

CLIMBING

A man is shown climbing a reddish-brown rock face. He is wearing a white tank top with a red and black graphic, patterned shorts, and a climbing harness. He is smiling and looking up at the rock. A rope is attached to his harness and runs down the side of the rock. A carabiner is visible on the rock face above him.

No 133 August/September 1992

\$4.95 in U.S. / \$6.95CD in Canada

Jibé

He brought 5.14 to the U.S., but who is J.B. Tribout?

Brave New World

The New River Gorge comes of age as the East's top climbing area

Party of One

A profile of Jim Beyer, an American soloist

Plus: carabiners, photo tips, and alpine climbing for everyman

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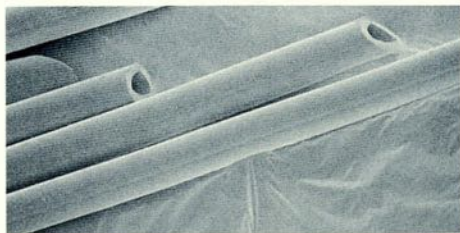
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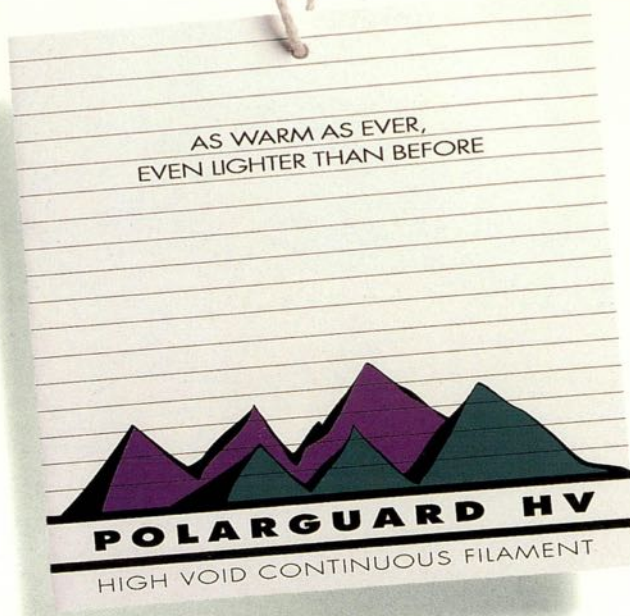
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Microscopic view of Polarguard HV - High Void Continuous Filament.

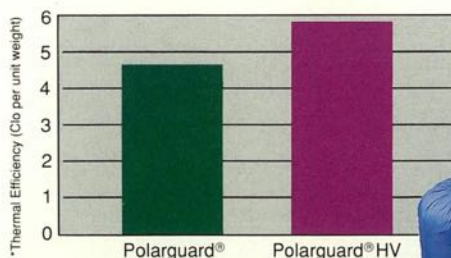
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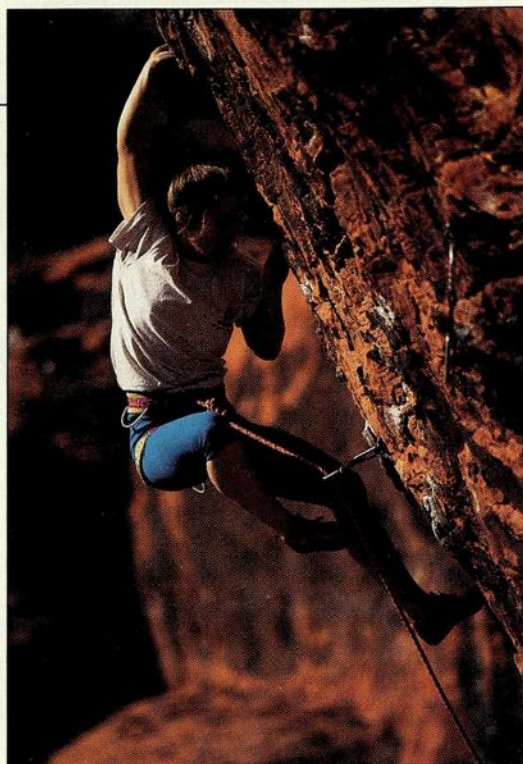
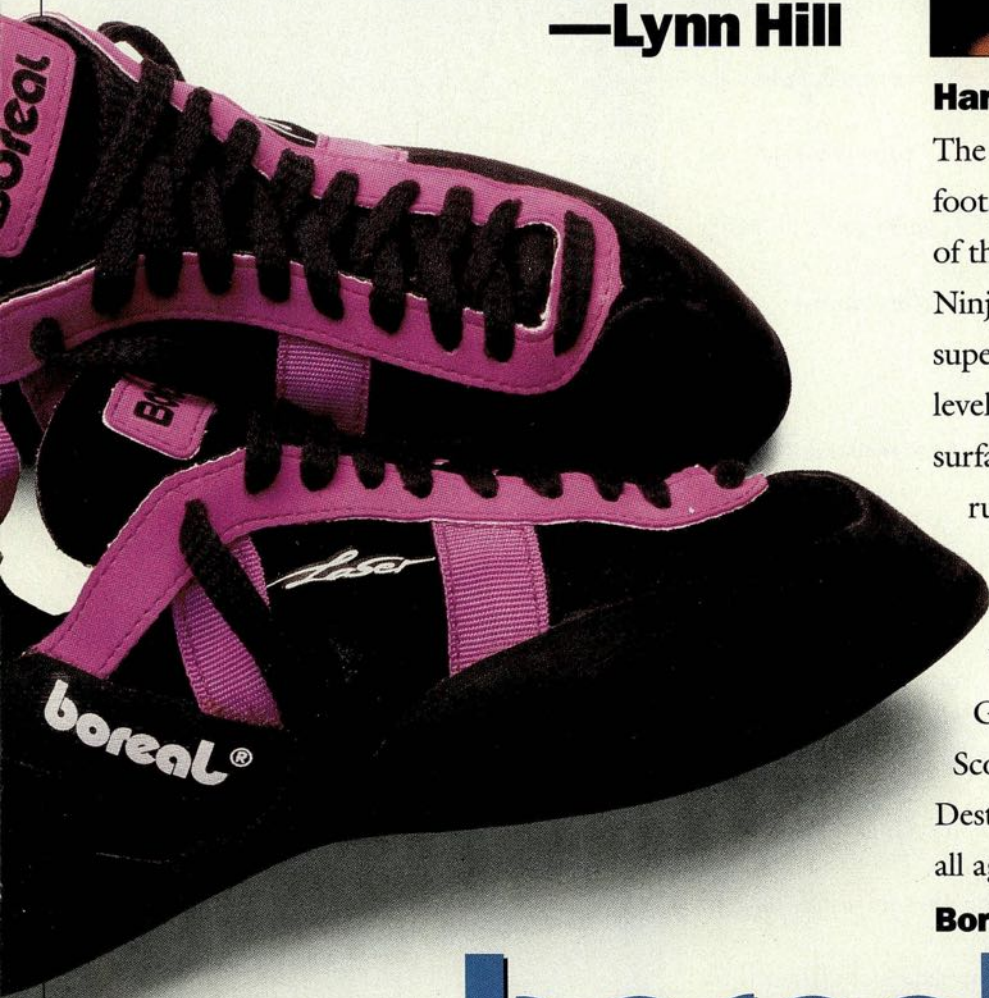
See a demonstration of Polarguard HV at The NorthFace Booth #1601,
the Hoechst Celanese Booth #659 and The Reliance Products Booth #2943.

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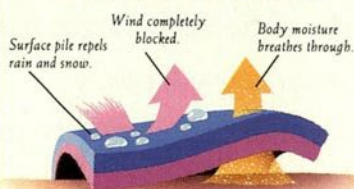
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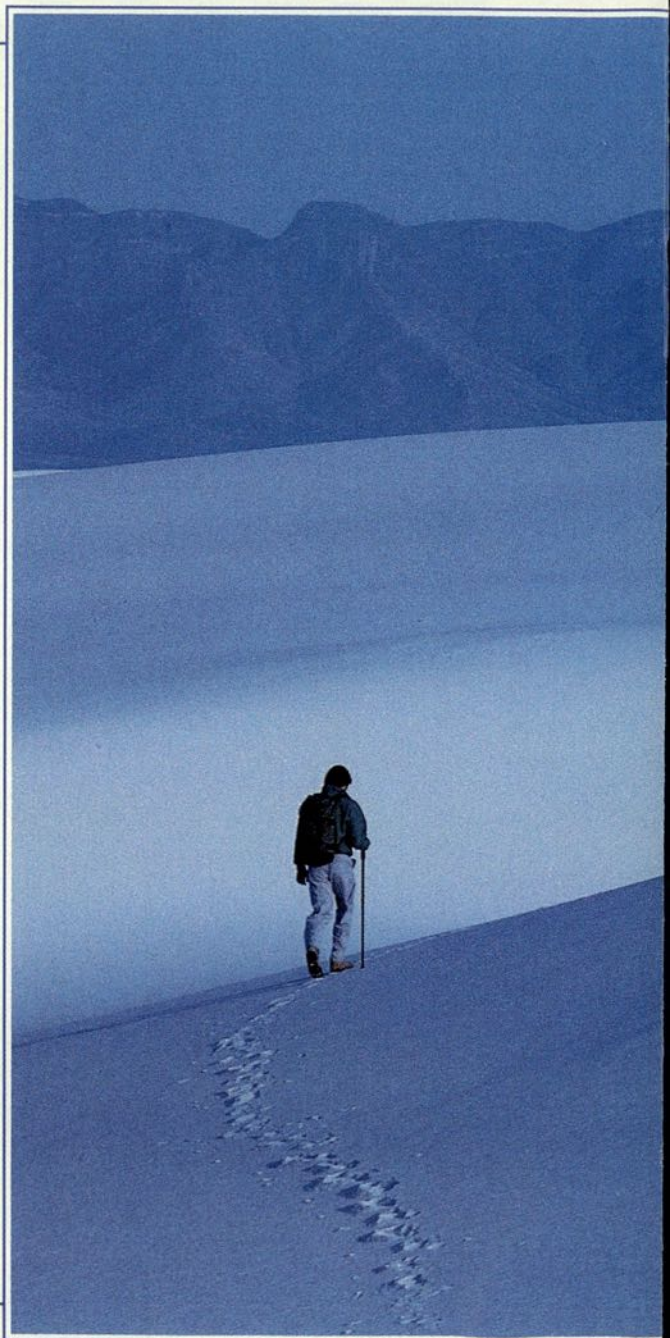


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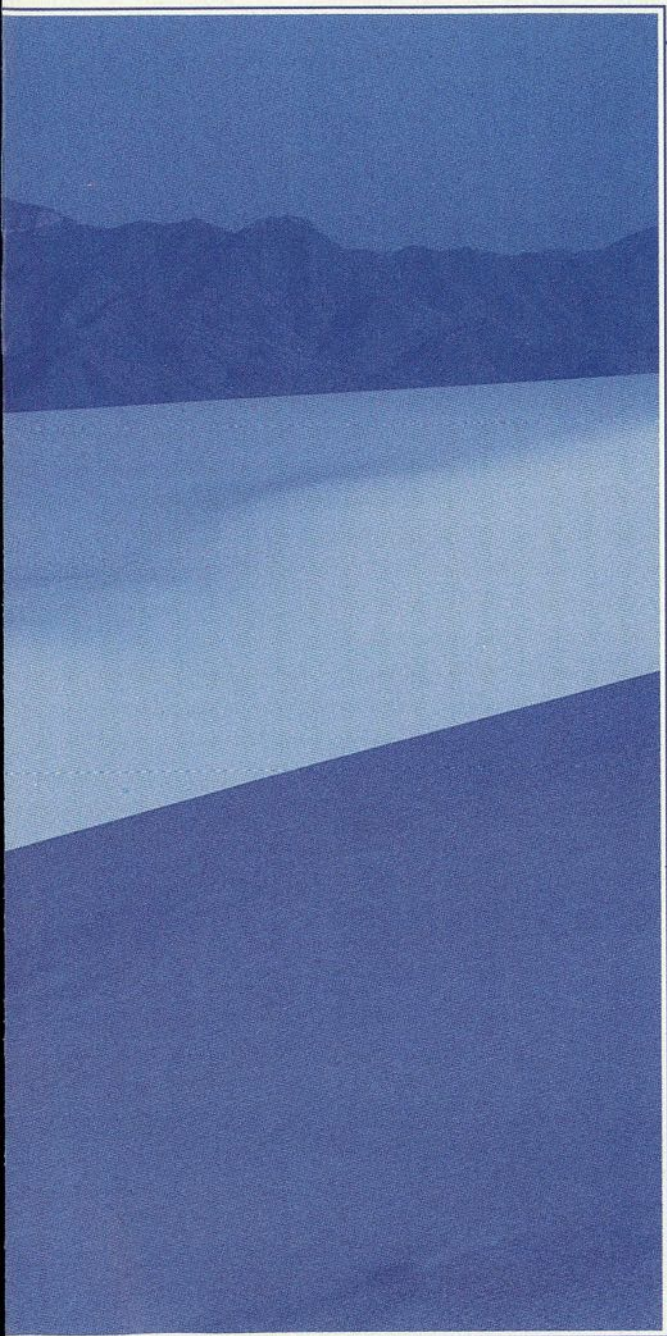
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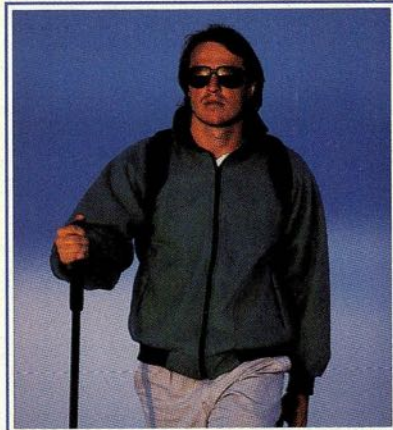
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The Climate Control Fabric™

ON GRAVITY, ROPE AND SENSITIVE FEELINGS.

by Paul Piana

Former Wyoming cowboy and ranch hand, miner, disc jockey and knife sharpener, Paul Piana won attention in 1988 with the first free ascent of the Salathe Wall, with Todd Skinner. Today, a professional rock climber, he travels the world, putting up new routes of formidable difficulty, as well as lecturing and writing on climbing.

I like a good rope, I always have. In fact, I consider myself a rope connoisseur. This page will start to make you one, too.

The first thing to know is that judging rope and choosing rope is primarily tactile. You use your hands. So first off, you have to get in touch with your feelings.

What some might call "supple," I call "flimsy."

Rule number one about feelings is this: If you love the way it feels from the first touch, the feeling won't last.

Rope should feel a little stiff at first. If it doesn't, the sheath is woven too loosely. The rope will wear quickly, and, in a fall, it will tend to overstretch (and the more a rope stretches, the weaker it gets).

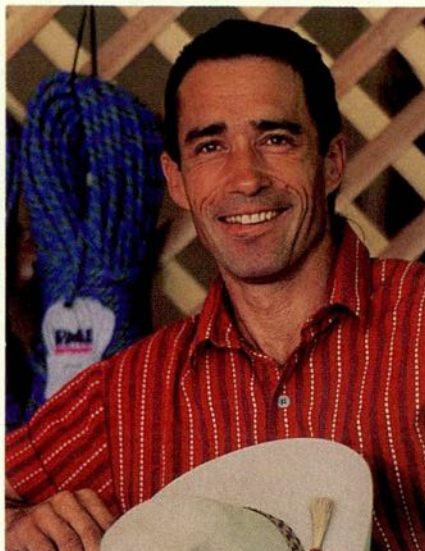
But if the rope feels stiff at first, it will relax in the first couple of outings, and then it will feel good, and stay feeling good, for quite a while.

Remember, there comes a time when every knot must become an unknot.

We climbers spend a lot of time tying and untying knots. This is where the handling characteristics of a rope are most obvious. And here again, the weave in the sheath is critical.

If the weave is too tight, the rope is stiff and hard to tie. If the weave is too loose, the knot "melts down" and is nearly impossible to untie.

When you're buying a new rope, let your hands guide you to a rope that feels a little on the stiff side. The "hand" will soon soften with use, the woven sheath will prolong the rope's life, and you won't have annoying unknottings.



The law of gravity is strictly enforced.

Since you depend on your rope to return to earth at a slower velocity than 32 feet per second per second, buying rope should involve criteria beyond just the price and the color.

Strength, for example. You should compare the UIAA fall ratings. Then compare the weight. Two ropes with a nominal diameter of 11mm might vary in their fall ratings, because one is markedly heavier than the other. In ropemaking, everything is a trade-off.

Notice, I said the "nominal diameter." A rope manufacturer can call his rope an 11 millimeter when the average diameter is actually 11.5mm or 11.6mm. And some do. You may be getting more nylon yarn for your money, but you're also hauling more weight.

One other thing. There's a trend toward ultralight ropes among sport climbers (I use one, the PMI Dynamic 9.9mm). But I don't recommend them for the average climber, because an ultralight will only take roughly half the falls of an 11mm. So unless you're climbing out on the edge, where a few ounces make a big difference, I'd advise using an 11mm or 10.5mm.

A dry treatment should stick to the rope, not to your fingers.

I have long thought that "dry" ropes were more of a marketing gimmick than actual product advantage. Most coatings cracked and flaked off in no time, or, if they were wax-based, they rubbed off and left a sticky residue on your hands.

PMI's new dry treatment is an impregnation, not a coating. It utilizes a new water-resistant chemical and a sonic process that bonds it to all the fibers in the rope. In the test tank, the PMI UltraDry™ floated on top of the water for weeks. It's the first dry rope that lives up to its name.

Now, what kind of feeling do you get from the price tag?

Frankly, as a professional climber, I don't usually have to pay for ropes anymore. But that doesn't mean I don't know what the deal is.

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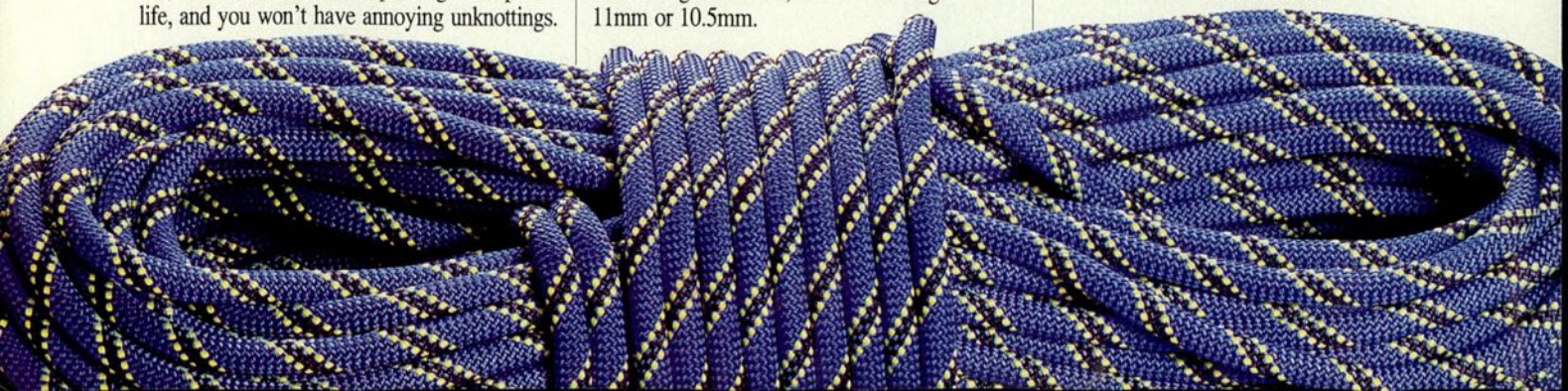
I have been using PMI's rope exclusively since they gave me one to try last year. It has the handling, durability and light weight I like. I like the colors, too. And, it goes without saying, I like the price.

But, as both a connoisseur of rope and a formerly dirt-poor rock climber, I've got to say I'd probably appreciate it even more if I'd had to pay for it.



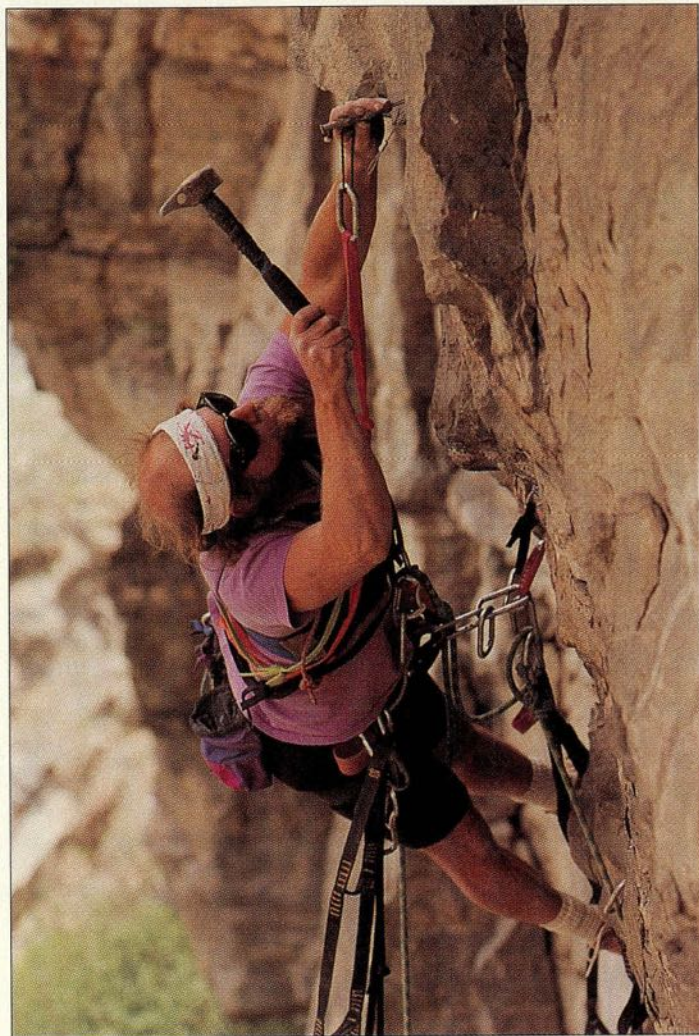
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Photo: Beth Wald

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Cover: Jean-Baptiste Tribout (aka Jibé) on his new Smith Rock route, *Just Do It* (5.14c), the hardest rock climb in the United States.

Photo: Mike Houska

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Is a carabiner just a biner? See our review to find out.
 Photo: Michael Kennedy

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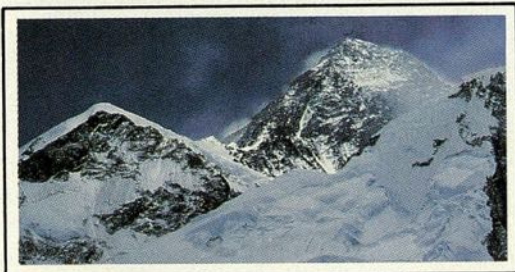


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Tibetans had long called it Chomolungma, "Goddess Mother of the World," but it wasn't until 1852 that British surveyors identified it as the highest point on the planet. Thirteen years later the mountain was renamed for Sir George Everest, Surveyor General of India from 1830 to 1843.

To early climbers, the great peak was doubly remote. Its sheer height made it as inaccessible as the mountains of the moon. Moreover, Tibet barred outsiders until 1920, and Nepal prohibited access until 1951.

The southern route was at last successfully climbed by Sir John Hunt's expedition in 1953. On the day that Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay stood together on the roof of the world,

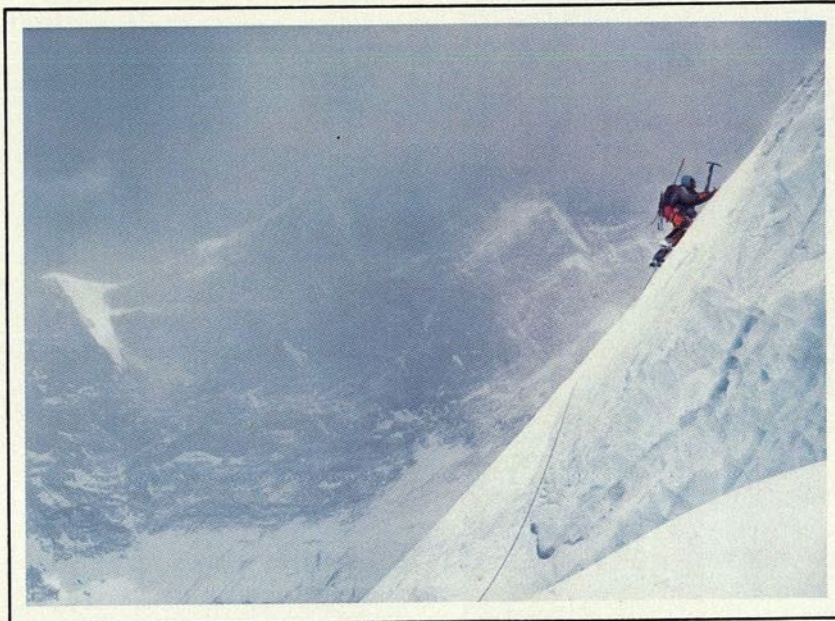


Earth's highest peak as viewed from Kala Pattar.

it seemed Everest could challenge man no longer.

But there were still untried climbing techniques and untried routes. In 1963, the American Expedition was the first to ascend the west face and, in 1978, climbers achieved the first ascent without oxygen tanks, beginning the so-called "purist" approach.

One thing that cannot change is the simple fact



Climber seen at 24,000 feet on the icy east face of Everest.

The Inexhaustible Challenge of Everest.

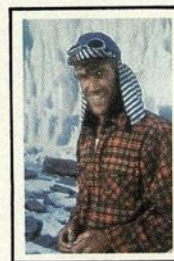
of Hillary and Tenzing's breakthrough success. In its honor, 35 years later almost to the day, another team put a man on the summit of Everest. Unlike their famous predecessors, they climbed without

extra oxygen and established a new route up the treacherous east face.

Although they traveled different routes by different means, both teams marked the times of their historic Everest ascents with Rolex Chronometers.

As an interesting footnote to history, Tenzing's son reports


that his father's timepiece continues to run in excellent condition.

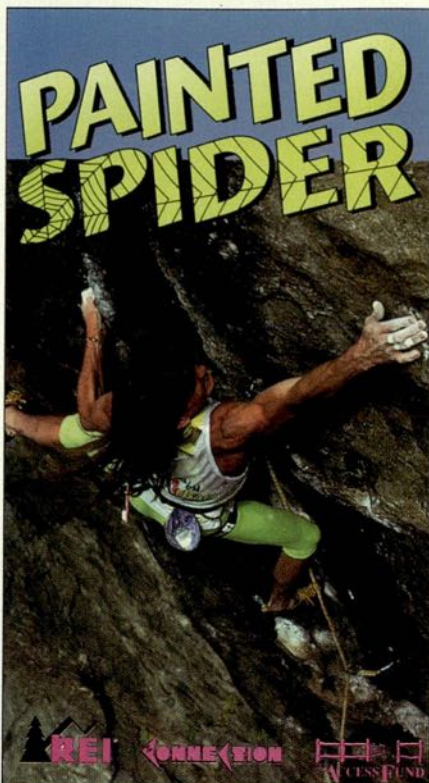


Sir Edmund Hillary, 1953.



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Rave reviews

Equipment reviews are among the most popular features in *Climbing*, judging from countless letters to the editor and all those quick notes scribbled on the backs of renewal notices. Last year we commissioned an extensive readership survey by an outside agency, Simmons Market Research, that showed that equipment reviews, along with articles on technique and training, are more in demand than any other aspect of our editorial mix. Our survey also pointed out that the readers of *Climbing* spend an average of more than \$400 a year on technical climbing gear. I'm betting your cash outlay has something to do with your thirst for more information on equipment. With so many products being phased in, phased out, and tinkered with, it's getting even harder to decide what gear is best. Why shouldn't you expect *Climbing* to help you make those choices?

Our testing methods, however, are at the center of an ongoing behind-the-scenes controversy involving *Climbing* and a number of equipment manufacturers who disagree with some of our evaluations. We'd like to hear more directly from our readers on this subject. By telling us what you want from *Climbing's* equipment reviews and whether or not you're getting it, we'll be able to gauge their accuracy and usefulness better.

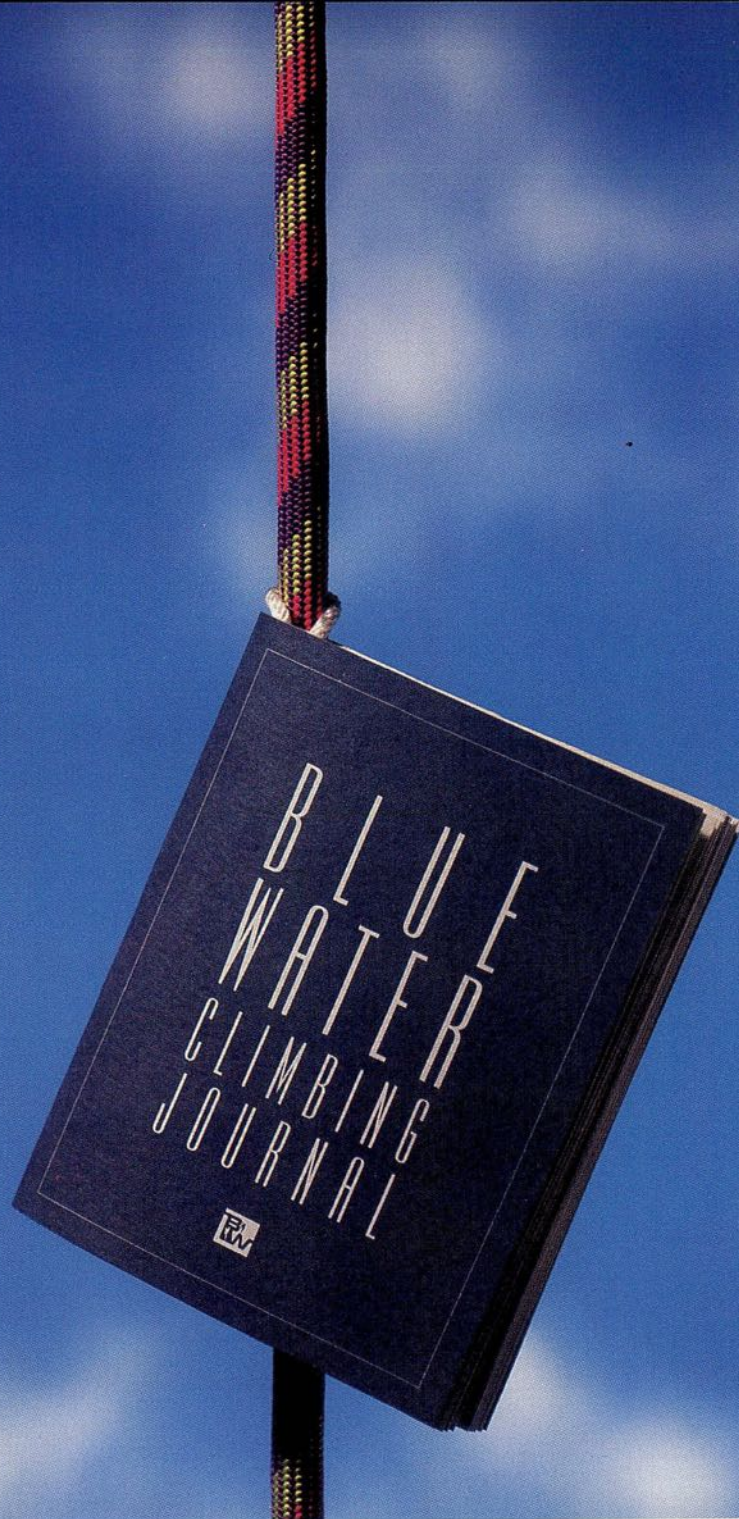
But first, an explanation. We believe the best way to test climbing gear is to use it, and use it a lot, in the environment for which it's designed. This sort of testing is as simple as it sounds. First we decide on a product category to evaluate — say, ropes or camming devices. Then we gather samples of all products available in that category. By studying the manufacturers' literature and advertising, we determine a product's intended use and decide on a set

of parameters to evaluate. Finally, we use that product under a variety of common climbing conditions and report what we discover to the reader.

We standardize our testing methods wherever we can. And we try to be as objective and consistent with our criticisms as possible. For example, in our rock shoe review in *Climbing* no. 132 we noted the "painful fit" of shoes with a slingshot rand. This isn't because none of these shoes fit our editors' feet, but because slingshot rands make any shoe less comfortable by forcing your toes to the front of your shoes. The conclusion is simply that shoes with slingshot rands are great for short routes, but you'd be better off with traditional rands for longer climbs.

One criticism we have heard is that our reviews reflect the bias of *Climbing's* editors, particularly our equipment editor, Duane Raleigh. Indeed, Duane does most of the testing — that's his job. But he doesn't work in a vacuum. All of us on the editorial staff are involved in the testing process; for example, I climbed in 22 of the 38 shoes we evaluated in this year's rock shoe review. We also solicit the opinions of other climbers, retailers, and suppliers; their influence on our published results is substantial. In addition, we often visit manufacturers' factories in order to get a first-hand look at how a particular piece of gear is designed, produced, and tested. And we often conduct our own strength tests, as we did by pull-testing over 30 carabiners to failure for this issue's review.

One thing we don't do is exchange favorable product reviews for advertising space commitments, nor do we print press releases thinly disguised as editorial material. We don't allow manufacturers to preview our product reviews, although we double check the



This May Be The Most Important Climbing Book Yet To Be Written.

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accuracy of prices, weights, and other specifications with them.

When a manufacturer disputes our published evaluations, we review what we've said and how we came to our conclusions. We welcome corrections of any factual errors, but when it comes to a difference of opinion regarding a particular product's performance or usefulness, we usually suggest that the manufacturer write a letter to the editor. This doesn't satisfy everyone, however, and like many other magazines that run critical reviews, over the years we've lost considerable revenue when companies who disagreed with our results cancelled their advertising. Nevertheless, we feel that readers' interests are best served by independent, objective evaluations of products on the climbing market.

A lot of hard research and testing goes into the development of climbing equipment. But we're climbers, not scientists, so as much as we try to communicate to you *why* a certain piece of climbing equipment works the way it does, we're more interested in *how* and *if* it works. In the end we want to know one thing: does the equipment you're buying live up to its promises?

So what makes our opinion worth more than anyone else's? Nothing, I'd say — if it was just a matter of opinion. But there's a lot more to it than that. In addition to evaluating specific product categories, we also give you as much information as possible so you can choose the appropriate piece of gear for your needs. We try to demystify the numbers so that you understand what's important and what's not.

I have to believe we're doing something right with our equipment reviews, otherwise you wouldn't be asking for more. Now it's your turn. What do you like and dislike about *Climbing's* equipment reviews? How accurate have you found them? Are there certain products we've not reviewed that you'd like to see us cover? How much do you use these reviews? And what can we do to make them more helpful?

Let us know, and we'll print a sample of your comments in a future issue.

— Michael Kennedy

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I can't get 'em open when I'm riding. They melt in the heat and they get like a rock when it's cold. They give me gas. If I don't drink a lot of liquids with them sometimes I get a stomachache! They leave a nasty aftertaste, and I have to chew them so much my jaw gets sore."

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Witness

In reference to John M. Taladay's germane piece, "Big Brother isn't watching" (no 132), there is one small but outstanding oversight.

Although our federal government is sometimes a capable bureaucracy, it often needs outside counsel. In this case, it's important to recognize the work of the American Alpine Club's past and current presidents, Jim McCarthy and Jed Williamson. Both worked as expert witnesses for the defense. Their on-site inspection with the attorney, and their subsequent testimony, were key factors in the decision reached in the lower court and later upheld in the Court of Appeals.

—Jonathan Waterman
Crested Butte, Colorado

You asked

A recent letter-to-the-editor asked what advertisers thought of the focus of the magazine. I hope this reply sheds some light. When we introduced the Thor-lo outdoors sock line in 1988 we chose *Climbing* as one of our first consumer publications to advertise in. *Climbing's* high-quality content, editorial integrity, and strong standards on ethics and safety seemed synergistic with Thor-Lo's commitments to quality products, environmental protection, and innovative marketing.

We were not disappointed. Our company's outdoors product category is growing at an exponential rate. Not only did our ads in *Climbing* help legitimize our products with climbers, but the staff of *Climbing* provided us with great sales and marketing support. I personally feel so strongly about *Climbing* that I have recommended it as an advertising resource to our suppliers and other outdoor companies.

As both an advertiser and an ardent amateur climber I take exception to the notion that *Climbing* should give a great deal of focus to the lower technical ends of our sport. Because of the evolution in standards there are numerous 5.8-and-lower classics already documented in the literature. Most recreational climbers will never climb even a fraction of these already well-known and well-established classic routes.

With advances in techniques and equipment even 5.7 weekenders like myself are able to visualize and lead multi-pitch 5.5 and 5.6 routes on sight and on natural protection. So why publish them? Many of the Boy Scouts and YMCA campers I teach follow at the 5.5 level on their second or third time out! Some are even better!

We simply do not need to encourage



glory-hungry novices to try to "lead new routes." This will only result in lots of accidents, lawsuits, and a nightmare of

ugly bolting problems. Nor do we need to glorify new low-end alpine climbs so Grade 4 scramblers can see their names in print. We will only encourage trashing of fragile alpine environments, create lots of unnecessary mountain rescues, and ruin the backcountry for those of us who really want to get away from the crowds. For the recreational climber, satisfaction should come from the fun, spiritual joy, and great exercise that come from the sport, not from some trumped-up sense of false accomplishment.

Finally, we do not feel that *Climbing* focuses overly on the superstars of the sport. Having been a college basketball coach and worked in the sporting goods industry with world-famous athletes, I am amazed at how humble, polite, and sensitive many of our best climbers really are. Frankly, those people who have sacrificed and suffered much to advance our sport deserve the recognition and praise they get in the pages of *Climbing*.

In conclusion, from the folks at Thor-Lo, *Climbing* magazine gets an A+!

—Mike Shadrout
Central Regional Manager, Thor-Lo
Statesville, North Carolina

Honorable mention

Regarding the K2 movie review (*Climbing* no. 131): Another climber filmed but not mentioned is Nazir Sabir, a Pakistani who has actually climbed K2 and Broad Peak, among other Karakoram peaks. His real name was used in the film and he is the only old-timer involved.

—Bill Kim
Edmonds, Washington

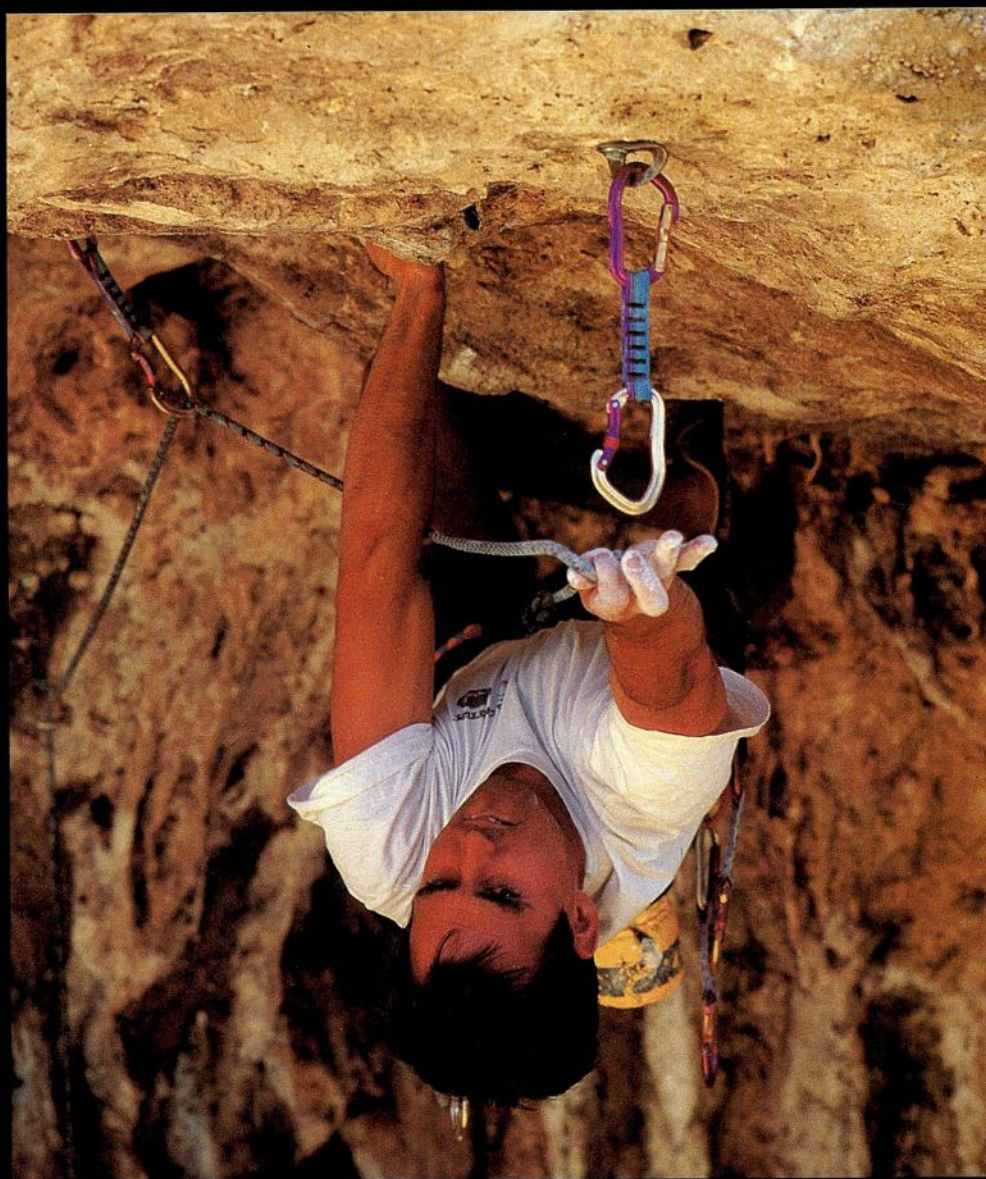
Jump for joy

I'd like to correct a mistake I made in my article on Front Range bouldering ("Pumping Sanstone: The Sequel," no. 130). Prior to Steve Mammen's incredible effort on *Never Say Never*, the face received an ascent by Jimmy Ratzlaff, who ran up to the face, kicked off it once, and leaped to the summit — one of the wildest run-and-jump problems I've heard of. He did this on his eighth try, a mere week after *Outside* magazine had declared the problem unscalable. Before you all rush out to Eldo to run up *Never Say Never*, bear in mind that Ratzlaff is 6' 7" tall and an ex-basketball player to boot.

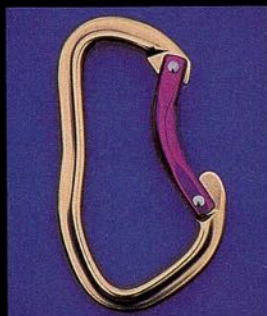
Also, the crucial left toehold on *The Meathook* snapped shortly after the article went to print. This hold is now four times bigger than before. Starting off the rock beneath *Left Eliminator* (Top 40, No. 4) is

The Choice Of Champions

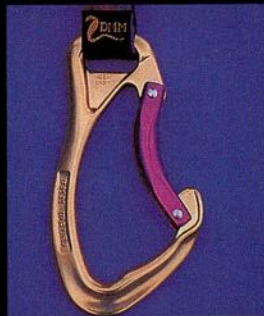
- François Legrand
- Mike Owen
- Itmite - B.U.
- Randy Leavitt
- Bobbi Bensman
- Ben Moon
- Fliss Butler
- François Petit
- Mick Lovatt
- Carol Nash
- Steve Petro
- Lisa Gnade



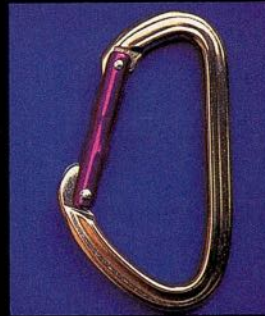
Randy Leavitt on Holy Power 5.13a, Kern River Limestone, California. Photo: Bill Freeman



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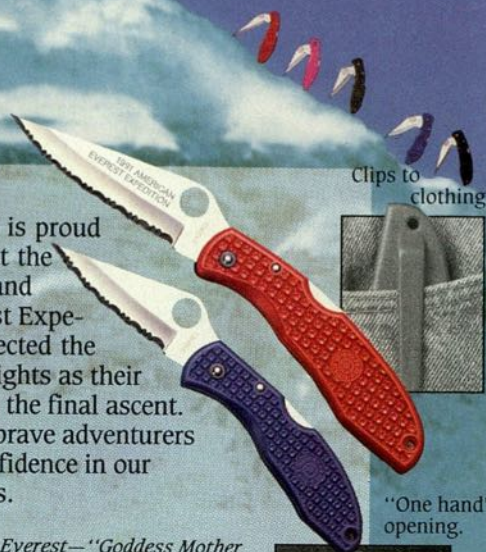
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now V7 or V8, not V10 as listed. From the ground the problem is still unrepeated and still probably V11.

—John Sherman
El Paso, Texas

Lock and load

The Petzl Grigri is a locking belay device that has enjoyed wide acceptance, particularly among sport climbers and in climbing gyms, since its introduction a little more than a year ago. Recently, concerns have been raised as to the suitability of this device for use in situations involving fixed anchors.

The Grigri is designed for use with UIAA-certified single 10–11mm ropes. By UIAA standards, such ropes may generate a maximum impact force of 2640 pounds in a standard test fall, which involves dropping a 176-pound weight 16.5 feet onto an 8.25-foot length of rope. This very severe test uses a completely static belay, as the end of the rope is fixed to an immovable object. Numerous such tests have been made using the Grigri (attached to the immovable object) as a belay device, resulting in maximum impact forces ranging from 1320 to 1975 pounds. Such forces are easily compatible with modern fixed protection designed for climbing. [Editor's note: see *Climbing* no. 126 for a complete discussion of the UIAA testing procedure].

With a dynamic belay, the energy produced by the falling climber is absorbed not only by the rope stretching, but by friction through points of protection, the natural give of the belayer's and climber's bodies, knots tightening, and rope slippage through the belay device. In addition, some of the fall's energy is absorbed by the weight of the belayer.

At times, the shock load of a fall can pull the belayer off his feet, especially if he is not anchored (as is common practice on sport climbs and in climbing gyms). This can be beneficial, making the belay more dynamic, but the resulting loss of control (either through dropping the rope or burning the belayer's hands if the rope slips excessively through the belay device) can be catastrophic. A truly static belay (as is used in the UIAA rope test) will prevent this potential loss of control as there is no rope slippage, but none of the fall's energy will be absorbed by the weight of the belayer and higher forces on the anchors will result.

The Grigri affords the energy absorption of belayer inertia (without loss of belay control) and a small amount of rope slippage (two to 50 centimeters, depending on rope diameter and condition). Assuming that the Grigri is fixed to the belayer and not to an immovable object, one can

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expect a maximum force at the fixed anchor of 900 to 1100 pounds.

There is no consensus that the only way to climb is with a dynamic belay. Indeed, it is possible for most dynamic belay systems to lock up, thus neutralizing the benefits of rope slippage. When an individual enters the risky playground of climbing, no belay system can guarantee against anchor failure or injury. It is up to the climber to evaluate each pitch and to accept the consequences of his actions.

It is important to note that the Grigri is not "self-locking" in that its function depends on the user. The Grigri was designed to avoid many of the hazards inherent in other belay methods, especially belayer error. We will be very happy when we are able to produce a locking belay device that affords a true dynamic belay, but until that day we prefer to let the anchors take the shock loads rather than allow climbers to hit the ground.

— Steve Hudson, President
PMI, U.S. Distributor for Petzl
LaFayette, Georgia

Pipe bomb

I applaud John Hart's article, "Humpty Dumpty Shat on a Wall" (*Climbing* no. 130) for its all-too-important message. After watching a party launch loaded plastic bags from Long Ledge on Half Dome last year, I submit this alternative:

Take a 14-inch long piece of four-inch diameter ABS pipe, glue a pipe cap on one end, and equip the other end with a threaded cap. Attach a loop of webbing with duct tape for easy handling, just as you would a water bottle. Pour two cups of Kitty Litter in the bottom of the pipe in case your Ziploc bags leak. This "poop bomb" fits in the haul bag and is virtually indestructible, although it adds a few pounds.

— Dean Rosnau
Mammoth Lakes, California

Corrections. In *Climbing* no. 132, the climber in the photograph on page 85 was misidentified; she is Sue Harrington. On page 48, the photo of the pre-Olympic climbing wall in Chambéry, France, is by Christophe Gaillard. On page 50, the photo of Gary Ryan is by Kevin Powell. All photos in the article "How to Improve Your Climbing Photography, Part I," were by John Sherman.

We welcome letters to the editor as well as any published articles related to our sport that you feel our readers may find of interest. Letters may be edited for clarity and available space. Please include full name, address, and daytime telephone number. Please send to: Letters, *Climbing*, P.O. Box 339, Carbondale, CO 81623.

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Photo by Kevin Vesel

OFF THE WALL

Compiled by Alison Osius

Media Watchdog

■ DestivElle. After the exciting news came out of her superb winter solo of the Eiger Nordwand,

didn't understand is the story's opening comment, that Destivelle, "seems fragile. One imagines a woman at home, stuck next to the stove..." What?

■ Climbers in Hollywood. *Science* magazine (May) wrote an article on how Lou Reichardt, neurobiologist and member of the first

climbing for the first time. In it, the writer, Hodding Carter IV, and his actor friend Preston Maybank go to Joshua Tree and hire an instructor, Pat Dennis (who seems to be the only person around without an incredibly preppy name). Carter doesn't like climbing and his friend loves it. Writes Carter, "Sensing I blamed him for getting us into this, Preston pleaded, 'Whatever you do, just don't refer to me as a would-be actor.'"

■ The buzz in the Bee. *The Sacramento Bee* (April 29) ran a comprehensive article on rock climbing by Matt Peters that included interviews with Dan Osman, Max Jones, Eric Perlman, and Dan Snitily, and large color photographs of "Judy" (Jody) Rozin and Howie Feinsilver.

Jones, a leading climber 10–15 years ago, stopped climbing in 1982, feeling there was nothing much else to do, as traditional climbers were limited to climbing cracks in faces. He began again last fall when a friend took him out to Donner Summit and, he says, "There were bolts on all these faces that we (had) thought would be real cool when we were climbing." He described a long-ago conversation with Jim Bridwell, who told him that climbing overhangs was the future of rock climbing. "And I thought, 'Maybe it is, but a lot of people are going to die doing it,'" said Jones, who "now stands — and falls — corrected."

Jones says, "I see (sport climbing) as a thing that saved climbing as a sport."



Catherine Destivelle, portrait of a mountaineer.

Catherine Destivelle of Paris was in the media spotlight. Here she is playing model and being interviewed in the French edition of *Elle* magazine (March).

Discussing her mountaineering career, Destivelle says, "Mountains are only dangerous if one doesn't know them well. One has to be logical."

She said that on the Eiger there was "not enough time to be afraid, not enough time to get cold," although she froze the tip of one finger without realizing it. She mostly climbed without gloves.

At the article's conclusion, she says, "Sometimes I fault myself for living only for myself." She foresees someday finding her "rope companion," having children, and stopping climbing. "The mountain, it is not all of my life."

The article mentions that Destivelle, 32, plays the flute (she has a sister who is a pianist and another who is a violinist), and is a film and reading aficionado. The only thing we

American expedition to the top of K2, served as the basis for the character Harold in the movie "K2." The film is inspired in part by the successful ascent of that mountain by Reichardt and his Seattle attorney friend, Jim Wickwire. Reichardt is quoted as calling the film a composite of life-and-death mountaineering experiences, rather than an account of that expedition. But, he says, "Three quarters of those things have happened to me at one time or another."

■ Light reading. Don't let the illustration in the "I've Fallen and I Can't Get Up" article in *M Magazine* (May) put you off. It's a hilarious piece in a familiar genre: a journalist writing about



Portrait of a rock climber, as shown in *M Magazine*.

Perlman, a writer, photographer, and film producer, says, on the

Overheard

"These little 90-pound women can hang on edges that you'd have to be a 5.14 climber to use" Utah's Geoff Weigand, after climbing with the 5'4", 90-pound Catherine Gloesner of Belgium.

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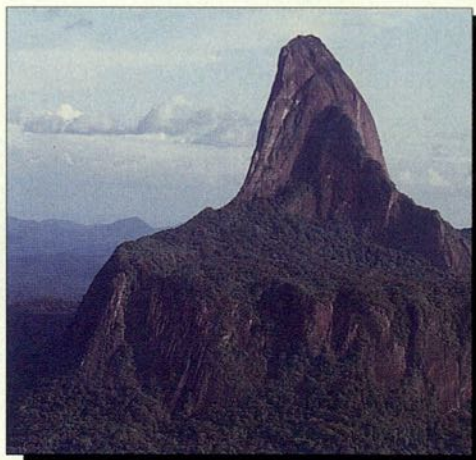
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same subject, "I enjoy the hell out of it. But it is not the be-all and end-all of the sport. Those who confine themselves to sport climbing are missing several of the most meaningful aspects of mountaineering ... the freedom of the hills and to go your own way."

■ **TV watch.** Air date for the ESPN Expedition Earth program, "Verti-



Aratitiyope in Venezuela.

cal Journey to the Lost World," is Friday, November 6, 9:30 p.m. EST. The film takes Rick Ridgeway, Michael Graber, Paul Piana, Todd Skinner, and Monique Dalmasso of France into Venezuela to climb the 2000-foot east face of Aratitiyope. The group travelled by canoe up the Amazon and Orinoco Rivers, and among the ancient Yanomami Indian tribe.

P.S. They did climb the face, and Piana got bitten by a piranha.

■ **Video visibility.** First it was Rob DeConto on MTV, on an oft-aired Metallica video. These days it's two other climbers, Peter Croft and Bobbi Bensman, filmed and interviewed as part of an MTV series on outdoor athletes.

Croft, a renowned climber and a guide for the Yosemite Mountaineering School, says things the audience may not be expecting from someone shown soloing steep cracks hundreds of feet up, such as, "I don't think of it as pushing the envelope.

"It's more like getting swept away with a certain feeling.

"I look at it as a chance to find out something about myself," he says. "You have to be really honest about yourself. You have to be able to look at yourself and say, 'Am I ready for this?'"

Bensman, a full-time climber and a model for Danskin, is shown in footage taken at Mount Lemmon, Arizona. The segment starts out sideways, with her looking as if she is crawling. Artsy, maybe, but weird.

She says, "I think if you dedicate your life to something, you'll get really good at it.

"I sleep in my car, like, five or six months a year and I cook on my tailgate."

Later, making a clip, she comments casually, "It's really a bummer if there's cactus in the rope."

■ **Monkey business.** The image shown here has been showing up all over the place in technical magazines such as *Electronic Design*, advertising Vicor power technology, or, in the United Kingdom, advertising Unigraphics and Cad-cams systems. What we're wondering is why the second is belaying the leader, when both are top-roped from above? And why, since they're rock climbing, the second is dangling an ice axe, or the leader, given said top-rope, is carrying all those Hexes? And where the heck did he get those old Royal Robbins shoes?

■ **Soloist.** In an ad in the *Bangor Daily News* (May 30-31), Acadia Trust of Portland, Maine, refers to its staff as soloists, just like Edmund Hillary: "True, the first Everest ascent owed much to the horde that shouldered the food and gear. Still, Hillary's own legs, lungs, heart, and sinew served as engines to propel him to the planet's top. Hillary's conquest mirrors the invaluable spirit of a soloist." Tenzing Norgay, who summited with Hillary, might be surprised to hear Hillary identified as such.

■ **Not guilty.** This goes out to all you cruel friends of Jeff Achey, *Climbing* magazine's new photo/copy editor, who have been asking him, "Hey, if I got that job could I put that many pictures of myself in the magazine too?!" Remember, *Climbing* works at least two months ahead. The series of bouldering shots in question was laid out by our art director before Achey came on board.

Slings & Pieces

■ **Buzzwords.** Or, continuing tales of climbers' names that have fallen into climbing vernacular. "Lantzing" refers to marking a dash of chalk either just above or below a key hold. "I use a lot of chalk," Colin Lantz of Boulder acknowledges cheerfully. "Some people say too much."

Then there's "Gaston," used as a verb, as in, "Did you Gaston here?" It means to grab a hold sideways, thumb down, elbow up. It's named for Gaston Rebuffat, shown in a photo in one of his books using both hands in opposing laybacks in a wide crack (looking as if he's trying to pull the crack apart). Originally, the term meant to use both hands that way — good Beta for, say, the crux move on *Acid Crack* in Joshua Tree — while now it can mean one hand.

■ **Air time.** Lisa Giobbi, a dancer and choreographer, has been per-

Overheard

"We sold our wedding rings.

We never wore 'em anyway." Annie Smith, on how she and her husband Kurt (who won a national title last year) financed an upcoming trip to Europe.

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forming a movement theatre piece in which she is suspended in midair for 30 minutes, hanging in a climbing harness. The piece is "largely dance, with a few circus ideas, and technology that I make happen with a lot of climbing gear," she says. "Carabiners are my best friend, and there's webbing in virtually everything I do."

The piece is inspired by the poem "Falling" by James Dickey, about the (true) death of a stewardess who



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Lisa Giobbi, a dancer who uses invisible climbing gear.

was sucked out into space when an airplane door opened. The woman was found in a field in Nebraska.

Giobbi's performance, said to be extremely powerful, is about the "process of a fall," says Giobbi, "and having that much time, 30,000 feet, to think about it. It's about her discovery that she is falling, that she's going to die, and the kind of panic involved, and about spinning and turning, and acceptance." Eventually, Giobbi says, the idea emerges of actually using the fall time, even playing with it.

Giobbi, 30, who has worked with the Momix and Pilobolus dance theatres and is choreographer for the Big Apple Circus, has performed this piece at One Dream Theatre in Manhattan and all over Europe in the past year. She also reworked and choreographed it for a ballerina at La Scala in Milan.

Giobbi climbs a little, and has always worn a climbing harness for the performance, but hers was old, and its buckles gave her sores. Recently, a friend and fellow hang-dogger gave her a Petzl Butterfly harness, "black so the audience can't see it," she says, "and *much* more comfortable."

Since then she has started haunting New York's Paragon and EMS climbing stores. "Sometimes I'll now start with the gear, see something and create a piece from it. There are all kinds of illusions that I wouldn't have thought of without seeing the gear."

She eventually plans to extend the falling piece into a full evening performance, using elements as varied as the archangel's fall in the

Bible, and mountaineering falls, which she is now researching.

Passages

■ **Died.** Tony Soler (1918–1992), May 10, in Silver Spring, Maryland. Among the many attending his funeral were his longtime friend Ray Moore, who was second on the first ascents of *Soler* on Devils Tower in 1951 and *Soler/East Face*, Seneca Rocks, West Virginia.

Said Soler once, "You know, really, it's not so much what you did...but it's that you did."

■ **Born.** To Gary and Meg Ryan of Boulder, their first child, Emily, on May 1. Gary is pursuing a full-time climbing/competition career, and Meg, former owner of the Great Herizons climbing school, is director of health services for the Colorado Outward Bound Schools.

■ **Imminent.** A bambino, in September, to J.B. Tribout and Corinne Labrune. Labrune at four months was seen seconding up to 5.12d.

■ **It's official.** Robyn Erbesfield and Didier Raboutou, international climbing champs, have finally set the wedding date: May 8, in her hometown of Atlanta. The couple resides in Toulouse, France.

Also to be wed: Jonathan Water-

man and Deborah Hutchinson, sometime this autumn. Waterman, a contributing editor of *Climbing*, is finishing up his latest book, *In the Shadow of Denali*, and Hutchinson is newly appointed director of Emergency Medical Services for the town of Crested Butte, where the couple recently moved.

■ **Wed.** Two longtime Shawangunks climbers:

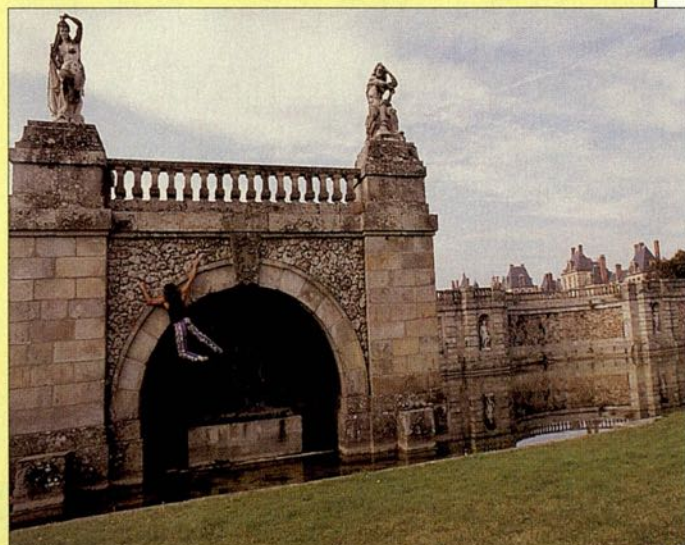
— Hugh Herr, who has made hard first ascents from the Gunks to the Bugaboos to Index, Washington. A double amputee and an analytic thinker, Herr created artificial feet and shanks for his climbing needs, and eventually patented an adjustable socket that can ease amputees' pain. He is pursuing a Ph.D in mechanical engineering at M.I.T. Herr married Lee Blithe, a reporter on a local newspaper he met when she was assigned to interview him, on June 5 in Oxford, Pennsylvania.

— Russ Clune, perhaps the United States' most exhaustively traveled climber, author of many hard first ascents in the Shawangunks, who made the first and still only solo of *Supercrack* (5.12+), and a sales representative for Black Diamond, married Diane Bracalente, an account executive for AT&T and a participant in the 1988 Olympics in field hockey, on June 13 in New Paltz, New York, where the two will live.

Overheard

"Today, climbing is a no-risk sport. Expeditions are nothing but overachiever professionals. They're not climbing for the love of the sport, they're doing it to get over their bad toilet training." Yvon Chouinard, adventurer and owner of Patagonia, Inc., in the Sports Guide (June)

OFF ROUTE



John Mireles bouldering at Fontainebleau. Chateau Fontainebleau, that is.

Please send humorous, dramatic, or blackmail shots to Off The Wall c/o Climbing, P.O. Box 339, Carbondale, CO 81623.

