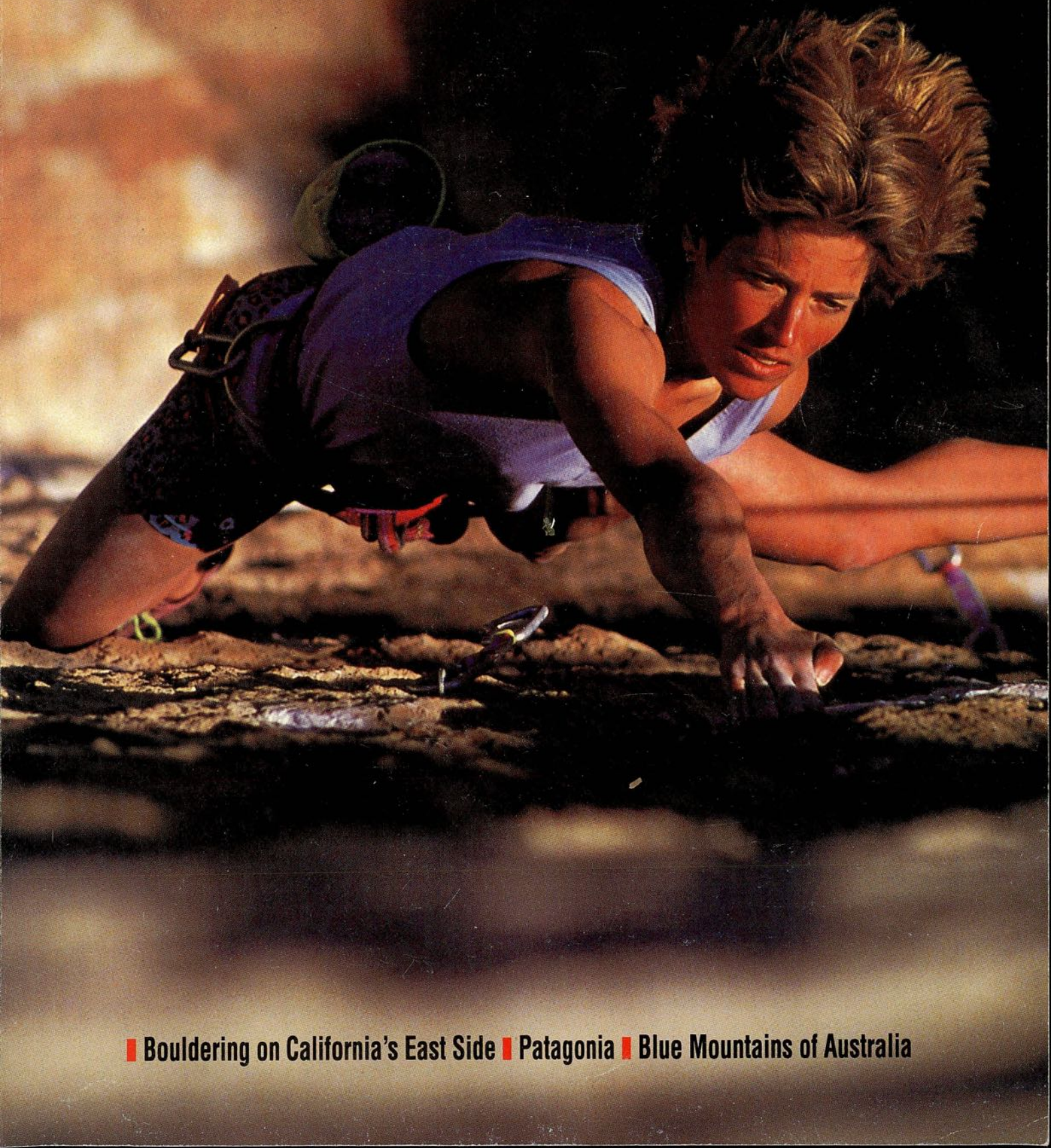


No 120 JUNE/JULY 1990

■ 1990 Rock Shoe Review ■

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CLIMBING



■ Bouldering on California's East Side ■ Patagonia ■ Blue Mountains of Australia

Wolfgang Schweiger, Rainbow Wall (5.13a). Photo: Brian Bailey

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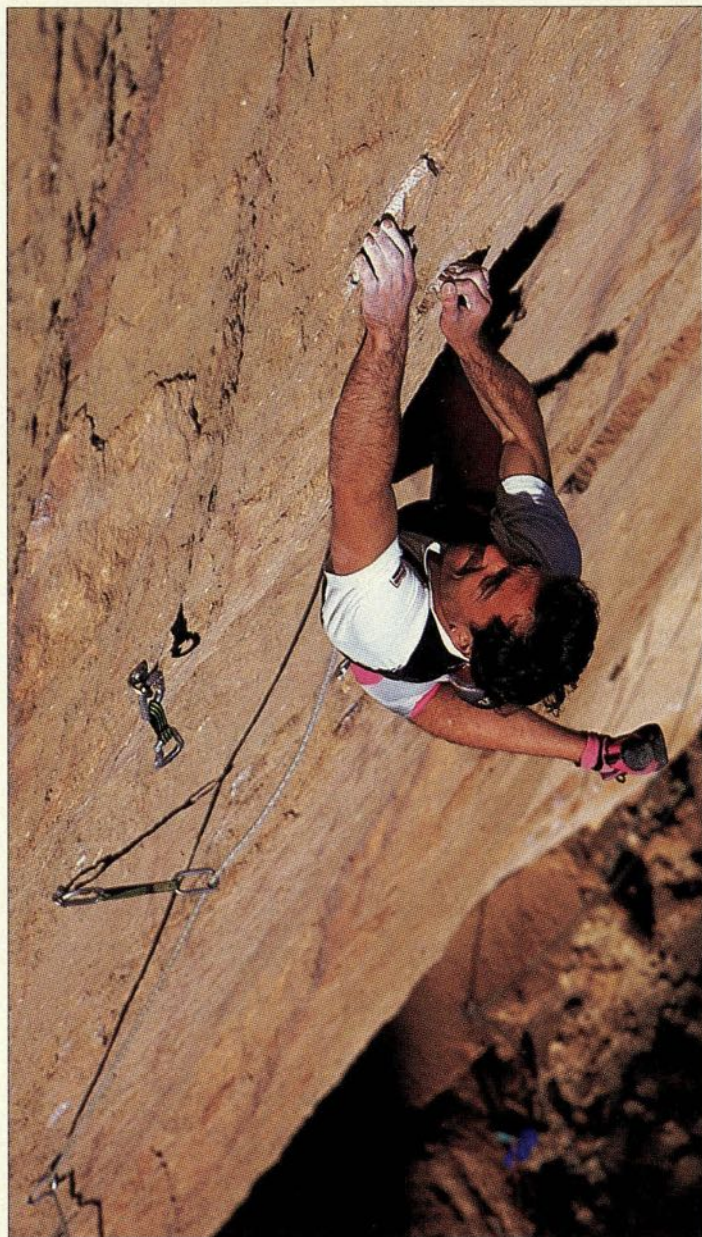


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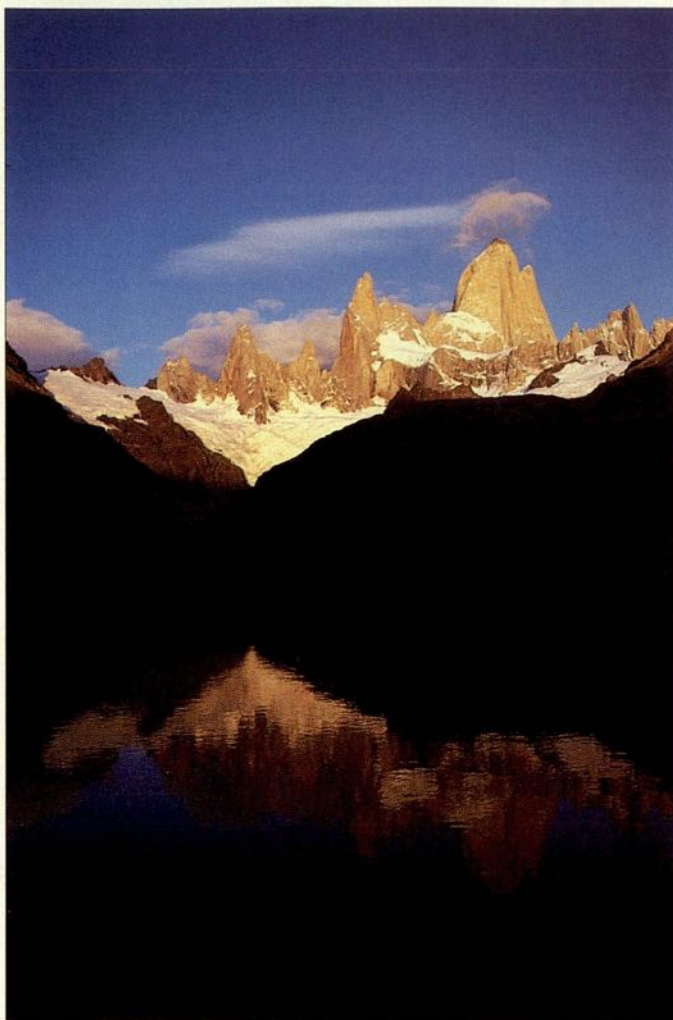
CLIMBING

Established 1970

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Sunrise on the east side of the Fitz Roy massif — Mojon Rojo to Mermoz — from the Rio Blanco Valley, Patagonia. Photo: Gregory Horne

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Most of the activities depicted herein carry a significant risk of personal injury or death. Rock climbing, ice climbing, mountaineering, back country skiing, and all other outdoor activities are inherently dangerous. The owners, staff, and management of CLIMBING do not recommend that anyone participate in these activities unless they are experts, seek qualified professional instruction and/or guidance, are knowledgeable about the risks involved, and are willing to personally assume all responsibility associated with those risks.

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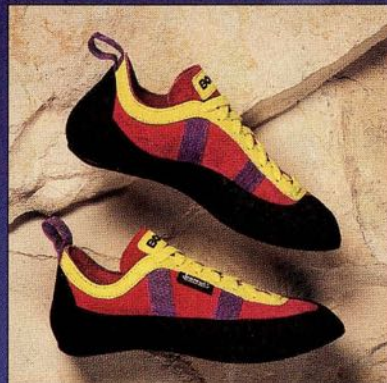
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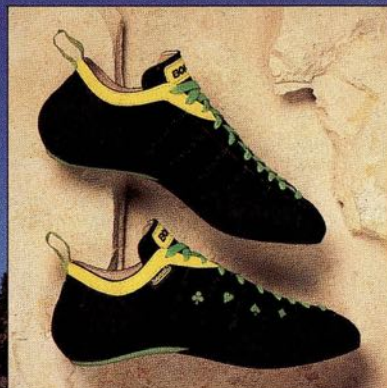
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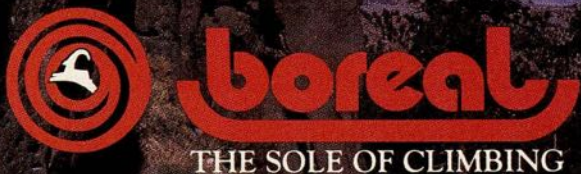
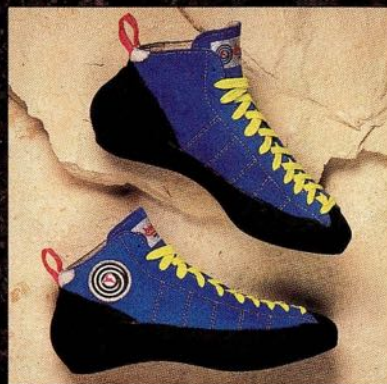
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John Bachar soloing "Oravity" (5.12a), Dexter Canyon.

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Hone your guns

Although I'd love to think that we climbed Howse Peak in three days instead of four, I have to point out that one of our bivies was missed in the picture on page 66 of *Climbing* no. 117.

In the same issue, *Slipstream* is given a technical grade of 4. Before history is rewritten, let me remind your readers that every ascent of that route from the second on (mine included) has avoided the direct finish by copping out to the right and gaining the summit icefield by way of a sensational, but easy, arete that divides the East and North faces of Snowdome. On the first ascent, John Lauchlan led the serac direct, not because he and Jim Elzinga didn't realize that they could scamper off to the right, but because they wanted to make their route harder.

Slipstream not a grade 6? Hone your guns and try the real finish, lads.

— Barry Blanchard
Canmore, Alberta, Canada

Who's the hero?

As a historian, outdoorsman, and student of Antarctic exploration, I was appalled by "What price adventure?" (Perspective, no. 118), especially since it was written by such a fine adventurer as Jonathan Waterman.

Waterman lionizes Robert F. Scott, a negligent naval officer who set off unprepared on a dangerous polar journey with inadequate equipment, skills, and knowledge. On the other hand, he shows disdain for the polar explorer Roald Amundsen, who, in contrast to Scott, spent years perfecting his skills and knowledge before demonstrating superior leadership on a highly successful expedition. The fact that Scott and his entire polar party died from poor preparation and leadership after failing in their quest to become the first party to reach the South Pole would seem to have some bearing on the subject.

Waterman praises Scott as a scientist for carrying 35 pounds of rocks back from the pole. The rocks were carried at the expense of speed which might have saved Scott's party; there were no scientific benefits, either, as the work had already been done by Ernest Shackleton. Amundsen is also condemned for unfairness (as Will Steger is) for using dogs. Yet it was the skilled use



of dogs and skis that brought his party to the pole first and safely home; the use of ponies and man-hauling contributed to the failure and deaths of Scott's expedition.

The contrast between the two expeditions goes still further in the favor of Amundsen: his careful preparation of food and equipment; his years of experience and study; his selection of team members for their skills and experience; the new route that he pioneered; and the small size of his expedition all indicate Amundsen's vastly superior approach to polar travel.

Scott deceived himself and generations to come when he wrote in his journal that "the causes of the disaster are not due to faulty organization." It was his incompetence in polar travel that led to the disaster, while it was his emotional appeal to English nationalism that made him a hero.

Thus, it is Amundsen and not Scott who should be held up as an example of an accomplished polar traveler. While I am not enthusiastic about the commercialism of Steger's expedition, I am in complete agreement with his methods. Such an ambitious journey cannot be carried out without the use of dogs and plane-dropped caches.

The six men of Steger's expedition, as Waterman points out, must still work for months under extreme conditions to achieve their goal. I hope and believe that the Steger expedition is modeled more on Amundsen's than Scott's. If a British explorer must be held up as an example, though, it should be Shackleton who, just short of the South Pole in 1909, had the sense to turn back rather than take his party to their deaths.

— Richard F. Lewis
Bloomington, Indiana

Take some responsibility

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is responsible for managing public lands and resources for multiple use. As federal land managers, we are often faced with conflicts between public land users and resource protection issues. We believe that an informed public is essential in helping us manage these areas in a responsible and cooperative manner.

The information supplied in your article about the Naturita climbing area in Col-

BECAUSE THE EARTH ISN'T FLAT

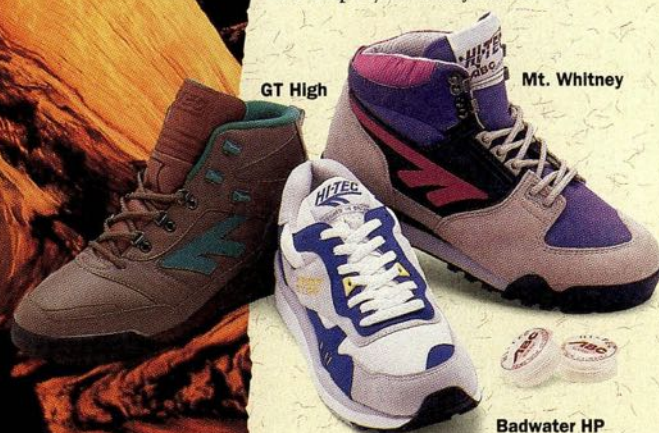
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areas of impact in the valley to existing roads and previously disturbed sites.

The BLM encourages responsible use of resources on public lands and respect for public and private property. We intend to work closely with the climbing community to ensure that accurate information is available pertaining to access, resource protection measures, and recreation opportunities.

Climbers may obtain maps and other information from the BLM office in Montrose (Bureau of Land Management, Uncompahgre Basin Resource Area, 2505 South Townsend Avenue, Montrose, CO 81401).

— Allan Belt
BLM Area Manager
Montrose, Colorado

Lower than a snake's belly

Had Glenn Tempest chucked a wobbly, writing about Bungonia "Canyon" (Basecamp, no. 116)? I doubt it: it's not the drum and he's no drongo.

Maybe you called Bungonia a "canyon" and not Glenn. Fair go. It's not a "canyon" mate, it's a gorge. Got it: *gorge*. It's Bungonia bloody Gorge, like it's not the Black bloody "Gorge" of the Gunnison. Stewrth!

I know you coves do a bonza mag but be fair dink and don't come the raw prawn with Aussie culture. But if Glenn called Bungonia a "canyon" (pig's arse, he did), well ... the bastard's been crawling lower than a snake's belly.

— Wil King
Mount Victoria, Australia

Just curious

I was fascinated by the recent report documenting body fat percentages of the top performers in the Snowbird competition (Off The Wall, no. 118). As a graduate student of exercise physiology at Columbia University I am very interested in the body fat statistics of the remaining competitors. Your readers may find the comparison between body fat and athletic prowess of further interest.

Those researchers who fear that these levels of body fat may be unhealthy are obviously mistaken. Otherwise, where would climbers get enough energy to sleep with each other's girlfriends, as was also reported in Off the Wall? And what does the fact that the women climbers have the lowest level of body fat of any women athletes mean in this context?

— George K. Soebus
New York, New York

Crack helmets, not heads

Much as I enjoy each issue of *Climbing*, I have been disappointed with the conspicuous absence of head protection in most of the magazine's photographs.

orado (Basecamp, no. 118) was very good. However, the Paradox Valley does not afford climbers unrestricted access due to interspersed private land and a number of resource restrictions currently in force.

For example, access to the base of the cliffs in the Atomic Energy Crag area requires crossing private land. At this time, there is no public easement to guarantee access, and climbers driving to the base of this area should be aware that they are trespassing. We suggest using other existing routes into the area, climbing at other areas, or securing permission from the private landowner.

Within Paradox Valley, there are sensitive resources which could be damaged by unrestricted activities. The most significant potential conflict lies with peregrine falcons and their eyrie, located in the vicinity of the Atomic Energy Crag. These birds and their habitat are protected by the Endangered Species Act, and climbers should be

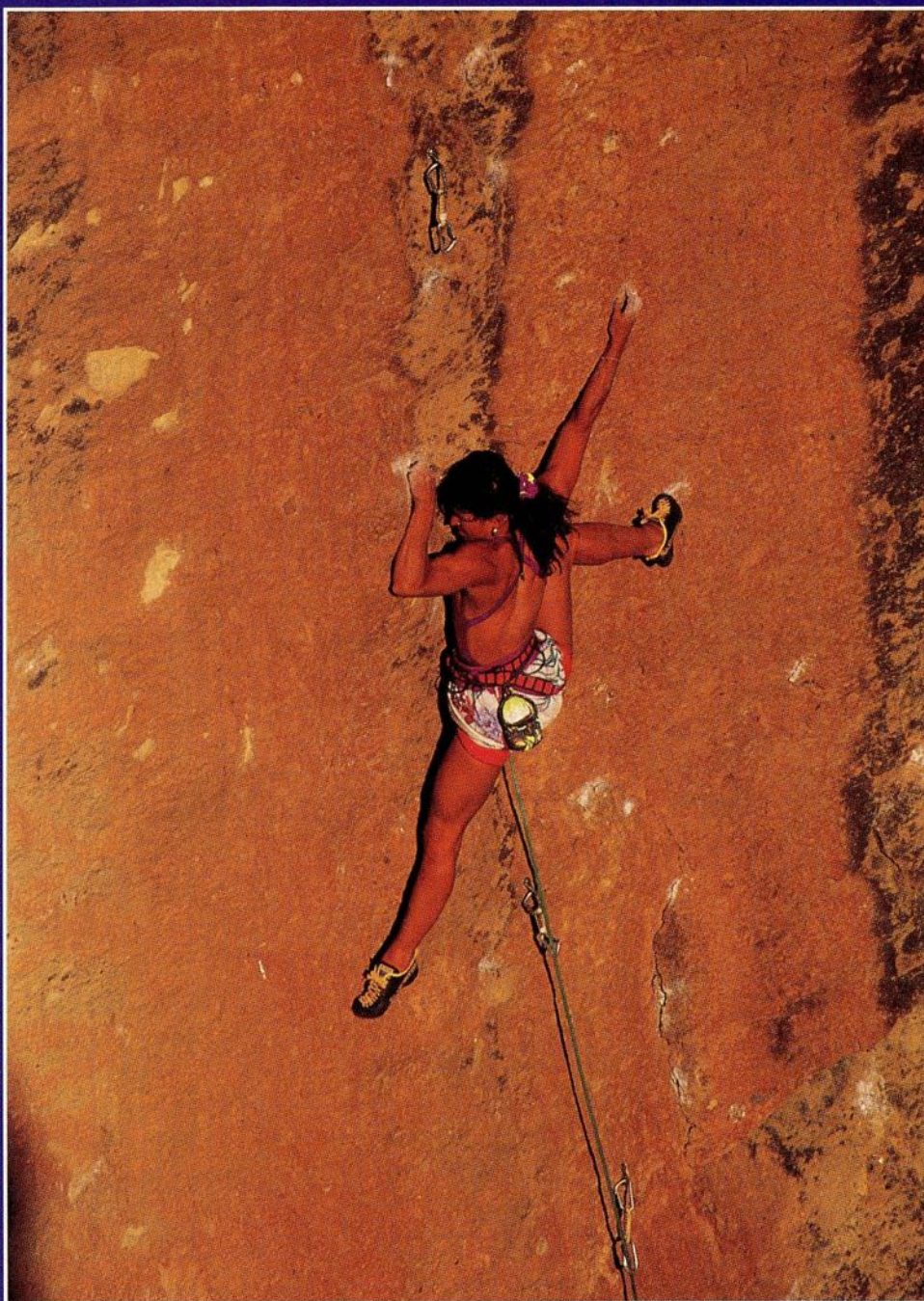
aware that disturbance in the eyrie area could result in fines of up to \$20,000.

The Atomic Energy Crag appears to be on the boundary of the area that is closed by the BLM to all human activity from March 1 to September 1. Up to now, the closed area has not been posted by the BLM, primarily because of its isolated location. Colorado Division of Wildlife personnel and BLM do monitor this area and will be evaluating the magnitude of climbing-related disturbances.

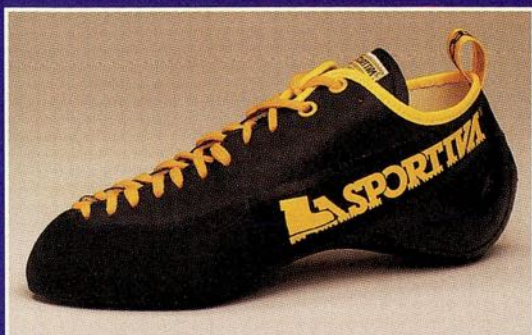
In addition to protected birds of prey, the valley also contains populations of the Paradox Valley lupine. This plant, which is unique to the area, is presently a candidate for protection under the Endangered Species Act. It is a high priority for BLM to protect this species to prevent its eventual listing as a threatened or endangered species. Such an action would require much more restriction on all activities. Therefore, we strongly urge climbers to limit their



Innovative Footwear For Today's Climbs



Bobbi Bensman on "Time Up" 5.13a, Smith Rock. Photo: Cathy Beloit



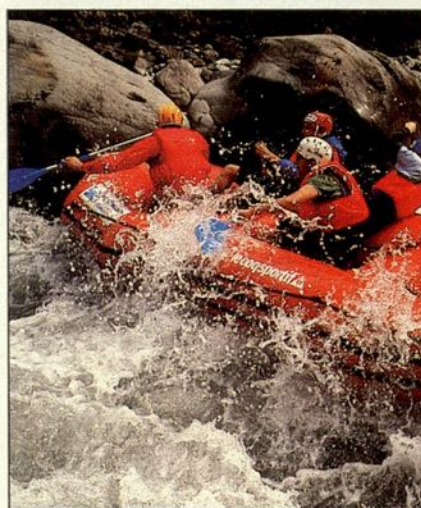
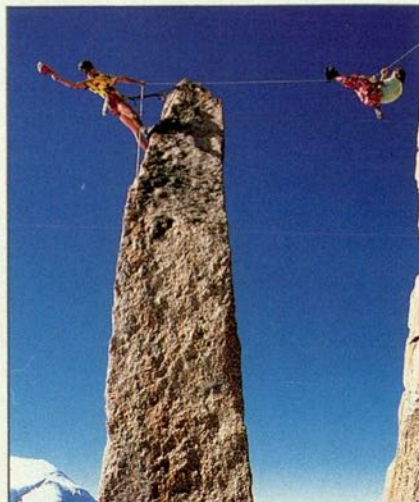
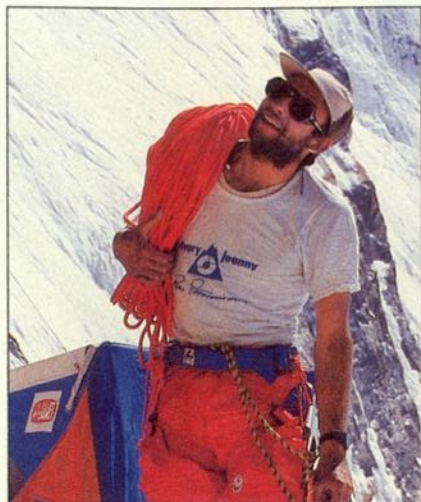
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In the February/March 1990 issue, I counted a total of 46 photographs of climbers on rock climbs (both in articles and advertisements). None of the climbers pictured was wearing a helmet! In fairness I should add that most, but not all, of the ice climbers photographed were wearing helmets. Shouldn't *Climbing* be setting a better example?

While climbers with helmets perhaps aren't as photogenic as Lycra-clad extremists with their hair flowing, a helmet is an integral piece of safety equipment and should be promoted as such.

— *Riyad Abu-Laban, M.D.*
Banff, Canada

Himalayan veterans wanted

I am looking for Americans who have climbed above 7000 meters, whether or not they obtained a summit, for a research project on the long-term consequences of participating in a Himalayan expedition. Respondents will be asked to complete a questionnaire and may be asked to submit to a more detailed personal interview. Please contact Dennis Ford, 1252 Vista Leaf Drive, Decatur, GA 30033.

— *Dennis Ford*
Decatur, Georgia

Route info sought

A new rock climbing guide is being prepared for the Salt Lake City vicinity. It will cover areas from Parley's Canyon to south of Provo, including American Fork Canyon. Accurate route data in the form of topos will be greatly appreciated.

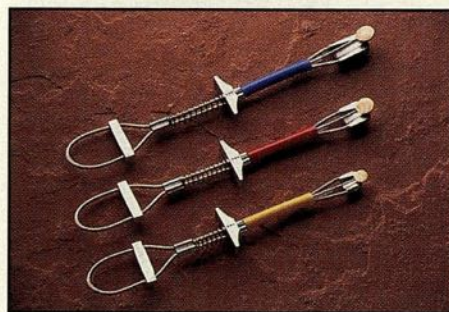
Please mail information to Stuart and Bret Ruckman, 3698 Golden Hills Ave., Salt Lake City, UT 84121, or drop by IME in Salt Lake City and jot it down in their new-route book. The deadline is July 1, 1990, except for American Fork Canyon, which is September 1, 1990.

— *Stuart and Bret Ruckman*
Salt Lake City, Utah

Letters-to-the-editor are welcomed: please include full name, address, and daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for clarity and available space. Please send to: Letters, Climbing, P.O. Box 339, Carbondale, CO 81623.

Corrections: In no. 117, we listed the incorrect phone number for Grip Head modular holds ("Build your own home gymnasium"); the correct number is (914) 688-7157. In no. 119, our table of contents introduction to "A Walk in the Sky" cites Broad Peak as the only 8000-meter peak first climbed by Americans; the article is in fact about the 1958 first ascent of Hidden Peak.

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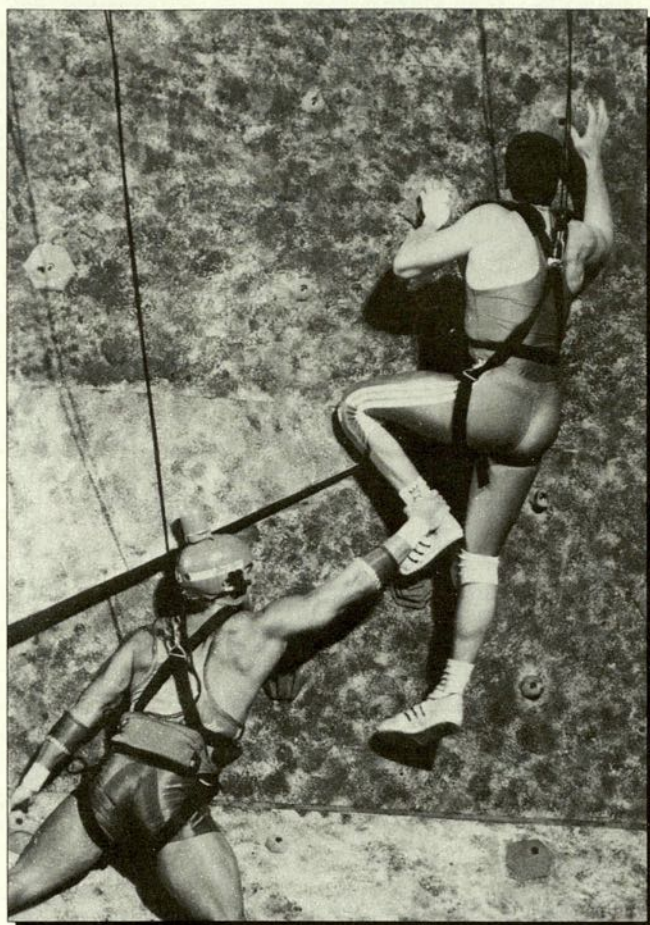
WEAPONS FOR THE WAR ON GRAVITY.

OFF THE WALL

Compiled by Alison Osius

Media Watchdog

■ Bag the Bercy invitational. Forget dieting for the Danskin Rockmaster Series, or practicing



Gladiator "Laser" (left) stops a contender from reaching the top of "The Wall" in a new syndicated television show, *American Gladiators*.

up for the Pocatello Pump. Get ready for *American Gladiators*, where every 13 weeks a dozen "contenders" challenge this TV show's defending Gladiators in eight events — including a wall climb.

If you knock off the other contenders to become Grand Champion (male or female), \$35,000 worth of cash and prizes, and an option to become a Gladiator, are yours.

American Gladiators, which debuted in September and is watched by 4 million viewers, is

the highest rated new one-hour series in syndication. It includes events such as

"The Joust" (contender tries to knock Gladiator off platform, using seven-foot pugel stick), "Human Cannonball" (contender tries to knock Gladiator off platform, using self, swinging on rope), and "The Eliminator" (obstacle course, includes Gladiators attacking from both sides with large medicine balls hanging from ropes).

Then there's "The Wall," a 30-foot artificial climbing structure (with Entre Prises holds!). At the sound of the buzzer, two contenders simultaneously start climbing. Ten seconds later, a bell rings. Two Gladiators leap up after the contenders and try to pull them off the wall, by the legs generally being the most effective method.

Says Rick Bornstein, the show's publicity director, "At first, people — the Gladiators and contenders — looked at this 30-foot wall and went nuts. They said, 'No way.' But they really got into it, and it's become their favorite event. The audience really looks forward to it, too."

Tryouts will be in mid-June. Call (800) 421-5743 for information. If you're in the L.A. area, you can also go and see the show being taped, free of charge.

■ Richard Nixon and Chris Grover expound. The April 2 issue of *Time* magazine, with Richard Nixon on the cover, contained a story on indoor-wall climbing as "the latest sport craze" on college campuses. The story highlights the nation's largest wall (30 by 160 feet), newly installed at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, and an intended eight-story wall in Chicago. Chris Grover, president of Entre Prises, the U.S. affiliate of the French manufacturer, was quoted: "Indoor cliffs appeal a lot more to people than the macho attitude of, 'Let's see how close we can get to killing ourselves and still be able to talk about it in the bars afterward.'"

■ How not to. A good story in *Harper's Bazaar* on climbing was accompanied by a woeful photograph of a model rappelling. She carried a rack made of all carabiners and no nuts, and wore large brown lug-soled boots, a brass-buckled leather belt, and yellow gloves to protect her hands from the effects of the most bewildering-looking method of rappelling this writer has ever seen. The rope went through a Figure-8 a few times, around her back, again behind her back, you name it. Her harness was also interestingly tied, one of its key points being a multiply-twisted sling, another a non-locking carabiner and another an unlocked locking carabiner.

■ We all have our reasons. In the *Kansas City Times*, an article described how at the Kansas Institute, a private psychiatric hospital at Overland Park, a climbing wall has become one of the institute's most successful forms of therapy for teenagers. On the wall, the story said, the students gain trust and self-esteem; climbing helps students with emotional and behavioral problems, and those who feel they are failures or cannot succeed at sports: "After a few

Overheard

New contributor, proposing an article to Climbing editor:

"I'm just an old-fart climber. I know your mother ... actually, I used to date her a little. That gives you an idea of what age group we're talking about."



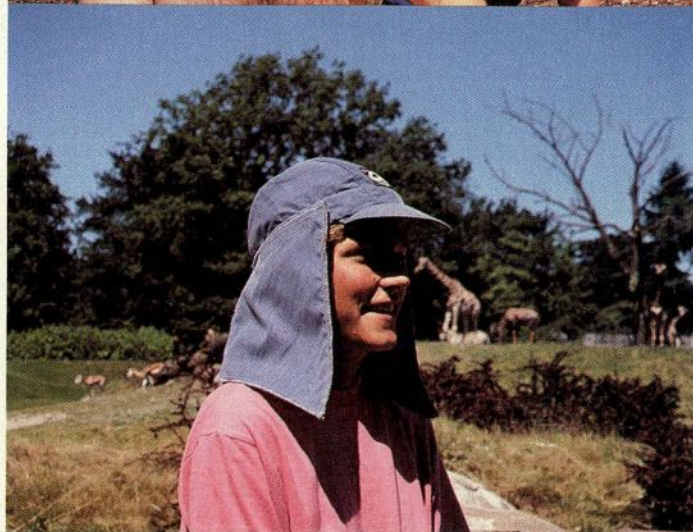
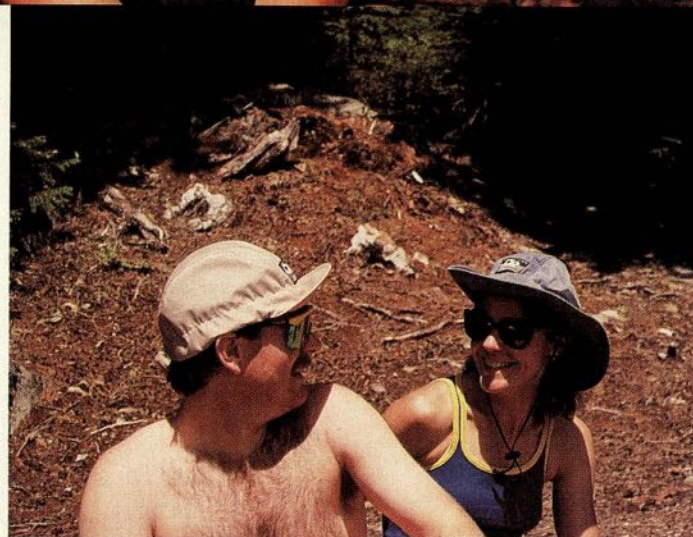
SONORA SOMBRERO™, SIERRA™ CAP, & SAFARI™ CAP

Though each of these hats has its own particular style and individual advantages, they have several important features in common that make them superior performers when it comes to protecting the head from attack by the sun. The fabric used for all three is one of those tricky blends of Cordura and high-filament-count nylon yarns that feels similar to cotton but dries about 4 times faster and lasts about 10 times longer. This fabric is highly permeable, and the hats are unlined, so they are just as cool as possible. They all adjust in size via our internal Cinch-Band adjusting system, so each hat always fits exactly right. In each hat the Cinch-Band is carried inside a 1¼"-wide tunnel made from Dryline, which makes a very comfortable and fast-drying sweatband.

Now for individual characteristics. The **Sonora Sombbrero™** was obviously inspired by the **Seattle Sombbrero™** and uses the same foam-stiffened brim which can be velcroed up Aussie-style or cowboy-style. It comes with a removable drawstring which can be cinched up under the chin to restrain the hat in high winds. This also allows one to push the hat off of the head and down onto the upper back.

The **Sierra™ Cap** is basically a high-tech baseball cap. The Cinch-Band allows much finer size adjustment than the button system on normal baseball caps. This makes for greater comfort, especially when one is cinching it down tight for high-speed skiing or biking. As with **A Hat For All Seasons™**, the plastic-stiffened brim can be flipped up or down. These features, and the fact that it is very light weight and fast drying, make it a great hat for river trips, and for all sorts of boating for that matter.

The **Safari™ Cap** is identical to the Sierra Cap except that it sports a removable skirt for shading the neck and ears when out on a glacier or tromping through the burning desert. The skirt is made in three sections for better fit and to enhance air circulation. It velcros off so that the hat can be used in simple baseball cap mode.



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attempts," the story read, "patients who once wouldn't even talk to each other begin shouting words of help and encouragement."

■ **"Up Against the Wall, America"** was the headline in a special spring edition of *People* magazine featuring an article on — same again — indoor walls and a large photo of climbers at Seattle's Vertical Club. By startling coincidence, all four of the climbers, bouldering in close proximity to each other, were wearing Vertical Club t-shirts.

■ **Derek's diet and beauty tips.** Somehow, an article on Boulder's "Dirty" Derek Hersey ended up smack in the middle of the special "Women in Sports" issue of *Rocky Mountain Sports & Fitness Magazine*. The story focused on his ropeless exploits, especially the "laps" he did on the Diamond Face of Long's Peak last summer. Hersey obediently gives quotes about the concentration level required by soloing, then sounds more like himself in adding that he once fell 18 feet because he was hungry and thinking about a cheeseburger.

Contacted at home, Hersey said that the aforementioned climb was *Edge Lane* (5.11a) at Millstone Edge, England, from which he hit the deck. He only bruised his heels, however, and was able to walk out to the pub on his tiptoes.

Regarding the *Rocky Mountain Sports* article, Hersey said that many friends have asked him incredulously, "What are you doing in there?!" They weren't surprised by the fact that

he was in a women's issue. "No, it was that I was in a fitness magazine," he says. "Because of all the swill I eat."

"I eat greasy bacon sandwiches, things like that. Today Dale Goddard and Chris Hill picked me up to go out to Eldorado. We stopped at the store and I got a hot dog and Twinkies. I offered some to Dale, and he turned white." (Hersey then went into Eldo and soloed 15 hard pitches, including *The Naked Edge*, *Le Toit*, *Rosy Crucifixion*, and *The Center Route*.)

