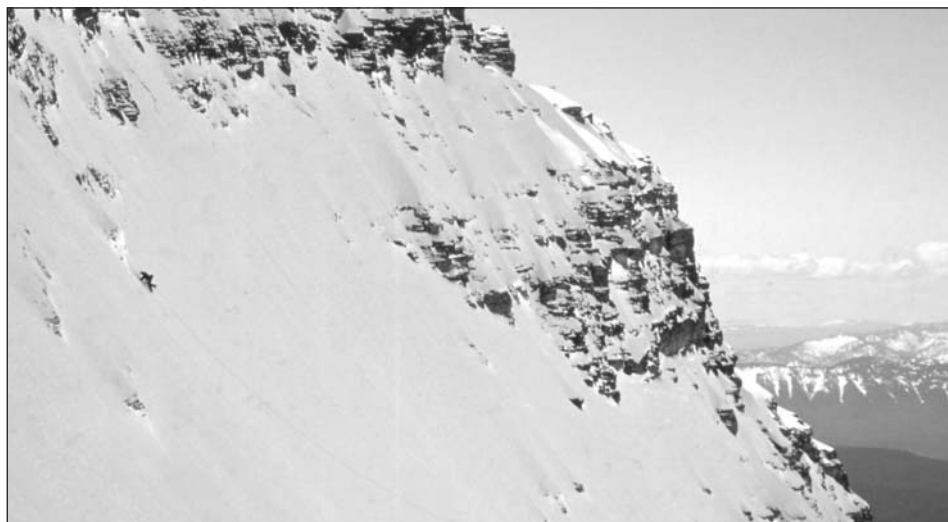
Four pitches of high-quality, chunky golden granite led to a mixed pitch that exited onto the ice apron of the High Route. We recommend a standard free rack; we left three pins and two heads in place. We proceeded to the top of the Enclosure via the standard High Route finish, topping out in the dark (IV 5.10X M4- AI3).

JOHN KELLEY

## Montana

*Glacier National Park, Mt. Jackson, Shades of Gray and Alpenglow.* Visiting, with limited time, Anna Jansen sought to climb a mountain over the weekend. Excited by high pressure, we made for Glacier. The following day our friends Jeff Shapiro and Gray Thompson arrived, adding to our confidence. Good company, thoughtful conversation, and a restful evening led to a unanimous decision to scale Mt. Jackson (10,052').

The next morning we charged the striking northwest couloir (3,400' from base to ridge), for the possible first ascent. Jeff and Gray advanced left while Anna and I veered right. We climbed casual snow that steepened into a headwall. AI3 climbing led Anna and me into off-vertical snow flutings of near-styrofoam consistency. Protection became slim as I led easy, yet exposed, ground. A ropelength later I hammered a ringer blade: "Thank God." Another ropelength found us additional protection, an anchor, and a break. Anna followed remarking, "The climbing didn't look hard, but you were moving slow. I knew you had shitty protection, so I climbed like I was soloing." Right on! With a carefree smile she took the next section. Twenty-five feet led through a smear of ice in a rock corner, with 500' of exposure. Now to relaxed snow climbing, right? Wrong! After pulling the anchor and simul-climbing onto a huge snowfield, I looked up at Anna running out 600' of snow pack without pro. Dear God, if she slips, spare her and kill me. The recurring nightmare seizes my consciousness like a Post-Traumatic Stress Dis-



Anna Jansen taking Glen Deal out for a romantic stroll on Mt. Jackson, Glacier National Park. Jeff Shapiro



Anna Jansen dreaming of what will be on Mt. Jackson. The two routes take the shady left couloir to the middle summit region (left of the prominent spur, left of the wide gully on the right). Glen Deal

order flashback. Alpine climbing with your girlfriend is twisted! My only comfort is the easy climbing. Back in the couloir proper we greet the other team. Jeff and Gray are having a blast. "Got some awesome pics of you guys. Get any of us?"

"Sorry, we were too gripped to think of snapping any."

The rest of the route involved uncomplicated snow climbing with good protection. When we were 500' below the west ridge, the sun threatened to set. Pursuing the same terrain as the other team was out of the question. Our comrades continued up the couloir, while Anna and I headed left. Terrain remained easy, with ample protection on straightforward rock (5.7) and snow. Alpenglow provided soft colors as I topped the ridge. By the time Anna joined me, we were blanketed in deep magenta. Downclimbing by moonlight, Anna and I reached Gunsight Pass and stumbled four miles back to camp. The other team suffered a wet bivy on the summit ridge. The time spent on Mt. Jackson in March was one of a good route, jolly spirits, and merry making among close friends.