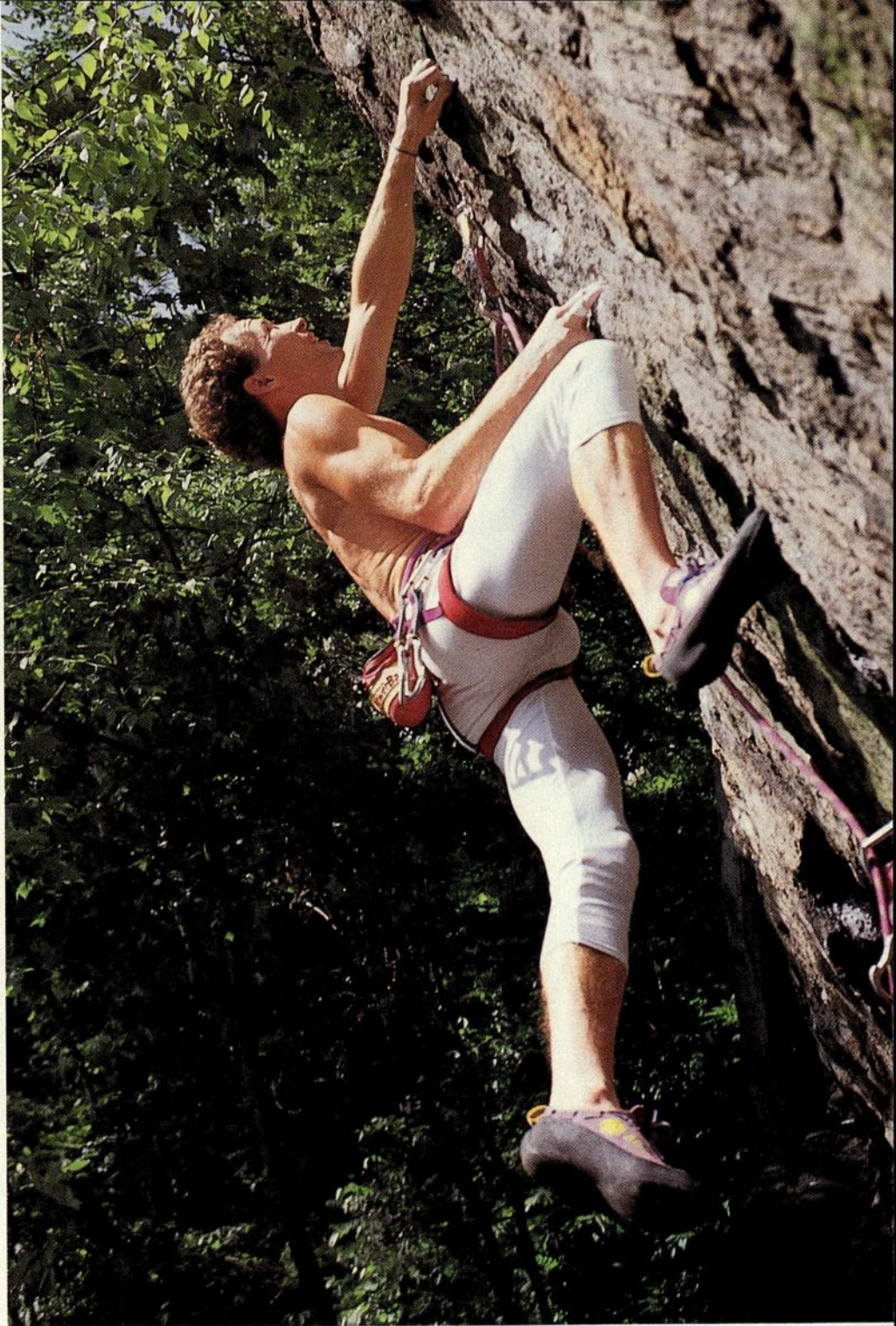
Photo: John Kane

Photo: John Mireles collection

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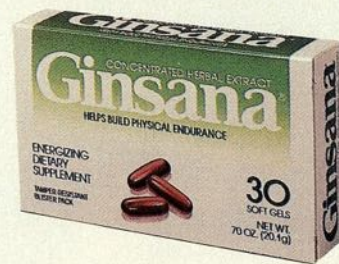
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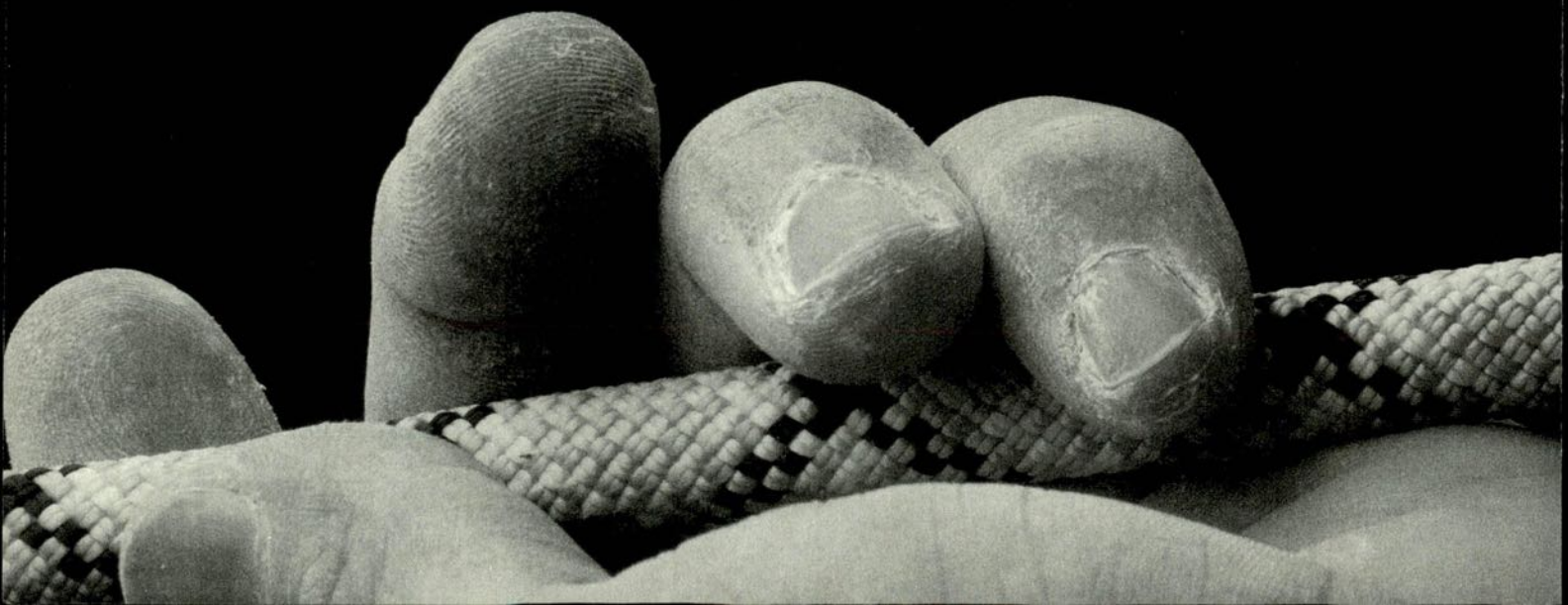
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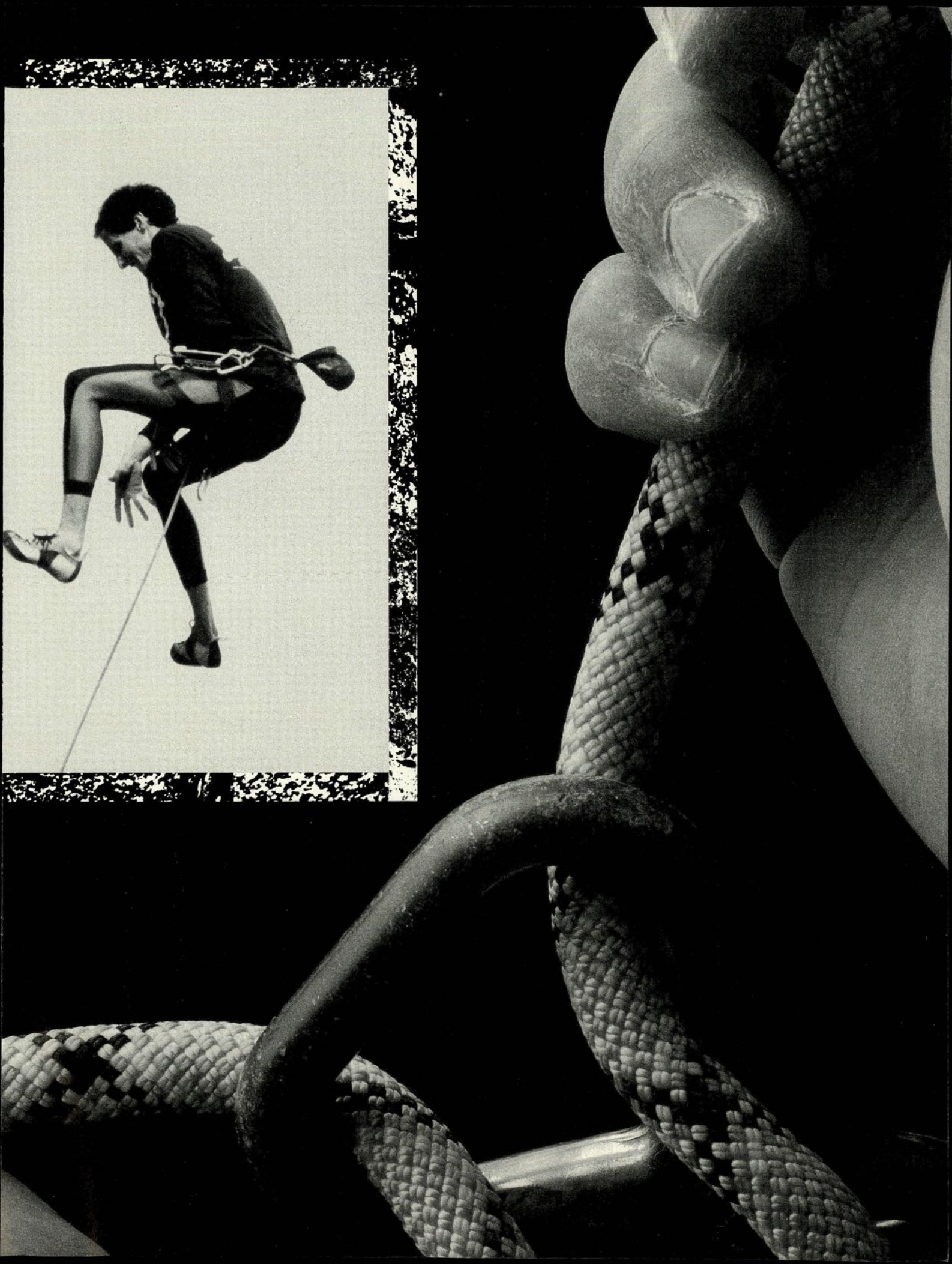
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Chronicle of a storm

Denali, Alaska

Editors' note: May, 1992, on Denali was the worst month ever in the history of Alaskan climbing. A severe storm enveloped North America's highest peak on May 11, creating nearly unbearable conditions in which many would struggle for their lives. Eleven climbers lost that struggle. Following are excerpts from the journal of Matt Culberson, who, with his wife, Julie, had volunteered for a National Park Service mountaineering patrol before the tragedy unfolded.

April 30: Julie and I arrive in Talkeetna from Salt Lake City and finish packing for our stint on the mountain.

May 1: Ron Johnson, a mountaineering ranger for the National Park Service, Keith Nicholson (another volunteer), Julie, and I fly onto the Kahiltna Glacier in big Army Chinook helicopters and land at the Kahiltna International basecamp at 7200 feet. We camp that night at

8000 feet at the junction of the Northeast Fork and main Kahiltna Glacier.

May 3: Climb Kahiltna Dome (12,500 feet) — great views of Foraker and the West Buttress.

May 6: We arrive at the 14,200-foot medical camp on the West Buttress, where we will be based for the next couple of weeks, in minus 25 to 30 degrees Fahrenheit temperatures and substantial winds. Keith has bad frostbite on six fingers.

May 7-8: Build medical camp weatherport, an insulated and heated structure with medical supplies and oxygen where we can treat sick and injured climbers. Keith flies out in a smaller Lama helicopter.

May 10: Good, cold weather. An American climber descends to report that he and his two companions have fallen from Denali Pass at 18,200 feet. His two companions have bad frostbite and are exhausted, and remain at 17,300 feet in

a tent directly below the pass next to a crevasse. They had climbed up via the Muldrow Glacier and lost a fuel can, so are very low on fluids and food.

Ron calls up the Lama from Talkeetna and he and Julie load in when pilot Bill Phillips lands at the weatherport. They fly to the tent site, but it's too steep for the helicopter to land so they climb out on the skids and jump down to the glacier. They package the injured and 20 minutes later the helicopter returns, loads the patients and flies back to the medical camp at 14,200 feet.

Meanwhile Matt has noticed commotion on the West Buttress headwall at 15,300 feet. Climbers are not moving except for one who is waving wildly. Matt radios to Ron and Julie and

A helicopter hovers over an injured Korean climber at 17,800 feet on the Cassin Ridge of Denali.

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when the Lama returns to pick them up they do a fly-by. They see blood and an injured climber, and do another skid-jump dismount and ascend toward the patient. He and his partner had fallen 1000 feet while descending along the fixed lines, which they had opted to not clip into. Broken humerus and head wounds. Ron and Julie load him onto the Lama and pop back down to 14,200 feet, pick up the other two injured climbers, return to the 7200-foot basecamp, and transfer all three rescued climbers to a fixed-wing aircraft, which takes off for the hospital in Anchorage.

May 11: A bad storm hits. It is predicted to be the worst in a decade with winds in excess of 110 miles per hour, heavy snow, and cold temperatures. In the late afternoon two Frenchmen arrive at 14,200 feet and report that one's wife is at the 17,200-foot camp on the West Buttress without food, fuel, or water — and she is too exhausted to descend. The storm has intensified and they are too tired to return to her. Ron, two NOLS instructors — Mike Wood and Willi Peabody — and I head up the Rescue Gully at 5:30 p.m. Julie remains at 14,200 feet to maintain radio and telephone contact between us and the Park Service ranger station in Talkeetna, which is coordinating the overall rescue effort.

We climb for three hours in poor visibility and 50 mph winds to reach the 17,200-foot camp. Some searching is necessary to find the tent. The French woman seems fine, though a bit befuddled that her husband and friend seemed to have abandoned her. Ron and I tie her in between us and descend via the West Buttress, returning to 14,200 feet at 11:30 p.m. [Upon return to Talkeetna the French team received a citation for reckless endangerment and contributed \$2000 to the rescue fund.]

May 12: The storm continues. We record 85 mph winds and minus 20 degree temperatures at 14,200 feet.

May 13: We receive a third-hand radio report that two Italian climbers [Giovanni Calcasno and Roberto Piomobo] have fallen on the Cassin Ridge; one has been spotted at the bottom of the South Face. We wonder about the other. Julie and Ron prepare rescue packs and stand by to fly to the Cassin as soon as the weather breaks.

May 14: A Korean team that had been attempting a new route on the South Face arrives at Kahiltina International basecamp at 4 a.m. with a member who fell 1000 feet when a rope broke. Suspected brain injury — his pupils are fixed and dilated. The storm continues unabated — Kahiltina International reports 4.5 feet of new snow and it's still falling.

May 15: Brief break in the storm. The injured Korean is flown out from Kahiltina International in an Air Force medivac helicopter. Bill Phillips flies the Lama up the Cassin with ranger Jim Phillips and they find the body of one of the Italian climbers at the base of the South Face at 11,000 feet. Another body is visible hanging off route in the first rock band at about 15,300 feet. The crew recovers the body at the base of the South Face and leaves the other one; it's far too windy and the access is too difficult to recover it.

That evening we receive a broken radio call from three Koreans at 18,100 feet on the Cassin. The message is "Helicopter, helicopter, helicopter!" The weather is too bad to fly above 16,000 feet. Ron and Julie are put on standby to fly up high on the Cassin at the first weather break.

May 16: Weather worsens again.

May 17: The storm continues. A Swiss climber comes to the weatherport during breakfast and says his friend [Alex von Bergen] is having problems breathing. Suspecting another case of acute mountain sickness or minor high-altitude pulmonary edema, Ron and I stroll over to their tent and are shocked to find the victim showing no discernable pulse or breathing, his pupils fixed and dilated. We initiate CPR. Julie and Dr. Mike Young,



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an experienced climber who happens to be in camp, arrive a few minutes later. Julie and I continue CPR, but after 25 minutes of futile efforts at resuscitation, Mike declares the Swiss climber dead. The climber's wife is present and needs explanations and consoling.

It is late afternoon and we are all napping in the weatherport when a Korean climber bursts in and says in broken English, "Crevasse, two members." Julie and I suit up as the Korean begins a mournful death wail. He is told in no uncertain terms to can it.

We head out at 6:00 p.m. The storm continues with winds of 35-40 miles per hour and zero visibility. John Roskelly and Jim Wickwire, two other very experienced climbers who are in camp, are about 10 minutes behind us in support. The crevasse incident is supposedly near the base of the fixed lines at about 15,300 feet on the West Buttress headwall. We get seriously lost and off route. A radio call to the weatherport helps us get back on route. Julie and I are first to arrive at the crevasse, followed shortly by John and Jim and four more Koreans, friends of the victims.

We are awed by what we see. An entire crevasse bridge (50 feet wide, 150 feet long and 80 feet deep) has collapsed. In the bottom of the crevasse on the side opposite

us is a Korean climber buried to his waist, gesticulating wildly. After several abortive attempts to throw him a rope, John and I tentatively rappel into the crevasse, wary of the potential instability of the new snow and ice blocks now forming the new crevasse floor. Jim is the primary anchor/belayer and Julie is managing the ropes at the lip — and the Koreans.

When we reach the trapped climber he points to his right. John begins digging him out while I inspect a big pile of blocks. The snow is bloody and a single foot is sticking out of the debris. My shouts elicit a long moan. As John continues to dig the first victim out, I begin to saw the snow and ice blocks into smaller pieces. A hand appears and grabs my ankle with tremendous force. Finally I remove the huge block wedged above the Korean's face.

By this time John has freed the other victim, who miraculously seems unhurt. Julie and Jim haul him out. John and I take turns sawing and digging for another hour before we are able free the second Korean, who is screaming in pain. Julie has radioed for a litter to evacuate the injured climber, but Ron and guides Brian Okonek and Bruce Blatchly are still 20 minutes from reaching the accident site with it. We try hauling the climber out of the crevasse but his screams of pain end

that effort. John and I take turns lying on top of him to keep him warm and protect him from the steady snowfall. To keep him from slipping into unconsciousness we slap his face and force him to make eye contact, repeating the mantra of the day, "Korea, Korea, Korea," followed by "Helicopter in one hour." (A little deception seemed appropriate.)

Ron, Brian, and Bruce arrive and lower the litter and a sleeping bag into the crevasse. We package the victim and the others haul him out at 10:30 p.m. It is 10 degrees below zero, snowing hard, and the wind is gusting. The accident had occurred at about 4:15 p.m. and had been reported an hour later. Forty-five minutes after topping out of the crevasse the Korean is in the medical camp being treated by Mike Young for hypothermia, internal bleeding, a mangled tongue (we would later find out he had tried to commit suicide by biting his tongue off so he would bleed to death), and a broken back. He is stripped, warmed, put on oxygen, and given over eight liters of intravenous fluids and occasional morphine. After an all-night vigil he seems barely stabilized. We all pray for a break in the weather.

May 18: In the early morning Julie and Ron catch a few hours of sleep in preparation for flying to help the three Koreans

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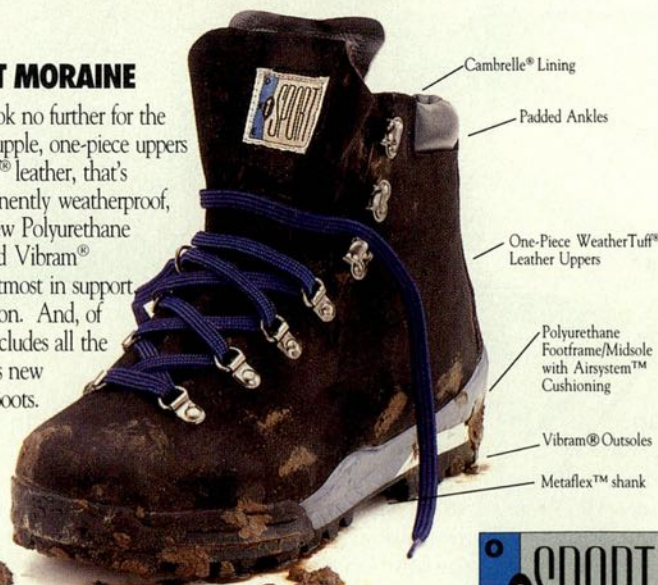
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stranded on the Cassin, now on their fifth day without food or fuel. A predicted window in the storm appears at about 1:00 p.m. and we package the second Korean from the crevasse accident in a litter and stuff him in the Lama, which remains powered up to combat the gusty winds. The Lama flies him to KIA basecamp where he is transferred to an Air Force medivac helicopter for the flight to Talkeetna.

The Lama returns with Jim Phillips on board and tries a food drop to the Koreans at 18,100 feet on the Cassin. The bag misses, but the winds have diminished and the pilot tries setting the helicopter down. All three Koreans rush the ship and the pilot pulls out before he decapitates someone. Jim motions them to approach one at a time. The pilot sets the chopper back down, one Korean jumps in, and they are off down to 14,200 feet. As soon as the Korean unloads, the Lama takes off again.

Julie does a check on the Korean's health and frostbite. He mostly seems hungry, though his fingers are in pretty bad shape. The second and third climbers are flown down to 14,200 feet and seem to be OK. The Korean leader becomes belligerent when I tell him that we won't retrieve their gear.

An Army Chinook arrives to fly the trio to Talkeetna and the three Koreans are escorted to it. One becomes combative and has to be forced into the helicopter. Later we realize the lack of food and fluids coupled with the rapid rescue probably had these guys incredibly confused.

May 19: The weather breaks. At 2:00 p.m. Julie and I leave 14,200 feet and descend to the Northeast Fork of the Kahiltna, arriving at the base of the West Rib at 11,000 feet at 9:15 p.m. We had hoped to do several climbs during our patrol, and we badly needed to get away from the pressure of the medical camp.

May 20: The weather holds. We climb the West Rib, reaching 16,200 at about 6:30 p.m. We traverse off and start the descent back to the medical camp at 14,200 feet when we notice dark spots and what looks like a rope below. As we approach we find a long blood streak ending 300 feet lower in a tangled mass of climbers and equipment.

The climbers' fall has ended on top of a snow bridge. I belay Julie down to see if anyone is still alive. She finds three bodies. I go down to identify the victims by equipment and clothing: three Koreans [Yung Soo Wang, Hong Sung Tak, and Jin Seong Jong]. We leave the bodies and continue our descent.

May 21: Ron and I load onto the Lama and fly up to the dead Koreans at 15,500 feet. A new pilot and gusty winds mean numerous fly-bys trying different approaches before the pilot decides not to land.

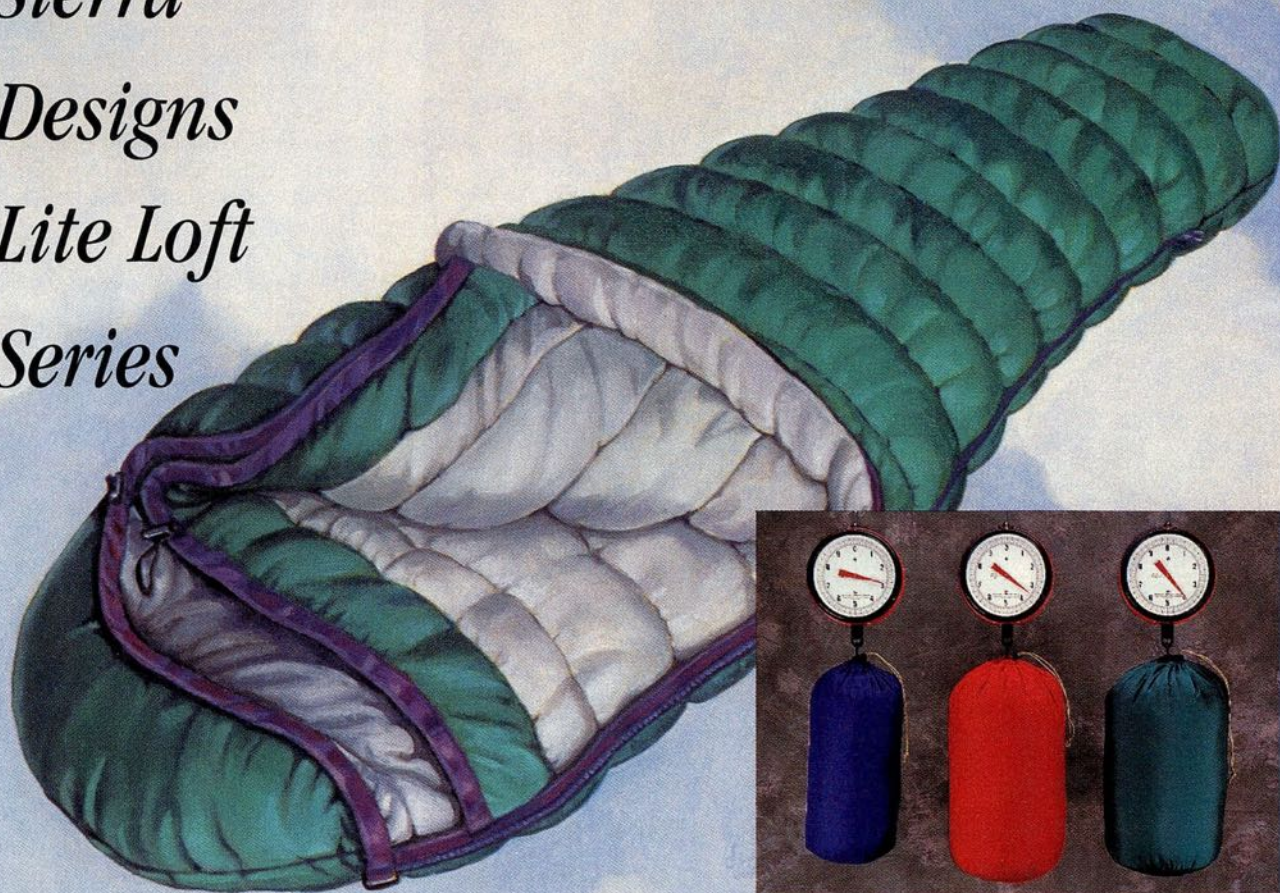
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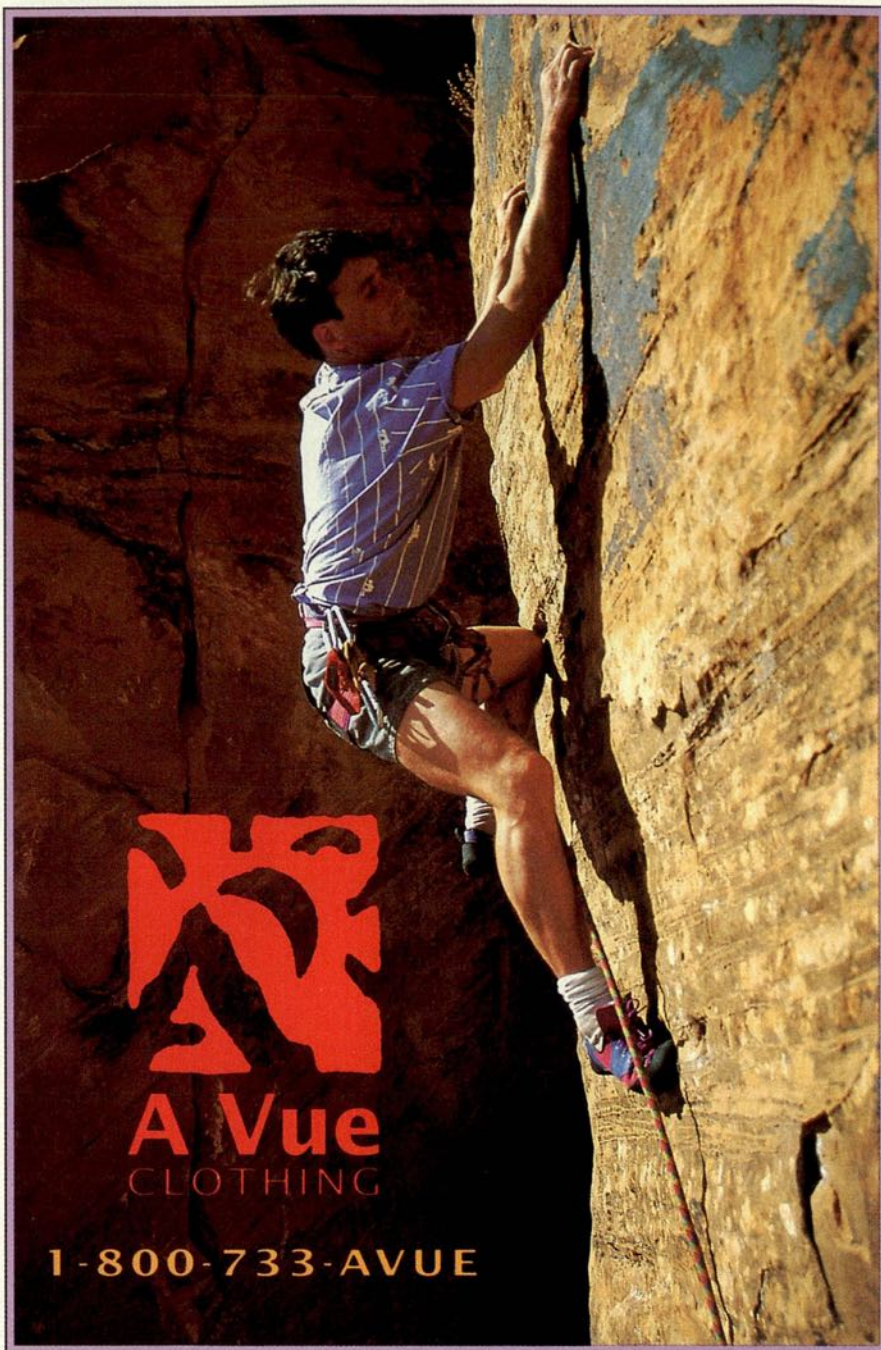
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Charlie Fowler, Moab UT Photo: T.R. Youngstrom

May 22: The next patrol is only one day out from 14,200 feet, so Julie and I decide to descend to Kahiltna International and fly out. Shortly before we leave we hear that Mugs Stump has been in a crevasse accident and is probably dead.

Everyone is stunned. Ron breaks down. Julie and I are again on standby. The story is that Mugs fell into a crevasse while descending the South Buttress at about 14,000 feet. The upper lip broke off with him on it, probably triggering the collapse of the lower lip; Mugs was buried by tons of snow and ice blocks. His clients, suffering from exhaustion and frostbite, rappelled into the crevasse but neither saw nor heard anything.

The Lama returns and ferries Julie and me to Kahiltna International basecamp. We discuss the situation with mountaineering rangers Renny Jackson and Jim Phillips, who have just done a fly-by of the crevasse where Mugs is buried. It is in a dangerous place, difficult to reach. It has been 30 hours since the accident. J.D. Swed, head ranger, decides that no rescue attempts will be made, a difficult but appropriate decision. Julie and I fly out to Talkeetna and receive VIP treatment from the Park Service.

May 23: A 7:30 a.m. phone call wakes us from a deep slumber. Ron wants one of us to fly back up to help with the Korean body recovery. I suit up and fly in the Lama up to 14,200 feet, pick up Ron, and land uneventfully at 15,500 feet. We traverse 10 minutes to the bodies. The helicopter returns to 7200 feet to refuel and wait. We take pictures of the accident site and the victims, and retrieve personal effects from their packs. The Lama comes back with a long line, pulls all three bodies free from the glacier, and brings them back to 7200 feet, where they are loaded into Talkeetna pilot Jay Hudson's Cessna 206 and flown out.

I return to Talkeetna, where the Park Service has flown in a psychologist to run a Critical Incident Debriefing. It lasts for about three hours. Afterwards Julie and I are hustled out and flown to Anchorage for a brief night at the Hilton before flying home.

A week after the Culbertsons left Denali, four Canadian climbers (Simon Proulx, Christian Proulx, Alain Potvin, and Maurice Grandchamp) fell down the Messner Couloir while descending the West Buttress. Apparently off route after a probable bivouac, they were last seen at about 2:30 p.m. May 31 by mountaineering ranger Roger Robinson, who was on a fly-by of the mountain looking for them. By the time he circled and returned, just minutes later, the four were gone, bringing the number of deaths on Denali this spring to 11.



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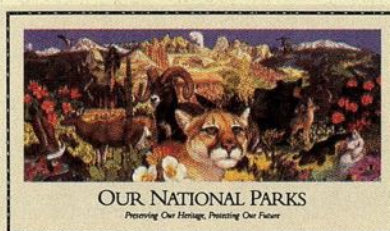
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Tuff stuff

The Enchanted Tower, Socorro, and Cochiti Mesa, New Mexico

The Enchanted Tower, near Datil, New Mexico is as overhanging as it gets. Amply huecoed and featured with large holds, this volcanic tower, with 5.11d to 5.13a routes up to 165-feet long, guarantees extreme fun and a mega pump.

The climbing area is magnificent, albeit relatively small. A mere year ago the Enchanted Tower had only a handful of routes. Today the main tower boasts 11 climbs with an additional 30 or so routes on the nearby rocks, and room for many more. The local activists largely responsible for this new activity are Adam Read, Lee Sheftel, and Matt Samet.

Some people have families larger than the population of Datil, but the town does have a small store, a good restaurant (serving a beef-oriented menu) with a salad bar, and is the only gas stop for 30 miles. Datil typifies traditional New Mexico ranch life, with friendly people. At an elevation of about 8000 feet, it is set in a coniferous, mountain environment.

The Enchanted Tower is an excellent place to climb in the spring, summer, and fall. You can climb in the winter on very mild days, but access can be a problem when the road is snow packed. The summer can be hot, but since most of the walls don't get the sun until late morning to early afternoon, cool climbing can still be found.

Sport climbing in New Mexico, by Matt Samet and Randal Jett, covers the Enchanted Tower area, and is available in two volumes under the same name; the guide with the light-blue cover is the one covering Datil and Socorro.

While on your way to, or returning from, the Enchanted Tower, stop by Socorro for more overhanging volcanic climbing. Located seven miles west of Socorro, the developed areas of The Box, Alcohol Wall, Major Wall, and Spook



Doug Couleur pulling pockets on the sustained *Technowitch* (5.12b), Enchanted Tower, New Mexico.

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A number of high-quality routes have gone up on Alcohol Wall. Since it gets early morning sun, this rock, with its numerous new short-but-sweet 5.10 and 5.11 climbs, and a few 5.12s, is an excellent warm up area on chilly desert mornings. Two of the best routes here are *The Jones* (5.12b), put up last year by Dillon Etscorn and Jake Rothfork, and *Liquid Diet*

(5.11d), an older classic. Also, on the right side of this wall, Lance Hadfield and Mark Thomas established several quality 5.10s and 5.11s.

The next stop is the Major Wall, which gets late-morning sun. Routes here are typically longer than those on the Alcohol Wall, and offer overhanging and difficult "bouldering" type cruxes. *Bananas on Acid* (5.12a) by Johnny Myrick, and *The* (continued on page 37)

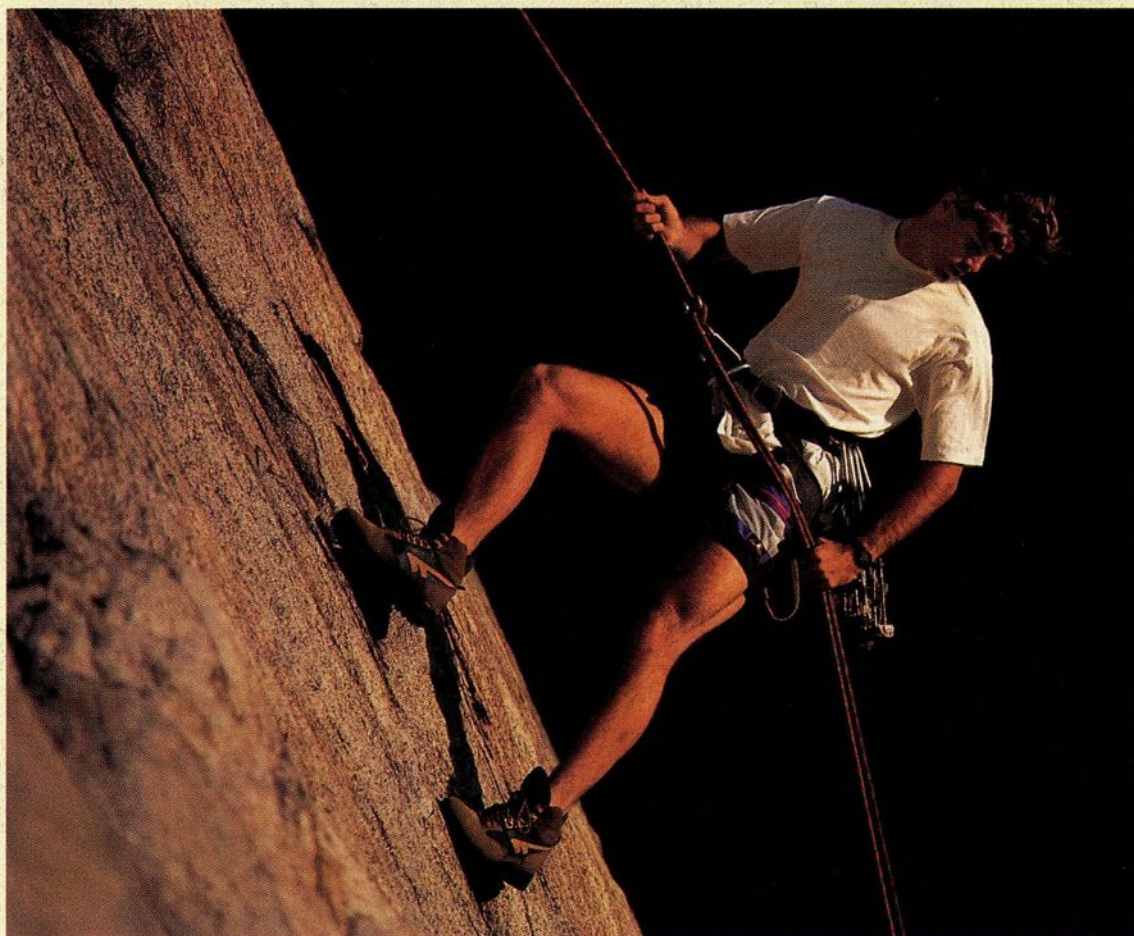
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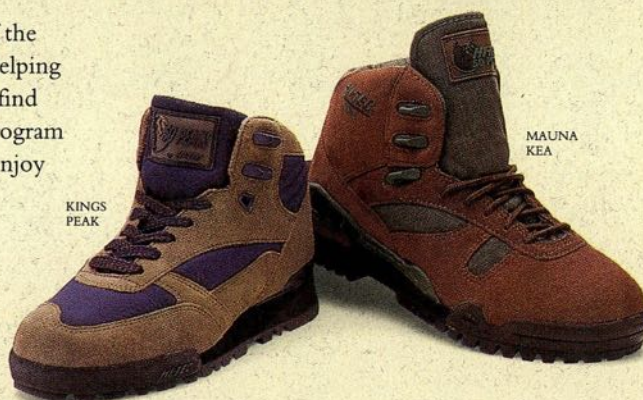
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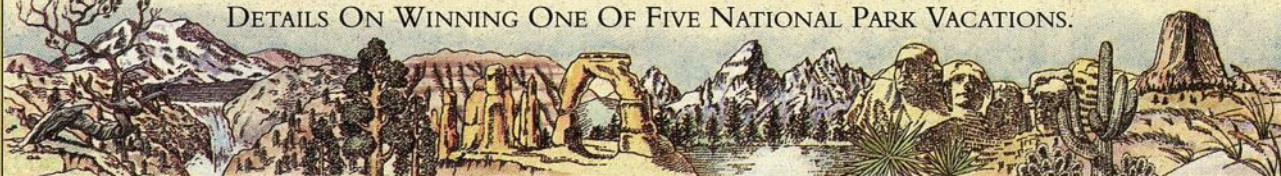
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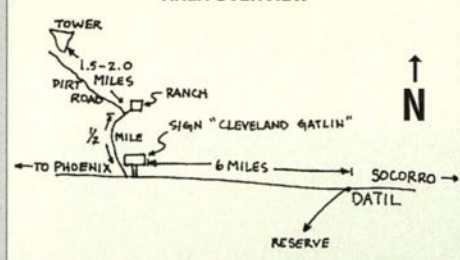


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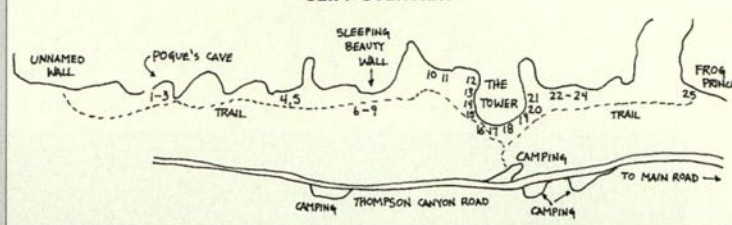
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The Enchanted Tower Area, New Mexico

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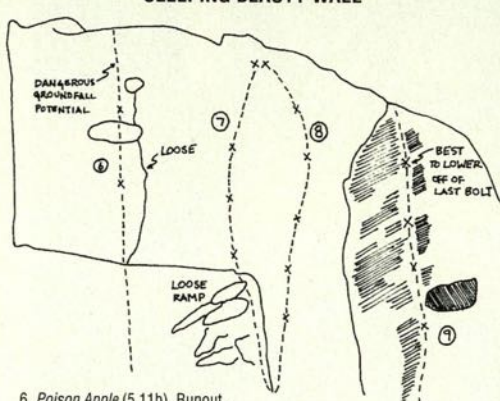


CLIFF OVERVIEW



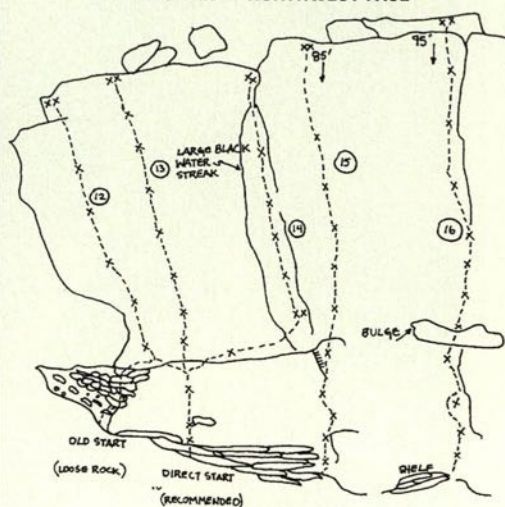
Getting there. Drive west on Highway 60 leading out of Socorro, New Mexico (about an hour south of Albuquerque), for about 70 miles to the town of Datil. Continue six miles west past Datil and look for an easy-to-miss sign on the right (north) side of the road, reading: Cleveland Gatlin. Turn onto this dirt road and follow the map above.

SLEEPING BEAUTY WALL



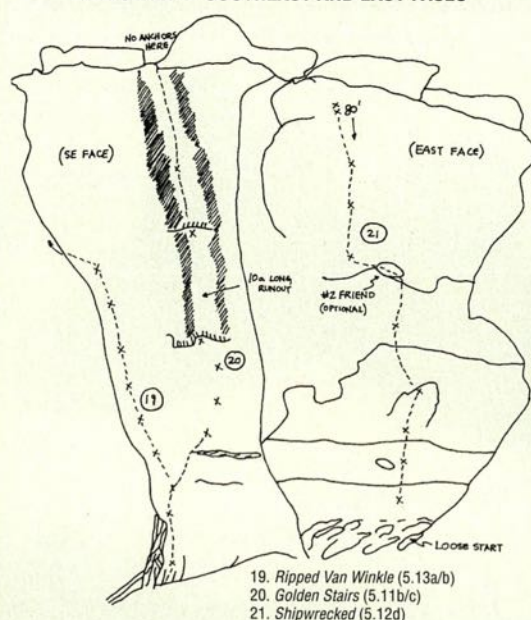
- 6. Poison Apple (5.11b). Runout.
- 7. Glass Coffin (5.11 b/c)
- 8. Sleeping Beauty (5.11d)
- 9. Tarred and Feathered (5.10d)

THE TOWER — NORTHWEST FACE



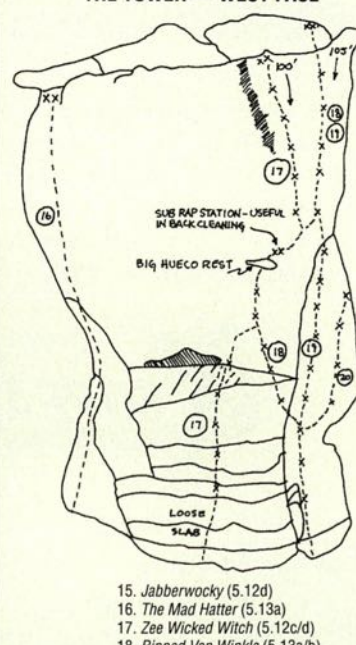
- 12. Technowiitch (5.12b)
- 13. Tinkerbell's Nightmare (5.12b/c)
- 14. Rumpelstiltskin (5.12a)
- 15. Jabberwocky (5.12d)

THE TOWER — SOUTHEAST AND EAST FACES



- 19. Ripped Van Winkle (5.13a/b)
- 20. Golden Stairs (5.11b/c)
- 21. Shipwrecked (5.12d)

THE TOWER — WEST FACE

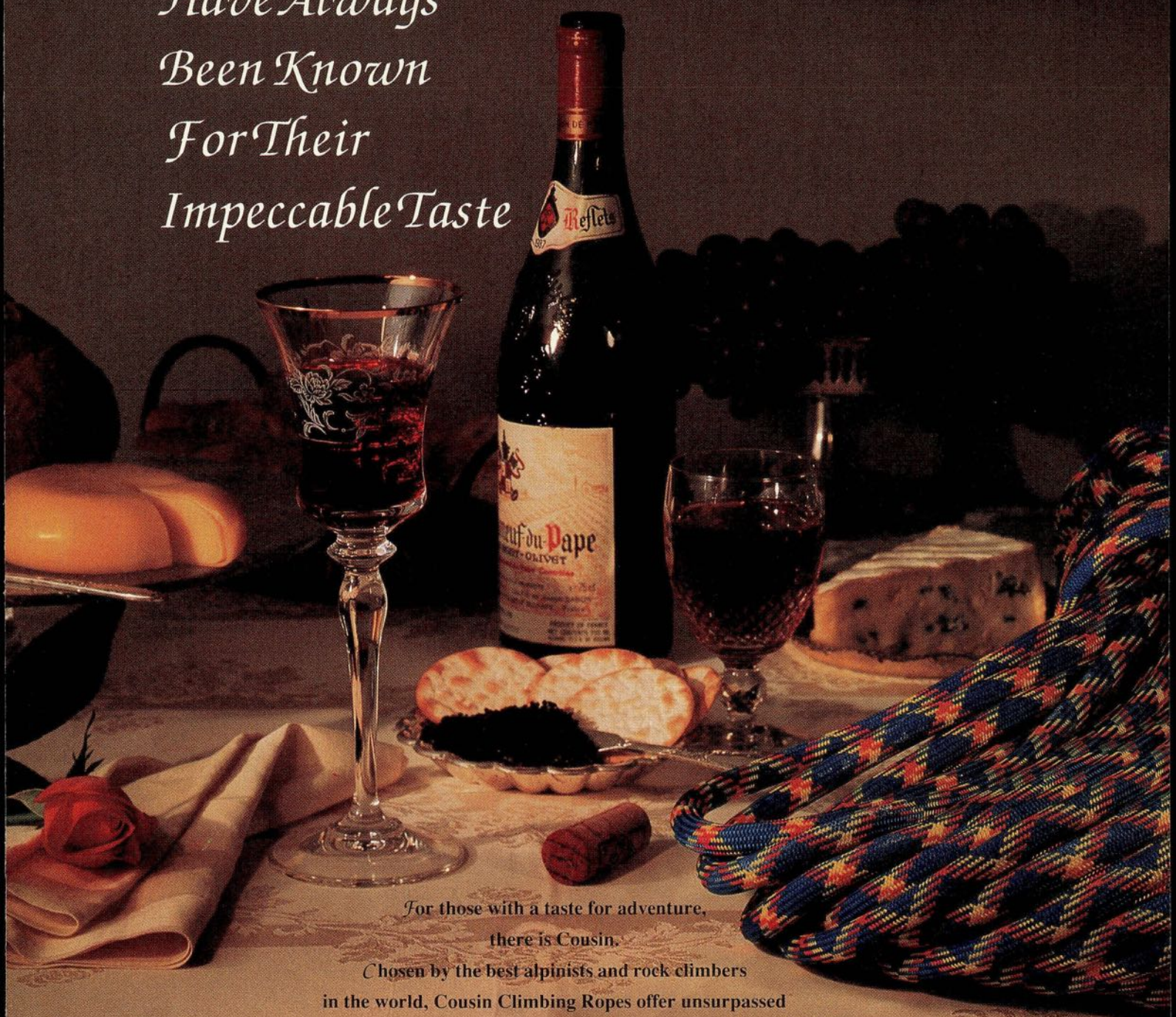


- 15. Jabberwocky (5.12d)
- 16. The Mad Hatter (5.13a)
- 17. Zee Wicked Witch (5.12c/d)
- 18. Ripped Van Winkle (5.13a/b)

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Terry Parish on Borderline (5.12d). ©1992 Rob Mulligan/Vertigo ■ Marolt and Associates, P.O. Box 1013, Aspen, Co 81612 ■ 303/925-1248

(continued from page 32)

Demon (5.13a) by Matt Samet, both have intricate climbing on excellent rock.

The Pocket Change Wall, situated above and right of the Major Wall offers two classics with *Pocket Change* (5.11c) and *Payday* (5.10a), the recent work of Lance Hadfield. The latter route requires small to medium Stoppers and small SLCDs.

On Spook Canyon Wall, Matt Samet's *Ride the Lightning* (5.13a) is an area favorite, ascending an overhanging east-facing wall on very clean rock. This cliff stands alone on the hill one-half mile east of The Box, and, as it receives early morning sun and afternoon shade, is a good spring and fall crag.

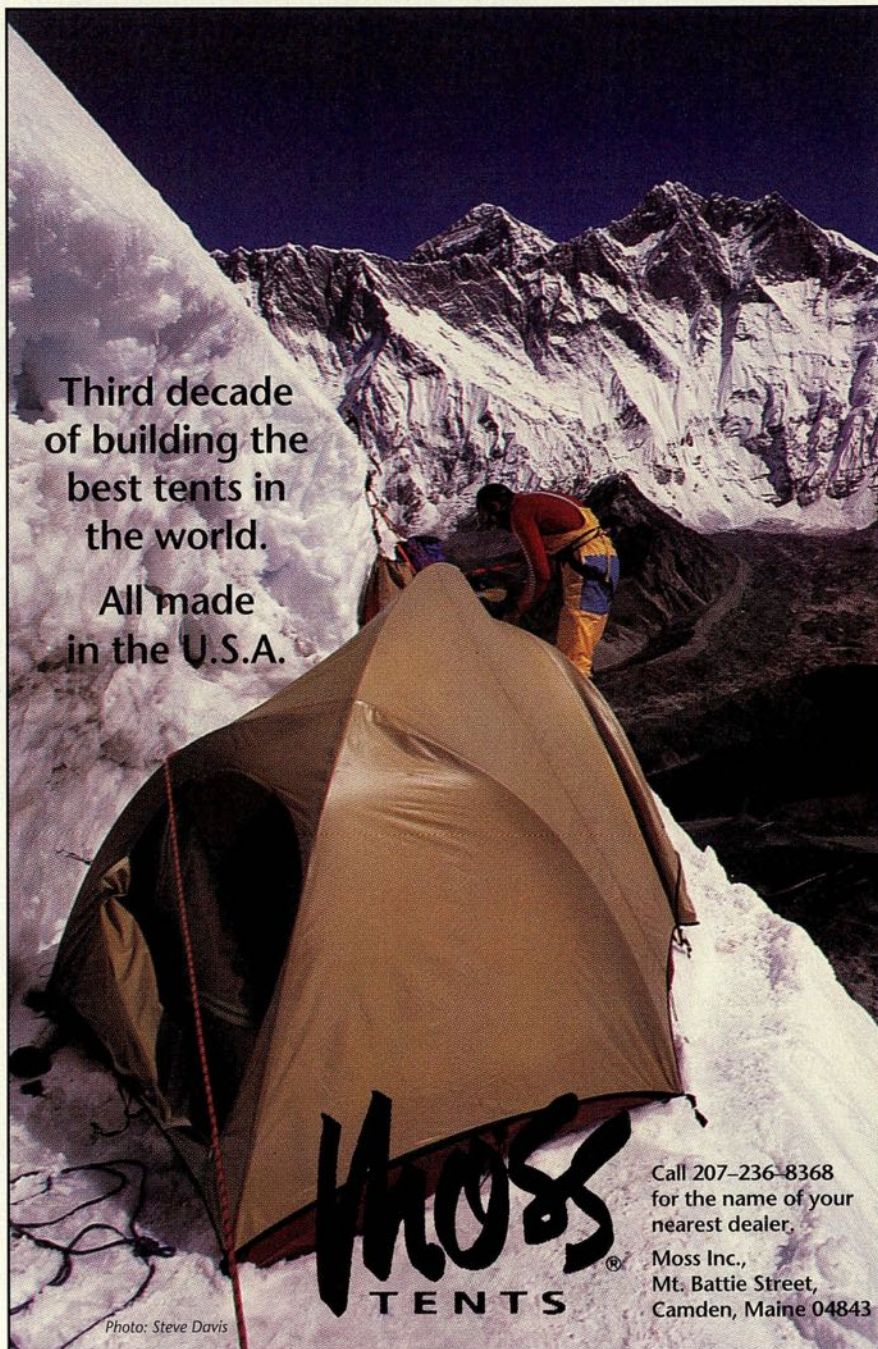
Filler a Papillon Wall, located uphill and south of the main Box area parking lot, yields yet more quality climbing. To get there, walk across the wash and right of Waterfall Wall, then go up the hill. *Window Shopping* (5.12b/c), by Tim Fairfield is a thin and devious face route starting right of the obvious cave. About 30 feet left is a new route by Jean Delataillade and Lee Sheftel; *Almost Blue* (5.12c/d) ascends an overhanging black water stain on thin holds and is an unusually clean line. On the far right of the wall are *Little Caterpillar* (5.12), first climbed by Fairfield and Gretchen Huebner, and *New Kid on the Block* (5.11a), established by Dave Wilson and Fairfield.

Near Cochiti Mesa's pocketed cliffs lies Eagle Canyon, another welded-tuff area, offering vertical to slightly overhanging climbs on east- and west-facing cliffs averaging 60 feet high. You can climb here year round with the possible exception of January, when you may encounter heavy snow and cold temperatures. The east-facing cliff doesn't receive winter sun, but provides ideal climbing during the hot summer. The opposite is true for the west-facing cliffs (warm in winter, too hot in the summer).

On the west side of the canyon are some of the area's longest and best climbs. *The Handsome Parish Lady* (5.12d/13a) received a variation exit by Delataillade. This new overhanging pocket line, *Midnight Sun*, is probably the hardest climb in New Mexico, and awaits a rating confirmation. Also on this side are *Maalox Moment* (5.11a), a narrow black slab with deep pockets, and *Unnamed* (5.11b), which requires a 50-meter rope. *Psycho Thriller* (5.11c) and *Banana Rama* (5.10c) are other enjoyable face lines in this area.

On the other side of the canyon Elephant *Talk* (5.13a), *Mikita* (5.13b), and *Drowning by Numbers* (5.12d/13a) are all new, overhanging, thin, and highly technical routes also established by Delataillade.

— Lee Sheftel



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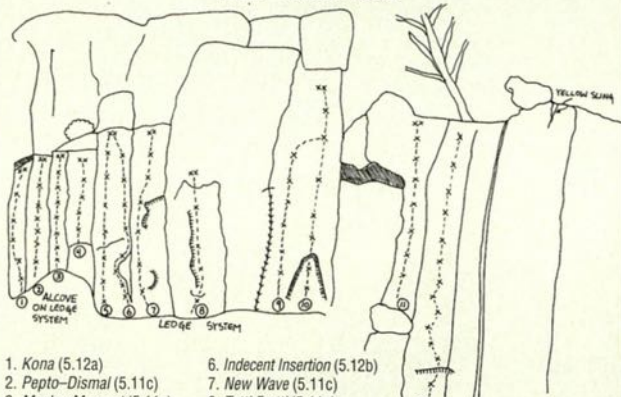
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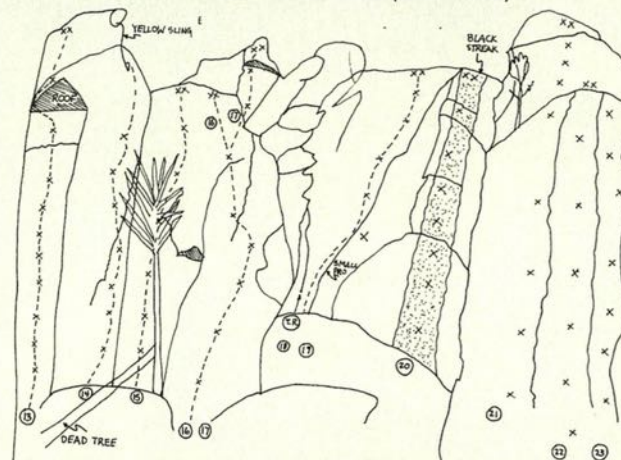
Socorro and Eagle Canyon, New Mexico

EAST-FACING WALL



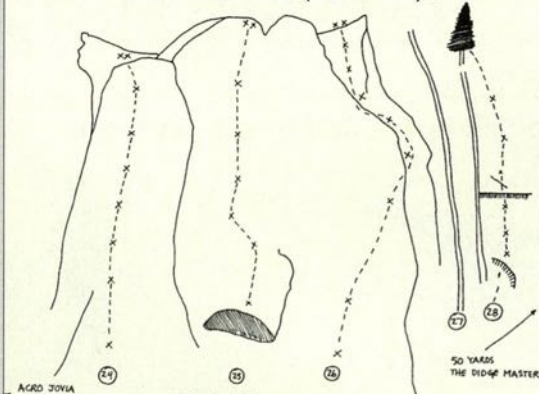
1. Kona (5.12a)
2. Pepto-Dismal (5.11c)
3. Maalox Moment (5.11a)
4. Wannabee (5.11c/d)
5. Killer Bee (5.9+)
6. Indecent Insertion (5.12b)
7. New Wave (5.11c)
8. Tutti Frutti (5.11a)
9. Jug Abuse (5.12a)
10. Turkey Baster (5.10c)

EAST-FACING WALL (NORTH END)



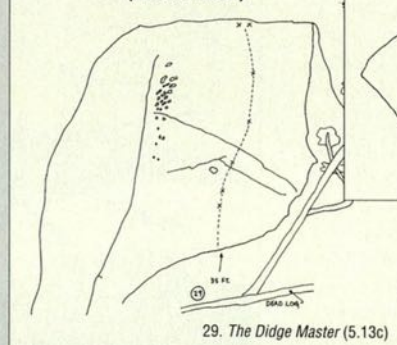
13. Top Hat (5.11c)
14. Unnamed (5.12a)
15. In Your Face (5.11b)
16. Handsome Parish Lady (5.12d/13a)
17. Parish Lady to Midnight Show (5.13a)
18. 5.12a/b TR
19. Unnamed (5.11b)
20. Racist Fantasy (5.12a)
21. Acro Jovia (5.12b/c)
22. Undulation Fever (5.12c)
23. Are You Lichen It (5.11d)

EAST-FACING WALL (NORTH END)



24. Earth Monster (5.11d)
25. Psycho Thriller (5.11d)
26. Banana Rama (5.10c)
27. Mr. Wong's Zipper (5.10b)
28. Ego Maniac (5.11c)

EAST-FACING WALL (NORTH END)



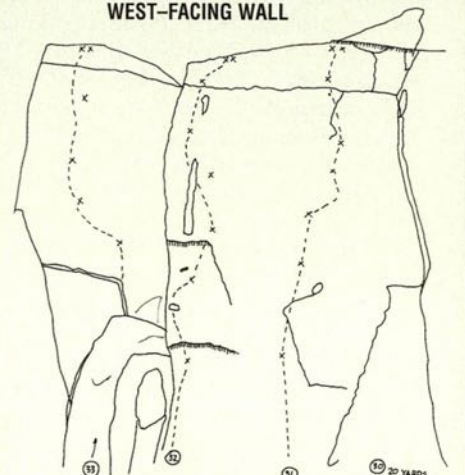
29. The Didge Master (5.13c)

EAGLE CANYON

Getting there. From Santa Fe take Interstate 25 south towards Albuquerque. Take the first Cochiti Lake exit. (From Albuquerque get off at the second Cochiti Lake exit.) Head west toward Cochiti Lake until the road Ts. Go right, then several miles to the Allsups convenience store (has gas and some groceries) in Cochiti. Continue for about a mile, until you see a golf course to the right. About one-half mile after the golf course is a dirt road (the only dirt road in

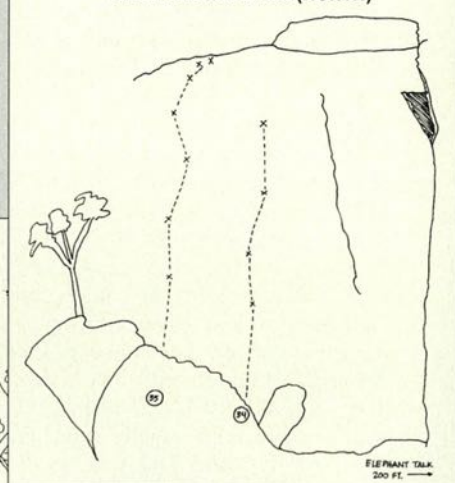
the vicinity without a gate). Turn right on this road, go about four miles, and park on the right side of the road, where a sign designates the Bandelier Monument Trail. Take the trail heading left along the hill. Hike about one-half mile, then veer left when the trail branches off into a canyon. Go up the canyon about a quarter mile, then head left out of the canyon towards the east-facing cliffs, or right out of the canyon towards the west-facing crag.

WEST-FACING WALL

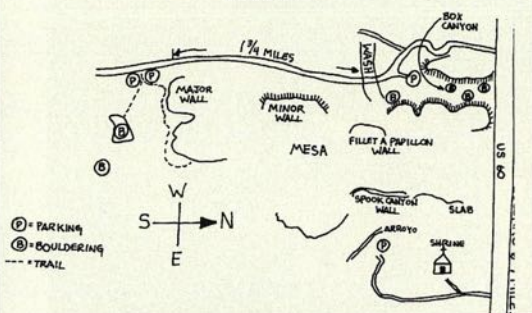


30. Frame by Frame (5.12b)
31. Elephant Talk (5.13a)
32. Strange Cargo (5.11c)
33. Drowning by Numbers (5.12d/13a)

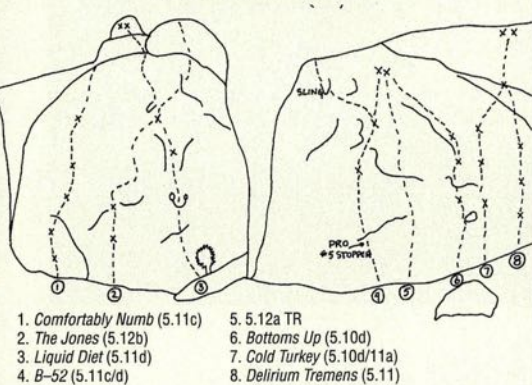
WEST-FACING WALL (NORTH)



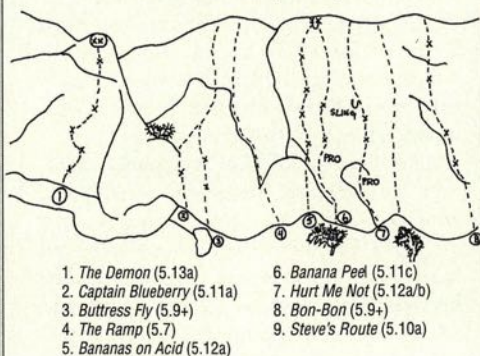
SOCORRO



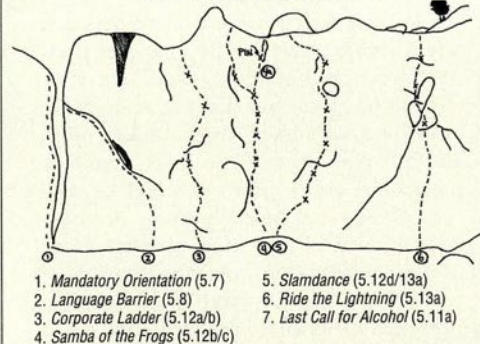
ALCOHOL WALL (EAST)



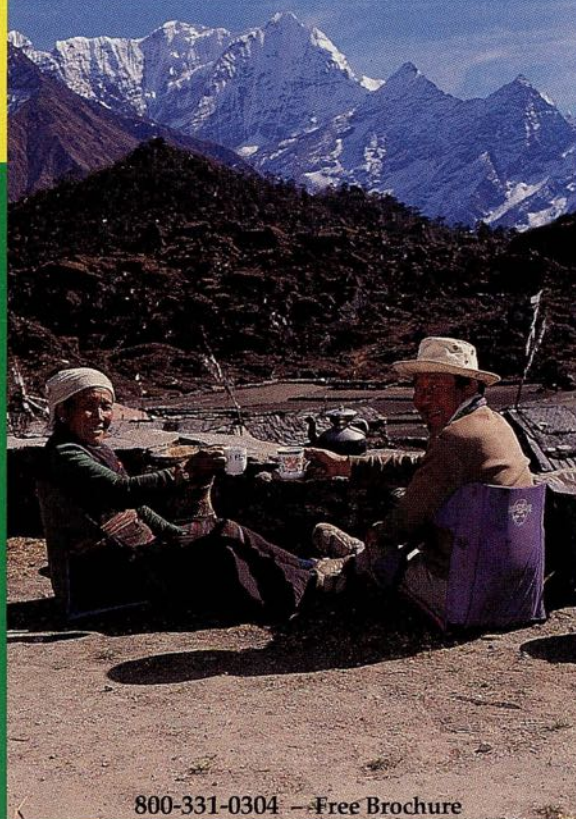
MAJOR WALL (RIGHT)



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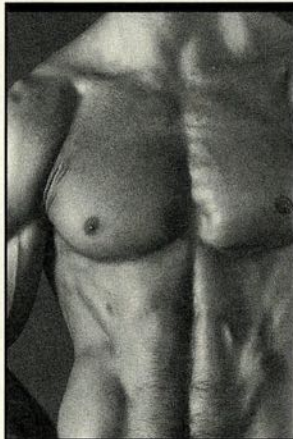
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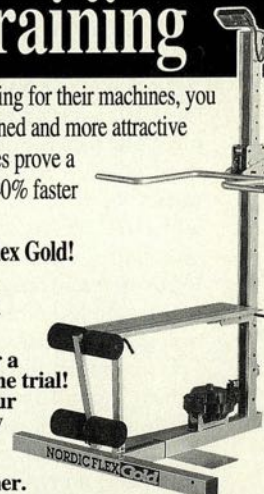


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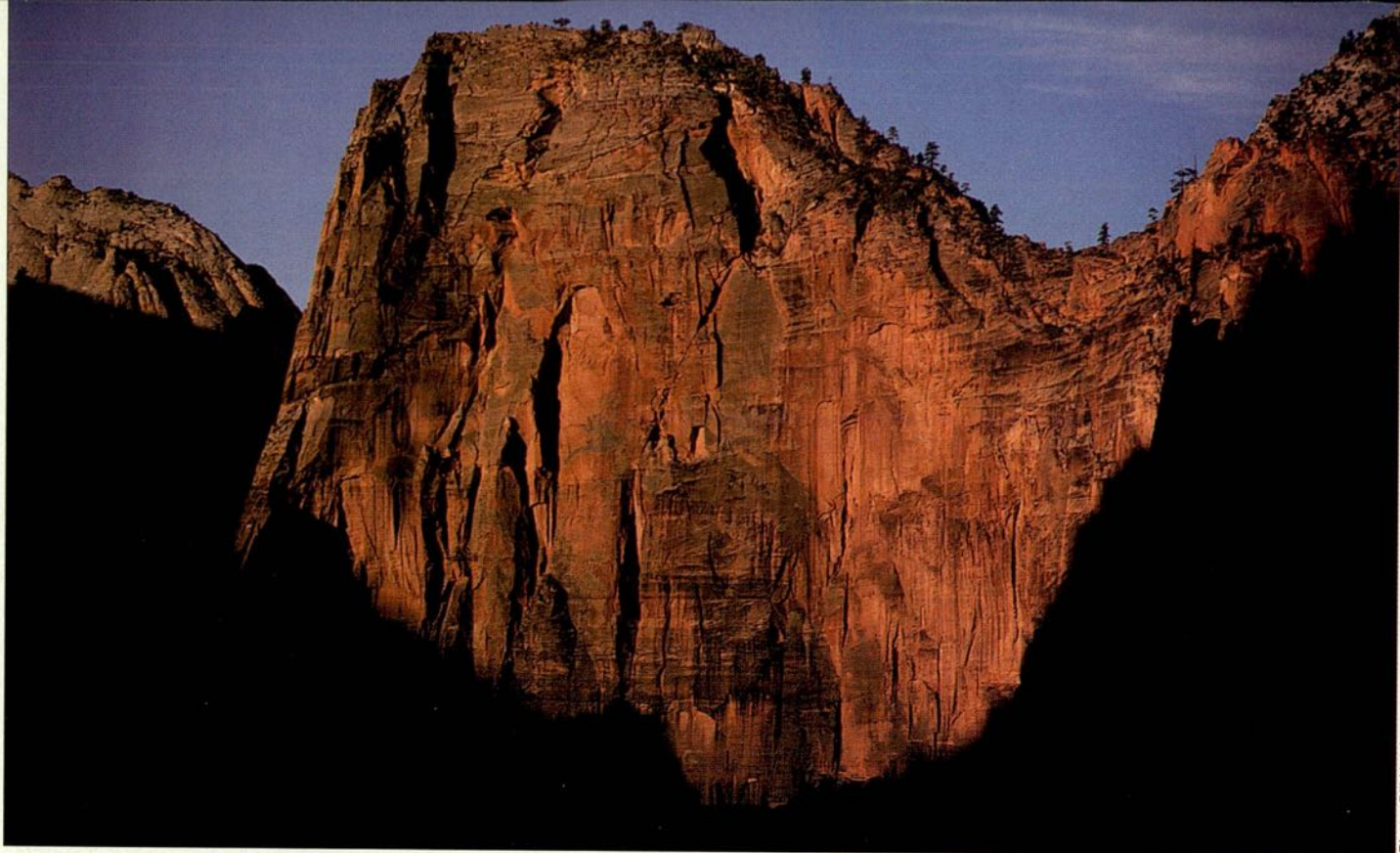


Photo: Bill Hatcher

"Civilized" big walls on the north face of Angel's Landing

Zion National Park, Utah

Legends of loose rock, tenuous protection, epic descents, hostile climate, poisonous flora and fauna, and wicked vertical bushwhacking keep most climbers from visiting Zion's sandstone cliffs. If you ever hear any of these tales, believe them and pass the word. But if you're interested in true adventure regardless of objective hazards, Zion is the New World.