■ **Checks and balances.** From an article in the *Rocky Mountain News* on climbing: "Only the nation's best, climbers like Dale Goddard and Jim Karn, can survive on sponsorships." Quoted, among others, is Will Gadd of the Canadian National Team, who said, "I'm still sponsored by my checkbook." He also commented, "(Sport climbers) are all neurotically obsessed with staying light. You've never seen something so funny as 10 guys sitting around complaining about eating too many brownies."

■ **Star Dreck.** A pack of climbers were involved in stunt work on *Star Trek V*, in which Captain Kirk falls off while soloing El Capitan but is rescued by Mr. Spock. But their efforts didn't seem to help the film rise above itself. Recently William Shatner got three Golden Raspberries ("Razzies") for the film: worst film, worst director, and worst actor. Only two other films have ever had this triple distinction: *Rocky IV* and Prince's *Under the Cherry Moon*.

The Golden Raspberries Awards Foundation is made up of film critics, film professionals, and frequent filmgoers.

■ **For the average Josephine ...** comes *Outdoor Woman*, a newsletter intended to expand into a magazine in the future. Its publisher, Patricia F. Hubbard, 47, is quoted in the *Buffalo News* of New York as saying, "There are lots of stories about world-class athletes, but very little to encourage or help the average woman who wants to hike or canoe or fish or hunt."

"If you're a famous rock climber like Lynn Hill, people

come to you to test equipment built for a woman's physique. But if you are an average woman, there's no central source of information, and you have to search high and low to find outdoor clothing and gear made for women."

For information on the newsletter, write *Outdoor Woman*, P.O. Box 834, Nyack, NY, 10960. A year's subscription (10 issues) is \$30.

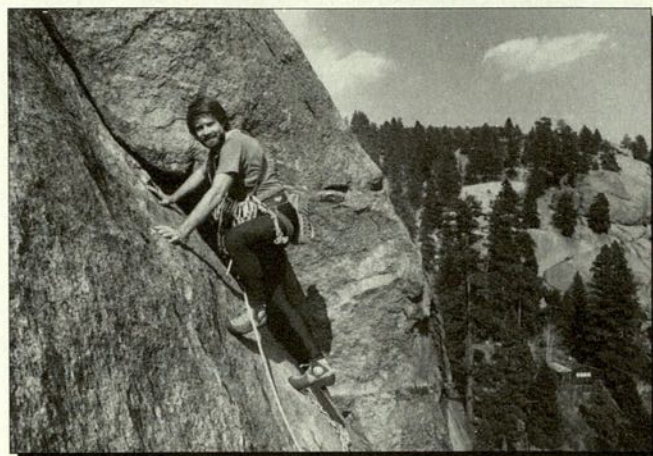
Happenings

■ **Game-show star.** On New Year's Eve, Barbara Renton of California was playing the latest edition of Trivial Pursuit when she came upon a name she recognized — that of her climber nephew, Ed Webster. "How many fingertips did moun-

As for a progress report on Webster, who lives in Boulder, he is back on the rocks — he recently top roped a 5.11, and is leading some 5.10s.

■ **Make my day.** This spring several Boulder climbers, including Craig Miller, were in Penitente Canyon, in the San Luis Valley, when they noticed three teenagers messing around on top of the cliff. Knowing that lately pranksters had stripped bolt hangers and slings from many anchors, Miller waited by the youths' pick-up. When they arrived, he made them empty their pockets of bolt hangers and cut-up slings, and told them to leave.

They responded by pulling shotguns on him. Miller's friend discreetly backed away. Miller didn't think the kids would use the guns ("They weren't old



Ed Webster

taineer Ed Webster lose on Mount Everest in 1988?" it asked. She knew, of course, and got the answer right. (Eight.)

The Trivial Pursuit inclusion was news to Webster. "At first I was horrified," he says. "I thought, oh my god, how gruesome, what a thing to be known for." It also, of course, was a bit galling that the card spoke only of the amputations, saying nothing of his four-man team's new route up the mountain. "But then I thought, oh well, there's nothing I can do about it," he says, and so he is simply taking the item humorously.

According to one Trivial Pursuit buff, the only two other climbers ever featured in the game are Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay.

enough to ... they weren't even over 14," he said later) and stayed put, but quietly. The kids then drove off, adding conversationally, "We're going coyote hunting."

■ **Lightning isn't supposed to strike twice.** Early last year, just at printer's deadline, a Federal Express plane carrying all *Climbing* magazine's slides and color separations crashed in the Aspen mountains in a blizzard. Both pilots survived, and one slogged down out of the mountains for help.

The staff at *Climbing* could only look at photos of the twisted wreckage, choke and wait. Three days later a crane lifted the plane, and there in the snow was the package — intact.

Recently, just at deadline for *Climbing's* 20th Anniversary



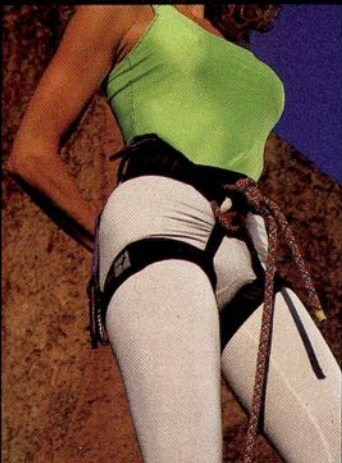
Derek Hersey

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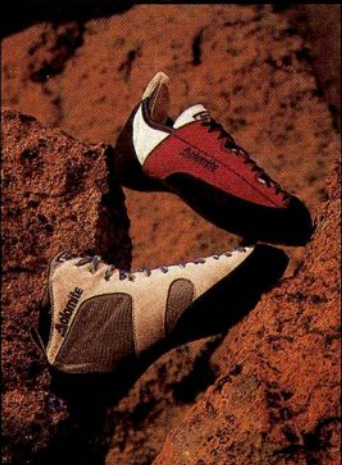
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Finesse/Aerial

Scott Franklin,
Gun Club (5.12c),
New River Gorge.

Photos: Brooke Sandahl

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Issue, news came over the radio that another Fed Ex plane to Aspen had crashed, perhaps because of iced-up wings. This time, sadly, the pilot was killed. Almost all the cargo was destroyed.

Climbing had three slides aboard that plane. One was the classic shot of the first Nose-in-a-Day team, John Long, Jim Bridwell, and Billy Westbay, hamming it up, decked out in their most purple, paisley, fluttering outfits.

Three days later came the last of many phone calls with Fed Ex. The slides were — intact. Perfect.

You don't expect lightning to strike twice. But then, neither do you expect two miracles in a row.

■ **Back in the USSR.** Last June, Hollis Ferguson of Independence, Oregon, attended a 10-day climbing exchange to the Crimea Peninsula in the Soviet Union. The mountains and limestone valleys along the southern coast, he says, "make Yosemite look like a sandbox. They are infinite." Now the Soviets are soliciting a visit from a group of up to 10 or 12 people for a July visit to the area, to commence in the city of Simferopol.

Contact: Hollis Ferguson, Independence Mountaineering, 215 South Main Street, Independence, OR 97351, (503) 838-6475.

Slings & Pieces

■ **The film of the 1989 International Sport Climbing Championship at Snowbird** has been sold to the Sports Channel, a cable station partly owned by NBC. Chris Webb, of Hummingbird Camera Systems of L.A., filmed the action. Contact your regional Sports Channel office for scheduling. ESPN International has also expressed interest in the show and various 1990 competitions.

■ **Largo finds new lease on life.** John Long, a.k.a. Largo, former founding member of the Stonemasters and a leading climber in the 1970s, may soon rule the waves. He has taken up competi-

Overheard

A Tonto National Forest (Arizona) document stated, "[the Superstitions bolting ban] will be actively enforced" ... yet also that "a single bolt in a remote location would not necessarily be judged an impairment." When two American Alpine Club Access Committee members requested a clarification, Mike Baca, National Forest recreation officer, declined, saying, "It's all black and white."

tive flat-water kayaking.

A paddler for years, he only recently started in the flatwater event, lured into it by the paddlers practicing on Bologna Creek near his Santa Monica home. The first time he got into a K1, says Long, "I couldn't even sit in it. It was 5.10c to sit still!"

Once he managed that feat, however, he gave some strokes that attracted a classic double-take from a high-echelon coach on shore, who has since coerced Long into serious training. "It suits me," says Long. "It's a pure strength event. But I have to extend my speed about tenfold, because I can go really fast — for about four feet." He is training for the 500-meter event.

After finishing his 6 a.m. water workout each day, he does some writing, then goes to the gym to meet the new trainer assigned him — "a guy with a

cat-o'-nine-tails driving my ass, telling me I've been doing everything wrong."

"I've even had to give up smoking cigarettes for this. It's dreadful. Also I have to eat baby food!" (pre-workout.) Half an hour before racing, he drinks Carbo-tea, filled with fructose and sucrose and "the caffeine of about 15 espressos."

"You get in that boat and you're ready to crank. Either that or look for some guy to beat up."

■ **Inspired by James Bond.** Confidential, but: the FBI has been making inquiries about artificial holds, preparing to put up a climbing wall in its training center in Quantico, Virginia.

Kudos

■ **Hailed in the hall.** The special Earth Day issue of *Rolling Stone* includes both a Hall of Shame and Hall of Fame, in which the magazine censures or lauds individuals, organizations, government agencies, even countries, lakes, and products. In the praise department, right in there with Greenpeace, Sting, David Brower, and unleaded gasoline, find the enlightened, do-good company Patagonia. "Since 1984, this California manufacturer of outdoor goods has been giving a whopping 10 percent of its pre-tax profits to environmental groups and causes — more than \$2 million to date," says the text, explaining that some 250 organizations "have benefited from the company's largess."

■ **Along those lines,** Cascade Designs will donate a portion of the profits from the sale of each Deluxe Long Thermarest pad to the Nature Conservancy — another group to be found in the abovementioned *Rolling Stone* Hall of Fame, which cites it as "a relatively obscure but smart and efficient environmental group."

■ **In the wake of the quake.** A few days after this year's big earthquake in California, workers at The North Face in Berkeley found themselves milling around their offices and factory rooms, wondering what they could do to help victims of the disaster. Someone had heard from friends

about the chaos in Watsonville, a farming town 100 miles south of Berkeley, where 400 homes, churches, and businesses had been leveled and thousands of people were homeless.

A groundswell movement began, with employees raising \$2000 to buy the things they were told were most needed. Diapers topped the list, and so they bought 1200. They also purchased baby food, potatoes, rice, oil, sanitary napkins, and flashlights and batteries.

The business' management joined in, cutting up synthetic polar fleece material to make 200 blankets, donating 100 tents, 100 coats and jackets, and 200 sleeping bags. Sierra Designs, its companion company, threw in 100 tents. As word got out, REI, located just around the corner, gave a dozen more tents, including some North Face six-person "Himalayan Hotels."

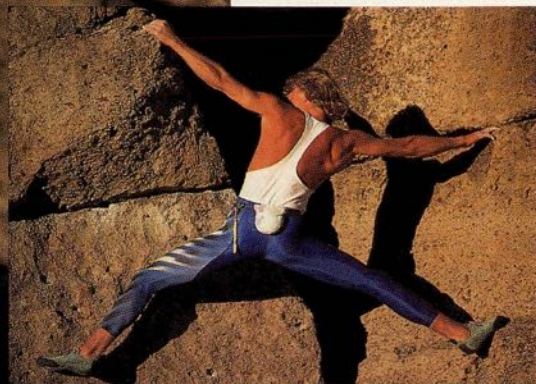
Six North Face employees, mostly Spanish-speaking, loaded a truck and drove to Watsonville, and handed everything out in three hours.

Says Kevin Smith of the company's personnel department, "People didn't say much. They were just tired and worried. But at least when they left they had something to lie down in, wrap a kid in." The children, he said, hadn't really absorbed the situation. "The kids were happy — they were camping."

Passages

■ **Died.** Paul Ledoux, aged 46, on January 18 of injuries sustained in a fall in the Needles of South Dakota. A graduate of M.I.T., Ledoux had eschewed an academic career to work as a cab driver, and concentrate on climbing, reading, and cinema; he was a collector of and expert on climbing guidebooks. Ledoux had been a pillar of the close-knit Boston climbing community for 25 years. (From *The Crux* newsletter.)

We welcome readers' contributions to this section. Please send original news items, ad copy, and photos to Off The Wall, Climbing, P.O. Box 339, Carbondale, CO 81623.



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Chris Goplerud bouldering on Deadman's Summit, CA
Photos: John Kelly



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— Tom Herbert, Marty Lewis

Wake-up call

Sugarloaf, California

The legendary Warren Harding made the first technical ascents here — climbed in 1954, the *Harding Chimney*, with its unprotected 5.6 offwidth, still horrifies some neophyte leaders. And on a quiet spring day, the eerie clanking of loose hangers on Harding's old bolt ladder leading to the South Summit reminds the modern-day climber of a simpler era.

Sugarloaf rises from the coniferous slopes above the American River and U.S. Highway 50 halfway between Placerville and South Lake Tahoe. Its 5000-foot elevation, southern exposure, diverse climbing, and 20-minute approach have long made this a popular winter area among Northern California climbers.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, virtually all of California's pioneering climbers made first ascents at "The Loaf," including Steve Roper, TM Herbert, Royal Robbins, and Galen Rowell. In the late 1970s, Max Jones and Mark Hudon began climbing here, creating such testpieces as *Captain Fingers* (5.12) and *Hooker's Haven* (5.12). The pair also made numerous free-climbing forays onto the awesome third pitch of *The Fracture*. However, it was Tony Yaniro who finally pieced together its first free ascent, putting Sugarloaf on the international climbing map and introducing 5.13 to the world with *The Grand Illusion*.

During the 1980s, a stillness settled over Sugarloaf, with most visitors opting to repeat the established crack climbs. But recently, the area has experienced an outburst of new-route activity. Virtually all of the new climbs have ascended the cliff's knobby faces, having been established after rappel preview, cleaning, and bolting. Some traditionalists may be concerned that some of the bolts were mechanically drilled or placed on rappel, yet several old routes, such as *Bolee Gold*, *Make That Move*, and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, also feature rappel-placed bolts.

On the blank face between *Farley* and *Scheister*, *Blue Velvet* (5.10b/c) is perhaps the

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best and most controversial new route. Will Catrell and friends, who did the first ascent, claim that this is a completely different line than *Tapestry*, a run-out 1970s horror show that had received very few leads, but, in fact, the first 60 feet are identical. *Blue Velvet* continues all the way to the summit on beautiful, well-protected rock.

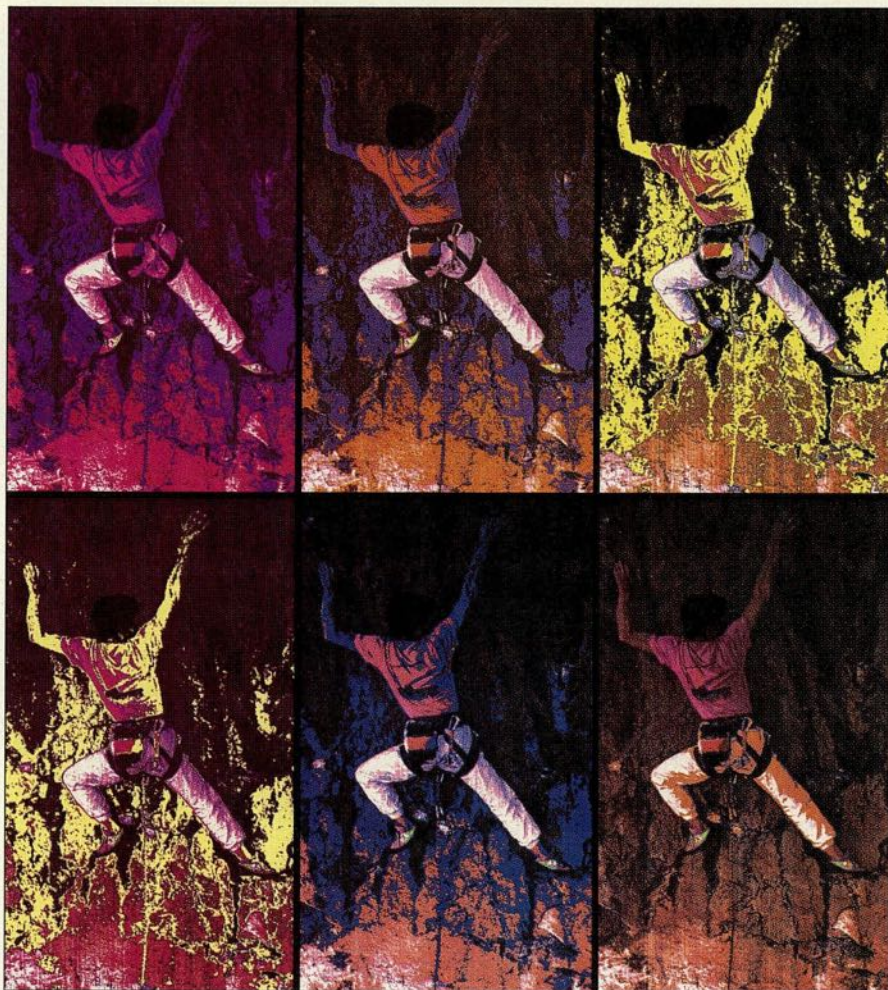
Although there has been talk of destroying this route for its intrusion on *Tapestry*, *Blue Velvet* has already received dozens of ascents, and it represents some of the best climbing at Sugarloaf. Destroying the climb will only result in a desecration of the rock, and the route should stand as a historic reminder of the ethical turbulence that racked climbing in the present era.

Bart O'Brien and Richard Swayze added a new route out of the notch between the North and South summits. *Ethics* (5.10b) provides an enjoyable fourth pitch to *Bolee Gold* or can simply be climbed as an alternative to the slab-pitch finish of the Harding route. While the face had one old bolt and lots of lichen, no record of a previous ascent existed. The pitch now sports two more bolts and is well protected.

Ray York and Dave Kennedy added *The Naked Edge* (5.11d), a fine route that follows the arete above the first bolt on *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. Above Farley's third pitch, Gordon Ainsleigh created two short finishes up to the summit: *Farley Mowat* (5.10c) and *Never Cry Wolf* (5.10a). Ainsleigh also led *Bolee Gold*, adding three bolts to the first pitch. Most climbers felt the original bolts had been poorly placed on rappel, and the climb has definitely seen an increase in traffic since the retrobolting.

On Sugar Bun, the giant boulder above the school on the trail to Sugarloaf, four new routes were established, all of which required lots of scrubbing and rappel-placed bolts. On the Northwest Corner, Alan Swanson and Cory Hicks found a 5.11a start to *Fly Trap*. *Dog Fight* (5.11b/c) is a new line sandwiched between *Mad Dog* and *Dirty Dog*; three bolts protect thin moves up the 40-foot face. Just left of *Make That Move* is a 20-foot face with a move or two of easy 5.11. The *Southwest Corner* was added by Innosanto Nagara and partner. Unfortunately, just before the turn of the decade, a zealot hammered the bolts on the climb flat. Ironically, this climb was a more "natural" line than any of the other recent Sugar Bun endeavors.

Currently, continued access to the area is an increasing concern. While the previous parking and access problems at Sugarloaf have apparently been resolved, with the help of Bob Schneider and the AAC, climbers should realize that any uncaring or aggressive actions have a detrimental effect on all of us. Whether it is sandwiching in a



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Hot Flashes

compiled by Michael Bengé

❑ Peter Croft on-sights Suzuki 5.13c testpiece in Yosemite Valley

❑ Lynn Hill does first ascent of a 5.14 by a woman

❑ Corrine Labrune red-points East Face (5.13d) of Monkey Face

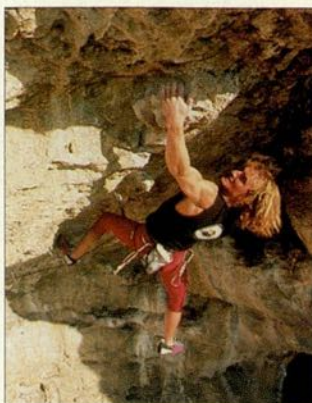
❑ Heavy hitters bloom this spring at Smith

❑ Patrick Edlinger and Didier Raboutou repeat The Maginot Line (5.14b) at Volx; Raboutou does Agincourt (5.14b), too

■ After wintering in Australia, Peter Croft returned to Yosemite Valley in March — apparently very fit. Just over jet lag, Croft got back on his feet with an easy ascent of *Cosmic Debris* (5.13a), then went looking for a testpiece he hadn't already done. He ended up in the Cat Pinnacle area, where he had one of the finest days in the history of Valley cragging. After one fall, he succeeded on an extreme thin crack there, attempted by Hidetaka Suzuki last year. Croft declined to grade that route, but on the same wall he on-sighted Suzuki's premier route of last year, *Vanbel-ladrome* (5.13c). To Croft's dismay, someone had added seven bolts and a fixed pin to the climb, but he avoided those, hanging out to place his own gear.

■ Early this year, while continuing to tear up the professional competition circuit, Lynn Hill of New Paltz, New York, climbed the hardest route yet done by a woman.

A bit of her personal history with the Frenchman J.B. Tribout adds some sparks to the story of her ascent. Although Tribout is a friend of Hill's, he "likes to goad me," she says. A couple of years ago, Tribout had razed Hill that no woman would ever flash 7c (5.12d), which, of course, she has since done. His next barb was that no woman would ever be able to do his route *Mass Critique* (8b+, 5.14a) at Cimai, France. Hill



Patrick Edlinger on *The Maginot Line* (5.14b), Volx, France.

redpointed the route on the last day of her trip to France, after nine days' work.

The sustained 75-foot *Mass Critique* involves three cruxes requiring technical body positions and dynamic movements, then a final dynamic crux at the top. Hill had never been on a 5.14 before this one, and actually did it faster than Tribout had. However, first ascents traditionally take longer than those that follow.

■ From France comes news of climbing at the highest standard. In February, Patrick Edlinger made the second ascent of *The Maginot Line* (8c, 5.14b) at Volx, a 25-foot roof that had resisted many attempts for two years until its first ascent by Ben Moon (UK) in November. This vicious route includes one-digit sidepulls out a roof with the crux coming at the last move.

Also in fine shape is Didier Raboutou (France), who not only did the third ascent of *The Maginot Line* but also the sec-

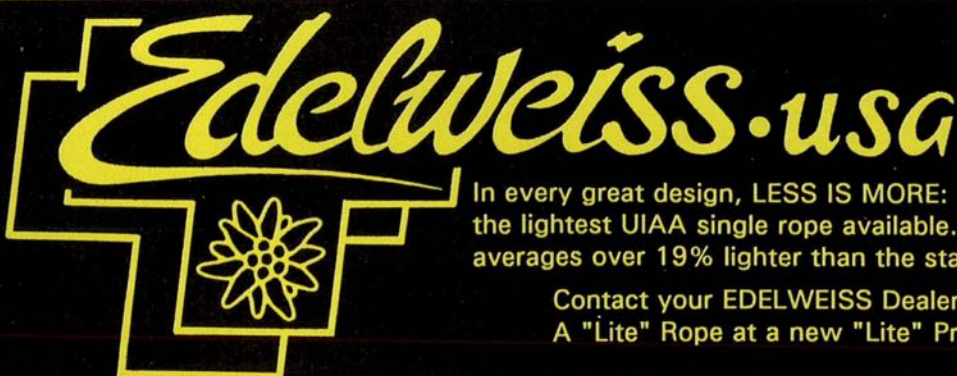
ond ascent of *Agincourt* (8c, 5.14b) at Buoux, another short, severe testpiece, again the work of Moon. At present both represent the only two consensus 8c's in the world.

■ In early April at Smith Rock, France's Corrine Labrune completed two first ascents ever by a woman, redpointing the *East Face* (5.13d, 8b) of Monkey Face and *Aggro Monkey* (8a+, 5.13b/c). The *East Face* has seen only five or six ascents. Labrune was the second woman to climb 5.13d in the United States. The other — Hill, of course, with her first ascent of a route in a small limestone area north of the Gunks.

Aside from Labrune, many of the sport's other heavy hitters visited Smith this spring, coming away with some outstanding efforts. Of note is Jim Karn's (Boulder) third ascent and quick redpoint of *Jammaster J* (5.13d), and Dale Goddard's (Boulder) three-day ascent of *White Wedding*, which he downgraded from 5.14a to 5.13d after finding a new, easier sequence. Karn confirmed the new rating, doing two laps on the route the new way.

Shelley Presson of Boulder and Robyn Erbesfield of Atlanta both redpointed *Churning in the Wake* (5.13a), joining Hill, Bobbi Bensman of Boulder, and Gea Phipps of Bend, Oregon, as the only women to climb consensus 5.13.

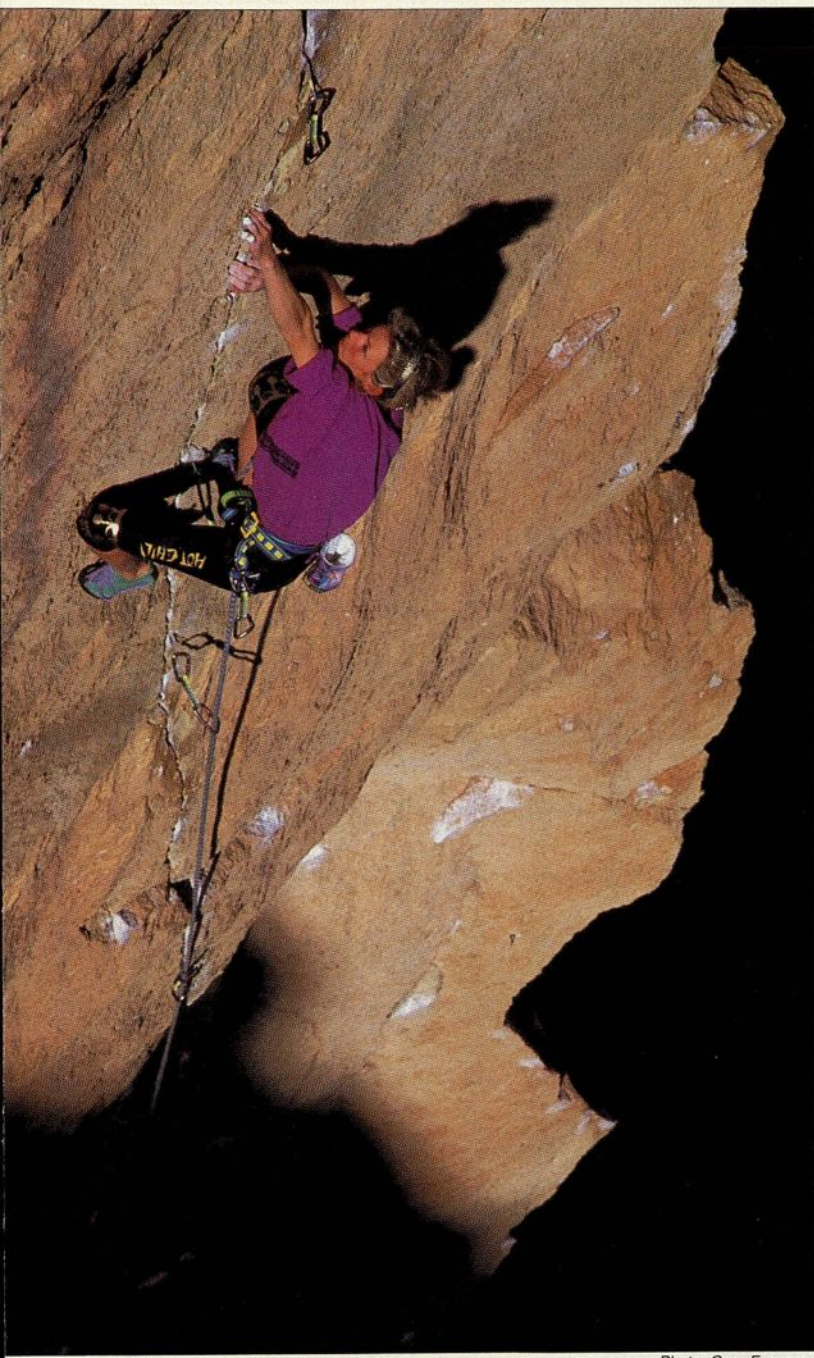
In the on-sight realm, Bensman flashed *Highway to Hell* (5.12a/b), while the season's best male on-sights went to Jean Baptiste Tribout (France) for



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Corrine Labrune on the *East Face* (5.13d) of *Monkey Face*, Smith Rock, Oregon — first ascent of the route by a woman.

Choke on This (5.13a), Jim Karn for *Bend Over and Receive* (5.13a), and the up-and-coming Canadian Will Gadd for *Kings of Rap* (5.12d). Also, Steve Schneider of Mammoth Lakes, California, flashed *Kings of Rap*.

In the “almost-a-break-through” category, Tribout came within feet of bringing the 8c (5.14b) grade to the United States. He had come to the United States this year with one thing in mind — to climb the 140-foot line left of the *East Face* of *Monkey Face*, which Alan Watts of Bend had bolted a couple of years ago. After spending approximately two weeks working the route, Tribout came close on redpoint after redpoint attempt but ultimately failed before he had to return to France. He'll reportedly “be back.”

■ Oklahoma? Texas? Indeed, the southern states have spawned a generation of talented young climbers. In *Climbing* no. 119, you heard about the Texan Josh Walker's quick second ascent of *Touch Monkey* (5.13a/b) at Cochiti Mesa. Another such youth, Larry Harris, 21, from Tulsa, redpointed what are perhaps Colorado's two hardest climbs — Christian Griffith's *Verve* (5.13c/d) in Boulder Canyon and *Desdichado* (5.13c) in Eldorado Canyon — last fall after working eight days on each.

In Texas, Harris has also succeeded on some difficult projects, including the third ascent

of the *Mariner* (5.13a) in two days at Cleburne, and the second ascents of *La Famine* (5.13c) and *Acropolis* (5.13b) at Tenkiller, Oklahoma. Harris has been climbing seriously for two years.

■ At Hueco Tanks, Texas, Todd Skinner procured the first bolting permit since the ban imposed a few years ago — but not without difficulty. According to the new procedure, a proposed bolted route must be approved by three different bodies: the Texas Parks Department, the El Paso Climbers' Club, and the Hueco Tanks Park Superintendent, the latter of which may have been the most troublesome in that the head ranger is a non-climber and the approach to Skinner's new project requires some hard scrambling.

After cutting through all the red tape, Skinner put up what may be Hueco's top testpiece, dubbing it *Cowboyography* and grading it 5.13d. It lies on the Front Side near *Malice in Bucketland*.

■ Lake Tahoe's relatively unknown Cave Rock “is one of the best crags in the country,” says Darius Azin of Bend, Oregon, fresh from a trip there. While the routes at Cave are few in number, they offer gymnastic climbing on a 45-degree wall that is about half a ropelength in height. The local Dan Osmond recently added a fine testpiece there, an unnamed 5.13c. The route involves a hard boulder problem to a long sustained section with a sporting 20-foot runout to the anchor.

Photo: Greg Epperson

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new, unnecessary route, destroying a climb deemed ethically worthless, drilling sloppy anchors, or adding bolts to an existing route, it is the rock that suffers. Please help preserve the best year-round climbing area in the greater Sacramento area.

— Bart O'Brien

New routes going in faster than you can write 'em down

Joshua Tree National Monument, California

The 1989/90 season yielded yet more four-star routes from the monument's virtually endless trove of rock. Among the extensive number of quality new routes, Randy Leavitt's *Hydra* (5.13c) and Troy Mayr's *Iconoclast* (5.13a/b), were definite season highlights.

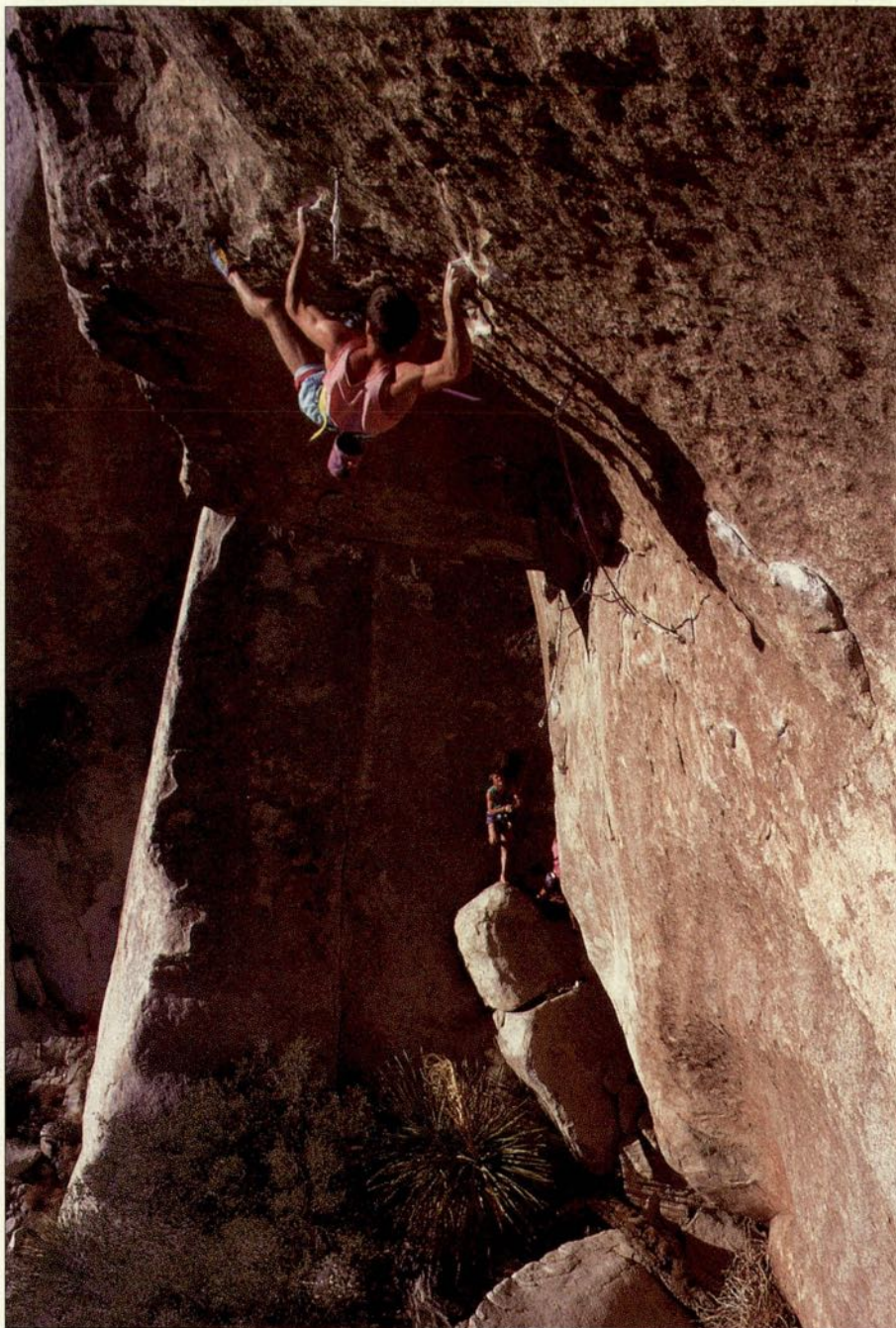
The incredible *Hydra*, located on Superblock to the right of Superdome, climbs a progressively overhanging face with nine bolts, and features a roof section that requires cutting one's feet loose while hanging from tiny crimpers, then heel hooking up over the lip for a wicked pull-over. This committing route is certainly one of Joshua Tree's outstanding testpieces.

Set in a spectacular location to the left of Saddle Rocks, the line that is now *Iconoclast* had been eyed by climbers for years. Mayr redpointed it early in the season. Its strenuous crux sequence involves slapping up a blunt arete. Shortly after this ascent the visiting Spaniard Txavo Vales did the second ascent, confirming the route's grade.

Also early in the season, on the Ivory Tower, Leavitt nabbed the elusive *Ocean of Doubt* (5.13b), which has since had many attempts at a repeat, none successful. On the Don Genero boulder in the Wonderland of Rocks, Leavitt established one of J.T.'s steepest routes, *Hot Pants* (5.13b), then nearby on a beautiful orange-red wall he added *Red Rain* (5.13a). To wrap up his inspired season, Leavitt climbed *Sideburn* (5.12a), located to the right of the Super Dome on the Super Block, following this with an equally good 5.10b route that is yet unnamed. On another successful note, Tom Gilje, who was climbing strongly last season, did the second ascent of Leavitt's *Pumping Hate*, verifying its 5.13a grade.

On the Saddle Rocks formation Bob Gaines and Scott Cosgrove added *Rough Rider* (5.11b), a sustained climb to the left of *Harlequin*.

In the Hall of Horrors, Mayr and Rob Mulligan climbed *Moonshadow* (5.12c), to the left of *La Cholla*. *Moonshadow* quickly received a second ascent by John Bercaw, who also did the second ascent of *La*



Randy Leavitt on the first ascent of *Hydra* (5.13c), Joshua Tree, California.

Cholla (5.12d); the latter route's third and fourth ascents went to Vales and Dave Robinson respectively.

On the South Astro Dome, Mulligan and Mayr completed the second pitch of *Mamunia* (5.12c), which they dubbed *Illusions* (5.13a/b). The two pitches taken together may make for the longest, hardest route in the Monument, involving razor-sharp edge pulling up a gorgeous orange streak. Near Barker Dam, Kevin Thaw established *Moondance* (5.13a/b), a three-bolt arete to the left of *Barney Rubble*.

In the Desert Queen Mine area, Geoff Fullerton and Bill Herzog produced the

tremendous *Times of Holiness* (5.11c), their best among a number of good face routes. In league with Fullerton, Mayr added three fine routes in the area: *Sensory Deprivation* (5.12b); *Cosmic Trigger* (5.13b), a sustained pitch the final move of which involves a four-and-a-half-foot dyno; and *I Have the Touch* (5.12c/d), done with Dave Robinson.

In the Lost Horse area, Gilje and Mike Lechinski climbed the steep arete to the right of the *Pat Adams Dihedral* to produce *Toxic Waste* (5.12), then to the left they added *Electric Free Gordon* (5.11c/d). The pair also established *Elvis Lives* (5.11c/d) and *Don't Bosch Me Around* (5.10+), in the

Photo: Rudy Holmeister

Desert Queen Mountain area; these routes lie to the right and left of *Black Diamond* (5.12), another excellent creation of theirs from a previous session. Also in this area Paul Borne has reportedly been busy working on several projects. His testpiece *Scorpion* (5.13b/c), located to the left of *Illusion Dweller*, has yet to receive a second ascent. And finally, the long-time locals Dave Evans and Todd Gordon tracked down *Girls in the Mist* (5.10d) to the right of *B for Beers*.

The crags in the vicinity of Indian Cove saw much development last season. One of the new routes that has become quite popular is Geoff Archer's *Silent but Deadly* (5.11a), situated to the right of *Silent Scream*.