GLEN DEAL

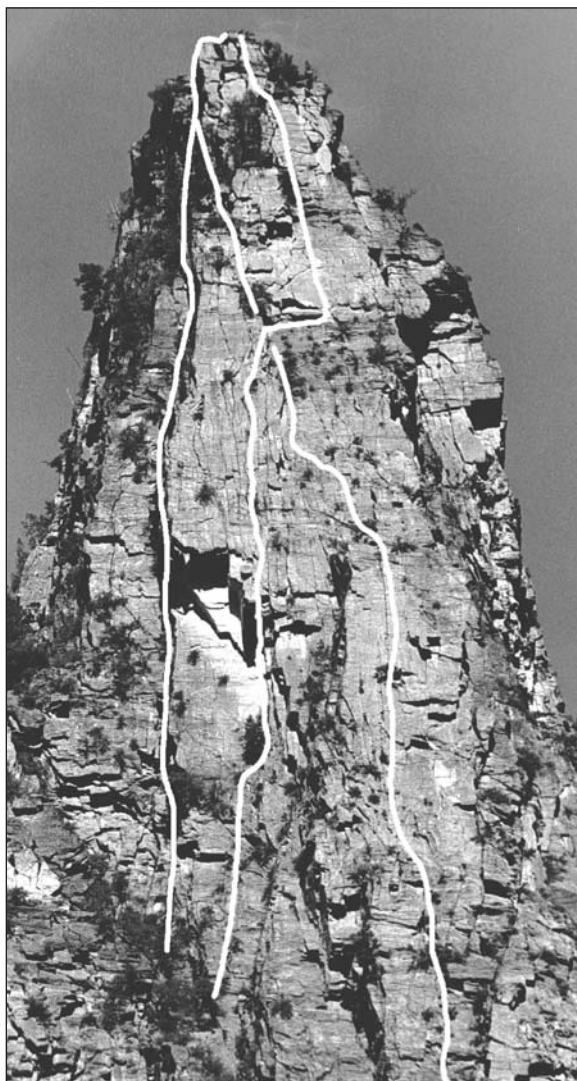
*Bitterroot Mountains, Spirolina Tower and Corner With a View.* Trapper Creek's Spirolina Tower was named after its first ascent in 1977, by Craig Kenyon and Tom Cosgriff via the southwest corner (5–6 pitches, 5.8). The tower was notable to Kenyon because of his near-death experience on the east face descent. In 1992 Rod Sutherland and I, on a lark, put up the direct south face route, Whimsey (7 pitches, IV 5.10c) (1993 *AAJ*, p. 155), while also experiencing trials on the east face descent.

In 2002 James Pinjuv prophesized that a thin line on a blank gray wall high up Spirolina was a perfect hand crack. With confidence Jimmy led the first pitch, a left-facing corner system

(5.9) 50' east of the start of Whimsey. I led the second pitch (5.8), up clean cracks to a small stance under a little tree. Jimmy led the foretold third pitch, the Jelly Jam (60', 5.9+)—one of the finest hand cracks in the Bitterroots, and named for its exquisite sweetness. I led the fourth pitch, the Orange Corner, a slightly seedy flaring crack, at 5.10b. Three pitches followed, with several options available. One can cut right, out onto the south face, following obvious cracks to the top (5.8–5.10, Whimsey finish) or angle northeast, toward easier terrain (Jelly Jam finish). During the east face descent we followed obvious ramps, placing several fixed pins and stoppers, and made five rappels.

During our descent Jimmy spotted a corner system, one and a half gullies to our east, that appeared to have a perfect crack in it. After two scrambling, roped approach pitches, I started up the third pitch, a clean, near-perfect corner (5.9+). Jimmy led the fourth pitch, a spectacular, vertical continuation of the corner (5.9+). Two more serpentine pitches (5.8) angling northeast led us to the top of the formation and a pleasant northwest walk-off into the descent gully (Corner With a View, III 5.9+).

STEVE PORCELLA



The south face of Spirolina tower in the Bitterroot Mountains. Left to right: Kenyon-Cosgriff (1977), Whimsey (Porcella-Sutherland, 1992), The Jelly Jam (Pinjuv-Porcella, 2002). Steve Porcella