Etched out of the landscape by the Virgin River in the southwest corner of Utah, the canyons of Zion National Park host numerous cliffs ranging from 600 to 2200 feet high. The rock is sandstone, each of its many layers generally recognizable by its color, and varies widely in terms of looseness, softness, and climbability. Angel's Landing, the centerpiece of Zion wall climbing, consists largely of Navajo sandstone, one of the more solid mediums in the region, typified by dark rock and clean cracks and corners.

Fourteen-hundred feet high, the north face of Angel's Landing offers nine excellent big-wall routes (including the all-free *Northeast Buttress*, not technically on the north face) on typically good rock, and in a spectrum of difficulty. For starters, there's the well-bolted *Prodigal Sun*, which tips the scale at a sane 5.5 A2. Then you have the serious nailups like *Empty Pages*, *Ball and Chain*, and the *Swiss-American Route*, all of which are sandstone A4. For classics there's the *Lowe Route* (5.8 A2), a moderate mixed route and a must for aspiring hardmen.

Angel's Landing, located mere minutes from the road by foot, has an approach to make a sport climber envious. The descent from the summit is equally casual: a two-mile paved trail winds down the hill in a beautiful setting. The difficulties of Angel's Landing routes are in the climbing itself, unlike many of Zion's other impressive walls where the approach and descent are serious undertakings in their own right.

Peregrine falcons nested on the north face of Angel's Landing in 1991, closing the wall to climbing during the fledgling season (January to mid-August). The peregrines traditionally make their yearly nests on either the Great White Throne, Cable Mountain, or Angel's Landing (both north and south faces). A closure may be in effect for 1992, so check at the visitor's center before climbing.

The Park Service requires a permit for climbs taking more than one day; request a backcountry permit and list the exact details of your intended route at the visitor's center, where you can also scan the two volumes of information compiled on most of Zion's established climbs.

The campground, located just inside the south park entrance, makes a good basecamp, as do the private campgrounds in the adjacent town of Springdale, which often have showers (about \$2) available. Drinking water is available at the Zion Lodge, nestled deep inside Zion Canyon

on the way to Angel's Landing. Springdale has some food services, but for major shopping it's cheaper to go to a supermarket in St. George or Cedar City, both about an hour outside the park. The Bit and Spur in Springdale, known nationally for its fine Mexican food, is the recommended place to drink and feast.

The weather in Zion is extreme. Summer temperatures are often searing and winters can be bitter cold. Winter ascents are possible, but beware: snow-covered sandstone causes serious immobility. The best climbing seasons are the spring and fall. In late fall the north face of Angel's Landing sees little sun, so prepare accordingly. After a thunderstorm it's good policy to stay off the rock for a few days — wet sandstone is very fragile.

Zion is a well-preserved wilderness area and climbers need to be aware of their impact on the high desert landscape. Pack all trash up routes and climb carefully, as the sandstone scars easily from careless piton and nut placements. The easier routes do not require either pitons or a bolt kit, and the nailing routes generally do not need any additional drilling, except perhaps at an occasional belay (some older bolts may need replacing also). A small bolt kit with 3/8-inch drills and a few 3/8-inch-by-3 1/2-inch Rawl bolts and baby angles will suffice for most Zion routes.

The north face of Angel's Landing.

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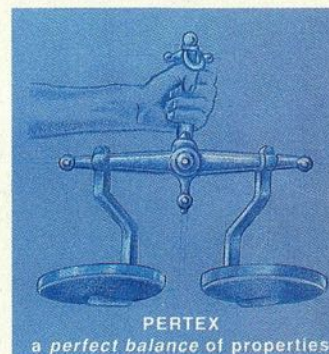
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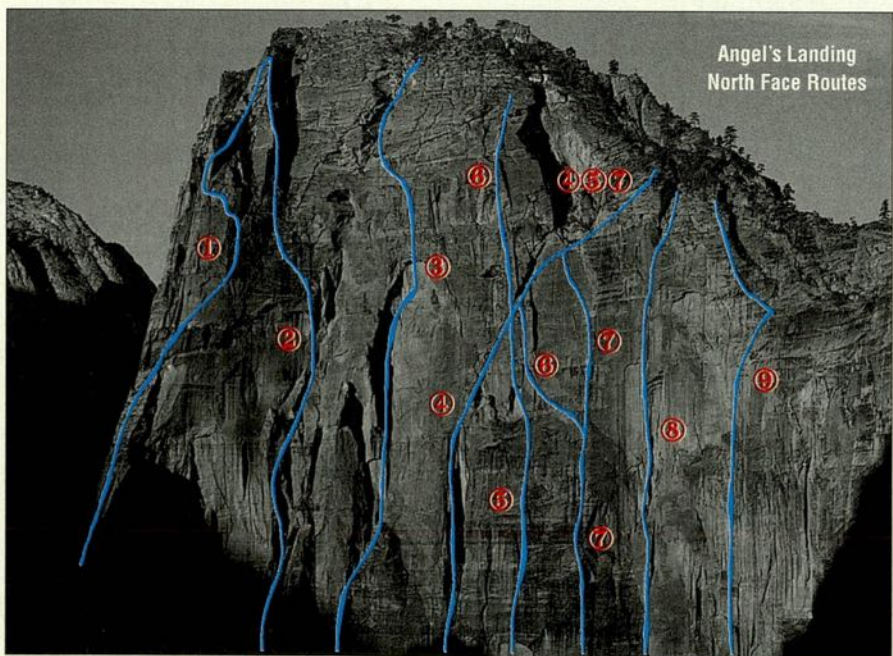
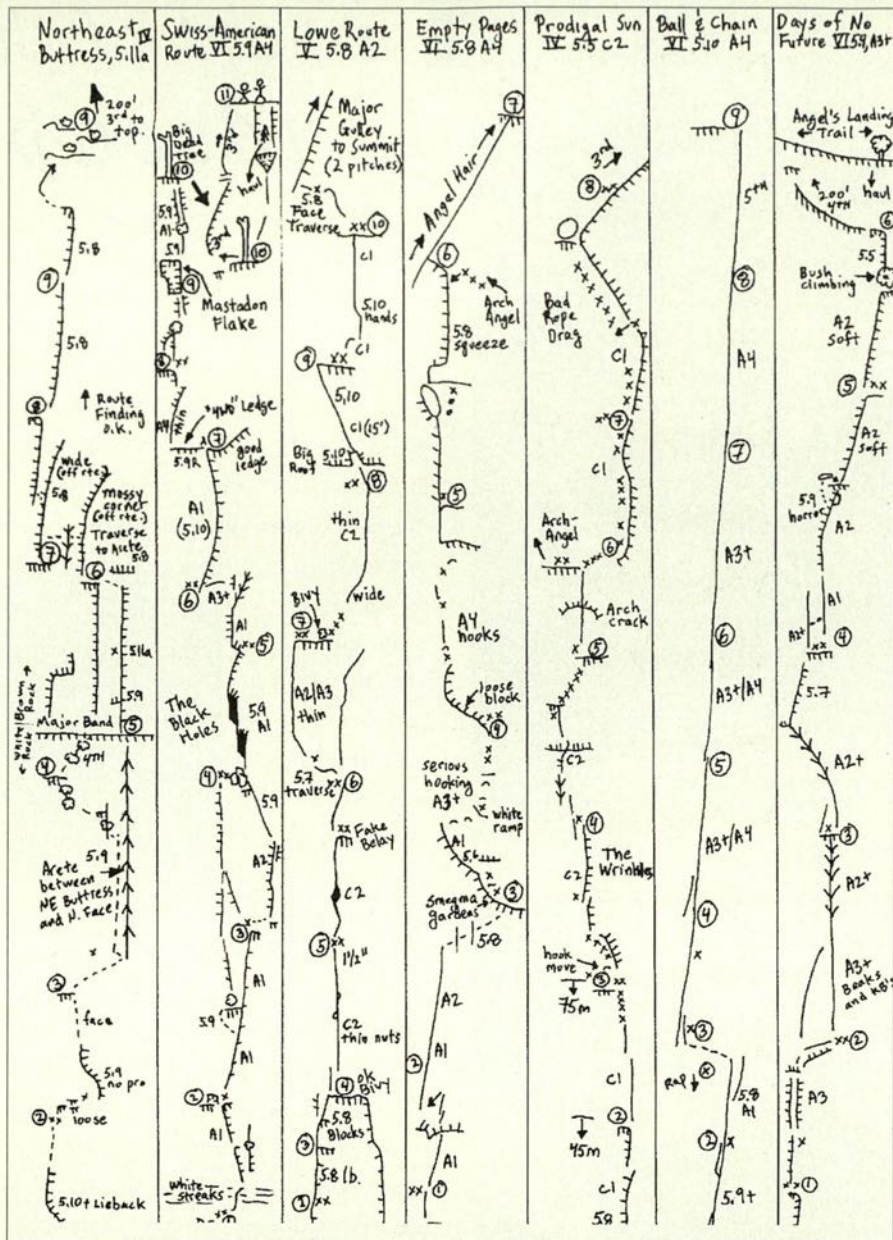
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Finally, be prepared for very high nailing standards on the harder routes — ratings are subjective and are generally modest compared to granite routes of equivalent difficulty.

— John Middendorf

Angel's Landing Route Information

1. Northeast Buttress (IV 5.11a). This excellent all-free alpine-type route starts on the east side of the ridge between Angel's Landing and the Organ.

Rack: 1/2 sets of Friends, stoppers, hexes, slings.
FA: Mark Austin, Randy Aton, and Phil Haney, 1981.

2. The Swiss-American Route (VI 5.9 A4). An excellent route up the continuous crack systems leading directly to the summit. 14 holes drilled on the first ascent (all belay bolts).

Rack: 10 Knifeblades, 12 Lost Arrows, 4 each 1/2" and 5/8" pitons, 2 each 3/4", 1 each 1" pitons, 2 1/2 sets of Friends, nuts, hooks, beaks.
FA: Xavier Bongard and John Middendorf, 10/19 to 10/22, 1991.

3. Original (Lowe) Route (V 5.8 A2). A popular introduction to Zion big-wall climbing. A spectacular route with several good bivouac sites.

Rack: Standard desert rack (2 sets TCUs and Friends to #4, nuts and slings), plus 10 to 15 pitons, mostly KBs and LAs. Only pitch 7 requires nailing, otherwise all clean.
FA: Jeff Lowe and Cactus Bryan, 9/70.

4. Angel Hair (V 5.9 A3). No bolts used on the first ascent. Dunn believes this route may go all free. Many difficult chimneys.

Rack: Knifeblades to 6" bongos, nuts.
FA: Dean Tschappat and James Dunn, 1974.

5. Empty Pages (VI 5.8 A4). Serious hooking (occasional drilled bat hook holes) and some loose rock. No anchors on top. Bolt kit may be required for blown-out drilled copperhead holes.
Rack: 6 KBs, 8 LAs, 6 each 1/2" pitons, 3 each 5/8", 2 each 3/4", 1 each 1", 1 each 1 1/4", rurs, hooks, 2 to 3 sets of Friends and TCUs, nuts, #3 copperheads for shallow drilled holes.
FA: Dave Jones and Mark Pey, 5/29 to 5/31, 1982.

6. Archangel (VI 5.8 A3). Many bolts and fixed pitons.

Rack: Pitons and nuts to 3", keyhole hangers.
FA: Ron Olevsky, solo, 10/1 to 10/8, 1978.

7. Prodigal Sun (IV 5.5 A2). This is a clean aid route and is an excellent introduction to multi-pitch aid routes. Many bolts, fixed pitons, and manufactured placements keep the difficulty to a minimum, and make for fast climbing.

Rack: 1 set of Friends, many small nuts, one hook, keyhole hangers.
FA: Ron Olevsky, solo, 9/81.

8. Ball and Chain (VI 5.10 A4). Very direct line ascending the major cleft between Angel's Landing and Scout's Landing.

Rack: 20 KBs, 20 LAs, 3 each angle, 2" to 5" bongos, nuts to 8" tubes.
FA: Glenn Randall, solo, 1978.

9. Days of no Future (VI 5.9 A3+). Excellent route up the center of Scout's Landing. Overhangs most of the way. 10 bolts placed on the first ascent.

Rack: 15 KBs (mostly long), 12 LAs (mostly long), 4 each 1/2" and 5/8" pitons, 3 each 3/4" pitons, 2 to 3 each 1", 1 1/4", and 1 1/2" pitons, hooks, Stoppers, and Friends to #7.
FA: Barry Ward and John Middendorf, 5/23 to 5/25, 1991.



Jumps in evolutionary development happen when life is challenged. The challenge may be competition, changes in habitat, or anything that makes new demands on a current level of ability.

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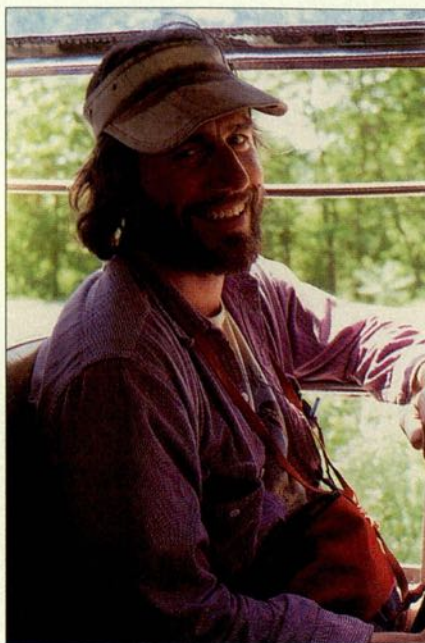
Mugs Stump, 1949–1992

Snow swirls softly in the gray sky and settles deeply over the fractured ice, muting its sharp edges. Higher, the bitter wind hurls itself against the ridges and buttresses of Denali, the Great One, the soul of the Alaska Range. Here it is calm, even peaceful; for the party of three climbers, the tension of the struggle with the storm above has given way to the lesser anxiety of being out of the maelstrom but still miles from home. Suddenly, the edge of a crevasse collapses — that happens often in places like this — and a climber is sucked into the abyss. The rope comes tight on his companions, drags them toward the void, then stops, disappearing into a jumbled mass of ice. All is still.

Mugs is gone — even a month afterwards it's difficult to say the words, let alone grasp their meaning. When I heard of his death on the South Buttress of Denali, it was as if a piece of the earth or the sky had suddenly disappeared. He was one of the constants of my universe, sharing tales of his most recent grand adventure in Zion, Yosemite, Alaska, or the Antarctic, or trying to tempt me into joining him on one of his upcoming projects.

A true "climber's climber," Mugs was always psyched — long free routes, big walls, frozen waterfalls, alpine faces, sport routes, as long as it was climbing. His dedication was complete, and he never strayed far from his own demanding set of standards; above all, he wanted to be out on the edge, pushing the envelope of what was possible in the mountains. He was a survivor, but more than that he had an intuitive sense of how closely to tread the fine line between the reasonable and the risky, something he did far longer and more skillfully than most climbers of his caliber. He also had an intuitive sense of his partners' limits — and he respected them. Mugs helped me to push myself, yet when I wasn't up to the task, he would harness his own incredible strength and drive, take over, and get us up that pitch or to the next bivouac.

Born and raised in Mifflintown, Pennsylvania, where his parents still live, Terrance Manbeck ("Mugs") Stump started fishing, hunting, and camping with his three brothers at an early age. Although he never took well to authority, he excelled in sports, finishing high school as an all-state quarterback. He attended Pennsylvania State University on a football scholarship,



Mugs on the magic bus in 1983 on the way to Gasherbrum IV, Pakistan.

where his teammates came up with the moniker he's been known by since, and played in two Orange Bowls before graduating in 1971 with a degree in Recreation and Health. After college he played a year of semi-professional football but, disillusioned with that, moved to Snowbird, Utah, in the winter of 1972–1973 in hopes of pursuing a career in freestyle skiing.

After two years of competing in local freestyle events and skiing virtually anything that held snow, Mugs found himself increasingly drawn to the backcountry. He spent his summers roaming the Wasatch wilderness surrounding Snowbird and by the winter of 1974–1975 had given up lift skiing in favor of touring. As he ventured into steeper and wilder terrain, he sought out local climbers and avalanche experts for advice, and in the summer of 1975 made his first roped climbs.

Mugs developed his climbing skills rapidly, and in spring, 1977, he made the first ascent of *Merlin* (V 5.10 A3) in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Colorado, with Bob Sullivan. That summer he spent two months in Chamonix climbing classic snow and ice routes. The trip culminated in an epic attempt on the *Dru Couloir* (then regarded as one of the most difficult ice climbs in the Alps) with Randy Trover, Steve Shea, and Jack Roberts. Starting out with no bivy gear, and food and water for a single day, the four got off route, were trapped on the face by a storm for two days, and barely made it down alive when their ropes repeatedly froze to the rappel anchors during their descent.

Mugs had plenty of drive and quickly came to know how far he could push himself. The climbs only got harder. In spring, 1978, Mugs attempted the *Hummingbird Ridge* on Mount Logan, Canada's highest peak, with Trover, Jim Logan, and Barry Sparks. After 10 days climbing they reached the point where the original ascent party had gained the ridge, but with several thousand feet and many corniced miles still to go, Mugs and his party retreated. Later that summer, Mugs and Logan made the first ascent of the often-tried *Emperor Face* on Mount Robson in the Canadian Rockies, a landmark mixed climb that has yet to be repeated.

In 1979, Mugs and Sullivan climbed *The Shield* on El Capitan in Yosemite Valley, California; a year later, they made the fifth ascent of the *Pacific Ocean Wall*, then one of the hardest aid routes in the world. Mugs would climb numerous other big walls in Yosemite and elsewhere: he made the first ascent of the *Streaked Wall* in Zion National Park, Utah, with Conrad Anker in 1990, and the first winter ascent of the *Hallucinogen Wall* in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison with John Midthendorf in 1992.

In the winter of 1980–1981, Mugs made the first of four trips to Antarctica. He developed a special affinity for the pristine and barren continent, and did much exploratory mountaineering there while working as a safety consultant for the National Science Foundation. In the Ellsworth Mountains in 1989, he made two of his best climbs ever, the 7000-foot *Southwest Face* of Mount Gardner and the 8000-foot *West Face* of Mount Tyree — each done solo, without bivy gear, and in a single day.

The Himalaya beckoned. Mugs and I attempted the *West Face* of Gasherbrum IV in Pakistan in 1983; he and Laura O'Brien tried Thalay Sagar in India in 1984; and he returned to India twice to attempt the *East Face* of Meru with various partners. But Mugs didn't like the organizational hassles and expense, or the sheer inefficiency of climbing in Asia. Instead, he turned increasingly toward the Alaska Range, which in many ways became Mugs' spiritual home. In the late 1970s and early 1980s he earned his living between climbs by salmon fishing off the coast of Alaska; later, he guided extensively on Denali and elsewhere in the Alaska Range. He returned again and again to peaks surrounding the Ruth Gorge, attempting Mount Johnson and the Bro-

ken Tooth several times, and climbing numerous routes on less well-known peaks in the area.

His greatest climbs in the Alaska Range, however, were on three of the region's most celebrated mountains. In March, 1981, Mugs and Jim Bridwell made the first ascent of the *East Face* of the Moose's Tooth, an exceptionally bold route climbed in frigid conditions with minimal food and equipment. The pair carried no bolts on the climb and the experience tested their well-developed skills to the maximum. A few months later, Mugs climbed the *Moonflower Buttress* on Mount Hunter with Paul Aubrey, a route that represented a quantum leap in technical difficulty for climbs in the Alaska Range. And in 1991, he made a visionary solo ascent of Denali's *Cassin Ridge*, starting at the 14,200-foot camp on the *West Buttress* with his climbing gear, a liter of water, and a pocket full of energy bars, he descended the *West Rib* to the base of the *Cassin*, climbed the route in a storm, reached the summit as the sun set, and returned to his *West Buttress* camp, all in a little over 24 hours.

Mugs and I shared some incredibly good and some equally bad times in the mountains of Pakistan and India. In 1983 we spent seven long, difficult days on the *West Face* of Gasherbrum IV, including four storm-wracked nights at 22,500 feet, before retreating. When we reached the relative safety of the West Gasherbrum Glacier, Mugs strode out ahead, anxious to rid himself of the intensity of the face, to go the last few miles at his own pace. I trudged on well behind him, lost in my disappointment at not being able to fulfill a longtime dream. A couple of hours later I crested a little bump in the glacier, and there was Mugs, waiting so we could walk into basecamp together.

At his very best, Mugs was generous, enthusiastic, and supportive. But he could also be selfish, insensitive, and moody. All of us who had the privilege to climb with him experienced both of these personas — in Mugs and, too often, in ourselves. The good spirit in Mugs, that warm part of his being that inspired me so much, was by far ascendant. In the past few years, it seemed to me that Mugs had really come into his own. He had great adventures in the mountains, but he was also more at peace with the world and at home with himself. He had dreams sufficient for several lifetimes, and it's our loss, too, that those dreams won't be fulfilled. I'll

remember Mugs most for his boundless enthusiasm, for offering me a quick smile and brief word of encouragement before a hard pitch, for laughing at himself while recounting some grim epic — for just being Mugs.

— Michael Kennedy

Andy Fanshawe, 1963–1992

Andy Fanshawe, 28, a well-known British mountaineer, was killed on the Scottish crag Lochnagar in the Cairngorms on March 14, 1992. He and his partner, Ulrich Jessop, had nearly completed Eagle Ridge, a Scottish ice Grade 5, when Fanshawe took a long fall from moderate terrain, pulling out several pieces of protection.

Fanshawe's death has been a terrible blow to British mountaineers: he was very well liked, and was among the cream of Britain's new generation of Himalayan alpinists, with bold ascents in Ecuador, Peru, the Alps, and the Himalaya.

In 1986, Fanshawe led a five-man British team in an alpine-style traverse of the twin summits of Chogolisa (7665 meters) in the Karakoram. In 1988, he spearheaded the technical climbing on Chris Bonington's expedition to Menlungtse in the Rolwaling Himalaya in Tibet. With a tremendous effort, Fanshawe and Alan Hinkes made the first ascent of Menlungtse's western summit (7023 meters), the lower summit of one of the Himalaya's most beautiful peaks. Fanshawe later chronicled both these expeditions in the well-received *Coming Through* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), one of the first books to describe the arduous expeditionary exploits of this generation of British mountaineers.

It was just after Fanshawe's stunning success on Menlungtse in 1988 that I met him and his teammates in Lhasa, all of us enroute home. I was struck by his open and happy spirit, and the sincere warmth and empathy he showed me in light of frostbite injuries I was suffering. Fanshawe resided in Cumbria, and three years later we reunited in the Lake District of England. I relish the memory of that beautiful sunny day when I shared his enthusiastic company on the crags. All who knew and loved him will greatly miss his kindness and ready smile. He had no children but left his wife, Carolyn Jerran Fanshawe.

— Ed Webster

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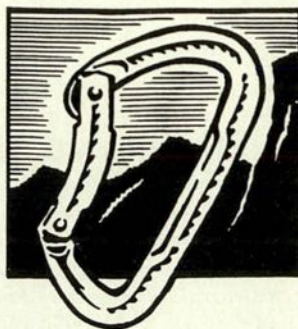


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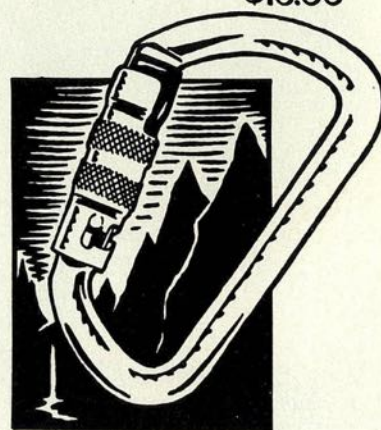
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HOT FLASHES

Compiled by Michael Bengé

New Nose record by Peter Croft and Hans Florine; Steve Schneider solos the Salathé in a day

Utah ablaze with new 5.14s — Geoff Weigand Blacks Out

Robyn Erbesfield comes into her own

Croft and Jonny Woodward free the Moonlight Buttress

Alpine extreme: Andy Parkin and Marc Twight

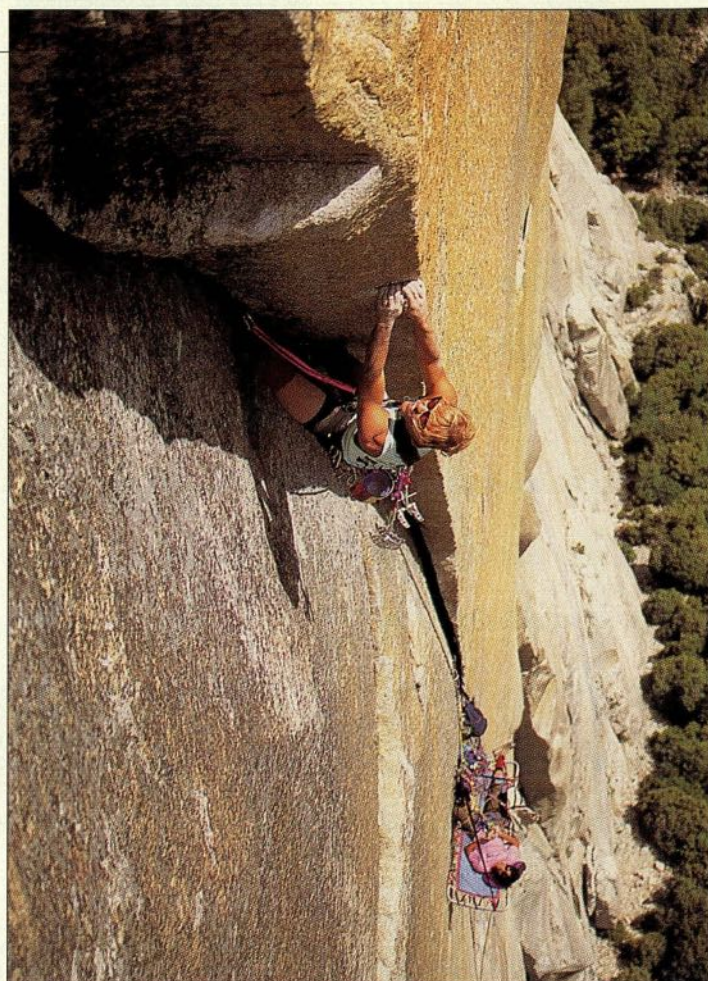
Alain Robert on 5.13 solo spree

■ The Valley saw a flurry of activity in early May, mostly on the speed front. Peter Croft of Yosemite and Hans Florine of Berkeley, California — who had never climbed together before — teamed up for a record speed ascent of *The Nose*, completing the route in 4 hours, 22 minutes. The previous record was 4 hours, 48 minutes, set by Croft and Dave Schultz. Florine and Croft, dressed in T-shirts and shorts and carrying a liter of water each, set out at 5:30 a.m. The pair simul-climbed the route in eight "pitches," switching the sharp end when the leader ran out of gear — which they placed sparingly. (Croft reportedly had to be urged to put more in.) Florine had attempted a new speed record a week before, doing the route in just over six hours. He says that Croft had quite a bag of tricks that allowed them to climb more efficiently through certain sections, particularly in the pendulums. After the pair descended, Croft went on to solo the 10-pitch *Steck-Salathé* on Sentinel as a cool-down.

Nancy Feagin of Jackson, Wyoming, and Sue McDevitt



Peter Croft and Hans Florine.



Steve Schneider freeing the wide crack on pitch 13 (5.12d) of *Excalibur*, El Capitan, Yosemite Valley, California.

of Yosemite became the first women's team to make a one-day ascent of *The Nose*, completing the route in just under 17 hours. A couple of days before, Feagin and Florine had climbed the *Salathé Wall* in only 12 hours.

Solo, Steve Schneider of Orinda, California, smoked up the *Salathé Wall* in a record 21 hours, 44 minutes — that breaks down to 37 minutes per pitch, including leading, cleaning, jumaring, and hauling. The *Salathé* had never been soloed in less than 24 hours before.

Also on the Southwest Face of El Cap, Schneider, Bill Price of Antioch, California, and Jeff Schoen of Berkeley, California, spent nine days on *Excalibur*, freeing around 75 percent of the route. Schneider referred to the three difficult offwidths — pitches 8, 9, and thirteen; 5.12b, 5.12c, 5.12d, respectively — as the "wide cracks from

hell." The team freed eight 5.12 pitches, but the crux of the free climbing came on pitch 21, a technical 5.13a tips crack.

■ Although J.B. Tribout's recent addition at Smith Rock, Oregon — *Just Do It* (5.14c) — is sure to be the hardest rock climb in the United States, Utah climbers, including Geoff Weigand, Boone Speed, Jeff Pedersen, and Dale Goddard, have quietly brought super-high standards to their state, establishing several top-end 5.13s and a few routes deemed consensus 5.14 by locals. This brief chronology recaps the growth of cutting-edge climbing in Utah over the past year and a half.

With the high-end developments in American Fork Canyon in 1990, Utah climbing was propelled into the limelight, attracting top climbers from all over the world. The already motivated local community was

Black Out

On June 14, during a period of cool weather, Geoff Weigand, John Barstow and I were the only people at the China Wall in Logan Canyon. Neither John nor I were climbing that day; I would be the belay monkey and John would take photos while Geoff attempted the project he had been working on for two months — a powerful route that overhung 30 feet in 60.

For the past six days, Geoff had been falling at the same brutal sequence by the third bolt; a low-percentage diagonal dead-point to a shallow two-finger pocket. The move covered a distance of five feet and Geoff's weight and momentum worked against him. I could never tell whether he was in or out; either way his body thrutched violently outward. Geoff's goal for the day was to link from the ground through the dead-point section, but he did have the remainder of the route totally wired in hopes of a redpoint. The top half is no bushwalk, involving an all-points-off throw to a slot and some big pulls out a final bulge.

Geoff tied into his new 8.8 and I put him on belay. Off he went, focused and breathing hard. He looked solid getting through the first hard sequence to the third bolt, but bobbled the clip for what seemed like hours, straight-arming off a block on the 45-degree wall with nothing to crimp, and no texture for added friction. He finally got the thin rope clipped and I said a relieved "good job;" actually I thought he was sunk. Geoff climbed past the bolt and set up for the crux. Silence. He let out a big deep breath as if trying to fool himself into thinking he was solid and fresh. Then, bam, his body thrutched out and I grimaced to catch the fall. But somehow he stayed on. Mission accomplished.

"Yeah!" we shouted. Geoff was breathing harder and looking not-so-solid. John and I were screaming encouragement. It took forever for Geoff to clip the next bolt and do the set-up moves for the huge throw to the slot. At this point Geoff was gasping and we were screaming so loud you could have heard us in Hell. But despite the enthusiasm, Geoff's body tension was fading. Somehow, between karate yells and hyperventilation, Geoff found himself on the setup holds, seemingly miles from the target slot. Without hesitation he leaped and, with a scream of desperation or defeat, was airborne. I clamped down on the slippery new rope to catch the fall but was astonished to see

Geoff, feet swinging, hanging on to the slot by one hand. In a split second he had his other hand and both feet on the wall; still in there.

"No way!" I cried.

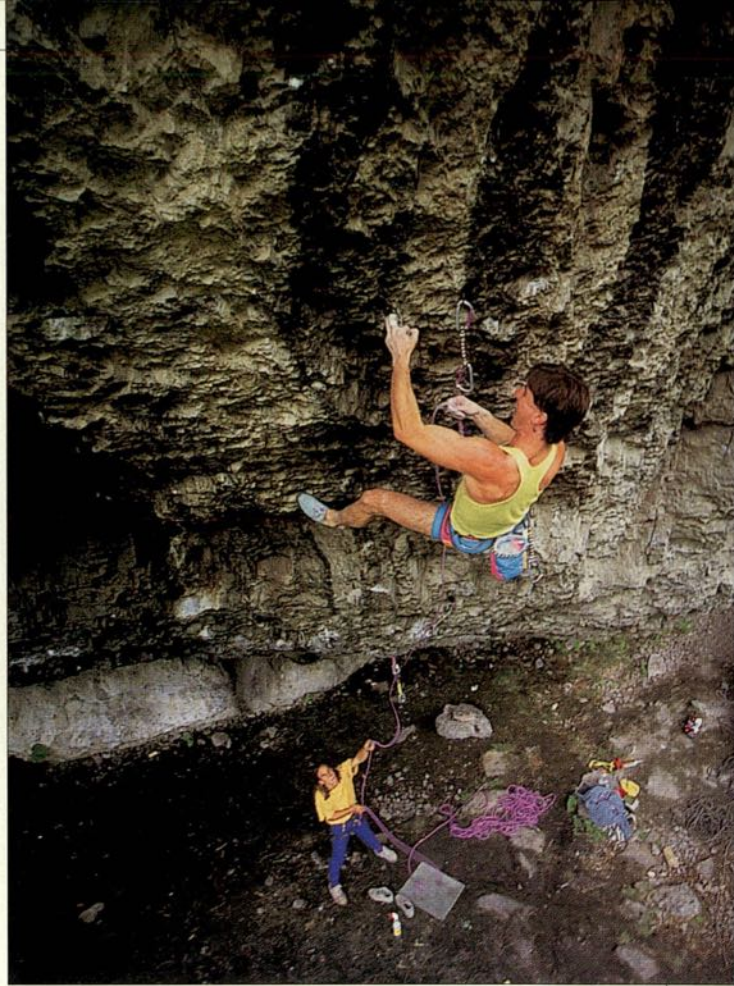
"Keep screaming," Geoff yelled, "I'm finished!"

At this point Geoff got a shake at two good holds. That's exactly what he was doing, shaking. His whole body was shaking. John and I were almost in tears; we had never seen anything like this. As Geoff began the next clip I was hesitant to pay out slack for fear that he might peel off the hold. But he got the rope in and after a couple more shakes he grumbled something about no blood in his arms, looked out at the bulge above, and nervously said, "I'm ready."

Screaming commenced, to be spiced with karate sounds from Geoff. Two "easy" setup moves led to the big one, and with each reach the drama intensified. We couldn't believe he was still hanging in. Geoff finally got his right hand in the undercling, the last setup before the *big* move. This was no small big move but a big move to someone who bouldered big moves all winter long: a lock off the undercling to a shallow two-finger pocket four feet out the 45-degree bulge. Geoff pulled the move in fine "at-the-limit" style — except he came up short. With a scream of failure he came down. But only part way, to a tiny pebble. This was getting ridiculous; the marginal clips, the just-barely moves, the noise, the shaking. But Geoff didn't let go.

John and I were laughing and screaming in hysteria. After regrouping on the pebble, Geoff groped upward again, but it was painfully obvious that once more he had come up short. No reserves left, no way to go down to the pebble. But with his best and loudest Bruce Lee imitation he lurched up and was in the pocket.

All that was left for Geoff was a short pull to a finger-lock and another four-foot pull to some big jugs, but the show was far from over. He stuck the finger lock, then his feet cut loose. Bad sign. John and I gave him more high-volume screaming than ever, as he hung there with his feet swinging like laundry on a line. Geoff scratched his feet onto the wall below and heaved his entire body toward the jug. No way. Short again. His hand glommed to some texture for a split second, and with a neck-breaking head-snap, he lunged for the jug. And got it. But he looked down



Geoff Weigand on the dramatic first ascent of *Black Out*.

very concerned, shouting, "These jugs aren't big enough!" I fought back the nervous laughter and yelled up, "They've gotta be!"

Geoff was shaking as he tried to take either hand off the jug to get a rest. John dashed over to where I was belaying and said, "Man I know people scream in martial arts but I've never seen it in climbing. That's cool." I told him he should hang with us more often, and payed out slack as Geoff fought through the last moves, clipped the anchors, and slumped onto the rope with a victory cry. John and I congratulated him. He just hung there dazed for several minutes until I reminded him where he was. "Oh yeah," he replied, as I suggested he pull the draws off the route.

The minute Geoff touched the ground he lay down in the dirt, curled up in the fetal position, and passed out. He woke with a start a minute or two later and John and I could tell something was wrong. "I'm fucked," he said trembling, "completely fucked." His glassy eyes and constricted pupils told us he wasn't kidding. He got up and wandered aimlessly around the base of the crag repeating his original statement. He had definitely released something into his blood.

A while later he could only function on an insect level, so we packed up and left.

On the way home, between periods of stupor, Geoff, who had been closely following the basketball championships and his hero Michael Jordan, said he was going to call the route "Slammit." He did not hesitate to rate it 8c. He got no questions about the grade from me, but I suggested he call the route "Blackout," for obvious reasons. He agreed.

John and I suspected that Geoff had tapped into some "rad power," a large dose of adrenalin perhaps, and our suspicions were later confirmed by a doctor. "Your friend accessed his emergency power," he said, "you know, the power that people have when they lift a car off of somebody in trouble." He also thought a mild stroke might have occurred, but nothing to be too concerned about.

The grade of the route is irrelevant, insignificant compared to the pure intensity of the performance. What matters is that Geoff punched it past his personal limits, and, in the process, inspired us to do the same. I wish everyone luck in the search for their own "Black Out."

— Boone Speed

given an extra push when Geoff Weigand and Dale Goddard moved to Salt Lake in the summer of 1990. The ensuing year and a half saw a consistent rise in standards, which reached a crescendo this spring, culminating with Weigand's dramatic ascent of *Black Out* (likely 5.14b).

The first really hard routes in A.F. put up in the fall of 1990 — *Cannibals* (5.13d/14a, graded 8b+ or 5.14a by its first ascensionist, J.B. Tribout) and *Dead Souls* (5.13d/14a, originally graded 5.14b by Scott Franklin) — were soon repeated and thought to be a notch harder than their Smith Rock counterparts, such as *Scarface* and *White Wedding*. Goddard and Weigand repeated *Cannibals*, and Didier Raboutou (FRA), Jim Karn, and Speed did *Dead Souls*. Within a couple weeks of repeating *Cannibals*, Weigand and Goddard were able to do the route on demand, as well as another link-up in Hell called *Brimstone* (5.13d). Around the same time, Goddard added a traverse into the start of *High Water* giving *Higher Water* (5.14a). Speed and Karn also repeated *Cannibals*.

That same fall Jeff Pedersen, a climber relatively unknown outside of Utah, finished his incredibly overhanging route, *The Blue Mask*, in the cave at the Billboard in A.F. Typically, he made no fuss over the route and was reluctant to offer a grade. Speed, responsible for many of A.F.'s hard 5.13s, repeated the route in four days and thought it to be "good 13d."

The spring following the prolific 1990 season had the worst weather seen on the Wasatch front in decades, putting most routes out of condition for the better part of the year. As a result most people were content with repeating anything that was dry and taking road trips to other areas. In the fall Weigand, in just a few days, squeezed in two hard new routes in A.F.: the sustained *Body Count* ("easy 13d"), and *The Love Boat* (5.13c), a steep and finery route on a new cliff called the Hideout. As bad weather still precluded major activity in A.F., climbers turned their attention to Logan Canyon two hours

north of A.F. Once again Pedersen produced the goods with the brilliant and strenuous *Big Brawl* (5.13c). This route took the line of weakness on the excellent rock of the China Wall where the potential for much harder routes was obvious.

As the weather deteriorated in winter the Salt Lake hardcores focused their attention on climbing indoors, and the Wasatch Body Shop was the place. Weigand, Speed, and the younger local talents Mike Call and Jonathan Knight spent many six- to eight-hour sessions pulling to their limit on the Body Shop's numerous "woodies" — bouldering caves renowned for vicious finger problems.

The Salt Lake climbers also traveled to the Virgin River Gorge, just over the Arizona border from southwestern Utah, where the steep limestone walls offer futuristic potential. In the late spring of 1991, the Californian Scott Frye made a worthwhile contribution with *Dude* (5.13c). Knight made the second ascent at the beginning of the winter over five days, a fine accomplishment considering it was his first route of that grade. Unfortunately, hot spring weather stopped Speed and Weigand from completing their newly bolted desperates.

The spring of 1992 was one of the driest in years. The fine weather combined with a winter of hard training paid off — the Utah bunch completed 13 ascents of 5.13d and harder.

Luckily, as the Virgin River Gorge became too hot, the discovery of Santa Clara (another new limestone crag) at 5000 feet near Saint George offered a cool crag. At a cliff there called The Gorilla, Weigand had one of his best days climbing ever, completing the first ascents of *Nintendo* (5.13c/d, fourth try over two days) and *Gorilla* (5.13b/c) in 15 minutes. Speed had been trying *Gorilla* for two days when Weigand snaked the route. Speed, however, completed his ascent right after Weigand, confirming the grade.

The action moved back north to Logan where Weigand had an even finer day, doing the first

ascent of *Slugfest* (5.14a, five days) and then repeating the *Big Brawl* (5.13c). Speed then completed his line to the right of *Slugfest* called *Tweek* (5.14a, six days). Both 5.14s are reportedly solid for their grade.

A day later in A.F. Goddard repeated *Dead Souls* (5.13d/5.14a). The next week Speed had a banner day when he repeated *Body Count* (5.13d, three days, four tries) then ran two laps on *Dead Souls*. Later that week Goddard made the third ascent of *Body Count*.

Once again Speed and Weigand turned their attention to Logan where Speed repeated the *Slugfest* in a fine three-day effort. Speed feels that *Tweek* and *Slugfest*, although different in style, are comparable in difficulty. Weigand continued with the first ascent of the roof/crack on the left side of the China Wall; *Trench Warfare* (5.13c/d) overhangs 50 feet.

In the Hell area of A.F., two other hard routes were established before the onset of hot weather. At the left end of the El Diablo Wall, Speed found another plum. *Power Junkie* (5.13d) is very short, but as the name suggests, you'll need plenty of crank strength to succeed. On the steepest part of the wall right of *Dead Souls*, Weigand climbed what is now the hardest route in A.F., *Cop Killer* (5.14a). Later the same week, Goddard repeated *Power Junkie*.

Weigand returned to Logan after a three-day rest and succeeded in an all-out effort on his final China Wall project, after nine days. Weigand named the climb, appropriately, *Black Out* (5.14b) (see "Black Out").

■ Robyn Erbesfield, formerly of Atlanta but now living in France, has come fully into her own. In early May, at St. Antonin, she on-sighted *Utlime Demence* (7c), and a couple of weeks later *Digital* (7c) and *A Song for My Father* (7c+) in the same day. As of this

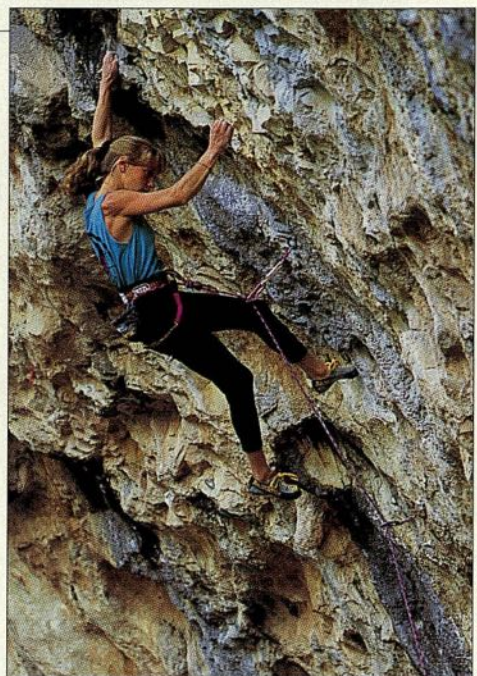


Photo: Beth Wald

On a roll — Robyn Erbesfield.

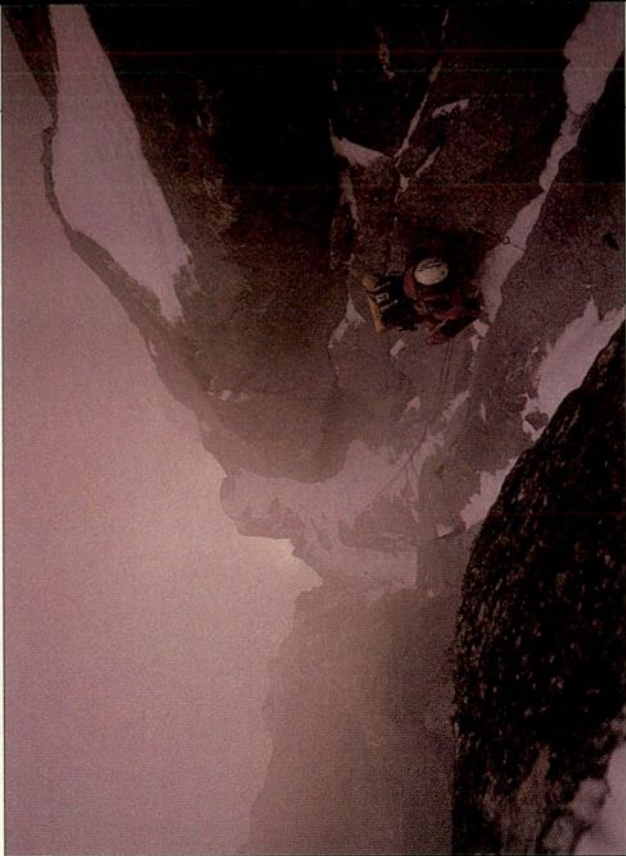
writing, Erbesfield has on-sighted 13 5.12ds and four 5.13as.

In competitions, Erbesfield dominated the season's first two events, with wins in the Open des Ecrins a L'Argentiere La Bessee in France, and the first World Cup event of year, in Zurich, Switzerland. Isabelle Patissier of France was second in both events. Erbesfield also won the Massy International Open, held in Paris in February.

■ In late April in Zion National Park, Peter Croft of Yosemite and Jonny Woodward of Salt Lake City made the first free ascent of the *Moonlight Buttress* (IV 5.12d/5.13a) on Angel's Landing. The *Moonlight Buttress* is one of the hardest, most sustained long free route in the country, and is of excellent quality.

Known for his solos of *Astroman* and same-day ascents of the *Salathé Wall* and the *Nose*, Croft calls the *Moonlight Buttress* "one of the best things I've ever done." The 10-pitch route ascends good-quality Canyonlands-style sandstone, and offers incredible face cracks and great exposure.

On pitch three, the pair avoided crumbling rock and an old bolt ladder, adding a 5.11c traverse pitch and a 5.10d pitch before connecting with the original line. The other pitches go at 5.11d, 5.12d/5.13a, 5.12a, 5.12a, 5.12b, 5.12a, 5.12a. On some pitches, Croft and Wood-



Andy Parkin following pitch eight of his and Marc Twight's *Beyond Good and Evil* (V ED+ WI 5 A3) on the North Face of the Aiguille des Pelerins, France.

ward opted to drill new belay stations in locations more logical for the free climb.

It was the first time Croft had climbed with Woodward. After one fall on the crux pitch, Croft lowered to the belay. Woodward then led the pitch, first try with no falls. Those with bigger fingers will find it difficult to get the crucial jam at the crux.

■ In the French Alps this spring, Andy Parkin and Marc Twight climbed a very difficult new route on the North Face of the Aiguille des Pelerins (3318 meters). *Beyond Good and Evil* (V ED+ WI 5 A3) is a serious, modern mixed route on an austere, cold face that receives no sun, even at the end of April, says Twight. (ED+ is the French overall rating, and means in this case "extremely difficult and then some," taking into account technical difficulty, commitment, altitude, runouts, length, descent, etc.)

Parkin and Twight climbed the route over two days on their third attempt in a two-year period. On April 21, the pair began climbing at 6 a.m. and bivied on top of pitch eight at 8 p.m. The next day they climbed from 8:30 in the morning until

8:30 that evening, reaching the Col des Pelerins and, after rappelling and downclimbing its west side, the hut at the Plan de l'Aiguille at 2:30 a.m.

The 14-pitch route is very sustained and often dangerous. Seconding, each climber jumared, not only because of the weight of the pack, says Twight, but because the leader generally left no ice in place for the second to climb. The only fixed gear the two left on the route is on a few of the belays. "Repeating this route will not come easily to those habituated to fixed protection," wrote Twight in a letter to *Climbing*. "Placing nuts and pitons to protect *Beyond Good and Evil* requires experience and no small amount of patience." Both Parkin and Twight took scary falls on the climb: Parkin fell six meters onto the belay anchors at the beginning of the 13th pitch, and Twight fell nine meters off the fourth pitch during the first attempt. "Taking fall like this, with crampons and ice tools, on a hostile and isolated face, is very sobering indeed," comments Twight. Twight describes the route as less committing than the *Walker Spur* on the Grandes Jorasses or the

Frenet Pillar on Mont Blanc but technically far more difficult.

■ When it comes to extreme rock soloing, the Frenchman Alain Robert's list of first solo ascents is enough to send chills down anyone's spine. Among the dozen 8a (5.13b) or harder routes Robert has soloed are *Reve de Papillon* (8a) and *La Nuit du Lezard* (8a+) at Buoux, *Crac Boum Hue* (8a) in the Verdon, and *Compilation* (8b or 5.13d) at Ombleze. In an interview in *Mountain* No. 145, Robert (a husband and father) says that the hardest climbs he solos are very close to his roped leading limit. "If you get scared," says Robert in *Mountain*, "the whole thing becomes far too dangerous and means that you've not prepared well enough for the route."

■ At the New River Gorge, West Virginia, Christian Griffith of Boulder had a fine five-day binge (no rest days). Among the nine 5.12s Griffith on-sighted were *Stealth and Magic*, *Lactic Acid Bath*, and *Pudd's Pretty Dress*, all 5.12d. He also did a quick (1 1/2-hour) ascent of *The Racist* (5.13b/c), and redpointed *Blood Raid* (5.13a/b), *Apollo Reed* (5.13a), and *Quinsana Plus* (5.13a/b).

■ In May, Tim Wagner and Jade Chun of Boulder had a productive road trip. At the City of Rocks, Idaho, Wagner completed the third ascent of Tony Yaniro's *Calypso* (5.13d), a highly technical route that has repulsed many talented climbers. At Smith Rock, Wagner did *Vicious Fish* (5.13c/d), and *Rude Boys* (5.13c), redpointing both in the same day. He also on-sighted every other route (over a dozen 5.12s) he attempted there, including *JC's 5.12* (5.12c), *Go Dog Go* (5.12c), and *Kings of Rap* (5.12d).

At Smith, Chun made quick redpoints of *Oxygen* (5.13b) and *Churning in the Wake* (5.13a), and on-sighted the tricky aretes *The Blade* (5.12b/c) and *Latest Rage* (5.12b).

■ Kevin McLaughlin and Glenn Schuler's new route on the north

face of Big Rock in the South Platte requires that the climber use nearly every technique in the book. After eight days, the Colorado Springs pair succeeded on the six-pitch climb, which offers a 5.12 finger crack, a couple of hand-crack pitches, a 5.11+ offwidth, and a 165-foot thin-face pitch for the finale. Attempting the first continuous free ascent, the climbers were caught in a typical South Platte electrical storm. While they were on pitch five, a bolt of lightning struck the rock, sending a current from the belay anchors into Schuler's harness, groin, and legs. McLaughlin, in the chimney slot below, was knocked out for a few seconds. The pair safely retreated, however, and returned two weeks later for the free ascent. *Shock Treatment* (5.12b/c) is perhaps the most sustained hard route in the South Platte area.

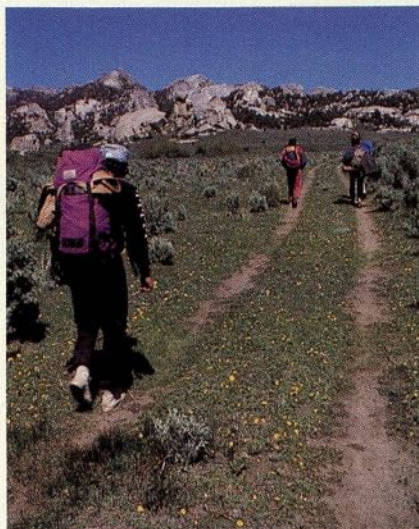
■ French ratings are frequently used in our reporting. Following is a grading comparison chart for high-end routes.

French vs. Yosemite Decimal System	
8c+	5.14c
8c	5.14b
8b+	5.14a
8b	5.13d
8a+	5.13c
8a	5.13b
7c+	5.13a
7c	5.12d
7b+	5.12c
7b	5.12b
7a+	5.12a
7a	5.11d

■ In Hot Flashes, *Climbing* No. 130, we discussed the distinction between on-sighting and flashing. Although we have reported flash ascents in the past, we will now report only on-sights because of the nebulous nature of flashes. Please follow this new convention in any correspondence to us. Thank you.

We welcome readers' contributions to this section. Please send news of noteworthy alpine, ice, and rock ascents to Hot Flashes, *Climbing*, P.O. Box 339, Carbondale, CO 81623.

Power Snacking



PowerBars help prevent the energy lags that can occur after a couple of hours of backpacking.

Photos: Greg Epperson

It's 10:30 a.m. on a typically busy day. You congratulate yourself on all the phone calls you've already returned, but now you're going into a big meeting and there's a gnawing emptiness in the pit of your stomach.

What you're experiencing at the office isn't much different from the energy lag that you encounter after a couple of hours of hard hiking; a plunge in blood sugar level that will make your concentration and

performance suffer.

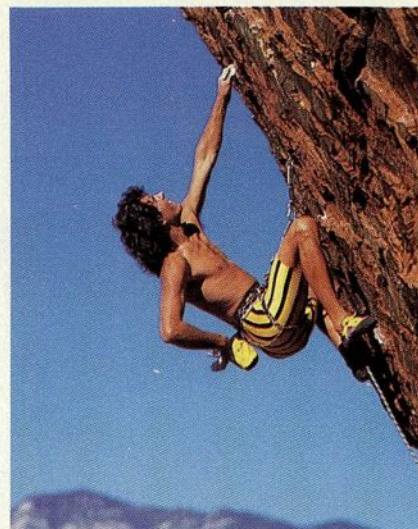
Both the brain and working muscles function best on the kind of energy delivered by carbohydrates, but since the body's ability to store carbohydrates is limited, energy lags can occur after a couple of hours of activity.

Snacking between meals can raise energy levels, but many people forget nutrition in their quest for convenience when choosing snack foods.

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The chart below compares the nutrition in PowerBars with other popular snacks.

The bottom line? The same considerations that apply when snacking while backpacking should be considered by all active people at work or in other activities.



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	Total Calories	% Calories From Fat	% Calories from Carbohydrates	% Calories from Protein	Vit C	Vit B1	% of U.S. RDA			Iron	Calcium	Cholesterol (mg)
PowerBar (any flavor)	225	8%	76%	16%	100%	100%	100%	100%	30%	30%	0	
Mixed Nuts (1/3 C.)	332	71%	12%	17%	0	14%	6%	65%	8%	4%	0	
Bran Muffin (Large)	180	40%	53%	7%	0	6%	8%	15%	9%	8%	*	
Banana (Med.)	100	2%	93%	5%	20%	5%	5%	5%	5%	2%	0	
Apple (Med. Delicious)	96	9%	89%	2%	11%	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%	0	
Potato Chips (2 oz. bag)	300	60%	36%	4%	20%	2%	6%	4%	0%	2%	*	
Snickers ^{®1} (reg. size)	280	42%	51%	7%	0	2%	4%	8%	6%	2%	*	
Carnation Breakfast Bar ^{®2} (Chocolate Chip)	200	50%	40%	10%	45%	20%	2%	25%	2%	25%	14	

* Information not available.

1 Snickers is a registered trademark of Mars Inc. 2 Carnation Breakfast Bar is a registered trademark of Nestle USA Food Co. Source: U.S.D.A., Nutritive Value of American Foods, 1985

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CIRCLE NO. 37 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Competitions

Karn, Erbesfield smoke bouldering contest

L'Argentiere, France

For the first time, Americans won both the men's and women's divisions of a world event, when Jim Karn and Robyn Erbesfield dominated in an indoor bouldering contest in France, the Open des Ecrins a L'Argentiere la Bessée. Karn also won the event last year.

Yuji Hirayama (JPN) and Faycal Naytech (FRA) tied for second in the men's division at the April 18-19 event. Isabelle Patissier (FRA) claimed a strong second among the women, with third going to the young Laurence Guyon (FRA).

Erbesfield alone on-sighted all the women's problems. Patissier also completed them all, but not without falls.

Karn, too, pulled all five first try; he was the only man even to complete them all. Hirayama, who is Karn's friend and housemate, and Natech each did four onsight, but could not manage the fifth even with falls. François Petit (FRA) pulled off that fifth problem, but couldn't do a different one.

Some 20 women and 70 men entered the event. Lynn Hill (USA) tied for fifth, and Scott Franklin (USA) made the men's final field of 26, where he finished 23rd.

Given the tough competition and the difficulty of the problems, said Doug Englekirk (USA), "I was happy just to be in the top 30."

Missing were only France's François Legrand, who was said to be feeling a little tired, and Didier Raboutou, who is competing at only a few select events this year.

Karn said modestly after the event, "It helped to be tall." It probably also helped to be strong.

— by Alison Osius, from reports

Erbesfield blasts among the boys

Zurich, Switzerland

François Legrand opened the World Cup season with a win — could it be get-

ting ho-hum for him by now? — while Robyn Erbesfield stole the show in one of the most exciting superfinals ever. Competing on the men's finals route, she not only won resoundingly among women but would have placed third among men.

Erbesfield, who had just won a bouldering contest against the same two women two weeks before.

Among men, two groups of 36 climbers each competed on two different quarterfinal routes (7c). Twenty-seven went on to the semifinal (7c+), which only Legrand flashed. Eight went on to the final (8a+).

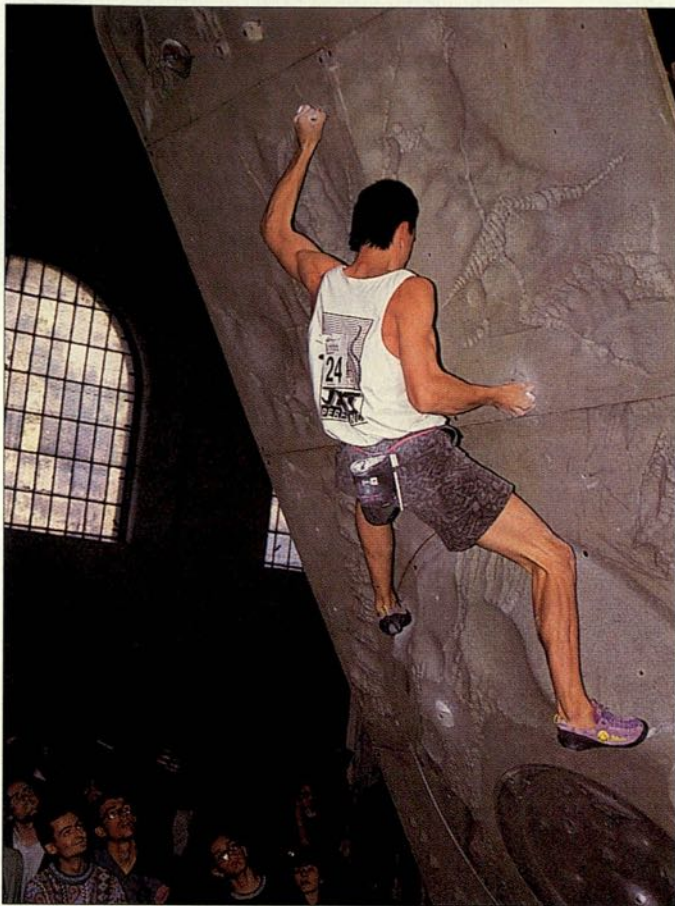
In ninth place, the first person to be cut from entering the finals was François Petit of France, a 17-year-old who is one of a dozen teenagers in Europe onsighting 7c+ these days. Last June Petit surprised everyone when he won the French nationals, ahead of climbers of such caliber as François Legrand. François's brother, Arnaud, who finished 23rd, amused and amazed watchers during the quarterfinal with his one-arm no-feet crank over a roof.

Next to be barely eliminated were Stefan Glowacz, the talented German climber, in 10th, François Lombard (FRA) and Salamat Rakhmetov (RUS) tied for 11th, and Tony Ryan (UK) in 13th.

The women climbed their superfinal directly after the men's final, creat-

ing a perfect opportunity to see how well they compared with the men. This case was unusual in that coursesetters did not change a single hold on the men's route. (Coursesetters frequently shorten some long reaches or ensure that the women have sufficient footholds.)

The course featured a steep wall, a big overhang, another steep wall, and an overhang at the top. Hill made the same error as Hirayama had in the men's final, using the wrong hand on a key hold. She fell going for the second move beyond that section, at 16.11- meters, while Hirayama had continued, arms totally crossed in front of him, to 16.92. Patissier climbed well, reading the confusing sequence correctly, and reached 16.11+. (A minus after a height means



Jim Karn on his way to victory in the Open des Ecrins a L'Argentiere la Bessée in France.

The competition was held on a rainy weekend May 2-3, in the Hallenstadion complex in Zurich. Among the changes this event ushered in for 1992 was that competitors can now earn points for finishes up to 30th. In the past they only received World Cup points for places up to 15th.

Fifty-three women entered the contest, with 16 passing from the quarterfinal (7b) to the semifinal (7b/c), which five flashed. Six continued to the final (7c+/8a). On that route three made the top: Patissier, last year's World Cup winner; Hill, the World Cup co-champion (with Patissier) the year before; and

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the climber tagged the hold; a plus means the person held the hold and tried to move past it.)

Erbesfield climbed her best, reading the sequence beautifully and focusing well. Above, at about three-quarters height, she reached the lower of two horizontal holds, either of which could be used to reach a third hold above, before falling. The second-place men's finisher, Severino Scassa

Other than Hill and Erbesfield, American competitors did not fare well, with no one passing his or her first round. Jim Karn, who had triumphed at the recent bouldering contest, was cut in the quarterfinal, the first time since Snowbird in 1988. Others in the quarterfinals were Scott Franklin and Doug Englekirk. Because the men competed on two different routes their rankings are approximations attained by

petition climbing. After all, bicycling has 7-Eleven and Coors Light, track has Sub-4 and Santa Monica, and tennis has Domino's.

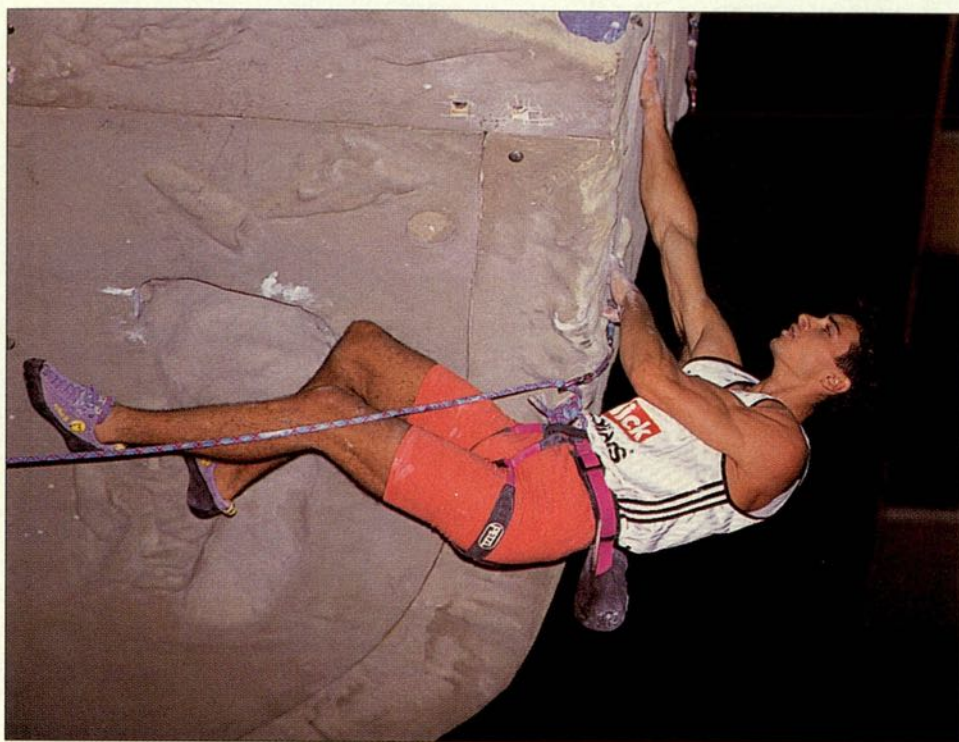
It's happening only slowly, but, aside from the U.S. Climbing Team, formed some four years ago to feed entrants into World Cup events, a new sprinkling of teams has appeared in the last year or two. The teams seem to exist primarily as marketing tools and in return provide team members with certain perks, notably free use of climbing facilities or equipment.

The Boulder Rock Gym's team was created mostly to advertise the gym, according to Pat Adams, a member and also a gym employee. When Adams, winner of the inaugural Tour de Pump held in climbing gyms around Colorado, is asked how the Boulder Rock Gym's team — himself, Christian Griffith, Steve Hong, Alan Lester, Mia Axon, and Jennifer Whaley — was chosen, he laughs. "Well, that's pretty much of a mystery," he says. A uniform, warm-up jacket, and free use of the gym awaited team members. Adams says a climbing team brings a rock gym publicity, especially if its members are good. And with Tour de Pump placings of first and second by Adams and Griffith, and first and third by Axon and Whaley, members' deeds were lauded in the U.S. climbing journals.

Membership in Team Paradise provided Kurt Smith and Mike Pont with a team uniform, competition entry fees — and a decal. Brian Vanderkrol of the Paradise Rock Gym in Denver says that having a team "is a hassle, costs lots of money, and there isn't much exposure for the sponsor." That's why Paradise, he says, "had" a team; organization of next year's team is "not looking good," he says.

CityRock of Emeryville, California, informally backs a team of national-caliber climbers, including Hans Florine, Diane Russel, Scott Frye, Peter Mayfield, Steve Schneider, Andy Outis, and Bird Lew, with sweatshirts and some help defraying competition entry fees.