In the Echo Rock area, the J.T. elders Charles Cole and Steve Anderson reportedly climbed three new moderate routes to the left of *Compassion of the Elephants*.

With large areas of rock still being discovered and new routes being produced at an explosive pace, the guidebook author Randy Vogel has been working frantically to finish a second complete guide to the monument. And with intrepid climbers' willingness to take long hikes in search of good routes, activity at Joshua Tree shows no signs of atrophy.

— Troy Mayr

Rads and trades square off in the Valley

Yosemite National Park, California

The fairly recent arrival of Euro-style sport climbing in Yosemite Valley has not gone without its share of acrimony. Although sport climbing is a trend openly embraced in other U.S. climbing areas, the ethical disparities between new and traditional viewpoints have resulted in a deepening rift within the local climbing community.

Feeling that rappel bolting is a desecration of local values and traditions, an unknown group of climbers has recently engaged in a route-chopping jihad. Unfortunately, this escalating conflict is a cause of great concern for the continued freedom to climb without restrictions in the Valley.

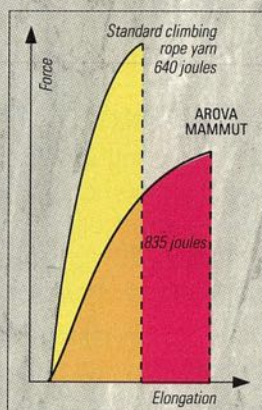
Worried about the possibility of government intervention resulting from the current open conflicts and incidents of rock defacement, the American Alpine Club Access Committee's Armando Menocal scheduled a meeting in Yosemite to address these issues. In a notice circulated prior to the meeting, Menocal stated, "I don't want there to be any misunderstanding about what the AAC is attempting to accomplish at the meeting. ... The AAC will ask that everyone agree on two points: first, there will be nothing done which may harm the rock ... no chopping of routes ... no chip-

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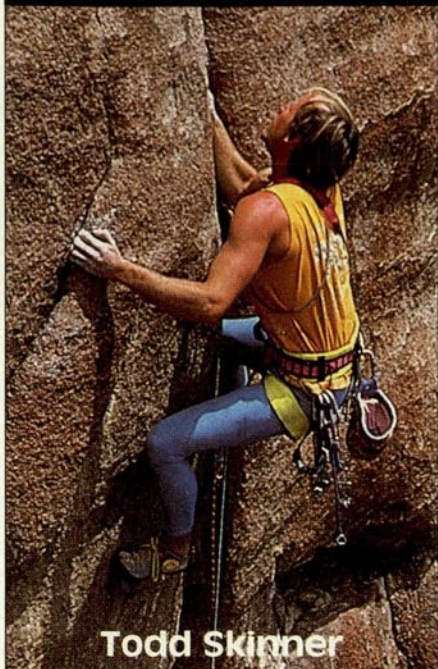
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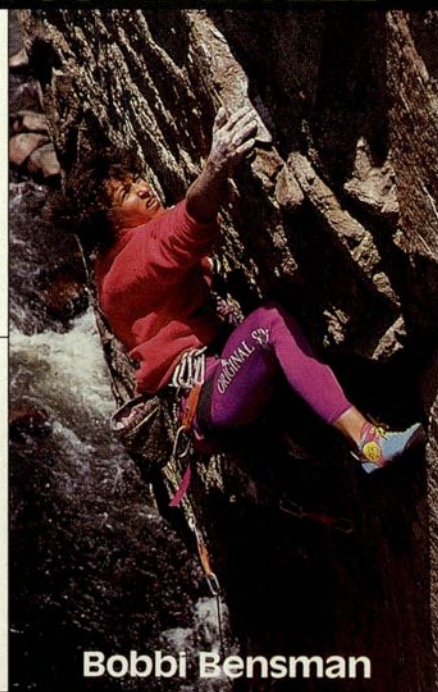
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ping holds; no bolting holds or gluing holds. Second, there will be no complaints to the Park Service about the conduct of other climbers, even if you believe that they have violated the first agreement."

On March 3 approximately 30 climbers representing both the sport climbing and traditionalist factions gathered to discuss the problems. Although the meeting had been set up as an AAC-mediated forum, Menocal's car broke down while he was on his way to Yosemite, so he was unable to moderate the discussion as planned. As might be expected when dealing with such a polarizing issue, the dialogue opened with uncontrolled exchanges and verbal attacks from both sides. With the meeting at an apparent stalemate, Jules Eichorn, the 78-year-old Yosemite rock-climbing pioneer, recommended that Royal Robbins, a staunch defender of tradition, chair the debate.

During the discussion, the traditionalists argued that rappel bolting is contrary to the established values in Yosemite, and that the resulting proliferation of bolts accelerates the environmental impact on the rock. The sport climbers responded by stating that rappel bolting produces safer routes, and that the widely accepted ground-up method of placing protection has just as much impact on the resource.

Although the heated debate apparently resolved nothing, Robbins posed two pointed questions, the first being, "Where do you draw the line on what can be done to the rock?" While the traditionalists uniformly denounced all forms of rock defacement, the sport-climbing advocates were less dogmatic but also disagreed more in their answers to this question.

Robbins' other searching question asked, "Should any place in the United States be preserved for ground-up climbing only?" This brought up the issue of government regulation, which could result from a proliferation of bolts. The sport-climbing faction stated that, in Yosemite, the enforcement of such a regulation would be nearly impossible given the Valley's vast scale and the number of climbers.

(It should be noted that the use of power drills in Yosemite is technically a violation of the Wilderness Act, which prohibits the use of all motorized equipment in a protected wilderness area. Only the use of human-powered drills is currently allowed — Editor)

In an attempt to better address these and other current issues pertaining to Yosemite, a group consisting of climbers from both camps recently conducted a four-month survey of climbers' opinions on these issues in California, the results of which will be published in the August/September issue of *Climbing*.

— Robin Ingraham, Jr.

Climbing policies on the drawing board

Boulder, Colorado

With the no-bolting policy firmly in effect in the Boulder Mountain Parks, Eldorado Canyon State Park, and Rocky Mountain National Park, many local climbers are finding themselves deeply involved in the democratic process, working with the governing agencies to develop climbing policies, primarily directed at minimizing environmental damage. For example, over 100 climbers attended a Boulder Mountain Parks advisory board meeting in February.

Currently, the Boulder Mountain Parks task force is considering cutting new approach trails to alleviate erosion and vegetation damage, and publishing a brochure suggesting ways that climbers can minimize their impact on and around the cliffs and avoid possible conflicts with bird habitat. It appears that the committee, which is made up of concerned climbers, rangers, and Colorado Mountain Club members, is not presently envisioning the removal of existing bolted routes, with the possible exception of those conflicting with bird habitat. A few areas, such as Skunk Canyon in the Flatirons and Blob Rock in Boulder Canyon, may continue to be closed to climbing during eagle nesting season, which is February through July.

Rocky Mountain National Park is wrestling with many of the same questions. Of particular concern there is the fact that replacement of unsafe fixed belay and rappel stations is not allowed under the current rules. Climbers should make their views known to the Park Service.

Eldorado Canyon State Park views the situation slightly differently and the Head Ranger Bob Toll is open to the idea that climbing is a valid use of the park. There exists the possibility that new bolt routes may be allowed under tightly controlled conditions. Topics of discussion include designating certain zones in the park where bolting would be permitted, whether to allow only hand drilling in these zones, the review and approval of any new route by a committee, and chalk usage.

The impending future of climbing in all three parks is being watched closely by government agencies and climbers around the country, as policies nationwide appear to be in a state of flux. One thing is certain — we climbers must be involved in the political process if we expect our wishes to be considered.

— Dan Hare



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Urban bouldering in Boston

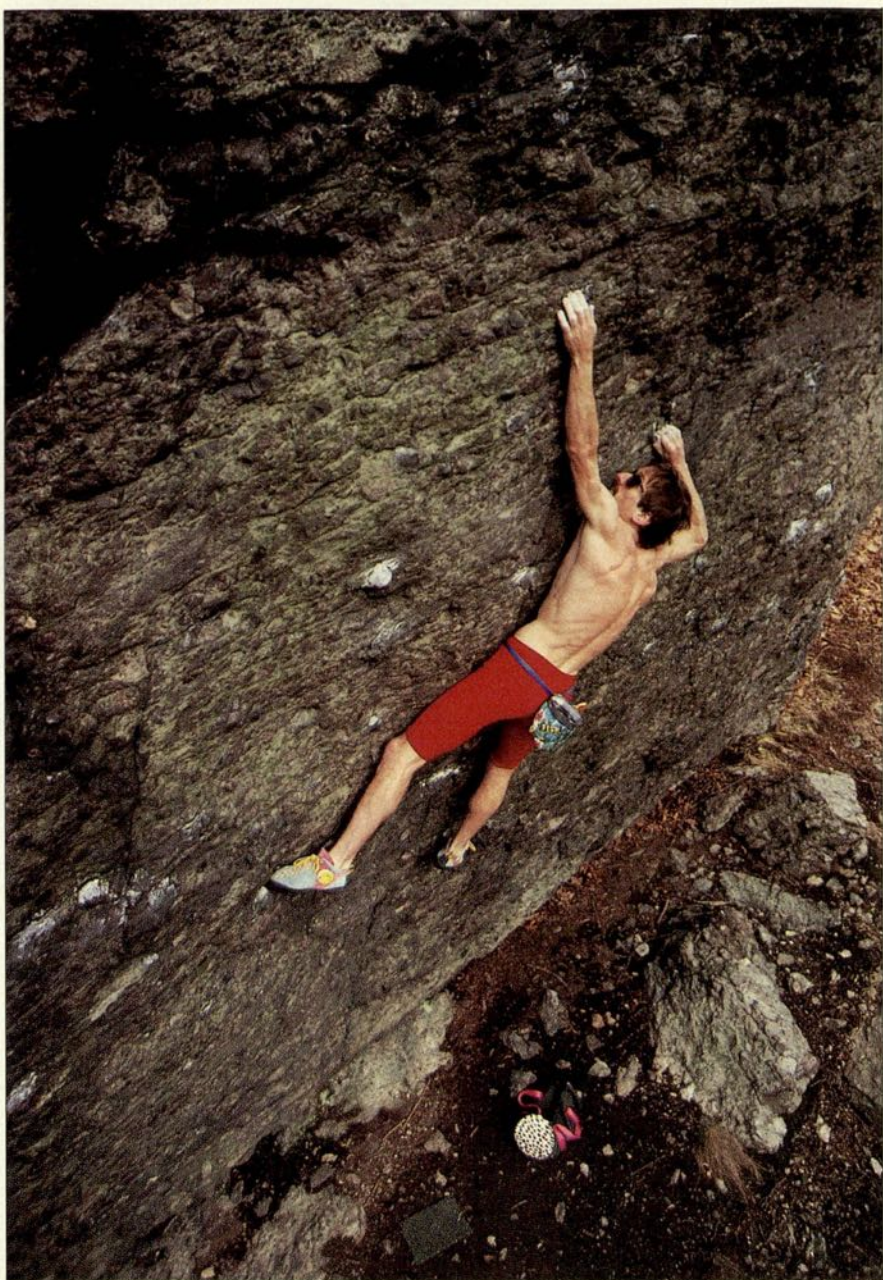
Hammond Pond, Massachusetts

I suppose that stranger things have been done before, but I'll be damned if I know what they are. I do know that when I informed my friends I was leaving a great home and cruiser job in Yosemite and moving to Boston, a general incredulity ensued. Most brutal in his amazement was Tucker Tech, who gleefully counted down the days for me until departure, and never passed up an opportunity to remind me that if one took the best crags in Massachusetts and dropped them into California, they'd receive no more notice than your typical Interstate 5 roadcut.

Now, there are days when I would kill to be back at Degnan's Deli, slamming down a few cool ones and checking out the local posing scene. However, small consolation that it is, Tucker was dead wrong about Boston's cragging.

Indeed, the metropolitan area is loaded with top-drawer bouldering. The best spot, Hammond Pond, lies gridlocked right in the middle of the city amidst vast shopping malls and palatial suburban mansions. A 300-acre nature preserve, Hammond Pond sports stacks of good problems on an assortment of 15- to 30-foot "craglets," linked by a network of trails — great for mountain biking — that meander through a lovely forest of rolling hills and hardwoods. While no match for Joshua Tree, Deadman Summit, or Mount Woodson, Hammond Pond is a regular poor man's Smith: bulging, knob-strewn faces, drastic overhangs, pockets, ripper incuts.

The first spot we checked out was the Alcove, and judging by the throng of locals and tonnage of chalk laminated onto the holds, we figured we'd found the local hang. We had our boots on in a jiffy, and after a couple of test pulls on the steep black wall, were feeling a lot less apprehensive about our trans-continental move. We were concerned, however, about the Boston locals — there was not a ghetto blaster, brewski, toothbrush, or extendo-scrubber in sight.



John Mallory on *Ecstasy* (5.13a), Route 9 Boulder, Hammond Pond.

Despite this cultural illiteracy of what constitutes civilized bouldering, the Alcove's problems were a pleasant enough surprise. Imagine the Merced River Canyon's Knobby Wall, a bit less steep and scaled down to one-third size, and you've got the picture. Aside from the *Gunsmoke Traverse*, it's probably the best natural gym apparatus I've ever seen. A long, low wall about 15 feet high, the Alcove overhangs its base by six feet in places, and the typical hold is first joint or smaller. Adding to the excitement are the occasionally weird topouts. With fingers wrapped around greasy pebbles of

doubtful integrity and feet hidden underneath by the steepness of the cliff, you may find that the ground can seem much further away than it actually is. Although flat, the landing features turf packed hard as a Kenmore Square sidewalk, and extracts a grim toll unless your deck-out trajectory is well planned. Although a seasoned boulderer will find the landing pretty tame, the Alcove does have a history of broken bones and sprains.

Another great Hammond micro-crag is the Pusherman Wall, an all-purpose 20-foot cliff that offers a little something for everyone. The right side is vertical,

Photo: Sarah Waddell

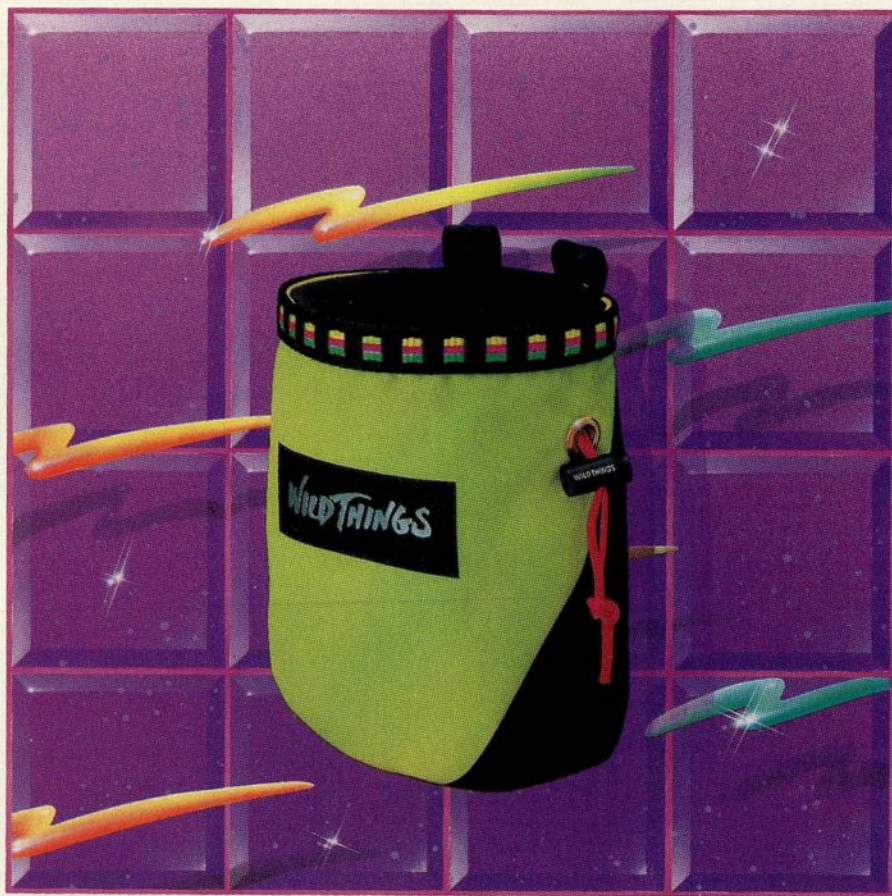
fairly juggy, and high enough to inflict fright — a good place for greenhorns to cut their teeth for off-the-deck work. Although a bit shorter, the left side bends back to 110 degrees and contains two of the most killer problems in Boston: *Hepatitis*, a tendon stretcher with power cranks off razors and tricky dynos between hopelessly inadequate fingertip pockets, and *Goofball*, a frightening knob route featuring long, scary reaches off questionable pebbles. Both are old Henry Barber 5.12s that see virtually no traffic.

Nearby is the neglected and unappreciated *Lost Roof*, which takes a 16-foot underbelly of a cave to a body-length 140-degree headwall and finishes with an exhilarating sloper mantel. I like to think of it as the Northeast's answer to Joshua Tree's *Pig Pen*, a splendid but vaguely unsavory route that proper Bostonians would never bother with.

Boston is steeped in history, and Hammond Pond is no exception. The local knickers-and-crumpets crowd have been shredding the Hammond desperates since the 1920s, and Robert Underhill and his cronies apparently dropped the hemp there on occasion. I imagine this would qualify Hammond Pond for Historical Climbing Landmark status, as Underhill probably used the place to introduce early North American climbers to modern European belay techniques — sort of a Cradle of Liberty for the alpine set.

More recently, Boston icons like Dave Breashears and Henry Barber took advantage of Hammond Pond's unique opportunities for tendon conditioning before moving on to rattle locals around the country. These days, shell-shocked yuppies use the place to model their matching Lycra-and-chalkbag combos between visits to the local indoor rock gym.

The rock is very strange. Resident geologists call it "Puddingstone," and despite my concerted attempts at understanding how the stuff was formed, I'm still not sure. I do understand that it involved streambeds, volcanoes, and glaciers — glacial polish is still in evidence on many area clifftops — along with the usual drawn-out process of erosion. The stone is conglomerate but feels more like a hybrid of welded tuff,



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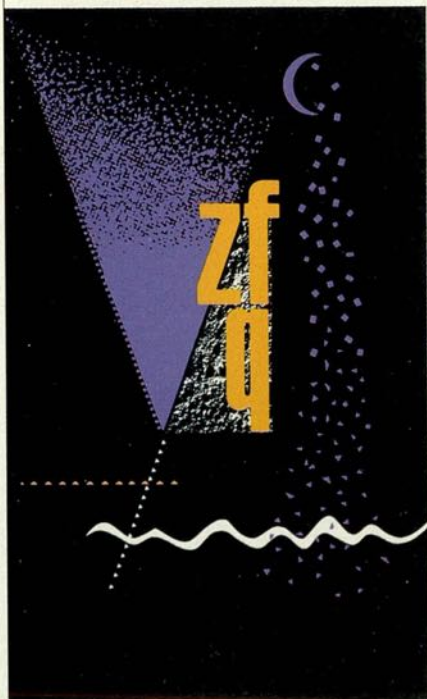


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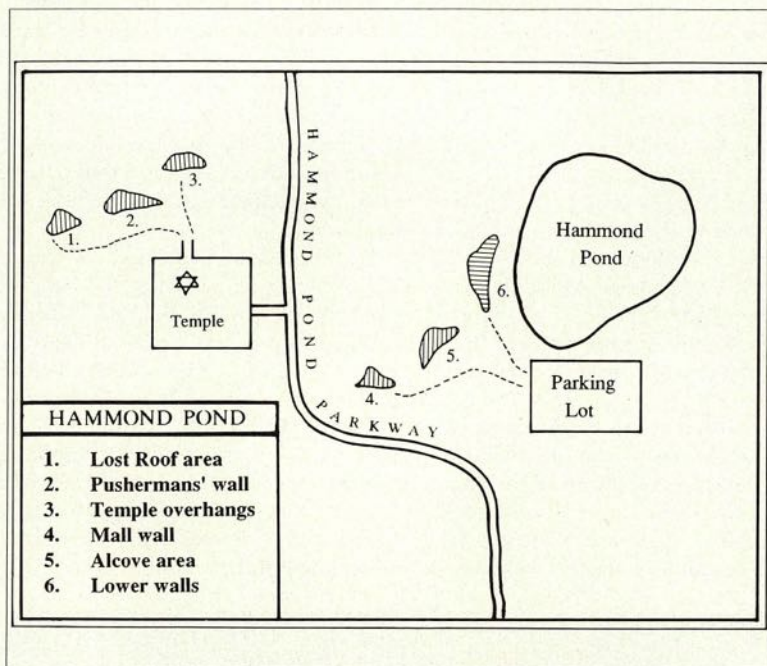
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half-baked basalt, and gravel, with a hint of Tuolumne's "The Knobs" thrown in for good measure. Edges are sharp, and an afternoon's bouldering can leave even the most calloused tips full of holes.

Nice as Hammond Pond may seem to those of us who live only 15 minutes away, its station in this world will never go much beyond that of a local crag. The cliffs just aren't high enough or the landings poor enough to really quicken

a boulder junkie's heart; moreover, choice problems are too few, maybe two dozen or so, to warrant anything beyond a brief stopover for the traveling climber. Still, a "Gold Tour" of the test-pieces, all tips jobs tackling very overhanging terrain, will deliver a monster pump, and for locals (and expatriate Californians) this small Boston area is a God-sent hang.

— Bob VanBelle



Hammond Pond — recommended boulder problems

Pusherman Slab

Pushermans Area. High, slightly less-than-vertical face w/numerous routes. 22'.

Hepatitis

L end of Pushermans, very overhanging concave face. Traverse R-slanting seam to bucket finish. 18'.

Goofball

Start as for Hepatitis. Funky, punji-stick landing. 17'.

Lost Roof

Outcrop 75yds W of Goofball. Starts back in giant cave, heading for bucket at lip. Scary mantle finish. 15'.

Bucket Launcher

Temple Overhang area. Extremely overhanging dyno over L side of roof. Poor landing. 2'.

Reefer Madness

Over roof 5' R of Bucket Launcher. 14'.

Bar Mitzvah

Thin crack traverse under roof. Very hard going R to L; extremely hard going L to R. 35'.

Hammond Eggs

Alcove. Thin cranks up steepest part of wall, just L of center. 15'.

Breakfast of Champions

Overhanging face 5' R of Hammond Eggs. 15'.

Snap

5' R of Breakfast of Champions. Another mindless overhanging jug haul. 15'.

Over Easy

Overhanging bucket haul on far L side of Alcove. 15'.

Lower Walls

Downhill, E of Alcove area, towards shore of pond. Two less-than-vertical slabs. 25-40'.

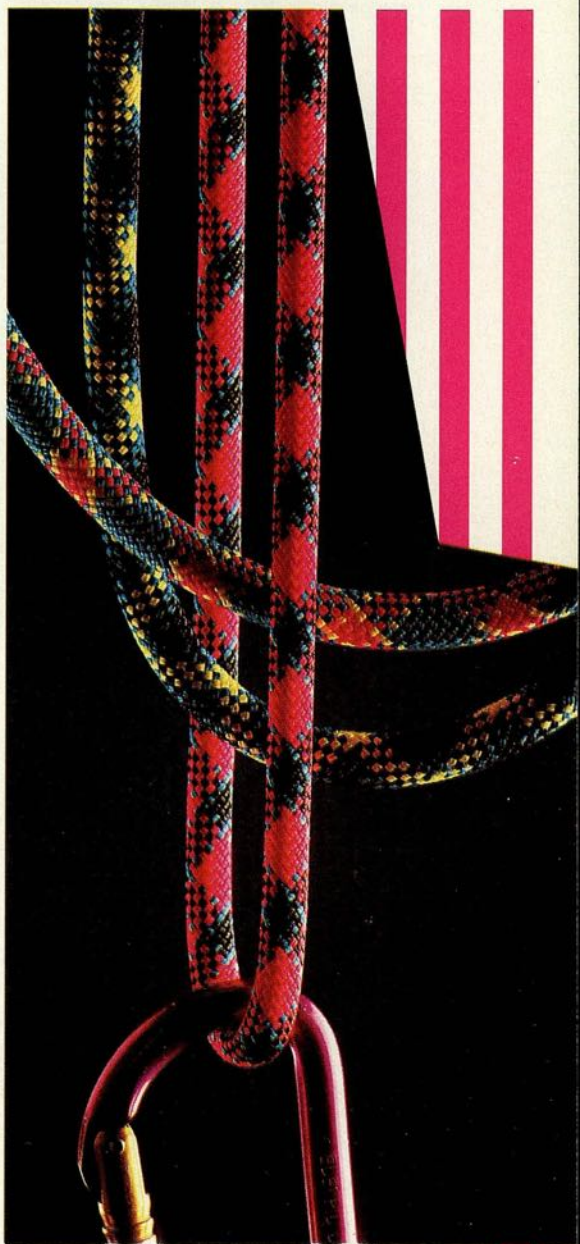
Mall Wall

Short steep wall above road, 75yds. W of Alcove. 13'.

Hammond Pond is located on Route 9, five miles west of downtown Boston, alongside the Chestnut Hill shopping mall. A Boston roadmap will get you there. More detailed information can be obtained from the scruffy guidebook Boston Rocks, published by the MIT Outing Club. Visitors should bring tape decks, toothbrushes, and brewhas.

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Stephan Venables after
summitting Everest, May '88.

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Rock and Snow burns to the ground — plans to rise again

New Paltz, New York

Rock and Snow, the New Paltz, New York, mountaineering shop, burned to the ground on February 20. The store was virtually synonymous with the Shawangunks, one of the birthplaces of North American rock climbing.

Today, on a typical 'Gunks weekend, hundreds of cars are parked below the eight-mile range of cliffs. For a while, the climbers will have to shop somewhere else.

The store was more than an outlet for mountaineering paraphernalia. It functioned as a call-in weather station, room-finding service, rescue headquarters, and liaison for climbers from around the world.

"You could be in Kathmandu and bump into somebody wearing a 'Rock and Snow' t-shirt," said Al Diamond, an area climber. Ordinarily, he and Jordan Mills, his partner in the guide service High Angle Adventures, would have been behind Rock and Snow's counter, dispensing advice and rustling up trade.

The pair listed climbing greats who'd passed through: Yvon Chouinard, Royal Robbins, Patrick Edlinger, and Lynn Hill. "And us!" they laughed. They also spoke of "the Vulgarians," Rock and Snow's owner Dick Williams and his friends, early wild-

men who challenged the limits of what was physically possible and socially acceptable.

"They took a sport that was gentlemanly and aristocratic and introduced a whole new level of ambition," said Diamond.

A famous poster that once adorned the Rock and Snow wall was of young Williams, buck naked on *Shockley's Ceiling*, swinging high above the Wallkill River Valley.

Williams, 52 years old and climbing 5.12, learned of the fire while on a cragging trip to Joshua Tree National Monument. A phone call to a friend confirmed it, but she didn't have the heart to reveal the extent of the damage. He called his store and got no answer. "But at least it rang," he thought, and felt the blaze must have been minor.

Back in New Paltz the next day he stared disbelievingly into a gaping hole where his two-story structure had stood. A backhoe had already removed the last of the charred rubble. The clean angles of the basement walls resembled the contours of a grave.

"It appeared to be a classic 'flash-over' fire," said Jim Munson, a fireman and climber, explaining a condition where combustible gases build up in a sealed building, then ignite. The blaze had started in the adjacent cobbler's store, from



Photo: Bob Niles/Poughkeepsie Journal

heating tape wrapped around cold-water pipes. The wall joining the cobbler's shop and Rock and Snow caught on fire, and the cobbler put it out on his side with a fire extinguisher.

A town meter reader, Sue Phillips, who was in the cobbler's shop when the fire broke out, ran up to two apartments above Rock and Ice to notify residents, who all got out safely.

The New Paltz Fire Department arrived in minutes. When firemen opened Rock and Snow for inspection, air rushed in, and the building became an inferno. Windows exploded, sending bystanders running for cover.

The combined efforts of 10 fire crews from surrounding villages salvaged almost nothing. The store's \$150,000 inventory of cross-country skis, Gore-Tex outerwear, and alloy climbing gear was fused beyond recognition.

Aside from Rock and Snow, the cobbler's shop, the two apartments, and a comic-book store were destroyed, and a restaurant slightly damaged.

Many more people than climbers had known of Rock and Snow. Anyone with a need for up-high expertise — tree surgeons, rock-and-roll riggers, TV stuntmen — called for advice. "I got a lot of work through them," said Munson, who as Rock and Snow's other licensed climbing guide served as technical consultant for the Broadway production of "K-2."

The flow of work will continue.

"I told my son, 'You're 20 pitches into a 35-pitch climb and you fall, what're you going to do? Go down?'" said Williams.

With the same kind of resolve that once allowed him to complete the route *Tough Shift* with a concussion and two fractured wrists, he said, "I'm 99% sure I've got a rental location to open by the start of the season, and then I can start over."

The 2500-square-foot store will have to be rebuilt from the ground up. This time a climbing wall will replace the old post-and-beam construction that provided a rainy-day practice surface for guests and employees.

But some things are gone for good: a museum's worth of photos documenting the history of Gunks climbing, and a collection of pitons and other outmoded hardware pulled from cliff faces and displayed with the warning "Rust Never Sleeps."

They're all buried somewhere in the New Paltz town dump now. A trove of fused chocks and carabiners should be there, too. Just as soon as he's through with the claims adjusters, Williams plans to see. They'll make fine adornments for the walls of "Rock and Snow II."

— Eric Ellman

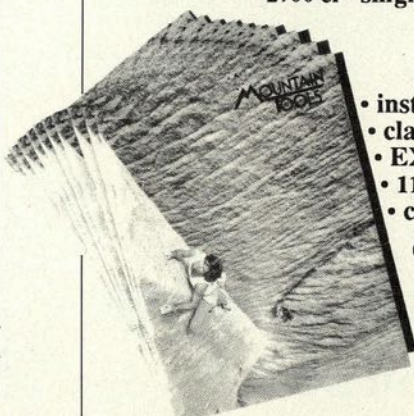


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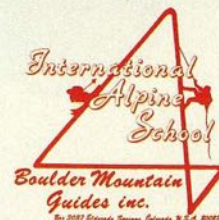
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Trial over 1986 Mount Hood tragedy closes

Portland, Oregon

A jury on April 5 found Oregon Episcopal School negligent in the death of one of six students who died during a school-sponsored climb in March 1986. The jury, however, cleared of negligence the mountain guide that the school had hired.

The guide and co-defendant, Ralph Summers, had been hired to assist the trip leader, Rev. Thomas Goman. Goman was one of two faculty members who also died after being caught by a storm high on the Oregon mountain.

Richard L. Haeder, whose 16-year-old son, Richard L. Haeder, Jr., died on the trip, was the only parent to bring the case to court. At the end of the three-week trial, Haeder was awarded \$500,000 in damages in the suit. Haeder had originally sought compensation in the amount of \$2.76 million.

Amy Horwell, the daughter of the school's deceased dean of students, Marion Horwell, lost pretrial rulings in two previous suits against the school and Summers. The school reached out-of-court settlements with six of the other families of the students who died.

In the 1986 accident a group of 10 students and three adults were caught in a severe storm on the upper portion of the 11,235-foot mountain, located in the Cascade Range. Goman and Summers turned the group around in the face of high winds and whiteout conditions, but were unable to locate the wanded route leading back down the mountain. Descending with the aid of a compass bearing — which turned out to be incorrect — they became lost among the crevasses of the Palmer Glacier, where Summers dug an emergency snow cave to shelter the party.

With members of the group having become dangerously hypothermic, the next morning Summers, along with one of the students, descended toward the Timberline Lodge to get help. However, in worsening weather, the two became lost and instead arrived at the Mount Hood Meadows ski area. Rescuers summoned to the scene were unable to locate the snow cave for three days due to 80-mph winds and blizzard conditions. Their efforts were also hindered by the fact that Summers had failed to mark the cave's entrance when he and the student, Molly Schula, began their descent. When rescuers finally discovered the snow cave, only two of the remaining 11 victims,

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Brinton Clark and Giles Thompson, were still alive.

The incident generated nation-wide press at the time, and was examined at length in such publications as *Outside* and *Backpacker* magazines. In the subsequent court trial both sides presented a number of expert witnesses from the climbing community. Speaking on behalf of the defendants were Jeff Lowe, John Roskelley, Phil Ershler, Andrew Harvard, and Jed Williamson. Witnesses for the plaintiff included Lute Jerstad, Dr. James States, Dunham Gooding, and Mike Volk.

While Amy Horwell may seek a continuation of the case with Summers as the sole defendant, the suit involving Oregon Episcopal School is now complete, and no other appeals are pending. According to Jeffrey Street, one of the two defense attorneys in the case, the school remains financially secure and is covered by insurance.

With the shadow of liability increasingly darkening the future of not only school and club outdoor programs, but also guide services, climbing-equipment manufactures, and others involved in the outdoor-recreation industry, this recent lawsuit along with several other cases involving charges of wrongful death and product liability may be only the tip of the iceberg.

In a brief prepared statement issued after the decision, the school's administration said: "No court of law can alter the sense of loss we feel for those who died — the courtroom is a difficult arena in which to resolve grief. Ralph Summers joins us in the belief that there are no winners in a suit of this kind."

— Lance Leslie

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Update from the Inland Northwest

Sandpoint, Idaho, and Spokane, Washington

Most new-route activity focused on northern Idaho cliffs last year, but more 5.12 routes have also appeared in the Spokane area, pushing the standards at the practice crags.

Compared to explosive activity at better-known crags elsewhere, pioneering efforts in northern Idaho have been slow and steady, but in the past three years the number of routes in the region has doubled. A small group of dedicated individuals from Sandpoint and Spokane continues to lead the way.

A part-time Spokane resident, Pat Mahoney, has been the driving force for scoping new lines in the Spokane area, producing, among other routes, *Body Scarfer* (5.12a) and *Slave Labor* (5.12a/b) at the Dishman Rocks.

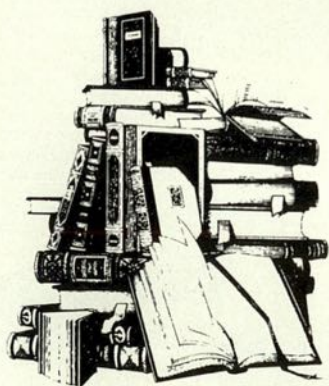
Larry Peterman, a long-time Spokane crag activist, continues to explore new ground, one of his best finds being *Black Cat* (5.11c), on the West Face of Chimney Rock.

Climbers in northern Idaho have yet to break the 5.12 barrier. The locals have several projects in the works, but none has been climbed in good style (led with no falls) yet. But many other high-quality routes of moderate difficulty have been established.

Kyle Austin, from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, injected some new energy into the Sandpoint group by free climbing an aid line just right of *Weasels Ripped My Flesh, Side 2*. He named the new route, which Tom Applegate had originally bolted on hooks, *Mean Creature* (5.11b). Austin also added a new line, *Down's Syndrome Disco* (5.10c), to the right of *Poster Child*. At the Schweitzer Rocks, Austin cranked off the face climb *Planet Dread* (5.11c) on Janitor's Rock at Laclede. *Edge of Destruction* (5.11b) went to Randall Green, while Gene Klein established another excellent climb, *Land Shark* (5.11a), at the Outback Cliff.

Of all the crag areas around Sandpoint, the Granite Point area still has the most new-route potential, but only a couple of climbs went up this year. *Point Special* (5.11c) is 80 feet of "good old-fashioned 5.11" and is one of the best pitches of that grade in the Sandpoint area. Like its namesake, the popular fishing lure that tantalizes the big trout of Lake Pend Orielle, *Point Special* provoked and teased Green and others until bagged. The climb is located on the overhanging face of the Big Wall, commanding a spectacular view of the lake.

— Randall Green



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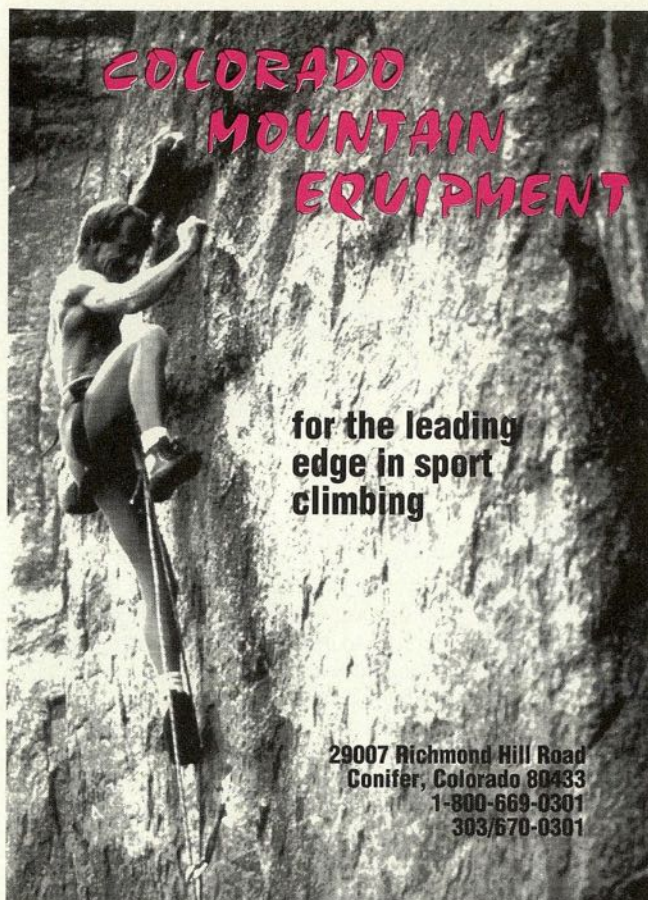
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Competitions

Aftershock in Berkeley — Karn, Bensman rumble

Berkeley, California

The Danskin Rockmaster I competition, put on by LoweCo in the Berkeley Community Theater March 17-18, mixed chaotic organization with 90 of the best climbers in North America. Jim Karn handily took his fourth straight win in a major competition, while Alison Osius and Bobbi Bensman competed again in a superfinal.

Due to the large number of men entered — 70 — Saturday began with a men's qualifying round, open to climbers who hadn't competed previously or who weren't on U.S. or Canadian national teams. This opener took place on one half of the familiar LoweCo wall, while the women climbed simultaneously in their semifinal on the other half, giving the theater a two-ring circus feel.

Christian Griffith of Boulder and Sean Myles, from England, had set the women's semi-final course at 5.11b, but many of the competitors felt the route was soft for that grade. Twelve among the 20 women entered flashed the route, resulting in a larger-than-anticipated women's final later that night.

That event was the first open to the public, because LoweCo felt the finals were the most exciting to watch. Friends of competitors, however, had been permitted to watch the semis.

The first crux on the women's route was a puzzling cross-through, where most competitors pumped out trying to solve the sequence. Laura Lonowski of Seattle, on a roll after winning the speed climbing event, climbed through the crux and up the overhanging wall to third place before falling.

Osius, from Aspen, smoothly negotiated the crux then worked tenaciously to the top. The charged crowd responded with a booming standing ovation as she lowered to the ground, all smiles.

Bensman, of Boulder, also flashed the route, using her strength and flexibility to walk through the technical moves. She later commented she felt the route was soft for 5.12b, but still good. In a repeat of the Continental Championships, held in Boulder in December, Bensman and Osius would meet in a superfinal Sunday night.

The men's semifinals on Sunday included the 16 contestants who had got-

ten highest on the qualifier and the 34 who had received a bye. This turned into a marathon for those waiting backstage, with the last climber spending nine hours in the isolation zone before his turn.

Two climbers, focusing hard on the route above them, forgot to remove the



Bobbi Bensman in the Berkeley superfinal.

socks they had slipped over their shoes to keep them clean during the walk from the wings to the wall. Somehow they both managed to gymnastically kick the socks off while climbing, then continue up to large rounds of amused applause.

Karn, of Bend, Oregon, supplied the only flash of the traversing 5.12c route, making it look like a "hiking trip," according to one competitor.

The doors opened to the public for the men's finals an hour late, and it was an hour and a half more (at nearly 9 p.m.) before anyone actually started climbing the 5.12d route. Climbing in order of how each had placed in the semifinals, climber after climber was ejected on the technical wall below the glowing orange "growth," a familiar feature lodged below the roof on the wall.

Hans Florine of Moraga, California, fresh from his speed-climbing win, pulled through the lower cruxes, survived the growth, and slapped a couple of feet above the lip of the roof for second place.

Jim Thornburg of Berkeley, Colin Lantz of Boulder, and Will Gadd of Colorado Springs all fought through the growth and slapped a hold just over the roof, resulting in a three-way tie for third.

Jim Karn climbed last, confidently strolling the lower half of the wall. Above the growth he fired a long lunge to get established, cutting loose and hanging off one arm. Only a few holds below the top, Karn threw a sideways dyno that didn't quite stick, but still earned him \$1,000 and first place.

Beginning at 10:30 p.m., the women's superfinal capped the long, long evening. Bensman climbed slowly, reaching to tap a high point often and making long reaches look easy on the overhanging wall. She finally pumped out on a deviously technical traverse, but not before reviving a tired audience and winning first.

Osius, although less powerful, climbed with smooth and well-planned moves, falling off a small hold three feet below Bensman's high point.

Danskin Rockmaster I showcased the skills of some climbers who hadn't been predicted to place high, while other climbers who had been expected to do well didn't have good performances. Scott Franklin and Dale Goddard, two of the country's best, both fell low in the semifinals. Goddard, a strong and consistent competitor, later commented, "I was saving mental strength for the finals. I guess I still have to try hard in the semis!"

— Will Gadd

(See results on page 45)

Rock Rodeo II

Hueco Tanks, Texas

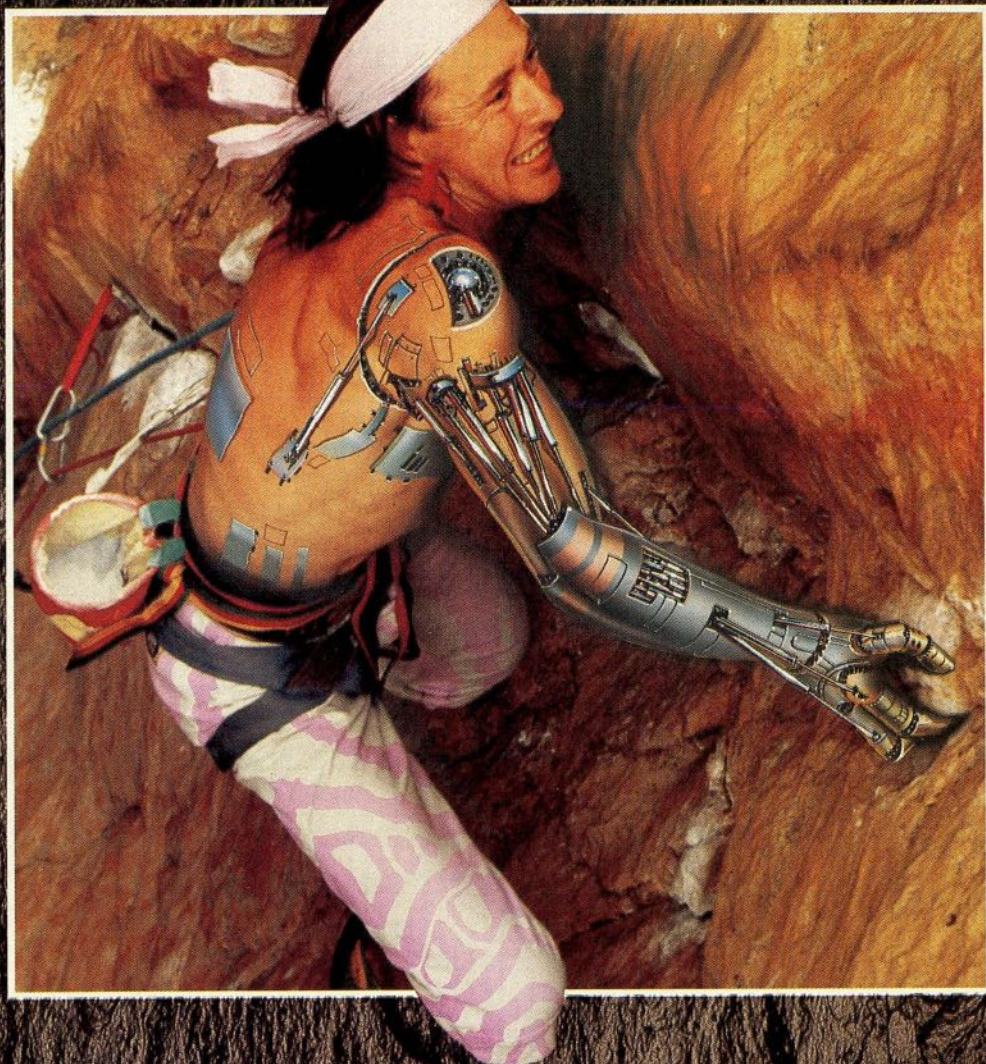
As you may recall, last year's inaugural Rock Rodeo bouldering competition was a great success despite threatening weather, threatening rangers, and various boycott schemes.

However, the results of Rock Rodeo I's fund-raising efforts are plain to see a year later. Whereas once Hueco Tanks' front-side faces were the home of the brave, this year climbers have been seen all over the rock, taking advantage of the hundreds

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of retrobolts paid for by the fund-raiser and added to existing routes. The retrobolting is the second phase of the state park's three-part bolting legalization program.

No sequel would be worth its salt if it weren't for the overcoming of evil forces. The biggest threat to Rock Rodeo II's success was the misprinting of the date of the event in *Climbing*. On the other hand, the weather this year was cooperative, as were the park personnel.

On the day of the event, the parking lot at Pete's Hueco Tanks Country Store, the traditional sign-in spot, was no more crowded than it had been the day before. Contest organizers bemoaned their fate as they glumly signed in the few contestants who showed early. With such a low turn-out it would be a pretty tough job draining all the kegs that afternoon.

Then, from around the bend in the south, came a stampede of VW buses and other assorted climber rigs. The registration tables were flooded. One hundred and fifty climbers eventually signed in, a 50% increase from the year before.

The moment of truth for many came at the registration table. When choosing an entrance category, many a self-styled hardman admitted to intermediate ability. Dave Head, nevertheless, attracted 16 contestants into this year's new Super-Expert

category. The half-a-million cash pot he promised no doubt lured them in. Only those who listened carefully found out Head was counting in pesos.

Out on the boulders that day, each category was closely contested. The Mushroom Boulder was the center of attention, due to its concentration of hard problems and an exciting six-foot Super-Expert dyno (an intimidating lunge, with no toprope allowed).

The Super-Expert course was unique among U.S. competitions. It was designed to test the overall bouldering skills of the entrants, not their foot speed, strategy, or topropping endurance. There were only 10 problems, all unroped. Included were slabs, mantels, cracks, lunges, and overhanging faces.

Each problem was worth 20 points if flashed, with points deducted for each fall. The harder the problem, the fewer the points deducted for a fall.

Contestants were forced to confront their weaknesses, or pay the price. Two crack problems gave the Super-Experts fits. Only four succeeded on a 5.12- crack (with only two flashes), while Alan Lester of Boulder was the only climber to get more than halfway across the 36-foot roof crack on the *Morgue* (5.12), cranking it in a bloody last-minute battle. The future of

American crack climbing appears bleak, though face climbing is quite healthy.

Dale Goddard of Boulder countered his jamming weaknesses with equal doses of finger strength and face technique to come out on top of the Super-Expert division.

In the women's division, the talents of Boulder's Nancy Prichard regained her an inscription on this year's golden chalk bag trophy.

Ample supplies of bonfire wood this year saved Pete's store from immolation. As before, the party went on longer than anyone can remember. For once, a sequel proved every bit as good as the original.

— John Sherman

(See results on page 45)

Boston tea party

Boston, Massachusetts

The contest at the Boston Rock Gym began exactly at 9:00 a.m. on February 3. For a "First Annual" contest, it was an auspicious beginning, although, since the competition was held in Boston where everything is either "The Oldest" or "The Biggest," another superlative label, "Most Prompt," should be no surprise.

Timing was an important factor on the first day, Saturday, considering that 55 contestants each had to climb seven routes. In an attempt to admit as many climbers

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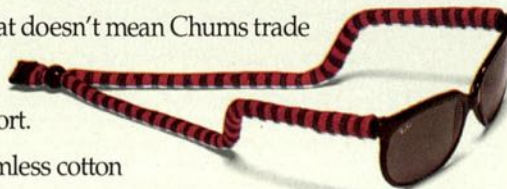
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as possible, organizers — the gym's owners, Steve Weitzler, Tom Nonis, and Wayne Domeier — had devised a format that accommodated climbers on seven routes at once.

Each climber had five minutes per route, with two-minute rests between routes. No one finished all seven routes.

The event resulted in a draw between David Luhan and Ed Keller for first place, with four people — Eric Engberg, Haj, John Cronin, and Al Diamond — tied for second. The top women were Mimi Stone, Madeline Carter, and Sarah Johnson in first, second, and third respectively.

Sunday's semifinal and final events were riveting to watch: the climbing was much more technical and many of Saturday's top finishers couldn't get past the initial moves.

In the men's competition, only eight of 30 completed the first route, with one climber after another peeling off at a crux move one-third of the way up. Many clung literally for minutes in indecision before lunging and falling.

No one finished the final route, but Cronin came within four feet to take first place.

A small controversy arose when the organizer judging that event allowed the second climber, Keller, unlimited time instead of his allotted six minutes. Keller eventually reached the second-highest mark.

All the other contestants peeled off before the six-minute time limit, so the question became, "Who gets second?" The issue was resolved amicably with second place going to Keller and third to John MacLean.

Four of the women qualified for the final, which was held on the men's qualifying route. Stone was the clear first-place winner, completing about two-thirds of the route.

— Ellen Champagne

(Results list not provided.)

Biggest-ever field at Portland Rock Gym

Portland, Oregon

Ninety climbers showed to make up the biggest field yet when, on March 3, the Portland Rock Gym held its third annual climbing contest.

The increased attendance was due to the fact that this year the Open category was to be broken into three sections: Recreational (5.7 to 5.9), Advanced (5.10 to 5.11), and Open (5.11+ to 5.12).

Competitiveness seemed to be mainly absent from the lower categories as climbers gave Beta and encouragement freely; the Open climbers were a bit more restrained.

A local, Blake Hankins, won the Open against mainly Bend-based opposition.

Also in the Open but not placing was Metolius' Jeff Paulson, who received a well-deserved prize for persistence on the longest problem in the contest — a 25-foot traverse across the overhanging wall, then 20 feet up, and 8 feet out on the roof problem. On all his three tries Paulson made it to within just one move from the anchor.

In the Advanced category, Mike Sessions, who began climbing only eight months ago, placed third.

— David I. Sowerby

(Results list not provided.)

San Diego Indoor Climbing Championships

San Diego, California

As part of the Kashi Outdoor Adventure Expo, Aquarius Adventures Mountain Guides hosted a large climbing competition at the Del Mar Fairgrounds on February 11. Little did the Expo organizers realize the climbing contest would dominate the entire show, with 142 contestants and friends from California, Arizona, the Northwest, and even Canada and New York arriving for 12 hours of continuous action.

Forced to limit the contest to one day, event organizers turned away over 100 climbers. The wall and routes were designed



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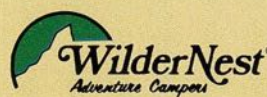
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TORONTO CANADA

by Bart Berry and Jim Thoen of Aquarius Adventures, with a crew of 20 working for three days straight, only stopping at 4:00 a.m. the morning before the competition.

The first route was a solid 5.10c hand crack and face climb that stymied many non-traditionalists. The second, a 5.11+ dihedral and finger-crack lead, stopped all but 12 finalists.

Round three was a wildly overhanging 5.12+ lead. Only two climbers reached the top panel of this 32-foot route until 17-year-old Andy Puhvel's turn. Puhvel, the very last climber, had to be pulled from a blanket and a deep sleep in the waiting area, but then flashed the route with a committing dyno to hang from the top edge by one hand. Although relatively young, Puhvel has accomplished many difficult ascents in Yosemite and Joshua Tree and appears to be someone to watch in the upcoming years.

Carmel Schimmel of San Diego took first in the women's climbing division and attributed her success to her experience with cracks at San Diego's Mount Woodson. In fact, the top three women finishers were all Mount Woodson climbers.

— Bart Berry

(See results right)

All the right moves

Grand Rapids, Michigan

The Midwest is not generally considered a hot spot in the climbing community, but it has a strong contingent of locals and an ever-growing number of new climbers. The recently opened Inside Moves Climbing Gym has been so successful that on February 17 it hosted the area's first annual climbing competition.

The event was a friendly gathering, bringing together 53 climbers from three states and Canada. The competition was broken into Recreational Novice, Recreational Experienced, and Open divisions for men and women, with a kids' division as well.

The climbing consisted of seven problems on the 25-foot textured walls, which ranged from low-angle to overhanging.

Contestants had three attempts at each problem, with a two-minute time limit. A successful first attempt earned three points; the second try, two points; and the third, one point.

In the Open division, Eric Nienhouse flashed all but the last problem and walked away with the title. Russ Clifton, who was moved from the Recreational Experienced to the Open on the day of the competition, surprised and thrilled everyone by being the only person to flash the severely overhanging final route.

— Kevin Cieszkowski

(See results right)

Competition Results

MIDNIGHT MOUNTAINEERING/ GAD GYMNASTICS COMPETITION

Lake Tahoe, California,
Feb. 1-2, 1990

Skilled

1. Deshanon Smith
2. Ricky Quinteru
3. Carol Chapman

Advanced

1. Dave Bryant
2. Sondra Utterback
3. Berry Robert

Expert

1. Larry Duin
2. Troy Rarick
3. Mark Miller

Masters

1. Dan Osman
1. Tom Herbert
3. Travis Klawin

SAN DIEGO INDOOR CLIMBING CHAMPIONSHIPS

San Diego, California,
Feb. 11, 1990

Kids (15 and under)

1. Kurt Freewald
2. Ryan Righetti
3. Matt Jaime
4. Richard Vogt
5. Peter Underhill
6. Chris Lindner

Over 40

1. Doug Mishler
2. Gene Vallee
3. Peter Rowat
4. Doug Dahlquist
5. Allan Engel
6. Jim Rapp

Women

1. Carmel Schimmel
2. Elke Lindner
3. Kimberly Worsman
4. Lisa Rehms
5. Kelley Penix
6. Mary Navarre

Men

1. Andy Puhvel
2. John Mireles
3. Peter Takeda
4. Robin Mulligan
5. Hans Florine
6. Mike Waugh

INSIDE MOVES

Grand Rapids, Michigan,
Feb. 17, 1990

Men's Open

1. Eric Nienhouse
2. John Nienhouse
3. Russ Clifton

Men's Experienced

1. Bob Bergman
2. Brian Bourdegas
3. Ken Bott

Men's Novice

1. Ralph Bidwell
2. Mike Picking
3. Matt Boorst

Women's Novice

1. Sue Hatt
2. Karen Tetzela
3. Jolyn Boorst
3. Kris Monzma

Women's Open

1. Jean Cieszkowski
2. Sharon Loszette

Children

1. Chris Plummer
2. David Poxson
3. Josh Wilhite

BRIANCON

France, Feb. 24, 1990

Women

1. Lynn Hill USA
2. Corine LaBrune FRA
3. Luisa Jovane ITA
4. Agnes Brard FRA
5. Paola Pons ITA
6. Marie Agnes Duval FA
7. Pascale Barthelemy FRA
7. Renee Guerin FRA
7. Marie Louise Kilcher SWI

Men

1. Jerry Moffat U.K.
2. Yuji Hiriyama JAP
3. Didier Raboutou FRA
4. Alberto Gnerro ITA
4. J.B. Tribout FRA
6. Serge Blein FRA
7. Salavat Rakhmetov USSR
8. Philippe Plantier FRA
9. Luc Thibal FRA
10. Damien Charignon FRA
10. Jindrich Hudecek CZECH
12. Robert Cortijo FRA
13. Jackie Godoffe FRA
13. Francois Legrand FRA
15. Alain Ghersen FRA
15. Thomas Rieser AUS
17. Raphael Cabane FRA
18. Thomas Cada CZECH
19. Laurent Laporte FRA
19. Thomas Suter SWI
21. Vincent Albrand FRA
21. Dominique Page FRA
23. Andrea Gallo ITA
24. Samuel Delsine FRA
24. Yann Ghesouiers FRA
26. Arnold T'Kint BEL
27. Ron Kauk USA
28. David Cambre FRA
29. Christophe Issertine FRA
29. Francois Lombart FRA
31. Pascal Auroy

ROCK RODEO II

Hueco Tanks, Texas,
Feb. 24, 1990

Super-Expert

- (200 pt maximum scale)
1. Dale Goddard
 2. Hans Florine
 3. Wallace Stasick

Women

1. Nancy Prichard
2. Lauri Medina
3. Mary Gabrieli

Advanced

1. Paul Cornforth
2. Matt Samet
3. Jay Anderson

Intermediate

1. Mark Thomas
2. Harold Hill
3. Mike Finley

Novice

1. Alex Burton
2. Linda Rosnl
2. Robert Bolin

DANSKIN ROCKMASTER I

Berkeley, California,
March 17-18, 1990

Women

1. Bobbi Bensman, Boulder, CO
2. Alison Osius, Aspen, CO
3. Laura Lonowski, Seattle, WA
4. Susan Price, Seattle, WA
5. Amy Irvine, Salt Lake City, UT
6. Nancy Prichard, Boulder, CO
7. Shelley Presson, Bend, OR
8. Lisa Rehms, Scottsdale, AZ
9. Bird Lew, Truckee, CA
10. Aimee Barnes, Pocatello, ID
11. Diane Russell, Santa Cruz, CA
11. Shannon Wade, Boulder, CO
13. Christina Wait, Austin, TX
13. Georgia Phipps, Seattle, WA
15. Jade Chun, Santa Barbara, CA
16. Carmel Schimmel, San Diego, CA
16. Sally Hunter, Los Angeles, CA
18. Mary Navarre, Idyllwild, CA
19. Sharon Urquhart, Arcata, CA
20. Kim Worsman, Escondido, CA

Men

1. Jim Karn, Bend, OR
2. Hans Florine, Moraga, CA
3. Will Gadd, Colorado Springs, CO
3. Colin Lantz, Boulder, CO
3. Jim Thornburg, Berkeley, CA
6. Tom Herbert, Bishop, CA
7. Pat Adams, Boulder, CO
7. Scott Frye, Berkeley, CA
9. Geoff Weigand, Bend, OR
10. Paul Bjork, Forest Lake, MN
11. Max Dufford, Seattle, WA
11. Don Welsh, Las Vegas, NV
13. Ed Keller, Florida, NY
14. Ed Barry, Yosemite, CA
15. Mike McCarron, Chicago, IL
16. Doug McDonald, Boulder, CO
17. Tim Wagner, Tustin, CA
18. Dave Robinson, San Diego, CA
18. Kevin Wilson, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA
20. David Luhan, Monroe, NY

(The above are only the top 20
out of 70 men competing.)

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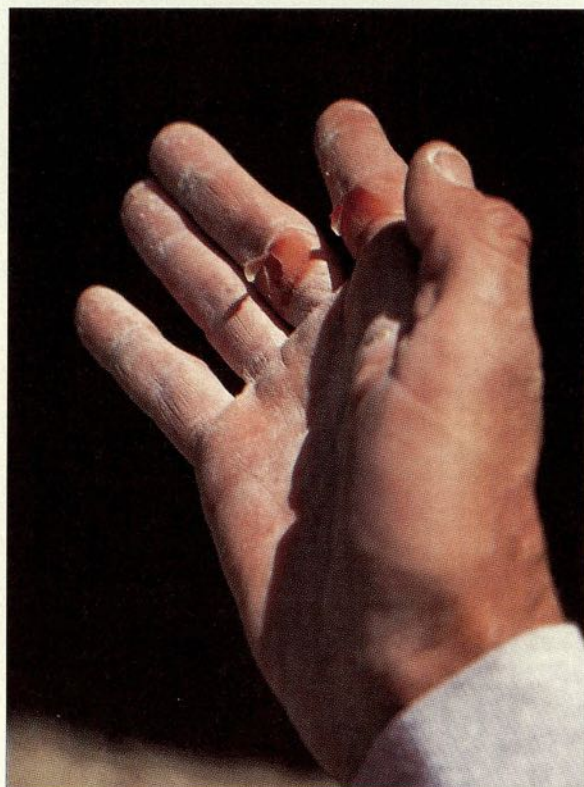
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East Side Stories

text and photos by John Sherman



The East Side of California's Sierra Nevada, 1977. Our Hero the author, youthful, yet to gain his characteristic bitterness and still quite impressionable, gets his first taste of East Side excitement. It's a cool summer night and he's up to his neck in Hot Creek, the bathtub-temperature stream soothing a pair of Tuolumne-cramped calves. A score of laughing heads and twice as many shoulders are visible

through the moonlit steam. Our Hero's eyes fix on a brassiere hanging from the footbridge. Suspended in the cups are two bottles of Jack Daniels. Fifths. Hmm. The eyes sweep the surface, searching ... Healthy bobbars abound. It's one of those cosmic experiences that alter the course of a life. Our Hero is hooked on the East Side. He has yet to see the boulders.

Steve Schneider on Grandma Peabody, Buttermilks.

A two-hour session is long by Deadman's standards. Not only is the skin turned to mush, the brain usually is too.



It's not long before Our Hero is introduced to Deadman Summit. Unavoidably located just a hundred yards from U.S. 395, the main road between Tuolumne and Mammoth, Deadman Summit's rhyolite provides an irresistible bouldering challenge. Tall pocketed faces, deep pumice landings, thick pine forests — it's the sort of place you could lose your head over. In fact, the prospector it's named after did just that. However, local legend says the cause was a dispute with his partner and not the fantastic bouldering.

Our Hero lucks out and keeps his head, but his tips are soon turned into mincemeat by the little piranha teeth lining the pockets. A two-hour session is long by Deadman's standards. Not only is the skin turned to mush, the brain usually is too. The problems tend to be high — 20-footers are commonplace. To conquer these, the boulderer needs to be higher. To quote sometimes-local Bill Russell, "To do this kind of problem, you need two Schlitz Bulls under the belt — they take away the fear."

If you forgot the Bulls or the buds, don't despair — Deadman's crushed pumice landings are the best in the world. Imagine falling into several feet of fluffy popcorn. The only drawback is that your shoes fill up with pebbles and dirt, so deep is the cushioning. Slippers are a good choice here since they fit into the letter-slot pockets and thin cracks, and can be emptied out and slid back on in seconds. Of course, there's something to be said for the time it takes to lace and unlace boots. But if you need more time to de-pump, you can play treasure hunt; they never did find that prospector's head.

Big guns (above); the author brushing holds on the first ascent of *Sketchpad*, Sherman Acres (right).

Many other good volcanic crags lie in the forests near Deadman Summit, such as The Swiss Cheese, Rick's Rocks, and the Bachar Boulders. It is at the latter that we rejoin Our Hero, about to turn 30, bitter at the changes in his sport, more bitter that those changes have neglected to fatten his pocketbook, but facing one last chance to grasp his share of fame before joining the Senior Tour. The face is beautiful, slightly overhung, 25 feet high, sparsely pocketed, but well defined by two bounding crack lines. Its reputation for difficulty is well established. Our Hero has heard from locals both that "only Moffatt has climbed it" and "only Kauk has climbed it." He can't shake the thought that if he pulls it off they'll say "only Sherman has climbed it."

Visions of greatness clog his brain — groupies, sponsors, his own TV ad, the cover of *Climbing*, more groupies. He cranks. He pulls. He throws. He shakes. He does it. On the top, his senses are flooded by a cool breeze, a mountain vista, a trembling pump, a finger that feels half-an-inch-longer than when he started, and the realization that he's all alone — Greg Epperson wasn't there to capture the ascent on film, and nobody has gotten famous on the East Side since Norman Clyde.

Fortunately, all is not lost. Mammoth is close by, offering all the support facilities needed to buoy Our Hero's spirits. Mammoth is actually a suburb of Los Angeles, where rich, trendy Angelinos live on winter weekends and employ a local populace of semi-indentured servants, some of whom are climbers with plenty of time in the summer to go bouldering and collect



unemployment checks. Surrounded by big money, drugs, and a recreational atmosphere, most Mammoth locals are accomplished partiers, and at the crags the fresh pine scent is often mixed with the heady aroma of fine smokeables.

But what's it like further south in the Owen's Valley? Let's rejoin Our Hero at the world-famous Buttermilks.

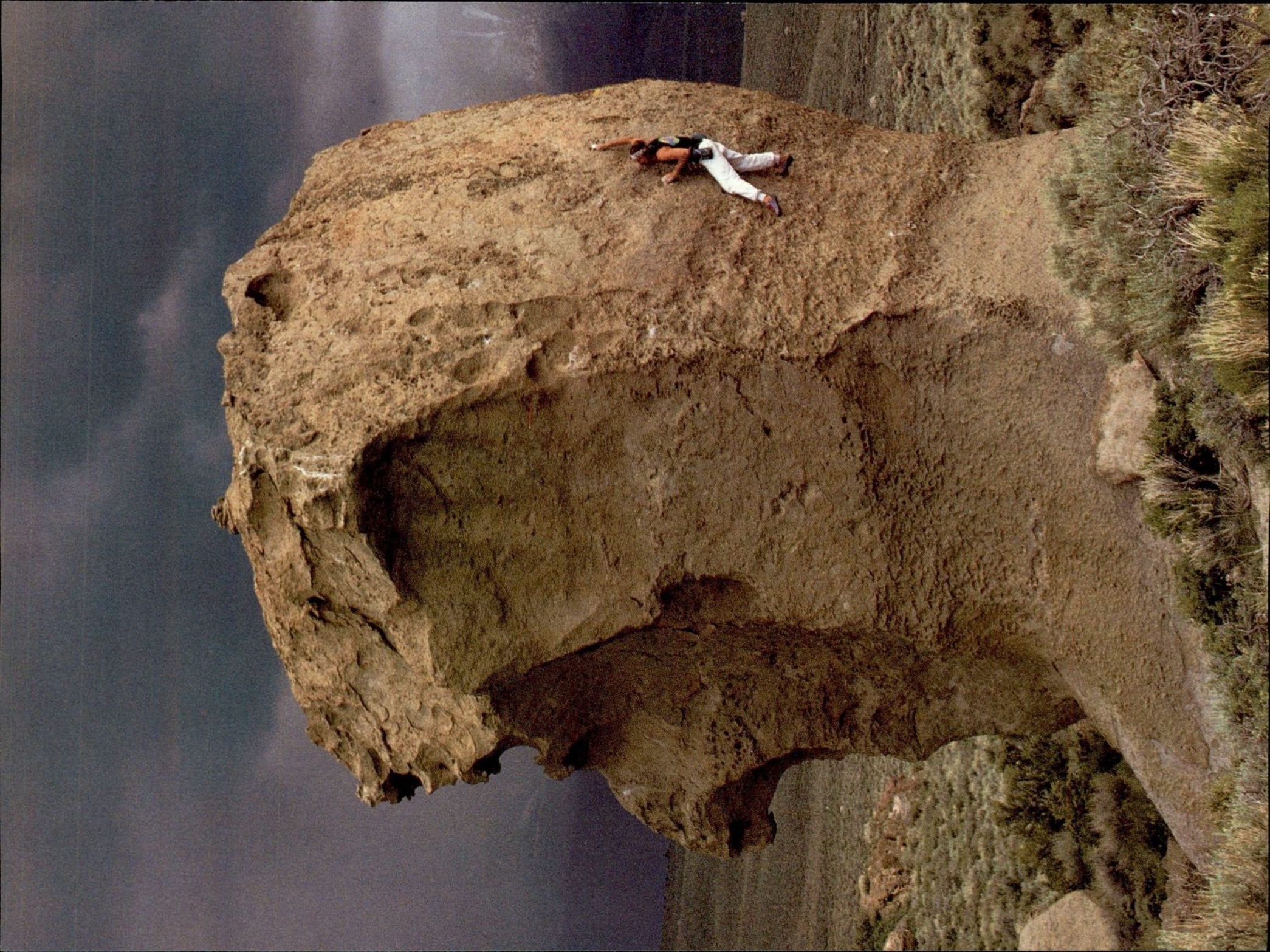
Uh oh. He looks to be in desperate shape. The combination of high-desert sun, polished granite boulders, too much chalk in the sinuses, and 20 or so cold beer compresses on his swollen elbows has left him a bit peaked. The Bishop boys throwing this shoe demo have proven themselves adept at partying as well as climbing. The festivities move to town, and Our Hero, the once-proud partier, has met his match. Like Tyson in the tenth against Buster Douglas, Our Hero fails to go the distance and collapses, before midnight, on the floor. Or is he on the porch? No, it's half and half. A debate between the other revelers ensues — should Our Hero be denuded of his eyebrows?

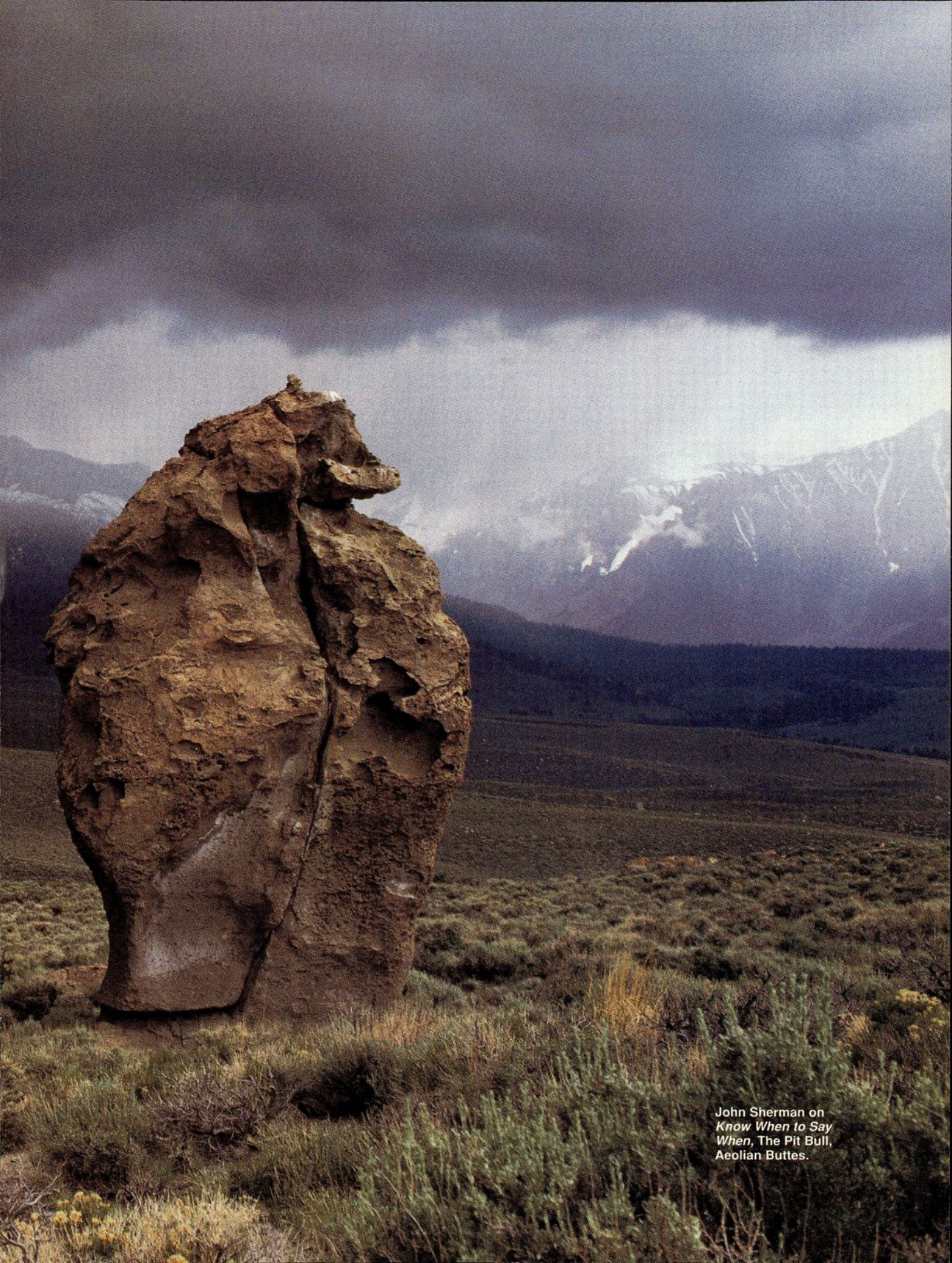
Morning dawns and Our Hero's stomach feels like it is filled with a mixture of battery acid and helium. Nevertheless, he still has his eyebrows, thanks to the inter-

vention of his buddy Mr. Big, who got him into this mess in the first place and is now driving him to Bishop for breakfast. Just when Our Hero's headache has settled into position, iron-maiden nails piercing the forehead, his cranium leaps for the windshield as Mr. Big stomps on the brakes of his loyally untrustworthy VW, "Van Hosen." Our Hero's precious brows stop just inches from the glass. "Golly," he exclaims. "Gee whiz," Mr. Big agrees. Apparently, they have never seen a mountain lion in the wild before, much less nearly wrap a big cat's head around one end of the bumper and its tail around the other. The lengthy catamount lopes gracefully across the road and hops a fence into a pasture of cows. The pair slap a high five and even forget their hangovers, momentarily.

Okay, enough with the drunken-idiot stories and the Ranger-Rick nature thrills. Here's the scoop on the boulders of the Buttermilks: they're big, they're round, they're surrounded by sage and coarse sand landings.

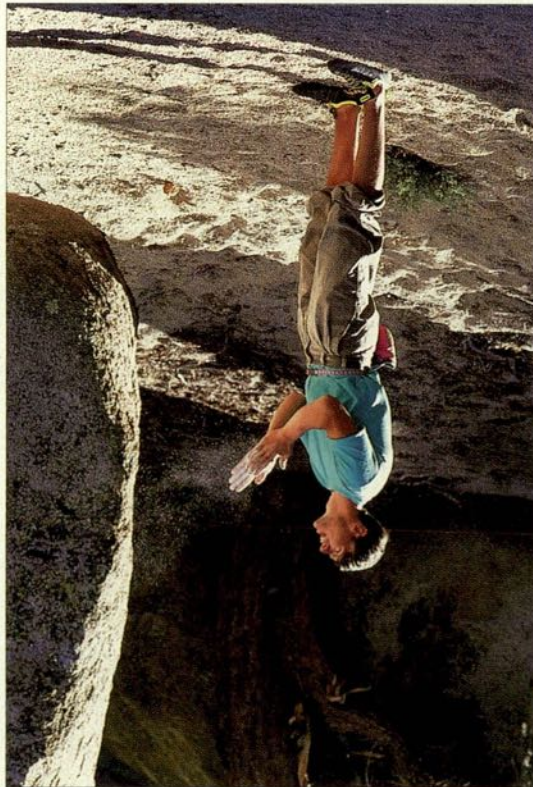
**Like Tyson in the
tenth against
Buster Douglas,
Our Hero fails to
go the distance
and collapses,
before midnight,
on the floor.**





John Sherman on
*Know When to Say
When*, The Pit Bull,
Aeolian Buttes.

Alas, another climber,
one stricken with
incredible shrinking-ball
disease, has declared
his intention to bolt it
into a sport climb.

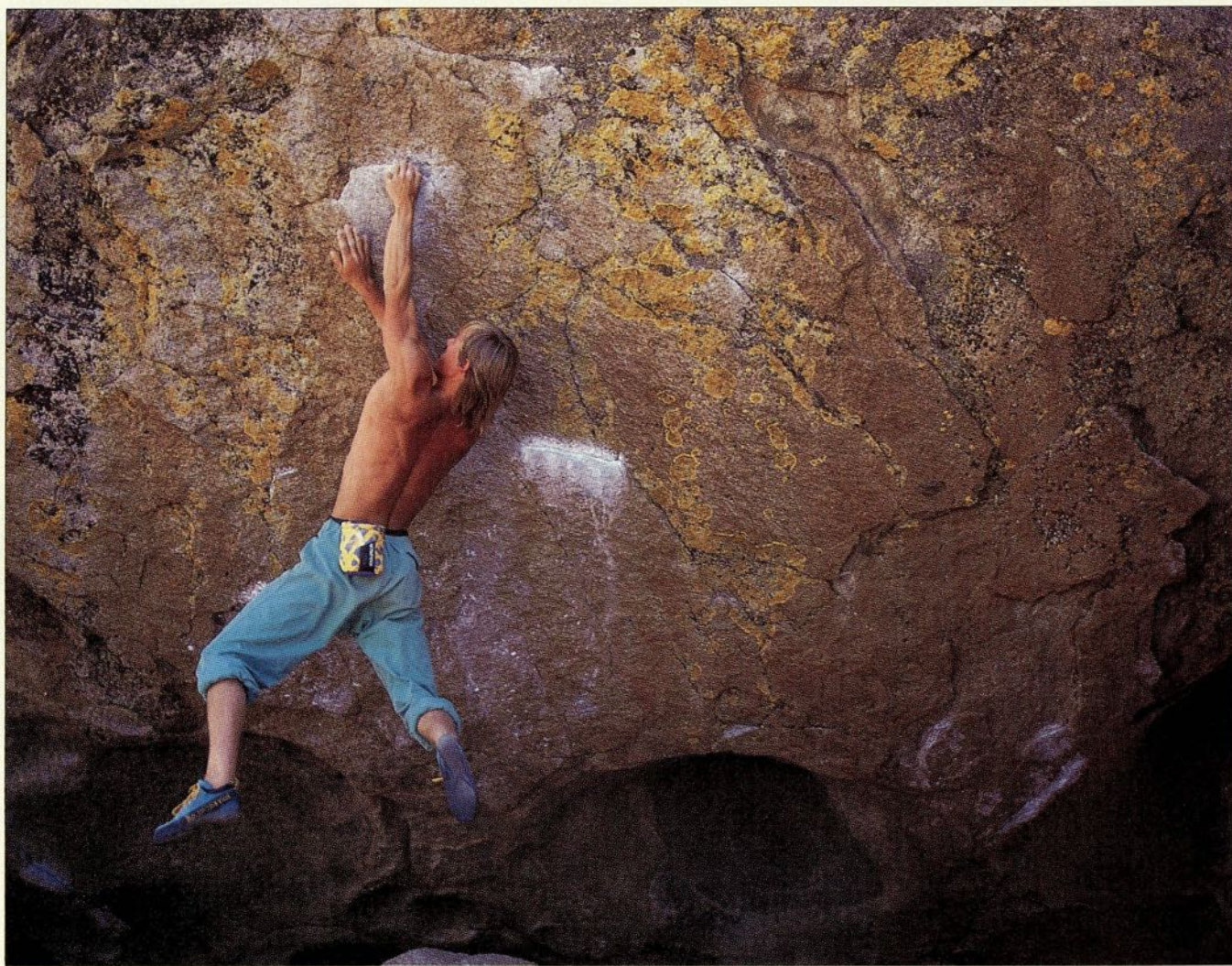


They usually feature a glossy polished side and a lower angled grainy side. Most of the classic problems are found on the polished faces. The holds range from plates and flakes to incus and huecos, and are either distressingly smooth or painfully rough. Many a smooth-looking dinnerplate features tiny crystals on the back side for lancing fingertips. Like Deadman's, Buttermilk sessions often end when the tips cry, "Uncle."