The most formal team to date is that of the Boulder-based Colorado Athletic Training School. According to its coach, Rob Candelaria, CATS provides coaching and calls for mandatory two-nights-a-week workouts for its "pretty much unknown" (though some are quite visible) members Joe Desimone, Mitsuru Kitigawa, Bruno Larsen, Shane Rymmer, Sharon Bulthaup, Lizz Grenard, Suzanne Paulson, Sue Wint, and Will Gadd. Another member, in absentia, is the renowned Robyn Erbesfield, now performing at top world levels. Candelaria says the stretching, strengthening, and climbing workouts often create a "frenzy of enthusiasm" among team members that



François LeGrand winning the first 1992 World Cup, in Zurich, Switzerland.

(ITA), had fallen at the upper of the two horizontals, reaching 19.79 meters. Erbesfield got 19.67 — and the women's title. Legrand got the second horizontal and fell two holds later, the highest contender at 21.21.

It was a fine finish for Scassa, a fast, natural climber who seems to move easily to each hold without thinking about the moves ahead.

Erbesfield said afterwards that other competitors "thought I fell because of a reach problem — I said no, I'd love to think that, but it was because I was a li-i-ittle tired. When you're tired, your lock-off gets a little less. It doesn't mean you're shorter," she said, laughing.

Legrand and Scassa teased her that she had been so close to their high points as to scare them, while Hirayama, whose high point she had passed, covered his eyes and mock-wailed, "Oh, nooooo!"

Hill said she was "pretty happy" with her finish, considering she was coming back from a recent finger injury.

doubling their finishes, an imperfect system that put Karn in 31st, Englekirk 35th and Franklin 40th. Alison Osius missed a foothold and placed 34th. Hans Florine and Colin Lantz participated in the open competition held before the quarterfinal.

At the close of Zurich, the next events on the roster were three masters competitions in France: Mont Aguille, July 3-4; Serre Chevalier, July 17-19; and Aussois, July 24-26.

— Alison Osius, with reports

Teamsters

The white van parked at the American Fork campsite last year was covered with product stickers. La Sportiva. Jrat. Gregory. Team Paradise.

Team Paradise? Could it be? Climbers, the most individual of athletes, forming teams and competing with, not just against, each other?

Indeed, climbing teams would seem to be a logical next step in the progression of com-

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Competition Results

UIAA KLETTERWELTCUP

Zurich, Switzerland
May 2-3, 1992

Women (finals)

1. Robyn Erbesfield (USA)
2. Isabelle Patissier (FRA)
3. Lynn Hill (USA)
4. Susi Good (SWI)
5. Luisa Iovane (ITA)
6. Nanette Raybaud (FRA)

Men (finals)

1. François Legrand (FRA)
2. Severino Scassa (ITA)
3. Yuji Hirayama (JPN)
4. Luca Zardini (ITA)
5. Guido Köstermeyer (GER)
6. Christoph Finkel (GER)
7. Francisco Arocena (SPA)
8. Gunter Unterrainer (AUS)

OPEN DES ECRINS A L'ARGENTIERE LA BESSEE, FRANCE

April 18-19, 1992

Men

1. Jim Karn (USA)
2. Faycal Natech (FRA)
3. Yuji Hirayama (JPN)
4. François Petit (FRA)
5. Frederic Nicole (SWI)
6. Laurent Laporte (FRA)
7. François Lombard (FRA)
8. Fabien Mazuer (FRA)
9. Frederique Coroller (FRA)
10. Benjamin Mazuer (FRA)
- (23. Scott Franklin USA)

Women

1. Robyn Erbesfield (USA)
2. Isabelle Patissier (FRA)
3. Lawrence Guyon (FRA)
4. Agnes Brard (FRA)
5. Lynn Hill (USA)
5. Felicity Butler (USA)
5. M.A. Piat (FRA)

1992 MILWAUKEE SENTINEL SPORT SHOW

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
March 14-21, 1992

Men's elite

1. David Moore
2. Paul Bjork
3. Jacek Krawczyk
4. Thomas M. Ramier
5. Jeff Engel

Women's elite

1. Pam Postma
2. Leslie Thorn
3. Barbara Shelonzek
4. Dina Johnson
5. Tanya Bjork

BOREAL BOULDERING CONTEST

Marquette, Michigan
April 4-5

1. Chris O'Connell
2. Stu Salisbury
3. Mark Hamlin
4. Phil Watts
5. Nikon Hampton (1st women's)
6. Tim Morley
7. Tim Willie
8. Scott Messersmith

1992 MIDEAST INDOOR CLIMBING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Oxford, Ohio
April 11

Men's Elite

1. Jamie Baker
2. Jack Dickey
3. Eddie Whittemore
4. [tie] K.C. Kopp
4. [tie] Tim Steele

Women's Elite

1. Dina Johnson
2. Jean Cieszkowski
3. Heather Anthony
4. [tie] Glo Berlier
4. [tie] Sarah Siegrist

GREENDALE CHALLENGE II

Worcester, Massachusetts
April 18

Men's elite

1. Steve Damboise
2. Steve Buck
3. John McClean

Women's elite

1. Rebecca Noyes
2. Bonnie Bubendorf
3. Karin Bates

CORDAGE MILL ROCK GYM COMPETITION

St. Louis, Missouri
April 25-26

Women's elite

1. Dina Johnston
2. Heather Anthony
3. Leslie Thorn
4. Aura Lee

Men's elite

1. Eric Zschiesche
2. Eddie Whittemore
3. Matt Lisenby
4. Greg Echelmeier

1992 REGIONAL OPEN CLIMBING COMPETITION

Mount Cranmore,
New Hampshire
May 9-10

Men's elite (finals)

1. John Cronin
2. Steve Damboise
3. Joe Terravecchia
4. [tie] Charlie Bentley
4. [tie] Bill Bentley
4. Brian Bergman
7. Steve Buck
8. Harry Breilman
9. John Mallory
10. John Maclean

Women's elite

1. Bonnie Bubendorf
2. Barbara Mazzeo
3. Sarah Waddell
4. Milada Bukovansky
5. Alish Cullen
6. Jenny Rudolph
7. Julie Reitzel

ROCKWORKS FIRST ANNUAL ROCKRALLY

Clifton Park, New York
May 16

1. [tie] Sean Fader
1. [tie] David Lanman
2. Harry Brielmann
3. Kevin Sparks

THE ROCK AND ROLL CLIMBING FESTIVAL

Temecula, California
May 23

1. John Mireles
2. Chris Kunth
3. Mark Canfield

exist for promotional purposes, some see the day when teams will be as commonplace in climbing as they are in other sports. Pat Adams envisions them competing for prize money in the Tour de Pump as early as next year, and thinks it would be "sorta cool" to have competitions between gyms. Individuals climbing as a team also tend to climb better: "Success breeds success," Candelaria says.

If climbing on a team leads to improved performance, then why doesn't every gym have a team and each competition a team title up for grabs? One reason could be that climbing has always focused on individual feats. No team contests exist because climbing is such an individual sport, Adams says. A more likely reason could be that competition among sport climbers is still in its infancy. As the sport matures and stronger interest, more prize money, and more backing surface, teams and team events may spring up and become firmly established.

— Chris Keleher

Competitions Calendar

August 22-23, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Canadian National Championships. Open competition. Registration date August 1. Held at Canadian National Exhibition. Contact: Joe Rockhead's Climbing Gym, 58 Wade Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6H 1P6; (416) 538-7670.

August 28-30, Emeryville, California

U.S. National Championships. CityRock Gym. ASCF sanctioned. Largest cash purse of any national competition. Contact: CityRock, (510) 654-2510.

September 19-20, Pocatello, Idaho

Pocatello Pump. Annual rock climbing rendezvous. Categories for all climbers. Reduced entry fee for early registration. Contact: Pocatello Pump, Idaho State University Outdoor Program, P.O. Box 8118, Pocatello, Idaho 83209; (208) 236-3912.

September 20, Fort Collins, Colorado

2nd Annual Budweiser Horsetooth Hang. Held in conjunction with the Access Fund. Contact: John Shireman, (303) 498-9252.

November 14, Boise, Idaho

3rd Gala Bronco Buck Off Climbing Competition. Boise State University Climbing Gym. Contact: Bob Allen, Bronco Buck Off Climbing Competition, c/o BSU Outdoor Adventure Program, 1910 University Dr., Boise, ID 83725; (208) 385-1506.

UIAA 1992 Sport Climbing Championship Schedule

- September 18-20 Frankfurt, Germany — European Championships**
October 8-11, Kobe, Japan (WC)
October 30-November 1, Nuremberg, Germany (WC)
November 14-15, St. Polten, Austria (WC)
November 20-22, Laval, France (WC)
December 4-5, Birmingham, Great Britain (WC)
December 11-13, Seoul, Korea.

WC = World Cup event

Important: Please note that competition dates often change. Consider them tentative until the time nears and you can confirm.

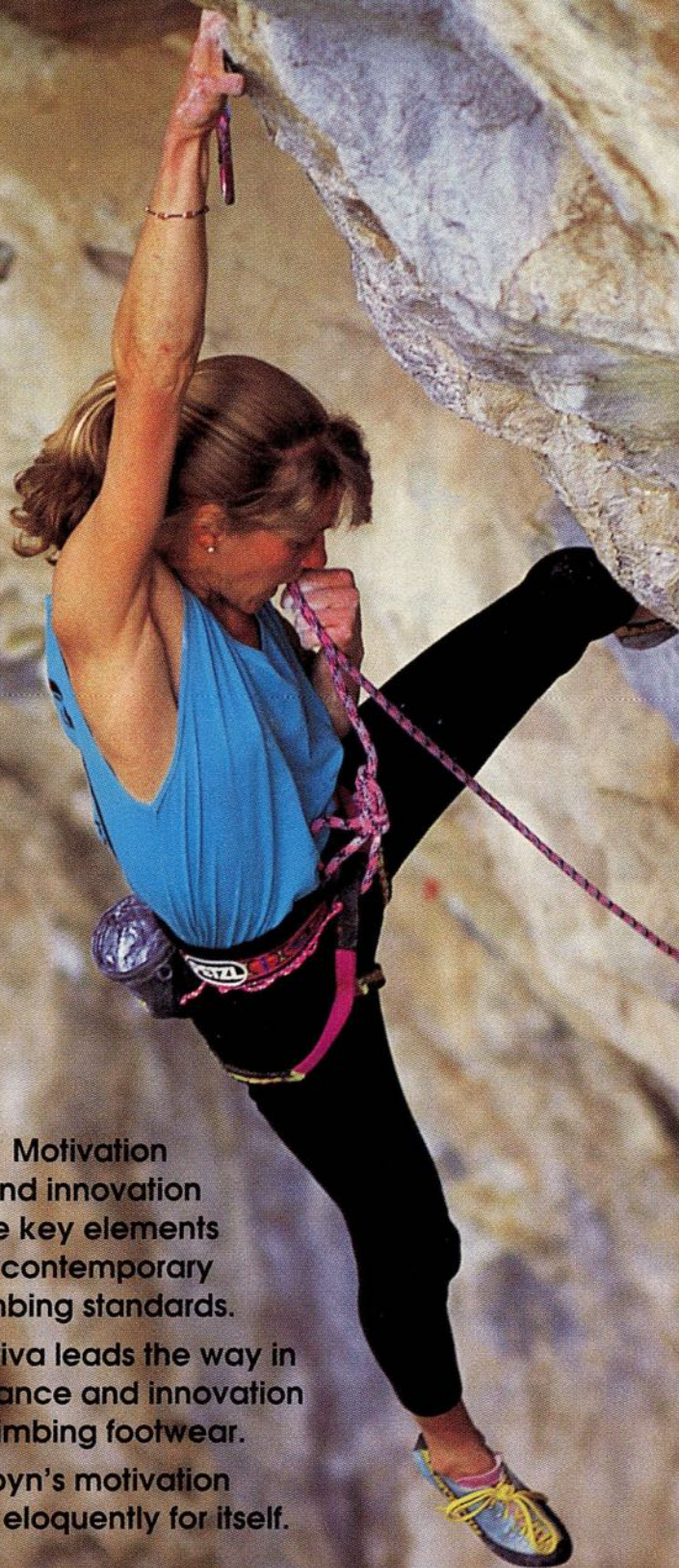
pushes the climbers to the top of their abilities. Team members have keys to the facility and can work out at any time day or night. CATS members have shown dramatic improvement in their climbing since being invited to join the team, Candelaria says, adding, "People can't believe some of them have been climbing for only two years." Erbesfield, for example, increased her flexibility by more than 50 percent after six months at the gym.

The Boulder-based Jrat, a clothing and gear manufacturer, sponsors a large "Team Jrat" of accomplished sport and competi-

tion climbers to further its products' exposure. The group includes Jim Karn, Nancy Feagin, Mike Beck, Wally Berg, Scott Cosgrove, Hans Florine, Kevin Gonzales, Porter Jarrard, John Mireles, Andy Outis, Kurt Smith, George Squibb, and the team captain, Colin Lantz. Various other manufacturers field labelled climbing teams, such as the PowerBar Climbing Team, composed of individuals who share use of a product. The climbers may receive stipends or "incentives," individual payment of some sort, for product visibility.

While climbing teams at present mostly

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Robyn Erbesfield • Vision Thing/8A • Photo: Beth Wald

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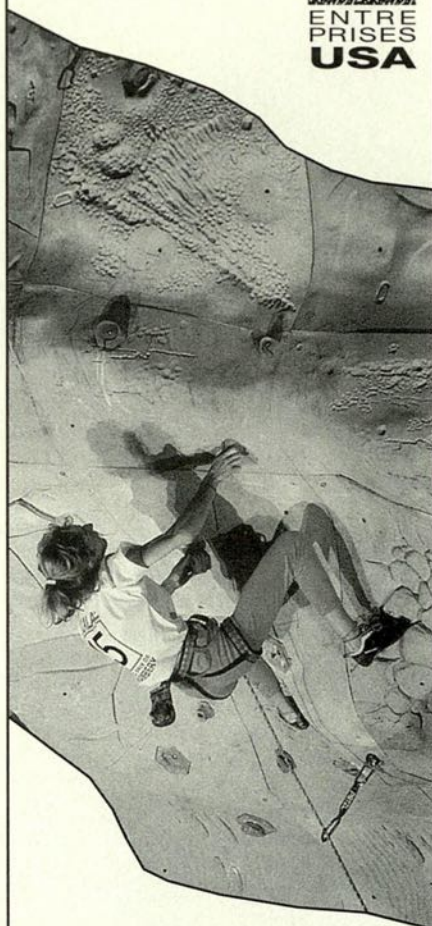
Robyn's motivation
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Regional Wrap-up

Drought relief Marrieta, California

The rains of March helped solve the stubborn Southern California drought, but did nothing for the dry spell suffered by local climbers. Relief arrived on May 23 when the Rock and Roll Gym held its first competition ever. Recently opened in the northern San Diego bedroom community of Temecula, Rock and roll is the only gym south of the San Francisco Bay.

The Rock and Roll Climbing Festival format combined points gained from a bouldering and top roping stage with points from two on-sight leads. In the open category, Chris Kunth of San Diego and John Mireles of Whittier emerged from the bouldering stage tied for points. Both successfully cranked all of the top-scored problems. Nancy Feagin of Lander, Wyoming, competed with the men and, to no one's surprise, emerged from the bouldering in a close third.

The 5.12a/b lead routes, set by the local whippersnapper Terry Parish, began on 25 feet of overhanging wall, followed by 20 feet of dead-bang roof. Mireles started things off with a flash of the first route, and Kunth kept pace. Feagin, hosed by her shorter reach, fell disappointingly low. Mireles also flashed the second lead route, while no others reached the roof.

In the end, Mireles took first, Kunth second, and Mark Canfield of Temecula finished third. Thanks go to Darren Dembrow and Scott Carlson, owner and manager of the gym, for putting together a most enjoyable event where locals could compete without having to drive 500 miles.

— John Mireles

Mich match Marquette, Michigan

It was still winter in the northwoods of Lake Superior country but the moves were hot at the region's lone competition, the third annual Boreal Bouldering Contest at Northern Michigan University's wall. The April 4-5 event featured on-sight climbing on two 75-foot traverses and two 30-foot vertical routes, as well as overhang cranking on a Brewer's Ledge Treadwall.

The first traverse's three crux sequences proved discriminating as several climbers fell at the first crux and several more at the second. Only three people hung on to attempt the final sequence, which no one made.

Climbing the same routes as the men, Nikol Hampton held the overall lead after the first day with 81 out of a possible 89 points. The climbing on day two opened with another crux-dense traverse, though three climbers managed the flash. Hampton slipped early, allowing Christopher O'Connell to grab the overall win, as he

flashed everything on the second day.

The crowd cheered loudest for 9-year-old Edmond Pechaty, who, in borrowed shoes and harness, cranked out 80 points over the two days. The contest closed with a doubles competition at the 15-degree overhang setting on the Treadwall. O'Connell and Rob Foy took first place with a combined distance of 74 feet.

— Phil Watts

Greendale Challenge II Worcester, Maryland

Eastern Mountain Sports' second annual Greendale Challenge featured several new divisions, and more competitors than last year's event.

The junior division competed first at the April 18 event. All the young climbers suffered from the crowd-factor syndrome, resulting in sewing-machine legs and wide-eyed stares. Jeff Siddell overcame the psyche-out factor and reached the high point to win. Among women, the competition quickly focused on Rebecca Noyes and Bonnie Bubendorf, who tied for first place and agreed to a climb-off. Noyes, who just started climbing in January, cranked through with determination to gain the high hold and victory; hers will be a name to watch in the future.

In the men's finals, four flashed their route, yielding another climb-off. In the end, North Conway's Steve Damboise lunged to his second win.

— Bill Lutkus

Milwaukee Sentinel Sport Show Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Milwaukee's annual spring competition is always a great kick-off to the climbing season at Devil's Lake. The third annual event, the 1992 Milwaukee Sentinel Sport Show, hosted by The Milwaukee Sentinel and Adventures Unlimited on March 14-21, attracted 115 competitors from throughout the Midwest.

Climbers in eight divisions competed on a free-standing 28-foot wall featuring two vertical sections and a dihedral capped by a 15-foot overhang.

In the women's finals, Pam Postma and Leslie Thorn both fell one hold from the top, with first place going to Postma due to her higher score in the preliminaries.

The men's advanced routes ranged from 5.11 to 5.12. Dave Groth, the local favorite, missed a hold on the second route and didn't make the finals. Two of the climbers, Paul Bjork and David Moore, completed the finals route, with Moore taking the win due to his performance in the prelims.

With the possibility of a pro division and more prizes, next year's competition should be better than ever.

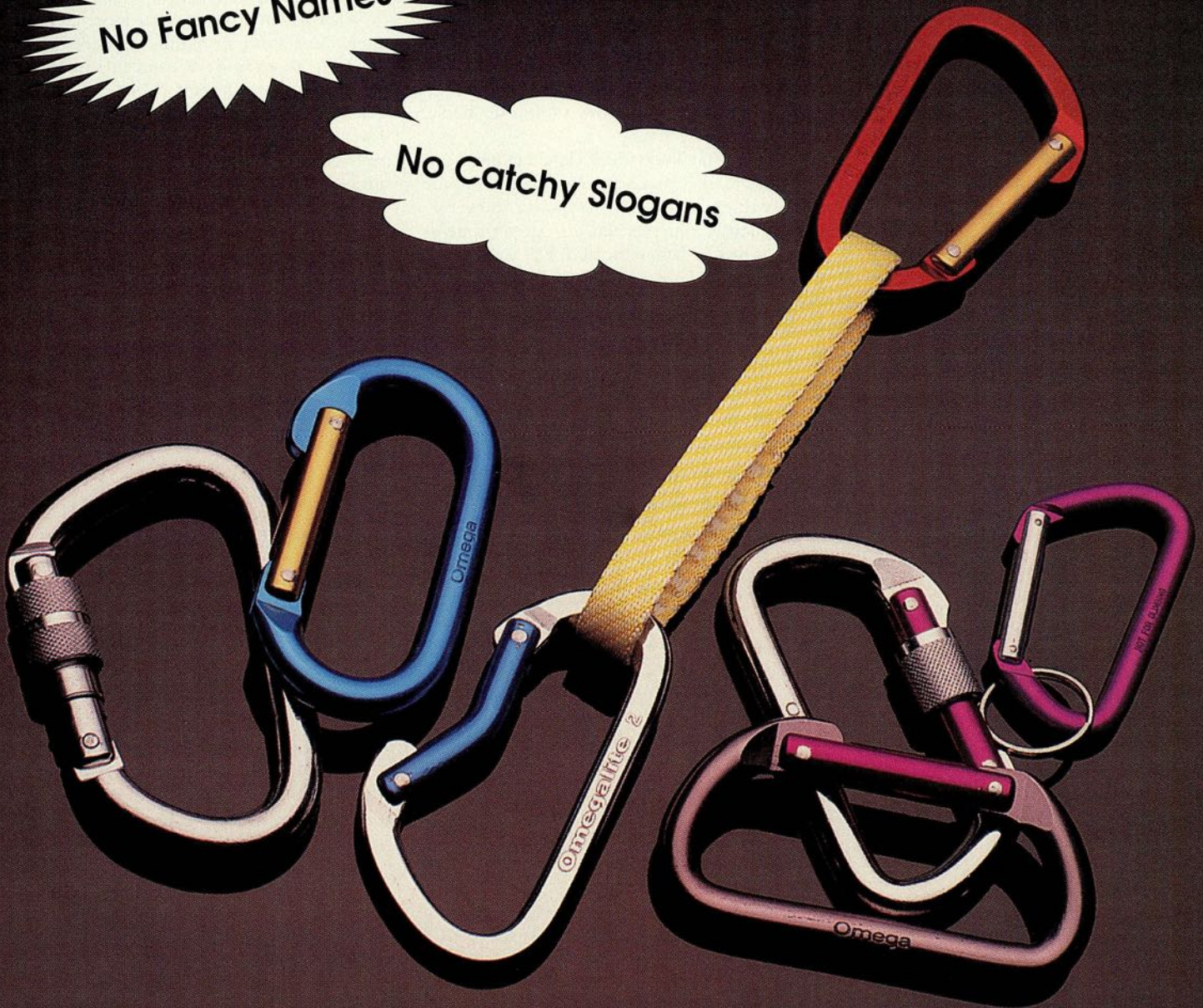
— Kevin Fons



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For the birds

Many kinds of wildlife (wasps, snakes, and scorpions among them) found in climbing areas are interesting to observe from a distance, but are dangerous in close quarters. A few climbers would add another species to the objective hazard list: the peregrine falcon, speed demon of the bird world.

Few wild denizens will defend their territory so aggressively as the peregrine, especially during nesting season. Stings and bites are one thing, but having a feathered torpedo shred your scalp at 200 miles per hour is quite another. It is a matter of safety, environmental awareness, and law (peregrines are classified as an endangered species), that climbers maintain a respectful distance from those sections of cliff where peregrines and other raptors set up house.

Any contact with a peregrine is rare. Yet it's surprising that climbers and raptors aren't more familiar with each other, as they both frequent the same cliffs. This fact has caused mounting concern among public-lands managers. As climbing grows in popularity, the likelihood of contact between climbers and raptors increases. A close encounter with raptors during the breeding season can cause birds to abandon a nest. As the Endangered Species Act requires that land managers take all possible measures to promote rehabilitation of an endangered species, officials at a number of major climbing areas have closed certain cliffs to climbing on a seasonal basis. For example, closures to protect nesting peregrines have been imposed in recent years at Yosemite National Park and Pinnacles National Monument, California; New River Gorge, West Virginia; Mount Lemmon and Granite Mountain, Arizona; Tieton River Canyon, Washington; and Devils Tower, Wyoming.

Although it is widely accepted that human intrusion can disturb raptors enough to spoil a nesting attempt, there is little objective data on climbers' overall impact on birds of prey. Consequently, inconsistent standards have been applied when imposing closures, and in some areas mere suspicion of nesting activity has precipitated closures.

Most climbing areas with long records of both climbing activity and raptor nesting (i.e. Yosemite) close only specific formations, or sections of cliffs, typically from January or February through July or

August. Some climbing areas, however, have gone to questionable lengths to protect raptors from climbers by prohibiting climbing throughout an entire park or natural area. At Tieton River Canyon last year, government officials wanted to ban climbing entirely before they were convinced that less radical measures would suffice. For the past two years a single nest on the main face at Granite Mountain has resulted in the entire mountain being closed to climbing.

No one knows how close a climber can approach a nesting peregrine without provoking a defensive response, how frequently climbers can intrude on a peregrine nest before the birds will abandon it, or even if climbers have a greater impact on raptors than other users. One study in the Northeast concluded that climbers might adversely affect raptors, but that when climbers were included in the management process, there was excellent compliance with local protective measures; climbers were not found to be the decid-

ing factor in whether or not raptors had a successful nesting season. At Pinnacles National Monument, where voluntary climbing moratoriums are observed each nesting season on certain formations, rangers have reported similar results.

What has been needed is a more comprehensive study of climbers' effects on raptors, to provide a foundation for appropriate management policy. In 1989 the Predatory Bird Research Group, a leading authority on peregrine falcons and restoring peregrine populations, agreed to undertake such a study at the urging of the Access Fund.

The study involved roughly two years of research, with the final report near completion as this issue goes to press. The study found that peregrine populations are recovering in many areas where climbers are active, and that cliff closures need not be extensive to be effective in providing a buffer zone for nesting raptors. Some areas once inhabited by peregrines had no climbing when the birds disappeared, but have since become heavily used climbing areas; even at these areas, peregrines have reestablished themselves (e.g. at New River Gorge).

With its philosophy that effective management is best achieved through education, in 1990 the Access Fund resolved to develop a brochure that would focus on the special considerations of climbing in raptor habitat. The Access Fund and the Forest Service agreed to distribute the brochure in all national forests where climbing is practiced.

Based on previously published climber's brochures, the raptor brochure was designed by Michael Jimmerson of the Access Fund and written by Jim Suriano, a peregrine expert. The Arizona Mountaineering Club paid for the initial printing. The publication has been approved by the Forest Service and will be supplemented at each national forest by an insert describing local conditions and regulations. The brochure is also available for distribution at national parks and all state and local parks.

The Access Fund believes that climbers, if well-informed about the do's and don'ts of climbing in raptor territory, will support all reasonable management actions taken to protect and rehabilitate raptor populations. It is important that climbers work closely with land managers to establish parameters for seasonal closures and

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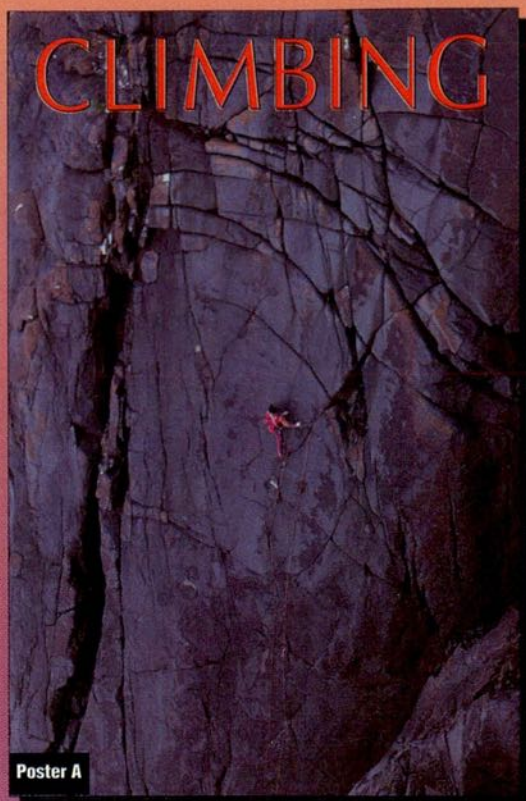


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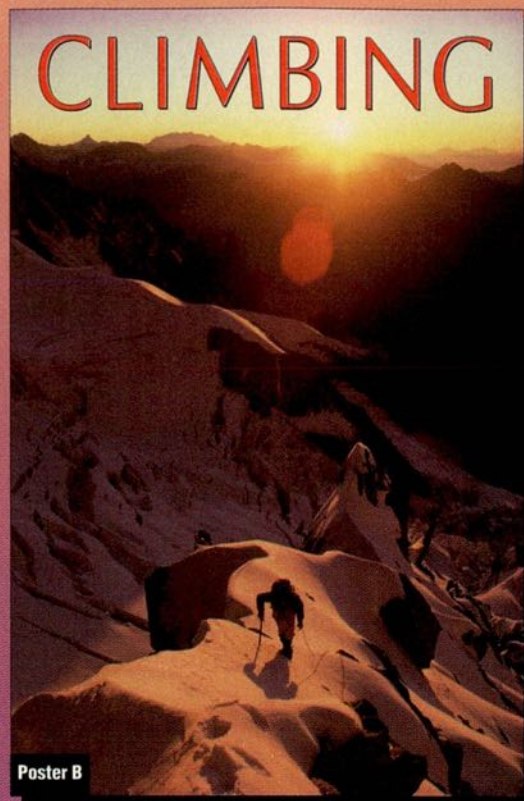


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other actions; these may vary from one area to the next.

The raptor brochure offers some closing thoughts: if you come upon an undetected raptor nest while climbing, retreat rather than climb around or through it — the climb will still be there after the birds have left. Wildlife is part of what makes climbing in natural areas so special. Future access, and the world's fiercest and fastest birds, depend on your consideration.

All climbers should familiarize themselves — and local land managers — with the valuable information contained in the Access Fund's raptor brochure. To obtain, write the Access Fund at P.O. Box 17010, Boulder, CO 80308.

Motor home mecca

At some climbing areas the contrast between nature and human presence borders on the absurd. In Yosemite Valley, for example, the park's awe-inspiring scenery is juxtaposed with a small city thriving on the valley floor.

Similar contrasts can be found at less well-known climbing areas. One such area is Vedauwoo, a beautiful and multifaceted natural area in southeast Wyoming (see Climbing #122). Vedauwoo's sculpted humps of pink Sherman granite, couched in a swath of aspen and pine, lie a half mile north of Interstate 80, one of the nation's busiest cross-country highways.

Despite its proximity to I-80 and regular use of the area as a rest stop for travelers, Vedauwoo feels pristine. However, recent actions proposed by the Forest Service — such as doubling the number of formal camp sites (with water and power hook-ups for motor homes), installing street lights in campground and restroom areas, building a children's play area, and rerouting, widening, and paving access roads to accommodate large vehicles — threatened to destroy Vedauwoo's special ambiance. But thanks to the response of numerous climbers and other visitors, Vedauwoo should retain its primitive feel and environmental quality.

After learning about the proposed improvements in early February, local climbers organized and challenged the Vedauwoo plan at three public review meetings held in Laramie and Cheyenne later in the month. Dozens of climbers showed up, denounced the proposed changes, and asked why more critical

improvements suggested years earlier — such as installation of an emergency telephone line and rehabilitation of high-use areas — were ignored. Public response was so negative that the Forest Service summarily withdrew the plan and convened a working group of citizens to help the agency draft a new plan more aligned with public sentiment.

An abbreviated version of the Vedauwoo plan was submitted to the working group on March 5. This new version entails modest "improvements," including lights at restrooms, a water-storage facility, and two full-time campground hosts equipped with cellular phones for emergencies. Camping and parking along the south side of the Nautilus formation will be prohibited. The main entrance road and several parking lots will be upgraded, and a part-time ranger will attend the area during the 1992 season.

Skip Harper, a Fort Collins climber active in the Vedauwoo planning process, called the revised plan "a result of the Forest Service working in cooperation with climbers and other users." The new plan should meet the needs of users, achieve management goals, and preserve the area's wild character. Climbers should monitor the plan's implementation to make sure that neither climbing freedoms nor climbing resources at Vedauwoo are further imperiled.

The Access Fund recommends that climbers support climbing at Vedauwoo by getting involved with management planning for the Medicine Bow National Forest. For more information on the management plan for Vedauwoo, contact Skip Harper (303) 223-7558 or the Laramie District office of the Forest Service at (307) 745-8971.

This column reports on news and activities regarding climbing access around the country. For more information on specific events and areas, or to report an access problem or success story, please contact Sam Davidson, The Access Fund Coordinator, 159 Nacional Street, Salinas, CA 93901; (408) 424-4705

To receive more detailed information on access, subscribe to Access Notes, The Access Fund's quarterly newsletter, by making a donation of any amount to The Access Fund, P.O. Box 67A25, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

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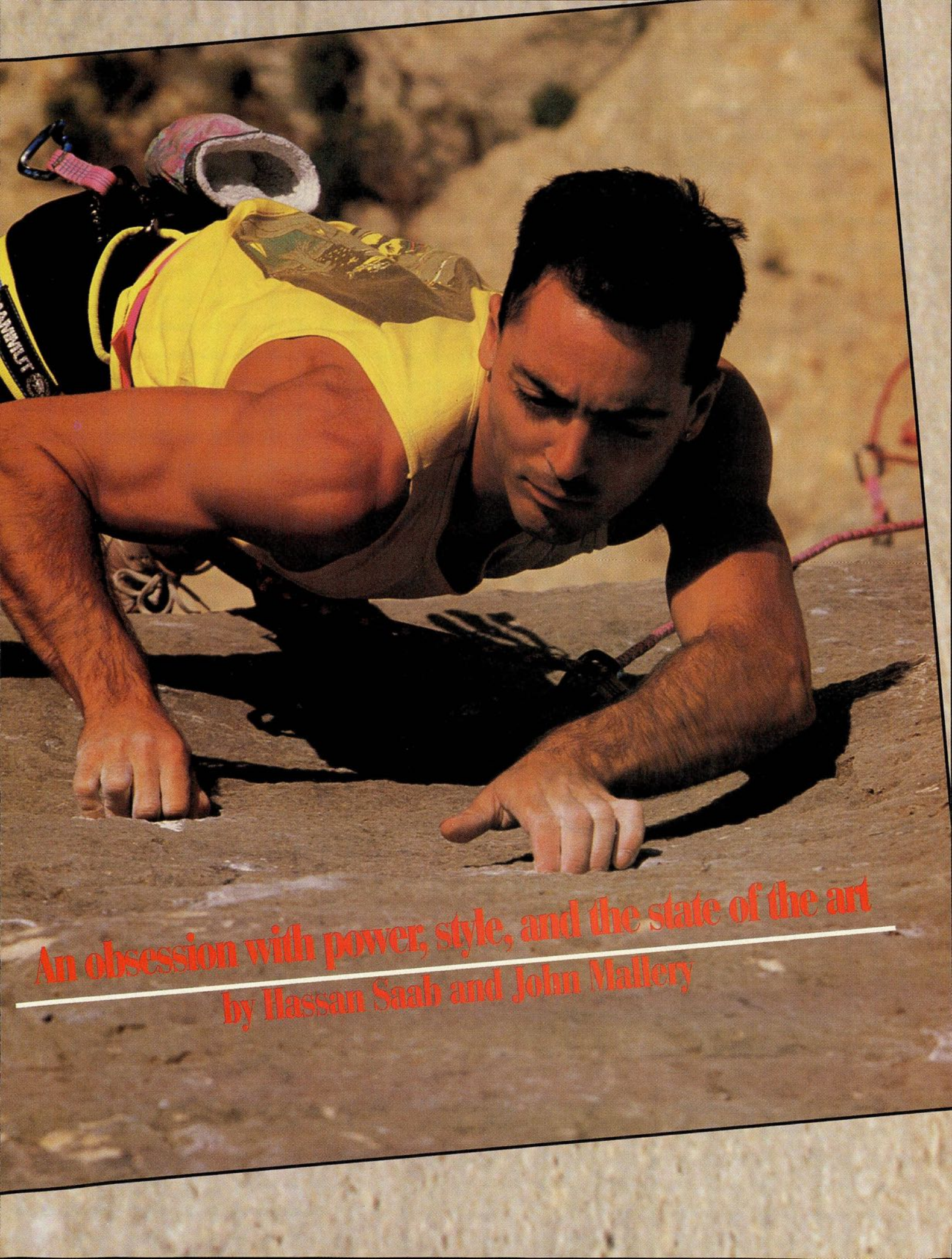
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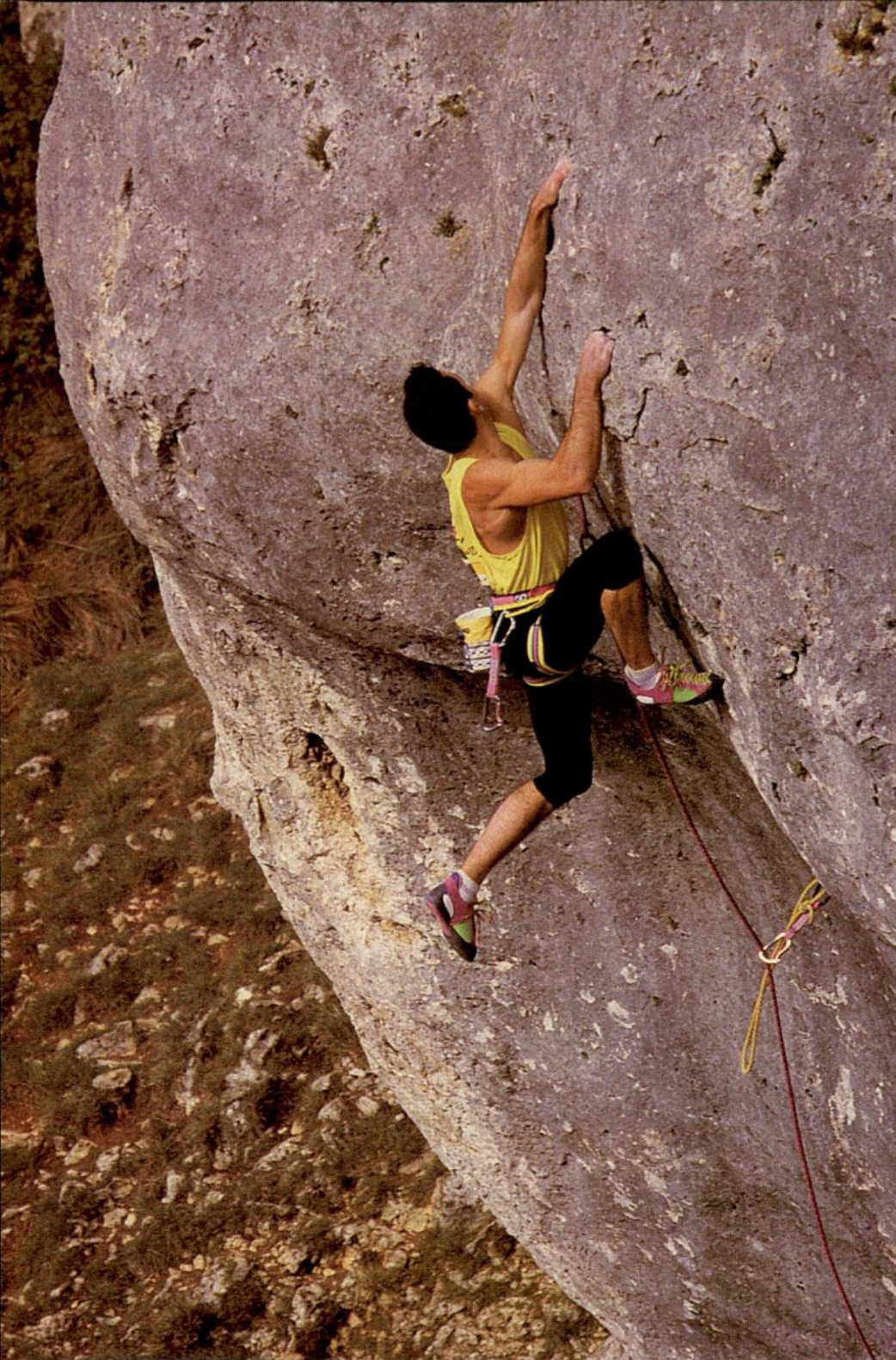


We waited expectantly at a little breakfast spot in Fayetteville, West Virginia, for Jean-Baptiste Tribout and his wife Corrine LaBrune. Chris Schneider, who had climbed some with Tribout, filled us in on the 5.14c Tribout had put up the week before at Smith Rock and explained that Tribout and LaBrune would be at the New River Gorge for a couple of weeks before returning to Europe. With each cup of coffee we became more psyched to give Tribout a tour of the New River testpieces, and debated whether he could on-sight 5.13 any better than Alain Gherzen or Marc LeMenestrel — two French stars who had visited the New in recent years.

Meanwhile, J.B. and Corrine waited for us 100 yards away at the local climbing shop. They finally gave up, and on some bad advice, headed off to the disappointing slabs of Fern Point. Not until the next day did things finally get on track as Tribout began a series of impressive ascents.



An obsession with power, style, and the state of the art
by Hassan Saab and John Mallery



Tribout on *Chimpanzadrome* (7c+), Saussois, France — his first 5.13 and a route he later soloed (left); and on *Crime Passionel* (8b), Verdon Gorge, France (overleaf).

Jean-Baptiste Tribout, whom everybody calls J.B. or Jibé, is one of the world's top sport climbers. After bringing the 5.14 standard to the United States with *To Bolt or Not to Be* in 1986, he returned to Smith Rock in the spring of 1992 to establish *Just Do It*, the first 5.14c in America and the third route of such difficulty in the world. Tribout also has to his credit over 15 5.14 redpoints, including three 5.14bs (*Agincourt* at Buoux, *Maginot Line* at Volx, and *Huevos* at Saint Geniez). Since 1988, he has on-sighted more than 20 climbs rated 5.13b or harder, including his 1989 cutting-edge on-sight of *Consensus* (5.13b/c) at Cimai.

Since 1982, when he redpointed his first 5.13a, *Chimpanzodrome* (the hardest climb in France at the time — second ascent) Tribout has continued to pull off ever-more-impressive ascents of hard routes. By 1984, he felt strong enough to go back and free solo *Chimpanzodrome*. Following his repeat of *Le Bidule* (5.13c) at Saussois in 1985, Tribout went on to establish *Les Braves Gens* (5.13d) at the Verdon Gorge. After breaking into 5.14 here in the

During his first five days Tribout on-sighted *Stealth and Magic* (5.12d), *Quinsana Plus* (5.13a, first on-sight), *Jesus and Tequila* (5.12c), *Apollo Reed* (5.13a), *Sanctified* (5.12d), and *Lactic Acid Bath* (5.12d). After resting a day, he on-sighted *Titan's Dice* (5.13a, first on-sight), *Pudd's Pretty Dress* (5.12d), *Blood Raid* (5.13a, first on-sight), *Burning Cross* (5.13a, first on-sight), *Devil Doll* (5.12d), and *Chunky Monkey* (5.12b/c). Tribout's near-misses were often as impressive as his on-sights: he came extremely close on both the highly sequential and bouldery *Mercy Seat* (5.13b), and one of the areas hardest climbs, *Flatfield* (5.13c).

United States, Tribout added a few 5.14s at French cliffs during 1987 with *Le Spectre du Surmutant* (5.14a) at Buoux, and *Les Specialistes* (5.14a) at the Verdon Gorge. Back in America during 1988, he put up *White Wedding* (5.14a) at Smith Rock (the unfortunate enhancement of a key hold after the first ascent has since reduced the grade to 5.13d). In 1990 he made the fourth ascent of *Maginot Line* (5.14b), perhaps the hardest route in the world at the time. The following year, in 1991, Tribout put up his own 5.14b, *Huevos* at Saint Geniez.

At 30, Tribout has been climbing ever since his parents, also climbers, took him to Fontainebleau at the age of five. At 10

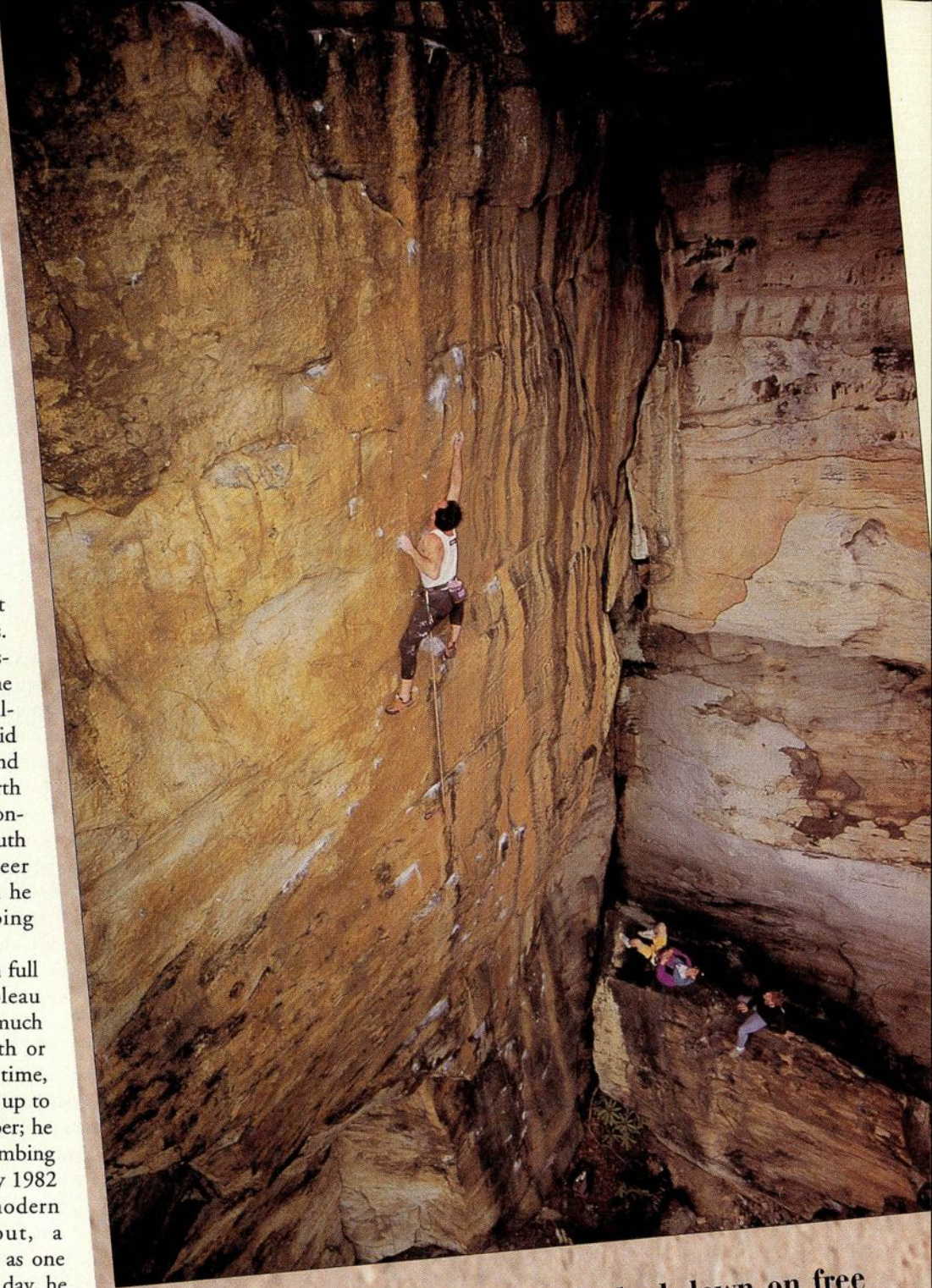
**On-sighting Quinsana
Plus (5.13a), Central Endless
Wall, New River Gorge,
West Virginia.**

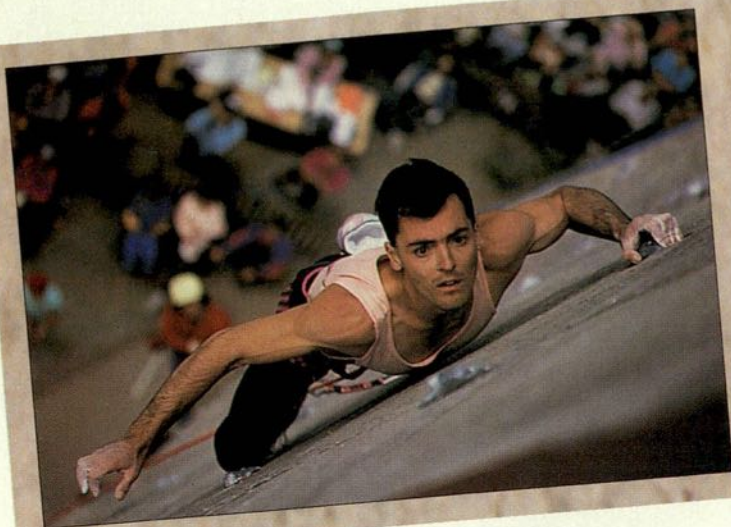
he started climbing with a rope at Saussois and other cliffs near Paris. Following the traditional progression from bouldering to alpinism, he began to make regular summer pilgrimages to Chamonix, where he did many of the classics (some solos and winter ascents), including the North Face of the Grandes Jorasses, the Bonatti Pillar on the Dru, and the South Face of the Fou. His alpine career didn't fade until he was 24, when he decided that he liked rock climbing much more.

From the age of 10 on, he put in full days of bouldering at Fontainebleau despite his parents' worries that so much climbing might impede his growth or make him muscle-bound. At the time, he had no idea that he would grow up to be a professional, world-class climber; he simply enjoyed the challenge of climbing and pushing beyond his abilities. By 1982 the media began spotlighting modern French climbing, and Tribout, a 20-year-old student, realized that as one of the strong young climbers of the day, he could make some money through sponsorships. He has climbed full-time ever since.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, a new style of climbing was developing at Saussois, instigated largely by Parisian climbers. Instead of returning to the ground after a fall, they practiced the moves with the aim of redpointing a route as quickly as possible. This approach to difficulty was carried over from bouldering at Fontainebleau, where success on difficult problems meant repeated work on the moves.

The older climbers of the day looked down on free climbing in the first place, and working out moves went over quite poorly with them. The friction between the young and the old was exacerbated when the Parisians denigrated traditional "French free climbing," the old-timer's practice of pulling on gear to get up long routes, and extolled the superiority of hard free climbing by any means.





“Competition climbing is almost a different sport because it takes a completely different approach and draws a different group of people. Competition climbing is one-dimensional, setting individuals and nationalities against each other and eliminating the camaraderie that climbers share at the crags.”

Photo: Beth Wald

When Tribout started climbing at Saussois in the 1970s, he immediately fell into the local practice of working routes.

Jean-Claude Droyer, who put up the first 7as in France, only considered a route climbed when the climber started from the bottom and climbed to the top clipping the gear along the way. Tribout and his friends sought the same end result, but for them, it did not matter what came before — working moves, resting on protection, anything at all. The Paris climbers remained largely uninfluenced by American traditional ideas. Their chosen tactics of working moves reflected their fascination with hard routes rather than on-sight climbing. In contrast, climbers in southern France climbed almost exclusively on-sight.

During the 1980s the Parisians went south to climb, and the two genres began to mix. Parisian climbers worked hard routes and southern climbers pulled off difficult on-sights. Both approaches were developed and refined throughout the 1980s, but the emphasis on working hard routes remained largely the practice of the Parisians because their frequent outings to Saussois gave them few options. Saussois is an unusual cliff, with a large concentration of hard routes with such bizarre, complex sequences that on-sights of 5.13a are still rare and 5.13b unheard of.

The older climbers of the day looked down on free climbing in the first place, and working out moves went over quite poorly with them. The friction between the young and the old was exacerbated when the Parisians denigrated traditional “French free climbing,” the old-timer’s practice of pulling on gear to get up long routes, and extolled the superiority of hard free climbing by any means. If anything, however, the strong opposition from traditional climbers motivated the Parisians to push even harder against the grain. Tribout and his friends were definitely on the margins of the French climbing community. They would go to the cliffs with their boom boxes and blast AC/DC as they worked routes. Shouts of “Allez! allez!” would be heard all over the cliff. Each time they went cragging they caused trouble.

Ironically, this group of outcasts became mainstream, professional climbers almost overnight. The advent of climbing competitions in the mid-1980s was the major turning point for sport climbing in France. Ever-greater media attention on climbing opened opportunities for top climbers like Tribout and the LeMenestrel brothers. The Parisians’ style had become more approved, and now top climbers had to either embrace competitive free climbing or be left behind.

Tribout chose to play the competition game, gaining all the advantages that came with it. For him, the main benefit was not the money but the unusual freedom to climb full time. The inconvenience was that he *had* to be good and *had* to perform. Sponsors were not doling out free lunches; to retain his sponsorships J.B. had to continually put himself on the line, a difficult circumstance requiring constant effort.

Most of the Americans who know Tribout well characterize him as gregarious and a regular sort of guy. “Although he plays the professional climber game, he has never lost sight of what climbing is all about — hanging out with other climbers, the routes, the dirt, and the opportunity to travel,” says Chris Grover of EntrePrises USA. Grover also says Tribout doesn’t come with overpowering natural ability, but is hyper-driven, even a workaholic. Other climbers have been encouraged to say, “If he can do it, I can, too.”

Some climbers, though, consider Tribout’s ambition excessive, and refer to his reputation for pirating other climbers’ first ascents.

His actions at Smith Rock illustrate the point. “Tribout’s best accomplishments at Smith are routes I’ve put a lot of time into,” says Alan Watts, whose name is synonymous with the development of hard sport climbing there. *Rude Boys* (5.13c), *To Bolt or Not to Be* (5.14a), *White Wedding* (5.14a), *Scene of the Crime* (5.13b/c), *Bad Man* (5.13d), and *Just Do It* (5.14c) are all routes that other climbers had prepared and worked, and Tribout got the first ascent. In some cases, he was given permission by the climber working the route. In others, not.

Tribout at the 1988 Snowbird World Cup (left); and on *Séance Tenante* (8a), Verdon Gorge, France (right).

Watts was very disappointed by the *Bad Man* incident. Tribout did the climb covertly, after Watts, who had spent over 40 hours just scrubbing the route, requested that he stay off it. At the time, Watts says he had come close to redpointing the route himself. Tribout, however, argues that once a route is bolted, it is fair game.

"I don't care what he does in France," says Watts. "This is America, and it's just not done here." Nevertheless, Watts calls *Just Do It* unquestionably the hardest route in America.

After our interview Tribout returned to France, anticipating a new addition to his life. He and Labrune are expecting their first child in September. The couple lives comfortably in Pertuis, a small town in southeast France in the heart of the limestone belt. "It will be OK," says Tribout. "I will continue to climb hard." Indeed, Tribout appears to be irrevocably connected to climbing. Says Christian Griffith, "It's obvious that Jibé is in for life."

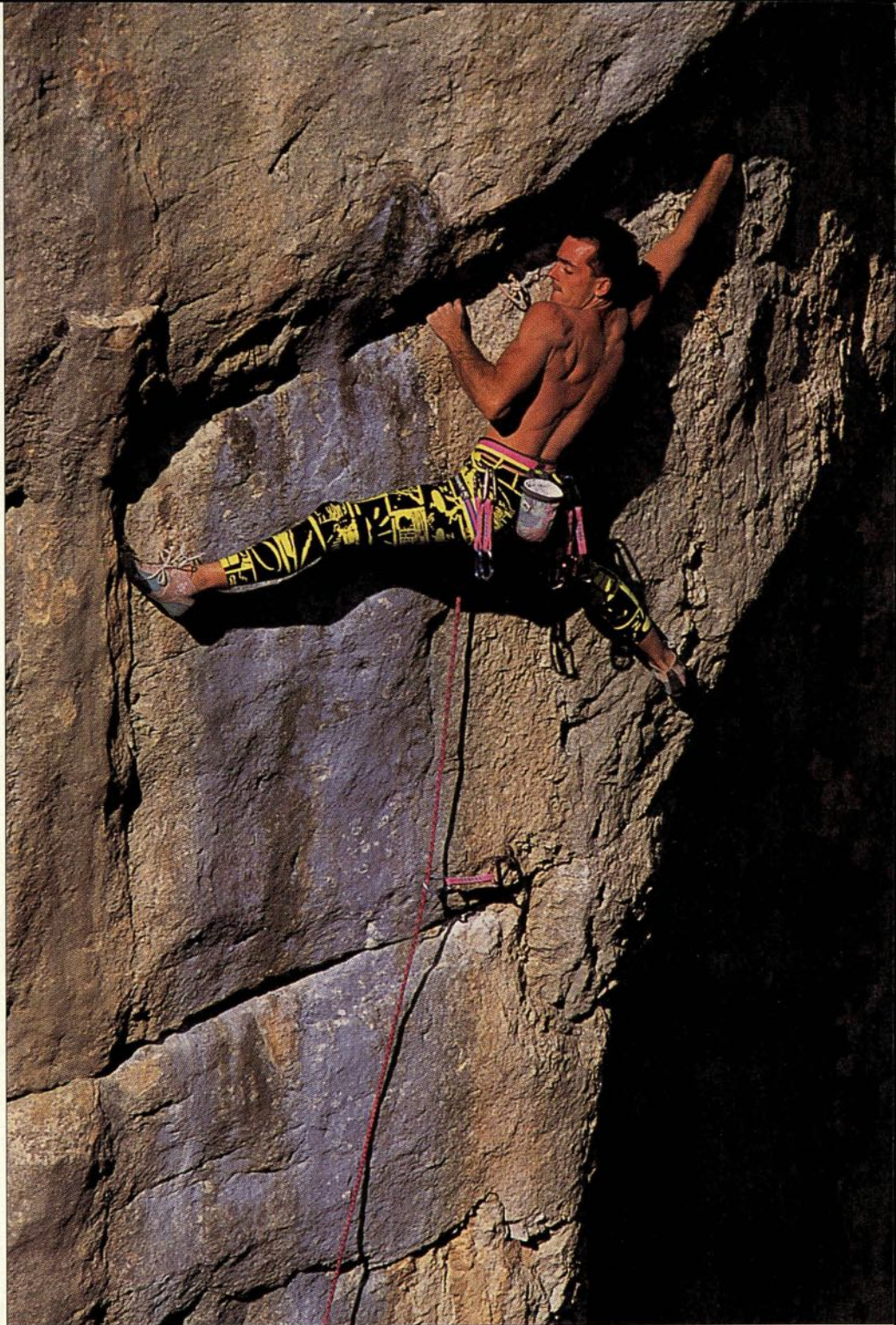
In the following interview [translated from the original French by Hassan Saab], Tribout shares his perspective on his new Smith Rock route, the development of sport climbing, training and technique, route rights, and the future of the sport.

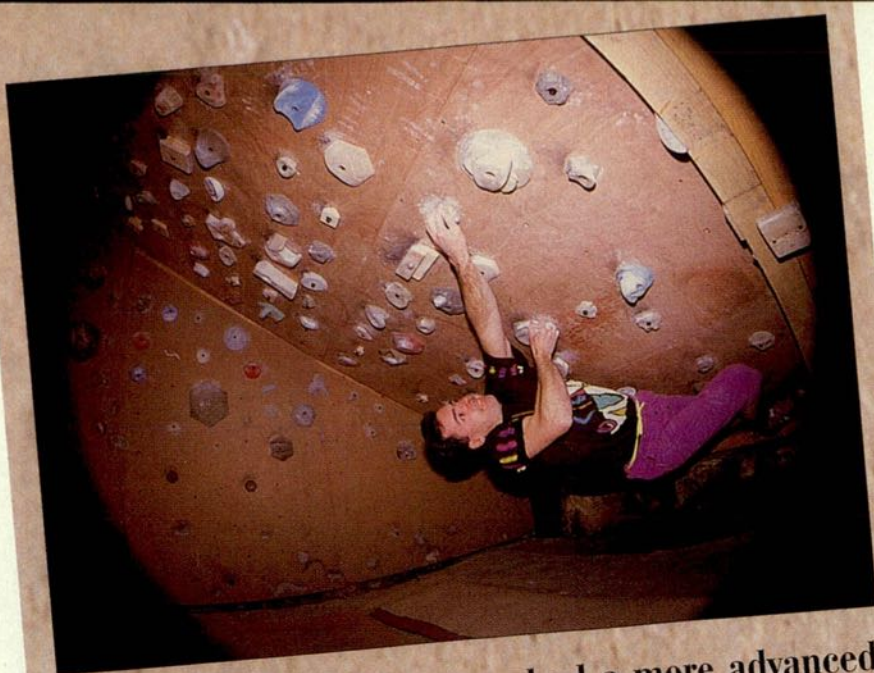
You just put up the hardest rock climb in the United States, *Just Do It* (5.14c), at Smith Rock. Tell us the story behind this route.

During my previous visit to Smith Rock in 1990 I spotted a truly exceptional line. Although the route was already bolted, nobody was actively working on it. I cleaned the holds, moved

a couple of poorly placed bolts, and tried to climb the route. After 15 days of effort I was falling near the top on redpoint. But then, the weather became very hot, I split my finger tips, and ran out of time. I went home very disappointed. Back in France, I kept telling myself, "I have to go back and just do it." Then, last year, Didier Raboutou went to Smith Rock to try the route and came very close to linking it.

I knew that I had to return this year and make the first ascent or this fantastic line would fall to another strong climber. In preparation, I trained at home as hard as I could from January through March to reach my highest fitness level ever. This April, I linked *Just Do It* (5.14c) after between six





"The 5.14 climber has reached a more advanced stage precisely because he has put in more effort and more soul-searching — from which he draws strength. It is like the Buddhist search for enlightenment. In climbing, the further you push yourself, the stronger the psychic rewards."

and eight attempts over seven days. Because I invested so much effort, this first ascent was perhaps the biggest joy in my climbing career.

Would you describe the route in some detail?

Just Do It overhangs about 32 feet in 140, and has 17 bolts. The first 80 feet overhang about six feet with 5.13c climbing that is mostly vertical but highly technical. At 80 feet, I finally get a rest on a sloping handhold with two small footholds. It is hard to milk this rest because the legs and feet begin to burn out all too soon. I stay there for five to 10 minutes, until I recover. By the time I leave the rest, I must be completely fresh mentally so I can concentrate as if just starting the climb. I forget each poorly executed move below and erase every doubt from my mind.

The top 60 feet is very steep and very strenuous 5.14a, and overhangs 26 feet. After a fairly hard section, there is a second marginal rest, where I catch my breath before launching into the crux sequence. The crux involves a series of 16 very hard cranks off small three-finger edges wide enough for just a half finger-tip pad. Two extremely tough *bidoight* moves follow. Crossing through from the first *bidoight* to an edge, I must power for a second *bidoight*, and make a radical dyno to a sidepull. The dyno is really hard; I fell off it three times.

The exit involves a series of very strenuous reaches on slightly bigger edges, a somewhat runout dyno to a bucket on the right, and a thin move to surmount the final roof.

Where is the crux?

Out of 140 feet, the last 33 feet is the endurance crux because the climbing kicks in as if the route has yet to start, and I am pretty pumped after 18 minutes of difficult climbing below. If I fail to concentrate on my technique or execute the moves poorly on the lower part of the route, there is no hope of pulling through to the top. So the crux is actually getting through the lower part smoothly with enough reserves to stick with it to the end.

Is there any chance that *Just Do It* will be downgraded, like *Les Specialistes* [Tribout's 1987 route in France's Verdon Gorge] was downgraded from 5.14b to 5.14a?

I doubt it. The fact is that *Just Do It* is a really hard route. Before coming to the United States, I did *Maginot Line* [5.14b] at Volx, and *Just Do It* is substantially harder. Didier and I talked about the route and agreed that the 5.14c rating was appropriate. Everyone else who has tried it thinks that the route is really hard. Having actually done it, I *know* that *Just Do It* is truly a unique line at a very special grade. In any event, few people will attempt such a long route because climbers who are capable of 5.14c today look more for power routes than endurance routes.

Did you train specifically for the route, for example, practicing individual moves?

No, I trained for power and endurance so I would have a greater margin on the moves, but not specifically for individual moves. I targeted my training to make me comfortable on the second part, so I would have a chance to link the entire route quickly.

What were the psychological requirements of the route?

Even though it requires top physical conditioning, the principal difficulty of *Just Do It* is psychological. The climber must maintain an extremely high level of concentration with only a few shakeouts over 20 minutes of highly technical climbing. It is very difficult to stay focused and continue executing tough moves with precision for such a long time. *Just Do It* is very different from the other two 5.14cs, Ben Moon's *Hubble* and Wolfgang Gullich's *Action Directe*, which are both very short and powerful.

Tribout training in his basement in Pertuis, France (left); and on *Mass Critique* (8b+), Cimai, France.

In the future, will extreme routes be long like *Just Do It*, or will they be short bouldering routes, like *Hubble* or *Action Directe*?

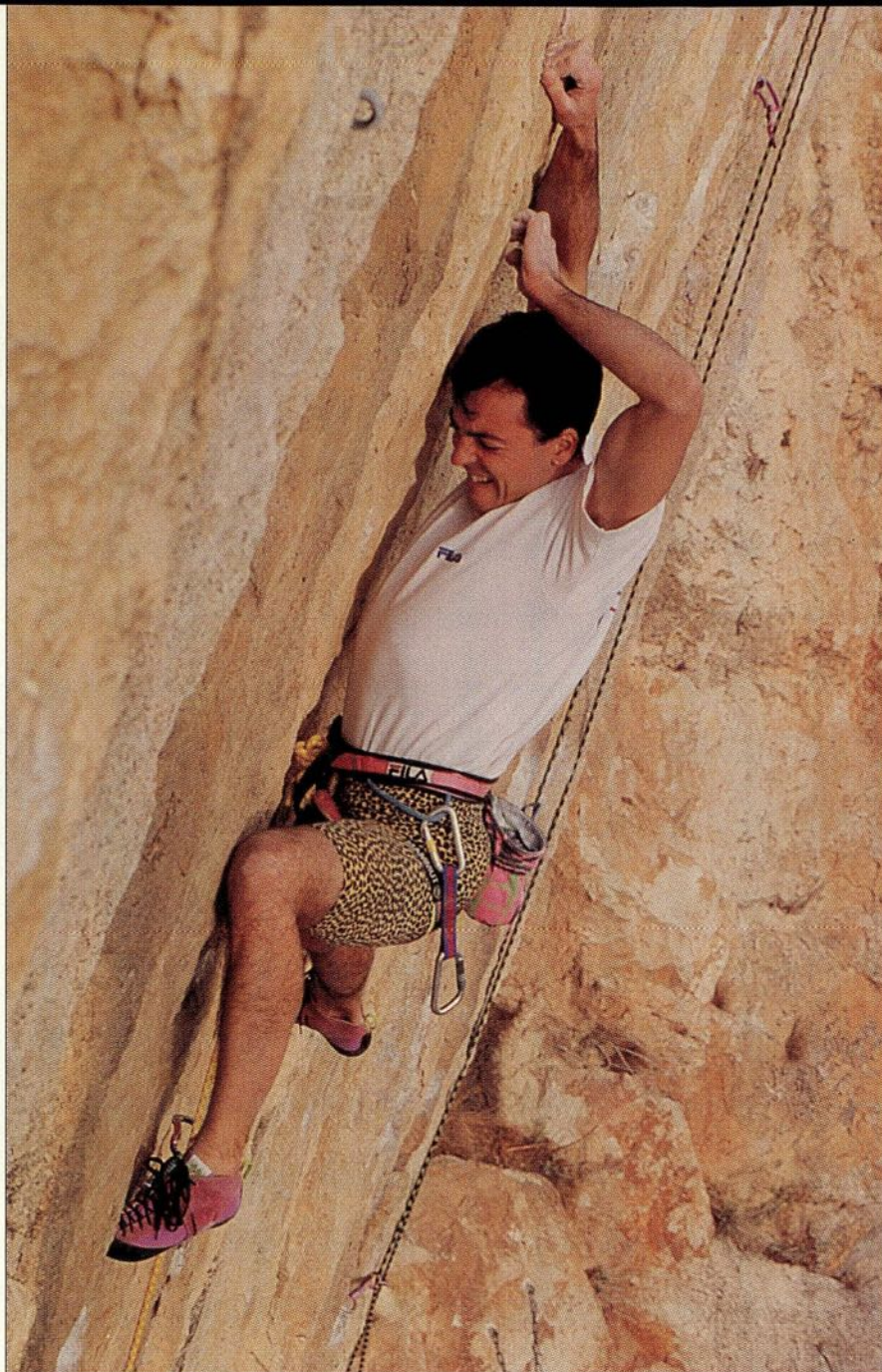
Climbers generally look for powerful routes. This fascination with power draws climbers to short routes where power finds its best expression. All the contemporary routes graded 5.14b or 5.14c are short, very short indeed. However, the most incredible routes — those ahead of their time — are characterized by length that yields the most unlikely continuity of movement. For example, *To Bolt or Not to Be* (5.14a) has only received five ascents in six years, but *Scarface*, also 5.14a but a power route, has seen 15 or 20 repeats. While many people can train and build enough power to climb short 5.14s, far fewer develop enough physical and mental endurance to succeed on long, psychologically demanding 5.14s.