Topope anchors exist only on Grandma and Grandpa Peabody, the two 50-footers that dominate the hillside. Other bolts have sporadically appeared in the Buttermilk, but none lasted for long. This is one area that refuses to be reduced to a playground for those whose egos exceed their ability and commitment. Come here expecting to climb at your limit, not above it.

What's this? Our Hero looks confused. He's just topped out on a 30-foot granite Buttermilk egg and now, after glorying in the tremendous surroundings, the 13,000-foot peaks towering to the west and the snow-shrouded White Mountains shimmering in the east, he takes a look down but can't find the descent. The solitude of climbing on the East Side is never so noticeable as when there's nobody around to point out the descent on a boulder you neglected to walk around first. While Our Hero weighs his predicament, let us visit the nearby burg of Bishop.

The southernmost of the two towns that dominate East Side rock climbing, Bishop is sleepy and happy to



Wallace Stasick chalking (left); Tom Herbert on the Cave Boulder, Buttermilks (above).

self-flagellation, beating himself with his bouldering rug. Waller-sized welts are rising on his arms and legs. Not bothering to strip the size 8 Fires from his size 10 1/2 feet, he runs downhill towards the car, fleeing from the invisible attackers. The no-see-ums are out. These minute insects make mosquitoes look as innocent as butterflies. Silent and no bigger than a flea, no-see-ums administer instant pain, followed by days of burning itching akin to poison oak blisters with Ben-Gay rubbed in. They are unfortunately common throughout the East Side during prime bouldering weather. Our Hero will soon discover, however, that greater winged terror is in store for him.

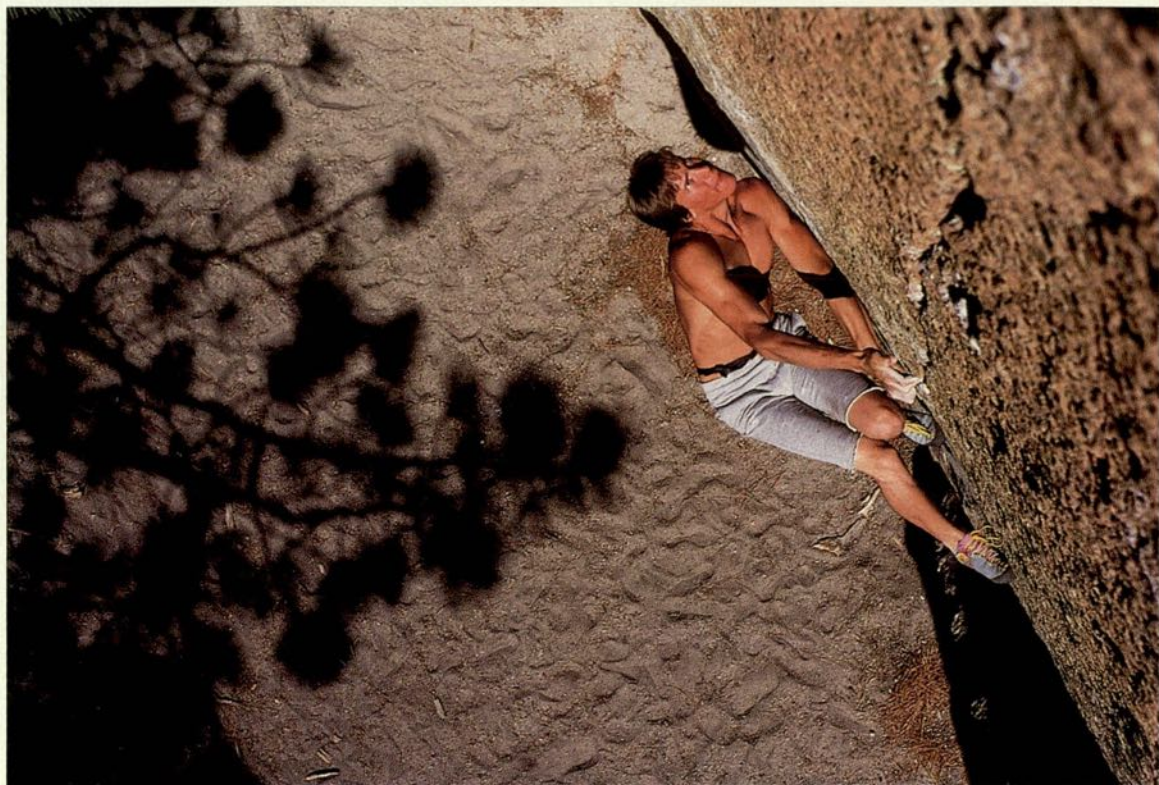
Until recently, the oldest volcanic rocks north of Mammoth, Aeolian Buttes, were relatively undeveloped. Their gargoylish appearance and pink, unvarnished color suggest poor quality, but closer inspection reveals many faces to be solid. Once

again, the setting is striking. To the east lie the desolate Mono Craters, looking like Iwo Jima after John Wayne was through with it, while to the west tower the mighty Sierras. Aeolian Buttes occupy a low ridge in between.

One boulder exerts a singular pull on Our Hero. It's called The Pit Bull due to its mean demeanor (even the descent is 5.10) and its resemblance to Mount Spuds in the Bud Light advertisements. Our Hero is attempting to climb the line between *Child Eater* and *Party Animal*. On a previous visit, he backed off this line from great height, just one move from meeting up with the top section of *Party Animal*. He now refers to this problem as *Know When to Say When*.

He'd be happy to forget about it and leave it for a better climber to tick the first. Alas, another climber, one stricken with incredible shrinking-ball disease, has declared his intention to bolt it into a sport climb. Our Hero just says, "No." No to pansyass 30-foot leads. No to bolts on East Side boulders. No to degrading the

With the sound like
fingernails raking a
blackboard, the fal-
con draws its talons
across the rock,
putting an edge on
the claws that would
make Freddy
Krueger proud. It
takes to the air.



efforts and visions of our predecessors. In a fit of traditionalist bitterness, he laces on his best boots, paws at his carpet patch, and mounts the rock.

In no time he's reached his high point. He glances down. The landing is East Side standard issue — it could only be better if it were closer. Still, from this height, broken legs are a distinct possibility. He digs his fingers into a delicate thin-walled pocket, brings his feet up to smear two polished dents, and stretches out left to barely reach a flat shelf no bigger than a Holiday-Inn-sized soap bar. He's extended so far laterally that his attempts to weight that hold amount to little more than a nervous stroking. He can still back off and feel like a turd for returning just to fail again. He could go for it and blow it, slam into the deck, and feel like a foolish turd with two sore armpits hugging a pair of crutches. Or he could go for it, succeed, and feel like a genuine Hero for getting away with something so foolish.

While Our Hero ponders his fate and wastes valuable reserves of endurance, the winged terror earlier promised enters the picture. On an outcrop a couple hundred yards away is the unhappy creature. No it's not a sport climber, nor is it Our Hero's editor. It's a falcon preparing to defend its territory. With the sound like fingernails raking a blackboard, the falcon draws its talons across the rock, putting an edge on the claws that would make Freddy Krueger proud. It takes to the air.

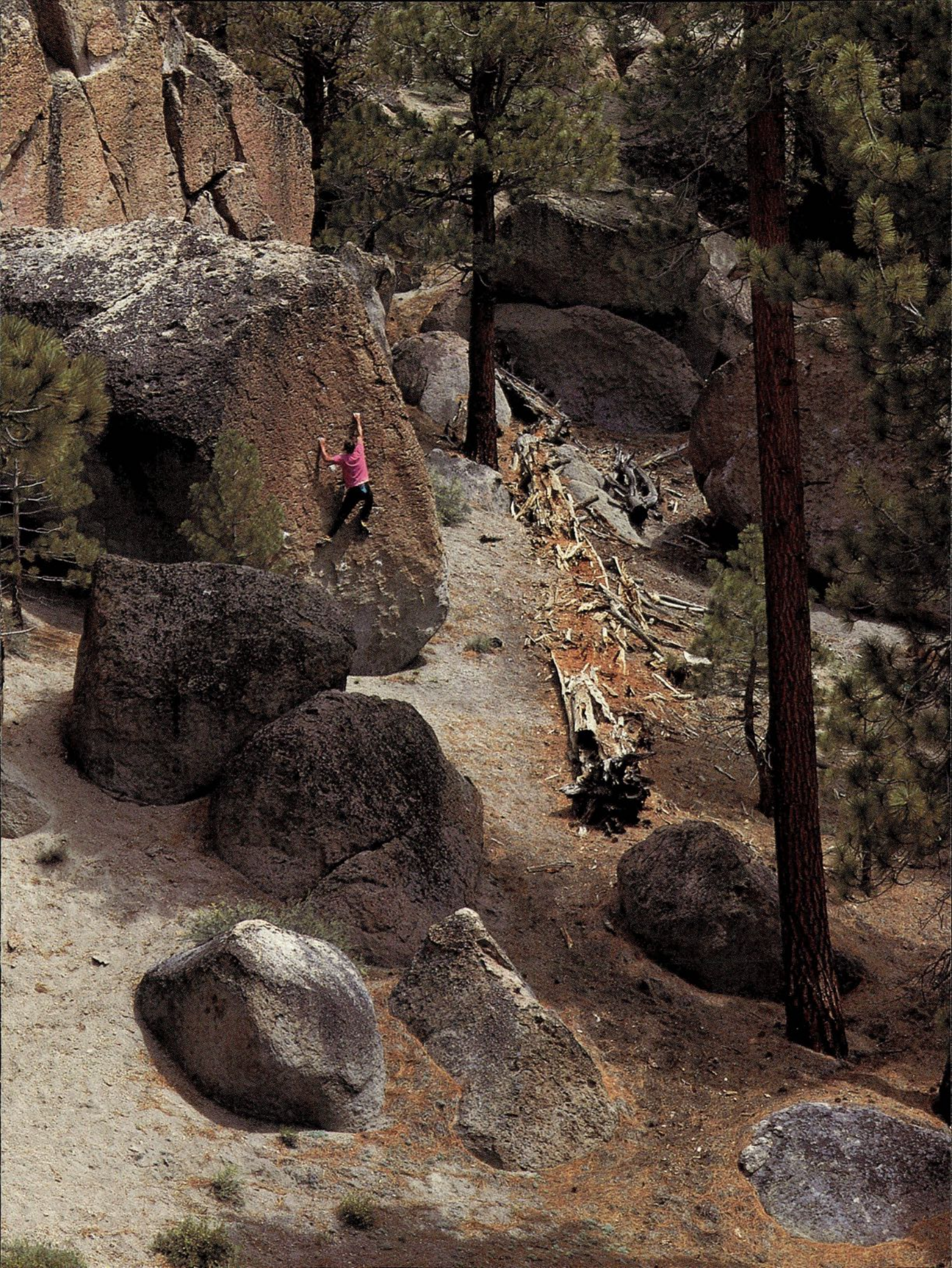
Our Hero cuts loose onto the soap bar. No going

**Tom Herbert at the Bachar Boulders (above);
Wallace Stasick at Rick's Rocks (right).**

back now and the falcon knows it. Emitting a shrill throaty cry, it dives. Swoosh, the soundwaves of a projectile beat on the eardrums. Our Hero's spotter screams out the falcon's movements. "From your right. Thirty feet, 20 feet, 10 ..." Our Hero digs into the holds with a double adrenalin grip. Swoosh ... He hurries upwards, grasps the top of the wall and peers Kilroy-like over the lip. "Twenty, 10 ..." It's coming straight for him, black tears flanking the flesh-razoring beak. He ducks his head. Swoosh ... Hair freshly parted, Our Hero tops out. Ho man, no time for summit parties.

Back on the ground, shaking from the falcon-molested downclimb, but satisfied that justice has been done, Our Hero is left with one nagging question: what's happening at the hot springs tonight?

A well-known traditionalist and frequent contributor to Climbing, John Sherman has eschewed using even a rope in favor of bouldering in recent years. In his words, "The ground doesn't lie." He is currently wrapping up a guidebook to the bouldering of Hueco Tanks, Texas, completing virtually every boulder problem — numbering nearly 800 — in the park in the process. This summer, he will be exploring the East Side boulders, and anticipates spending most of his time at his secret area pictured in this article.



LAND OF TEMPEST

PATAGONIA

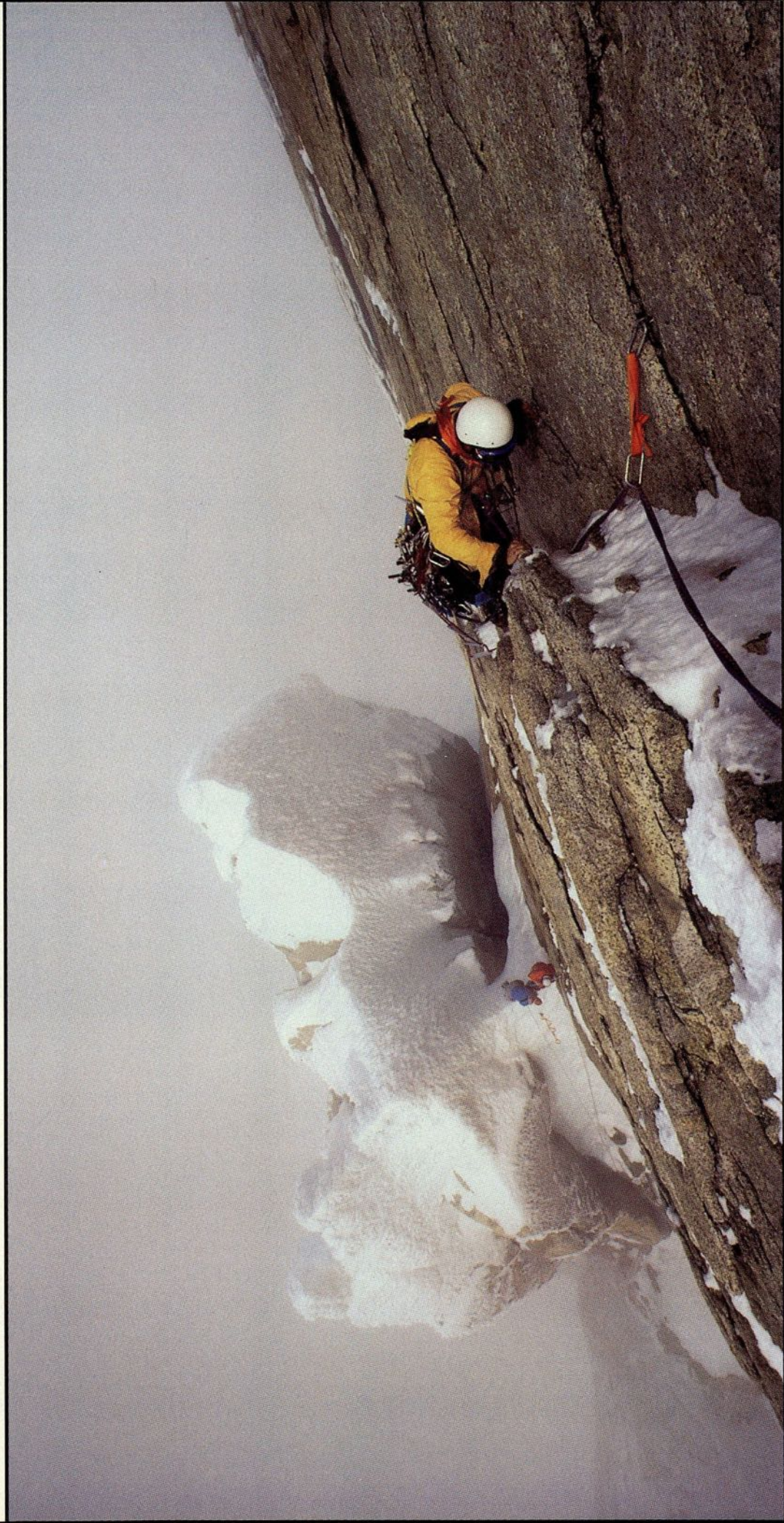


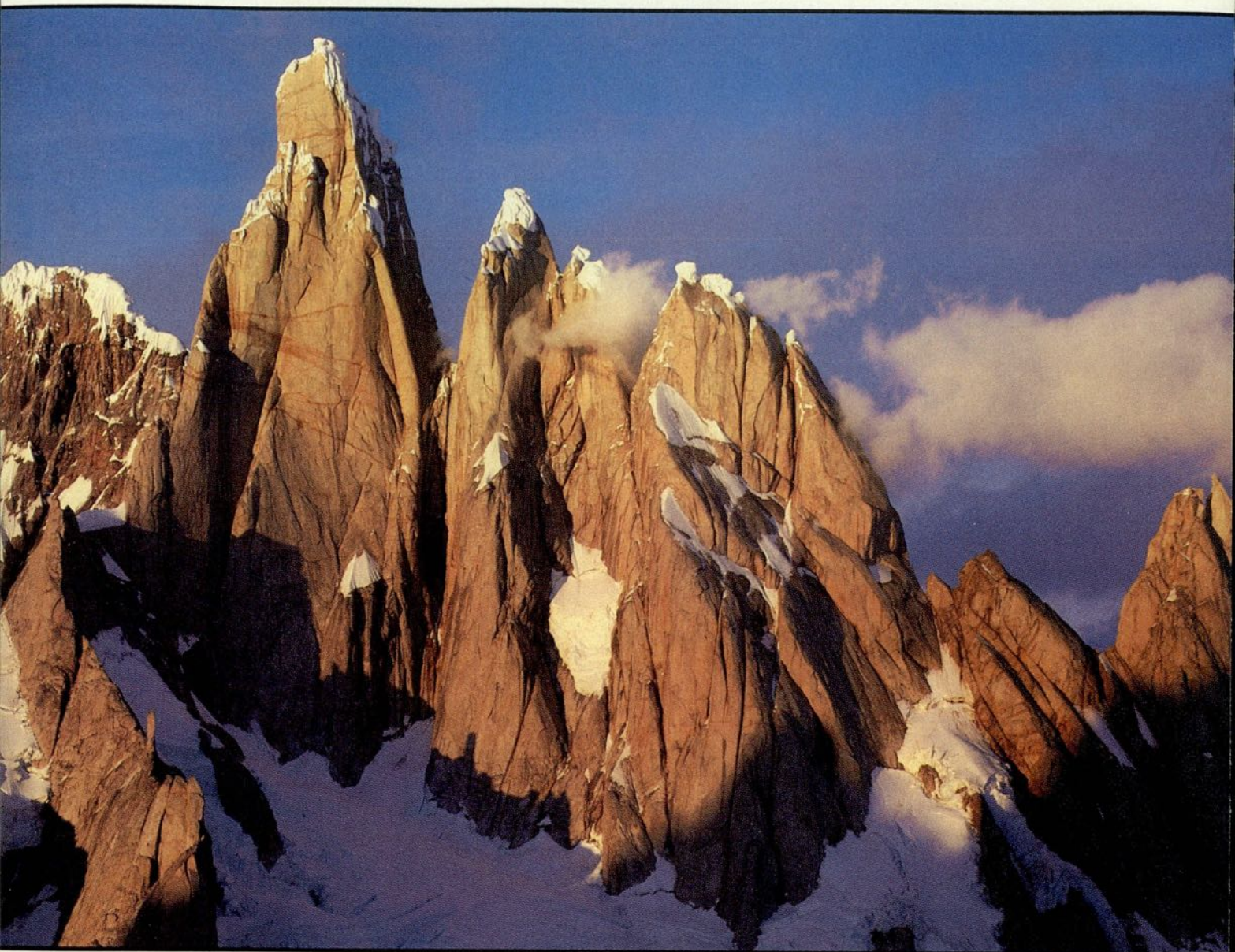
The great British explorer and mountaineer Eric Shipton called Patagonia the land of tempest, and the mention of its name conjures up images of impossible granite spires soaring up to consort with wind-torn skies. Shipton's description is an accurate one: the region lies near the tip of the South American continent, at the center of a vicious cauldron where air masses from the Pacific and Atlantic oceans reel and collide with a fury that is unmatched in the Southern Hemisphere.

Although it is a place of rare beauty, nearly every climber who has made this pilgrimage, triumphant or otherwise, has recounted how capricious weather and gale-force winds dominated the experience. Royal Robbins once wrote, "Patagonia is exceptionally beautiful: go there to hike, go there to photograph, but if you want to climb seriously you need to be a masochist with unlimited time on your hands."

BY GREGORY HORNE

Patagonian sunrise clouds, a sure sign of bad weather to come. Opposite: Climber on the headwall of the Maestri Route on Cerro Torre.





Climbing journals, magazine articles, and books on the region are rife with descriptions about the infamous Patagonian weather. Don Whillans wrote in the 1962 *Alpine Journal* about his descent of Aiguille Poincenot, "When the rope was pulled down, it refused to drop and stood vertical, lashing like a mad thing in the air. ... It was impossible to throw the abseil rope down because of the wind." And in *Mountain* no. 38, the Swiss climber Toni Holdener described descending the East Pillar Of Fitz Roy: "During the subsequent retreat, which would have been almost impossible without fixed ropes, everyone had to give his all to escape those elements of hell. You couldn't see more than 15 feet, the ropes were frozen stiff, and the whole descent took place more or less in the midst of a continuous powder-snow avalanche."

The exact origin of the name Patagonia is unclear.

Some historians attribute it to the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan, who in 1520 was the first European to explore the inland waters of Tierra del Fuego and hence up the convoluted coastline of southern Chile. Magellan is said to have named the mainland to the north *patagones*, Spanish for "big feet" after the local Tehuelche Indians who wore oversize moccasins made from the hide of the guanaco, a smaller South American relative of the camel. Another explanation is that the name originates from a legendary monster that the Indians called *Gran Patagón*.

Patagonia refers to a much larger area than most people realize. Its boundaries are not precisely defined, but they roughly include the land south of the Río Negro in southern Argentina, east of the crest of the Andes, north of the Strait of Magellan — which includes the Torres del Paine in southern Chile — and bounded by

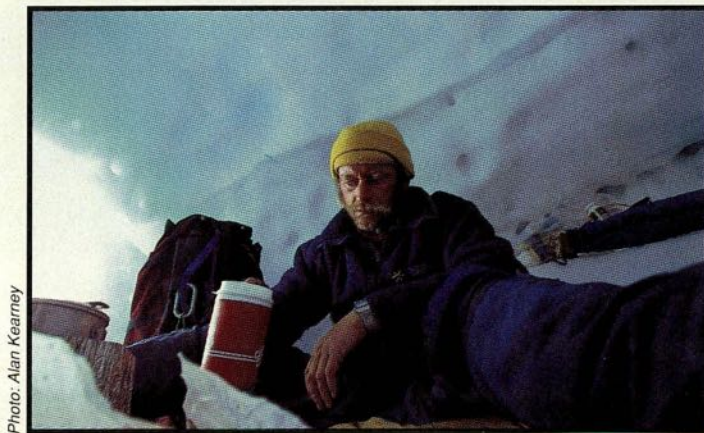


Photo: Alan Kearney

Alan Kearney waiting out bad weather in a snow cave below Fitz Roy. Opposite: the Cerro Torre group at dawn.

the Atlantic Ocean to the east. In all, this comprises about 675,000 square kilometers, an area larger than California and Oregon combined. Only a tiny fraction of that territory includes the stunning granite monoliths we automatically associate with Patagonia. Much of the region is monotonously flat semi-desert land populated by wild sheep and the *ñandú* or rhea, a large flightless bird.

Two of Patagonia's most famous peaks are Cerro Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre, located on the Chile-Argentina border. The boundary is disputed in this area, so nationalists on either side claim that these peaks are in their respective countries. In any case, both peaks are accessed from Argentina's Los Glaciares National Park. Although few North American or European climbers travel to this area without these summits as their primary goals, countless other worthy prizes can be found in the massifs. But while more and more articles are written every year about the Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre groups, it can be hard to find information about the area's layout and lesser peaks.

Cerro Fitz Roy (3375 meters) is the highest and most massive peak of the region and forms the western crest of a serrated granite horseshoe of superb spires. The peak was named after Robert Fitz Roy, the captain of the H.M.S. *Beagle*, the ship which carried the English naturalist Charles Darwin on his exploration of South America in the 1830s. The local name for the peak was Chalten or "the smoking one," referring to the nearly constant cloud cap concealing its summit; the plume misled early explorers into thinking that Fitz Roy was an active volcano. The area was first explored in 1782, but an actual mountaineering foray didn't take place until 1916, when several of the area's minor peaks were climbed. It was later in the 1930s that the Italians Aldo

Bonacossa and Father Alberto de Agostini led expeditions attempting Fitz Roy.

In 1952, a team consisting of the renowned French alpinist Lionel Terray and his Italian partner Guido Magnone reached the summit of Fitz Roy by the Southeast Buttress. The pair utilized snow caves for protection against the fierce winds and fixed ropes up steep sections of the route. These methods would become the normal strategy for dealing with the prolonged spells of bad weather. During this expedition a third team member, Jacques Poincenot, drowned while ferrying loads across the swift-flowing Río Fitz Roy. His friends named Aiguille Poincenot, a striking spire located southeast of Fitz Roy, in his memory.

The second route to go up on Fitz Roy was one of the few alpine-style first ascents in the area. In 1964 the Argentines José Luis Fonrouge and Jorge Comesaña climbed the *Supercanaleta* or *Super Couloir* on the west side, in a three-day round trip. Today there are at least ten routes on Fitz Roy. Some have been done solo and/or in very short times: for instance, the Frenchman Yves Astier's 12-hour solo ascent of the *American Route* (Southwest Ridge) in December 1985, first climbed by Yvon Chouinard, Doug Tompkins, Chris Jones, Dick Dorworth, and Lito Tejada-Flores in 1968. The route originally required 30 hours of technical climbing out of 60 days that the team spent in the area waiting between brief breaks in the weather! Astier's climb was eclipsed less than a month later by the Austrian Thomas Bubendorfer's 7 1/2-hour solo ascent of the same route. But possibly one of the most impressive feats yet accomplished in Patagonia was the 1979 solo first ascent of Fitz Roy's North Pillar by the Italian alpinist Renato Casarotto. In July 1986 the Argentines



The Fitz Roy massif from the east, from Cerro Madsen.



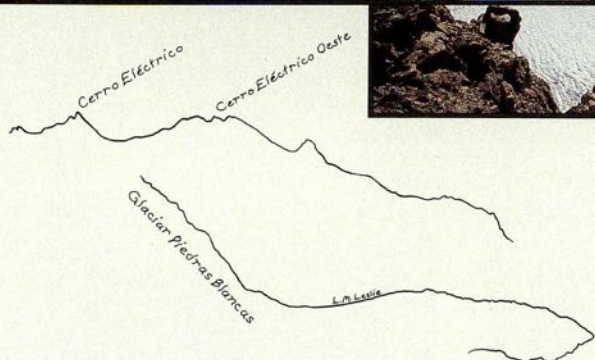
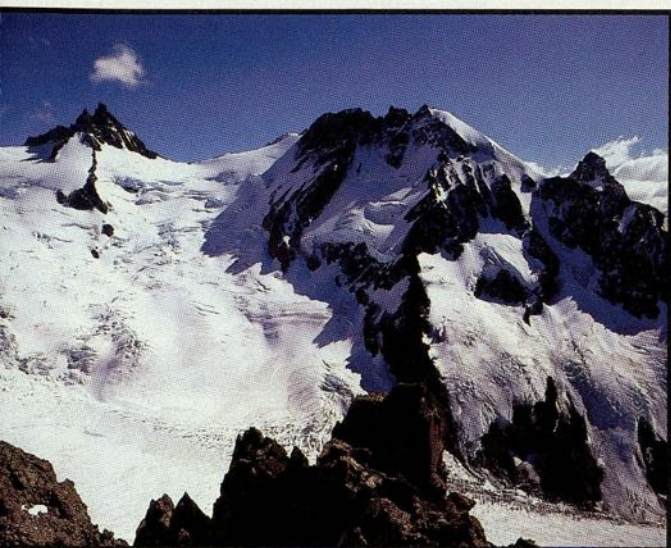
Eduardo Brenner, Sebastian de la Cruz and Gabriel Ruiz broke new ground with the first winter ascent via the *Super Couloir* in July 1986 (note that the seasons are reversed south of the equator).

Aiguille Poincenot (3085 meters) was first ascended in 1962 by the Anglo-Irish team of Don Whillans and Frank Cochran. The pair climbed the obvious diagonal ice ramp across the East Face and onto the upper Southeast Buttress. This stupendous buttress was climbed in its entirety by an Italian expedition led by Graziano Bianchi in 1986. Starting from the Río Blanco Glacier, the team climbed 1000 meters of very steep, sustained rock to join the Whillans/Cochran route for the final 300 meters.

A number of other very fine spires in the Fitz Roy group are worth mentioning. South of Aiguille Poincenot are the beautiful fangs of Torre Innominate (2501 meters), first climbed by an Anglo/American team in 1974, and Aguja Saint Exupéry (2680 meters), first ascended in 1968 by Italians. North of Fitz Roy are Aguja Mermoz (2754 meters) and Aguja Guillaumet (2503 meters), two beautiful jagged peaks with popular East Face routes. Both of these peaks were first climbed by Argentine groups, in 1974 and 1965 respectively.

Two of Fitz Roy's outlying formations, Aguja la Silla and Aguja Desmochada, are seldom climbed though they are fine objectives; Argentines made the first ascent of la Silla in 1971, while Desmochada received its first ascent by the American team of Jim Bridwell, Jay Smith, and Glenn Dunmire in 1988. (Note: the word *aguja* means "needle" in Spanish and is often used interchangeably with the French word *aiguille*, which has the same meaning. The names of peaks referred to here are those most commonly used.)

For sensational viewpoints that require minimal climbing equipment, there are several easy summits in the group. You can reach the airy summit of Cerro Madsen (1797 meters) using only basic snow-climbing gear, and the entire Fitz Roy horseshoe wraps around this central peak. A bit closer to Fitz Roy, Punta Velluda (2010 meters) is just above Camp I or advance basecamp for Fitz Roy and its surrounding peaks. From the Piedra del Fraile, the basecamp for parties attempting the *Super Couloir*, the various summits of Cerro Elctrico (2182 meters) also provide memorable views of the area, including the southern Hielo Continental, a massive icecap — actually two, the Hielo Sur (south) and the Hielo del Norte (north) — that covers some 6330



square kilometers. First ascended in 1932 by Agostini and party, Electrico was among the earliest peaks to be climbed in Patagonia.

Further to the west of Fitz Roy, forming a jagged barrier between the Hielo Continental and the “drier” ranges to the east, is the Cerro Torre massif. The western sides of the peaks here are directly exposed to weather pouring off of the icecap, and as a result they are usually plastered in rime ice. Cerro Torre’s distinctive summit ice mushroom is the product of storm cycles that deposit continual coatings of atmospheric moisture. Cerro Torre and its two lower neighboring spires to the north, Torre Egger and Cerro Stanhardt, form a triad of summits that present an image of fantasy — fiercely steep granite crowned by ethereal ice-encrusted summits.

Cerro Torre (3133 meters), Spanish for “Tower Mountain,” was first attempted by a couple of expeditions in 1957/58. Although one of the teams included such stellar alpinists as Walter Bonatti and Carlo Mauri, these were little more than reconnaissance trips, as sufficient logistical support to siege the mountain was lacking, and the technical difficulties had been seriously underestimated. One of these climbers, the Italian Cesare Maestri, returned the following summer and

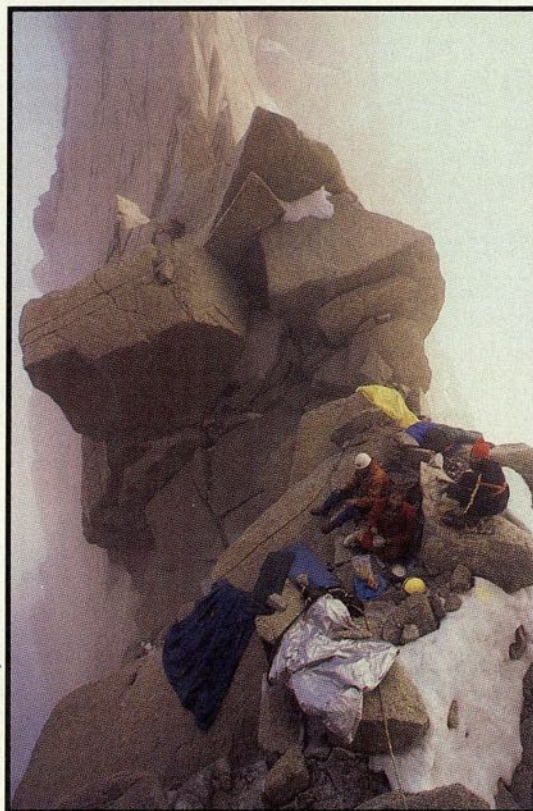
completed what he said to be the first ascent of Cerro Torre, via the North-Northwest Face. Maestri’s route ascended the steep face from the col separating Cerro Torre and Torre Egger, which he dubbed the Col of Conquest. This questionable “conquest” was not without a price, however, as Maestri’s partner, Toni Egger was killed in an avalanche during their epic descent.

Today, some believe Maestri’s claim, while others still doubt its authenticity. Succeeding climbers who have closely inspected the route have expressed skepticism as to whether this line could have been climbed without extensive siege tactics and much fixed rope. Since Maestri returned alone from his ordeal, delirious and unable to remember the exact details of the ascent, perhaps the truth will never be known.

Maestri and a small team went back to Cerro Torre in 1970 and, with his infamous gasoline-powered compressor and drill, attacked the mountain’s Southeast Buttress in a bolting frenzy that makes any of the current controversies over ethics seem minor. Using a winch to haul up the compressor, he was able to drill 15 holes per hour! The placement of several bolt ladders linked together portions of the route, where blank walls would normally bar upward progress. But up to 16



Photos: Alan Kearney



Polish climbers
in the notch, North
Pillar of Fitz Roy.
Opposite: Climbing
on the North Ridge
of Cerro Stanhardt.

bolts at one belay stance and numerous bolts beside A1 piton cracks put in question the moral judgment of the technology used. Maestri and his partners Ezio Alimonta and Carlos Clause did not go to the actual summit during their assault, but stopped where the rock ended at the top of the East Face just below the summit mushroom. In a final act of machismo, to prove to anyone who followed that these bolts were necessary to accomplish the route, Maestri chopped the final 15 meters of the bolt ladder below the summit shoulder.

In 1975 another Italian expedition, this one made up of members of the Lecco Section of the Club Alpino Italiano — the Lecco Spiders — completed a difficult route up the West Face, which they had first attempted in 1970. Climbing this side of the mountain requires a long glacier approach via the Río Tunel and then along the Glaciar Viedma from the icecap. The team installed fixed rope and ladders over steep terrain that went from snow to ice to rotten rock and then to vertical ice, culminating at the Col of Hope. Above, the West Ridge steepens and merges into the West Face. Just as the food supplies were running out four climbers made their final try.

The difficulties were unrelenting, and they were forced to do numerous difficult and time-consuming traverses, using direct aid on steep rock and ice in order to bypass below the threatening summit cornices. And all of this was performed in high winds and virtual whiteout conditions. Casimiro Ferrari, Mario Conti, Giuseppe Negri and Daniele Chiappa accomplished the first undisputed complete ascent of Cerro Torre on January

13, 1974, standing together on the wind-ravaged summit at 5:45 p.m. There was no sweeping view, only the dull gray clouds.

Notable among the more recent accomplishments was Jim Bridwell and Steve Brewer's alpine-style — and first complete — ascent of the Southeast Buttress over one-and-a-half days in 1980 (see *Climbing* no. 58), and the first winter ascent, via the same route, by an Italian team in July 1985. Cerro Torre has even had multiple ascents by the same climber in one season, when in 1985 the Swiss Marco Pedrini climbed the Southeast Buttress solo in one day, then repeated the climb twice more in the making of a film. In 1986 the magnificent East Face, hailed as Cerro Torre's "last great problem," went to a six-man Yugoslavian team.

Torre Egger (2987 meters) is only 146 meters lower than its more famous neighbor Cerro Torre, yet is in many ways a more technically difficult climb. In 1976, the Americans Jim Donini, John Bragg, and Jay Wilson followed Maestri's route to the Col of Conquest between the peaks finding relics of the Italian's controversial Cerro Torre climb. The American team spent nearly three months dodging foul weather and fixing ropes on this first-ascent route up Torre Egger's South Face.

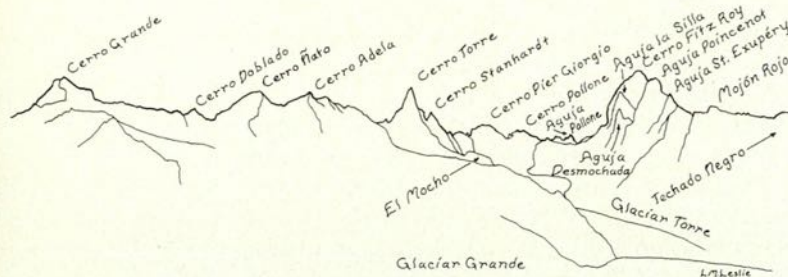
Two subsequent routes on Torre Egger have followed lines that ascend the spire directly from its base. A Yugoslavian team climbed the sheer Southeast Face in 1986, and a very strong Italian group knocked off the East Pillar in only four days in 1988.