You seem to have been at the forefront of hard free climbing for such a long time now. Have you ever felt stuck at a certain level, unable to make progress?

Only once, two years ago. When I returned to France after failing on *Just Do It* I was depressed for seven or eight months. I lost my self-confidence and I believed that I was a bad climber, despite some good finishes in competitions. I got over this slump by doing other routes. After I repeated the *Maginot Line* and put up *Huevos*, I started my comeback. But as long as *Just Do It* remained unfinished, I continued to have self-doubts. So when I went to Smith this spring I absolutely had to succeed in order to restore my self-esteem. Apart from this episode, I have never suffered any loss of motivation; in fact, I have been highly motivated for as long as I have climbed.

What were the main influences that pushed your climbing?

When I was young, there were two major influences. The American influence came from reading *Mountain* and seeing pictures of Ron Kauk. We dreamt so much of incredible Yosemite cracks, and even wore torn-up painter's pants. The French influence was Jean-Pierre Bouvier — a very strong



French climber who put up *Chimpanzodrome* (5.13a) at Saussois. Bouvier took French climbing from 5.12b to 5.13a in 1981 with this one route.

After I made the second ascent of *Chimpanzodrome* in 1982 there was really no individual climber I could look to for inspiration. So I just watched other climbers to find qualities I could draw on to improve — and I could always learn from other climbers.

What drives the progression of difficulty in modern sport climbing?

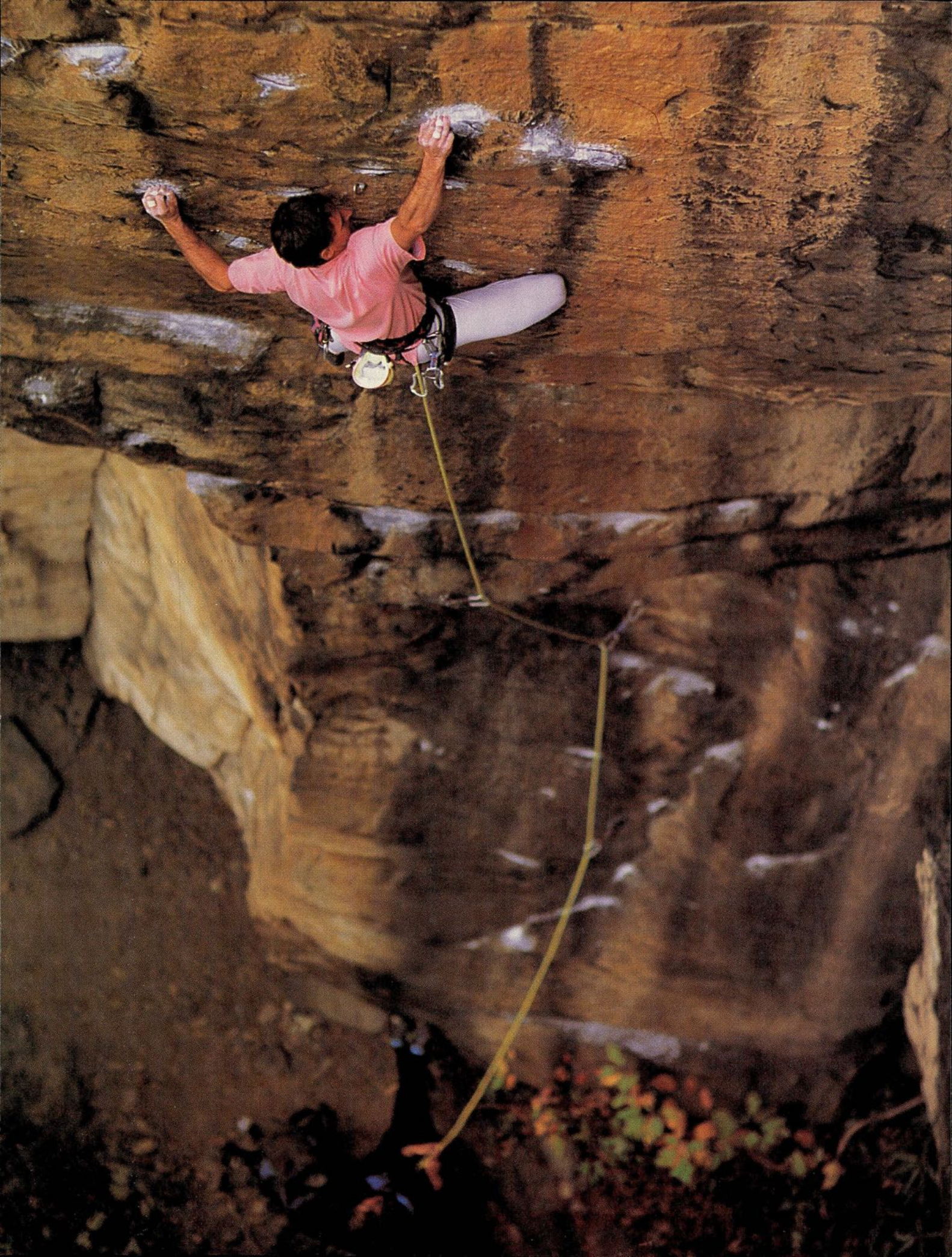
Healthy competition between climbers generates progress and drives difficulty. A number of strong climbers, who were friends and climbed together, competed with each other to put up new routes and repeat hard routes. In 1987 organized climbing competitions became the locomotive of difficulty as

(continued on page 113)

BRAVE NEW WORLD RIVER GORGE

The word has been a while in getting out, but then things can move slowly in the staid and stolid East. The New River Gorge in West Virginia began to take off as a modern climbing area about 10 years ago. Climbers from all over the East converged on the area, drawn by cool hard moves on sunny steep rock. The groundwork came in the early to mid-1980s, but in the past few years, development of exceptional pace and quality has catapulted the area to a new level.

BY HASSAN SAAB



The town's chief of police, wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a full-length Western coat, stood out in the middle of the intersection at the town's only stoplight. He was blowing a whistle and giving motorists confusing hand signals that, often as not, countered the perfectly functional streetlight hanging just above him.

What's there? The most solid sandstone this side of Australia's Mount Arapiles. Literally miles and miles of cliffs. Every kind of climb: perfect cracks and corners; immaculate, long, steep, technical faces; overhangs for raging gorillas; slabs to suit sweet grandmothers. You may choose from bolted sport climbs, perfectly protected natural lines, or bold, blank trad routes.

Dating back more than 500 million years, the New River may be one of the oldest rivers in North America. It has carved out a 1000-foot gorge, rimmed for some 60 miles with a band of steep, compact cliffs. Beginning in the early 1980s, these cliffs became the locus of a rock-climbing boom that has yielded nearly 1500 routes.

The Nuttall Sandstone makes up the top 100 feet or so of the Gorge, with dense woods sloping down to the rapids churning below. Easy walking trails lead through quiet woods along the base of the cliffs.

Five years ago, at the time of my first visit, "the New" was still a rumor, a rock-climbing conquistador's El Dorado mythologized by climbers from the East and Midwest. On visits to Western climbing areas, these climbers told and retold tales of miles of unbroken faces and humongous roofs.

And so I found myself in Fayetteville, West Virginia, the town nearest the New's main cragging areas, trying to exercise patience in sitting out a downpour that was flooding the town's storm sewer system. "Milwaukee" Dave and I sat for hours in his VW Microbus, parked on the town's main street right in front of the police station, scanning the AM and FM stations for weather information.

Every now and then Dave would turn his glazed eyes from the rain to me and ask with affected nonchalance, "Think it'll stop raining soon?"

"I don't know, man. The radio says it's supposed to rain for the next three days."

"Unh...expletives!?!&*#@!"

Carried away by enthusiasm about the cliffs, none of the New River locals I'd met out West had said anything about the area's weather. But luckily we found a little bit of entertainment right in the middle of Fayetteville. The town's chief of police, wearing a wide-brimmed hat covered in clear plastic and a full-length Western coat with a slit down the back, stood out in the middle of the intersection at the town's only stoplight. He was blowing a whistle and giving motorists confusing hand signals that, often as not, countered the perfectly functional streetlight hanging just above him. Traffic was in a tangle. As it turned out, neither the weather nor the chief's vigor were anything out of the ordinary.

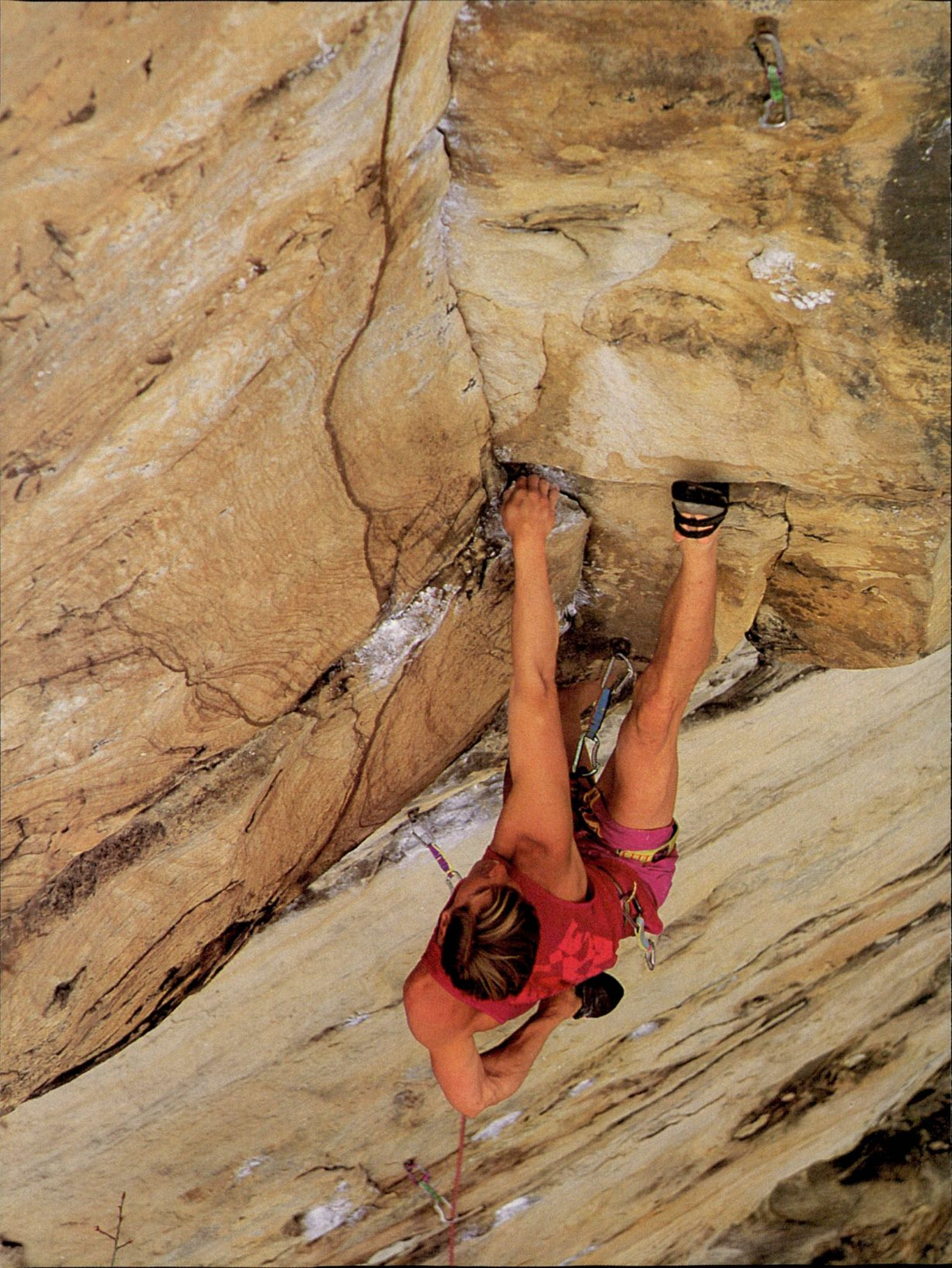
Eventually the chief had his fill of directing traffic and headed back to the station. On his way he stopped by our van and advised us in a friendly and courteous manner that our parking meter had expired. Then he handed us his business card, on which figured his name, Tunney M. Hunsaker, small iconographic representations of a police badge and a pair of boxing gloves, and, in small print, notations that: a.) in 1954 he became the youngest West Virginian to attain the rank of Town Chief of Police, and b.) in Louisville, Kentucky, on April 29, 1960, Chief Hunsaker was Muhammad Ali's first professional boxing opponent. (Hunsaker went the distance, but lost the fight by unanimous decision.)

It rained — day and night — for seven out of 10 days. Despite the beauty of the Gorge and its limitless cliffs, I left feeling cheated, reluctant to return.

It's been said that if it weren't for the weather, the New River Gorge would be the best crag in the country. Among all the "instant" climbing areas of the past few years, the New is unique in the extent and quality of its offerings. It is not just one but several distinct crags. On the north rim of the gorge, the most frequented cliffs are the Bridge Buttress, Junkyard Wall, and Bubba City, for their easy and moderate classics like *Zag* (5.8), an arresting crack that requires at least passing acquaintance with every known jamming technique, or *New Yosemite* (5.10a), a Valley-perfect hand crack. The 5.10 and 5.11 grades are well-represented at all the crags; *Leave it to Jesus* (5.11c) is a divine 100-foot finger crack, while *Celibate Mallard* (5.10b), comes at you with every kind of rock feature known to man.

Mike Vaughn on Quinsana Plus (5.13a), Central Endless Wall (previous page); Porter Jarrard on Lactic Acid Bath (5.12d), The Glory Hole, Kaymoor (right).





Also on the north rim, Fern Point, Central Endless Wall, and Beauty Mountain draw strong climbers to their profusion of 5.12 and 5.13 sport climbs, most of which are of the gently overhanging technical variety. Two of the best are *Jesus and Tequila* (5.12b), a striking arete, and *Quinsana Plus* (5.13a), which ascends what must be one of the most beautiful stretches of rock anywhere. On the south rim of the gorge, most activity is at the recently developed Kaymoor Cliff.

What it took to get me back to the New, five years after the washout, was Porter Jarrard, who for the past two or three years has been one of the area's most active route developers. Porter, 26, grew up in Greensboro, North Carolina, and took up rock climbing in earnest about five years ago, after he got tired of bodybuilding, motocross racing, and Rubik's Cube competitions (his official personal best: 28 seconds).

To Porter, rock climbing means claiming territory. He seizes every opportunity to rush out to the nearest undeveloped cliff to explore, clean, and drill, spending all the money he does not have on bolts and hangers. Porter's sphere of influence extends through North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, New Mexico, Idaho, Wyoming, and Ontario, but his primary focus has been on New River, his favorite area.

I met Porter during the summer of 1991 in Lander, Wyoming, where we climbed together at Sinks Canyon for a month or so. Almost every day he proselytized.

"So when're y'all comin' out to the New?" he'd say. Or, "Y'all gotta come out to the New this fall, it's good, man, best place I ever climbed."

"But how about the weather, Porter?"

"Weather's fine in the fall, 'sides if it rains you kin climb at the Hole at Kaymoor; rock there's so steep it don't matter if it rain or shine." Porter is proud of, and cultivates, his hillbilly image.

Porter left Lander in mid-August, and phoned every few days to work on me some more. Finally, I succumbed. I drove all night through Kansas, Missouri, and Kentucky, thinking, "This is a long way. I hope it's worth it." I pulled into Fayetteville on a crisp, sunny late September afternoon, and ended up staying at the New through early December. It was so worth it that after a three-month winter break in the Southwest I returned to the New for two more months in the spring.

Doug Reed on his ultra-classic *Legacy* (5.11d), Central Endless Wall.

To Porter, rock climbing means claiming territory.

He seizes every opportunity to rush out to the nearest undeveloped cliff to explore, clean, and drill, spending all the money he does not have on bolts and hangers.

The town of Fayetteville is a relaxing, scenic place to hang out on rest days, and the surrounding area is excellent for white-water boating and mountain biking. About three miles from the nearest crag, Fayetteville is a small town built on a hill. It was founded in those days of the last century when the land held a promise of wealth to the coal-mining communities springing up all about New River Gorge. The town was built without regard for any kind of sustainable future, and so, since the demise of coal mining in the area decades ago, many of the town's big old houses have stood vacant and decaying. The streets were lined with boarded-up storefronts posted with "For Rent" or "For Sale" signs and phone numbers that attracted no calls.

Happily the town is undergoing a revival, with city folks drawn to the quiet, picturesque area and its recreational opportunities. The old houses of Fayetteville are being restored and several new businesses have opened: climbing, mountain-bike, and kayak and boating shops; a cafe; a pizzeria; and a bed-and-breakfast.

Another change is that Chief Hunsaker retired this winter after more than three decades of service. He's proud to say that in all that time, he never once had to pull his gun. He often comes out for breakfast at the town's cafe, and if you ask he might play you a recording of the Paul Harvey show on which he was featured.

On my first afternoon back, Porter dragged me down to the Hole to belay him on his redpoint of *Blood Raid* (5.13a), a wildly overhanging route with a psycho-dynamic crux for the last move. The Hole is a blocky, cave-like roof system 60 feet high, 200 feet wide, and overhanging about 40 feet, crisscrossed by a dozen routes ranging from 5.12a to 5.13c, most established by Doug Reed. It's been variously compared to Cave Rock and Volx. Yes, you can climb there in the rain, and the Hole and the rest of the north-facing Kaymoor cliff are ideal for climbing in hot weather.

The Hole ushered in the age of radically overhanging routes, such as Reed's *Lactic Acid Bath* (5.12d), which overhangs about as much as it ascends, and which, to borrow a line from Todd Skinner, has the biggest holds you'll ever fall off of.

The Hole was "discovered" in the fall of 1990 by Doug Reed, who began route development there the following spring, secretly drilling several routes on aid, solo. Until that time route development at the New had focused almost exclusively on the Gorge's sunny north rim. It seems inexplicable that climbers had neglected the south rim for so long, especially since its cliffs are clearly visible from the popular north side. But as soon as word got out about what Doug was up to at the Hole, herd mentality took over. In a gold-rush phenomenon several dozen routes went up in just a few weeks. Today Kaymoor offers over 80 routes, comparable in quality to those on the established cliffs of the North rim.

Throughout the 10 years he's climbed at the New, Reed, 32, has been a leader of the pack, pioneering new routes, cliffs and tactics. He was first drawn to the area by a note and a few photos placed on the bulletin board of the Gendarme climbing shop at Seneca Rocks, West Virginia. The note and the photos were a kind of message-in-a-bottle from Bruce Burgin, one of the first New River locals, who desperately needed other climbers to aid him in exploration and development. Since then Doug has hardly left. In 1982 he established *Englishman's Crack*, the New's first 5.11, and in 1989 put up *The Racist*, then considered the area's hardest climb at 5.13c. He also led the shift of interest from gear-protected crack and corner climbs to bold, minimally protected face climbs and finally, with the advent onto the scene of power drills, to bolted sport climbs.

Reed's development of the Hole at Kaymoor marked an important transition in New River climbing. Until then the New had been a place to climb vertical or slightly bulging walls occasionally broken by roofs. The Hole ushered in the age of radically overhanging routes, such as Reed's *Lactic Acid Bath* (5.12d), which overhangs about as much as it ascends, and which, to borrow a line from Todd Skinner, has the biggest holds you'll ever fall off of. After they recovered from the initial shock of climbing upside down and backwards, most New River climbers decided they liked this style of climbing and went out looking for more.



One drizzly day last October, Jarard dragged me out on an exploration of the shores of Summersville Lake, a reservoir created by damming the Gauley River about 20 miles north of Fayetteville. Like most of the rivers in southern West Virginia, the Gauley winds below miles of beautiful sandstone cliffs. We'd heard about the place from Doug Cosby, a young D.C. climber who had wandered there seeking reprieve from the stifling summer heat.

That day we found a wall that has become one of the area's prize jewels. The Coliseum face is more than 80 feet long and 200 feet wide, and overhangs by more than 50 feet. The central section of the wall is capped with a 10-foot roof. For a couple of hours we just sat there under the looming mass of the wall, wondering if anything would go.

Within three weeks Porter established the first two routes on the Coliseum, *Apollo Reed* (5.13a), named as a friendly jab toward Doug Reed, and *Mercy Seat* (5.13b). Both routes became instant classics, proving Porter's dictum, "You gotta give the people what they want." *Apollo* has even superseded Doug Reed's *Quinsana Plus* at Central Endless as the New's 5.13a of choice for the aspiring 5.13 leader. *Apollo* follows the featured central wall and exits through the roof at the top. *Mercy Seat* branches out left from *Apollo* at the third bolt for more continuous climbing and harder moves. Two weeks later Porter and I established a third route on the Coliseum, *Tobacco Road* (5.12b), which follows a right-slanting line of weakness on the left end of the wall. This spring Porter added a bouldery, continuous, and fingery 5.13b, *Pod*, on the right side of the wall. He has another project in the works, just right of *Apollo*.

Development of the Hole at Kaymoor and the Coliseum at Summersville Lake added an important element that had been missing at the New River: overhanging, gymnastic routes to complement the area's well-established technical challenges. Indeed, very few areas can match the incredible variety, quality, and quantity of climbing at New River. Still, major cliff formations remain untouched by climbers; radically futuristic walls are just slumbering away. Good things appear to be in store for the brave New world.

Hassan Saab is in the running for the title of America's most widely traveled sport climber. Saab, a Ph.D in chemical physics, worked as a research and development engineer in Pasadena, California, for six years before his current incarnation.

Hassan Saab on a typically unnamed Doug Reed route (5.13a), Second Buttress, Kaymoor.



Doug Reed on Idol Point Arete (5.12a), Endless Wall.

Grafenberg Crack [P], Central Endless, hand crack, layback, roof.
Riding the Crest of a Wave [P], Central Endless, arete, corner, roof.
Smooth Operator [P], Fern Point, hand crack.
Angels' Arete [P], Bridge Buttress, arete.
New Yosemite [P], Junkyard Wall, hand crack.

5.10

Mushrooms (5.10b) [P], Beauty Mountain, crack, face.
Burning Calves (5.10b) [P], Beauty Mountain, finger crack.
Brain Tweezer (5.10a), Beauty Mountain, steep face.
The Undeserved (5.10b) [P], Central Endless, layback flake, corner.
Black and Tan (5.10a) [P], Central Endless, corner, roof, face.
Celibate Mallard (5.10b) [P], Central Endless, flake, roof, corner.
Party in Your Mind (5.10c) [P], Fern Point, steep face.
Linear Encounters (5.10c) [P], Fern Point, corner, roof, crack.
Mellifluous (5.10d) [P], Fern Point, hand and finger crack.
Remission (5.10b) [P], Diamond Point, crack.
Gemini Cracks (5.10a, 5.10c) [P], Bridge Buttress, crack.
The Entertainer (5.10a) [P], Junkyard Wall, corner, roof, crack.

5.11

Scenic Adult (5.11c), Kaymoor, arete.
Magnitude (5.11c), Kaymoor, steep face.
Lost Souls (5.11d), Kaymoor, overhanging face.
Disturbance (5.11d), Beauty Mountain, face.
Mensa (5.11d), Beauty Mountain, steep face.
Esthetica (5.11c), Central Endless, steep face.
Legacy (5.11b), Central Endless, steep face, corner, roof.
Leave it to Jesus (5.11c) [P], Central Endless, finger crack.
S'More Energy (5.11b), Fern Point, steep face, big holds.
New Age Equippers (5.11d), Fern Point, steep face.
Agent Orange (5.11d) [P], Bridge Buttress, face, flake, crack.
Shear Strength (5.11b/c), Bubba City, steep face

5.12

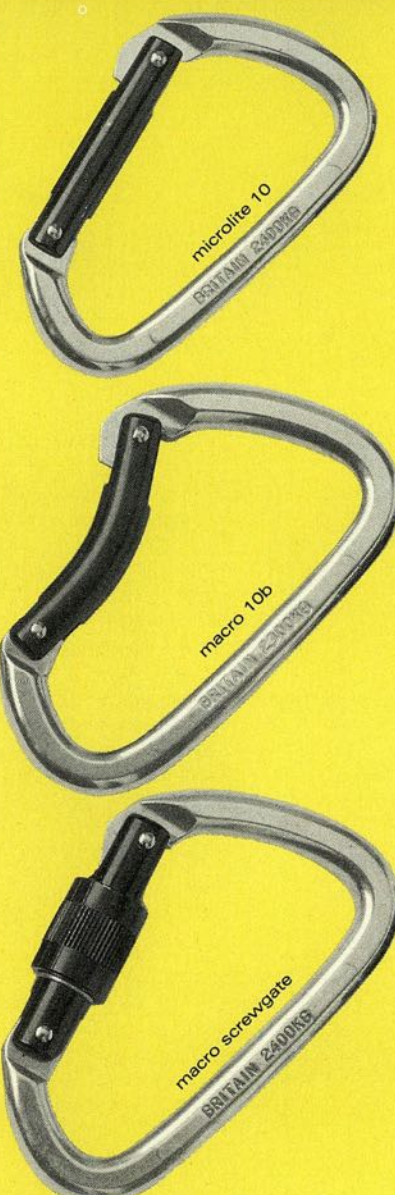
Easiest Way to the Top (5.12a/b), Hole at Kaymoor, roofs.
Lactic Acid Bath (5.12d), Hole at Kaymoor, roofs.
Thunderstruck (5.12b), Kaymoor, steep to overhanging face.
Chunky Monkey (5.12b), Beauty

Mountain, overhanging face.
Jesus and Tequila (5.12b), Central Endless, arete.
Sacrilege (5.12b), Central Endless, steep face.
Pudd's Pretty Dress (5.12c/d), Central Endless, steep face.
Freaky Stylee (5.12a), Fern Point, steep face.
Unnamed (5.12b), Fern Creek Falls, overhanging face.
Michelin Man (5.12a), Bubba City, steep face.
Bubbacide (5.12b), Bubba City, steep face.
Masterpiece Theatre (5.12c), Bubba City, steep face.
The Skull in the Stone (5.12c), Summersville Lake, overhanging face.

5.13

Blood Raid (5.13a/b), Hole at Kaymoor, tiered roofs.
The Travesty (5.13c/d), Beauty Mountain, steep face.
The Sportster (5.13b), Beauty Mountain, steep face.
Titan's Dice (5.13a/b), Central Endless, overhanging crack, roof.
Dissonance (5.13a), Central Endless, steep face.
The Pocket Route (5.13a), Central Endless, steep face, roof.
The Racist (5.13c), Central Endless, steep face.
Quinsana Plus (5.13a), Central Endless Roof, steep face.
Libertine (5.13a), Central Endless Roof, steep face.
Apollo Reed (5.13a), Summersville Lake, roofs, overhanging face.

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Party OF One

A PROFILE of Jim Beyer, an American soloist.

BY Greg Child

I first encountered Jim Beyer from a distance, in Yosemite Valley, in 1977; he was 2000 feet above me on El Capitan, making the first solo ascent of the *Shield*. I stood amongst a group of climbers in El Cap meadow, watching spring storm mists swirl around the wall. I still recall the patter of rain against our cagoules, the beat of The Grateful Dead playing from a tinny portable tape deck, and the awe that the sight of El Cap filled us with, glistening wet and gold as it did that day, like a fearful, shining beast. It was the year a drug-lord's plane had ditched in a frozen high-country lake, and bales of weed were still being hauled out of the ice. Life in the valley was deliciously deranged.

We were young, our hair was long, and we lived and breathed climbing.

The sky darkened as a Sierra thunderhead regrouped to pelt the valley with another assault of sleet. On El Cap, climbers — sodden, cold, and had-enough — could be seen rappelling off the *Nose* and *Tangerine Trip*. Only one remained — going up, not down.

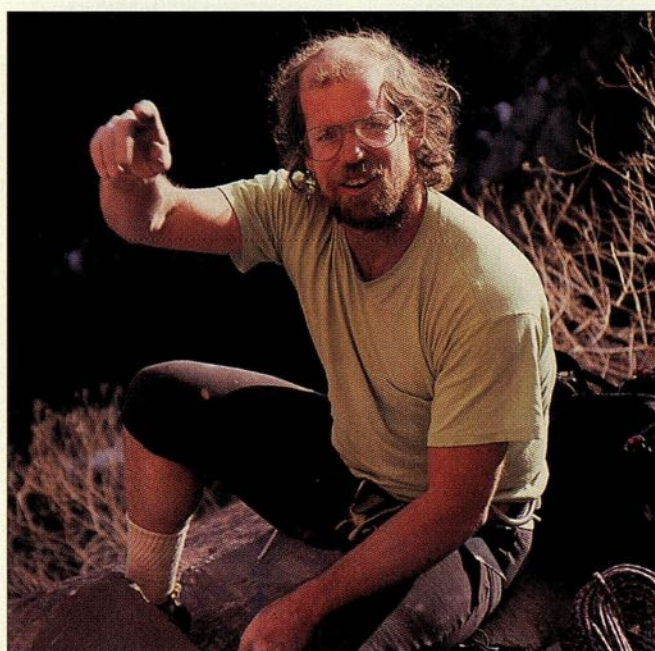
"Who is that guy up there?" I asked.

"That's Jim Beyer," someone replied.

"He must be freaking out in this weather."

"Nah. Beyer can handle it. He soloed the *Dihedral Wall* last year. He likes it up there alone." I filed the name — Jim Beyer — in my memory. It would keep cropping up in years to come, attached to news of bold solos on big walls.

Clouds engulfed El Cap, and we retired to our clammy



Beyer in Eldorado Canyon, Colorado, in 1992. Left: Bib-O-li-Motin, a 19,685-foot rock fang above the village of Karimabad in Pakistan. Beyer's 1990 hair-raising solo route ascends the left skyline.

... he began
inexplicably sliding
down the rope.
He was stung
with the
adrenalin shot.
Something was
dreadfully wrong,
but what?
When his jumars
jammed and he
jolted to a stop
he looked up
to see a
big-wall climber's
nightmare.

nylon abodes in Camp Four, leaving Beyer, with two-thirds of El Cap beneath him, to press on.

The headwall of the *Shield* is so overhanging — 30 degrees beyond vertical — that rain doesn't touch it, but, in the gloom of storm, it's cold and very exposed. By afternoon Beyer had nailed the crux, the Triple Cracks, anchored his rope, rappelled the pitch, and was jumaring back up and hammering out knifeblade pitons when he began inexplicably sliding down the rope. He was stung with the adrenalin shot. Something was dreadfully wrong, but what? When his jumars jammed and he jolted to a stop he looked up to see a big-wall climber's nightmare.

The sheath of his lead rope was cut through, neatly circumscribed from rubbing against a sharp burr on a piton. His weighted jumars had stripped the sheath down the rope, caus-



Grand Cathedral (19,245 feet) — Beyer's 1989 solo route (VII 5.10d A4+) finishes on the left-hand arete of the summit pyramid after climbing a 2000-foot big wall and over 3000 feet of alpine ground below

ing his slide, and exposing several feet of white nylon core, at which, strand by strand, the piton was sawing.

With no one but the misty sky to bitch to about it, Beyer looked up at the rope. Every movement caused the piton to cut another millimeter into the core. Later he told a friend that he begged God's help. "When nothing happened," Beyer said, "I knew there was no God."

Beyer knew he had put himself in this situation, and he alone would get himself out of it. He muscled aside fear as he jumared the fraying rope toward the belay. It was as if these adrenalin-thumping moments were meant as a test of his physical and mental training, a test to see if he really had the stomach for the life of soloing he'd mapped out for himself. The test was simple: the rope snaps, Jim dies; jumar past the fraying strands, he lives. Years later, on other walls, in other ranges, the tests would become more extreme.

Who is Jim Beyer?

Most readers of climbing magazines will draw a blank on the name. He doesn't pen articles about his climbs. Never before has a photo of Beyer appeared in a magazine.

This, then, is the story of Jim Beyer, America's most accomplished big-wall soloist. It is a story of a reclusive man's 20-year solitary odyssey that's taken him quietly yet triumphantly up a score of American monoliths, and to an agonizing defeat in the Karakoram Range of Pakistan. It's a story of discovery of self through extreme climbing and, by the end, of an alchemical metamorphosis of purpose.

Who is Jim Beyer? Most readers of climbing magazines will draw a blank on the name, for he is no star of the climbing media. He doesn't pen articles about his climbs, save for understated accounts in the back pages of the *American Alpine Journal*. Never before has a photo of Beyer appeared in a magazine. He possesses neither the leonine leotards nor physique of the sport-climbing set. Beyer is a house builder, who dresses in well-worn, sawdust-scented work clothes. His Falstaffian physique is built for endurance rather than sport. He is a soloist in more avenues than climbing: he kayaks white water solo, and even the spec-houses he builds for a living are mostly Beyer's work alone.

Beyer is suspicious of anyone who basks in the glow of fame in climbing. Magazine profiles are anathema to him. Sponsored climbers and sport-climbing heroes are "posers." Thus, it took some convincing on my part to get him to discuss his career. But talk he did, on a winter weekend in 1991 in Boulder, Colorado, in the half-finished shell of his latest house, and in Eldorado Canyon. "My agenda in spilling my guts to you," he told me, "is to show there are traditionalists left in climbing." That was his conscious agenda. If he had an unconscious agenda, then it was to unburden himself of himself, for in the world of a soloist there are few people to listen.

Beyer's brand of climbing — solo big wall climbing — is not everyone's cup of tea. It's a slow and laborious process, a mental and physical marathon. It is, essentially, aid climbing for pitch after pitch up huge cliffs, using a roped self-belay system. Such climbs might take two weeks, and on them one must carry

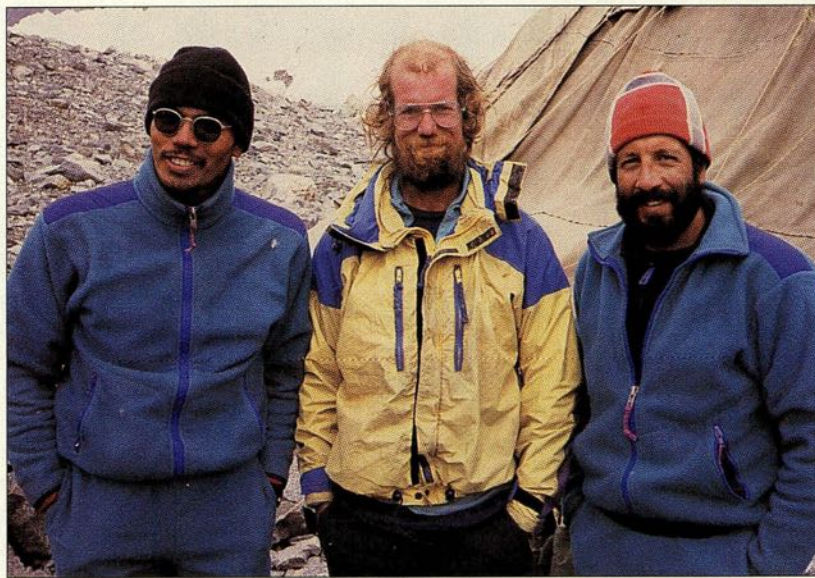
The original
premise of climbing
— that all routes
should be climbed
from the ground
up, without
previewing — is,
to Beyer, both
ethic and religion.

"Anyone
has the right
to place a bolt
wherever
they want,"
he says,
"but anyone
is also free to
remove it."

masses of hardware, bivouac gear, food, and water. The endeavor means hauling loads weighing hundreds of pounds; it means complex rope work and sleeping in porta-ledges. On a hard pitch, the climber might nail fragile flakes, make multiple moves on skyhooks, or step off A5 aid to begin free climbing into unknown territory — with no one at the other end of the rope to whimper to. To embark on a solo climb, the climber must be driven to succeed and fueled by a deep belief in himself. Thus, for a soloist, defeat comes hard because there is only oneself to blame for failure.

Born in Florida but a longtime resident of Boulder, Colorado, Beyer, now 36, made his big wall solo debut at age 17, with *Sunshine* (V 5.9 A3) on the Diamond face of Long's Peak. The route was a first ascent — remarkable for a youngster — and it set the course of his climbing: inevitably solo, usually first ascents, unsupported and unpublicized to the extent that few people even knew where he was. Here, and ever since, he placed bolts only as a last resort.

The original premise of climbing — that all routes should be climbed from the ground up, without previewing — is, to Beyer, both ethic and religion. His traditional convictions are bred of 23 seasons in Yosemite, 10 in the Tetons, and three in the Karakoram. He despairs of, and endorses guerrilla warfare on, the gridwork rap-bolting practices of sport climbers. Like the EarthFirst! environmentalists who creep into forests to hammer mill-saw-wrecking spikes into old growth trees, he has, under cover of darkness, erased several efforts of the Bosch generation. "Anyone has the right to place a bolt wherever they want," he says, "but anyone is also free to remove it." In a letter to *Climbing Magazine*, he challenged its editors to publish a "how-to" article on bolt removal to balance the plethora



Beyer with his Mexican *compadres* after his Broad Peak epic in 1991.

of advice on bolting, handdogging, and sport-climbing techniques filling today's magazines.

But the story of Jim Beyer, student of traditional ethics, pales against the tale of Jim Beyer, graduate of the school of hard knocks.

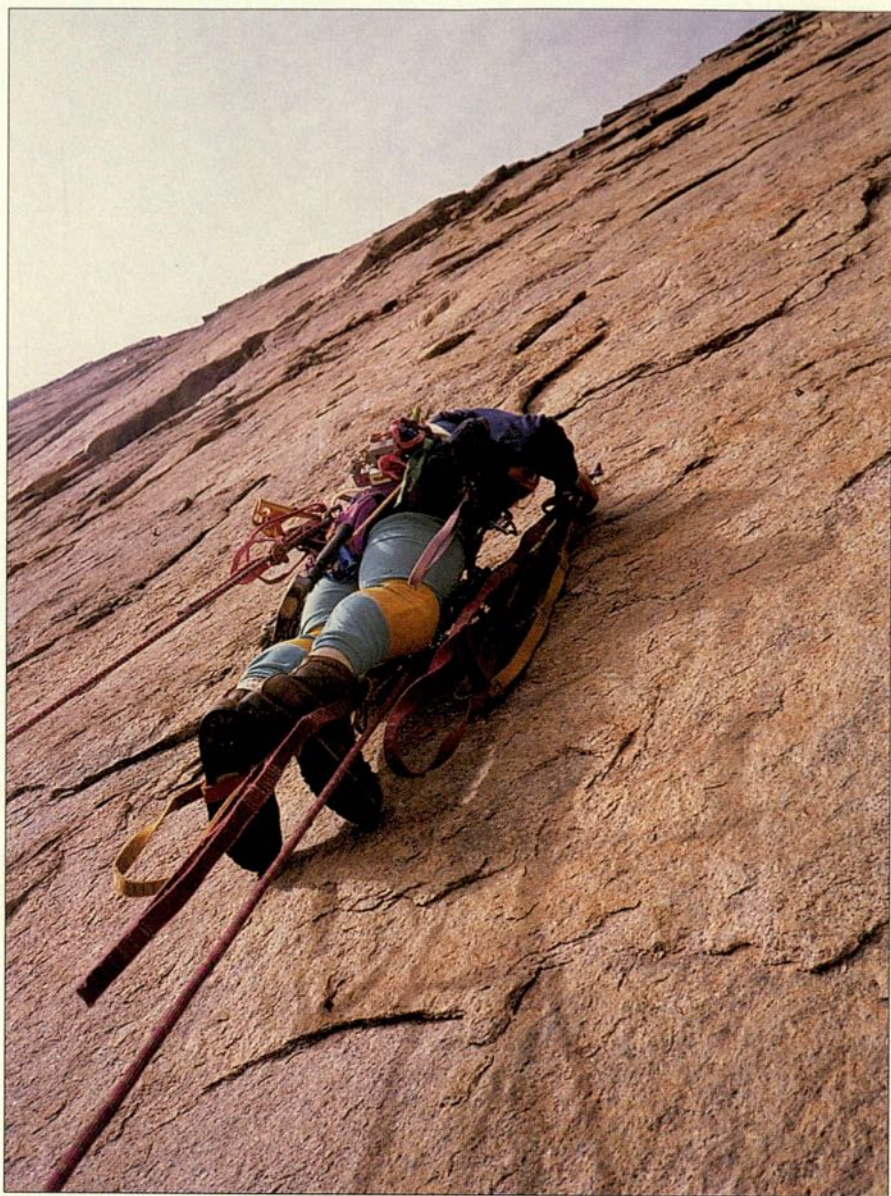
The year Beyer soloed the *Shield* he left Yosemite in a VW bug crammed with his possessions to climb in the Canadian Rockies. In Banff, while hanging around

a parking lot outside a pub with a friend, Beyer was accosted by a man wearing a leather jacket. "He grabbed me by my sweater and cranked me up close to smell my breath," says Beyer. "Then he flashed a police badge."

Ordered to empty his pockets, Beyer produced an apple. The undercover agent was disappointed; he was looking for contraband. But Beyer had a joint in his back pocket. His survival instinct took over. He backed out of his sweater, leaving it in the agent's hands, and ran. Cutting his losses, the narc arrested Beyer's friend. After a cold bivouac in the woods, Beyer traded himself to the police for his buddy's release and spent a week in jail.

This youthful debacle ended when Beyer was deported, handcuffed, from Canada as persona non grata. Once across the border he sped back to California, visited his girlfriend, found their relationship had ended, and proceeded to the haven of Yosemite. Near Merced, at 2 a.m., he parked the bug and entered an orchard to sleep. When he awoke his car was gone; while he'd slept it had been burglarized, torched, then towed to the scrap yard. Beyer had lost everything he owned.

He quit climbing for a couple of years after that. "Jim's epic on the *Shield* really scared him, and a run of bad luck hit him hard," says Steve Quinlan, a climber and carpenter from



Beyer hooking on *Steep is Flat* (VI 5.10 A4+) on the Diamond, Long's Peak, Colorado, during the first ascent with Pat McInerny in 1990.

Wyoming, and one of Beyer's oldest friends. "I think it shocked him to discover his capacity for getting himself into hot water."

So Beyer filled his life with other things. For a time he drifted with radical environmentalists. Later he earned a place on the U.S. National Kayak Team as a flatwater racer. Curious to examine left-wing politics from the inside, he visited Nicaragua with an American group after the Sandinista Revolution, to help harvest the coffee crop. Beyer did not adapt well to his new surroundings, however, and tired of the endless political lectures, barracks living, and constant surveillance. Instead of kowtowing to the propagandists, he argued with them. One day he rented a car and went to the beach, without official permission. Such independent thinking didn't rest well with his Sandinista hosts: he was deported from Nicaragua by armed escort.

Beyer's own tales created, for me, the picture of a loner. But people who know Beyer better reveal another side of the man.

"He is the most politically aware climber I've ever met," says Quinlan, who told me of Beyer's support over many years of environmental and political causes. On one occasion Beyer

By 1982 Beyer quit believing he could find a more significant purpose in life than climbing. If he had abandoned climbing because he suspected its tunnel-vision lifestyle made him unsuited to normal society, then he returned to it because it was the most gratifying life he knew.

marched with a group from Moab to Salt Lake City, as a protest against a planned nuclear dump in the desert near North Six Shooter peak. As for Beyer the climber, Quinlan affectionately describes a curmudgeonly reactionary traditionalist who refused to use Friends for several years, and who often didn't report his new routes, especially those in the Wind River Range.

By 1982 Beyer had quit believing he could find a more significant purpose in life than climbing. If he had abandoned climbing because he suspected its tunnel-vision lifestyle made him unsuited to normal society, then he returned to it because it was the most gratifying life he knew. And when he returned to Yosemite it was to activate the plan he had been nurturing since his earliest solo walls. He embarked on a series of climbs that would harden him for his ultimate dream: a new route, solo, alpine style, boltless, in the Karakoram Range.

Methodically he ticked off a succession of new Yosemite walls. On *Heading for Oblivion* (VI A4+) on Leaning Tower he copperheaded his way up tenuous seams just 40 feet right of the original Harding route. But, unlike Harding, Beyer did little drilling. He regards this as his hardest Yosemite wall. Later, on a 23 1/2-hour roped solo of El Cap's West Face, he accomplished the monolith's first one-day solo.

Solid Yosemite granite polished Beyer's technical skills, but to harden himself against isolation and pure fear he turned to the lofty and crumbling Fisher Towers near Moab, Utah. These lonely, weirdly eroded sandstone spires, says Beyer, are "an alien, hostile environment, perfect for training for the Karakoram." During the 1980s he forced himself up five new solo routes there, some up to 900 feet high.

To describe these routes he coined a term: shakefest, a climb which reduces the leader to a state of quivering terror. Beyer's route names reflect his mindset at a given time: Sandinista Couloir and Revolutionary Crest from the Tetons in the early 1980s show his Nicaraguan period. In the Fisher Towers, his route names reflect a darker mood — *Run Amok* (VI, 5.9

(continued on page 139)

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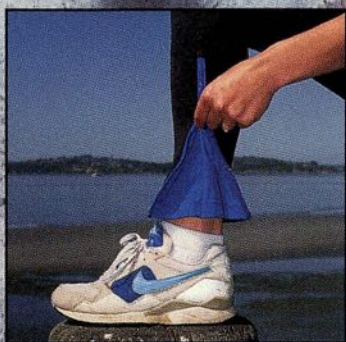
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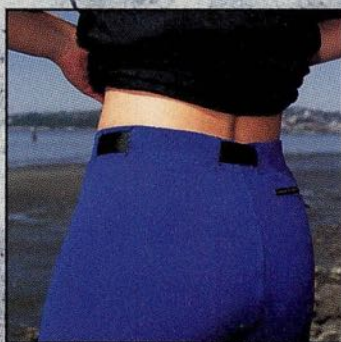
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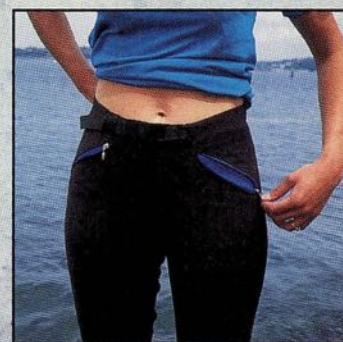
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1/15 of a second of fame

—by—

Gary Hush,
student

There was something odd happening on Hollywood Boulevard the other day.

This will not be news to many of you.

In addition to fourteen robed cultists selling roses and a tour bus from Tupelo, Mississippi (all carrying maps to the stars' homes), a man was traveling at 15 mph wearing half a pair of pants and holding a curious electronic device.

It was Gary Hush, on skates, carrying the Nikon N6006, participating in what many call just another day in Southern California.

How *normal* it all must have seemed.

Mr. Hush is a photography student and crack roller skater from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena.

He was using the Nikon N6006 because it is a very sophisticated SLR that also happens to be easy to use. Mr. Hush, you see, is averse to slamming into parked cars or robed fanatics while fiddling with *f*-stops.

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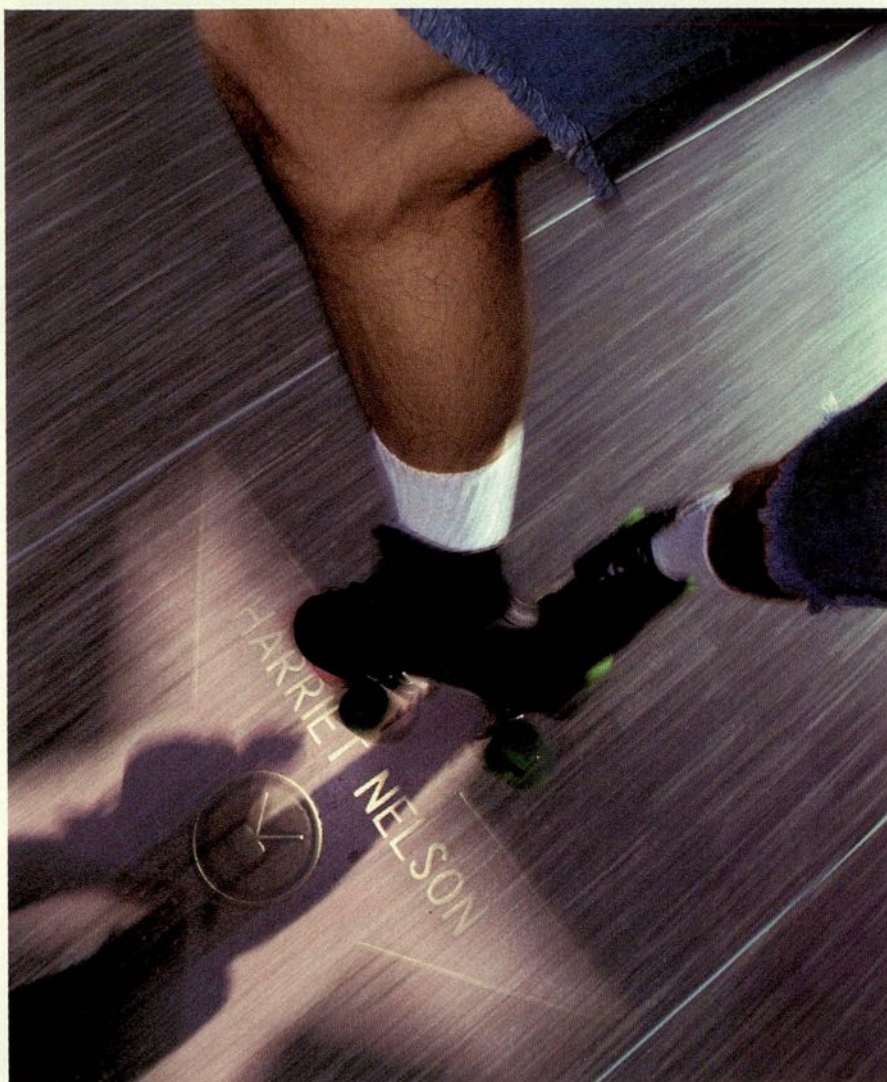
It has Spot Metering, Center-Weighted Metering, and Nikon's exclusive Matrix Metering, which reacts instantly to rapidly changing light conditions or fast action.

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invoked a feature called Rear Curtain Sync, which, well, basically puts a blur behind a moving subject.

The N6006 also has our legendary lens mount, so you can use nearly every Nikkor lens made since 1977, including more than twenty autofocus Nikkors made with our own glass and coatings. They are the



Look out! Man with a cane ahead!
Got him.

There's even a built-in flash with 28mm coverage. Mr. Hush brightened his lovely legs (and aren't we *all* glad he did) by powering up the flash one stop and adjusting exposure compensation on the camera minus 1.3 stops to retain sidewalk detail.

To create the sense of motion, he

same lenses carried by nearly seven out of ten professionals who use 35mm.

The N6006, however, is the Nikon we recommend when your mind is on photography and your body is on something else.

Like vacation. Or a safari. Or skates.

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Got her. See?



Gary Hush.
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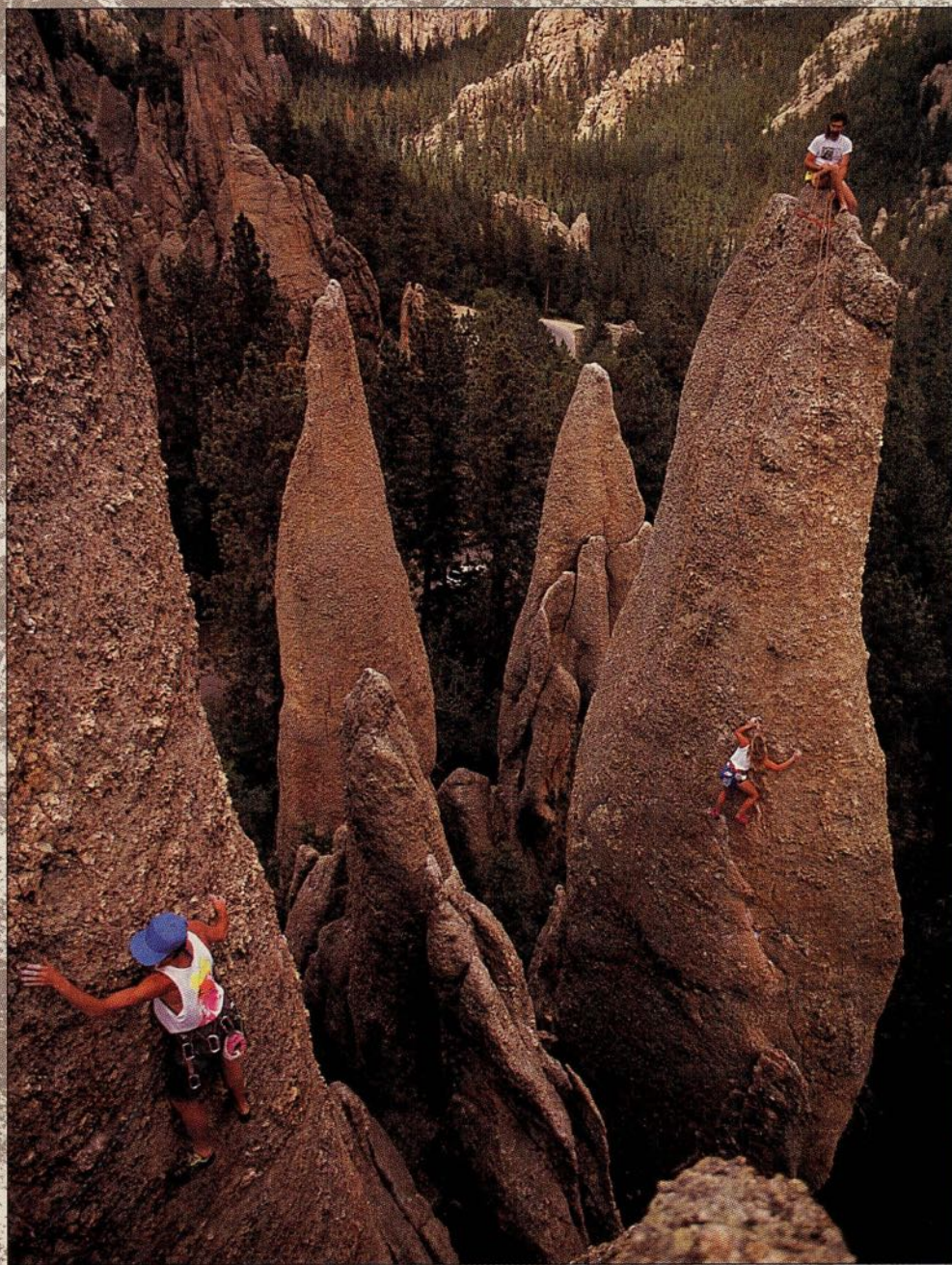
The N6006: built-in fill-flash, autofocus, interchangeable Nikkor lenses. Call 1-800-NIKON-35 for a free booklet.



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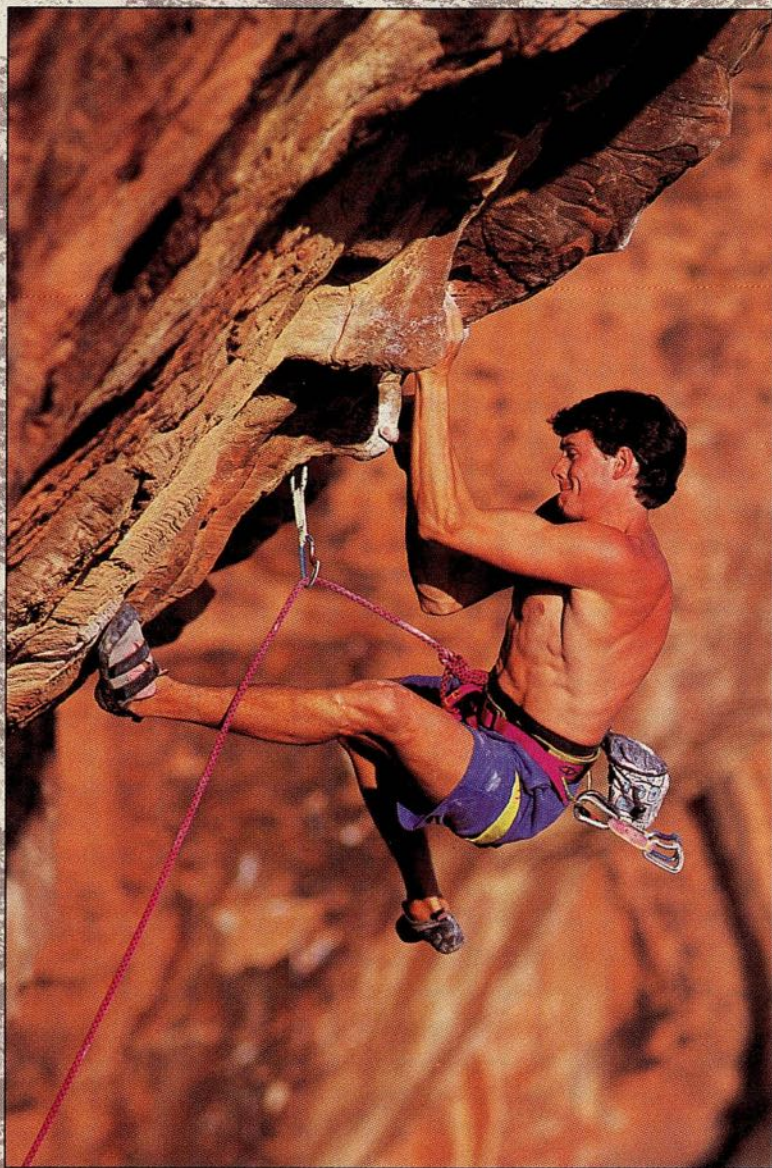
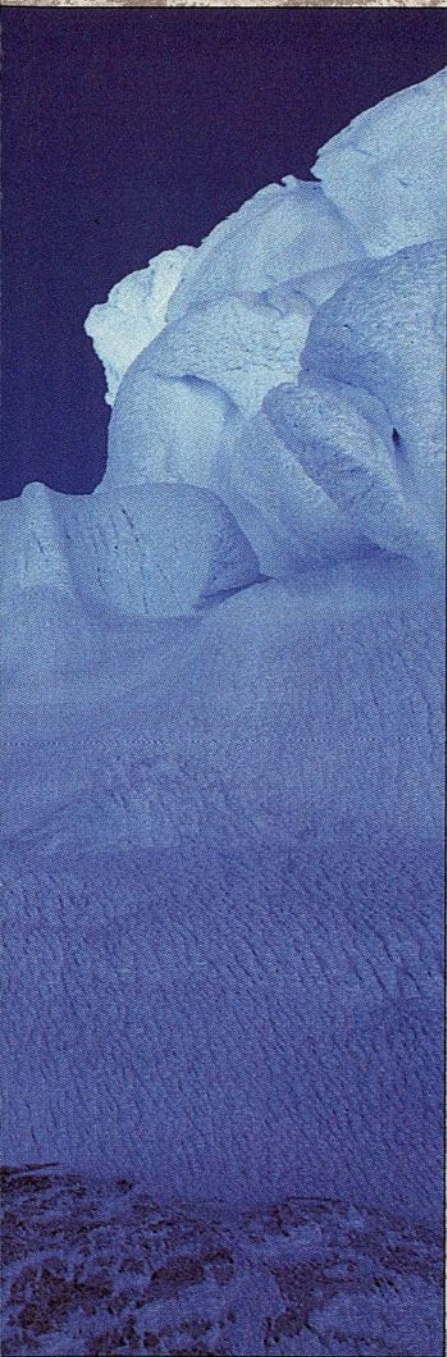
GALLERY



JOHN SHERMAN AND BARBARA BUSSE
ON THE TRICOUNI NAIL (5.8) AND AN
UNKNOWN CLIMBER ON QUEEN PIN (5.9),
THE NEEDLES OF SOUTH DAKOTA.
PHOTO: MARK WILFORD



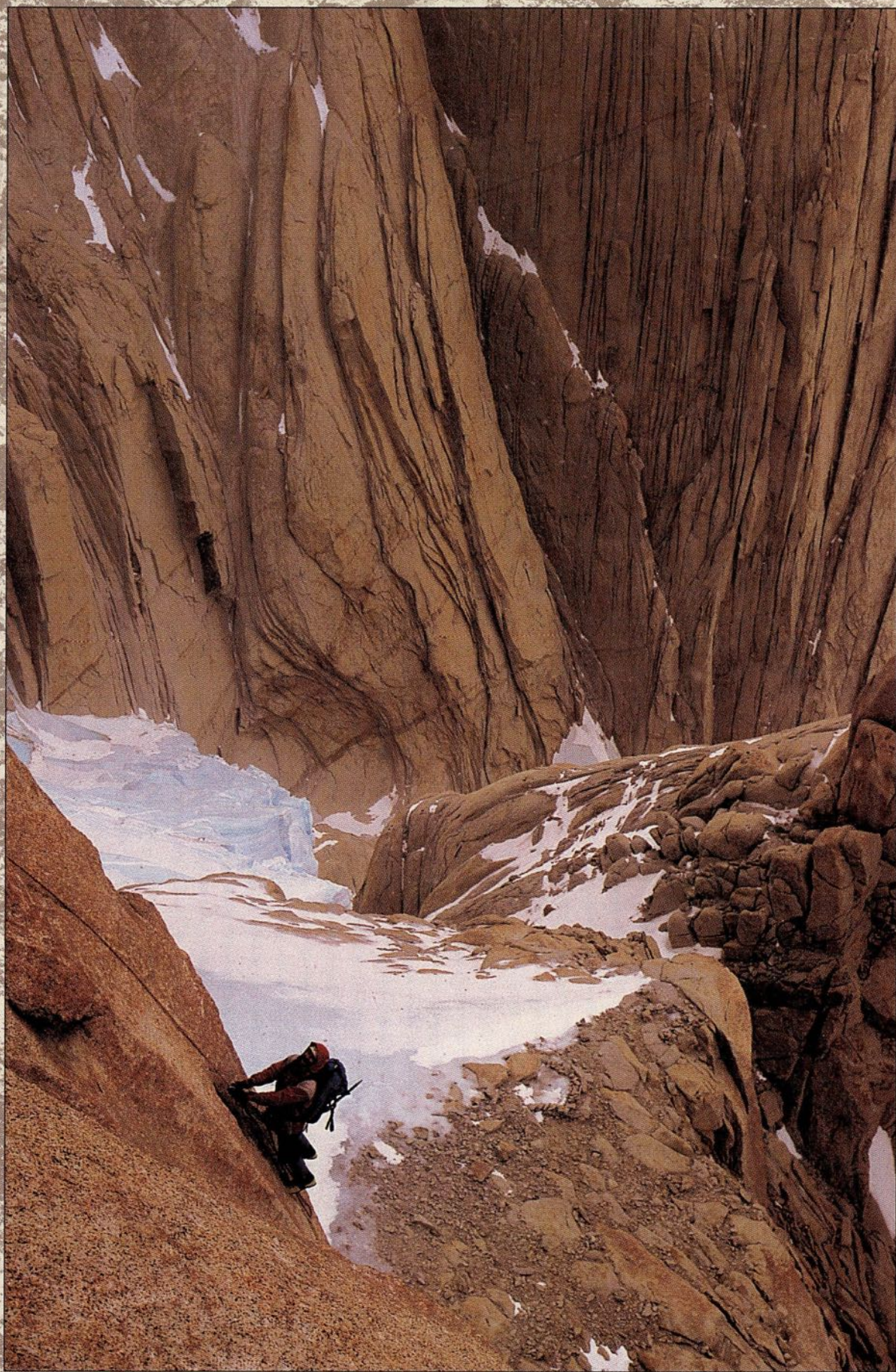
**ERIC WINKELMAN CLIMBING RIME ICE ON THE WEST FACE
OF CERRO TORRE, PATAGONIA, CHILE.
PHOTO: MICHAEL BEARZI**



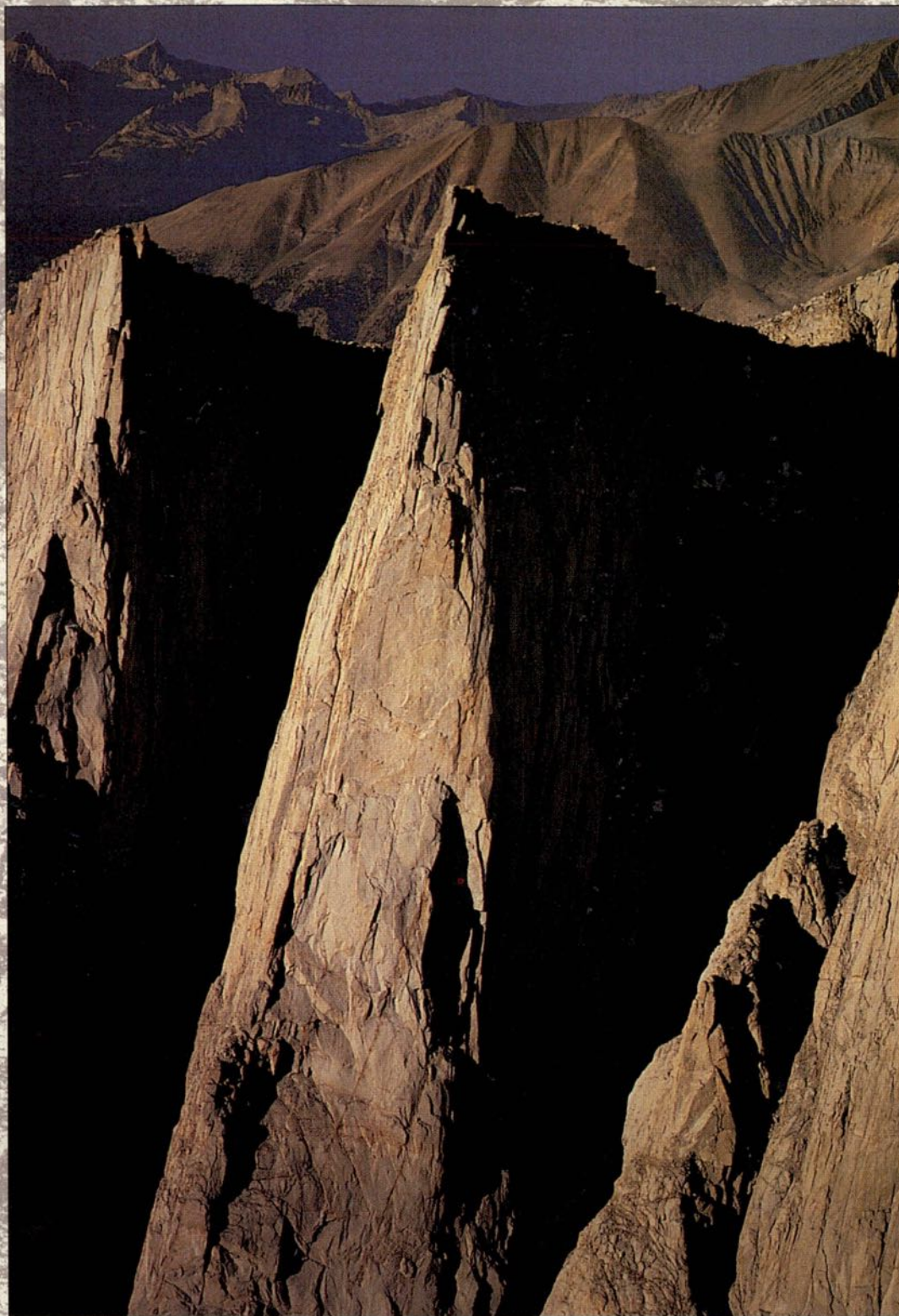
**DAN MCQUADE ON CHOD WARRIOR (5.12), IN THE
STRATOCASTER AREA, RED ROCK, NEVADA.
PHOTO: GREG EPPERSON**



**STEVE PORCELLA ON THE SOUTHEAST RIDGE (III 5.9)
OF MOUNT RUSSELL (14,086 FEET), SIERRA NEVADA, CALIFORNIA.
PHOTO: CAMERON BURNS**

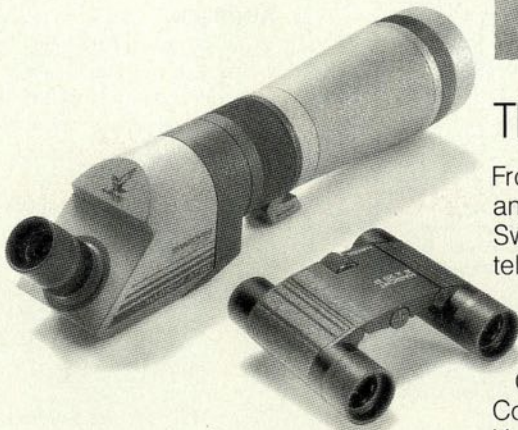
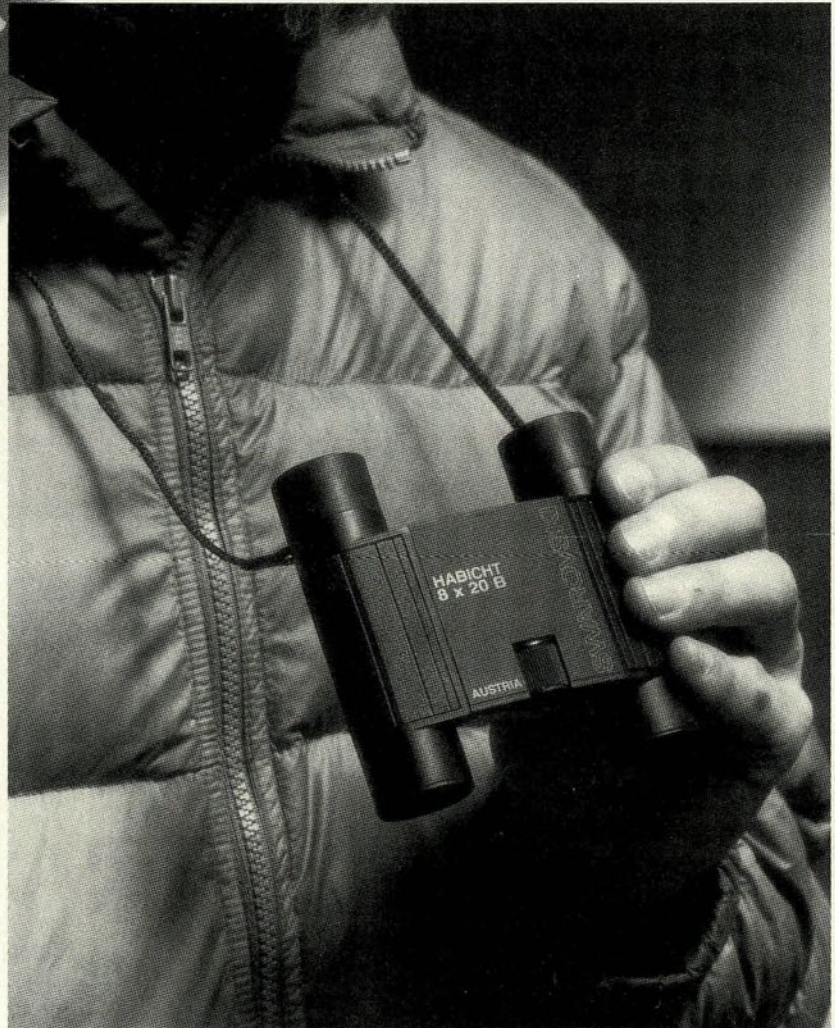
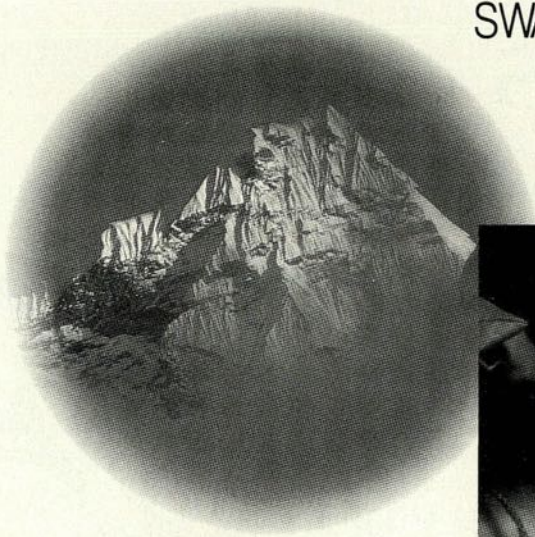


DAN GRIFFITH CLIMBING ON FITZROY, PATAGONIA, CHILE.
PHOTO: CHRIS ATKINSON



**SUNRISE ON THE EAST FACE OF KEELER NEEDLE
(14,240 FEET), SIERRA NEVADA, CALIFORNIA.
PHOTO: GALEN ROWELL**

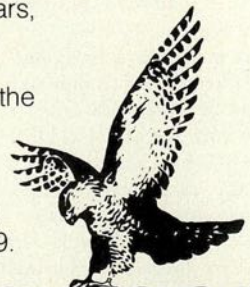
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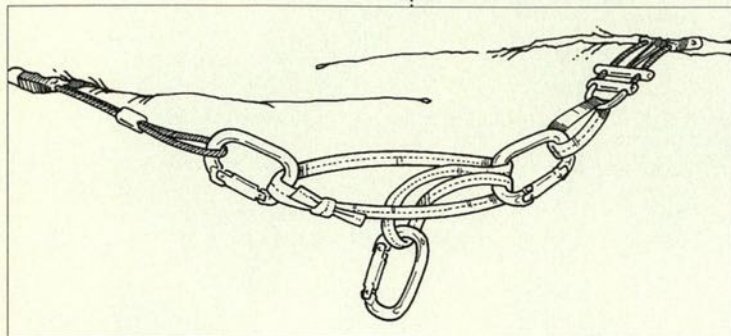
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Quick Clips

Opposing pro

A quick and efficient way to tie off and clip opposing pieces of protection in horizontal placements is to join the two with a sling clipped



through one piece and girth-hitched around the carabiner on the other as shown. Hold the system in place by pulling the rope end loop tight before clipping to it.

When using this system, beware: if one of the pieces fails, the other placement will be subjected to a severe shock load.

— Michael Peter Silitch
Carbondale, Colorado

Fake it

Interested in making a climbing wall but don't want to spend your life savings? Make your own holds from flat-backed artificial rocks sold at a masonry supplier or brickyard.

Fake rocks cost about two to three dollars per square foot, and you can get about four to six holds from that amount. Artificial rocks come in various shapes and textures, so shop around to find just what you need.

To make the rocks mountable, you'll need to drill each one out using a 3/8- and 3/4-inch masonry bit. Drill the 3/8-inch hole first and go all the way through the rock. Then, using this hole as a guide, drill a shallow 3/4-inch hole so you can countersink a washer and an allen-head bolt. Be careful not to drill the

recessed hole too deep or you'll break the hold. Also, make finger pockets by drilling shallow holes with the 3/4-inch bit.

— Peter Bergeron
Bass Lake, CA

A quick and efficient way to tie opposing pieces together.

Glue you

Kevlar cord is nice for slinging SLCDs, Stoppers, and hexes, but because Kevlar is flame-resistant, whipping its ends is very difficult.

Super-type-glue provides a quick, long-lasting fix. Trim ends of the cord with sharp scissors or a knife and roll the cord between fingers to work the kern flush with the mantle. Saturate the ends, inside and out, with several drops of glue. Let the glue dry overnight, and make sure it does not stick to anything.

— Philip Reynolds
Provo, Utah

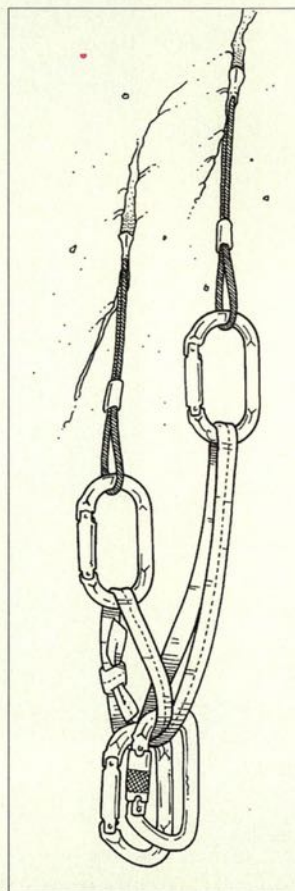
It lives beneath the stairs

A convenient place to build a climbing cave in your home is under the stairs. This is an excellent place for those with limited space. Use wood screws to attach 3/4" plywood (be sure T-nuts are in place) to the upstairs supports. You may need some 2x4s to brace the mid-section of the plywood if it flexes. Although small, this wall provides good power training.

— Brian Mecham
Ogden, Utah

Anchor anguish

Let's face it: most climbers don't count on micronuts to catch them if they fall. Simply clipping into four micronuts individually won't work; they will all break if you fall 10 feet above them. To double the effective strength of these nuts, rig your protection as shown. Use a locking carabiner as a backup to guard against gate



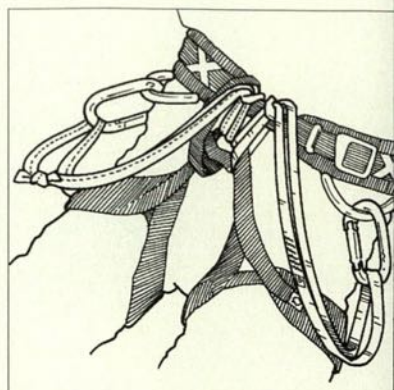
Equalized micro-nuts. If one nut fails, however, the other piece will be shock loaded.

vibration, which will inevitably take place if a nut pops out.

— Anthony Calderone
Salt Lake City, Utah

A link in the chain

A better way to clip to the lowering anchors on sport routes: girth-hitch two



A safer way to clip into a lowering station before untying.

24-inch-long runners to your harness and clip them to gear loops. (Tuck the runners between your harness and waist to keep them out of the way of your racked gear.) After you clip the rope into the anchors, clip the runners to the anchors, too. Now you are secure. Untie, run your rope through the anchors, retie, and lower off. This method eliminates the need for two carabiners (the ones used to fasten each runner to the harness) and removes two links in the chain of things that can fail.

— Bruce Black
Pocatello, Idaho

Keying in

Crack climbers have long known that taped hands allow for better and more comfortable jams. The same concept can be applied to pockets. By taping certain "hocks" or key fingers (higher on the finger for shallow pockets, lower for deeper ones) a pressure lock can often be had on even the sharpest pockets.

— Jeff Jackson
Austin, Texas

We pay \$25 for tips published here. Please send to Quick Clips, Climbing, P.O. Box 339, Carbondale, CO 81623. Include name, address, phone number, and Social Security number.



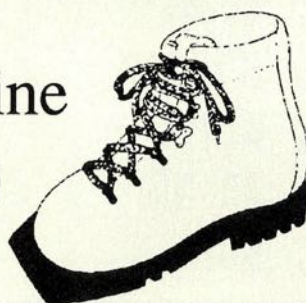
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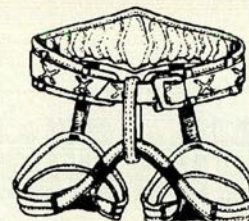
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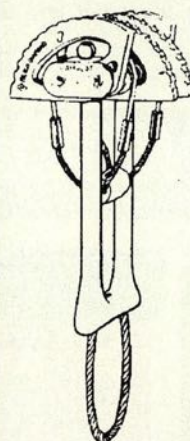
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Smooth operators

Carabiners are not as simple as open and shut

by Duane Raleigh

Carabiners are about the last thing you'd ever lose sleep over, and even in lucid moments you probably don't think about them too hard. Nevertheless, they are the only piece of hardware you use every time you tie in, and, blindly entrust your life to. Carabiners deserve your confidence, too — you are more likely to be eaten by a serial

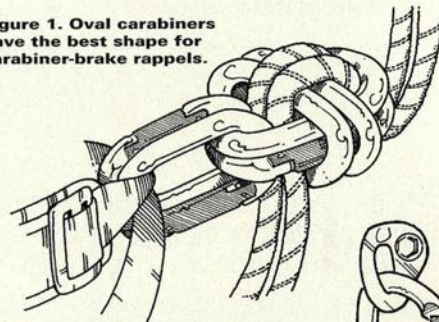
want to clip into a belay anchor with a bent-gate carabiner, which could unclip itself. Nor would you want a bunch of heavy and hard-to-clip ovals when you are redpointing the *Desperate Line*. Here are the attributes we've detailed in the charts, along with a number of tips on carabiner use and care:

Shape. Carabiners come in four basic shapes: oval, D, asymmetrical D, and HMS (pear) shaped.

For aid climbing, oval carabiners are the best. Their utilitarian shape holds more gear (pitons especially) in an orderly fashion than other styles, is easier to use for carabiner-brake rappelling (Figure 1), and doesn't shift around as much when weighted under your aiders. Ovals, on the bum side, are inherently heavier and weaker than other designs.

D carabiners, by virtue of a design that concentrates more of the load along the solid spine and less on the weaker gate area, are stronger than ovals. Ds work fine for use as the top carabiner (the one that clips into the protec-

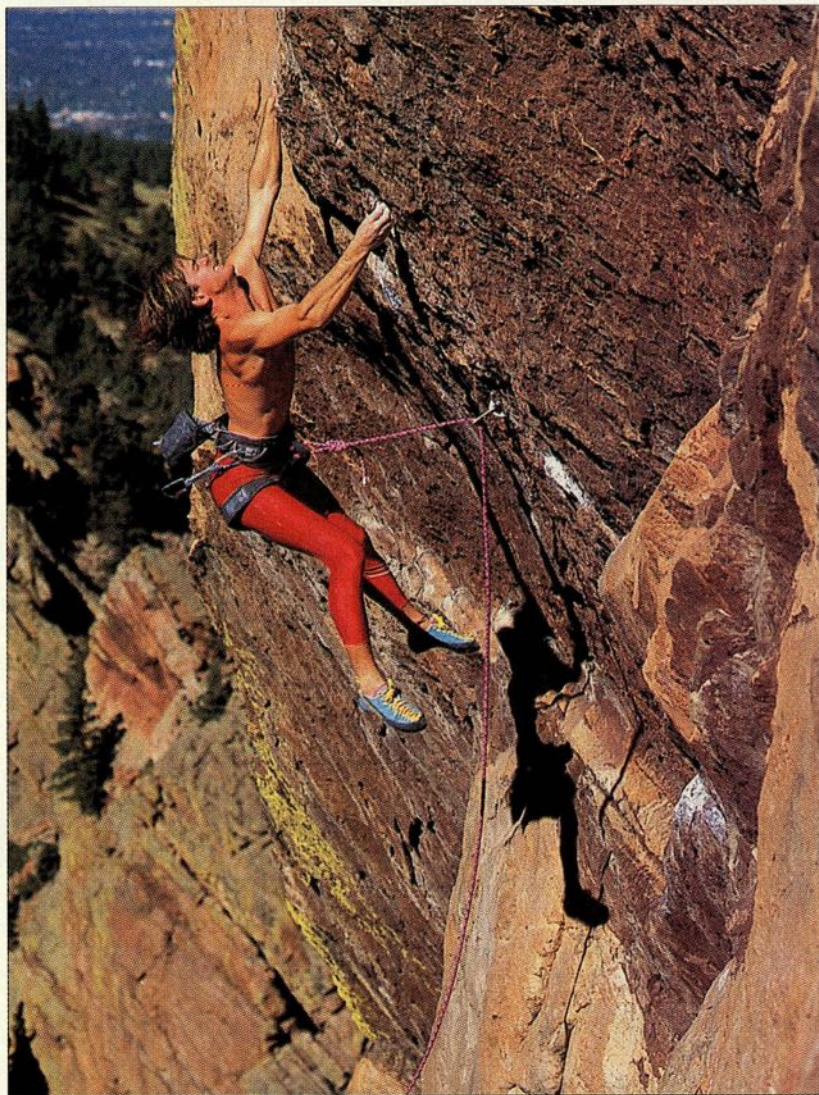
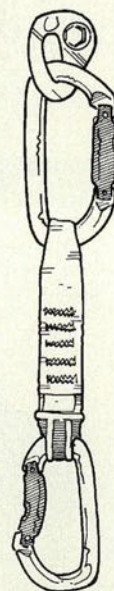
Figure 1. Oval carabiners have the best shape for carabiner-brake rappels.



tion) on quickdraws (Figure 2) and for general free-climbing, but are heavier and typically have less gate-open space than the asymmetrical D. Asymmetrical Ds are the prodigious offspring of Ds, but are smaller at one end so they are usually lighter yet just as strong. Straight-gate asymmetrical Ds are the sport climber's design of choice for the top carabiner on quickdraws, while those with bent gates are ideal for the bottom as they make clipping the rope in easier.

Two new carabiners, the DMM Mamba (bent gate) and the HB Hooker (straight gate), come with a sling permanently sewn through a slot

Figure 2. A typical quickdraw with a standard D on top and an asymmetrical D with a bent gate at the bottom.



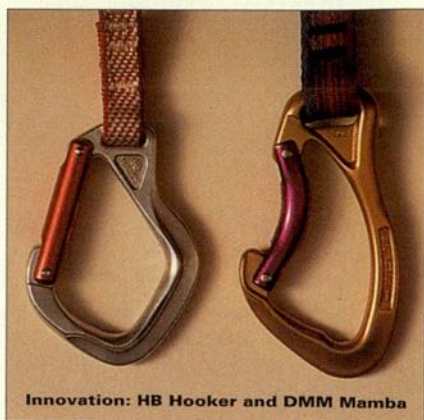
Remember never to clip in with a single carabiner, unless it's a locker like Jimmy Surette is using on *Snake Watching* (5.13) in the Flatirons near Boulder, Colorado.

killer than break a carabiner in normal use. Carabiners — a bent metal rod, gate, and a spring — are seemingly simple. But if you think one is just like the other, think again.

A carabiner's primary task is to link the rope to protection, but we also use them to belay, jumar, haul, rappel, hold gear, and among other things, open a brewsky now and then. You can't just grab any of the 100-or-so different types, though, and have at it. For instance, you'd never

Illustrations: John McMullen

Photo: Greg Epperson



Innovation: HB Hooker and DMM Mamba

in the top of the carabiner. This aesthetic feature makes it impossible for the carabiner to rotate or flip away from your hand when clipping in, and virtually ensures the rope will ride where it should, in the base of the lower arm. Visually the DMM and HB carabiners are unbeatable; but at \$15 each, we hated to see them get scratched. (The DMM Eclipse, a straight-gate carabiner for use on the bolt-clip end of the Mamba, and similar in specifications, arrived too late for review.)

HMS carabiners are large, pear-shaped, and have locking gates. These have ample room inside for wads of ropes and slings, suiting them for use with a belay or rappel device. HMS carabiners are the only carabiners that should be used for Munter-hitch belaying and rappelling (Figure 3), as they let the hitch rotate freely so you can take slack up or pay it out quickly. When using an HMS make sure the rope runs against the wide end; using it with the rope on the small end will compromise the carabiner's strength and function.

An assortment of ovals and Ds (both regular and asymmetrical, some with bent gates for sport climbing) works best for most climbs. In addition you should have one large locking carabiner for belaying and rappelling and one or two other locking carabiners for clipping in to critical anchors.

Price. You can buy state-of-the-art carabiners (nonlocking) for \$6 to \$10 each. A carabiner's price usually reflects its design (bent-gates generally cost more than straight ones) and finish. Lower-priced carabiners typically aren't as cosmetically nice, and are heavier than more-expensive ones. Even so they'll get the job done and won't be any less safe. (Our charts list suggested retail prices.)

For a dollar or two extra you can get many carabiners with an anodized coating, which is mostly cosmetic but will help prevent corrosion (a plus if you climb near the sea or in bogs) and will keep the black oxidation, a surface film that forms on nonanodized aluminum, off your hands and rope. Look under *Finish* in the charts for anodization info.

Locking carabiners typically cost between \$10 and \$20 each. As with regular ones, the price of a locking carabiner is indicative of its finish quality and function (self-locking carabiners usually cost more than manual-locking ones).

Weight. Climbers are obsessed with lightness. And rightly so: you can't expect to do your best if you're carrying an unnecessary load. Yet there are times to go light and times to go heavy. Go light on your boots, pack, harness, and trim 10 pounds off your belly. Go heavy, up to a point anyway, on carabiners.

"Ultralight" carabiners — in general those weighing less than 40 grams — are lightweight because they are smaller than regular carabiners, and are made from smaller-diameter rod stock, which forms

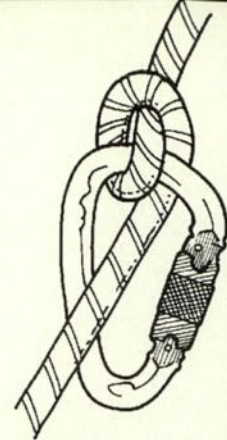


Figure 3. HMS carabiners are best for Munter-hitch belaying and rappelling, as their large shape lets the knot rotate freely.

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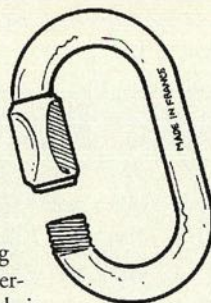


in effect a thin edge that is hard on ropes. (Indeed, we've had two ropes ruined by these carabiners.)

Before buying ultralights, weigh the advantage of saving half a pound or so (assuming a rack of 10 quickdraws) against the increased wear on your rope and the fact that thin, light carabiners won't last as long as thicker, heavier ones. If you decide to shun ultralights you still don't need to overburden yourself — there are numerous carabiners weighing between 40 and 55 grams, still an acceptably light weight, that are rope-friendly.

Most carabiners are made of aluminum alloy, which with its high strength-to-weight ratio is ideal for the majority of climbing applications. Aluminum's biggest drawback is its relative softness, making aluminum carabiners gouge-prone when clipped through steel bolt hangers, which are made of a harder metal. This didn't matter much five years ago when most climbers still held, though some just barely, to the "leader must not fall" adage. Today, however, you can scream off dozens of times on a sport climb without raising a rancle. Consequently, aluminum carabiners take a beating. You can wear one dangerously thin after only a season or two of use — and quicker still if it's hanging on an indoor wall that sees daily traffic.

Figure 4. Inexpensive rapid links are ideal for permanent attachment to bolts and for use in climbing gyms.



To combat wear consider using locking steel carabiners (or alternatively titanium, which is also more durable than aluminum, but is lighter than steel) at lowering anchors and on the bolt end of quickdraws that you will leave in place while working a sport or indoor route.

Steel carabiners are heavy and expensive (a good locking one costs upwards of \$15), but should last a lifetime of hang-dogging. Uncoated steel rusts quickly, so when shopping for steel carabiners be sure you get the ones with a rust-inhibiting coating like zinc or nickel, or those made of stainless or chrome-moly steel (see *Finish* in chart).

Of the nine steel and one titanium locking carabiners we tested our runaway favorites were the Lite Alloy Steel Carabiner made by the Seattle Manufacturing Company, the three types from Omega Pacific, and the Blue Water Locking Steel. All five carabiners are corrosion resistant, incredibly strong (they hold in excess of 9000 pounds), and have smooth gate notches and hidden threads, making them

less abrasive to quickdraws and ropes than the other steel carabiners, which have sharp notches and threads.

Steel carabiners are also suitable for rescue work, where high strength and durability are vital. (Rescue organizations: check gate-opening dimensions, listed in the charts under *Clearance*, to see if these carabiners will clip around your litter rails.)

Although not made for climbing, bolt-gate steel carabiners (Figure 4) are gaining popularity with indoor climbing gyms and for use at lowering stations. Rapid links, which have a screw bolt instead of a hinged gate, offer a less expensive (\$2 to \$3.50) alternative to regular steel carabiners for permanent attachment to bolt hangers. The difficulty of screwing the lock collar down — you need a wrench to get them real tight — precludes using them on lead, but it also makes the link more difficult for gear thieves to remove.

The French-made Maillon rapid links (steer clear of the Taiwanese and Japanese knockoffs) we picked up at our local hardware store were rated to a working load (typically 25 percent of maximum strength) of 3300 pounds for the 1/2-inch stock, and 1980 pounds for the 3/8-inch ones. We pull tested four of each and couldn't break any of them — they all exceeded our test jig's 8000-pound pulling capacity.

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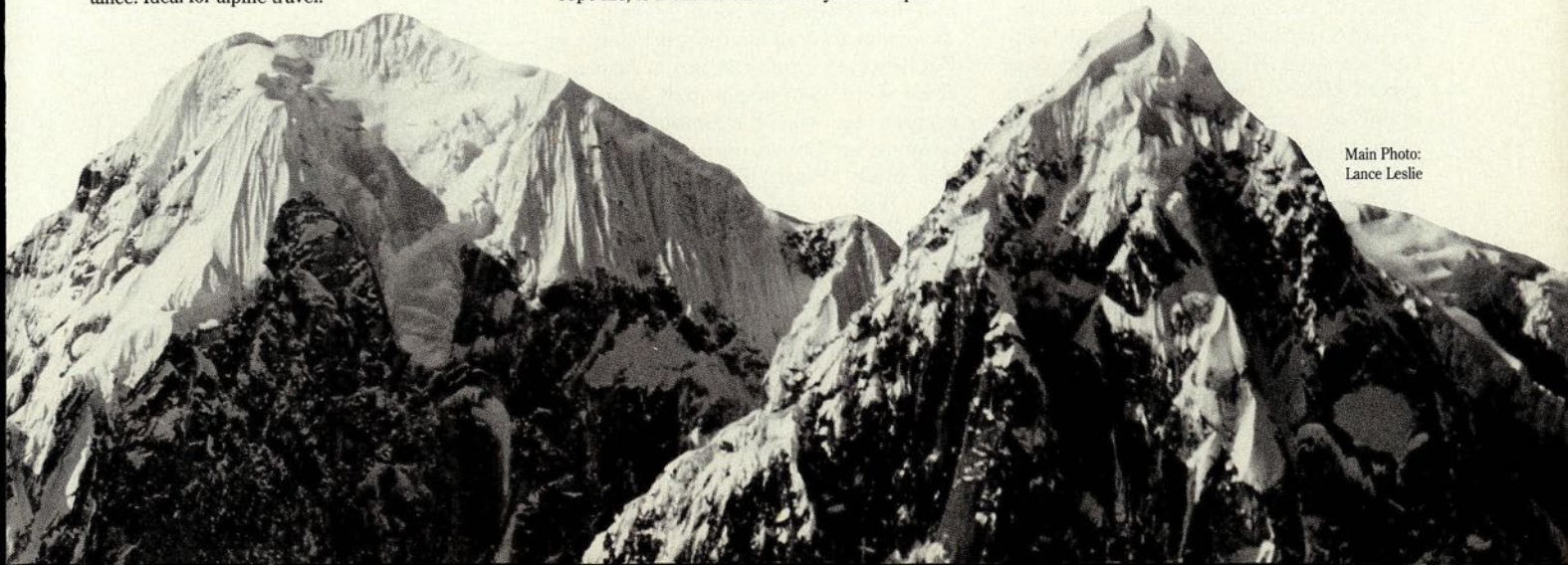
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Carabiners

	Shape (1)	Gate (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Gate stiffness	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted	Tested (7)	Comments
Black Diamond													
Light D	D	S	\$5.35	49	A	5060	1320	light	15	9	✓	1/2	abrasive gate back; inexpensive
Oval	O	S	\$5.35	62	A	4400	1540	light	16	11	✓	1/2	inexpensive
Quicksilver	AD	S	\$6.95	47	A	4620	1571	light	20	9	✓	1/2	abrasive gate back
Quicksilver	AD	B	\$7.95	47	A	4620	1571	light	24	9	✓	1/2	abrasive gate back
Big Easy	AD	S	\$7.95	52	A	5169	2018	light	23	9.5	✓	1/2	abrasive gate back; deep thumb well; large
Big Easy	AD	B	\$8.25	52	A	5169	2018	light	26	9.5	✓	1/2	abrasive gate back; deep thumb well; large
Blue Water													
Catalyst 11mm Oval	O	S	\$5.00	62	N	4400	1500	medium	17	9.5	✓	1/2	abrasive gate back; inexpensive
Catalyst 11mm D	D	S	\$5.00	63	A	6600	1850	medium	17	9.5	✓	1/2	abrasive gate back; inexpensive
Catalyst 10mm Lite	AD	S	\$5.75	49	N	4620	1350	medium	22	8	✓	1/2	abrasive gate back; inexpensive; deep thumb well
Climb High/Contat													
11mm Dogleg	AD	B	\$9.85	57	G	5000	2200	light	23	11	✓	1/2	abrasive gate back; high-gate-open strength
Clog													
10mm Dogleg	AD	B	\$9.20	50	G	5291	1540	stiff	25	9		B	abrasive gate back; thin area below gate
11mm Offset	AD	S	\$12.95	70	B	6172	1760	stiff	22	9.5		B	abrasive gate back; large; deep thumb well
DMM													
Mamba	DS	B	\$15.80	58	S	5500	2200	light	29	8.5	✓	B	abrasive gate back; reslinging \$2.50; deep thumb well
Lynx 10mm D	AD	S	\$9.95	51	G	5280	1760	medium	18	9		B	abrasive gate back
Lynx Offset D	AD	S	\$14.95	65	G	5940	2200	medium	22	10		B	abrasive gate back; high open strength; deep thumb well
Truklip	AD	B	13.15	49	S	5500	1540	medium	28	9		B	abrasive gate back; deep thumb well

Notes on the charts: 1) O – oval; D – D-shaped; AD – asymmetrical D; DS – asymmetrical D with sling attached 2) S – straight; B – bent or dogleg 3) Weights listed in grams
4) B – bright finish; A – anodization optional; S – anodization standard; G – gate only anodized 5) Strengths listed in pounds 6) Gate clearance and rope-arm diameter listed in millimeters
7) B – batch tested; 1/2 – individually tested to 50% of rated strength; 2/3 – individually tested to 66% of rated strength; 3/4 – individually tested to 75% of rated strength; NT – not tested

Strength. As mentioned earlier you'll probably never break any carabiner. Still, you can stack the odds in your favor even more by using carabiners that meet UIAA standards. Recent UIAA regulations (see update on page 107) stipulate that carabiners must hold 4400 pounds along their major (end-to-end) axis with the gate closed, and 1540 pounds with the gate open. All carabiners sold in Europe must be UIAA certified; those sold in the United States need not, although most meet or exceed UIAA standards. Our chart lists major-axis strengths (supplied by the manufacturer) with the gate closed (*Strength closed*) and open (*Strength open*).

How reliable are the listed strengths? We randomly tested a few carabiners from each manufacturer and found that all exceeded their rated strengths, some by a large margin.

Gate. The gate shape and spring determine how easy a carabiner is to clip, and

equally important, how easy it is for the rope to unclip itself.

Gates can be either straight or bent (dogleg). Straight gates are applicable to any climbing situation, so most climbers have dozens of these while owning only a handful of bent gates, which are less versatile. (Our charts list gate shape under *Gate*.)

Bent-gate carabiners are easier to clip into than straight-gate ones, making them the preferred carabiner for sport climbing. But bent-gate carabiners also make it easier for the rope to unclip itself, a problem compounded when the carabiner isn't free to rotate, such as when it's clipped directly to a piton or bolt. For that reason use bent-gates only on the bottom (rope clip) end of quickdraws and never use them on critical points of protection (i.e. first bolts and belay anchors). Even then be certain you clip the rope so it won't tend to track back across the gate (Figure 5), a good habit with any style carabiner. Watch out when lowering off or working a climb

with the rope clipped overhead — your side of the rope can clip back through tensioned quickdraws that are directly in line with you, effectively unclipping you from those pieces.

A light-tension gate spring makes for easy opening of the gate. Why not, then, always get the lightest gate springs? Carabiners with light springs tend to stick

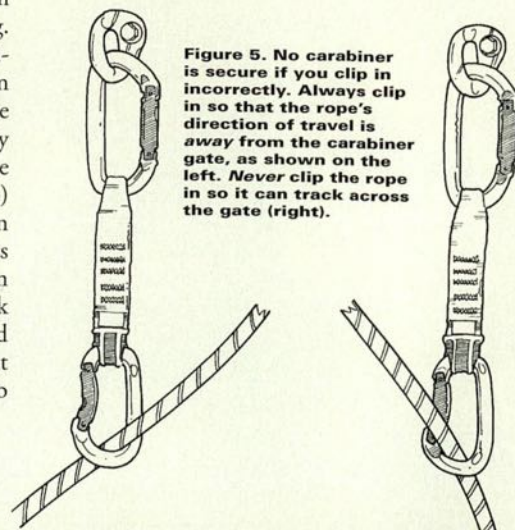


Figure 5. No carabiner is secure if you clip in incorrectly. Always clip in so that the rope's direction of travel is away from the carabiner gate, as shown on the left. Never clip the rope in so it can track across the gate (right).

Carabiners

HB

Shape (1)	Gate (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Gate stiffness	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted	Tested (7)	Comments
AD	B	\$11.25	51	G	5291	1980	medium	25	10	✓	B	abrasive gate back
AD	S	\$10.85	47	G	5291	1980	medium	20	10	✓	B	abrasive gate back
DS	S	\$15.40	54	G	5291	1980	medium	25	10		B	abrasive gate back; reslinging \$1.00

Kong Bonaiti

Shape (1)	Gate (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Gate stiffness	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted	Tested (7)	Comments
AD	S	\$7.95	50	A	4950	1462	stiff	18	9.5	✓	2/3	keylock gate
AD	B	\$7.95	50	A	4950	1462	stiff	23	9.5	✓	2/3	keylock gate
D	S	\$5.95	42	A	4950	1350	stiff	19	8.5	✓	2/3	abrasive gate back
D	B	\$7.95	42	S	4950	1350	stiff	25	8.5	✓	2/3	abrasive gate back
Big D	AD	\$9.95	67	A	5850	1462	stiff	26	11	✓	2/3	keylock gate; large; deep thumb well
Diagonal	D	\$9.95	63	S	6750	1800	stiff	25	10	✓	2/3	gate opens diagonally; gate sticks open
Standard D	D	\$6.60	63	A	6750	1800	stiff	16	10	✓	2/3	abrasive gate back
Helium	AD	\$7.95	32	A	4500	1350	medium	17	7.5		2/3	keylock gate; thin area on rope arm
Helium	AD	\$8.95	35	S	4500	1350	light	25	8.5		2/3	abrasive gate back; thin area on rope arm
Ace	AD	\$6.95	52	A	4950	1462	stiff	27	10	✓	2/3	abrasive gate back; deep thumb well
Ace	AD	\$5.95	52	A	4950	1462	stiff	23	10	✓	2/3	abrasive gate back; inexpensive; deep thumb well
Oval	O	\$6.60	62	B	4950	1462	stiff	17	11	✓	2/3	keylock gate

Lowe/Camp

Shape (1)	Gate (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Gate stiffness	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted	Tested (7)	Comments
33	AD	\$9.95	33	G	4840	1320	medium	24	8		3/4	abrasive gate back; thin edge on rope arm
33	AD	\$9.95	33	G	4840	1320	stiff	22	8		3/4	abrasive gate back; thin edge on rope arm
D-42	AD	\$6.95	41	G	4840	1320	medium	25	8		3/4	abrasive gate back; thin edge on rope arm
D-42	AD	\$6.50	41	G	4400	1320	stiff	21	8		3/4	abrasive gate back; thin edge on rope arm
D-49	AD	\$7.50	51	G	5060	1540	medium	23	9	✓	3/4	abrasive gate back
D-49	AD	\$7.95	51	G	5060	1540	medium	28	9	✓	3/4	abrasive gate back; deep thumb well

open when they get dirty or corroded. Also, light-spring gates are more likely to get knocked open if the carabiner slaps against the rock, as can happen when it is clipped to a runner, which is snapped about by the rope as it pulls taut and relaxes during a fall.

Since the gate-open strength of a carabiner is typically about 75 percent lower than its gate-closed strength (some will hold as little as 1200 pounds, a force easily attained in short falls), it's imperative that the gate stay shut. Don't sweat it, though, your chances of having a carabiner gate, even one with a light spring, swinging open on its own are slim. Worry instead about keeping the gate clear of webbing and equipment, which can jam the gate open (obstructed gates are a frequent cause of carabiner failure), and make sure the gate faces away from the rock.

To help keep gates closed you can use carabiners with stiff- or medium-resistance gates — several manufacturers use stiff springs expressly for that reason — but bear in mind that those carabiners will be slightly harder to operate (See *Gate*

stiffness in the charts.) Better yet, choose a carabiner with a high gate-open strength such as the Petzl Spirit.

Wider gate openings make racking gear easier, and, if you clip into carabiners by pushing the rope in with your thumb, are less likely to pin your finger. Note, though, that for clips, the thumb well (the space below and behind the gate) also needs to be deep enough to allow passage of your finger. (See *Clearance* in the charts for gate-opening dimensions.)

Kong-Bonaiti makes a D carabiner, the Diagonal, with a gate that swings to the side to give you more room inside for ropes and gear. It also is designed to stick open. This feature makes stick clipping bolts easy, but it is too dangerous for other uses.

At the gate end opposite the hinge most carabiners have a notch and rivet pin that, besides forming a gate stop, clasp together when you load the carabiner. The exception is the patented "keylock" gate system available on a few Petzl, Kong, Salewa, and Stuba carabiners. Keylock carabiners have male and female couplings milled into the carabiner body and gate (Figure 6).

This design has several advantages over the notch and pin. First, keylocks are smoother around the gate, so they are easier on your rope. Second, there's no rivet pin in the opening end, so there's also no potential for stress fracturing. (Stress fractures are tiny cracks that can develop around press-fitted rivets.) And finally, keylocks slip through webbing, wired nuts, and bolt hangers with less snagging. We couldn't find any disadvantage to keylock carabiners (see *Comments* in the charts).

Being able to glance at a carabiner and

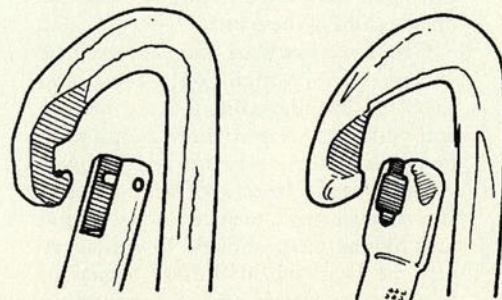


Figure 6. Notch-and-rivet gate (left) and keylock gate.

Carabiners

	Shape (1)	Gate (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Gate stiffness	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted	Tested (7)	Comments
Omega Pacific													
Standard Oval	O	S	\$4.50	62	A	4400	1500	medium	17	11	✓	1/2	inexpensive
Standard D	D	S	\$4.50	63	A	6600	1850	medium	17	11	✓	1/2	Inexpensive
Omegalite 2	AD	S	\$5.25	49	A	4840	1350	medium	22	8	✓	1/2	inexpensive; deep thumb well
Omegalite 2	AD	B	\$5.50	50	A	4840	1350	medium	26	8	✓	1/2	inexpensive; deep thumb well
Petzl													
Spirit	AD	S	\$10.95	50	G	5400	2200	medium	19	9	✓	1/2	keylock gate; high gate-open strength; deep thumb well
Spirit	AD	B	\$11.50	50	G	5400	2200	medium	22	9	✓	1/2	keylock gate; high gate-open strength; deep thumb well
REI													
Gold Oval	O	S	\$5.75	64	G	4800	1452	stiff	20	8.5	✓	T	abrasive gate back; square area on upper arm; inexpensive
Gold D	D	S	\$5.75	52	G/A	4780	1254	stiff	20	8.5	✓	T	abrasive gate back; square area on upper arm; inexpensive
Salewa													
Flash	AD	B	\$9.20	50	S	4840	1430	stiff	23	9.5	✓	2/3	keylock gate
Flash	AD	S	\$6.70	50	A	4840	1430	stiff	19	9.5	✓	2/3	keylock gate
Hit	AD	S	\$6.70	52	A	4840	1430	stiff	24	10	✓	2/3	abrasive gate back; deep thumb well
SMC													
Mountain D	AD	S	\$7.50	68	A	6700	N/A	medium	24	10	✓	B	abrasive gate back; large; deep thumb well
Lightweight D	AD	S	\$6.90	49	A	4800	N/A	stiff	19	8.5	✓	B	abrasive gate back
Titanium													
DHS-2000	D	S	\$9.00	76	S	5800	N/A	x-stiff	18	10	✓	N/T	blind gate; more durable than aluminum; lighter than steel
Wild Country													
MicroLite 10	AD	S	\$8.50	50	G	5280	1540	stiff	22	9		B	abrasive gate back
MicroLite 10b	AD	B	\$8.50	50	G	5280	1540	stiff	28	9		B	abrasive gate back
Macro 10	AD	S	\$8.95	53	G	5060	1540	stiff	25	9		B	abrasive gate back; deep thumb well
Macro 10b	AD	B	\$8.95	53	G	5060	1540	stiff	29	9		B	abrasive gate back; deep thumb well

Notes on the chart: 1) O – oval; D – D-shaped; AD – asymmetrical D; DS – asymmetrical D with sling attached 2) S – straight; B – bent or dogleg 3) Weights listed in grams
4) B – bright finish; A – anodization optional; S – anodization standard; G – gate only anodized 5) Strengths listed in pounds 6) Gate clearance and rope-arm diameter listed in millimeters
7) B – batch tested; 1/2 – individually tested to 50% of rated strength; 2/3 – individually tested to 66% of rated strength; 3/4 – individually tested to 75% of rated strength; NT – not tested;
T – individually tested, no figure given

immediately tell which end of the gate opens helps you clip in quicker, so most carabiners have a protruding latch on the opening end of the frame.

Carabiners without this feature have “blind” gates, which could cause you to miss a clip unless you mark the opening end with tape. If you climb routes with bent pitons or homemade bolt hangers you may need a handful of blind-gates to clip through small-diameter holes. (Good luck finding them, though. In our survey only the Titanium DHS-2000, a carabiner that takes Herculean hand strength to open, has a blind gate.)

Comments. We didn’t find a single carabiner we wouldn’t use. But when we go into a climbing shop and fork over hard cash, there are certain ones we prefer.

Nearly everyone knows that sharp rock or improper rope management and care can shred a climbing rope. But do you realize that even as you’re pampering your rope — keeping it out of the dirt, and using runners or padding to protect it from edges — your carabiners can be surreptitiously tearing it apart. That’s why we pass on any carabiner that feels sharp along its inside radius. We also pay particular attention to the backside of gates where

the cut-out for the gate pin, the gate and frame juncture, and the area where the notch flattens out, are frequently abrasive.

After that we check the carabiner’s diameter. Here we look at the carabiner arm where the rope will run (with asymmetrical Ds and HMS carabiners this is the longer curve; ovals and Ds are the same on both ends) to make sure it’s nice and fat. Remember, the thicker the carabiner, the kinder it will be to your rope. (To find rope-arm diameters, see chart under *Diameter*.) We check the rest of the body for thin areas, too. Some carabiners are plenty thick around the lower arm, but

UIAA update

In May 1991 the UIAA set new standards for ropes and carabiners.

UIAA-approved carabiners must now hold a minimum of 20kN along their long axis with the gate closed and 7Kn with the gate open.

The second development was the passing of "twin" rope standards. (Twin ropes are designed to be used together as one rope and must never be clipped apart as you can with double ropes.) Twin ropes are to be tested together using the same 80kg mass used for single ropes, and must sustain 12 test falls without failure (for comparison single ropes must withstand five falls). Twin ropes will likely be appearing in the U.S. soon. Unfortunately these ropes, marked with the term *TWIN* on the end tape, can be easily and dangerously confused with double ropes.

Virtually all American climbers insist on UIAA-certified ropes, but don't look for the UIAA stamp on other gear. Most American-made hardware would probably pass UIAA tests, but U.S. manufacturers don't submit them because testing is expensive and climbers in this country don't seem to care. In Europe, as of July 1992, under the new Community European Norm (CEN) requirements, climbing equipment may not be legally sold without having met national or international standards based on the UIAA label. American manufacturers wishing to sell in Europe will have to seek certification. The Climbing Sports Group of the Outdoor Recreation Coalition of America has spent a lot of time on this issue, particularly since the level of "in-house" quality control, which will be required under the new CEN standards, has not yet been defined, but under the most restrictive proposals could be prohibitively expensive.

In the meantime, if American climbers ask for equipment meeting UIAA standards, we will see more U.S. manufacturers seeking certification for their products, most of which will probably pass with ease.

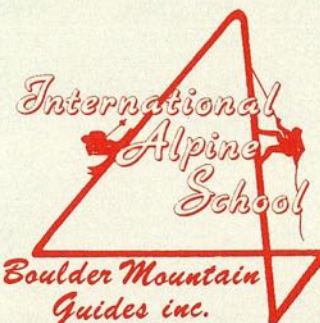
— Jeffrey T. Lea

American Alpine Club UIAA delegate

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Locking Carabiners

	Shape (1)	Gate lock (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted (6)	Tested (7)	Comments
Black Diamond												
Superlock	AD	A	\$19.95	87	A	6292	2023	20	9.5	✓	1/2	double lock; large; jams with dirt/ice
Blue Water												
Locking Steel	AD	S	\$13.85	208	Z	9020	N/A	24	11	✓	1/2	hidden threads; large
Cassin												
HMS	HMS	S	\$11.95	74	B	4950	1350	24	11		2/3	hidden threads; large
HMS Hardcoat	HMS	S	\$14.95	74	S	4950	1350	24	11		2/3	hidden threads; large; durability coating
Ace	HMS	S	\$9.95	88	B	4950	2250	23	11.5	✓	2/3	hidden threads; large
Charlet Moser												
Triangular	AD	ST	\$15.40	86	S	5500	2420	20	12	✓	T	secure
Climb High/Contat												
Bayonett	AD	ST	\$13.30	52	S	5000	1980	19	10.5		1/2	small; secure
Clog												
11mm Twistlock	AD	A	\$18.25	80	B	6172	1760	19	9.5		B	sharp notch on lock; jams with dirt/ice
11mm Screwgate	AD	S	\$14.95	76	B	6172	1760	21	9.5	✓	B	hidden threads
HMS Twistlock	HMS	A	\$18.30	100	B	4850	1320	20	12		B	large; jams with dirt/ice
HMS Screwgate	HMS	S	\$16.00	95	B	4850	1320	21	12	✓	B	hidden threads; large
DMM												
HMS Kwiklock	HMS	A	\$22.95	92	G	5500	1540	22	11.5		B	jams with dirt/ice; large
HMS Nylongate	HMS	A	\$21.50	88	G	5500	1540	21	11.5		B	jams with dirt/ice; large; plastic high-profile sleeve unlocks easily
HMS Screwgate	HMS	S	\$17.50	86	G	5500	1540	23	11.5		B	hidden threads; large
Lynx Kwiklock Aluminum	AD	A	\$22.95	78	G	5940	2200	18	10		B	jams with dirt/ice
Lynx Kwiklock Nylon	AD	A	\$21.75	74	G	5940	2200	18	10		B	jams with dirt/ice; plastic high-profile sleeve unlocks easily
HB												
11mm Autolock	AD	A	\$18.25	81	B	6613	2200	19	9.5	✓	B	sharp gate corner; jams with dirt/ice
11mm Screwgate	AD	S	\$14.95	76	B	6613	2200	19	9.5		B	sharp gate corner; hidden threads
HMS Autolock	HMS	A	\$18.30	96	B	5219	1760	23	12		B	sharp gate corner; large; jams with dirt/ice
HMS Screwgate	HMS	S	\$16.00	91	B	5219	1760	23	12		B	sharp gate corner; large; hidden threads
Kong Bonatti												
Big D	AD	S	\$9.95	71	A	5850	1440	22	11	✓	2/3	keylock gate; hidden threads; large
Hyper	D	S	9.95	47	S	4950	1350	15	8.5	✓	2/3	hidden threads
Oval	O	S	7.95	66	B	4950	1462	15	11	✓	2/3	keylock gate; hidden threads
Standard D	D	S	7.95	69	A	6750	2250	14	10.5	✓	2/3	hidden threads
Ultra	AD	S	8.65	52	B	4950	1462	16	10	✓	2/3	hidden threads; small
HMS	HMS	S	7.95	60	B	4950	1462	19	9.5	✓	2/3	hidden threads; large

Locking Carabiners

Maillon Rapide

Shape (1)	Gate lock (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted (7)	Comments
1/2-inch link	O SB	\$3.00	229	Z	8000+	N/A	14	12	-	N/A steel; inexpensive; for permanent attachment only
3/8-inch link	O SB	\$2.00	102	Z	8000+	N/A	12	9.5	-	N/A steel; inexpensive; for permanent attachment only

Omega Pacific

Shape (1)	Gate lock (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted (7)	Comments
Large D Steel	D S	\$16.60	288	Z/A	9020	N/A	26	12.5	✓	1/2 hidden threads; large; available in aluminum
1/2-inch D Steel	AD S	\$13.25	271	Z/A	9020	N/A	23	12.5	✓	1/2 hidden threads; large; available in aluminum
7/16-inch D Steel	AD S	\$13.85	208	Z/A	9020	N/A	24	11	✓	1/2 hidden threads; large
Locking D	D S	\$6.25	68	A	6600	1850	14	11	✓	1/2 hidden threads
1/2-inch Modified D	AD S	\$13.00	99	A	5940	2300	22	12.5	✓	1/2 hidden threads

Salewa

Shape (1)	Gate lock (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted (7)	Comments
Flash Block	AD A	\$7.50	54	B	4840	1430	16	9	✓	2/3 keylock gate; small; can clip and lock on lead

SMC

Shape (1)	Gate lock (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted (7)	Comments
Locking D	AD S	\$10.00	74	A	6300	N/A	20	10	✓	B hidden threads
Light Alloy Steel	AD S	20.85	169	NK/Z	10000	N/A	23	8.5	✓	B hidden threads; large; available in stainless steel (\$27.95)

Stubai

Shape (1)	Gate lock (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted (7)	Comments
Rescue D	D S	\$17.95	311	Z	10000	N/A	42	13	✓	B sharp gate and threads; extra large
Steel Oval	O S	\$12.10	140	Z	3520	N/A	18	10	✓	B sharp gate and threads
Steel D	AD S	\$16.70	230	Z	7040	N/A	25	12	✓	B sharp gate and threads
Super Steel 5000	AD S	\$21.75	210	C	11000	N/A	16	11	✓	B sharp gate and threads; chrome steel

Titanium

Shape (1)	Gate lock (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted (7)	Comments
DHS-3000	D ST	\$13.00	83	S	6800	N/A	15	10	✓	NT secure; more durable than aluminum; lighter than steel

Wild Country

Shape (1)	Gate lock (2)	Price	Weight (3)	Finish (4)	Strength closed (5)	Strength open (5)	Clearance (6)	Diameter (6)	Opens weighted (7)	Comments
Macro Screwgate	AD S	\$11.95	63	B	5060	1540	19	9	✓	B hidden threads

Notes on the charts: 1) O – oval; D – D-shaped; AD – asymmetrical D; H – HMS style 2) S – screw; A – automatic; ST – spring-loaded twist lock; SB – screw bolt
 3) Weights listed in grams 4) B – bright finish; A – anodization optional; S – anodization standard; G – gate only anodized; Z – zinc plated; C – chrome plated; N – nickel plated
 5) Strengths listed in pounds 6) Gate clearance and rope-arm diameter are listed in millimeters 7) B – batch tested; 1/2 – individually tested to 50% of rated strength;
 2/3 – individually tested to 66% of rated strength; 3/4 – individually tested to 75% of rated strength; NT – not tested; T – individually tested, no figure given; N/A – information not available.

are noticeably skinnier next to the gate.

You frequently need to open a carabiner while hanging on it, so we weed out any carabiner that won't open under body weight. To test for this, we loaded each carabiner with 200 pounds, the equivalent of an average-weight climber plus aid rack, then tried to open the gate. (See *Opens weighted* column in charts).

Finally, we insist on carabiners with high gate-open strength, and only buy those that are tested at the factory. Some manufacturers pull each carabiner to a specified percentage (usually 50 or 75 percent) of its rated strength, a test that doesn't harm the carabiner and guarantees a reliable product. Other manufacturers batch test by breaking several carabiners

out of each production run. Some don't test at all. (See chart under *Tested* for manufacturers' testing methods.)

Locking carabiners

There are times, like when belaying, rappelling, or at the first piece of protection on a route, when a carabiner *must* stay closed. That's when you should use a locking carabiner.

Locking carabiners are mostly large so you can clip them through your leg loops and swami (or belay/rappel loop if your harness has one) and still have room for a belay or rappel device, or a Munter hitch (if it's an HMS carabiner). Smaller locking carabiners work for belaying or rappelling with a suitable device if clipped to a

belay/rappel loop, but they won't let a Munter hitch rotate, and get cramped when clipped around your swami and leg loops. The best use for small locking carabiners is for clipping to critical anchors.

Excluding the Maillon Rapide bolt-gate, which you can't operate while on lead, there are three basic types of carabiner locking systems: screw-gate, automatic, and spring-loaded twist. Screw-gate carabiners are the most trouble-free, working well in dirty or freezing conditions that can jam spring-loaded and automatic-locking carabiners. Screw-gate drawbacks include their ability to unlock themselves when your back is turned, or almost as bad, their tendency to clamp down so tightly you need pliers to loosen them. All

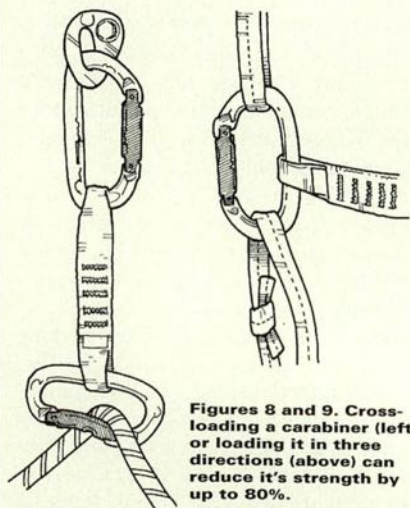
Carabiner use and care

A carabiner's age is inconsequential compared to the amount of wear it has on it. Don't fret about how old your carabiners are; concern yourself instead with the amount of abuse they've sustained. Retire a carabiner immediately if you drop it off a climb — throw it away even if it appears undamaged, for it could have fractures too minute to detect with the naked eye. Ditto if you hammer on a carabiner. And don't use "found" carabiners, especially ones discovered at the bottom of cliffs. (Use your trashed carabiners as "cleaner biners" for removing pitons; make sure you mark them so you don't mix them up with your good ones.)

Check your carabiners every time you climb. That goes double if you hang on bolts. Retire any grooved, gouged, nicked, cracked, or corroded carabiners. Besides making the carabiner weaker, these signs of wear will abrade your rope.

Clean sticking gates by washing the carabiners in kerosene, wiping them dry, and then spraying them with a silicone spay. Don't zap them with oil or WD 40 as both will attract grit.

There isn't a lot to carabiners, but safely using them isn't as simple as open and shut. Anticipate your direction of travel before clipping into a placement, and orient the carabiner so the rope runs straight through it and won't double back across the gate (Figure 5). This is crucial, especially if you are using bent-gate carabiners. (Again, only use bent-gates on the rope-clip end of slings and quickdraws.)



Figures 8 and 9. Cross-loading a carabiner (left) or loading it in three directions (above) can reduce its strength by up to 80%.

To reduce the chances of the gate bumping the rock and opening make sure the gate faces out and away from the rock. Use a suitable length runner to prevent a carabiner from torquing over an edge (Figure 7), and tape or otherwise secure your carabiners in place on quickdraws to insure they don't flip upside down or sideways. Never allow a carabiner to be crossloaded (Figure 8) and don't place a carabiner so it can be pulled in three directions (Figure 9);

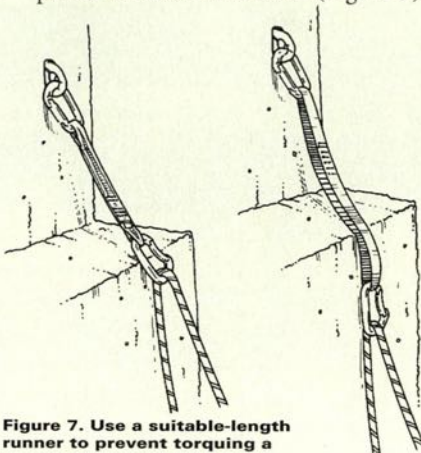


Figure 7. Use a suitable-length runner to prevent torquing a carabiner over an edge.

both situations can cut carabiner strength by as much as 80 percent.

Carabiners are also weaker when clipped through wide webbing, which will spread more of the load onto the gate; use 9/16- or 11/16-inch webbing instead. Additionally, don't clip the rope to a carabiner that is clipped directly to a fixed piton or bolt — the carabiner's inability to swivel increases the chances of the rope unclipping itself. Use a runner (or quickdraw) with another carabiner instead.

When it is imperative that the rope not come out, such as when belaying, jumaring, rappelling, and on the first point of protection of a climb, use a locking carabiner. If you don't have enough locking carabiners, use two nonlocking ones with the gates reversed. Make sure your self-locking carabiners are working properly; clean them or throw them away if the locking action is sluggish.

Match your carabiners to their use. If you intend on falling a lot, use big, thick carabiners. Use ultralights only when weight is critical; extreme sport or alpine climbing for example. And if you are going to dog a route all season, use steel carabiners at the bolt hangers.

Carabiner manufacturers and distributors

Black Diamond

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(801) 278-5533

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(800) 366-2666

Charlet Moser

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Shelburne, VT 05482
(802) 985-5056

DMM, Stubai (steel only)

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(404) 834-7515

Lowe/Camp

Lowe Alpine Systems
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Broomfield, CO 80038
(303) 465-3706

Omega Pacific

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Kirkland, WA 98033
(206) 822-9020

Petzl

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Recreational Equipment, Inc.

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Salewa/Kong

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Timepeace Titanium
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Wild Country U.S.A.

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aluminum screwgate carabiners we found have hidden threads, which are much preferred over the rope-rasping exposed-thread types found on many locking steel carabiners.

Automatic-locking carabiners have a spring mechanism that locks the gate for you. These are the most convenient locking carabiners, but you must pay close attention when using them as they can also unlock themselves if the locking collar scrapes against the rock or is rotated by the rope. The Black Diamond Superlock solves this problem by giving you the option of manually double-locking the collar once the automatic lock has engaged. Of the automatic-locking carabiners we tested the DMM nylon-gated ones, having a high-profile locking sleeve, were the easiest to accidentally unlock.

Kong-Salewa makes a small, self-locking carabiner, the Flash Block that you can (after some practice) clip in to quickly while on lead. Don't use this carabiner for belaying or rappelling, though: it is too small, unlocks easily, jams with dirt, and the plastic locking collar can break.

The Titanium D HS-3000 and the Climb High Bayonet offer spring-loaded locking with a twist. These two carabiners differ from the self-locking ones in that they must be manually locked by rotating the gate collar via a tricky push or pull and twist combination. However, the difficulty in locking these carabiners makes it almost impossible for them to accidentally unlock.

The Bayonet and HS-3000 are too small for belaying and rappelling. Use them instead for clipping to critical anchors and for aid climbing when you need the security of a locking carabiner (like clipping shock-absorbing runners), but don't want the bulk and weight of a full-size locker.

For maximum security clip to first points of protection with the Cassin Express Sling (\$8.95). The Express sling is a solid metal ring with an attached sewn sling. To use you thread the rope through the ring prior to tying in and clip a carabiner (preferably a locking one) to the sling. You carry the carabiner on a gear loop as usual. Clipping to protection is simple: you get the carabiner off the loop and clip in. Since the rope is already through the ring, you don't have to clip it in, and even better, it is impossible for the rope to come out.

Corrections: In *Climbing* no. 132, the rock shoe chart on page 102 mistakenly lists the *Boreal Classic* as both lined and unlined; it is lined. Also, since this review was published the price of the *Boreal Ballet* has dropped from \$150 to \$140.

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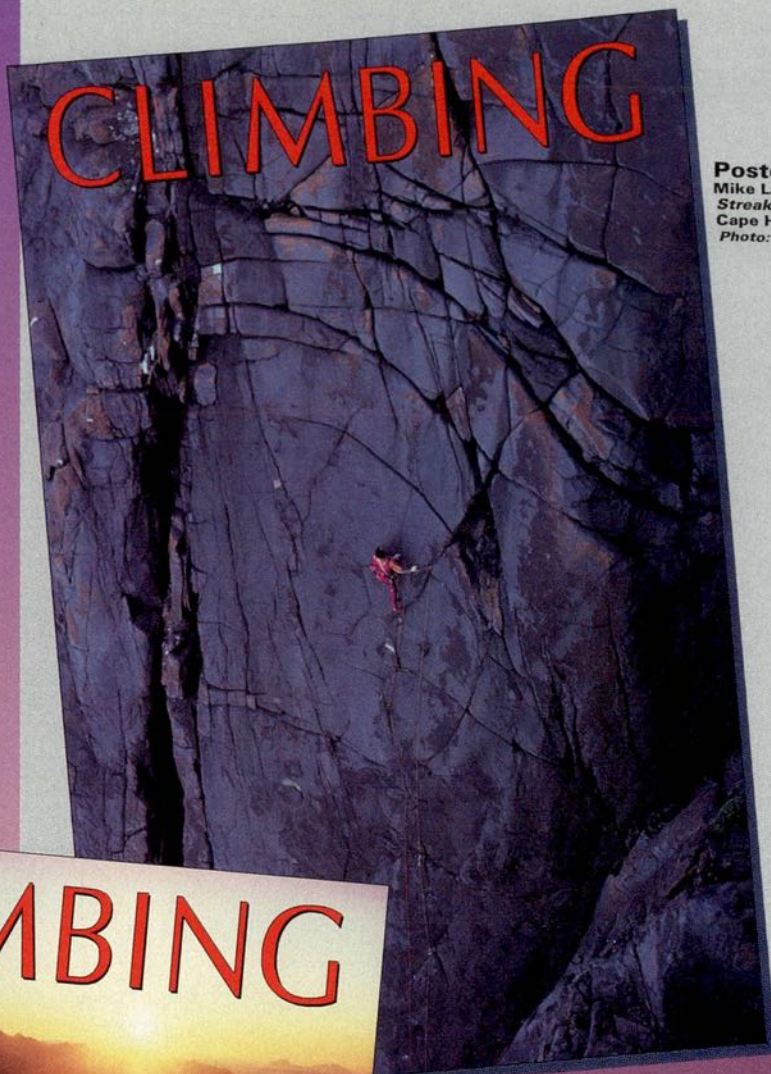
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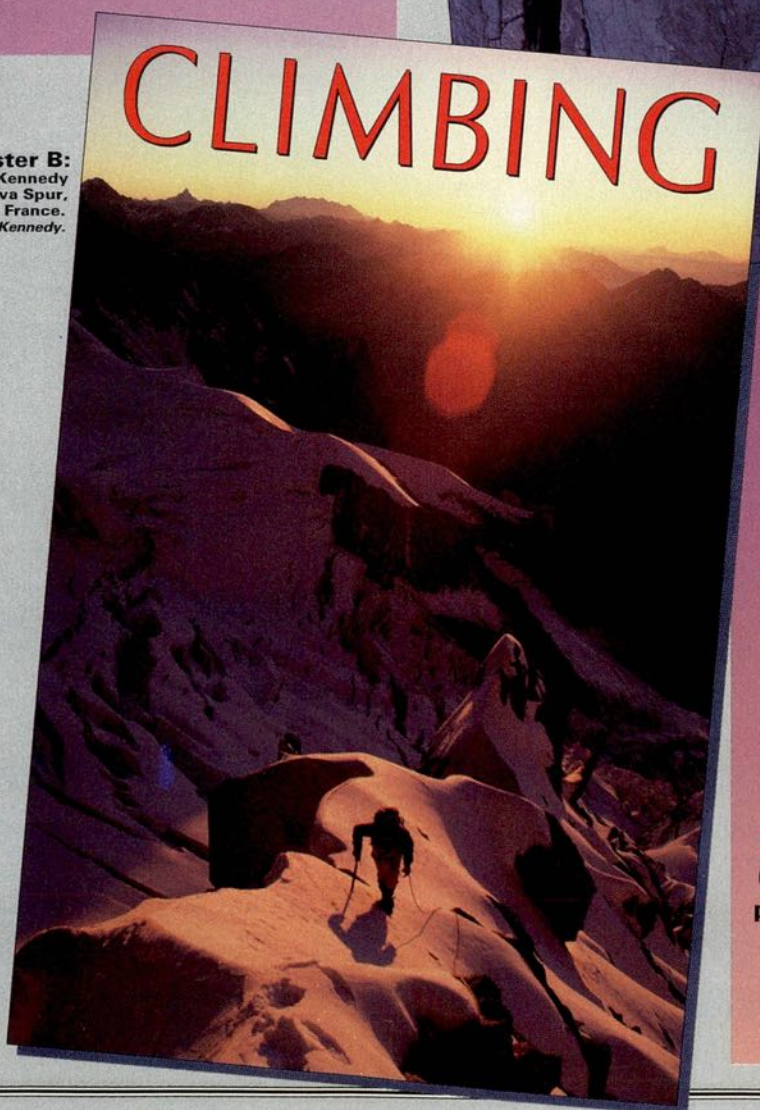
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climbers trained hard to win. Even though many of the best gave up doing hard routes to devote themselves to competition, other climbers who seldom competed continued to push hard routes. Ben Moon and Wolfgang Gullich applied their great physical strength to their own game, putting up short but extreme power routes.