Cerro Stanhardt (2800 meters), the northern-most and lowest of the triad, received numerous attempts before the

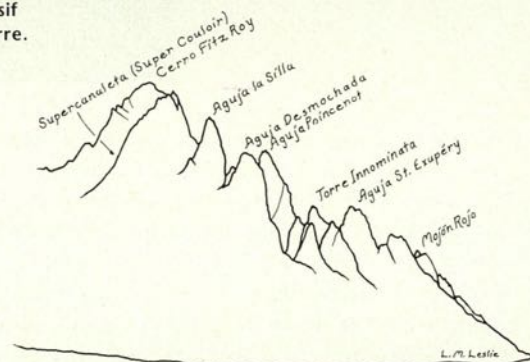


Photos: Gregory Horne

The western side of the Fitz Roy massif from Glaciar Torre.



The Cerro Torre and Fitz Roy massifs from the south, from the Cerro Solo/Cerro Grande Col.



CLASSIC

A classic
Canyonlands
spire that's
not a crack
climb:
Thumbelina
on the
Bridger Jack
formation.

LEARNING TO CRAWL

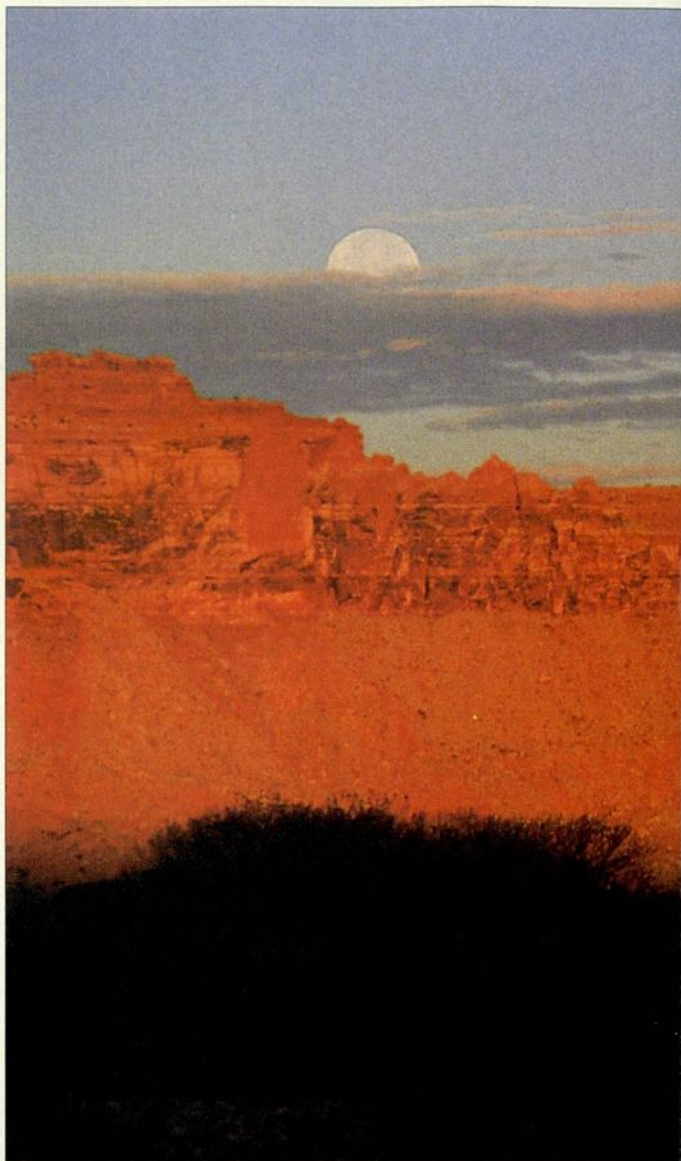
by Jeff Achey

West out of Boulder: early winter, an October snowstorm descending; cars off the road in the foothills blizzard, over the Divide into aspens glowing crimson in the setting sun above Vail, dusk in the sage hills outside Rifle, the Utah state line ...

**"We left the snowstorms and the thunder and rain, for the desert sun; we're gonna be born again."
— The Pretenders.**

Every desert trip seems to have its tape. Chrissy Hynde's searchlight lyrics held significance that returns to me now, five years later; phrases that summed salient pieces of Ed's and my lives and synchronized this joint pilgrimage to the desert. A defiant rhythm, a simple song, but a catalyst for questing minds, leading us out of the snow into desert clarity; a tape deck thinking for us as we headed west.

West and into the canyons; the ritual, moonlit, clattering crossing of the relic Dewey Bridge (one of the sad days in my life, the day that new bridge went in). A silhouette of Castleton Tower, then the river road, moonlight shimmering off the Colorado, dark walls



looming, green rabbitbrush in the headlights, cottonwoods just beginning to show autumn gold. South out of Moab, Highway 163 (now 191), Indian Creek animated with remembered exploits. I open a barbed-wire gate for Ed Webster's red pickup as specters of cows peer at us through the sage. We drive past petroglyphs inscribed on the sandstone walls and finally come to a halt, pitching out our bags under the stars.

Morning. Ed has a project, and, anticipating desperate going, he assembles a rack of Friends worth more than his truck, more than all my earthly possessions. We'll attempt the most obvious line on a spire dubbed The King of Pain, a line avoided by Ed and Peter Gal-

To my mind, a "classic" can be one of two types. Either it exaggerates the characteristics of an area (like *Supercrack* up the valley, or the Gunks' *Foops*, or Stone Mountain's *Rainy Day Women*), or else seems comically improbable. *Learning to Crawl*, as we'd eventually call the climb, was the latter.

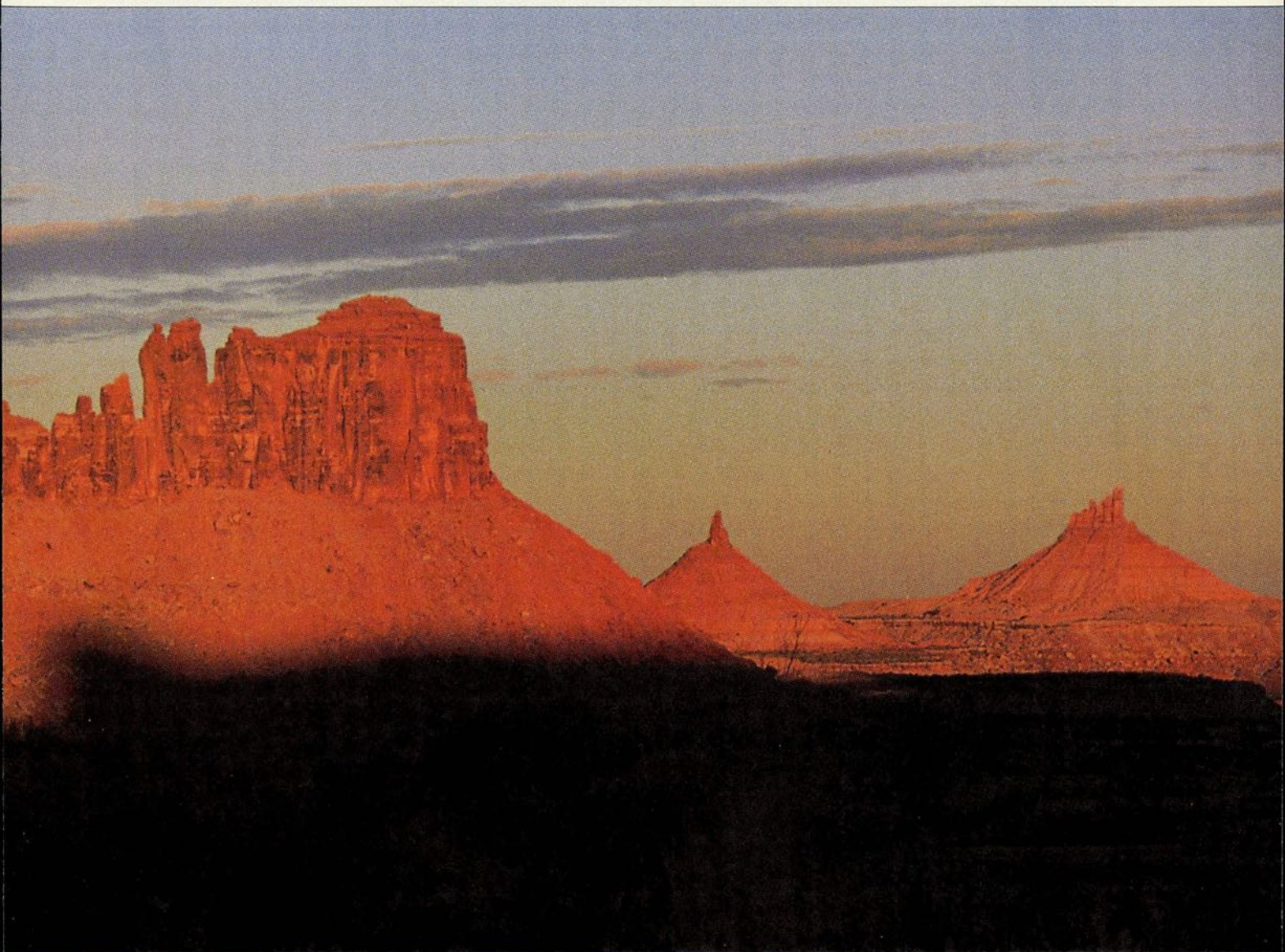


Photo: Michael Kennedy

lager on the spire's first ascent out of fear of a multi-day tussle. The spire having been climbed, via *Rites of Passage* (5.11+), Ed is back to tackle the plum. As it happens, this route goes easily; no 5.11, varied, beautiful, satisfying. We call it *Vision Quest* (III 5.10). (Later, in the book *Canyon Country Climbs*, Monica Lou and Chip Chace will call it *Dirt Fest*. How rude!)

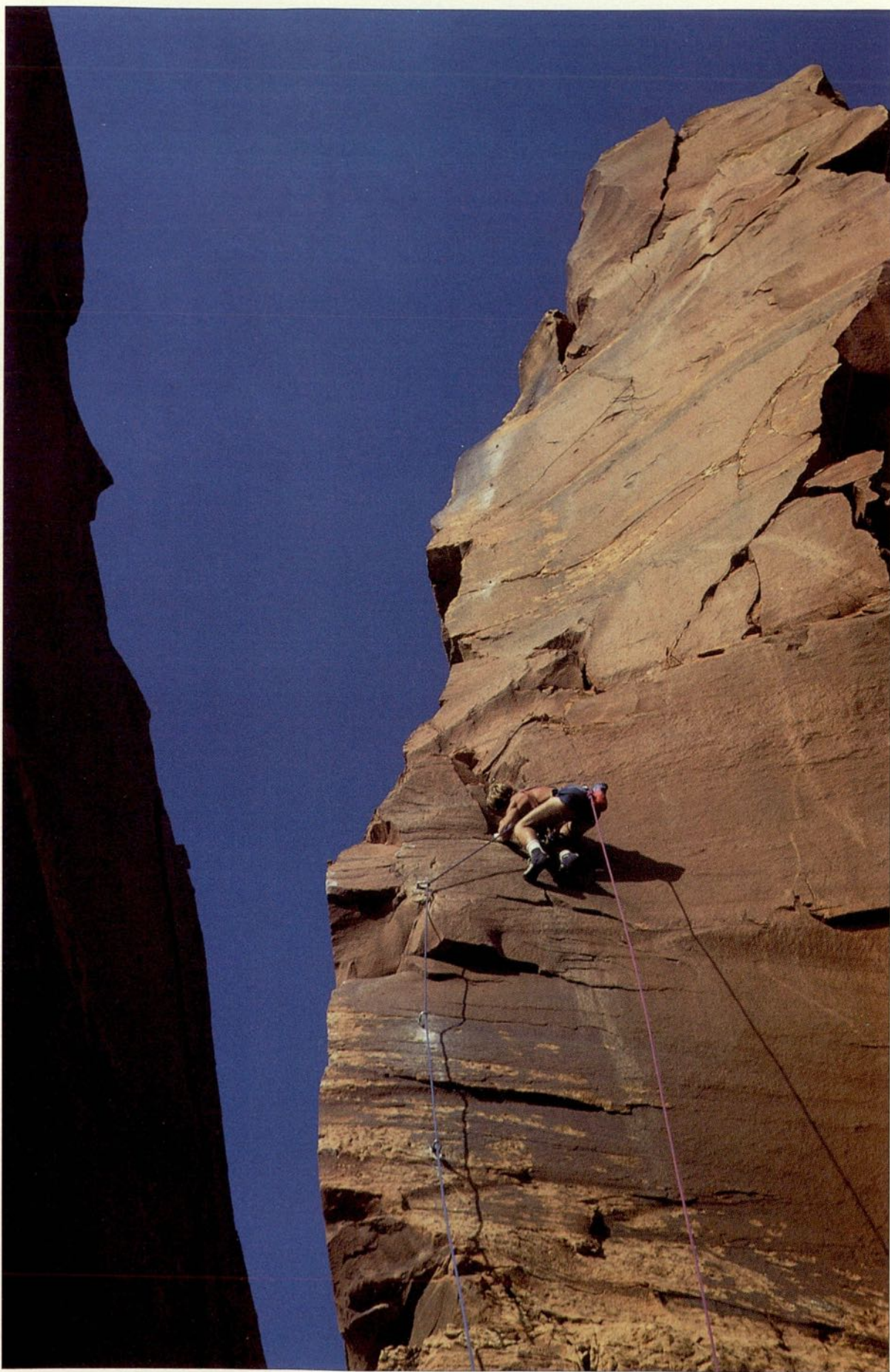
In the afternoon, Ed gives me the tour of the rest of the Bridger Jack spires. Sparkling Touch, Sunflower, Hummingbird, Bridger Jack Butte. Two spires are yet unclimbed, but both are crackless. The larger of the two, twin to Sparkling Touch, has a sharp-edged arete, a ropelength long, elegantly featured, varnished choco-

late brown and glossy black. I tilt my head, and suddenly, just for a second, it looks like a climb.

To my mind, a "classic" can be one of two types. Either it exaggerates the characteristics of an area (like *Supercrack* up the valley, or the Gunks' *Foops*, or Stone Mountain's *Rainy Day Women*), or else seems comically improbable. *Learning to Crawl*, as we'd eventually call the climb, was the latter. The name comes from the Pretenders' album; Thumbelina, the spire's name, was the relevant song.

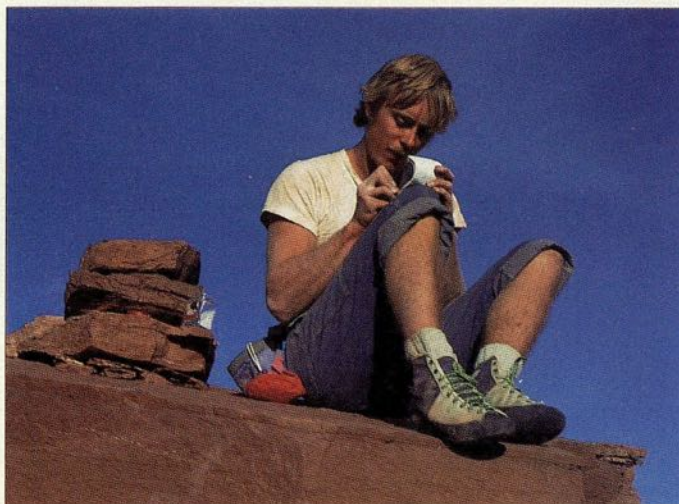
I'm a sort of blue-collar desert climber. I've never managed to climb 5.12 there, always have to borrow Friends

The Bridger Jack formation with South and North Sixshooter Peaks in the distance.



I'm a sort of blue-collar desert climber. ... My memories are less of infinite thin hands up flawless slashes than of launching blocks out of fist-width cracks, of slots, and sand in my ears. My climbing pants are scuffed rock red. I seem to come home with crack wounds on shoulders and hips. I've never done Supercrack.

(I own three), stick mostly to the towers, and love to see how far I can drive my car without getting stuck. My memories are less of infinite thin hands up flawless slashes than of launching blocks out of fist-width cracks, of slots, and sand in my ears. My climbing pants are scuffed rock red. I seem to come home with crack wounds on shoulders and hips. I've never done *Supercrack*.



The author leading the first ascent of *Learning to Crawl* (5.11), Thumbelina, Bridger Jack formation (left); and signing the summit register on The King of Pain.

Today, with The Bolted Arete such a familiar element of the collective climbing consciousness, this Wingate edge would have seemed an obvious line. But in 1985, to my naive eyes, it is remote, a fantasy, a dream climb. I am psychologically misdirected, having left the more applicable persona (ascent by fingertip, pointed toes) among the rainbow-colored walls of Eldorado. This land of prickly pear and saltbrush has taught me how to jam, not how to crawl. But yet, it might go.

The bolting, however, is an issue. Bolts in the Canyonlands, with few exceptions, belong at belay stances. I think of Earl Wiggins running it out on the *Fringe* and *Luxury Liner*; then I think about the bolt legions of Fred Beckey and other desert pioneers. I resolve to consider it as I go up: to bolt as necessary, but stop if things get ugly.

Next morning, Ed finds a place in the sun to belay my engineering efforts; I tip-toe on one drilled angle to place another, and on a few aid nuts to place another, and do some 5.10 free moves. Holds too good to be true appear in the polished sandstone. Six bolts in all. I rappel to the ground from a ledge near the top and, like lizards, delighted, we free climb the route in the late afternoon sun. We pinch or layback the arete for most of the way, around a small roof or two, the one 5.11 section scarcely reminding us of the improbability that had veiled the route only hours before. I'd never done anything like it.

A virgin summit; bare rock, petrified crossbedded sands, the 200-million-year-old work of restless Triassic winds. So they say. We drive a couple of bolts down among the dunes and nestle a couple of bolts down among the dunes and nestle a couple of bolts down among the dunes and nestle a couple of bolts down among the dunes. All is still. Always from these summits I notice the mass of rock gone; from here to Grandview Point and beyond, cubic miles of air, once sand, then solid rock, now fans of sand again in the Gulf of California and behind Glen Canyon Dam. Davis Canyon is just over there, now well down the list of future nuclear dump sites. So they say. We rap off into the sunset.

I have to show the route to someone, and a month later, after two days of offwidth odyssey, Chip Chace and I climb Thumbelina, adding the imposing crack at the top for another 20 feet of 5.9. That's the last I hear of the route for a while. A few years later, Michael Kennedy, my neighbor now, tells me he's climbed the route and thinks it's a classic. Maybe so.

Jeff Achey, 31, teaches math and science and directs the climbing program at the Colorado Rocky Mountain School, in Carbon-dale, Colorado. He and his wife, Jane, have two children, Ian and Sarah. Achey began climbing in the Shawangunks at age 15, and went on to make difficult ascents in the Boulder area, on Long's Peak, and in Utah's Canyonlands. But he is a boulderer at heart.



TALES FROM THE **URBAN** WILDERNESS

BY GREG CHILD

Climbing began, and nearly ended, for me in the early 1970s amidst the urban wilderness of Australia's Blue Mountains, a tableland of sandstone cliffs two hours' drive west of Sydney's 4-million-head sprawl. In those early days, every Friday after school I'd slip the knot from my school tie, toss it on top of an abandoned pile of homework, grab a rucksack, and, with some schoolboy climber—*compañero*, escape Sydney — "The Big Smoke" we called it — on a clattering train called The Fish. From atop the 5000-foot plateau of the Blue Mountains, Sydney appeared then, as it still does, as a pall of gray smog, whereas from sea-level Sydney, the "Blueys" rose in the distance like a mysterious blue cloud bank.

The aqua haze, which hangs in the valleys and gives the Blue Mountains their name, is said to come from the leaves of the gum trees, which on warm days emit a vapor of eucalyptus

oil that refracts blue when sunlight penetrates the air. These same leaves, when tinder dry, feed the bushfires that sweep the mountains every decade or two, leaving the land blackened yet ready to regenerate with startling suddenness. The hundreds of miles of cliffs fringing the tableland form a natural fire-break, protecting the towns above from all but the worst holocausts.

These cliffs, bordering the towns of Katoomba, Blackheath, and Mount Victoria, are where Australian rock climbing began, back in the 1930s. At that same time, they provided work projects for depression-ridden Australia. For a period, the valleys echoed to pick axe and blasting powder as coal mines and tourist trails were etched into the cliff faces. The remnants of that era — overgrown trails that inexplicably begin and end, and Inca-like steps winding down cliffsides and waterfalls — lead to today's climbing crags. Beyond these byways, in deep valleys and canyons of rainforest, you can still get delightfully lost for a long, long time.

Giles Bradbury on *Rough Trade* (25), Shipley Lower/Porters Pass, Blue Mountains.

The sensation was of lightness, of weightlessness rather than acceleration. But when I cartwheeled over and saw Chris, alone, clinging to the rock above me, receding into the distance fast, and saw the belay tree clipped to my harness, flapping angrily like a failed parachute, I took this as proof of falling.

My first climb — and still, at grade 8 (5.5), the first route for many beginners — was the initial tower of The Three Sisters, a triple-summitted formation at Katoomba. This baroque-looking trio of pinnacles is the Blue Mountains' best-known landmark, appearing on everything from t-shirts to ashtrays. Adjacent to a busy tourist lookout, it is also the most watched climb in the Southern Hemisphere. I was 13 in 1970 when I sweated up this route, using a laid nylon rope, steel carabiners, and a rack of gadgets — Clogs, Pecks, Moacs, rope-threaded machine nuts — that today I wouldn't even use as retreat anchors. Sitting on the summit of the First Sister, gazing over the cliffs and forests of the Megalong Valley, I had a teen revelation: I would drop out of school, leave home, and become a climbing bum the moment I turned 16, which in Australia is the legal age at which children are granted enough responsibility to wreck their lives.

Indeed, by 1973 I'd quit school and saved \$200 from a summer job, left home (except for when the weather was bad or I needed a decent meal), and was living in a cave above a Blue Mountains cliff. My climbing partner was a gangling youth named Chris Peisker. Three years of weekend cragging had taught us enough to be dangerous.

One summer day as we strolled along the cliffs of Mount Piddington to try a new route — a variation to an existing route, in fact — we saw nothing portentous in the fact that the climb ours would eventually join was named *Last Act*.

The semi-hanging belay I reached at 100 feet after our new pitch joined *Last Act* was no more than a sapling sprouting out of a crack. Most anchors in those days were no better — you'd just run it out till you found a bush or rock horn, sling it, and belay. When Chris climbed up to me he stood stemmed across the corner an arm's reach below, handed over the gear he'd cleaned, and suggested I lead again: something about the climb was psyching him out, he explained. Taking everything except one small Stopper, I mounted the tree to let Chris clip in.

Then, something went wrong. The rush of air across my cheek told me I was falling, but, since I was the belayer, this was impossible. The sensation was of lightness, of weightlessness rather than acceleration. But

when I cartwheeled over and saw Chris, alone, clinging to the rock above me, receding into the distance fast, and saw the belay tree clipped to my harness, flapping angrily like a failed parachute, I took this as proof of falling. "This could be it," I thought, screamed, smashed into the limb of a large tree, then hit the ground 100 feet below.

A cow moaned pathetically in the distance. As I regained consciousness the cow's whine grew louder, closer; stupid beast must have wandered up from the farm below and gotten

lost, I thought. I decided to move, lest it trample me. I raised my head and lifted my knees to stand. My foot flopped at a crazy angle, like a dead fish. I looked around. Blood was everywhere. Worse, it was mine. The cow started to cry like a young man. Then I realized there was no cow, just a kid wheezing through broken ribs at the pain of broken ankle, shoulder, nose, and concussion. "I'm a fucked unit," I thought, and drifted into a dreamy dimension of shock and adrenalin.

Something moved beside me. I turned my head. A yard-long black snake was wedging itself between twigs and plants, shedding its skin. Eyeing me with pupil-less concern, it slithered onto the tree limb I'd brought down, jammed itself between the fresh splinters, and slipped opportunistically out of its last fold of old scales. Perhaps all actions have a purpose.

Above, Chris, who'd survived me falling and bouncing to 20 feet of the rope's end, quivered with fear. Between his legs the rope trailed down to a groaning dead weight on the ground. Above lay 100 feet of steep rock. With no protection between him and oblivion, no way to climb up or down from his airy stance, and his fingers slowly peeling off the holds he held, he could conceive of only one thing: jump.

Then he noticed the Stopper I'd neglected to take from him. He slotted it into a pocket, clipped the rope in, and rappelled down to raise a rescue. ... Yes, perhaps all actions have a purpose.

Like any sandstone, Blue Mountains rock varies in quality. At its worst, the walls are crumbling "choss" the consistency of a vertical beach — like Dogface, a 300-foot wall created in the 1930s when a coal mine weakened the cliff and sent it down with crash heard as far away as Sydney. Thirty years after the dust cloud of this awesome act of nature settled, a Sydney climber named John Ewbank aid-climbed his way up these tottering walls of shale and cheesecake-soft sediments, creating a score of largely unrepeatable overhanging adventures as lunatic as anything Layton Kor ever created on America's desert towers.

But elsewhere, the passage of time has leached silicas in the sandstone to the surface, and a kiln-baked

Sunrise over the Grose Valley, Blue Mountains.



The mid-30s spread had become a topic of obsessive discussion among us. Food seemed to convert to fat faster than we could understand and find its way into places we never imagined. As summer wore on and my route on Janiceps Wall continued to elude me, I became convinced that the path to success on this route lay in beating myself into the right form and weight.

orange hardness covers the rippled sediments. The cliffs, 100 to 300 feet high, are sometimes slabby, but often vertical or overhanging. Comparisons as wide apart as Dresden and Canyonlands have been made. But when you wander up from the cliffs toward the pub and fish 'n' chip shop at Blackheath as a dense Yorkshire fog wells out of the Grose Valley, you could just as well be roaming the gritstone edges of Britain. Yet here are ghost-white gumtrees and a multitude of reptiles, small kangaroos called wallabies, and raucous bright parrots.

In 1990 I escaped the American winter and headed to antipodean summer in the Blue Mountains. Returning to the Blue Mountains is always, for me, a stroll through my own memories. I inspected the dead log at the base of *Last Act*, and wandered the trails and cliffs where my climbing began. Because the crowds all head to Arapiles — the Smith Rock of Aussie climbing — the climbing “scene” around the Blue Mountains remains refreshingly small. In fact, it’s unusual to encounter another party on a crag midweek, and weekends are anything but crowded. Still, the crags — Narrownneck, Shipley, Porter’s Pass, Mount Boyce, Mount Piddington, The Zig Zag, Mount York, and Cosmic County — are well-developed with hundreds of classy face routes.

On this trip, a 110-degree leaning sheet of rock at Mount Piddington, called Janiceps Wall, caught my eye and held it for two months, in the same way that Himalayan summits occupy me on expeditions. Janiceps Wall was no stranger to me: in 1966 a vile crack called *Janiceps* (21/5.11a) was Australia’s hardest route. Ticking it off the hit-list meant bloodied hands, and it was a big day for me when (with an ankle full of surgical-steel screws) I repeated it at age 18. Jamming up *Janiceps* I had stared left across the wall. Only a gecko could climb that, I thought. I knew it was miles beyond my abilities but, over the years, every now and then I’d imagine myself trying it.

In 1983 Mike Law climbed that face, grading it 24 (5.12a), naming it *Daphne*. But now it is regarded as 100 feet of sustained, runout 26 (5.12c), and is seldom repeated. I couldn’t get off the ground on it in ’83, but this year, taking several tries, redpointed it.

The route, the wall, had been traveling through my

brain for 15 years. It had been the climb I wanted most on this trip. It wasn’t as if it was the best climb on the planet; it was just a personal obsession, an obscure gremlin, that had lodged in my mind.

While working on *Daphne* I glanced at the terrain further left. The holds were thinner than those of *Daphne*, yet occasional jugs appeared to bring respite. The gremlin returned in my thoughts, and I knew that if I didn’t do something about this obsession with Janiceps Wall I’d waste valuable thinking space for another 15 years. I bolted the route, tried it, then realized I’d have to lose a

lot of weight and get a lot fitter before I’d get up it. Which is the way summer-holiday projects are born.

No pain, no gain, they say about training, and the Blue Mountains’ answer to France’s Volx or the ‘Gunks of New York, in terms of angle and forearm abuse, is Boronia Point. Blackheath’s mailman, John Smoothy (they call him Crunch), and Giles Bradbury delighted in taking me to this cliff to watch me flail on such of their creations as *Sydney Rose*, *Greypower*, and *Onions* — climbs in the 25–27, or upper 5.12 range. Giles was working on his own monster here, a 130-degree wall he’d named *Tripe*. After a morning aping around on this wall we sat on the ground, nursing hyper-inflated arms, discussing the evils of “project climbs.”

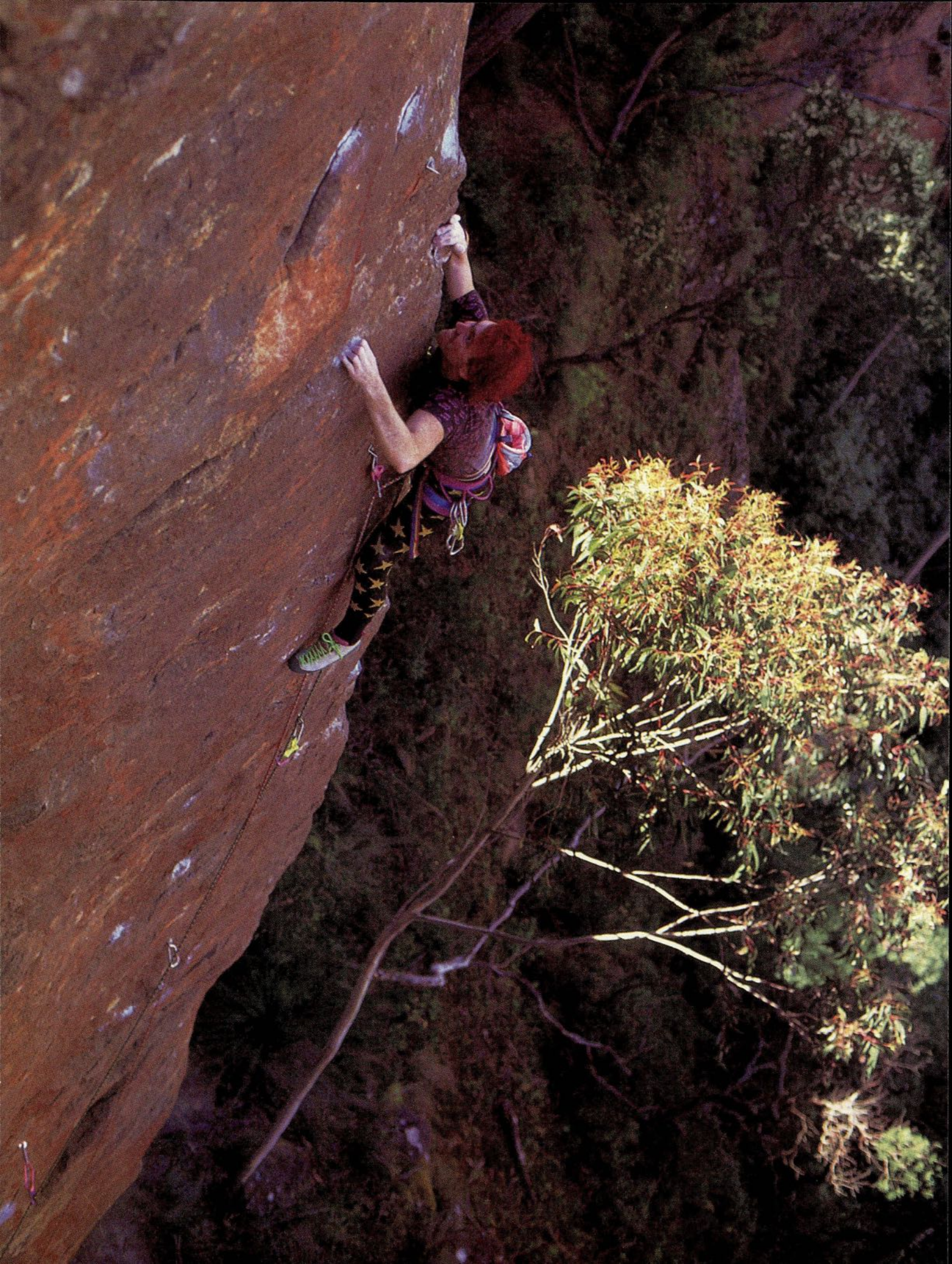
“They’re anti-social,” said Giles, who, from projects like *Vanity Case* (28/5.13a) at Porters Pass, knew well the bribes and ploys needed to persuade belayers to hold your rope all day, every day.

“I dream about them,” I said, describing the constant, involuntary repetition of sequences in my head before and during sleep, as if in my thoughts I’d crack the mystery of a route that was beyond me in the flesh.

“I’m too bloody fat. Some bastard always down-grades my routes anyway,” muttered Crunch.

The mid-30s spread had become a topic of obsessive discussion among us. Food seemed to convert to fat faster than we could understand and find its way into places we never imagined. As summer wore on and my route on Janiceps Wall continued to elude me, I became convinced that the path to success on this route lay in beating myself into the right form and weight. I’d watched climbers at Smith Rocks, with super glue and nail files, fashion their fingers into pointed claws to fit tiny pockets, and seen them diet themselves into sleek, aerodynamic shapes. But this took time and dedication. In the short term, I could only boycott the local pub, and visit more areas for more training climbs. While wandering the Blue Mountains, I also found myself never far from the history of early Australia.

Mike Law on *Grace* (26), Mitchell’s Ridge.



But first, rituals had to be performed. I drank a cup of coffee for breakfast to "loosen my free radicals." I didn't understand what this meant but it sounded advantageous. On the drive to Mount Piddington I swallowed two aspirin to reduce the swelling and pain in my fingers and elbows, and kicked back a handful of amino acids. At the crag I stretched out while chemicals with unpronounceable names entered my bloodstream. Soon, my heart felt like an alligator.

The monument at Mitchell's Ridge honors "the first crossing of the Blue Mountains," by three colonial explorers of the last century. When Sydney was in its infancy in the 1800s, the rugged Blue Mountains — part of the 2000-mile Great Dividing Range — stood impassable for 25 years. Their successful crossing was a major expedition, but Australian revisionism has ignored the fact that aborigines had crossed the mountains repeatedly centuries earlier. Now, though, the aborigines have all but disappeared, dead of disease brought by settlers, massacred, or absorbed into white culture. The only traces of aboriginal culture left in the Blue Mountains are a few ochre hand prints on the cliffs and some stone tools of chipped chert.

Crunch had found such tools at Cosmic County — the finest crag in the mountains — beneath a classic finger crack called *Gentleman's Drag* (23). The aborigines, who wandered by this place en route to the plains either side of the Blue Mountains to hunt emu and kangaroo, possibly had an intricate "dreaming," or myth, about this wall to explain why it is red as sunset, smooth as a pond of water, and split by a single thin crack. Cliffs seethed with religion and meaning for the aborigine, as they do, on another level, for climbers.

Crunch had wandered the cliffs of the Blue Mountains more than anyone, during his fight with cancer in the mid-1980s. His soul-searching explorations had yielded many gems, climbed between chemotherapy bombardments. Perhaps none of his climbs are more elegant than *Grace* (26), a 50-foot overhanging arete three minutes' walk from the Mitchell's Ridge monument. As I edged and balanced my way up it I kept thinking how apt, in every

way, was the naming of this route. Had he meant grace of movement? Grace under pressure? Grace before God? I asked him. He shrugged, offering no elaboration. Perhaps that period was behind him now, and he didn't wish to talk about it.

My weight-reduction curve peaked in late January. The only time I'd been lighter was after a bout of dysentery in Pakistan. But this crescendo of training wouldn't last long, I suspected, for my abdomen's destiny lay along the lines and contours of the Don Whillans physique. I was flying back to the winter murk of Seattle in a week and could already feel the lard in me waiting in ambush. As a Sunday morning broke I knew it was my last chance to redpoint my route on Janiceps Wall.

But first, rituals had to be performed. I drank a cup of coffee for breakfast to "loosen my free radicals." I didn't understand what this meant but it sounded advantageous. On the drive to Mount Piddington I swallowed two aspirin to reduce the swelling and pain in my fingers and elbows, and kicked back a handful of amino acids. At the crag I stretched out while chemicals with unpronounceable names entered my bloodstream. Soon, my heart felt like an alligator. My rigid protocol of physical fascism was working. I was a body Nazi, if only for a day.

Nights of visualization brought me to the crux quickly. The ambient humidity was high. The screech of heat-maddened insects in the Kanimbla Valley had begun and the sun was rounding the crag. I had to hurry, or I'd grease off. I shook out at a knee-bar rest, then pulled onto the pockets and 1/4-inch edges that led to the crossed-hands dyno that had spat me out countless times before. I lunged once, missed but held my stance, recoiled, and lunged again, catching a layback and groping through. Succeeding on this new 28 was as satisfying as any alpine summit I'd stood on.

"What will you call it?" someone later asked.

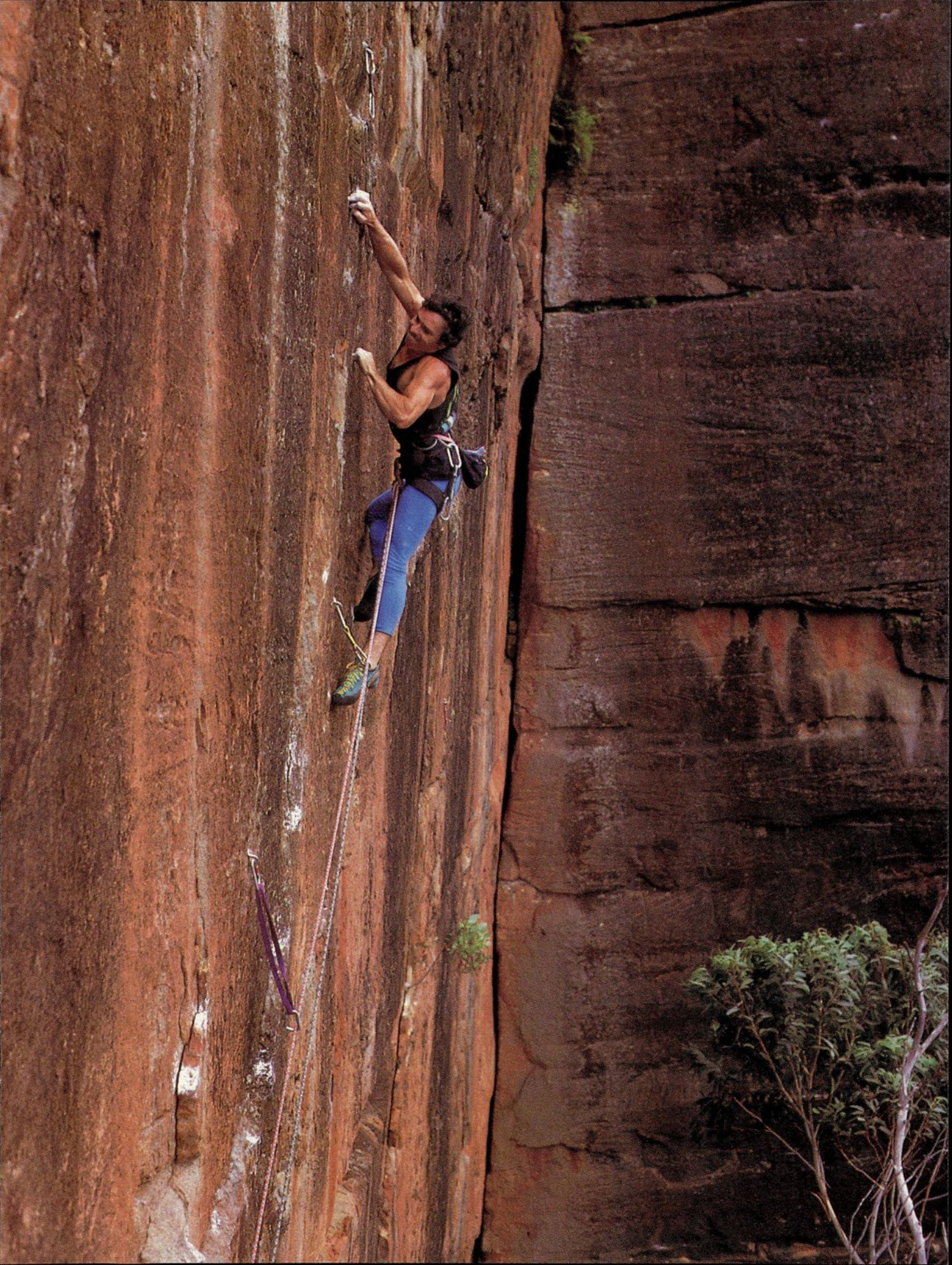
"Old Stealthbelly," I replied.