What went on in France between 1981 and 1986?

In France, there were two rival groups, the climbers from the South: *les Sudistes*, such as Patrick Edlinger and Patrick Berhault, and the Parisians, which included me, the LeMenestrel brothers, Laurent Jacob, Alain Ghersen, and others. The Parisians climbed all the time, bouldering at Fontainebleau, and traveling to the South during vacations. The intense competition to put up new routes among this group of people who climbed together all the time pushed difficulty up a letter grade every six months or year. With no psychological barriers to impede our progress, our training in the gym, our bouldering at Fontainebleau, and our extensive rock time working routes allowed us to catch up with people elsewhere in the world, and to put up even harder routes.

Were you explicitly seeking to do the hardest routes in the world?

At the beginning, we were like anyone else. We had seen the climbing magazines, and were aware of hard routes in the United States, England, and elsewhere. So we traveled to these places to see them for ourselves. In 1984, for example, Antoine LeMenestrel and I went to England together and repeated the hardest route there [*Revelations* (5.13)]. Afterwards, we traveled to Switzerland, Germany, and elsewhere to attempt the hardest routes of the time. We were not alone on our quest for pure difficulty; Gullich was also repeating and putting up hard routes.

You mentioned earlier the advent of climbing competitions, which pushed the sport more into the mainstream.

What effect have the attendant sponsorships had on sport climbing?

Sponsorships enable climbers to train full-time and become better climbers. The rapid development of modern sport climbing in France would not have been possible without sponsorship. The efforts of corporate sponsors to promote the sport have contributed significantly to the progression of difficulty.

What is your view on the difference between competition climbing and climbing at the crags?

Competition climbing is almost a different sport because it takes a completely different approach and draws a different group of people. Competition climbing is one-dimensional, setting individuals and nationalities against each other and eliminating the camaraderie that climbers share at the crags. The UIAA is presently trying to copy other sports and push national teams into competing against each other. The people running competitions do not understand the essential transnational experience climbers find at Buoux, Smith Rock, or in the Frankenjura.

While real climbing is totally different from organized sports, competitive climbing is very much like them, reducing climbing to a routine training regimen. At the same time, it draws conformists with personalities and qualities different from the marginal climbers of just five years ago. They are ordinary careerists who consider climbing just as they would soccer, baseball, or track. They are not people whose fascination with climbing leads them to build their lives around it. To me, climbing is above all else a lifestyle, regardless of whether you climb 5.14 or not. At any grade, the climbing experience is a passion.

How would you compare the experiences of climbing 5.14 to those found on 5.11?

A 5.14 climber's years of experience enable him to push closer to his limits. The 5.14 climber has reached a more advanced stage precisely because he has put in more effort and more soul-searching — from which he draws

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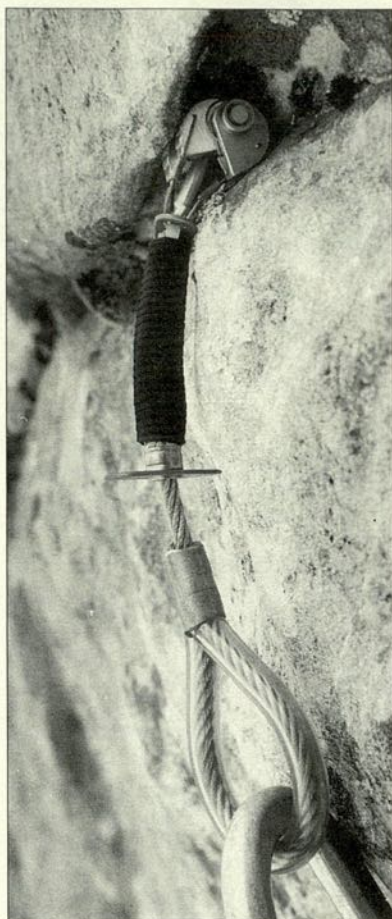
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strength. It is like the Buddhist search for enlightenment. In climbing, the further you push yourself, the stronger the psychic rewards.

When will 5.14d happen?

There are now several routes graded 5.14c. But it will take some time to confirm and consolidate 5.14c, just as 5.13d was consolidated, with hard, easy, and medium-difficulty routes in the grade. We should see a true 5.14d within two or three years. Today, there may be five or six climbers capable of

"The best way to prevent progress is keep a line to yourself for two or three years. If a climber is actively working a route, people should respect that. But if the route is idle, it is fair game for anyone."

5.14d because their training for competitions puts them in top physical shape. With a few exceptions, like Didier Raboutou and me, they are too busy training to spend time working really hard routes on natural rock. Even though I compete, I remain highly motivated for hard routes; I will never give up hard routes for the sake of competition.

Is the progression of grades going to continue after 5.14d?

In the foreseeable future, climbers will reach higher levels of difficulty because the new generation climbs far better than mine did at their age. Didier Raboutou and I are 30 years old and Wolfgang Gullich is 32. This older generation climbed a long time to gain the experience that allowed us to break into mid-range 5.14s.

In France and in Europe, young climbers on-sight 5.13b at age 16, and redpoint 5.14b after work at 17 or 18. If their progress parallels that of my generation, young climbers who do 5.14b at 18 will certainly do 5.15b by 25. They will build their power at an early age — between 18 and 22 — when they gain strength fastest. After they reach tremendous power levels, they will acquire the experience needed to approach hard routes effectively. I am convinced that they will climb routes

harder than my generation can. In sport climbing you can be on top for a limited time, but five or 10 years later many stronger climbers will inevitably emerge. You must not fear evolution or progress for it is a fact of life.

So you believe that the current level of difficulty is nowhere near human physical limits?

Right. If you look at other sports, for example track, climbers are nowhere near reaching a degree of

physical perfection comparable to prototypically perfect athletes like Carl Lewis. Sport climbing is young, only about 15 years old. Track and field is more than 50 years old. It would be unrealistic to expect sport climbing to reach the limits of human potential after a mere 15 years. The limits are a long way off.

What advice do you have for climbers interested in establishing hard routes?

The best way to start is by repeating other climbers' hard routes in order to find out what consensus difficulty is and how to approach hard routes. When you work on a first ascent, the tendency is to mystify the climb and think that it is very hard. You fail to realize that when someone else tries the route, they will find the moves straightforward. This was the mistake that I made with *Les Specialistes* and Antoine LeMenestrel made with *Ravages*.

Instead of keeping people off your first ascent, it is really good to let some friends try the moves, but not link them all and take the first ascent. They can make sure you have the best sequences, and maybe find some tricks to get past sections. Second opinions put a route's difficulty in perspective, and help you realize that the route feels hard because it is a first ascent, not because you are cranking incredible moves.

Speaking of first ascents, American climbers have a proprietary attitude about their new routes. Does the same attitude prevail in France?

A few years ago, the French had the same attitude that a route belonged to the person who bolted it. I shared this attitude as well. With the advent of power drills, climbers realized that bolting a route requires only a couple of hours on good rock, and perhaps a day on bad rock. People equipped many routes, but at the same time, many foreign climbers and French climbers from other regions were coming to climb in the South of France. Even though a climber might bolt a route and try it, someone would come along and climb any route left idle for as little as a week.

The big turning point occurred when Ben Moon snagged a couple of routes that French climbers were very close to linking. Ben did not ask any locals for their opinions; he just did the routes, establishing two 5.14bs. And now everybody thinks it's great. This kind of pressure to finish new routes pushes difficulty. The best way to prevent progress is keep a line to yourself for two or three years. If a climber is actively working a route, people should respect that. But if the route is idle, it is fair game for anyone. Even if a bit new for the United States, this attitude will spread everywhere within five years, as climbers travel more and the proprietary notion evaporates.

Is this why you are not bothered when people accuse you of stealing routes?

At Smith Rock, I did *I Am a Bad Man* (5.13d) last year for a very simple reason. The route was bolted three years ago and Alan Watts had tried it. By last year, the route had sat idle for two years and Alan was no longer climbing. Was the route to be left unfinished for 10 years? Once a route has been left idle two years after being bolted, it is open to anybody. It is good for someone to keep a route if he is active on it, but after a while, come on.

Training and technique are two essential factors in climbing. How would you define technique?

Climbing technique is the means for each individual to make the best use of his entire body to get through a series of

moves with the least possible expenditure of energy. Technique is often summarized as footwork, but that is a mistake because footwork is only one aspect of technique. The rest is the technique of the knees, the hips, knowing how to pull on holds with the shoulder, not just with the arm and the biceps, not pulling too hard on holds, using just enough effort to hold on, and keeping the feet weighted.

Training for technique is simple: just think "technique" every time you put on your shoes. By keeping technique in mind at all times, trying to minimize the amount of effort, and looking for the best sequences, you become very strong on technique as it becomes second nature.

French climbers have a reputation for good technique. Perhaps the reason is that many start climbing when they are very young, and must develop technique because they have yet to develop strength.

So technique is acquired through practice?

That's right. Four or five years ago I was not climbing very well. Like many climbers today, I was always climbing on one foot and one hand at a time, with the other foot doing nothing to help the move. One day I told myself, "It's over, I want to use my feet better, to use my body better." From then on, I concentrated on using my entire body, and now it is second nature for me to use both feet.

When you climb, do you always use one foot to push your weight onto the other foot?

Yes. It takes a couple of years of actively working on it, but the results are very satisfying. For example, it lets you on-sight routes because it helps you climb well, find good sequences, and conserve energy. Although developing power is satisfying, it is not enough; climbers should focus more on developing technique.

How can a climber find specific techniques to practice?

Watching other climbers is an enormous source of progress in technique because you learn how they position themselves for moves. When working a route with other climbers, notice different ways that climbers of different height, weight, or climbing styles prac-

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tice the moves. Even if you have found a good sequence that works for you, it is very interesting to try another climber's sequence in order to see why it works better for him.

By learning different solutions to movement problems, you can expand your repertoire of techniques. Then when you are climbing on-sight, you see a wider range of options for making moves. I have always watched other climbers, whether at competition or at the crags, and it still remains a source of technical progress for me.

What about training?

Training requires lots of motivation, more than most people think. Just as important as training are the everyday complements to it: eating healthy foods and getting enough sleep. The training itself requires new ideas and imagination, because the worst thing for climbing is repeating the same stale routines. The body just adapts to them, and you do not progress. Lots of variety is the key to successful training. For this reason, many top French climbers train at home on their own personal climbing

walls, boulder all the time, and do some longer routes. All this variety and exposure to different styles of moves trains them for movement.

Although important, power is useful only insofar as it contributes to movement. Some people are physically very strong, but

the whole body because it combines technique with a very strenuous workout. Because you can do a wide variety of moves and sequences in a couple of hours on an artificial wall, a climber can progress much more rapidly indoors than

"I think that drive and mental strength are the factors that distinguish ordinary from extraordinary achievements. In competitions, it is not the physically strongest climbers who win, but rather the mentally strongest."

are much less strong on climbing moves, because they use just one muscle, instead of the whole muscular chain. When you pull on a hold, if the whole rest of the body follows with good technique and the climber is practiced in using the power of the whole body, the movement is more effective and efficient. Training on climbing walls is very good for developing the chain of power through

outdoors, where an equivalent workout requires much more time.

What other factors are important for training?

I train for power and endurance in different periods. Depending on my goals, I vary the mix. Competition climbers mainly try to increase their endurance, but they train some for power as well. Climbers who like hard

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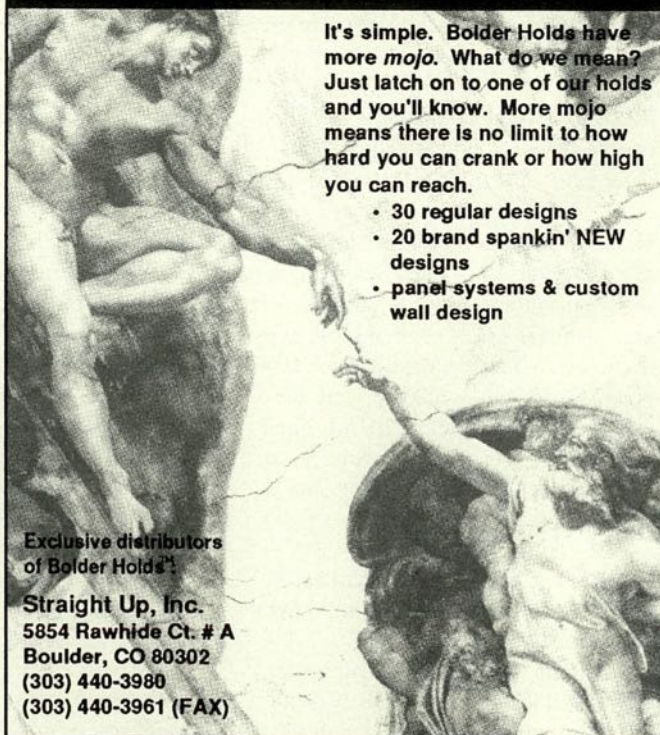
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35-foot routes will emphasize power and explosive strength that lasts for just 30 seconds. Although different from competition training, training for 5.13 still comes down to increasing both power and endurance.

How do you define endurance?

A simple definition of endurance is the ability to recover on small holds after a hard sequence, to survey the next section, and to continue. Endurance is the ability to sustain a level of effort for a long time. It has mainly to do with the fingers and forearms, but technique is an essential factor. A climber with lots of physical endurance but no technique is useless; endurance is in a large part knowing how to position yourself on the holds in ways that conserve strength.

Laps on routes provide good endurance training. But the classic mistake is to do laps very fast with imprecise movements — approximate footwork and approximate hand moves. I used to do lots of sloppy laps and I found them unproductive. Laps only become useful training when you are tired *and* you focus on very careful and precise tech-

nique. By training to maintain technique when tired, you will learn to maintain concentration, avoid haphazard moves, and on-sight routes better.

Is the ability to concentrate when you are tired the essential factor in on-sight climbing?

Sure. François LeGrand is the model for a climber who can maintain concentration when he is tired. He bases all his training on maintaining good technique in extreme situations. If he has become so strong in the last two years, there is nothing mysterious about it, because he has trained extremely hard to perfect his technique. Today, François LeGrand's technique is one of the best worldwide. His technical strength is grounded in a unique wealth of movements accumulated over the years. François watches other climbers, absorbs every type of move they do, and then uses this stock of moves to recognize sequences very quickly and to pull off extraordinary on-sights. This is pretty much the whole recipe for becoming a strong climber: watch other climbers, work on technique, and, in parallel, develop power.

What about psychological training?

You are either psychologically strong or not. It's pretty much innate. People who are driven — whether to put up new routes, win competitions, or just do hard routes — put in much more effort and want to succeed much more. I think that drive and mental strength are the factors that distinguish ordinary from extraordinary achievements. In competitions, it is not the physically strongest climbers who win, but rather the mentally strongest.

What about breathing and power techniques such as those found in Tai Chi?

Antoine LeMenestrel has experimented recently with some interesting breathing techniques. It is incredible how Antoine can climb even when he is out of shape. If you breathe well, you can crank some extremely powerful moves without much trouble. A few months ago, I began checking out these breathing methods, and they work well for me.

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by the routes, especially long hard routes. I like the superb lines and unique climbing there. I also like Smith because I have met some cool people there and I always feel like going back to see my good friends. The enjoyable atmosphere at Smith is almost as important to me as the quality of the cliffs.

Do you travel to other climbing areas?

I must be one of the French climbers who travels the most. I go abroad at least once or twice a year. I have visited England, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, and the United States. Everywhere I go, I try to either put up a hard route or repeat the hardest routes in the area. When traveling away from home, it is difficult to pull off hard redpoints because you must succeed in a short, limited time. Motivationally, it is a fantastic challenge. At home, time is on your side, you can wait for good weather, or wait because your fingers hurt. But I have always enjoyed traveling and meeting different people. I have come to New River to meet new people and experience new kinds of climbing.

What are your favorite climbing areas?

The climbing areas in the United States that fascinate me are Smith Rock and the New River Gorge. In Europe, my favorite areas are the Frankenjura in Germany, Malham Cove in England, and the trilogy of Buoux, Verdon, and Cimai in France. And for bouldering, I must not forget Fontainebleau.

If travel is one of the rewards, what else do you seek from climbing?

What I seek most is performance — personal performance for myself. Right now, I am striving to improve physically, technically, and mentally as a climber and to progress in my approach to movement. I love this unending quest. The other aspect that I like is the climbing lifestyle. Climbing is perhaps the best sport for traveling and meeting people. Because climbers everywhere around the world share a common outlook and respond similarly, I encounter a really great sense of community. This sense of community, which is missing in other sports, is what draws me to climbing. In Buoux, for instance, it is ordinary to see climbers of 15 or 20 different nationalities climbing together in an

excellent atmosphere. This is very important to me because I dislike nationalism in any form.

Even if climbing is a transnational activity, are there any characteristic national traits?

Each country has its own climbing culture, and that adds to the charm of climbing. French climbers are good technicians because the best, like Patrick Edlinger, climb with great poise on very technical moves. As young climbers imitated them, French climbers in general came to climb very aesthetically. German climbers have always been fascinated with power, and they prefer a very powerful style.

What about American climbers? What is their culture?

Their culture is putting up a fight. As they do battle with routes there is always encouragement coming up from the base. At American cliffs, you hear people yelling up from the base "go on, go for it" as the climber gives it his all. This is the atmosphere of American cliffs; this is the combative characteristic of the American climber. Americans also like training for their sport in the gym. In contrast, the French typically spend lots of time on the rock, bouldering and doing laps, but until recently, they did no weight-lifting.

But you Parisian climbers did just those American things.

Yes, we did, and that is why other French climbers considered us bad guys. We acquired a bad reputation in the South because the southern climbers, who never did any training, used to say that Parisian climbers were tedious because they worked so hard at climbing, and that they were bad climbers because they needed to train so much. So "training" used to mean "bad climber." Obviously times have changed.

What are your present objectives in climbing?

My goal is to climb hard routes. Until last week, I was aiming for *Just Do It*. Now, I will focus on my new route at Buoux. Overall, my aim is to progress as a climber and improve as an athlete until the day that I am too old to improve. Competitions are good for maintaining motivation and pushing

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my progress. But I got more pleasure from putting up *Just Do It* than from winning any competition. Establishing hard routes is really my main objective.

Do you have any hard projects underway in France?

Just before leaving for the United States to attempt *Just Do It* again, I was working a long-standing 5.14b or 5.14c project at Buoux. After about 27 moves over four minutes, this amazing short route ends with a big dyno. I really want to finish it when I get back to France.

In your consistent search for difficulty over the years, what has been the reward of establishing hard routes?

The personal memory of the creation stays with you all your life. It is like an on-sight in that you do it just once. For an on-sight, you get just one chance. A hard first ascent remains with you forever, as a small creation, a tiny imprint in the world that *you* have made. It's really fabulous. The more you invest in it, the more you train, the more energy you put in, the more important your ultimate success.

What meaning do you ascribe to climbing?

None. Getting to the top is very primitive. It is what surrounds climbing that is interesting: self-discovery and getting to know other people. Climbing is really a contact sport. When you feel your fingers on the sandstone of New River Gorge, or the *goutes d'eau* of the Verdon Gorge, the tactile sensation is fantastic. No other sports have notions like jamming a crack or getting a knee lock; the varied forms of rock contact in climbing are truly exceptional.

What are your views on chipping or manufacturing routes?

I am basically against chipping, and I think that chipping at the New River Gorge or the Verdon Gorge is completely stupid, because the cliffs are very nice, the rock is perfect, you have miles of cliffs, so why chip? In places like Volx, where the rock is loose and the cliff a mere 500 feet wide, climbers chose to chip and glue everything, rather than have no routes. At Volx, the outcome was a very good cliff with many interesting routes. So for me, chipping at Volx is all right.

What makes climbing a worthwhile activity?

Although many sports offer physical challenges, few demand as much inner strength as climbing. There is a constant personal search, an advanced form of mind control, to fight doubt and focus on the task at hand. The challenge is within yourself. Like few other sports, the climber picks the route and chooses the problem he will solve. In choosing *Just Do It*, I selected difficulty, not because someone told me to, but because that was what I wanted.

At every grade, it is the same; a climber selects problems at his limits, or well below them, and so makes up his own game. What makes climbing extraordinary is that there are no rules other than the ones the climber imposes on himself. In France today, for example, some very strong climbers are interested primarily in doing hard moves and piecing together sequences, not so much in linking the route. Although they may occasionally link routes, they mostly just jump on a bunch of routes and work the moves. This is OK because they play by their own rules, doing what they want.

What can you discover in climbing that you can use in real life?

Climbing gives an individual a sense of meaning, a direction. For me, climbing is a little like religion: you get what you look for. It's a search for what you can give. If you give only a little, you receive only a little. If you seek something strongly, you will get something strong in return.

How would you like your contribution to climbing remembered in 10 or 15 years?

My competition results certainly will fade quickly. So I would like history to record simply that I put up some good hard routes. People will say that my routes, *To Bolt or Not to Be*, *Just Do It*, *Les Specialistes*, and *Le Spectre du Surmutant*, are good routes, and that's what J.B. did.

An active sport climber who has lived in France, Hassan Saab is always looking for opportunities, such as this interview, to practice his French. John Mallery of Cambridge, Massachusetts, is an active East Coast climber and photographer.

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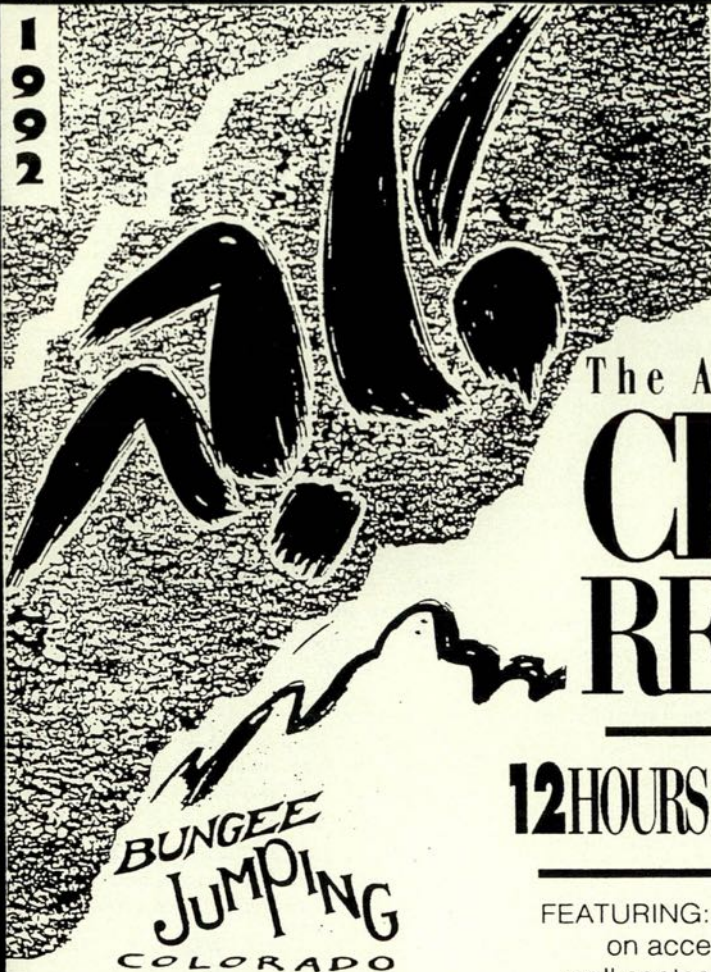
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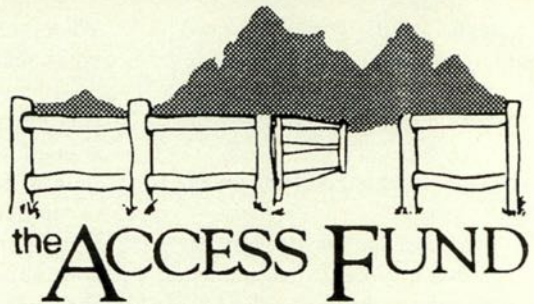
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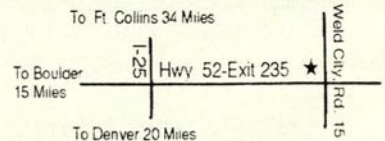
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The Alps for everyman

The Bernese Oberland

by Gary Langer

Here's a dream of heaven for the novice climber: big mountains, but with easy access. Challenging climbs, but with straightforward routefinding. One-day ascents that end within reach of a cold beer and a warm bunk.

Here's its name: the Bernese Oberland.

This is not bulletin news. Climbers have been

slightly overcast morning had given way to a howling whiteout of an afternoon. My hands were as icy as the rime-coated rocks, the wind was screaming like a bad heavy metal band, and I was having serious doubts about finding our way down. My photo from the top shows my buddy grinning like a maniac in front of a sheet of whiteness where our 100-mile view should have been.

Not to overdramatize: I did not actually sob audibly on the way down from the Jungfrau. And, while it crossed my mind, I did not swing my ice axe at the woman who strolled past us at 13,500

feet, nonchalantly soloing the route. I even laughed about it four hours later, over a plate of spaghetti and a beer at the train-station cafeteria.

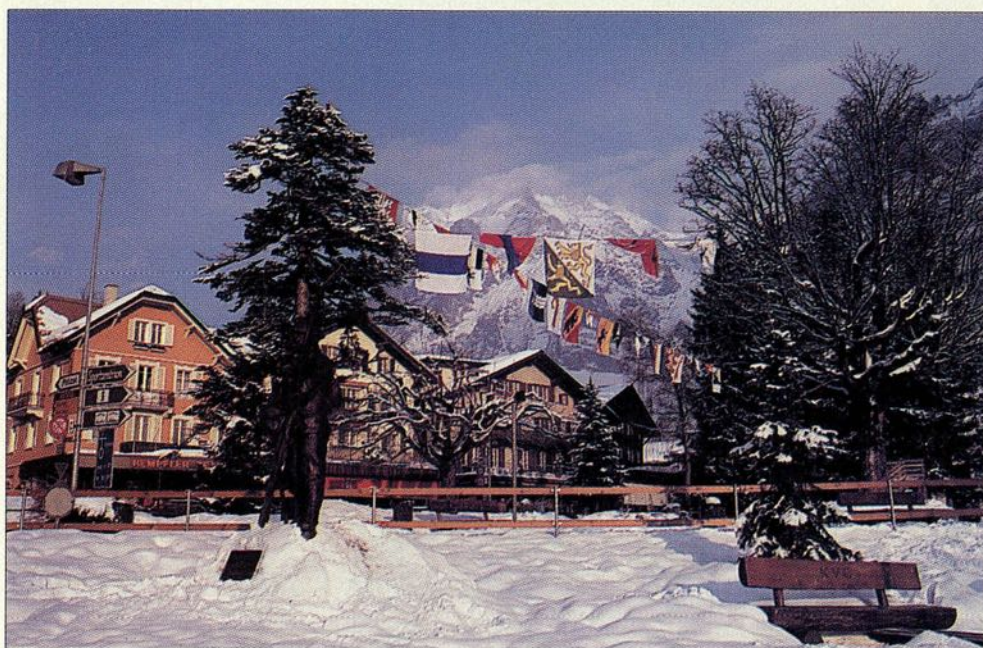
This is what novice Alps climbing is about: pasta, brews, train stations and guys like me climbing the Jungfrau. Tomo Cesen should read no further. But if you're an occasional rope-monkey with a yen to dent your axe on something Big and Impressive, these Alps are the place.

Down in the valley is the little burg of Grindelwald, and it is a splendid place to start. In late summer — the time to climb, when the snow up high is consolidated — the gingerbread-fronted houses are festooned with geraniums, the sun shines, and the outdoor cafes beckon. Flat-

land tourists in loafers stroll by, and you can enjoy an utterly unwarranted sense of superiority by wandering among them with an ice axe poking out of your summit pack. (All but the most idiotically macho will check the rest of their gear at the train station.)

The stops: Lehmann's Herberge, the best inexpensive (\$25) hostel in town. (There are also campgrounds, \$5.) Bernet Sport, the best gear shop, where you can find forgotten essentials, blanch at the outrageous prices, and maybe rent a mountain bike. The guides' office, to sniff around for tips about route conditions. And, finally, of course, the church graveyard.

Call me morbid, but this world-class resting place is not to be missed. Mountain guides have lived and died in Grindelwald since they invented the business; here their names jump out of the guidebooks and onto carved limestone. The plots, like all of Switzerland, are bordered with flowers and wildly neat. Ice axes adorn some



The Wetterhorn — one of the many peaks offering moderate climbing possibilities in the Bernese Alps — above Grindelwald, Switzerland.

marching to the high land over Bern, Switzerland, for 200 years, etching into history their ascents of some of the most famous peaks on the planet. The Jungfrau went underfoot in 1811. The Mönch in 1857. The Eiger in 1858 and its North Face 80 years later.

The focus of world-class mountaineering has long since moved farther afield, mainly to the places, appropriately, where prayer-flags flutter. What's been left behind, in the mountains that gave Alpinism its name, is simply one of the best-developed, most accessible climbing areas in the world.

While very tough routes abound, it's for novice and intermediate climbers that the Bernese Alps now hold a special charm. With well-established routes, an extensive hut system, and detailed guidebooks, there are few better places for a beginner to climb.

None of this was on my mind one day last summer, as my partner, Peter Price, and I picked our way up the summit ridge of the Jungfrau. The

Photo: Jon Krakauer

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The classic West Ridge of the Eiger — it's not the North Face but it is the Eiger.

headstones. Inscriptions offer the final tale tersely: "Fallen from the Schreckhorn." "Struck by lightning on the Wetterhorn."

Look up and there it is, looming above this very spot: the big, blocky Wetterhorn, a blue-gray thumb in the sky, as impassive and massive a monument as ever stood sentinel.

In the mountain's shadow, across the cemetery, past chest-high blocks honoring world-famous guides, Peter found a plain wooden cross tucked in a corner; in German, the legend read: "Unknown climber."

Let's hear it for the little people.

In fact, *not* getting killed is one of the better reasons to climb in these Alps. If you break a leg in, say, the Peruvian Andes (see Simpson, J.), it'll be a long, lonely crawl home. Here the hills are so peopled with climbers, and so well-patrolled, that help is likely to be close at hand. Experienced mountaineers will rightly be annoyed by all the company. But for the less self-assured, it's more a comfort than a bother.

Indeed, helicopters are so prevalent that it's necessary to know a little chopper etiquette. Waving one hand over your head means, "Hello, how are you, I'm fine, now please go away." Waving *both* hands over your head means something else: "Please scoop me up, take me far away from here,

and present me with a very large bill once we get to town."

To pre-empt any chopper-rate shock, get rescue insurance by subscribing (\$15) to the Swiss Air Rescue Foundation (Mainaustrasse 21, 8008 Zurich, Tel. 01-385-8585). Even if you don't need a lift, the cash goes to a good cause — someone who does.

... you don't have to lug around a tent, stove, or much food. Using the standard calculation that one pound not carried equals one ton more fun, the presence of the huts makes the Bernese Alps a very pleasant place indeed.

Happily, whimpering for an airlift is a fate that did not befall this correspondent. Luck? Maybe. Skill? No. The real reason is my insistence in climbing the easiest routes available. If the Southeast Ridge of the Mönch was good enough for some Victorian lady in skirts 100 years ago, I figured, it's good enough for me.

And it was. Drenched in sunshine, we scrambled up a ridge of mostly fourth-class rock, pulled up to a sharp corner and cramponed up a 40-degree snow ridge to more rock. Then on to another sharp snow ridge, three feet wide with extremely satisfactory exposure, to the top. Piece of cake.

From up there the Aletschglacier, longest glacier in Europe, flowed by like a cold white river. The Jungfrau, the Eiger, and the Fiescherhorn reared up around us like tidal waves. Somewhere down below someone chose that moment to start blowing for all he was worth into an alpenhorn, celebrating, no doubt, our great success.

The Eiger

Southwest Flank/West Ridge

Here's the route description for the Southwest Flank and West Ridge of the Eiger, from the out-of-print *Bernese Alps East*, edited by Robin Collomb and published by the Alpine Club, London:

From the Eigergletscher Station follow a track E in moraine then take a ledge L for 100m. followed by short direct zigzags up broken rock below the Rotstock (2663.2m.) to scree and the lower edge of a snowfield.

Climb the snow to an obvious couloir opening at the top L side. Ascend limestone steps just L of couloir to a rock band. Traverse 89m. L and by an ascent and movement R turn the step. Work diagonally L away from couloir to a screefield saddle adjoining the W ridge (pt. 3066m. below).

Go up the loose R flank, possibly snowy, and make a steep rising traverse R above the lower head of the lower couloir; here a traverse L of 50m. along a ledge leads to a spectacular view across Eigerwand. There is a big step on the ridge above. Keep to the rising traverse and go up to an obvious snow hollow on the R side of a buttress flanking step. Near top of snow exit L up a steep gully and shortly move R from it to climb steep broken slabby rock, usually snow/ice covered, in a rising traverse R, still about 100m. below ridge. So reach more continuous snow and climb back toward ridge 'til opposite a small gap just above an isolated rock step (3668m.).

It is usually best to continue up the steep snow/ice slope just below the crest, but for preference reach the ridge itself as soon as possible, cornice on L, and follow it with a loose gully section to top.

Perhaps the best thing about Mönch Day was that we started it in our bunks at Herr Lehmann's place, way down in Grindelwald. Had we done the approach on foot we'd have spent all day hiking toward our distant goal, winding up halfway there, camped amid the cow parties on some alpine meadow.

A quirk of the Swiss character enabled us to avoid that fate. These people are so fond of digging, it is said, that they put holes in their cheese. More to the point, they put holes in their mountains.

Thus it was that on July 27, 1896, a group of gentlemen started swinging their pickaxes at the southwest flank of the Eiger, above a place called Kleine Scheidegg. They proceeded straight into the moun-

tain, angled up, poked their noses out over the North Face, then banged a right turn and, 16 years later, popped out on the other side of the mountain.

Beyond accomplishing a marvelous bit of interior routefinding, these intrepid diggers made it possible to ascend to the Jungfraujoch, altitude 11,333 feet, while seated in an extremely quaint little cog railway car. (Keep an eye out for crampon-armed backpacks tumbling out of the overhead racks as the craft lurches up the rails.)

The motivation for the Jungfraubahn railway was to accumulate tourist dollars, and it will take about 80 of yours to buy a round trip ticket. Not cheap – until you contemplate walking.

Beyond being handy, the Jungfraubahn makes for a very scenic trip. The train wends its way up the cool green valley, past tidy little chalets with neatly stacked woodpiles and well-mannered Swiss cows. Heidi may wave as you glide by.

The rail deposits you at Kleine Scheidegg, beneath a sky full of Alps, yards from the terrace of the now-faded hotel where Clint Eastwood practiced gritting his teeth in *The Eiger Sanction*. You can stay here, if you can't think of anything better to do with \$85.

Most of us can, so we'll change trains and head up. The next stop is the Eigergletscher Station, just below the easiest route up the 13,041-foot Eiger. It's worthwhile to bring along a tent, check it at the Jungfraujoch station, then bring it back down to Eigergletscher on the return to make camp for the Eiger climb.

Then into the very bowels of the mountain, so to speak. After a few minutes in darkness the train reaches the Eigerwand Station, with thick windows that open directly onto the Dreaded North Face. We all troop out to look; disconcertingly, and despite the oohs and aahs of our fellow travelers, the pitch by the window looks easy. Maybe... ah, never mind.

Soon enough we're at the Jungfraujoch, the saddle between the 13,677-foot Jungfrau and 13,468-foot Mönch, our targets. Both peaks are so close it's possible to catch the first train out of Grindelwald, stroll over to either mountain, climb up, climb down, and get back to town in time for a round of miniature golf.

Possible, but not the way to go. It's best to climb the Jungfrau *before* the first train arrives, putting you on the mountain ahead of the rhumba-line of guided groups that piles out of the station and up the trail each morning. Getting a jump on the crowd does not mean you have to

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The Mönch Hut, to be precise, is nestled at the very foot of the Mönch, a mere hour-plus stroll from the station (or a 45-minute forced march, which is what the Swiss guides do to their paying victims).

After a full day of frolicking in the snow this big, boxy, three-story house looks like heaven. In the mud room you gratefully de-boot and slip into a pair of corduroy slippers. On the top floor are the bunk rooms, fitted with foam pads and thick wool blankets.

And on the blessed middle floor, truly the Floor of Floors, is the dining room. Big sturdy tables full of people eating big sturdy meals. Quiet. Cozy. If you're lucky a storm will blow in, beating its forehead uselessly against the windows, reminding you of the full richness of the word "indoors."

The meals are enormous. The beverages include beer. Room and board costs about \$30 a night. And there are huts like this one — in varying sizes and degrees of service — scattered throughout these mountains.

While the price is not minimal, the benefits are abundant: you don't have to lug around a tent, stove, or much food. Using the standard calculation that one pound not carried equals one ton more fun, the presence of the huts makes the Bernese Alps a very pleasant place indeed.

Peter and I unashamedly executed the Bernese Alps equivalent of a visit to Disney World: ride up, climb the Mönch by the Southeast Ridge, overnight at the Mönch Hut, relax through a day of conveniently bad weather, then climb the Jungfrau via the Southwest Flank of the Rottalsattel and the Jungfrau's Southeast Ridge. Next head back down to the Eiger-gletscher Station for the Eiger climb, by way of the Southwest Flank and West Ridge. Wrap up the trip in true tourist style with a day hike to the base of the Eiger's North Face. There we poked around, teeth gritted a la Clint, in the vague unspoken expectation of finding something appropriate to the place, like a human skull.

Ours was the standard excursion in terms of accessibility; the interior Bernese Alps are tougher to reach, all involving some significant glacier slog-ging. But a look at the map and a reality check of your own ability will suggest myriad possibilities: Fiescherhorn, Finsteraarhorn, Schreckhorn, Wetterhorn, the Eiger's Mittelegi Ridge. (You can reach the Mittelegi Hut from the Eiger-

Travel tips

Huts, hostels, and guides

Don't get scalped on your trip to the Alps. Herewith, a short list of contacts for the budget-minded climbing fool:

Swiss National Tourist Office. 608 Fifth Ave. New York, N.Y. 10020. Tel. (212) 757-5944. Can provide a list of mountain huts managed by the Swiss Alpine Club and sundry other information.

Mönch Hut. One of the huts not managed by the SAC. Call from Grindelwald to make sure there's room; Tel. 036-71-3472.

Swiss Air Rescue Foundation, Mainaustrasse 21, 8008 Zurich, Switzerland. Tel. 01-385-8585. For air rescue insurance.

The Alpine Club, 55 Charlotte Road, London, England, EC2A 3QT. Publisher of the out-of-print Bernese Alps guidebooks.

Lehmann's Herberge, 3818 Grindelwald, Switzerland. Tel. 036-53-1191. The best little inexpensive hostel in Grindelwald.

Maplink, 25 East Mason St., Suite 201, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. Tel. (805) 965-4402. For, you guessed it, maps.

Bergsteigerzentrum, 3818 Grindelwald. Tel. 036-53-5200. The guides' office, in case you're so inclined. Be warned: They ain't cheap. About \$220 to join a group up the Jungfrau, for example.

wand Station, but be warned that the Grindelwald guides, who own this hut, are reported sometimes to deny admission to unguided climbers.) Watch the weather as you go; as a north-facing escarpment, the Monch, Jungfrau and — especially the Eiger, though it's the shortest of the three — catch some of the worst weather in all the Alps.

While choosing a route may be tough, getting the maps, at least, is easy: Contact Maplink, 25 East Mason St., Santa Barbara, CA, 93101, (805) 965-4402. Order 1:25,000-scale Swiss topos No. 1249 (Finsteraarhorn, including the Jungfrau and Monch) and No. 1229 (Grindelwald, including the Eiger). They're \$11 each.

Guidebooks may be a bigger problem. The best are *Bernese Alps East* (including the Monch and Eiger) and *Bernese Alps Central* (with the Jungfrau), edited by Robin Collomb and published about a decade ago by the Alpine Club of London. Both are cruelly out of print, but the club says new editions should be ready this year.

For the time being, Michael Chessler, the mountain bookmeister, has the old "Central" book in stock (call [800]654-8502). And as a holding action until the new "East" book appears, its description of the standard route up the Eiger is reprinted here (see box). One warning: while Collomb's route descriptions are excellent, he lowballs the difficulty of these climbs and seriously underestimates the time normal people need to complete them.

Another source is Richard Goedeke's *The Alpine 4,000 Meter Peaks*, which describes the trade routes up the Monch, Jungfrau and others. But Goedeke stubbornly leaves out the Eiger because it's 30 meters short of 4000. Picky, picky.

Between now and when the "East" book is reprinted, you can find a copy in The American Alpine Club library. Bernet Sport in Grindelwald, or the guides' center might also have copies.

A guidebook's report of a climb, of course, is like a clinical description of sex: only remotely related to the real thing. Collomb advises, for instance, that the traverse from the Rottalsattel to the Jungfrau entails a waltz across "a broad, pleasant snow ridge." At this lovely spot I found myself shuffling across a socked-in, wind-whipped, boot-wide, ice-coated ledge above the Long Plummer to Doom while the Drooling Invisible Dogs of Death snapped at my ankles. "*Peu difficile minus*," which translates into something like "easier than not very hard," somehow does not capture the essence of this experience.

But difficulty is not really the issue. We find the demons where we summon them, unexpected and fervently undesired. Mine barked on the Jungfrau. My partner saw his own drooling dogs on the Eiger, a route comprised of 5200 feet of steep, very loose scree with a few limestone chutes thrown in. About halfway up, a blue flame flashed in his head, revealing the consequences of the two of us skittering off into the abyss, and this vision briefly created in his place a slack-jawed candidate for a beach vacation next year.

He didn't weep, though, or even snivel much. Fear is like a mountain, and as the Eiger pioneer Heinrich Harrer wrote, "One cannot defeat or conquer mountains, one can only climb them." And, he might have added, laugh about it later.

Gary Langer lives in New York City, works as a pollster for ABC News and does freelance writing and photography. He plans to climb something hard someday. Really.

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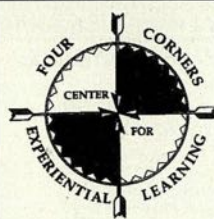
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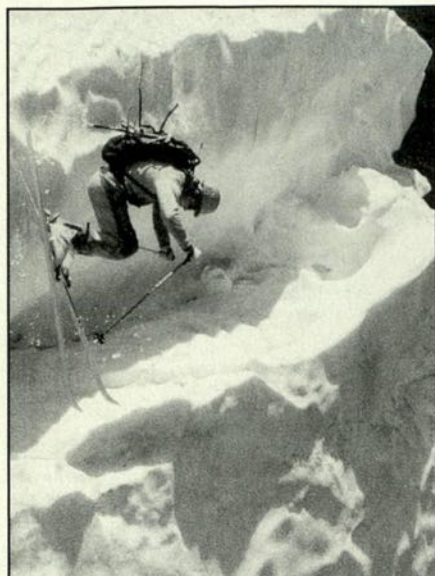
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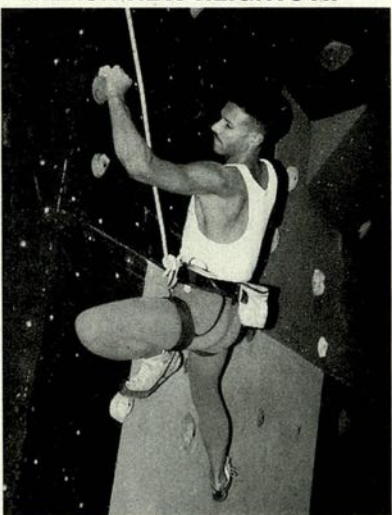


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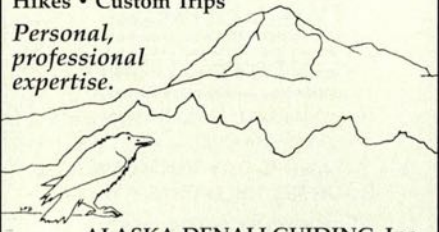
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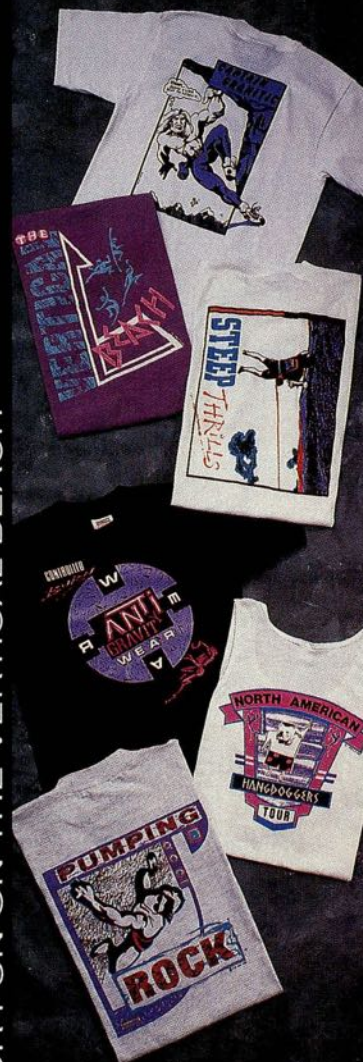
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There's copper in them hills

Canada's wildest river: the Tatshenshini-Alsek at risk

by Michael Down

Mount Fairweather and Mount St. Elias are not just two of the great peaks of North America — they're the highest coastal uplifts anywhere on the planet. Less than 15 miles from the beach at Cape Fairweather lies Fairweather's 15,300-foot summit, the tallest in British Columbia, Canada, and one of many mountains straddling this Canada/ United States border. To the north, soaring up from the sullen waters of the Gulf of Alaska, sits Mount St. Elias. Only 20 miles from the coast, this mountain tops out at 18,008 feet, making it the second-highest point in North America. Together

plant species. A number of environmental factors conspire to make the Tatshenshini-Alsek an oasis pulsing with life in a surrounding desert of rock and ice. Of particular note is what biologists believe to be the most productive year-round grizzly bear habitat on earth and the only home in Canada for the rare "Glacier" Bear, a sub-species of the black bear named for its distinctive silver-blue fur.

Flowing some 160 miles from the dry tundra of the Yukon interior to the Alaska coast at Cry Bay just south of Yakutat, the Tatshenshini-Alsek is an international river system protected along its upper and lower reaches in Kluane and Glacier Bay National Parks, respectively. Only the river's mid-section within British Columbia remains unprotected. The Tatshenshini-Alsek is a wilderness treasure comparable to the Bio Bio River in Chile and the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. Protection of this B.C. section of the river would link together the two parks and complete the world's largest international wilderness preserve — some 23 million acres in all.

However, the river's midsection also holds treasure of another kind. Windy Craggy Mountain, a glaciated massif straddling the high ground above the confluence of the Tatshenshini and Alsek, could become the largest open pit copper mine in Canada if Geddes Resources of Toronto, Canada, gets its way. Geddes' plan is to remove the summit glacier and rip off the upper 2000 feet of the mountain to get at the copper deposit underneath.

A massive open pit in the heartland of a completely pristine wilderness would not be a pretty sight. But even more ugliness is hidden in the rock of Windy Craggy itself. Some 35 percent of the deposit is sulphide which, when exposed to the atmosphere, oxidizes to create sulfuric acid and a deadly threat called acid mine drainage (AMD). Once AMD gets going, there is no way to stop it, and it persists in the environment for thousands of years. (Ancient Roman mines in Europe are still leaking AMD.) Not only does AMD generate a potion as strong as battery acid, it also leaches out toxic heavy metals from the rock of the water table. In the case of Windy Craggy, this would result in an acid bath that could wipe out the Tatshenshini-Alsek's rich international salmon fishery and the globally significant grizzly population that depends on it.

Geddes Resources has proposed a solution: sulphide-bearing waste rock is safe as long as it isn't exposed to air, so it plans to bury the hundreds of millions of tons of sulphide-bearing waste rock underwater in a two-and-a-half-mile long reservoir created by damming a valley at either end. A simple solution, except that the proposed damsites are right in the thick of the most earthquake-active area in all North America. Like the Himalayas and Andes, the

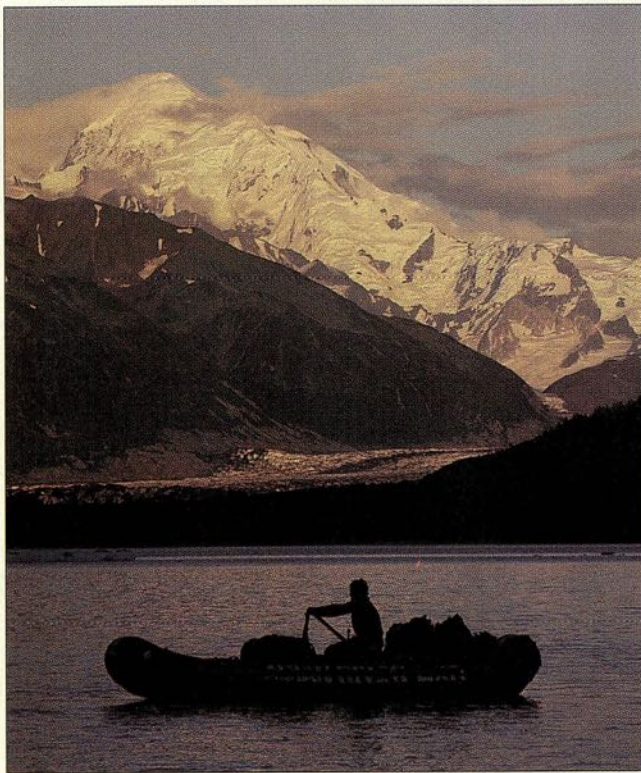


Photo: Patrick Morrow

Alsek Lake along the threatened Tatshenshini-Alsek River, Alaska/British Columbia border, with Mount Fairweather in the distance.

these two great peaks tower like outposts on the sea, standing guard over the river that flows between them: the Tatshenshini-Alsek.

Many conservationists consider the Tatshenshini-Alsek North America's wildest river. And no wonder. Not only does the river cut a path right through the heart of Canada's highest and most spectacular mountains, draining the world's largest non-polar icecap, but a number of glaciers flow to river's edge and calve off icebergs into the fast-running water.

But more important than its superlative scenery, the river is of exceptionally high biological diversity and productivity. Wildlife populations are outstanding, as are the number of rare and unique bird and

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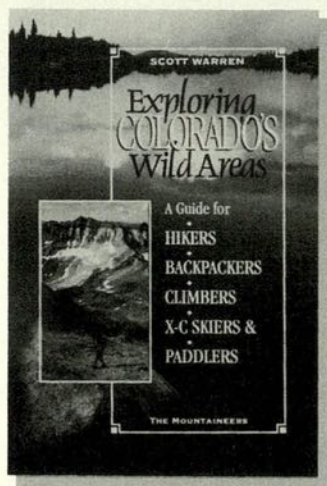
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St. Elias mountains are still growing out of the collision between two major tectonic plates. Indeed, there are plenty of cold-sweat climbing stories telling of narrow escapes from the shaking and moving of the St. Elias and Fairweather Ranges. Yet the greatest story comes from the biggest quake ever recorded on the continent: 8.6 on the Richter Scale, in 1899 and centered only 75 miles from Windy Craggy. That day mountains jumped 50 feet, and glaciers surged forward half a mile in five minutes. Additionally, the Little Alsek used to be a tributary of its big brother; now it flows the other way.

The proposed Windy Craggy tailings dams, one of them 360 feet high, would be subject to these titanic shocks repeatedly over the thousands of years they would be required to stand. With the active Fairweather fault only 30 miles away, it would only be a matter of time before the dams were breached and AMD destroyed the Tatshenshini-Alsek water system, which flows into Glacier Bay National Park, only 24 miles downstream.

The end of the road for Windy Craggy ore is Haines, Alaska, where Geddes would upgrade a deep sea port for shipping copper concentrate. To get the ore to Haines, Geddes proposes building a 150 mile long slurry pipeline and access road by ripping open this vast wilderness and traversing right through prime grizzly habitat in the Tatshenshini before following the Chilkat River, home of the largest wintering bald eagle population in the world. An earthquake— or avalanche—induced rupture in the pipeline would wreak havoc on the salmon, eagle, and grizzly populations of either river.

Upon reaching the terminus, the slurry would be drained, dumping 330,000 gallons of toxic effluent a day into Lynn Canal — home of a \$41 million fishery which supports the town of Haines.

The litany of adverse environmental impacts from Windy Craggy is endless, and with so much to lose and so little to gain it's no surprise the townsfolk of Haines and Yakutat, and government agencies including the U.S. Marine Fisheries and National Parks Services outright reject the Windy Craggy proposal. However, Geddes Resources is pressing the B.C. government for quick approval, and would like to have the mine on stream as early as 1994. Consequently, a coalition of more than 50 conservation groups, representing more than five million members in Canada and the U.S., has joined together in a continent-wide campaign to fight for preservation of the Tatshenshini-Alsek.

An aficionado of wilderness mountaineering in the coastal ranges of North America, Michael Down serves as President of Tatshenshini Wild. For more information, contact Tatshenshini Wild, 843-810 W. Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1A4.

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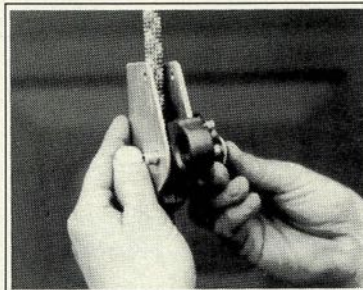
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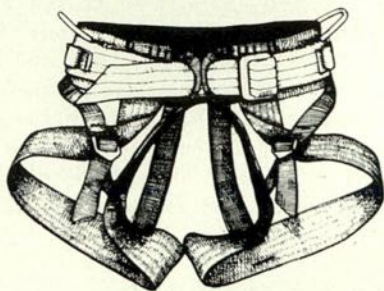
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WHERE'S DA ROCKS MAN?

Giving it your best shot

How to improve your climbing photography, Part II

by John Sherman

We'll get into the good stuff right away — the section that will allow you to justify that next big photo purchase. Let's talk about gear.

Cameras

So. The camera that came free with your subscription to *Time* magazine just isn't cutting it. But which camera should you buy instead? There are two types of 35-millimeter cameras: rangefinder and single lens reflex (SLRs).

Rangefinder cameras made today are generally

"point-and-shoot" designs that have numerous drawbacks for serious photography. Most rangefinders do not allow the use of interchangeable lenses (though some of the more versatile — and expensive — models have two different lenses or a zoom built in). Most feature noisy autowinders that advance and rewind the film, and exposure controls that are fully electronic with no manual mode, making them useless when the batteries die.

The advantages of a rangefinder camera are that it is compact, light weight, and cheap to replace when you drop it from Thank God Ledge on Half Dome. The range-finder cameras that do have manual film advance are

very quiet, a plus when shooting your partner leading across an unstable cornice.

A rangefinder camera is a good choice to take along on multi-pitch climbs. The point-and-shoot models allow one-handed operation so you can *keep your brake hand on the rope while belaying*. If buying an autofocus model, choose one that allows you to lock focus on the subject, recompose, then shoot (see Part I for an explanation of this technique).

If you're serious about your photography, buy an SLR. Through a combination of mirrors and prisms, SLRs allow the user to view a scene exact-

ly as it will appear on the film. The SLR's greatest asset is its interchangeable lenses. But if you thought ropes and climbing shoes were expensive, wait till you price camera lenses!

Most SLRs today have some sort of auto-exposure mode. Either you set the aperture and the camera sets the shutter speed (aperture preferred), or you set the shutter speed, letting the camera select the aperture (shutter preferred), or the camera sets both (sometimes called "program mode"). Many SLRs also have autofocus. For serious photography, buy a camera that features a manual mode, where you have the option of making all exposure and focusing decisions. The more control you have, the more thought you are required to put into the photo, and the better the potential results. The automatic modes come in handy in two situations: when you hand the camera to your partner who barely knows which end is which, and in fast-action situations where you don't have time to adjust all the controls yourself. Shutter-preferred mode is the best for climbing action photos, since you choose the action-freezing or blurring effect you want, letting the camera alter depth of field as necessary.

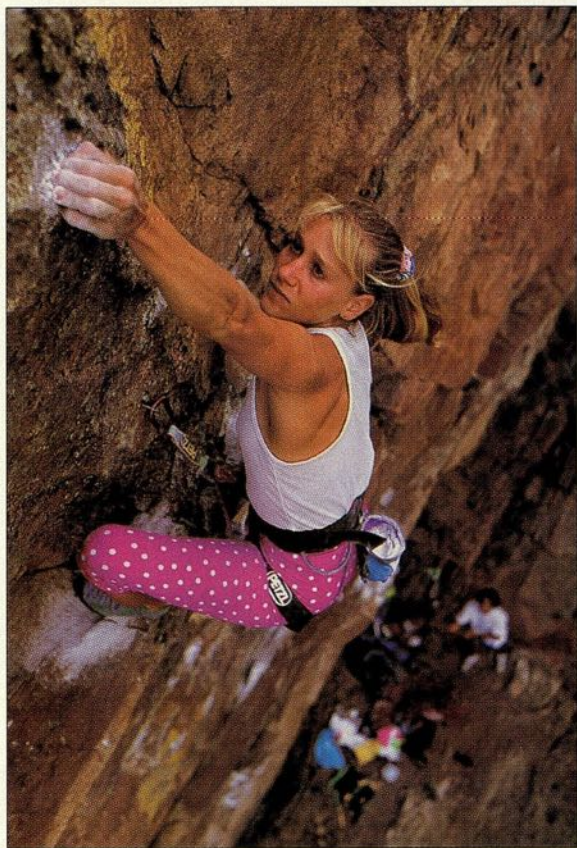
Another consideration in choosing a camera is what happens when its batteries die. You're halfway up Fitzroy and you forgot the spares — is your camera's shutter incapacitated? Will it be reduced to just one fixed shutter speed, or will it work on all shutter speeds? Be sure the camera you buy will work on at least one shutter speed if the batteries go down (and always carry spares).

Nikon, Canon, Olympus, Pentax, and Minolta all make high-quality and durable SLRs. At the upper end of the scale, the legendary Leica can help max your photographic abilities — and your Visa Gold Card.

Lenses

There are two types of lenses to blow your dough on: fixed focal length and zoom. The focal length of a lens determines the angle of view or the amount of coverage in the frame. The "normal" lens for 35mm SLRs is 50mm. Wide-angle lenses have a focal length under 50mm, commonly 35mm, 28mm, 24mm, 20mm, 18mm, or 15mm. The latter two are super wide, often called "fish-eye" lenses. Telephoto lenses have a focal length over 50mm, which includes "medium" telephotos of 85mm, 105mm, and 135mm, and extend through 180mm, 200mm, and big guns like 300mm, 400mm, 500mm, 600mm, 800mm, and 1000mm. Zooms have variable focal lengths, from 24–50mm wide-angle zooms up to 105–300mm or even longer telephoto zooms.

Because of their optical simplicity, fixed focal-length lenses generally yield sharper results than the more optically complicated zoom lenses. They are more affordable than



A wide-angle lens is effective for tight climbing action shots, giving the impression that the climber is farther off the ground than she really is, as in this photo of Robyn Erbesfield on *Undertow* (5.12b) in Fern Canyon, Colorado

Photo: Brian Bailey

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zooms of comparable sharpness, unless you go for one of the "fast" lenses with extra-wide maximum apertures (up to 1.2 on some 50mm lenses). Fast lenses are great for low-light situations, but a cheaper way to handle dim conditions is to use faster film. See below.

For a two-lens kit, I recommend a 35mm and 100mm. For a three-lens kit I'd go with a 28mm, a 50mm, and a 135mm. The longer telephotos — 300mm and up — are favorites among wildlife photographers, but are more limited for climbing photography. Of course, if your subject hasn't bathed in a while ...

The 15mm to 20mm "fish-eyes" are notorious for image distortion, i.e., noses near the lens look huge, heads in the corners of the frame resemble watermelons, trees seem to fall over, and distances are exaggerated. If you are aware of this distortion you can make it work for you. The 10-o'clock-high composition so often used in climbing photography is a classic example. Here, the use of a wide-angle lens will make the climber appear to be much higher off the deck than he really is.

Telephotos also distort, but they make distances seem compressed. Telephotos have shallow depth of field, which can be effectively used to isolate a subject. (See Part I for more discussion and illustration of wide-angle and telephoto distortion.) A

short to moderate telephoto is the best lens for flattering portraits or close-ups; wider lenses will distort facial features.

Zoom lenses are very convenient — with just one lens you can cover a wide range of focal lengths. Nonetheless, the wider the zoom's range, the more demands placed on it optically, and the greater the compromise in image quality. Be wary of zooms with a range greater than three to one; they are unlikely to produce sharp images. At any given focal length, a fixed-length lens of similar quality will outperform a zoom lens set at the same length. Another disadvantage of zooms is their slow maximum aperture. And some zooms, especially wide-angle to telephoto zooms, change aperture as you zoom. With such zooms, be sure to set your exposure at the same focal length at which you'll shoot the photo.

If you plan to own just one lens, I recommend a 35–100mm zoom. In sunlit conditions the slow speed (f/3.5 to f/4) won't be a problem; pack some fast film for low-light situations. Another good lens combination is a 35mm fixed matched with a 70–210mm or 80–200mm zoom.

"You get what you pay for." Nowhere in life is this so true as in buying lenses. Lenses made by the same manufacturer as your camera will work best. Cheaper lenses from independent manufacturers won't

work as well. The dealer trying to sell you a Cheesoflex 24–300mm zoom will no doubt tell you that the Cheesoflex company actually makes the lenses for Canon, Nikon, and Pentax. Don't believe him. Some independent manufacturers do make high-quality lenses, but such lenses won't be significantly cheaper than the manufacturer's counterpart.

All lenses share two characteristics: they all give bad results if they aren't clean, and they break when dropped.

Tripods

A steady camera is essential for sharp photography; buy and use the heaviest support you're willing to carry. Monopods, though obviously less stable than tripods, work well in awkward spaces and are standard gear for many sports photographers.

Filters

A filter is an extra chunk of glass to shoot through, so don't use one if you don't need one. If you do use one, keep it clean. For color slide work, polarizing filters and warming filters (81A, 81B) are the most useful. The huge number of filters useful for black and white work are extraneous for color photography.

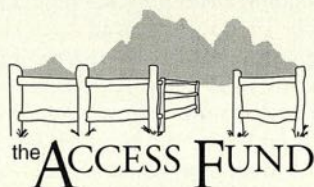
Polarizing filters. Light reflected off most surfaces becomes polarized (the light

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waves vibrate in a single plane). Polarizing filters absorb polarized light before it reaches the film, cutting reflections off windows, water surfaces, polished rocks, etc. By removing the polarized "white" light reflected from a surface, the true color of the object emerges. Foliage, for example, appears more green after a polarizer has cut out the reflections from the leaf surfaces. Particles in the sky also reflect a lot of light.

Polarizers cut this glare, darkening the blue of the sky and making clouds stand out. They have their greatest effect when the reflected light source is perpendicular to the direction the camera is pointed.

Some photographers mistakenly crank the polarizer to get the maximum effect every time. Shadows on objects against the sky may blend into the deep blue of an overly darkened sky, robbing the object of its form. Crank the polarizer only as far as necessary to get the effect you desire.

Polarizers cut out from 1 to 2 1/2 f/stops of light. Set the exposure *after* you have set the polarizer.

Another note on polarizers: there are two types, linear and circular. Linear polarizers can throw off the autofocus systems of some cameras and, in rare cases, the light meters in others. Check with the salesman to make sure you buy a polarizer that will work with your camera.

Warming filters. Damn. You were running the raging tan on that last trip, but the photos made you look like you had just climbed out of a casket. This happens when shooting in the shade or in overcast conditions. Color film is designed to give accurate rendition of objects lit directly by the sun (except for some specialty films that are color-balanced for artificial light sources). An object in the shade is usually lit by the sky, which gives a much bluer ("cooler") light than the sun. The light on overcast days is similarly blue. To achieve correct color balance in these situations, use an 81A filter to "warm" the light striking the film. In particularly deep shade or heavy overcast use an 81B. An 81A cuts light by 1/3rd f/stop, an 81B by 2/3rds. Take your exposure reading with the filter already in place.

Other filters. Though ultraviolet light is invisible to the human eye, color films do register some of this light as a blue "haze." For long scenic shots, especially at high altitudes or in misty conditions, UV or "skylight" filters will reduce this haze. These filters will also warm a photo slightly. Some photographers keep a skylight filter on each lens to protect the outer element from scratches and fingerprints. For most shots, however, it is just another chunk of glass to shoot through. Remove it before shooting.

Film

35mm transparency (slide) film comes in two emulsion types, C4 (Kodachrome) and E6 (Ektachrome, Fujichrome, and Agfachrome). Kodachrome comes in three speeds (ISO 25, 64, and 200), and is known for its accurate color rendition and fine grain. Faster films have a larger grain size, and are thus less sharp than slower films. Kodachrome 25 is good for razor-sharp scenics, but too slow for shooting in low-light conditions or without a tripod. Kodachrome 64 is a good all-around film, fast enough to catch sunlit action shots and sharp enough for the occasional scenic shot. Kodachrome 200 is relatively "grainy," but best for low-light situations such as action shots in deep shade. Kodachrome is more heat-tolerant than E6 films, making it a good choice for traveling. Nevertheless, avoid leaving any film in a hot car or baking in direct sun.

Processing Kodachrome requires million-dollar machines, so most photofinishers must send it to Kodak-authorized labs. Several custom labs handle Kodachrome, and it's the opinion of most professional photographers that these independent operations do a better job than the Kodalux labs.

E6 films — I call them Baileychromes, as this is the type of film that the photographer Brian Bailey uses to make his

Mudsport in Fulford Cave. Pack: Bugaboo

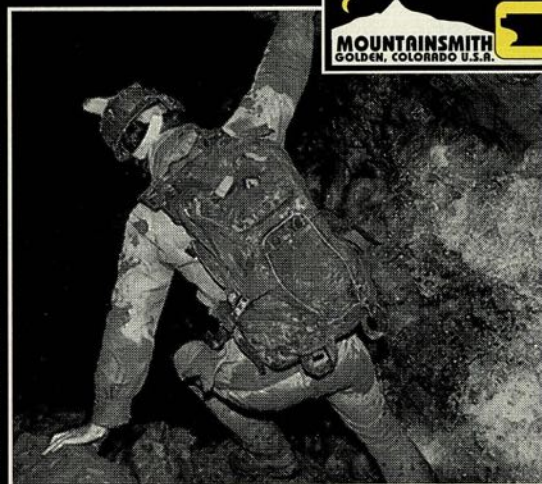


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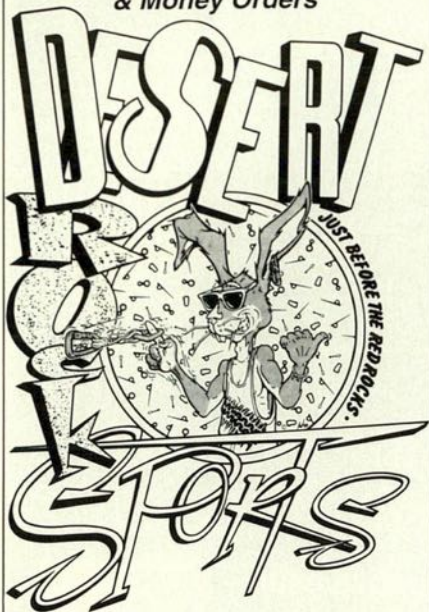
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heroes tanner, their gear more colorful, and the walls they're climbing look like they've been dipped in gold. E6 films have better color saturation than Kodachromes, and are also easier to process. Even the most primitive big cities (yes, I'm talking El Paso) will have a photofinisher who can handle E6 on the premises, usually on the same day it's received and sometimes as quickly as two hours. The required mailing times make it impossible to get Kodachrome processed this fast. E6 films come in speeds from ISO 50 to ISO 1000 and higher. In general, Kodachrome is finer grained at an equivalent film speed. However, some of the newer E6 films (like Fuji's expensive Velvia) are just as sharp as Kodachrome. The expense of film and processing for Kodachromes and E6 films is roughly the same.

A few words on print films: color prints are fine if you're keeping an album, and you can have prints made from slides. Making slides from prints is possible, but is not a standard procedure with most photofinishers and the results are generally poor. If you dream of having your work published in a magazine, don't shoot print film. Magazine reproduction requires color transparencies or black and white prints.

After exposing any film, have it developed as soon as possible.

Slide shows

The biggest problem with most climbing slide shows is too many slides with the same composition in a row. See Part I for tips on compositions that make the eye move about the photo. In arranging a show, strive for a mix of perspectives on any given subject. In particular, try to include long shots, medium shots, and close-ups. A long shot might show the entire cliff with a speck of a climber on the wall. The medium shot could be a 10 o'clock high, showing the climber's body and the move the hero is cranking. The close-up might show the critical nut placement at the crux. Mix up the long, medium, and close order throughout the slide show.

Try to include action shots, scenics, portraits, humor pics, and gear shots, but please take it easy on the wildflower studies. When on a trip, think in terms of your slide-show needs before shooting. For instance, if you were visiting Yosemite Valley, you might want to illustrate the experience with: the Yosemite National Park sign at the park entrance, an RV parked in the middle of the road videoing a deer, a waterfall, long shots of the cliffs you climbed, Japanese tourists in action, close-ups of tape jobs, TCU racks, and crowbars, the rangers busting your partner for cooking in the lodge lot, and so forth.

Too many slide shows feature nothing but climber-in-action photos, with no supporting slides to give a feel for the area.

If you have a story to tell with your slides, by all means put them in chronological order. If you have too many hero shots in a row, slip in a generic close-up to break things up: say, a Ninja slipper toeing into a pocket, or fingers torquing in a tip jam. Leave each slide on the screen for six to 10 seconds, no longer, even if it's a shot of yourself looking honed as can be. The only exceptions are slides that illustrate an explanation. For example, a long shot showing the Eiger Nordwand might be on the screen for more than a minute as you point out pertinent features.

A dissolve unit and double projectors, if available, make for a much more polished show. If you're really motivated, you can put your slides to music; a projector with a timer is very helpful for doing this. To achieve best results, listen to the music while running an empty slide projector at a pace of six to 10 seconds per slide. Between each advance of the projector, write down what emotion you feel from the music. A word or two will do. Sample words might be frantic, heavy, bright, low, happy, contradictory. It will probably take several times through the music to fill a complete sheet with these notes.

When you've completed your analysis, it's time to look at your slides and match them emotionally with the music. Say for a particular bass line you wrote on your sheet "ominous"—at this point put in the close-up of the rack of BigBros. Later, during the cymbal solo, you wrote "obnoxious." Put in the photo of Verm, grinning.

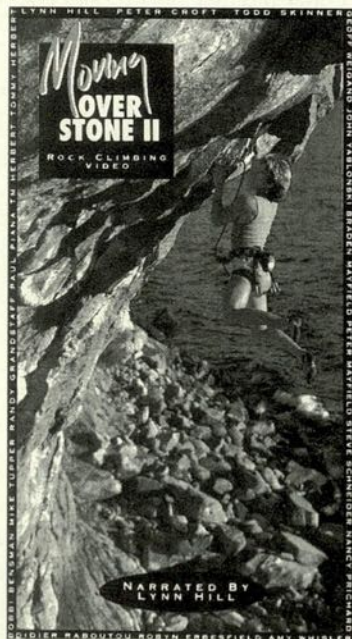
Editing

When you get your slides back from the photofinisher, *edit them ruthlessly*. Toss out the fuzzy, the poorly exposed, and the boring ones. If you've been exposure-bracketing your photos, you'll need a big trash basket. You might be emotionally attached to some of the technically wretched photographs. By all means keep those if they make you happy, but don't force your audience to wince at them.

Don't expect to read an article and automatically crank out Ansel Adams shots. To become proficient at photography takes lots of practice. Shoot lots of film. Make mistakes and learn from them. Strive for variety and originality. Persevere and soon you will be giving slide shows that will leave your audience begging for more, not mercy.

John Sherman hails from El Paso, Texas, and is a regular photo and editorial contributor to Climbing.

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A4a), *World's End* (VI 5.9 A5a), *Death of American Democracy* (VI 5.10 A4d), and *Deadman's Party* (VI 5.10 A5c). On these, he conditioned himself to climb alone, and to never give up, no matter how scary or awful the climbing was. On *Run Amok*, in 1979, he climbed a pitch-length curtain of vertical dirt by chopping steps into it with a hammer. He looked at *Death of American Democracy* for five years before finding the gumption to try it. On it he discovered the use of aluminum heads in soft rock. Such placements, aid-climbing aficionados will attest, provide all the security of walking on thin ice in a heat wave. On *Intifada*, his masterpiece on the East Face of Cottontail Tower, Beyer quivered enough to rate the route A6 — it is perhaps the world's most severe aid route. He summarizes the delights of the last pitch as "38 hook moves, a crux of stacked blade tips in rotten flakes, and a lunge to the summit." Beyer used no bolts on the route, not even for belays.

Beyer's Conradian obsession with Fisher Towers scared not only him, but those close to him. "During those years," he says, "every girlfriend I had told me I'd die there."

The Fisher Towers attuned Beyer so well to the subtleties of aid placements that he sub-divided aid ratings from the usual five into 14. In this system A1 through A3+ describe aid in a way most climbers who have stood in etriers would comprehend. Beyer's system divides A4 and above, though, into four degrees, a to d. Hard, or "psycho" aid commences at A4d, a rating which indicates the risk of a 40-foot fall with injury potential. A5a sports 60-foot fall potential. By A5d a fall could rip out a full pitch, including the anchor. Beyer describes A6a as having "extreme death potential involving more than two pitches with possible 200-foot falls. Cruxes are cutting edge technical aid. No bolts can be used for protection or belays, meaning that in the case of fixed ropes below, a fall could rip out lower anchors, too."

Though Beyer generally climbed alone on his new routes, and quietly,

word about these climbs got around the desert. Were his routes as extreme as he claimed? One veteran desert rat, Kyle Copeland, a climbing guide and guidebook author from Moab, knows Beyer and the nature of his routes. "There is no doubt that Jim has done the hardest nailing routes on Utah sandstone," he says, "but I don't always agree with his choice of line. He looks for incipience and difficulty rather than aesthetics."

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Charlie Fowler, the peripatetic all-round climber from Telluride, Colorado has known Beyer since the 1970s. "Jim has become a role model to many Yosemite big wall climbers," he says. "He pushes hard on his routes. The few who know him find his single mindedness inspiring."

But if Beyer's determination has earned him admiration, his intensity also scares people. "I'd be nervous to climb with Jim," says Copeland. "He might push me beyond my limits." Furthermore, though Beyer's routes are established from the ground up, he sometimes stretches the definition of traditional.

"Jim's tactics are unusual," says John Middendorf, a big-waller with many hard desert and Yosemite walls to his credit. He sometimes fixes ropes until the final ascent, bivying on the ground rather than the wall. And his free tactics are questionable. He sometimes aids a pitch first then subsequently frees the moves while hanging on jumars from fixed rope."

Beyer admits to these methods in accounts in the *American Alpine Journal*. Of *Intifada* in the Fisher Towers he states "the 900-foot climb took nine days and one night on the wall." On a

new route on El Capitan left of the West Face, *Reach for the Sky* (VI 5.11d A4d), he records his tactic of working a pitch free from fixed rope. "My only question about climbing like that," Middendorf says, "is that subsequent leaders are unlikely to find themselves on-sighting 5.12 when the only pro is A3 copperheads that the first ascent party placed on aid, but subsequently removed."

After his sagas on the Fisher Towers, Beyer noticed something an impartial observer might call strange: he was more comfortable climbing alone than with a partner. "On multi-day aid routes," he explained during our Boulder meeting, "you need mental stamina to focus on the technical situation. Being with another person breaks my concentration."

With the dream of a Karakoram wall of rock and ice in his mind, Beyer spent hundreds of hours running, weight-lifting, and biking. He crafted his diet to create physical bulk to sustain his body on long walls. Even on a simple pitch in Eldorado, he always shouldered a full rack to stay used to carrying the heavy gear needed on long routes.

In the mid-1980s he began experimenting with a form of sports meditation or self hypnosis. "It's mental pre-programming," says Beyer. "It helps me cope with instants when I need an automatic reaction to survive." He would visualize himself in dangerous climbing situations and store survival responses. Long before a climb Beyer would be psychologically ready, for he had already visualized the worst a climb could present — even hideous injury. By indoctrinating himself with planned, automatic escapes from every situation he learned to push himself harder. "Some people buy insurance," he says, "I train mentally and physically to stay alive."

By 1989 Beyer deemed himself ready for the Karakoram. He arrived at the base of the Grand Cathedral, a 19,245-foot-high granite layer cake of walls overlooking the Baltoro Glacier. With only a cook at basecamp as support, Beyer set off on his dream climb. At just about the same time Mark Wilford and I stumbled out from a 13-day night-

mare of storm and failure on Nameless Tower. Once again, as in Yosemite in 1977, I found myself on the ground, watching Beyer, who appeared as a dot on the wall. Beyer's cook, a Balti, handed me a cup of tea and we sat on a boulder watching him solo a searing crack line. "Jim good man," said the cook, "but little bit crazy."

Fifty-four pitches. Thirteen days. Beyer's route on Grand Cathedral was no pushover but it went smoothly in good weather. He rated the experience VII 5.10d A4+. Perhaps it was a fantasy realized too easily, for in 1990 he was back in the Karakoram, this time in the Hunza region.

"On some of my climbs I've gone for the summit at all costs, exceeding what could be called intelligent actions. This might compromise my credibility with some people," said Beyer as he began to tell me the story of his solo of Bib-O-li-Motin, a 19,685-foot rock fang above the village of Karimabad.

I, too, knew the peak well. I'd attempted it in 1985, but fusillades of stonefall from its couloirs and 2200-foot walls sent me and my companions running, as it did three later expeditions. The only previous ascent of the mountain when Beyer tried it in 1990 was by Patrick Cordier's French party in 1982, via the mixed East Ridge. The stupendous southeast face was unclimbed, and that was Beyer and Pat McNerny's goal.

Beyer had befriended McNerny, a climbing guide, that year in Moab. To prepare for the Karakoram the two climbed a new route on the Diamond (*Steep is Flat*, VI 5.10 A4+), and had an impressive season in the French Alps.

On Bib-O-li-Motin, the pair spent 12 dangerous days dodging rockfall, fixing rope, and load carrying up a 200-foot ice cliff in the approach couloir before dumping their gear at the foot of the wall. Large avalanches are common in this region — two Japanese attempts on Ultar, a peak next to Bib-O-li-Motin have ended tragically this way, and in 1985 I'd seen slides rake the gullies and flow over the meadows, sweeping away sheep and goats.

The night Beyer and McNerny set off they found their fixed ropes piled at the foot of the ice cliff, shredded by an avalanche. Undeterred, Beyer patched a

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toward the wall a
voice inside me
kept saying
'Dude, you are
one step closer
to death.'"*

makeshift line together from bits of 5- and 9-millimeter cord and headed back up the ice cliff. At the final overhanging lip, Beyer, totally without protection because all their gear was beneath the wall, found rotten ice that he couldn't get his ice tools to stick in. Each time he struck his ice tools or kicked a crampon into it, the ice exploded and his placement skated. A shakefest began that Beyer calls "worse than A6." Says McNerny, "It was the most incredible thing I've ever seen. For five minutes Jim would dangle from one ice axe, get the other in, then the first would pop out, along with his feet. He was gasping desperately. If he'd fallen he'd have gone 200 feet, and the rope would surely have snapped."

But eventually Beyer fought his way over the bulge. The pair reached the wall in a storm and began to climb. Two days later it was still storming and they were 500 feet up, climbing rotten rock. Cold numbed their hands. McNerny dropped a rope. As he rigged a rappel to fetch it from a rock snag his doubts about the sanity of their adventure welled to the surface.

"Maybe I'll just rap down to the rope and keep going and let you solo this nightmare," McNerny said. "Why don't you do that," replied Beyer calmly.

The partnership they'd begun on the Diamond was hard for McNerny to break. "I felt bad leaving Jim," McNerny later told me, "I wanted to be there, but I was way out of my depth."

As McNerny began the first rappel Beyer smiled at him reassuringly, to let him know he bore no grudge. "Don't worry, dude," he said in a fatherly tone. "You're like 99 percent of the people. You're afraid of dying."

By day six Beyer was near the top, having climbed a dozen ice-coated free and aid pitches. But three days later he hadn't moved, trapped in his bivy sack as a

snowstorm raged around him. On the ninth day he pressed on in frigid weather. Beyer's resolve and equipment were now wearing thin. His ropes were frozen cables, his ice hammer had snapped at the head, his food was dwindling, and the weather, by the 10th evening, was again deteriorating. The whole time Beyer was on the wall a Japanese expedition on Ultar deemed the weather so bad they didn't move out of bascamp.

"Every hour or two," says Beyer, "I'd stop and shout into the storm, 'Do I really want to go on?'" Each time he decided he did, he'd swallow a caffeine pill and continue.

Sixty feet from the top he found himself stemming free up a rime-coated dihedron, his boots skating. Suddenly the snow blobs forming his footholds collapsed, and he was hurtling through the air.

Self-belayed falls tend to be long and often messy, and Beyer could ill-afford such folly. His mental programming kicked into gear. He rotated and lunged for his last piece of pro and caught it with both hands. Had this catch been in a baseball game, Beyer would have received the MVP award, but where he was his only reward was survival. Grappling with the corner again, he thrashed up and over the rim to find himself in darkness and storm, without headlamp or bivouac gear. He was not, however, on top but on a rubble-strewn slope below a thorny crown of possible summits.

The situation was deflating. "My adrenaline rush had long gone," says Beyer. "The survivor in me said, 'No more.'" He turned around.

Bitter thoughts wracked Beyer on the descent. He felt he no longer cared about summits. He hated mountains. But by the time he reached the meadows and McNerny two days later, he realized that, although he hadn't stood on the highest pile of rubble on top, there was an element of success to his climb: he had completed a wall that had thwarted four expeditions, and he and his partner were going home alive.

By 1991 Beyer figured he was ready to climb the hardest big wall route in the world. Using money from a spec house he built in Boulder, he organized an expedition to Nameless Tower (20,463 feet) in Pakistan, and, since he was in the land of the

8000-meter peaks, Gasherbrum I (aka Hidden Peak, 26,471 feet). Two solo "training routes," in 1989 and 1990 in Colorado's Black Canyon of the Gunnison — *Climb Bold or Fly* on the Painted Wall, and *Black Planet* on North Chasm View Wall, both boltless and rated VI A4d — had put him in good stead.

Perhaps Bib-O-li-Motin had left a residue of fear in him. Shortly before departing for Pakistan, Beyer visited Yosemite to seek a partner for Nameless Tower. John Middendorf was keen. Though Middendorf had seen Beyer around for years and knew he was a master big-wall climber they'd only climbed a few short free routes together. "Jim was always an outsider to the cliques of Yosemite," says Middendorf, who suggested they climb a long route to get better acquainted. Beyer and Middendorf's Pakistan plan, however, never got off the ground.

Beyer arrived alone in Islamabad a few weeks after the defeat of Saddam Hussein's army. Many climbers had canceled their trips to Islamic Pakistan. Not Beyer. He called his expedition the "Trango Shakefest '91." He wanted an experience beyond any of his other climbs. This he got, but not in the way he planned.

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His problems began in Islamabad. Says Beyer, "A paperwork mix-up between my expedition and some other group had led my young liaison officer to believe three women were on my team. His first question to me was, 'Where are the ladies?' When I explained there was only me, his fantasy of a vacation in a basecamp of women was shattered."

To fathom Beyer's further fiascos one must understand that Pakistan's mountaineering rules in 1991 required expeditions to have at least four members.

Through negotiations with the Ministry of Tourism, Beyer solved this glitch by hiring three Pakistani high-altitude porters to be his partners. It wasn't an ideal situation, and was costly, but it got Beyer moving toward the mountains. The problem was, though paid and contracted to do so, this trio refused to carry loads. During the approach along the Baltoro, these paid members and Beyer's other porters made daily sit-down strikes, demanding better equipment and more pay.

But Beyer's main conflicts arose from the bad chemistry between him and his LO, whom Beyer paints as a rigid martinet who protested at every opportunity. "Jim, you'll take 101 risks on this climb, but I will not take a single risk," said the LO at the start of the trip. "Every rule must be followed exactly." Things went downhill from there, says Beyer, beginning when the LO, while examining the expedition clothing provided by Beyer, found he was getting used longjohns and other hand-me-downs from Beyer's wardrobe. The combination of the LO's intractability and Beyer's distrust of authority figures and naiveté on how to interact with his Pakistani hosts created an explosive situation. (The LO was unavailable for comment for this article.)

Perhaps Beyer had pre-programmed himself for the showdown that followed on the Dunge Glacier. On the final day of the approach, trouble began within sight of the granite bulwark of Nameless Tower. Beyer attempted to pay off and send back one of his three paid members. This plan — intended to save him money and endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism, says Beyer — precipitated an argument when the member refused to leave. He wanted to stay to earn more money. Backed up by the LO, the others quit in sympathy, leaving Beyer with six regular porters to shuttle his 10 loads to the peak. Beyer left the four bickering on the talus fields, and set off, happy to be rid of them. An hour later, sweating under a heavy load, Beyer heard the LO behind him hailing the group to stop.

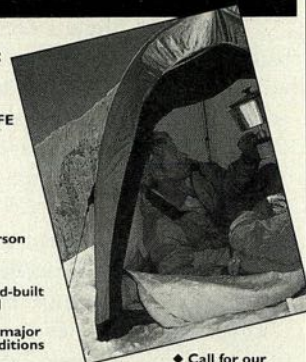
Awaiting the LO's arrival, Beyer instructed the porters to remove their loads and pile them in a heap. "No man approaches me," he ordered, and positioned them 10 feet away.

"The expedition is over," declared the LO. "We return to Skardu. Porters, pick up your loads and follow me."

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#4

A TRUE STORY!

"Dhaulagiri Did Not Go As Planned."

Dear Todd (Bibler)-

When I arrived at base camp, Carlos Buhler had a bad case of bronchitis ... Dainus Makauskas had stepped into a crevasse and torn the medial collateral and cruciate ligaments in his knee ... I was left as the sole healthy climber. I climbed through the ice-fall to the col at 5600 meters, and a major storm moved in causing major avalanche hazard I arrived at the 8167 meter summit on 19 October. The descent to my



Bibler tent at high camp was a bit of a nightmare, as strong winds and snow severely restricted visibility. It became dark, I got lost, and didn't find my tent until three hours after

dark. The Bibler was very important to my success and survival. On a solo, you have to carry all the gear, and keeping weight down is critical. Many other tents would have been torn apart, but I was able to spend a reasonable night in my Bibler. Thanks!

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"Don't touch the loads. Everyone stand back," Beyer countered.

The LO had found a technical point; because three members had quit, Beyer was no longer the team of four stipulated by the rules. Also illegal was the fact that the team had split into two groups. Such details are commonly overlooked by LOs, who usually seek to help an expedition climb its peak. But in this case expedition justice became perverted.

A war of words ensued. Beyer made it clear he was staying. Essentially, he was in the right — the rules state that the expedition leader is the ultimate authority, and if he disagrees with an LO's decision he must state the nature of the disagreement in writing, but need not follow the LO's orders.

Meanwhile a witness appeared out of the rubble: a Spanish climber heading up to jumar his ropes on Great Trango Tower. "He seemed torn between his climb and this crazy spectacle," says Beyer. "I said, 'Hey, man, wait a few minutes and you'll see the biggest fistfight of all time.' I knew I couldn't fight off 10 guys, but a witness might be useful."

The Spaniard left. With a cry of, "Porters, follow me," the LO charged at Beyer, who threw the enraged soldier onto his back. Successive charges — unaided by the flabbergasted Balti porters — ended identically.

"You assaulted a Pakistan army Lieutenant," the LO screamed. "I vow you will never leave this country. You will go to jail. I will see that a helicopter returns to forcibly remove you from this mountain."

Beyer considered, then stared into the LO's eyes and said calmly, "The decisions you make today might have a great affect on your career, Lieutenant, because if a helicopter comes up here they'll never take me alive."

While relating the tale to me Beyer grinned, as if in hindsight he had found a soft spot for the LO. "We were similar in a way. We're both fearless." The stalemate ended when Beyer agreed that everyone but he would return to Skardu. He gave the Pakistanis food and a goat, but retained everything else.

Alone, Beyer couldn't shake off the feeling that his enemies were hiding in the rocks, waiting to steal his gear the moment he left camp. So he hid his loads under boulders across the glacier, and carried them up valley by night to a

concealed camp where he hid by day from the threatened helicopter (which never materialized). After a week of load carrying to the base of the 3000-foot wall Beyer was in position to begin the greatest climb of his life. He had gone through the awful and the ridiculous to get there; now it was just himself and the wall. In a fit of jubilation he stood atop a boulder and declared the Dunge Glacier an independent country, and himself its benevolent dictator.

But as Beyer climbed the couloir next evening he was flooded by doubts. "With every step toward the wall a voice inside me kept saying 'Dude, you are one step closer to death,'" says Beyer. The insanity of the previous weeks and the isolation were playing on his nerves, but Beyer knew the value of intuition. To add to his burdens he had twisted his ankle (the injury was later diagnosed as a fracture), and walked with pain throughout the week of load carrying.

Beyer gropes for words to explain his snap decision to quit Nameless Tower. "I spent a lot of time in my tent, thinking. Climbing had always been something I'd done for my own amusement," he says. "But this time I'd found myself fighting for the very right to do it. Every step of the way things had gone wrong, and I began to have very negative thoughts about my chances under the emotional circumstances. One morning I woke up with a complete change of thought. I would cross the glacier, find some people to talk to, and head on to a fresh start and another adventure: to climb an 8,000-meter peak."

Masquerading as a trekker hurrying to catch his friends, Beyer and a single porter he hired on the Baltoro Glacier trail crept through basecamps to arrive beneath Broad Peak (26,400 feet), the world's 12th highest summit. He had abandoned the idea of Gasherbrum I, for which he had a permit, as it was two additional days up valley. Beyer planned a clandestine ascent, using fixed ropes and camps others had left on Broad Peak's West Face. He began climbing the day after his arrival, just as storm clouds appeared. It was late in the season and his camp had minimal provisions. Beyer gambled that he could climb faster than the storm would advance.

Carrying only a bivy sack, he raced up the slopes. At about 23,000 feet he

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clearly that someday
a hook was going to pop
when I was soloing
and that would
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and climb traditionally
but I want to share it
— with partners."*

encountered three Frenchmen descending from the impending storm.

"Who are you?" one asked, shocked to see a new face on the hill.

"I can't tell you my name, but I am your friend," said Beyer, still edgy about being captured by the army.

"American?" quizzed the Frenchman.

"I am your friend."

"You have no permit?"

"I'm a friend. Tell me what is above."

"There are some Mexicans, but their tents are full."

"I have no tent, no sleeping bag," explained Beyer.

"You must go down!" shouted the Frenchman.

"Not till I reach the summit."

"You are crazy!" The French climbers left.

At the Mexican tent a gale howled. Beyer, desperately cold, shouted into the door, "Buenos dias. I'm in bad shape out here." He had weighed the possibilities of this moment. What if the Mexicans refused him entry? Would he beg them, bribe them, use violence? He didn't have to worry. Two hands reached out and dragged him in. For an hour Beyer languished in exhaustion — he hadn't eaten or drank all day, and had climbed 8000 feet.

But soon the tent began disintegrating in the hurricane wind, and the Mexicans urged him to get out and escape with them. When he looked out at the raging storm, Beyer realized climbing up was impossible and began descending. His first few steps told him that his body had, as endurance athletes put it, "bonked," or used up every molecule of available energy. Hallucinations and leg cramps plagued him. He staggered, sob-

bing with the pain and frustration and fear that his body wouldn't carry him out of the blizzard. Beyer became convinced he'd die. The Mexicans urged him on, but the snows were nearly smothering them and they didn't even know who he was. The only thing that kept him awake during that 10-hour descent to Camp II were his caffeine pills, each one equivalent to two cups of coffee.

"I'd always prided myself on being a survivor, and it was those skills, that willpower and all my training that got me down that afternoon," says Beyer. "But I also realized something else, and that was how much I love life. Anyone who didn't want to live as much as me would have died, regardless of their training."

At Camp II Beyer flopped in a tent while the Mexicans descended to basecamp. Twenty hours of constant movement had wrecked him. He stayed awake long enough to melt some snow, and drink it. At dawn he awoke to a churning gut. The snow — polluted by many climbers over many seasons — had given him explosive diarrhea. "The stomach cramps were terrible. I fouled the tent, my suit, everything." He forced himself down the last of the mountain, shit welling up the legs of his altitude suit. At basecamp he collapsed, until the Mexican team's doctor rendered assistance.

Oh, were it over then; he had yet to face the music in Islamabad after walking out. Needless to say, the Ministry of Tourism's officials didn't view Shakefest '91 as a triumph in U.S.-Pakistan relations. Wisely, they'd vetoed the LO's demand for a helicopter mission to arrest Beyer, but when Beyer asked them to refund his helicopter-rescue and environmental-protection bonds (amounts totaling \$5000) matters got sticky.

At the Ministry, a high-ranking official told Beyer "The good news is we won't stop you leaving the country. The bad news is your LO says your porters did massive environmental damage on their hike out by burning firewood and not disposing of a goat carcass in a hygienic manner."

Pressed to sign a document accepting responsibility and forfeiting \$1000, Beyer refused, calling the charge bogus. An argument ensued which became so heated that Beyer's Pakistani trekking agent, who was also present, shouted, "I hate Americans! George Bush kills innocent Iraqis!"

Finally Beyer consented to pay a small fine. "Well, Mr Beyer," said the Ministry of Tourism official as the troublesome tourist left his office, "I don't think we'll be seeing you back in Pakistan again, will we?"

My weekend with Beyer was classic Colorado, with cool winter sunshine. He took most of a day to relate his tale of Pakistan, and by its end he looked exhausted. In what he'd told me I found much that was shocking and askew from my perceptions of human nature. Though I admire Beyer in the same way I admire climbers like Voytek Kurtyka, Doug Scott, and Mugs Stump, his cult of solitude was unsettling in a visceral way. But then I had never visited the spiritual and physical hinterlands of self the way he had. Beyer had many layers, and I had only scratched the surface of getting to know him. Though his adventures as a soloist defined a personality separate from those around him, at my last question he revealed a newly emergent individual.

"I'll ask you the question I'm often asked after an expedition," I had said to Beyer. "Are you a different person than before that ordeal?"


It sounded like a dumb question, and I expected to hear plans of more solo brinkmanship. Instead he said this: "I left the old Jim behind the morning I decided to quit Nameless Tower. It's not that I psyched out, but for the first time I admitted to myself I was wrong. My whole psychology believed it was right to cultivate risks to achieve success. This led me to take terrible chances. Because I was soloing, in my self-centered world I could talk myself into it. Without being conscious of it, I behaved as if summits were worth dying for. I don't buy that any more."

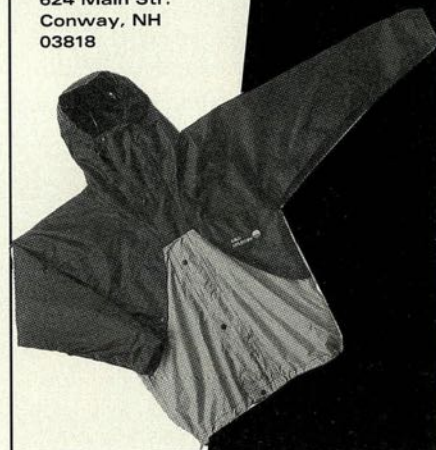
I hadn't counted on this dimension of Beyer — sobered, humble, sated. When he saw I was surprised he simplified his reasoning: "I guess I just saw clearly that someday a hook was going to pop when I was soloing and that would be the end. I still want to climb hard and climb traditionally but I want to share it — with partners."

A crag, wall, and Himalayan climber, Greg Child is a longtime contributor to Climbing. He is returning to Pakistan for another attempt on Nameless Tower this summer with Mark Wilford and Rob Slater.

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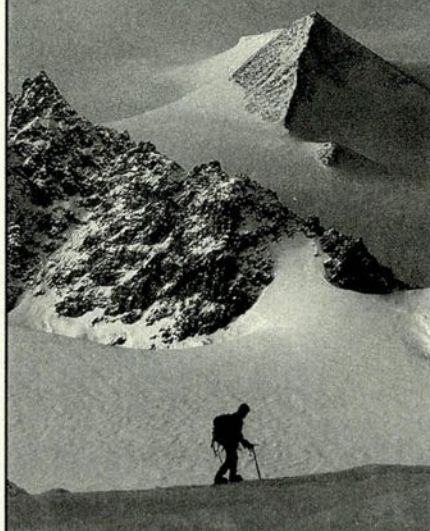
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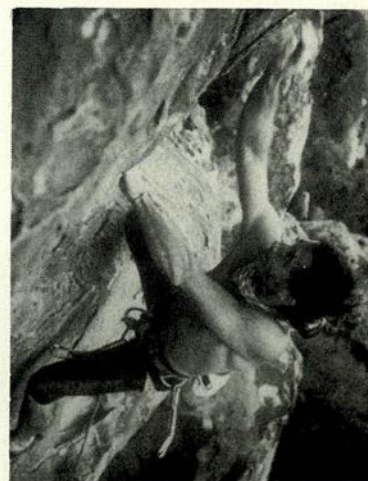
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Too high

Update on altitude-illness research
by Stephen Bezuchka, M.D.

In 1959, around the time of the birth of super alpinist Tomo Cesen, modern descriptions of altitude illness first appeared in the medical literature. Before that, victims of High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE), fluid congestion in the lungs, were thought to have pneumonia, and few victims of High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE), accumulation of fluid in the brain, had been described. But it took a long time for the new information to waft up to those going higher.

Pneumonia, instead of HAPE, continues to be diagnosed in climbers. After a drop in altitude—

AMS and acclimatization

Most people who ascend rapidly will develop symptoms of AMS, an "altitude hangover." Commonly, after a day or two at altitude, victims will have symptoms such as headache, nausea, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, or fatigue. Just sleeping a few nights at the altitude where you first develop these symptoms will usually get you back in shape for further climbing. If not, going down a few thousand feet to sleep will usually help. It matters little how high you climb during the day; it is the sleeping altitude that is important for acclimatization.

A useful sign of good acclimatization is a copious urine output every few hours when you arrive at altitude (here arbitrarily defined as 4000 meters or 13,000 feet). Those who lose about two percent of their weight as water this way don't suffer as much as those who gain weight. There is some carry-over of acclimatization after descent for up to six weeks. A climber may go high in order to acclimatize, then come down and make a quick ascent. This was Tomo Cesen's strategy on his solo of the South Face of Lhotse (8501 meters).

Climbers with a brisk hypoxic ventilatory drive (that is, those who increase their breathing most vigorously when oxygen in the air diminishes) perform better at altitude and may be less likely to get altitude illness than those who don't. (Top marathon runners, in contrast, characteristically have blunted ventilatory drives.) But psychological drive is also an important factor. Of the participants in the first oxygenless ascent of Everest, Messner has a strong ventilatory drive, while Habeler, with a blunted drive (meaning he doesn't increase his rate of breathing as significantly at altitude), was successful as well.

About five to 10 percent of climbers with AMS go on to develop the more serious edemas (HAPE and HACE). The earliest sign is that the victim is not his usual emotional self. This is difficult to detect in the mountain environment since so many other factors affect how we feel.

A more useful sign for detecting serious AMS and early HACE is poor coordination. A good test for coordination is tandem walking. Draw a straight line in the snow or ground and try to walk it, touching the toe of one foot with the heel of the other. You may have had a state patrol officer try this on you. Since tandem walking is more difficult when tired and dehydrated on the hill than when sober by the roadside, have someone not suspected of having altitude sickness do the exercise for comparison. Anyone staggering or otherwise having difficulty doing this test should descend, either physically or *physiologically* (more about this second method later).

New data suggests that drug treatment, in addition to descent, is the best way to handle serious AMS. Recommended treatment prescribes the

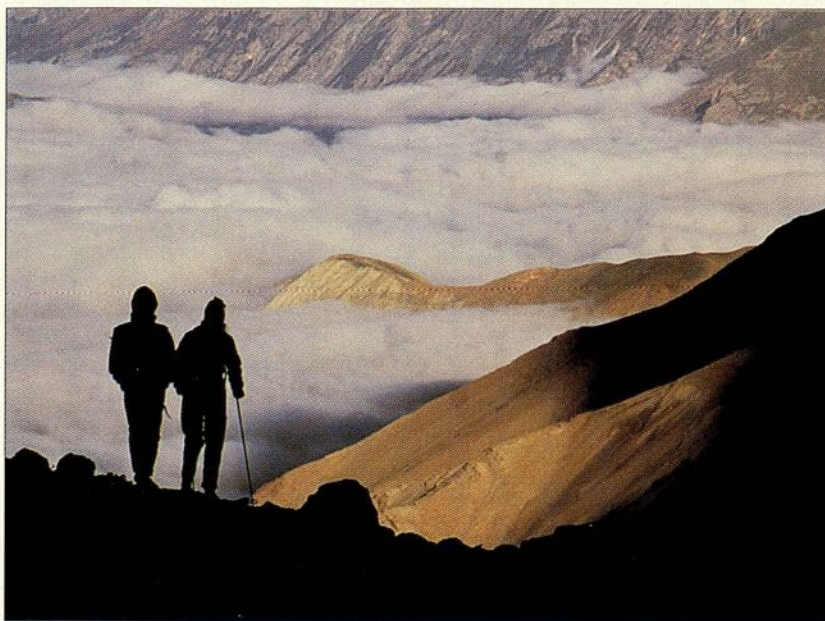


Photo: Michael Kennedy

Trekkers in Nepal.
What happens to you and your brain at altitude? What are the best treatments?

related trekker fatalities in Nepal, the number seems to be going up again. And climbers, especially those doing alpine-style ascents to extreme heights, succumb, even though often acclimatized. Peer pressure, competition, and denial are often involved. Doctors may be especially prone to get sick at altitude by this scenario. Medical problems up high are too often assumed to be something other than altitude illness; assume altitude illness unless good evidence suggests otherwise.

Research on altitude illness initially centered in the Himalaya, the Andes, and on Canada's Mount Logan. Lately, useful results are coming from work in pressure chambers, on Denali and in the Alps. Here is a summary of recent new information that has practical importance to climbers going high. A basic knowledge of the various syndromes (not yet universally called diseases), HAPE, HACE, and Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), will be assumed. The best guide to the basics is still Peter Hackett's *Mountain Sickness: Prevention, Recognition and Treatment*, published by the American Alpine Club.

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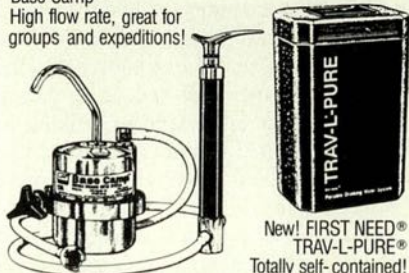
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potent corticosteroid dexamethasone (Decadron™ is one U.S. advertising name for this drug, but I urge you to use the official generic name, known world-wide) given every six hours in oral doses of four mg. The body makes a similar hormone, but treatment involves industrial-strength doses that perhaps act to decrease swelling in the brain. At the same time, give acetazolamide (commonly known as Diamox™, another advertising name best not used), 125 to 250 mg two or three times a day, to help reduce symptoms of AMS and aid acclimatization. When the body rids itself of bicarbonate, respiration slows. Acetazolamide slows down the chemical reaction where bicarbonate and acid are converted to carbon dioxide and water in the kidney, thereby allowing you to retain bicarbonate, and thus breathe more rapidly.

There are two drugs that help prevent the symptoms of AMS: acetazolamide and dexamethasone. Only acetazolamide is recommended, since it actually helps speed acclimatization, and is relatively safe. Research suggests that lower doses are probably as effective as the higher doses previously advised, and there are fewer side effects (people allergic to sulfa drugs should not take acetazolamide). Side effects include increased urination, making carbonated drinks taste flat, and, in higher doses, tingling of the hands and lips. Acetazolamide is especially helpful taken at bedtime, and is the only drug recommended to help sleep. Do not take sleeping pills at altitude as they aggravate oxygenation to the point where they could be lethal.

Many problems are associated with dexamethasone use in the mountain setting. If you stop taking it, because you lose the pills in an avalanche or leave them at the basecamp, you are worse off than if you hadn't started. Once you stop taking dexamethasone, you feel wretched as well. In studies where subjects didn't know what drug they were given, dexamethasone users felt so bad they said they never wanted to take it again. About the only preventive use that makes sense is on a fly-in rescue where you need to be able to function up high and don't have time for the gradual process of acclimatization.

Detection and treatment of HAPE

One of the earliest signs of HAPE is a slight decrease in exercise performance at altitude. This is obviously difficult to determine, since so many other factors affect performance. If you are still winded after others have recovered their breath, this may be an indicative sign. The mortality rate of HAPE, untreated, is over 40 percent. Even with treatment more than 10 percent of the victims succumb. If you have had HAPE

before, your chances of getting it again may be as high as 66 percent.

Recent research suggests that using a drug that dilates the pulmonary arteries can treat this syndrome, although this form of drug treatment is still poorly studied. Because such drugs lower blood pressure throughout the body, their use when HAPE isn't present can lower pressure to the point where a person can't stand without falling over, something you want to avoid on the North Face of Jannu. However, in studies in the Alps, climbers treated with nifedipine for their HAPE were later able to go on and climb further. This work, done in a controlled clinical setting, was the first evidence that anyone experiencing HAPE could do anything other than descend, recover, and maybe climb back later. Expect to see more data on this mode of treatment in the future. At present, nifedipine is not recommended unless the victim clearly has HAPE, and descent is impossible. In the case of an immobilized climber, a single 10 mg dose could be placed under the tongue and an improvement might be noted after 30 minutes. Someone must monitor blood pressures to gauge further doses. If the pressure falls dangerously low, no more drug should be given. One study appeared in the medical journal *Lancet*, pages 1241-1244, November 25, 1989. Those considering this treatment option should discuss this paper with a knowledgeable doctor. Previous HAPE victims can take nifedipine to help prevent HAPE on future climbs. A study on this was reported in the October 31, 1991, issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, pages 1284-9. More developments from studies in progress should help us develop better guidelines for the use of this and similar drugs.

The Gamow Bag

The Gamow™ Bag, a portable pressure chamber, is a new way to diagnose and initially treat most symptoms of altitude illness. Developed by Igor Gamow, a professor of engineering at the University of Colorado, it weighs about 12 pounds (with pump), and costs less than most funeral caskets. To diagnose suspected altitude illness, zipper the victim in the bag, pump it up, and see if he or she gets better. As air pressure increases inside the bag, the physiologic equivalent of 1000 meters (3000 feet) of descent is accomplished.

Experience among trekkers suggests that using the bag for an hour or two produces long-lasting results in the treatment of AMS. For those with HAPE or HACE who are unable to descend, the bag has proved lifesaving, though four to six hours are required. Inquire at Portable Hyperbarics Inc., Box 510, Iliion, NY 13357, (315) 895-7485 or Chinook Medical Gear, 100

Arapahoe Avenue, Suite 10, Boulder, CO 80302, (303) 444-8683. The hyperbaric bag should become standard equipment for larger expeditions to altitude.

In all serious cases of altitude illness, oxygen is crucial to therapy, and should be available. We know that cold, exercise, and dehydration act together to worsen the syndromes and may be important factors in causing them. Focus attention on keeping the victim warm, at rest, and well hydrated. Victims of HAPE using the new hyperbaric and drug therapies have, in several recent cases, cancelled evacuation plans when their conditions improved. Some deaths have resulted from this practice. Descent is the mainstay of treatment, always was, and probably always will be.

Other effects of high altitude

Recent research has focused on high altitude deterioration and what happens to the brain at altitude. Subtle but long-lasting brain injury occurs in those who spend time at extreme altitude (5000 meters, 18,000 feet). Those with more pronounced hypoxic ventilatory drives, who perform better at altitude, appear to suffer more long-term brain injury. The reason is not clear. While the pronounced drive may help them perform better at altitude, this may be because they breathe faster, causing a change in blood acidity that may shrink the blood vessels in the brain, compromising oxygen delivery there. Or brain damage may result because such individuals deliver less oxygen to their brains during sleep.

In chamber studies it has been noted that climbers lose weight during prolonged stays at high altitudes (no matter how good the food is), probably because of poor absorption through the intestines. The cause is thought to be edema, similar to that occurring in the brain and lungs. Studies indicate that the immune system doesn't function well at altitude, so (like AIDS patients) we are more apt to get infections. Even if we treat infections with antibiotics, they don't tend to get better until we descend.

The best advice on going to altitude is still to take your time and be aware of possible altitude illness. If symptoms appear, wait it out if it is mild, or take acetazolamide or descend if it is serious, and perhaps start dexamethasone as well. Getting plenty of rest, drinking lots of fluids and staying warm are also important. Just what you and Cesen learned in kindergarten.

A climber since 1965, Stephen Bezruchka, M.D., has provided health services to local people in isolated regions of Nepal, and is the author of The Pocket Doctor: Your Ticket to Good Health While Travelling, Nepali for Trekkers, and Trekking in Nepal, A Traveler's Guide.



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The GAMOW Bag at Makalu Basecamp, 1992, American Makalu Expedition. Left to right: Alan Burgess, Brian Cox, Peter Carse, Jim Stames, Pemba Sherpa, Brad Johnson. Photo: Brad Johnson

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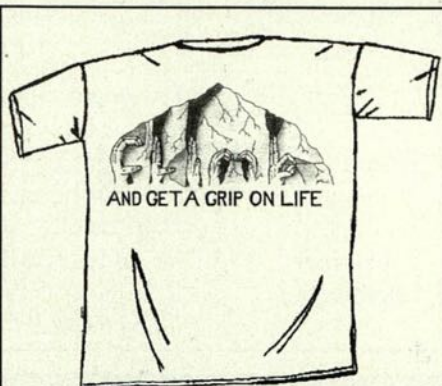
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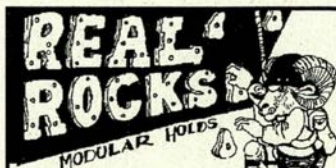
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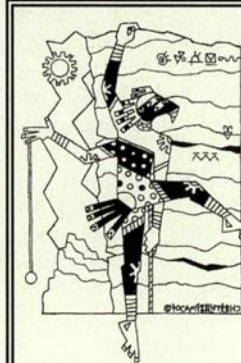
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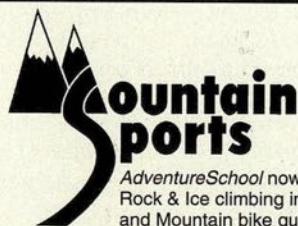
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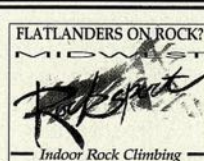
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WARNING

My protection gear was not designed for use with a static belay (i.e. no rope slip at the belayer, regardless of how high the forces get). Although my hangers and pitons are no longer produced, many are still in place or on climbers' racks. Their use with a static belay was not intended, is not suitable, and can cause equipment failure leading to injury or death, due to the high forces that may be generated in a static belay.

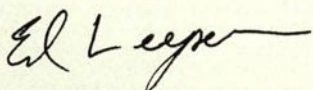
At particular risk are 1/4 inch Rawl-Drive bolts — round-head or stud type — but none of my gear has an adequate strength margin when used in static belaying. Nor may other gear, including UIAA-certified ropes; but I can't speak for other manufacturers.

Previously all common belay methods or devices have produced rope slippage with no conscious act by the belayer — when forces exceeded what could be held statically — thus limiting the maximum possible forces on ropes, on belay and protection anchors, and on the falling leader.

Recently, however, a European manufacturer, Petzl, has introduced their Grigri, a belay device which "locks onto the rope" with a cam action like an ascender. This is a whole new ball game.

True, Sticht Plates or similar devices have held most falls without rope slippage, **but this proves nothing.** In those rare, very hard falls where slippage did occur in spite of anything the belayer could do, that helped to limit all forces in an essential way. Furthermore, the fact that a UIAA-certified "dynamic rope" is tested, when new, to survive a high-factor static fall also proves nothing. There are no rock edges in the UIAA test.

If you want to participate in this major experiment of introducing the first truly static belaying in American climbing history, I hope you won't clip into any of my gear while doing so. Thank you.



Ed Leeper, Boulder, CO — 303/442-3773

Perspective

continued from page 152

West Buttress. A strong-willed person, she denied having any problems during the climb, and apparently didn't adequately monitor her condition. 2) In a freak accident in May, 1989, a tent — an anchored tent, inside a snow wall — with three people in it was blown from a camp at 16,000 feet on the West Buttress in a storm. One climber managed to cut his way out before the tent had gone too far and climbed up to tell the guides what was going on. All three climbers suffered injuries ranging from broken bones to frostbite, but survived the 1500-foot fall. 3) In June, 1989, a client suffering from altitude illness was unable to go the summit and after consulting with his guide elected to stay alone in a tent at high camp on the West Buttress while the rest of his party went to the summit. His condition deteriorated unexpectedly, and he was taken down by another Genet guide. He was able to walk to base-camp on his own.

A close look at these unfortunate incidents revealed mitigating circumstances which, in my opinion, made the actions of the guides involved not irresponsible or incompetent, just wrong choices for that particular day. We all learned from these events. None of us is likely to repeat them. Someone in the Park Service must have understood this; otherwise, Genet wouldn't have been allowed to operate for the past two years.

Speculation on the reasons behind Genet's demise abounds in Anchorage these days. An adage holds that there are two reasons people do things: the reason they tell you, and the real reason. No one seems to know the real reasons for the revocation of Genet's guiding permit. Possible causes include politics, personalities, and a history of differences between Genet personnel and the Park Service that goes way back — and unfortunately has little to do with Genet's overall performance on the mountain.

It's been my experience that guiding is more art than science, and that learning this art is a never-ending process. For every guide I know, this process includes doing some things that in retrospect would have been better done differently. We learn from our miscalls. Our judgement never becomes perfect, but it does improve with each expedition. This is how our profession evolves.

But Park Service policy undermines this process by keeping a cumulative tally of grievances, not only against the individual guide, but against the company he works

for. As a guide's experience increases, so do the odds of his becoming involved in an "incident." Because they worked for Genet, three of the seven McKinley guides who have led over 20 trips each won't be returning this year. The Park Service views their absence as an improvement. I do not.

The above was written before the 1992 season began. The record-breaking number of deaths this year underscores the reality that McKinley can be dangerous, especially to those unfamiliar with its particular hazards. We frequently read in Park Service press releases that accidents happen more or less equally to experienced and inexperienced groups. I question this. Experience on other mountains doesn't necessarily equate with safety on McKinley, but experience on McKinley does. One statistic that doesn't seem to get quoted too often is that far fewer climbers in guided groups tend to die: three deaths in guided groups versus 72 deaths in non-guided groups since the Park Service started keeping records in 1932. These numbers alone make the decision to remove a group of experienced McKinley guides very suspect.

This whole scenario saddens me greatly, not only because Genet is history and I'm out of a job (at 45, I wasn't anticipating many more years on McKinley anyway), but also because on the mountain I've caught glimpses of a better way. I've been part of a community spirit that seems to transcend the ranger and guide hats we wear. Above 14,000 feet, the different origins of our paychecks fade into the background, and we emerge as human beings with similar perceptions, resources, and appreciation for our surroundings. Guides and rangers share the common objectives of keeping the mountain clean, providing safe trips for ourselves and our clients, and being available to assist other climbers when needed. Don't we all return to McKinley year after year at least partly because of some special appreciation for the natural power and beauty we find there?

Over the years I've treated people for hypothermia, allowed climbers from other teams to rope with me on descent, and given open seminars on avalanche safety. I've found myself a constant source of information for less experienced climbers. I've been fortunate in that no client has been injured on a trip I've led. Other Genet guides' track records are similar. We all share our knowledge and skills with whomever needs them, and everyone is better off. Bringing some of this attitude

back to Talkeetna would do no harm to anyone.

My own interaction with rangers during the past two seasons was overwhelmingly positive. These guys were consistently helpful to me and my clients, and seemed empathetic to the logistical problems inherent in guiding. McKinley rangers have a difficult job balancing their roles as helpers, rescuers, and policemen, and from what I've seen they do it well. In real life, neither rangers nor guides bat 1000 in decision-making. I'd like to believe that although the original observations and interpretations were made by rangers, the situation escalated to its present sad state as layer upon layer of bureaucratic hierarchy became involved.

Enlightened park management should foster our commonalities. There's a new head ranger in Talkeetna this year. He's inherited the unenviable task of rebuilding a credible and co-operative relationship with the guide services. I wish him luck. No — I wish him more than luck. I wish him the wisdom to wield his power expertly and lightly. And I wish I could be around to lend a hand.

John Michaud originally hails from the flatlands of Missouri and currently lives in Anchorage, where he is studying for a degree in counseling psychology. He is a veteran of eight McKinley trips as a guide for Genet Expeditions. His last article for Climbing was "Money For Nothing: The Education of a Denali Guide," (no. 132)

Editor's note: Genet Expeditions' owner Harry Johnson appealed the Park Service action, and after that appeal failed, filed suit to have his company's guiding permit reinstated. The case was settled out of court. The settlement allows Johnson to retain his Denali guiding-concession permit, but only for the purpose of selling Genet Expeditions and transferring the permit to another Park Service-approved business.

Because it expires at the end of the year, the permit would apply only to the 1992 climbing season. Next year, officials will put Genet's four-year permit up for "open bid" and award it to the most qualified company, with no preference given to its previous owner (as is usually done with concessionaires that operate in national parks). As of mid-June, with only a month remaining in McKinley's 1992 climbing season, no sale had been reported and the permit's status remained in limbo.

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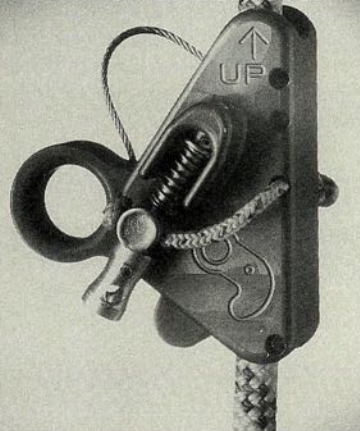
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Anatomy of a shutdown

by John Michaud

Last month was sweet. I had a feature article published in *Climbing*, and for a brief shining moment I was a knowledgeable spokesperson on the art of McKinley guiding. This month I'm history — booted off the mountain, perhaps never to return. I barely had time to bask in the afterglow. What happened?

In late February the National Park Service revoked Genet Expeditions' permit to run guided climbing trips on McKinley. Genet, for whom I've guided for six years, was accused by the Park Service of "a history of unsafe practices" which necessitated its removal "to service the public interest." Here are the official reasons given for shutting Genet down:

Incident #1: In February and March of 1991, a client was allegedly informed in a telephone conversation that Genet's safety record was perfect. It isn't, and stating otherwise is certainly a breach of professional ethics. Both Genet managers who may have received the calls deny this incident. They point out that the death of Genet client Lynn Salerno in 1989 is so frequently written about in mountaineering literature that disavowing it would be pointless, and that they normally mention this to prospective clients in pre-trip discussions in order to drive home the importance of communicating with the guide during the ascent.

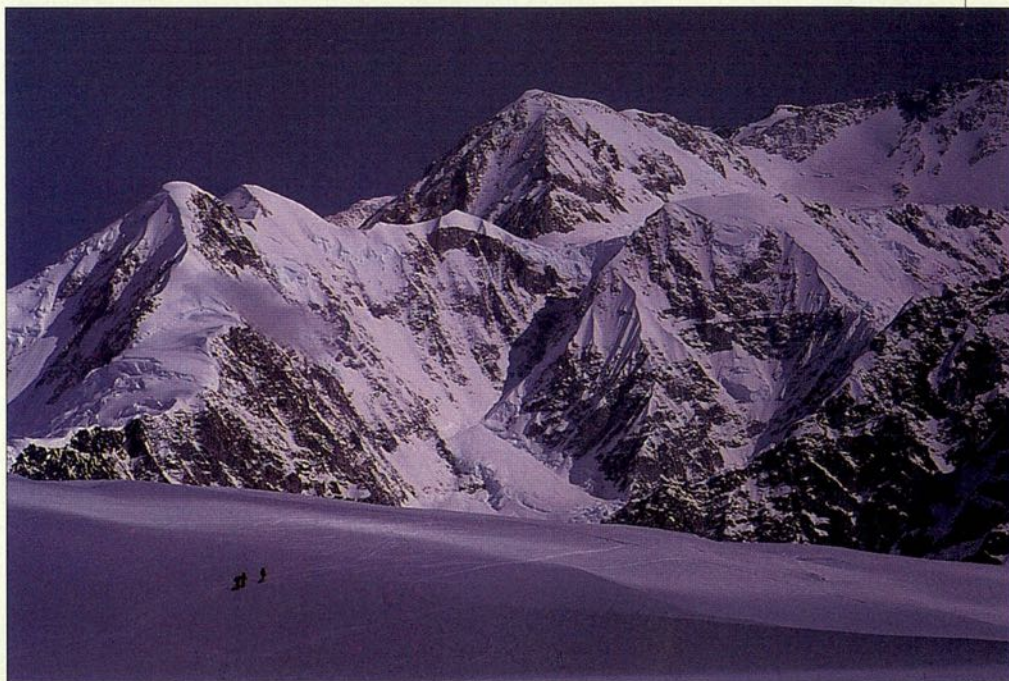
Incident #2: On May 30, 1991, an assistant guide led a group to the summit. The lead guide chose to remain with a sick client. The assistant and his team made the summit and returned safely to high camp. So what? Any assistant guide should be capable of assuming the lead guide's duties, and the facts indicate that this assistant was capable. In another incident cited from this trip, two roped teams were allegedly separated by a half hour to 45 minutes on Karsten's Ridge, a common practice that in no way compromised the safety of either group.

Incident #3: On May 26, 1991, a roped team of a guide and two clients fell and self-arrested while descending the steep slope leading down from Denali Pass to the 17,200-foot camp on the West Buttress. The upper part of this slope is often wind-swept hardpack, which many guides protect with snow pickets. But according to the lead guide, this incident took place lower on the slope, where there is a runout onto a flat snowfield. On this day the snow was softer than usual, and the guide decided that conditions meant little chance of a fall, and, should a fall occur, that it could be arrested easily. He was obviously correct.

Incident #4: In June, 1991, a client

ting down a company that's been in business for 24 years?

The first three incidents cited were associated with a trip on which, by all accounts, some extreme personality conflicts developed between guides and clients. The clients' subsequent complaints to the Park Service precipitated the revocation of Genet's permit. In the extended confinement and extreme conditions often experienced on Mount McKinley, personal dynamics occasionally wreak havoc on even the best-planned expeditions. Most experienced guides realize that unfortunate personality combinations are part of the game. However, the usual result is bruised egos



Climbers at 9000 feet on Denali's West Buttress, a route that has long been the domain of embattled Anchorage guide service Genet Expeditions.

stepped on a fixed rope, allegedly at the instruction of a guide. Stepping on the rope is taboo in mountaineering, but in the context of the thousands of sharp teeth on the ascenders which slide up and down the same ropes every day of the summer, the damage done by a few dull crampon points is negligible. Is such a minor error just cause for shut-

and a flurry of accusations, not the demise of the guide's business.

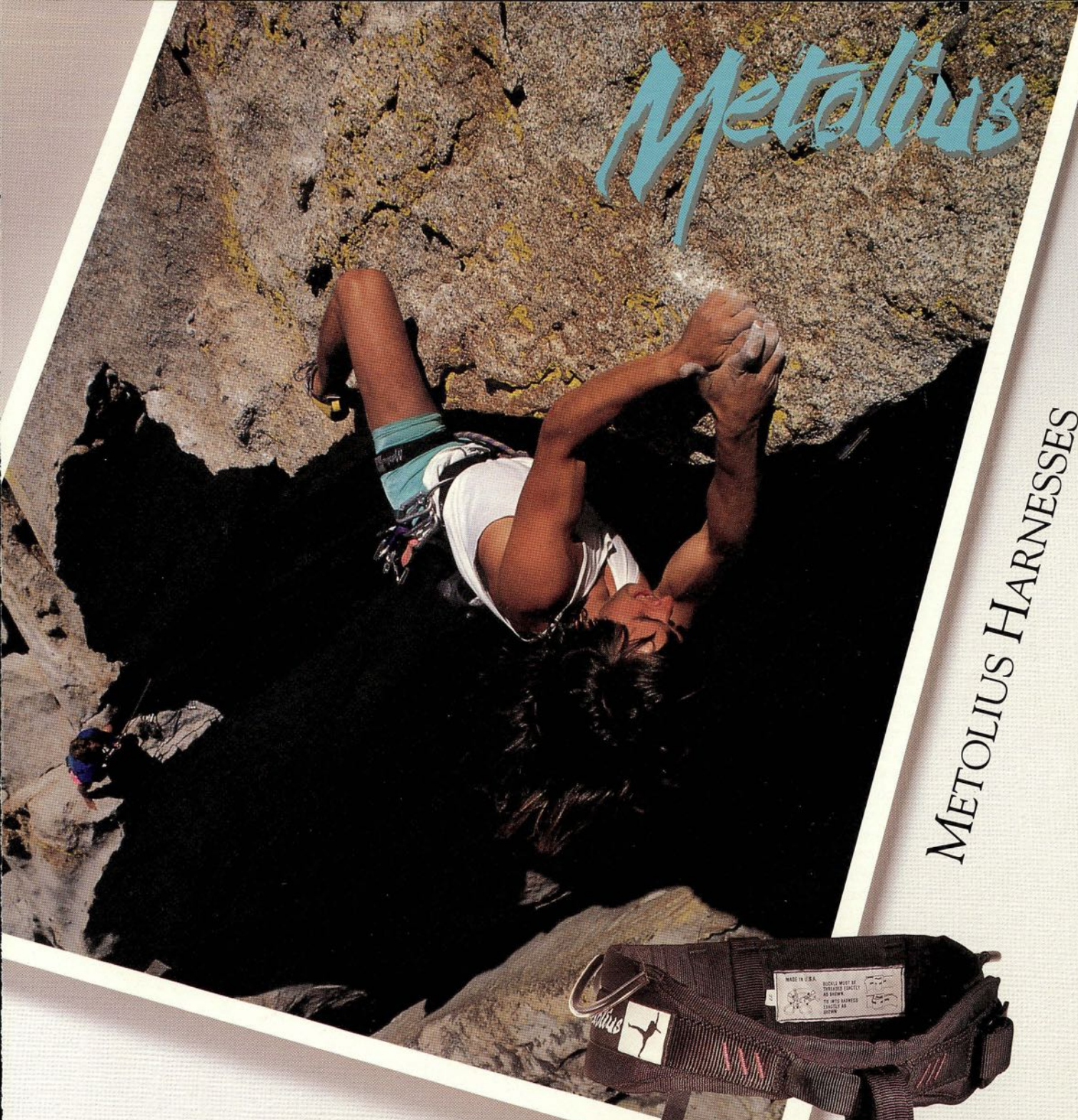
Genet's track record isn't perfect. During the summers of 1988 and 1989 Genet guides were involved in three "incidents" which certainly merit scrutiny. 1) As mentioned above, on May 18, 1988, Lynn Salerno died of exhaustion at 19,000 feet while descending the

Continued on page 150

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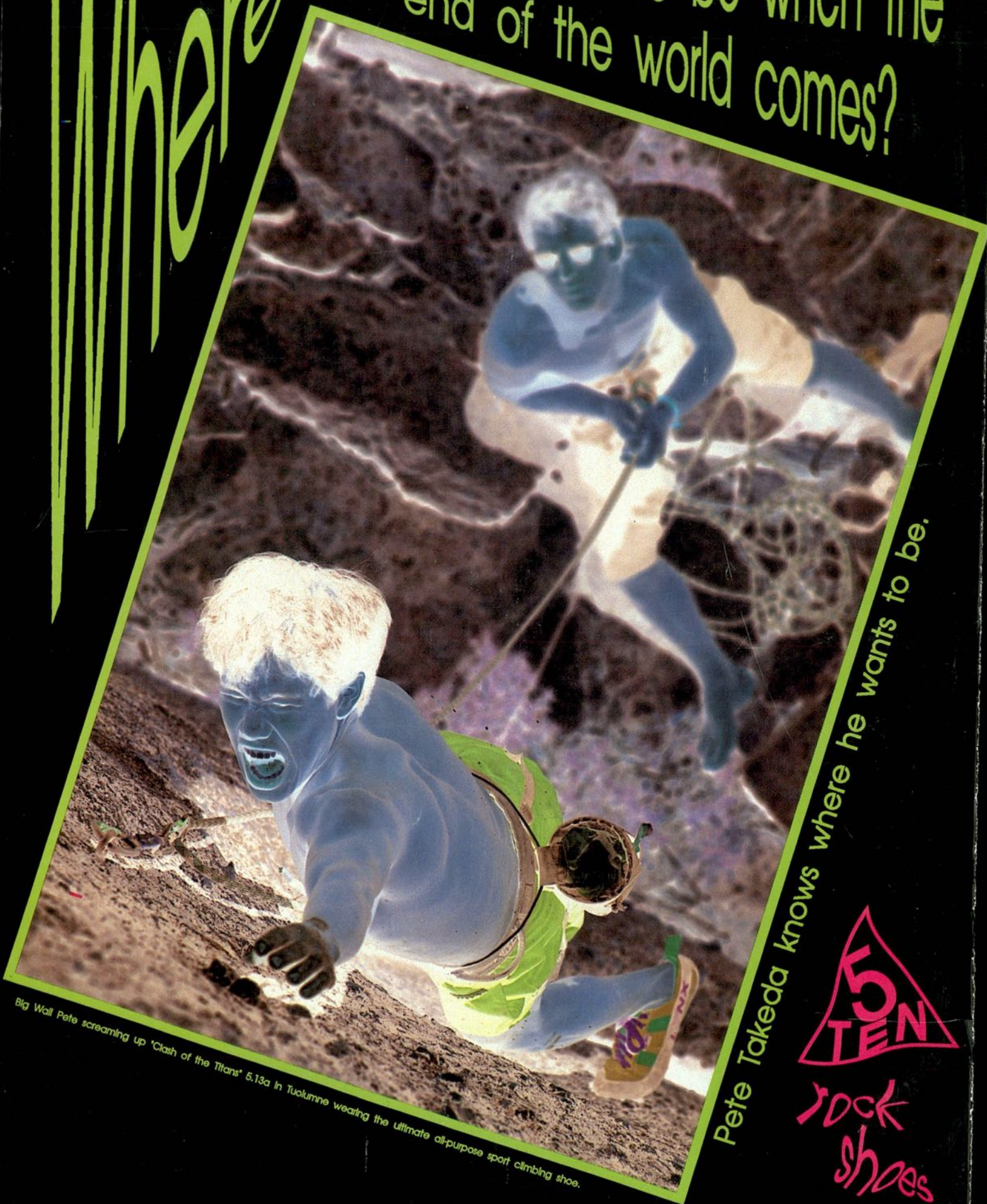
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