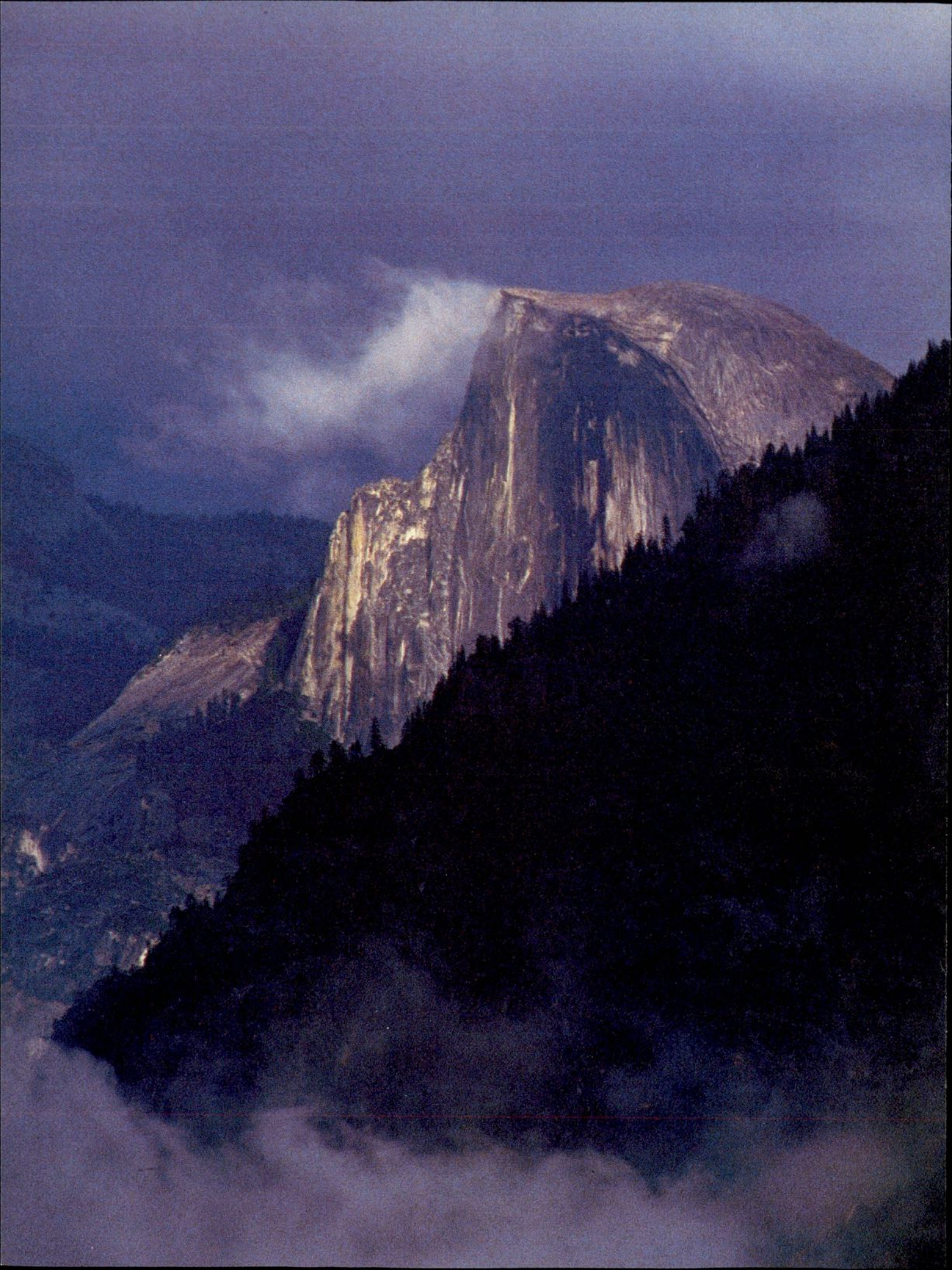
"What does it mean?"

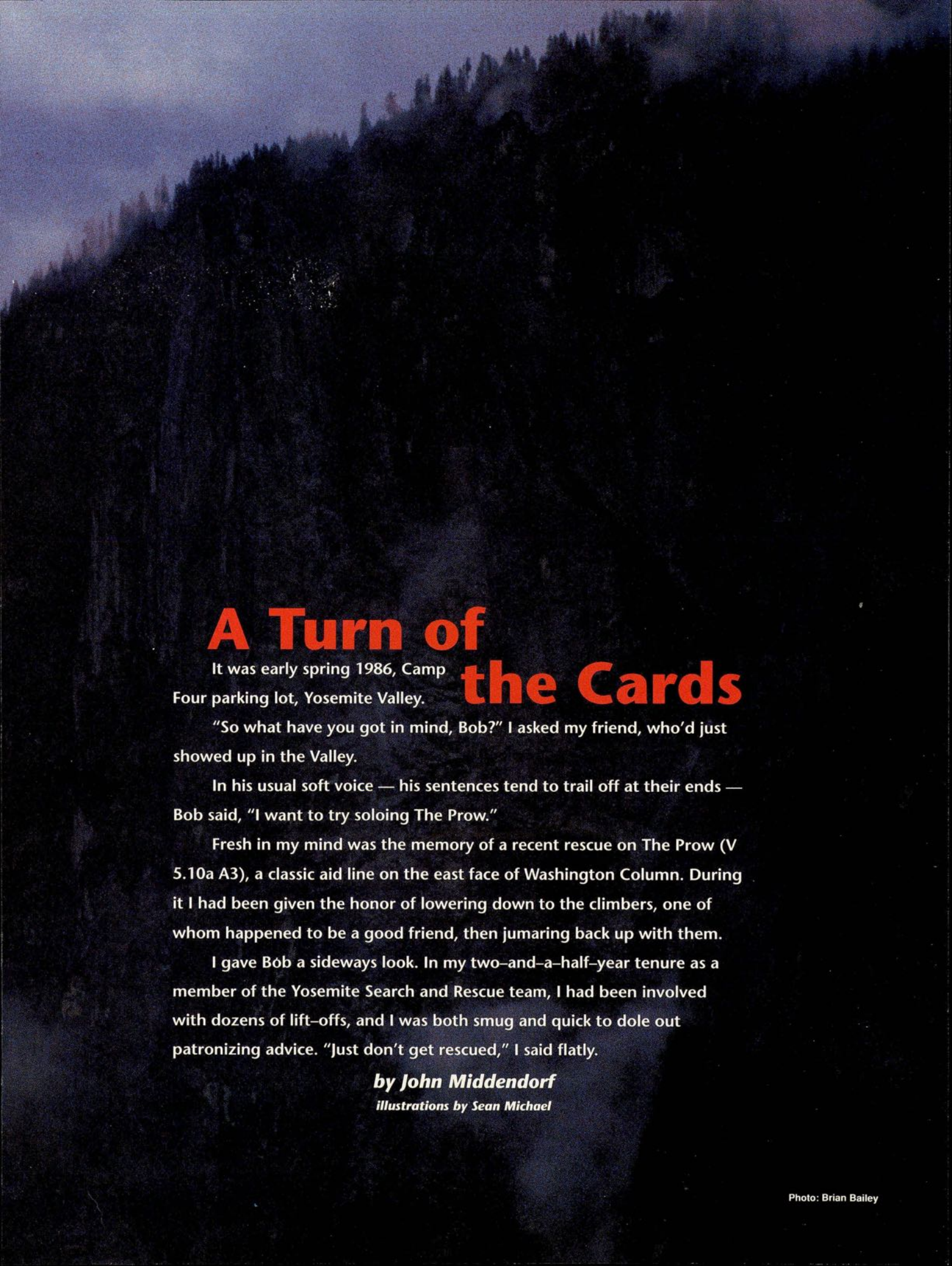
I shrugged. That period was behind me now. My stomach rumbled. Or was it in front of me?

Greg Child is exceptionally accomplished as both a rock climber and alpinist, his record ranging from Himalayan summits such as Gasherbrum IV to hundreds of hard-rock ascents in Australia and the United States. Originally from Sydney, he now lives in Seattle. His book, Thin Air: Encounters in the Himalayas, will be released in this country by Gibbs Smith this fall.

Greg Child on *Old Stealthbelly* (28), Mount Piddington.







A Turn of the Cards

It was early spring 1986, Camp
Four parking lot, Yosemite Valley.

"So what have you got in mind, Bob?" I asked my friend, who'd just showed up in the Valley.

In his usual soft voice — his sentences tend to trail off at their ends — Bob said, "I want to try soloing The Prow."

Fresh in my mind was the memory of a recent rescue on The Prow (V 5.10a A3), a classic aid line on the east face of Washington Column. During it I had been given the honor of lowering down to the climbers, one of whom happened to be a good friend, then jumaring back up with them.

I gave Bob a sideways look. In my two-and-a-half-year tenure as a member of the Yosemite Search and Rescue team, I had been involved with dozens of lift-offs, and I was both smug and quick to dole out patronizing advice. "Just don't get rescued," I said flatly.

by John Middendorf

illustrations by Sean Michael

Bob looked nonplused, but before he had time to think, asked, "Why?" Because, I thought, rescues are serious undertakings, and getting rescued doesn't do a thing for your reputation with the Valley denizens, much of whose inner language centers around such events. "Rescue bait," they call certain less promising big-wall climbers. All I said was, "I don't know, that's just the way it is around here."

Several weeks later, two of my rescue-team friends and I would start up the South Face of Half Dome, intending to make a winter ascent.

The South Face of Half Dome, one of Warren Harding's finest masterpieces, is a 2000-foot wall. Its upper half is a blank sea of white granite, void of any apparent climbable features. Remote and beautiful, the route has a history of failures, although Walt Shipley's extraordinary solo ascent two years ago and the nearby free line put up recently by Dave Schultz and Scott Cosgrove seem to have tamed the wall's fearsome reputation. On the 1968 first-ascent attempt, Warren Harding and Galen Rowell were trapped by a severe storm for several days and had to be rescued, which in itself was a pioneering event in technical extrication, because at that time big-wall rescue technique was still in its infancy. (Their rescue was documented in *The Vertical World of Yosemite*.)

Other parties had faltered as well, for reasons ranging from lack of proper hooking gear to debilitating summer heat, often necessitating retreat. In several cases, friends on the summit have lowered ropes, gear, and provisions to stranded or stalled climbers.

In fact, the South Face had hosted more failures than successes when my eventual partners, two Yosemite regulars, Mike Corbett and Steve Bosque, decided to go for a winter ascent. The season had been extremely mild — some called it a drought winter — so the venture seemed very feasible.

Yet from the onset of preparation, as the two made multiple six-mile uphill plods to Half Dome's base, and then fixed several pitches, they experienced setbacks. In one storm snow sloughed down the face into a 30-foot

pile on the ground, forcing Steve and Mike to spend an entire day digging out their gear. Then it took another month before the long-term weather report looked good.

Normally two climbers make for the most efficient wall team, but Mike and Steve, sharing a feeling of burnout, asked me to join them. Mike and I had done a few big walls together in the past, and I always found myself charged up by his undying affinity for them.

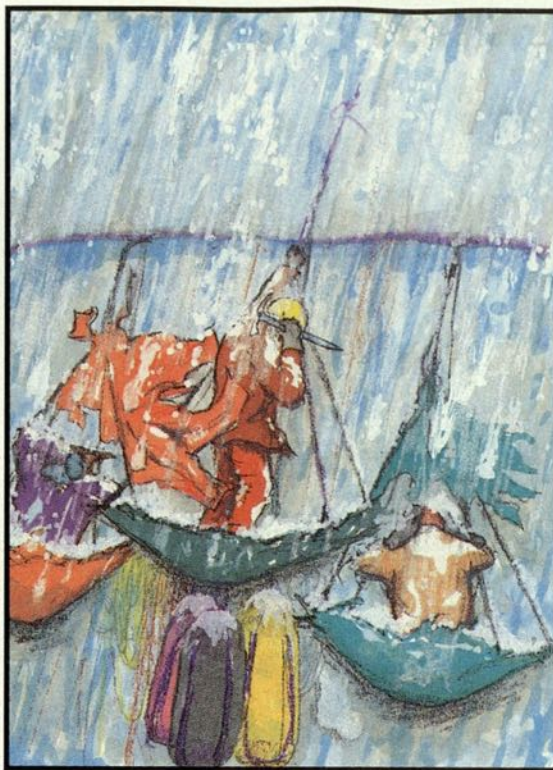
Steve's deliberate and understated approach to such adventures, which he would regularly squeeze in between periods of raising a family and working full time, always seemed impressive to me. I was really excited about our team and the chosen route. It was going to be my 40th long route (1000-plus feet) in Yosemite.

Shunning the more intelligent option of packing two separate loads to the base, I carried all my gear in a single towering 100-plus-pound haul bag, while Steve and Mike carried their light final assault loads. By the time we got up the Vernal Falls switchbacks — only two miles into the eight-mile approach — I was staggering every step. The one-shot technique works well for El Cap where the torment of the approach is halfway five minutes after you step

out of your car, but this was one long, steep uphill plod. Mike and Steve periodically tried to persuade me to off some weight onto them. With too much pride in self-sufficiency, I refused. Thirty-one thousand staggers later, the grueling approach ended.

That night, it sprinkled on us, but the next day we climbed in beautiful sunny weather. The first two days took us to the end of the Arch, a huge left-facing dihedral soaring halfway up the wall, and onto the Face, a thousand feet of 75- to 80-degree featured rock with very few cracks.

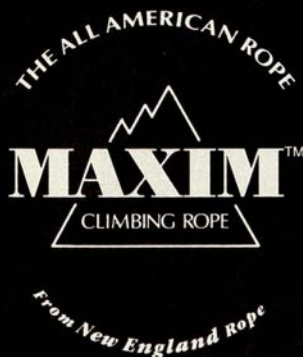
The eighth pitch, which we named "The Great Escape Hatch," was a contortionist's dream: a gaping bombay chimney, awkward as hell, like an aid version of the Harding Slot on *Astroman*. After that pitch, I told Mike, "You know, regardless of a wall's actual rating, every route seems to require the sum total of my aid experience." Mike understood exactly.



Visibility was nil. Then the temperature dropped, the rain turned to icy BBs, and our soaked gear began to freeze solid.

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*Randy Leavitt, La Machine (5.13 c/d), Joshua Tree.
Photo: Leavitt Collection.*



The uncertainty of our fate made our exhausting, freezing misery that much harder. Right now, the flames of hell didn't seem so bad.

The third day, in T-shirts, we climbed five of the 11 remaining pitches. I eyeballed each for its free-climbing potential, realizing that we just might have discovered the most awesome free-climbable face in the Valley. I free climbed between some bat-hooking sections on my leads just to try it out. (Bat-hooking — placing specially designed hooks in shallow drilled holes — is a technique invented by Harding in order to surmount blank sections of rock.)

Up to this point the climbing and setting had been awesome, and we often commented on what an ultimate gem of a route this was. We were having a great time.

The day's fourth pitch took us to one of the Tri-Clops, three large, shallow, dark indentations in the rock that from the ground look like caves and, with some imagination, passageways into the depths of Half Dome. This evil-looking place had been Harding and Rowell's demise, and the energy of their desperation seemed to still linger. Though dusk was fast approaching, Mike had an uneasy sixth sense about the spot and decided to go for the next pitch, a steep bat-hooking stretch that ended on The Ledge, which on the topo looked like it might make a good bivy.

Darkness set in midway through Mike's lead. Then came the frightening clanging of gear and yank on the belay rope. Dead silence. "Hey Mike, you OK?" Silence. "Hey, Corbett!"

Steve and I flashed headlamps upward but all we could see was the rope disappearing into the darkness. Then

from above came the explanation. Mike had popped a bat-hook and taken a 20- or 30-foot fall, fracturing his finger in an attempt to grab the previous bat-hook. But a broken finger barely slows down a guy like Mike, and he finished the lead. We set up the bivy in darkness at The Ledge, which turned out to be nothing more than a small six-inch stance formed by a protruding flake.

Sometime in the early hours of Friday morning, clouds moved in and a light rain prompted us to dig out our portaledge rainflies. Little did we know it was the start of one of Yosemite's worst storms ever. At dawn it was still pattering steadily. Mike suggested a general rest day, and Steve and I agreed. But instead of clearing, which our little box radio had promised, the weather became worse. We braced ourselves for a storm. Later, when the completeness of the radio's lie became evident, I would jettison it, as a symbolic gesture of our isolation.

On Friday evening the rain became a torrent and the winds picked up. Sometime that night, Steve's ledge collapsed, and in the minutes it took him to reconstruct it he got completely soaked. From the relative comfort of my slightly damp ledge, I listened to his struggling and cursing and felt sorry for him, but there was nothing I could do, aside from lending him my headlamp, since an exit from the ledge for even a minute meant complete saturation. It's funny about Steve; even when he has good reason to curse, he does so only as if playing a part — no semblance of actual anger exists in his tone. He is always like that.

WEATHER ANY EXTREME.

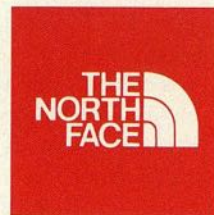
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Photography by Chris Nobel.

Hours later, I felt my ledge's suspension straps begin to slip due to the wet and icy conditions. I knew what was happening: slowly, my ledge was being twisted, one outside corner sliding down, and the other twisting up, as if it were trying to dump me out into the void. Any movement accelerated the slippage, but in the dark I could not see what to do to fix it. Trying not even to breathe, I cried, "Steve, I need my headlamp back, NOW!" (In the adverse conditions my headlamp, a Petzl Zoom, was our only functioning piece of gear, and it had become a coveted item.) But in the twisted tangle of his nearly destroyed portaledge, Steve was forced into stillness; even the slightest wiggle caused his ledge's suspension to slip, then the ledge to fall apart (by this time it had collapsed several times). He tried to extend the headlamp to me, but to no avail.

So I tried to re-tension the suspension without light. My movement caused the structure to slip completely. The end-tubes dropped out of their shallow side pockets, leaving me hanging in space among an untenable assortment of tubing and fabric. Instantly, everything became soaked, as if I had jumped into the Merced River in full regalia — except that this was colder. From the haul bag I dug out my spare wool clothes and rain gear, but in the deluge they were soon drenched, too. A foot-thick sheet of water poured down from the moderately angled face above. Rain pelted us, driven sideways by the high winds. I finally retrieved my headlamp, and, with a mixture of determination and resignation, took my time reassembling the ledge. I couldn't get any wetter.

In the end the failing portaledges didn't matter, because by morning all of us were soaked to the bone anyway. Seemingly by osmosis, moisture poured through my "waterproof" ripstop rain fly. The waterproof coating mysteriously fell off the fabric in large cobweb-like sticky sheets, creating another mini-storm inside.

By 10 a.m. Saturday the winds were blowing over 50 miles per hour, with gusts throwing us and the ledges about. Visibility was nil. Then the temperature

dropped, the rain turned to icy BBs, and our soaked gear began to freeze solid.

"We're gonna die in these conditions," Steve said. "We've got to at least try to get out of here!" We exited our ledges and inspected each other and our gear. Instantly, fingers and toes went completely numb, and the wind and cold penetrated to the bone.

With uncanny foresight, Mike had insisted on leav-

ing a rope fixed over the otherwise-irreversible roof below the eighth pitch. Still, that was five rappels down and several hundred feet to the left. As we discussed our situation we noticed that the ropes in front of us were frozen to the wall in solid tangles, and would need to be chopped out with an ice tool. We quickly realized that to retrieve even a short length of usable rope would be impossible. Even if we could have, our jumars would never have grabbed on the frozen cord, the ice-covered wall would have thwarted any effort to swing sideways to belay anchors, and a near-certain hang-up in the rappels would have resulted in a fatal separation from each other. Drilling our own anchors was out of the question, as it would require far more manual dexterity than our

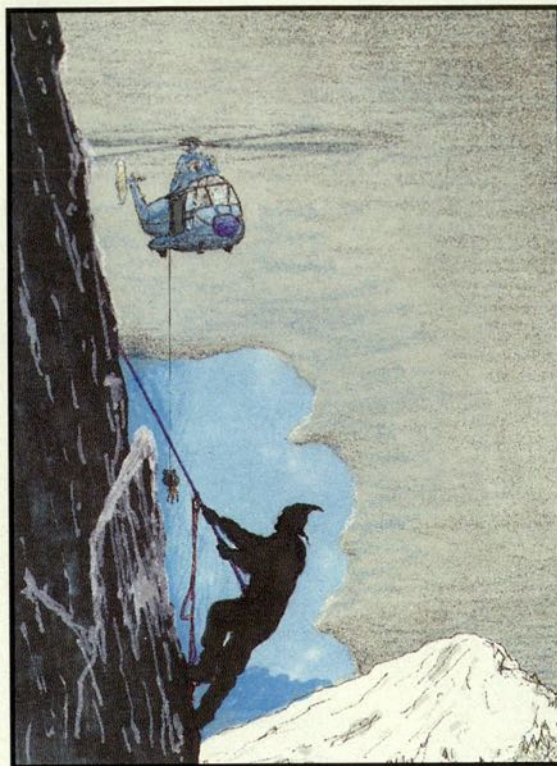
frozen fingers could provide. And in the back of my mind I remembered how miserably Rowell fared in 1968 while attempting to rappel in similar conditions from just 100 feet below our position.

All sorts of potential and likely nightmares crossed my mind, each ending with three bodies frozen to the wall. I was the first to disappear back into my portaledge.

We remained as a team, huddled in place, waiting.

All Saturday the storm beat us in a deafening roar of flapping nylon and typhoon winds. I realized how much my entire life depended on my lightweight rain fly. Violently whipping, it seemed ready to rip to shreds any minute. Earlier, Steve's fly had been torn apart, and critical corner parts of his ledge were mangled into scrap metal, rendering it useless. He was now sharing Mike's portaledge. If either of our two remaining ledges

(continued on page 118)



It was dusk, but sleep, I realized, would be fatal. I tried to keep my mind busy. ... In sets of 100, I counted to 22,000, twitching with each count.

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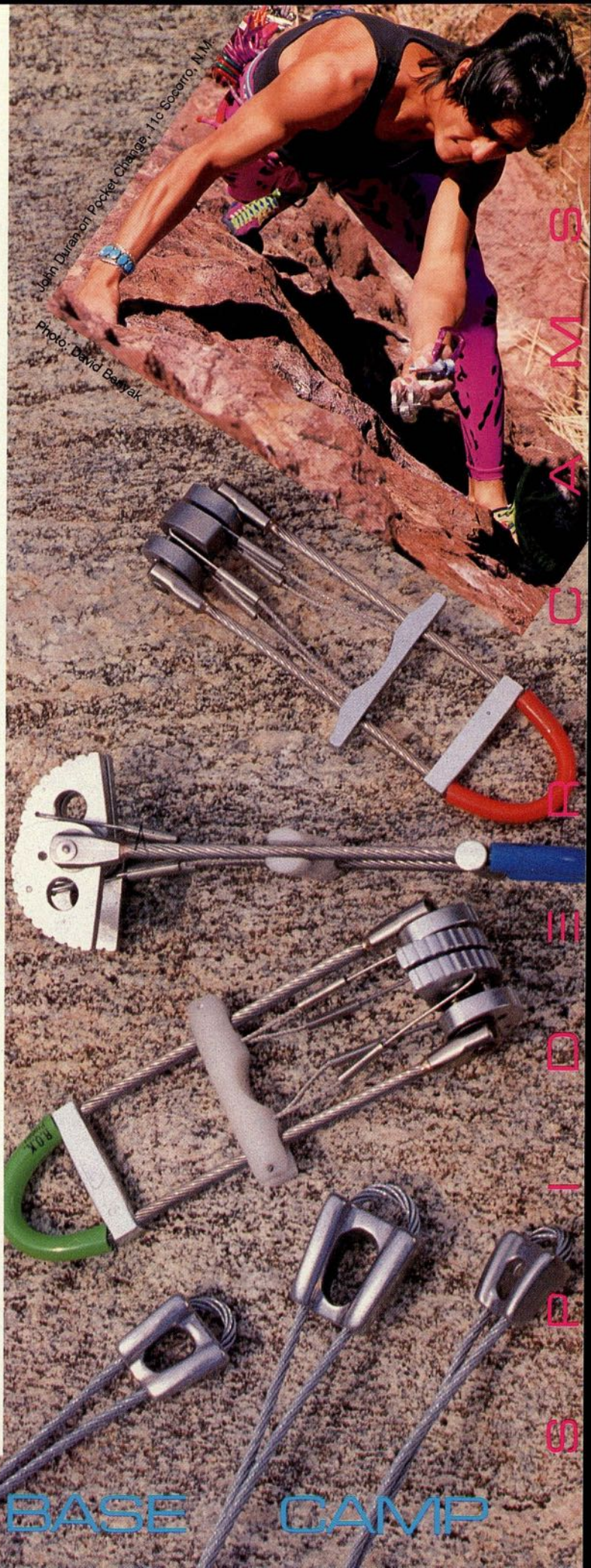


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1990 Climbing Shoe Review
by Duane Raleigh

Flecks of chalk hung in midair, spinning and looping and eventually settling on the scratched glass counter in the climbing shop. Behind the counter, a sun-dried salesman operated the trigger of a cam with his gnarled fingers.

"How may I help you?" he asked.

"I'd like to look at some rock shoes," replied the climber and potential customer as he fingered an incut pocket on the store's artificial rock wall.

and established companies have expanded, but all in all 1990 appears less innovative than last year, when shoes became lighter-weight, closer fitting and higher performing. This isn't to say that the manufacturers have been locked in the doldrums of complacency. Indeed, they have been busy resculpting and tuning their existing models, and a few have even added a new shoe or two to their already boggling line-up.

Selecting the right shoe

Of all the equipment necessary for rock climbing, shoes are the only item that can actually improve your performance. Therefore, getting the correct pair is of paramount importance.

After culling through every make and model of rock shoe available, the most crucial bit of advice we can give you for choosing climbing footwear is this: take your time, shop around, and try on every shoe that you can get your hands on.

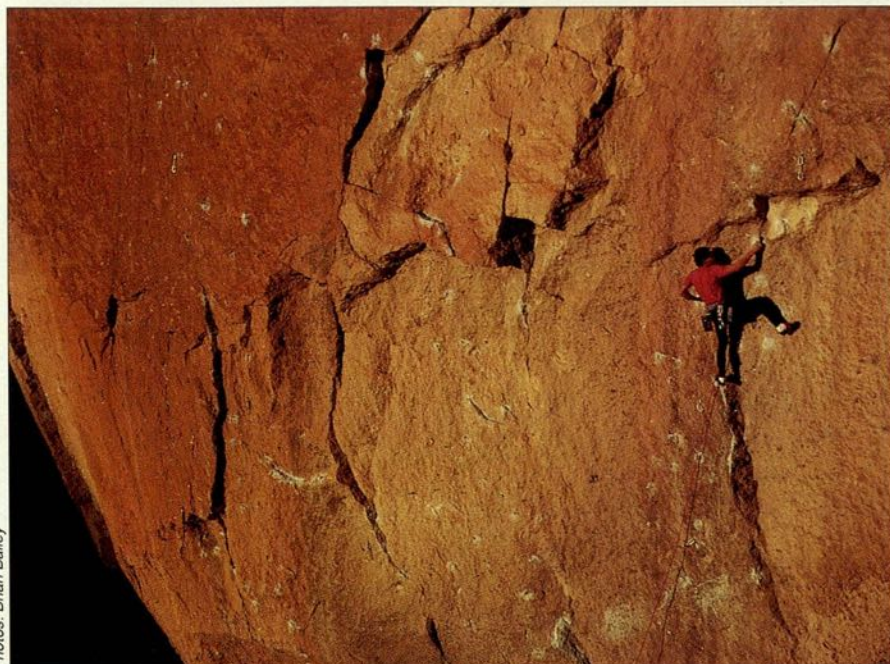
Compared to the prices of other outdoor sports equipment such as skis or mountain bikes, the cost of climbing shoes is small. Sure, climbing shoes aren't cheap and you must consider price versus quality, but fit and design are as important, if not more so, than price.

Fitting your climbing shoes

Even the most technical and expensive shoe can't perform well if it moves around on your foot. Climbing shoes must fit very tightly and one common mistake is to size them too large; however, the degree of snugness depends on the length and type of climbing for which the shoe is intended. Multi-pitch routes and crack climbs require a looser, more comfortable fit than short, technical testpieces. A climbing shoe must also conform closely to the contours of your foot. With excess space in the toe or heel, a shoe will never perform as well as it should. A shoe's shape depends on the manufacturer, and sometimes even the model, so check around. Try shoes on until you find one that seems to have been tailored for your foot.

Guidelines for sizing climbing shoes

1. Always try shoes on with bare feet. If your foot is sweaty and won't go in, douse it with baby or foot powder.
2. Start fitting one-half size below what you normally wear in street or running shoes, and then step down in size until you can't get your foot in the shoe. Expert



Photos: Brian Bailey

Duane Raleigh shoe testing at Smith Rock, Oregon (above); Randy Leavitt on *Five Crying Cowboys* (5.12+), Joshua Tree, California (right).

"What model are you interested in?"

"Model?"

"Yes, there are 30 models of shoes this year, all different. We have pocket shoes, edging boots, slippers, all-purpose shoes, high-tops, low-tops, lined, unlined. What would you like to see?"

"Well ... I don't know."

"OK, how about if we start with price. Shoes cost anywhere from \$90 to \$150."

"\$150! ... I just want to go climbing."

"Exactly."

"What do you recommend?"

"Well, that depends on the type of rock you'll be climbing and on your level of experience. Here, let me show you..."

Welcome to the 1990 Climbing Magazine Rock Shoe Survey

What's new this year in the world of climbing shoes? Well, to be brief, a lot and not much: new companies have emerged

climbers wear the smallest shoes they can get into, while weekend enthusiasts generally fit theirs a size larger.

3. With your foot laced in the shoe, feel around for hollow pockets, especially in the toe and heel areas. No portion of your foot should be able to slip around inside.

4. Don't panic if your toes are curled under in a hook. With use, the shoe will stretch, allowing your toes to flatten to a more normal position.

Since sizes vary from one manufacturer to the next, you must wear climbing shoes around indoors to ensure that you have the precise fit. Many climbing shops now have artificial walls — a perfect way to take a test spin. Don't be bashful. Also, remember that all climbing shoes (don't listen to the hype) stretch. The amount deviates from shoe to shoe and may range from one quarter to one full size after several weeks of climbing. If you are having difficulty deciding between two sizes, the smaller pair is almost always the right one.

Design of climbing shoes

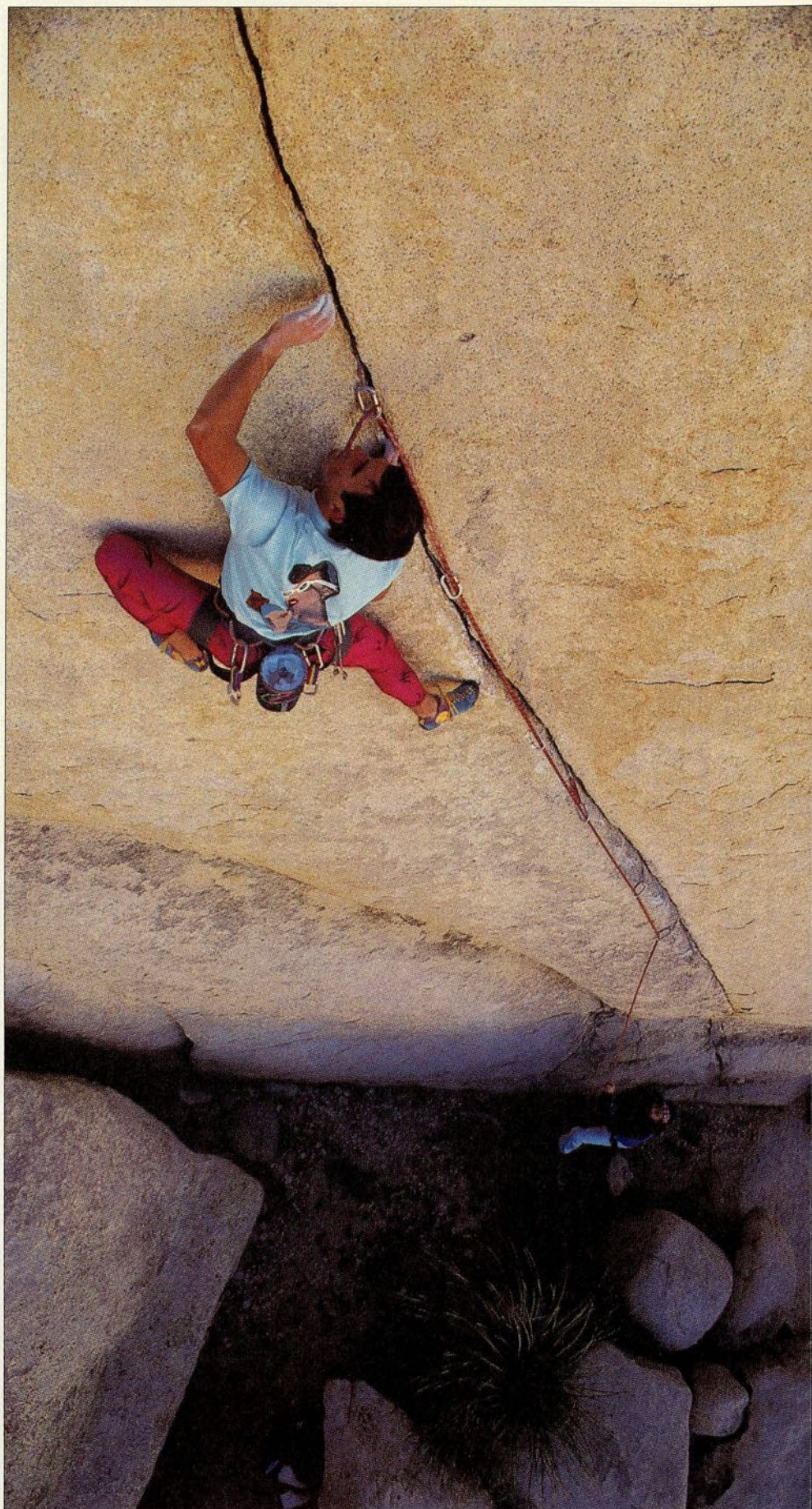
Aside from fit, shoe design and function should be your primary concern. Look carefully at the shoes to see what style of climbing they are designed for, then consider the type of rock you frequent.

If you climb mostly on steep faces with pockets and edges you will want a low-topped shoe with a super-close fit, pointed toe, and high sensitivity. The low top provides unlimited foot articulation, the close fit gives you control, the toe point buries into pockets, and the sensitivity lets you know what your feet are doing at all times. Friction/slab shoes should also be low-topped and close-fitting, but with additional suppleness to ensure maximum rubber-to-rock contact.

Crack climbers should look for a moderately stiff boot for support and protection. Crack boots should also have full-coverage sticky rands for adhesion and a thin, flat toe profile for deep penetration. If you climb on a variety of rock, you may prefer an all-around shoe with full rand, medium flexibility, and rounded toe point.

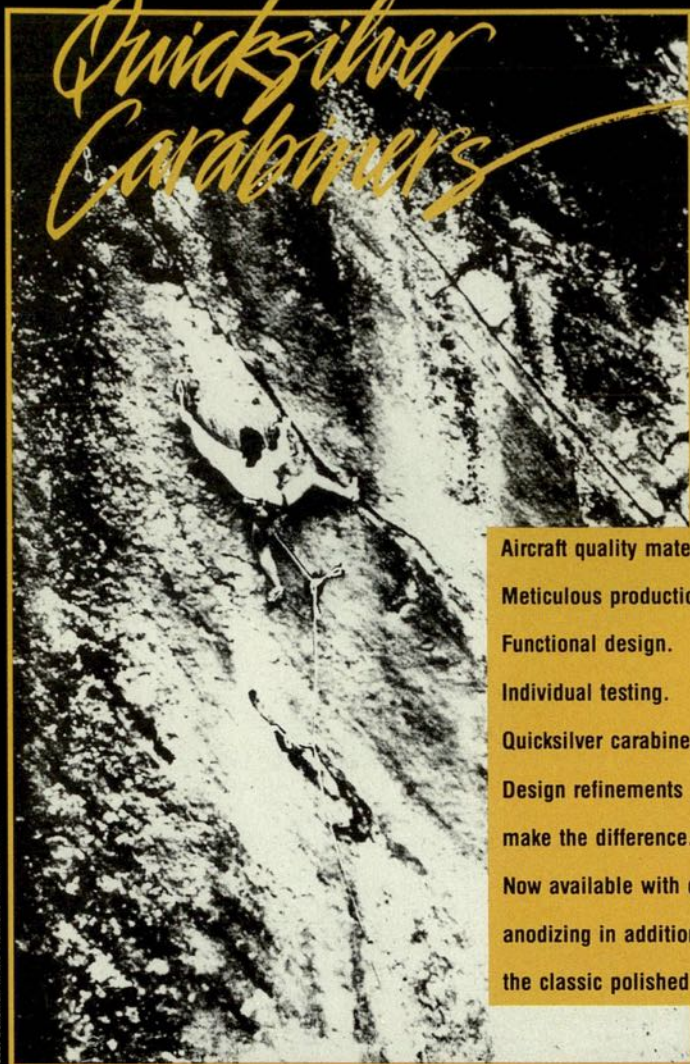
While modern climbing shoes fit better, are lighter and more technical than those of yesteryear, the most important advancement in the last decade was the use of sticky, highly adhesive rubber on the soles. Originating in Spain, "sticky" rubber was first implemented by Boreal/Fire in the early 1980s. No longer exclusive to Fires, this rubber, in varying degrees of quality, is widely copied and used for every make of rock shoe.

The perfect climbing rubber would be flypaper sticky and have the strength of steel. It would be able to friction up smooth glass and, at the same time, hold



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Bobbi Bensman in the Flatirons. BRIAN BAILEY



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solid on razor thin edges. Unfortunately, a rubber of this caliber is nonexistent. While shoe companies strive diligently to reach a balance between hardness and stickiness, an increase in one trait is always offset by a loss in the other. Harder rubber edges and resists wear, but isn't secure on friction. Soft rubber sticks to smooth rock, but inversely fails on small edges and is quick wearing. At present, there are no industry standards by which you may compare the various rubbers. This means that it is up to you and your common sense to make certain that you get what you really need.

The following glossary is provided for those unfamiliar with rock-shoe terminology.

Cambrelle — Synthetic fabric commonly used to line shoes for stretch control and moisture absorption.

Edging — To climb using the inside or outside "edge" of the sole.

Frictioning — Placing the entire flat of the sole against the rock for purchase. A typical maneuver on low-angle climbs. Also called smearing.

Front Pointing — Similar to Edging, but using only the front tip of the shoe.

Hooking — Using the toe or heel rand to grab or "hook" the rock for balance, forward progress or resting.

Last — The form or "foot" around which the shoe is constructed. The shape of the last determines the shape of the shoe.

Midsole — A piece of material placed between the sole and lining to give the shoe rigidity. Midsoles are usually made of leather, plastic, cork or fiberglass.

Rand — The band of rubber bordering the shoe.

Salpa — A compressed leather composite used in midsoles to stiffen the shoe.

Texon — A more flexible, synthetic version of Salpa.

Thin Cracks — Cracks smaller than your hand.

Shoes were tested over several months on rock and artificial surfaces throughout the United States; reviewers this year included the author and most of the editorial staff of Climbing. The 1990 Rock Shoe Review includes most rock shoes currently available in this country. Some new shoes were unavailable in time for testing; those will be surveyed in an addendum later this year. All weights listed are for men's size 6.5.

Three-time Climbing rock-shoe reviewer, Duane Raleigh, 30, has been rock climbing for 17 years, and has to his credit ascents ranging from 5.13 sport climbs to the first solo ascent of El Capitan's Zenyatta Mendatta.



Runout

Opera

Entrada

Eldorado

All product photos: Lance Leslie

ASOLO

Runout

Price: \$125

Sizes: 2–9 by half sizes

Weight: 16.2 oz.

Upper: leather

Lining: canvas

Midsole: micro rubber/Salpa

Rubber: Grimpour sole and rand

Rubber Characteristics: Very sticky and soft but also fast wearing — best for friction.

Comments: Available last year, the Runout remains unchanged and is the best value shoe from Asolo. This is Asolo's technical face shoe for pockets, edging, and friction. The Runout is a flexible, lightweight, and sensitive shoe corresponding to the curve of the foot. It has a narrow toe profile and modified point. It is a very precise shoe for advanced face climbing and competitions.

All of the climbers who wore the Runout felt that it was Asolo's best shoe, but also agreed that its performance declined as the shoe broke in, and that additional rubber should be added to the instep and heel for better hooking performance. The Runout has a medium-width fit and must be sized super tight to compensate for stretch. **Summary:** Advanced level shoe for technical face climbing.

Entrada

Price: \$140

Sizes: 3, 4–12 by half sizes

Weight: 22.4 oz.

Upper: leather

Lining: canvas with leather heel pocket

Midsole: Texon

Rubber: Same as Runout

Comments: The Entrada was also available last year and remains unchanged. It is an all-purpose crack shoe with high-topped leather uppers. A full sticky rubber rand provides adhesion in cracks — a stiffened midsole adds comfort.

We found the Entrada to be durable for long crack climbs and to perform well on moderate face routes. It is well made and comfortable, but for hard technical climbing we thought it heavy and cumbersome.

Summary: Crack climbing shoe; excels on long jam climbs.

Eldorado

Price: \$140

Sizes: 3, 4–12 by half sizes

Weight: 21.5 oz.

Upper: leather

Lining: canvas with leather heel pocket

Midsole: Salpa

Rubber: Same as Runout

Comments: Out last year, the Eldorado remains one of Asolo's staple boots.

This is an all-purpose shoe similar in design to the Entra-

da but lighter in weight, with a sharper toe point and softer flex. The new point and increased feel make it better suited to edges, smears, pockets, and thin cracks than the Entrada. We felt this to be a shoe for beginning to intermediate climbers. The shoe's construction is superb, but the upper could be lowered below the ankle for greater mobility without sacrificing support. **Summary:** Good all-purpose shoe.

Opera

Price: \$75

Sizes: 2–9 by half sizes

Weight: 8.6 oz.

Upper: leather/mesh

Lining: none

Midsole: none

Rubber: Grimpour rubber soles with C-1 (harder) rubber rands

Rubber Characteristics: Same as Runout

Comments: The Opera, introduced last year as Asolo's friction/training slipper, remains unchanged.

It is a lightweight training slipper with a good forefoot fit and sensitivity. The Opera is best suited for artificial-wall climbing and bouldering. On the downside are the Opera's high price, limited durability, and poor lacing design, which makes them slide on your foot.

Summary: Lightweight training slipper.

BOREAL/FIRE

Gazelle

Price: \$87

Sizes: 2–12 in half sizes

Weight: 13.8 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: Texon

Lining: none

Rubber: Spanish rubber sole and rand

Rubber Characteristics: Medium-sticky rubber that edges and frictions well, with good durability.

Comments: This is Fire's new slipper/shoe similar to last year's Ninja, but with improved lacing and control.

If you prefer slipper-style footwear, the Gazelle may be the choice for you. Highlights of this slipper include extreme sensitivity, a soft flex, a thin toe profile, and abundant rubber coverage. These features prime the Gazelle for pocket and friction climbing, but for difficult edging the laces do not extend far enough down the forefoot to give support to the toes. Additionally, half the reviewers found the toe fit to be perfect while the rest found it too pointed, causing a dead space in front of the big toe. **Summary:** Flexible slipper suitable for friction, pocket, and artificial-wall climbing.

continued on page 92

Resoling your own

by Trent Billingsley

If you've been sitting around this winter, pawing through back issues of *Climbing* and wondering what to do during the off-season, here's a solution. Most climbers have the same problem — what to do with those blown-out rock shoes? Until recently, the choices were clear: either leave them to molder in the back of the closet, or send them out for an expensive resole. But why not do it yourself?

Although resole kits have been around for a few years, only recently have they become available in most climbing shops. Because of this, many people are not familiar with the procedure and may be reluctant to try resoling for fear of screwing it up. However, the truth is that any climber can breathe new life into old boots. Resoling is a simple process that takes only a couple of hours, a few tools, and the desire to save a lot of cash.

The tools required are minimal: a drill with a grinding wheel, a pair of pliers, a knife (a utility knife, the type with razor-sharp blades, works best), a kitchen stove (preferably electric), and a resole kit (about \$15). If your shoes are in really sad shape, you may need some Aqua Seal (available where wet suits are sold) to rebuild the edge of the sole. Also, automotive brake-pad cleaner (trichloroethane) works well for cleaning off the surfaces to be glued.

Presently, there are two brands of rubber available on the retail market — 5.10 and Cocida (One Sport).

The 5.10 resole kit furnishes you with all the necessary materials: instructions, glue, and a large slab of Stealth I or Stealth II rubber. With this you can resole up to size 11 shoes; larger sizes and rands are available from 5.10.

Cocida, on the other hand, doesn't provide instructions (of course, you won't need them now) or glue (use Barge's Cement, available at some shoe stores or from a shoe-repair shop). The rubber is pre-cut to size 14. Currently, Cocida markets three different types of rubber. The green label is a little harder than most and is designed for edging. The red label is formulated for smearing, and the orange label is a competition

rubber that is half the thickness of the other two and twice as expensive.

Now the fun of removing the old soles begins. As you may have discovered by drying your shoes out by the campfire, heat destroys the glue that bonds the sole



There are easier ways of getting those old soles off.

to the shoe. So, to start you'll need an electric stove top (do not use an oven as the rand will come off faster than the sole). Before you begin, tightly stuff both boots with wadded socks and lace them up to preserve their shape. Turn the stove on high. If you don't have access to an electric stove, a gas stove will work, but be careful and keep it at a lower setting — the combination of an open flame and flammable rubber presents an obvious hazard. Now, holding the shoe by its upper over the heel, wave the toe three to five inches above the heat source, making sure to keep the sole down. Remember, you want to loosen the sole and not the rand. *Be careful not to burn the sole, the shoe, or yourself.*

After a couple of minutes the rubber at the toe should be too hot to touch. Take it away from the stove. If you're lucky, it will have already started to delaminate. If not, take the knife and peel back enough sole at the point of the toe to grab with the pliers. Using the pliers, you should be able to peel back about an inch of sole at a time without

meeting much resistance. When you reach a point where the sole and the boot refuse to part company, return them to the heat for more creative coercion. The trick is not to muscle the sole off, as you might tear a hole in the bottom of the shoe or take off a chunk of the rand. Repeat the process until you are able to peel off the sole completely.

One thing worth considering before scalping the entire sole is the possibility of replacing the forward half only, since the arch and heel areas seldom receive much wear. Half-soleing will also give you two resoles per kit with half the labor. To do half-soles, simply heat and pull back the rubber as described above, but stop at the arch and cut off the forward section. Next, cut a corresponding sized piece of rubber from the kit. To prevent the sole from later pulling apart at the arch, bevel both the edge of the rubber pad and the sole to mate at opposing 45-degree angles.

If you damaged your boots while removing the sole or the toes of your boots are excessively rounded, you may want to take some time here to rebuild the edge with Aqua Seal. Start by applying a liberal dose of Aqua Seal to the damaged area, and allow it to dry overnight. In the morning, grind or sand the edge until it matches the rest of the shoe. If the bottoms of the shoes were glued in — such as on the One Sport Resin Rose — they may have come apart when you pulled off the sole. This is not as serious as it looks and is fairly easy to remedy with the copious use of Barge's Cement; but make sure the spaces to be glued are as clean as possible (use the brake-pad cleaner for this).

With the 5.10 kit, the rubber comes in one large slab. However, shoes aren't the same width all the way through, so be careful that both soles will fit before you just cut the slab in half. You might need to place your shoes on the rubber and draw an "S" between the two to have enough rubber. Cut down this line with the utility knife, pulling the two pieces apart as you go.

The next step is to prepare the shoes for gluing. Use a grinding wheel, belt sander, or sand paper to rough up both

the new rubber and the bottom of the shoes. When you finish this process, clean the surfaces thoroughly. Take care not to touch the clean rubber with hands; oil from your fingers will affect the bond. For insurance, I spray both surfaces with brake-pad cleaner to remove all dirt and oil.

When both surfaces are prepared, it is time to glue. Spread the thinnest possible layer of glue across the bottom of the shoe and the new rubber sole. Let both dry completely — about two hours. Heat both surfaces over the stove for 10-15 seconds. Do not burn the glue.

Place the new sole on a flat surface and align the shoe above it, setting the heel down first. Then apply pressure, working from the heel to the toe. Do not simply set the shoe down flat on the sole, as this will create an arch. Make sure to align them correctly because once contact is made it's permanent.

At this point there are a number of techniques to make sure the sole and the shoe are bonded. Professionals hammer the soles on over a wooden foot form called a last. To hammer the soles on yourself first remove the laces, and lay the shoe on a cement surface with the sole side down. Hammer the sole inside the shoe, working from the middle of the shoe out to remove any trapped air bubbles. Hammer for as long as you can stand it, concentrating your efforts on the outer edges. Other methods I've used include squeezing them together with a pair of pliers, walking around in them, and parking them under a car for a few hours. If you choose the latter, park the tires on the toes because this is where delamination is likely to develop.

Allow the shoes to cure overnight. The final step involves shaving the excess rubber from the sole. Using the utility knife, trim the sole as close to the shoe as possible. This is easiest if you pull the blade towards your thumb as if peeling an apple (but be careful). You should be able to cut away most of the excess rubber. Then, on the grinding wheel, bevel the sole to your liking.

Finally, if you should notice an imperfect bond, don't panic. Either use a paper clip to apply more glue to that area, or fill it with Aqua Seal (I've been very happy with the performance of the Aqua Seal). Inevitably, the bond on a resole job is not as strong as the original and you may have to repeat this process occasionally.

Now, go climbing and enjoy your "new" boots, resoled and already broken-in.

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Ace

Ballet

Classic

Gazelle

Ace

Price: \$120

Sizes: 2–13 in half sizes

Weight: 16.8 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: Texon

Lining: canvas

Rubber: Spanish rubber under forefoot and on rand, non-sticky rubber composite under heel

Rubber Characteristics: Same as Gazelle

Comments: Last year we reviewed the Ace and found it to be the best shoe Boreal\Fire had ever made. Trying it out again this year only confirmed our previous convictions.

The Ace is a top-end face-climbing shoe. It is moderately stiff when new, with good sensitivity, fit, and feel. The lacing system compresses the toes to make a stable edging platform and the sticky rands hook and jam securely. The Ace is a superb technical-face shoe especially in the early stages of use. Unfortunately, the Ace suffers the same malady as most other shoes of its type: it breaks down quickly, losing much of its fine control.

Summary: High-performance face-climbing shoe.

Ballet

Price: \$125

Sizes: 2–13 in half sizes

Weight: 21 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: Texon

Lining: canvas

Rubber: Same as Gazelle

Comments: The Ballet is Boreal\Fire's top all-around shoe. It has a comfortable, anatomical form, ankle-high uppers, and sticky rand. All of these features contribute to make the Ballet both supportive and secure — important considerations when you are tackling long free climbs like those in Yosemite.

In face climbing, we found the Ballet to be the only general-purpose shoe with close, over-the-toe lacing which is necessary for steep edging. Equally adept on long cracks and friction routes, durable, and comfortable, the Ballet remains one of the most consistent well-rounded climbing shoes available.

Summary: One of the best all-around shoes, particularly suitable for long free climbs.

Classic

Price: \$110

Sizes: 2–13 in half sizes

Weight: 21.7 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: Texon

Lining: none

Rubber: Same as Gazelle

Comments: This is the shoe that started it all. When the Classic first came out in the

early 1980s, it revolutionized climbing footwear. Its sticky rubber soles quickly made all previous forms of climbing footwear obsolete. Over the years, this shoe has seen many improvements such as a closer fit, denser lacing, and a refined toe point.

No longer at the forefront, the Classic nevertheless still has its place as an all-purpose boot suitable for entry-level climbers.

Fitting wider and with less of a toe point than the Ballet, the Classic works well for climbers with longer second toes (Morton's toe) or excessively wide feet. As an introductory, all-purpose shoe the Classic is one of the best; however, its unlined uppers stretch up to a full size.

Therefore, make certain that you size it with a bare foot and select the smallest shoe that you can squeeze into.

Summary: Comfortable all-purpose shoe, best suited for beginning to intermediate climbers and long free climbs.

FIVE-TEN

Vertical

Price: \$138

Sizes: 2–12.5 in half sizes, 13–15 in whole sizes

Weight: 17.8 oz.

Upper: leather/nylon

Midsole: polypropylene

Lining: Cambrelle

Rubber: Stealth 2 sole and rand

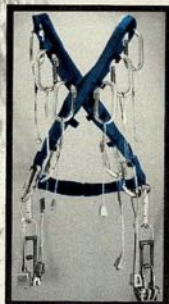
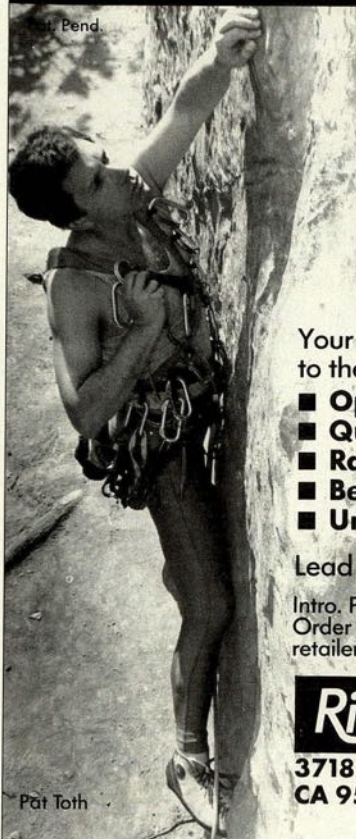
Rubber Characteristics: The highest frictioning rubber on the market (other than Stealth 1), but it does not hold on edges as well as some of the harder brands.

Comments: The Vertical, which has been on the market for several years, has undergone several changes in 1990 for better all-around performance.

This year the Vertical has lost weight, is lower cut, and has a more anatomical fit, changes that have given it greater feel and maneuverability. With sticky Stealth soles, this shoe frictions very well, especially considering its stiffness. In cracks and on long free climbs, the Vertical is comfortable and durable. In fact, after a full season of climbing, chances are that your well-worn Vertical will retain most of its original fit and stability — something you can't say about the lighter constructed shoes. Though suitable for most uses, the Vertical is weak in pockets and on edges because of its thick, bulbous toe and widely spaced eyelets.

Summary: Good all-around performer, durable and comfortable.

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Vertical

Friction Loafer

Ascent

Ascent

Price: \$89

Sizes: 3–13 in half sizes

Weight: 17.8 oz.

Upper: leather/vinyl

Midsole: Salpa

Lining: canvas

Rubber: Stealth 1 sole and rand

Rubber Characteristics: Stealth 2's predecessor, Stealth 1 does not edge as well, but is stickier.

Comments: Priced at \$89, the Ascent is the least expensive climbing shoe available this year. It is similar in design, construction, and function to the Vertical, but foregoes some of the latter's niceties for a reduction in price.

The Ascent is a high-topped, multi-use shoe for beginner to intermediate climbers. Its strongest points are low price, sticky sole and rand, and comfortable fit. All of these features combine to make the Ascent an outstanding value for shoestring budgets and/or first-time shoe purchasers.

We discovered that the Ascent could out-perform many of the more expensive shoes, especially on friction and hand-size or wider cracks, but for small pockets and thin cracks, we found the toe box bulky and the uppers restrictive.

This shoe has a lot of things going for it, but quality construction isn't one of them. The lining on both shoes de-laminated the first

time we used them, and the pink vinyl that wraps the ankle appears to be merely cosmetic — it is unnervingly slick for heel hooking.

Summary: Budget-priced, all-purpose shoe for moderate-grade climbing.

Friction Loafer

Price: \$92.50

Sizes: 3–13 in half sizes

Weight: 14.6 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: Salpa

Lining: Cambrelle

Rubber: Same as Vertical

Comments: On the market for over two years, the Friction Loafer remains one of the best climbing slippers around.

This is a slipper with substance; a thin Salpa midsole gives it some rigidity for edging, with only a slight loss in sensitivity and flex. The Loafer is suitable for all types of extreme friction, pocket, and

thin-crack climbing as well as for training and competitions. Our only squabble is that the Loafer's laces stop well short of the toes, causing a marked loss in control compared to other slipper styles that lace down to the toe point.

Summary: Slipper for high-end friction, pocket, and thin-crack climbing.

HANWAG

Magic Top

Price: \$150

Sizes: 5–13

Weight: 17.3 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: rubber

Lining: canvas

Rubber: Sticky rubber sole, harder rand

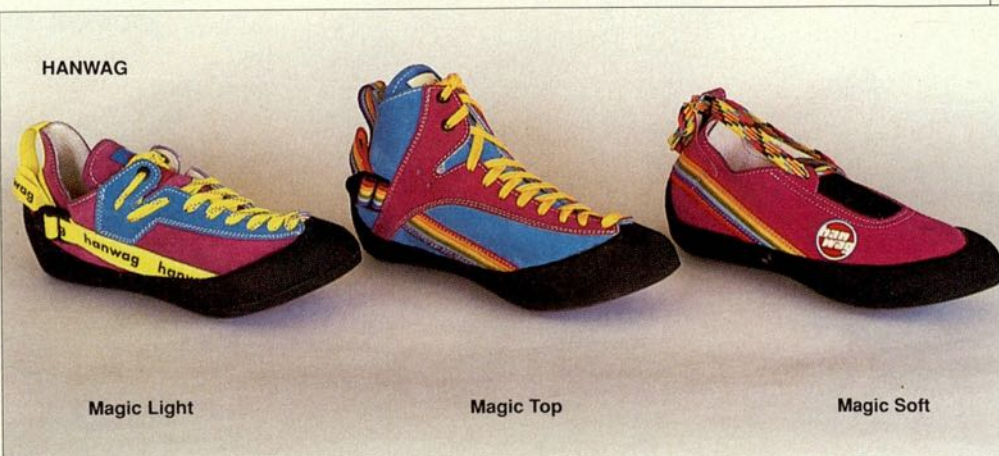
Rubber Characteristics: Good edging, average on friction. Smooth soles need to be roughed up with sandpaper or a grinding wheel before use.

Comments: The Magic Top is Hanwag's all-around climbing shoe. Available in Europe for many years, it is one of the most popular climbing shoes abroad.

This shoe has two typical Hanwag features: a very pronounced heel-to-toe curve and a buckled heel tab. Of the two, the curved last is the most beneficial, as it places the tip of the shoe in line with your big toe. This gives it precision front-point and pocket capabilities; however, climbers with longer second toes may find the banana shape painful. While the shoe's pointed toe is functional, the heel buckle is not. It is supposed to compensate for stretch and provide control by drawing the shoe up from heel to toe, but in practice we had difficulty pulling the strap tight enough to be of any benefit.

Sensitivity and flexibility are the best features of the Magic Top. This shoe has much of the feel and softness of a slipper, yet because of its contoured fit, it is still able to edge remarkably well. With a pointed toe for pockets, flexibility for smearing, and anatomical fit for edging, the Magic Top is a good multi-purpose shoe if it fits you right, although it is pricey at \$150.

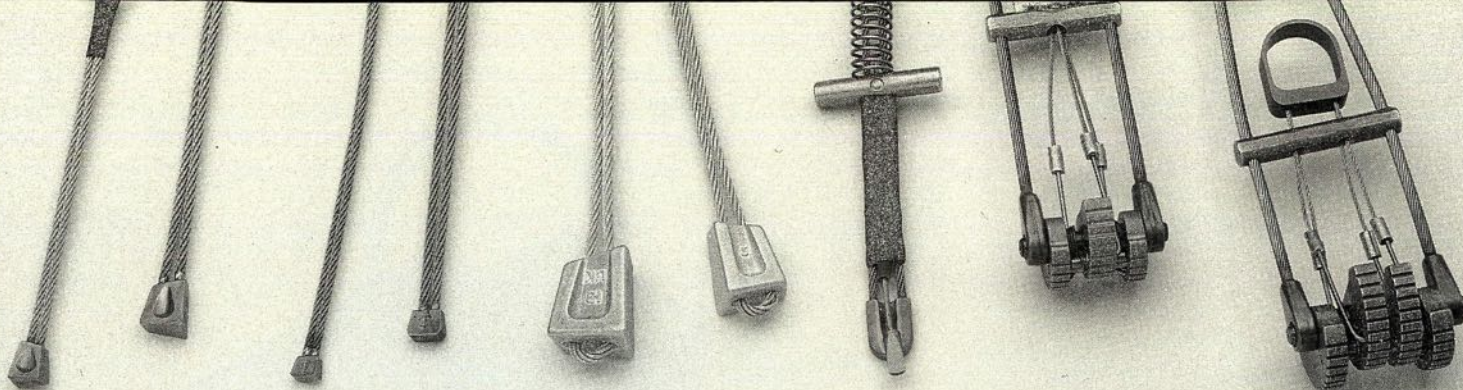
Summary: Multi-use shoe with radical fit and high sensitivity.



Magic Light

Magic Top

Magic Soft



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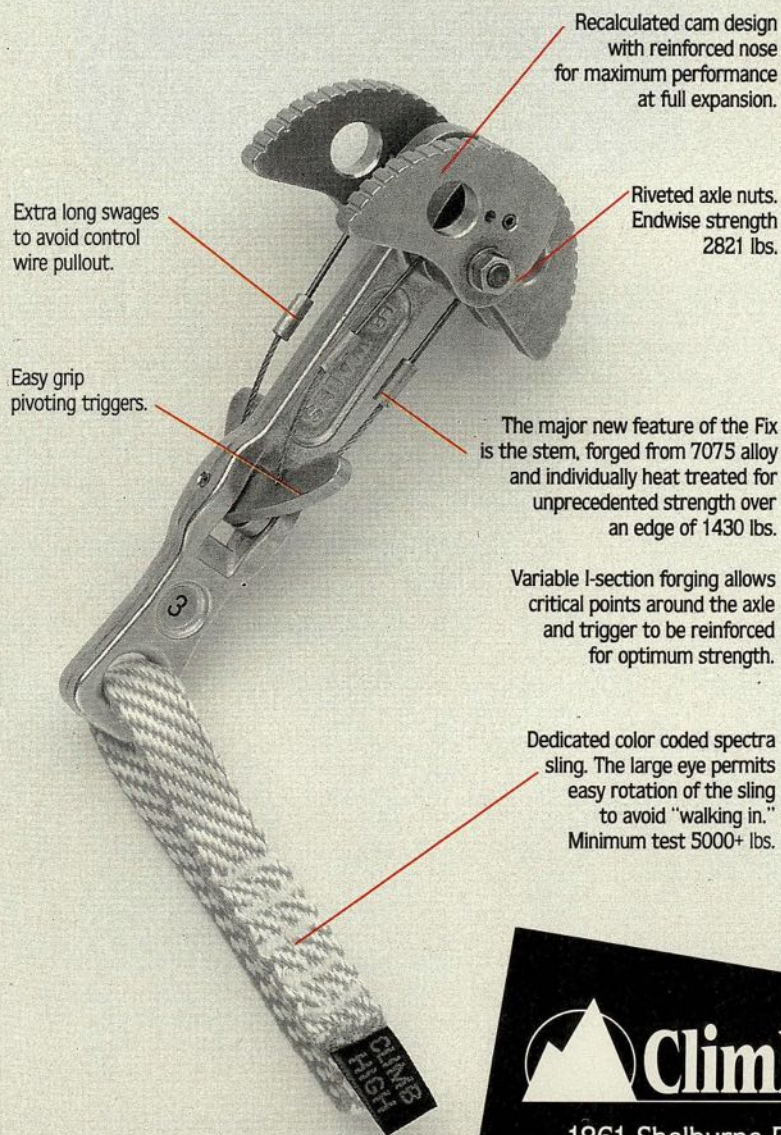
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Magic Light

Price: \$141

Sizes: 5-13

Weight: 19.7 oz. size 9.5

Midsole: rubber

Lining: canvas

Rubber: Same as Magic Top

Comments: This shoe is essentially a low-cut version of the Magic Top. Of the two shoes, the Magic Light was our favorite because of its lighter weight and higher maneuverability.

With a needle-sharp toe point, the Magic Light penetrates deeply in pockets and thin cracks, and with high sensitivity and flex it frictions and face climbs well. For artificial-wall climbing, where you need a sensitive shoe that will smear, edge, and toe-in, the Magic Light is ideal. Light construction is the shoe's one pitfall, and its lack of support causes premature foot fatigue.

Summary: Sensitive face shoe that excels in pockets.

Magic Soft

Price: \$96

Sizes: 5-13

Weight: 10.9 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: rubber

Lining: canvas

Rubber: Same as Magic Top

Comments: The Magic Soft is like a diet soft drink, light with a bitter after-taste. For \$96 you would expect this slipper to blow the others off the rock, but unfortunately this is not the case: it's construction is shoddy, and it is both difficult to size and over-priced. Still, if you can get into the Magic Soft it fits great and is soft and sensitive; it will also out-edge most slippers.

Summary: Soft training and friction slipper with a highly contoured shape.

KAMET



Super Flash



Profile



Joshua Tree

KAMET

Profile

Price: \$113

Sizes: 34-43 in whole sizes, 38-43 in half sizes

Weight: 18.8 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: nylon

Lining: Cambrelle

Rubber: Spanish rubber sole with sticky rand

Rubber Characteristics: Very sticky rubber, frictions better than it edges.

Comments: On the market for over a year now, the Profile is Kamet's best edging shoe and was our favorite of the three models available from this Spanish company.

Economically priced at \$113, the Profile is the least expensive of the high-performance climbing shoes. Everyone who tested the Profile found its fit to be superb and its face-climbing performance above average. It has a pointed toe for small pockets, sticky rand for hooking, and is well constructed. It could be improved by making it lighter and more flexible, but even without those changes the Profile is an effective face-climbing shoe.

Summary: Economical high-performance face shoe.

Joshua Tree

Price: \$105

Sizes: 34-46, 38-43 in half sizes

Weight: 20.7 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: leather

Lining: Cambrelle

Rubber: Same as Profile

Comments: Another well-made shoe from Kamet is the Joshua Tree, a comfortable, durable, and well thought out general-purpose climbing shoe. Experienced climbers will find the shoe clumsy, but beginning to intermediate climbers will appreciate its support and durability.

This shoe has a full coverage, sticky rand and a thin, flat toe that grips and compresses well in cracks. The toe is a modified point for occasional pockets, and the shoe's overall stiffness is supportive for longer climbs. As an introductory shoe for all types of climbing, the Joshua Tree is one of the better buys.

Summary: Multi-use shoe that is well made and economical.

Super Flash

Price: \$115

Sizes: 34-46, 38-43 in half sizes

Weight: 18.2 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: composition

Lining: Cambrelle

Rubber: Same as Profile

Comments: This shoe is a crossbreed between the Profile and the Joshua Tree. Designed for face and friction climbing, it has a lower, more contoured fit than the Joshua Tree and greater flexibility and feel than the Profile. The Super Flash has a clean, sharp toe point and close,

over-the-toe lacing. This gives it good penetration and control in pockets and on edges. Compared to a specialized face climbing shoe, the Super Flash is heavy and cumbersome, but unless you are pushing the outer edges of difficulty, chances are this shoe has everything you will ever need.

As with all of the Kamet shoes, we were impressed by the Super Flash's quality of construction and materials. The only changes that we could recommend would be to lower the upper and lighten the overall weight.

Summary: All-purpose face-climbing shoe for moderate difficulty.

LA SPORTIVA

Tao

Price: \$143

Sizes: 34-46.5 in half sizes

Weight: 15.1 oz.

Upper: Lorica

Midsole: leather board

Lining: canvas

Rubber: Spanish rubber sole and rand

Rubber Characteristics: Sportiva rubber is among the best for edging and wear; however, it will not smear as well as some of the softer polymers.

Comments: Hands down, the Tao proved to be the best rock shoe out this year. It is a hybrid of Sportiva's successful Kendo and Futura rock shoes, and is a very precise face-climbing shoe with an



Futura

Kendo

Mariacher

Mega

excellent fit and quality construction. The toe design is a modified point, not quite as sharp as that of the Kendo, but more defined than the Futura. This design gives it good pocket-climbing capabilities while still allowing front-point control. As flexible and sensitive as the Tao is, you wouldn't expect it to edge, but because of its vacuum-tight fit and a unique rand that drives the foot forward, it is one of the most precise edging shoes around.

The Tao makes use of a new upper material called Lorica, a synthetic that is breathable and supple, but without the stretch and inconsistencies of natural leather.

During the course of the survey, everyone who tested the Tao was reluctant to part with it. The only change we thought this shoe could stand was in appearance: the Tao is, to put it bluntly, ugly. Maybe next year we will see some livelier colors.

Summary: Face-climbing shoe with excellent fit and control.

La Nera

Price: \$87

Sizes: 34-46.5

Weight: 8.2 oz.

Upper: Lorica

Midsole: none

Lining: canvas

Rubber: Same as Tao

Comments: This is Sportiva's newest effort at a training and friction slipper, and is much improved over last year's Ballerina. Unfortunately, it still needs some work.

The La Nera is anatomically shaped and has an elastic heel band. When front-pointing, we found the radically pointed toe of the La Nera to be ineffective, causing a dead spot in front of the toes, which resulted in loss of stability. The shoe does have a simple lacing setup, but it still does not prevent the foot from moving within the slipper. In pockets and for training, the La Nera does an adequate job, but for \$87 it needs some work before we would rush out to buy it.

Summary: Pocket and training slipper.

Mega

Price: \$140

Sizes: 33, 34-46.5 in half sizes

Weight: 19.2 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: leather board

Lining: canvas

Rubber: Same as Tao

Comments: The Mega is La Sportiva's time-honored flagship shoe, and is one of the most popular climbing shoes ever.

This year's Mega has been

honed into a specialized edging shoe. To give it better front-pointing abilities, the toe has been squared to a chisel point. Distributing the load more equally across the toes and producing a more stable platform to reduce foot fatigue. The newly shaped Mega had such a "locked on" feel for micro-holds that it easily won our approval as the best edging shoe ever.

Over the years the primary complaint against the Mega has been its awkward heel design, which Sportiva has addressed this year by giving it a more traditional contour, allowing the heel to stay more solidly in place. Another change in the 1990 Mega is the use of sticky rubber for the rand, which improves its security for hooking and in cracks.

Summary: Specialty shoe for top-end face climbing.

Mariacher

Price: \$147

Sizes: 34-46.5 in half sizes

Weight: 21.5 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: leather board

Lining: canvas

Rubber: Spanish rubber sole. Italian rubber rand is not as sticky.

Comments: The Mariacher was the first shoe to threaten Fire's dominance back in the mid-1980s by attacking the latter's weak spot: edging.

The Mariacher emerged as the premier edging boot, and advanced free-climbing levels the world over.

Today's Mariacher is much the same as its predecessor, and is still popular, but it has been surpassed by a lighter, closer-fitting genre of rock shoe such as the Tao and Futura. Still, the Mariacher holds its own as a general-purpose rock boot. Durable, comfortable, and close-fitting, the Mariacher is hard to beat. Indeed, next time you are out at the rock take a look around. You will probably see at least one pair of purple and yellow Mariachers, and chances are those same shoes have been through at least two or three resolings.

Summary: Long-wearing all-purpose rock shoe.

Futura

Price: \$138

Sizes: 34-46.5 in half sizes

Weight: 17.4 oz.

Upper: leather

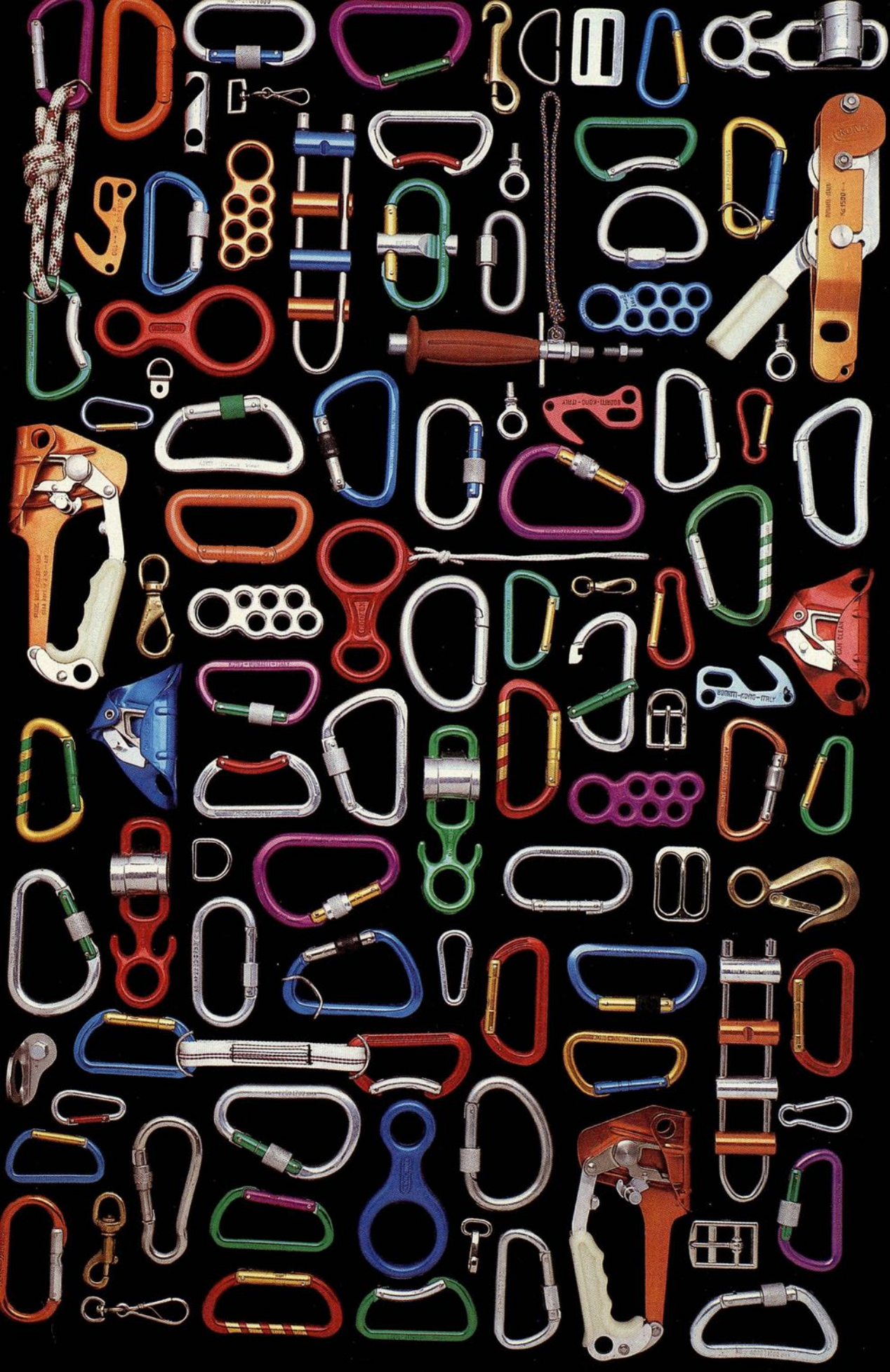
Midsole: leather board

Lining: canvas

Rubber: Spanish rubber under forefoot, Italian (harder) rubber under heel and on rand.

Comments: When this shoe came out over a year ago, it rose to the forefront of technical face climbing where it remains today.

The Futura is an



LA SPORTIVA



Ballerina Flash



Tao



La Nera

advanced-design shoe with a tensioned rand like the Tao that drives the foot forward. A medium-point toe gives it stability for frontal edging, but for pockets the Sportiva Kendo is clearly superior. The Futura has a good combination of stiffness for support and sensitivity for feel. It also is the only shoe designed for at-home resoling. The sole under the forefoot is separated from the heel and is easily stripped off and replaced using Sportiva half-soles.

Summary: Advanced face-climbing shoe that is close-fitting and durable.

Kendo

Price: \$103

Sizes: 34-46.5 in half sizes

Weight: 13.4 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: none

Lining: canvas

Rubber: Spanish rubber sole, Italian (harder) rubber rand.

Comments: The Kendo is the Futura's sister shoe for pocket and friction climbs. In many respects the Kendo is a slipper: it is soft, sensitive, and lightweight, and has a fine toe point. In other respects it is a shoe: it laces down to the toe point, has a mid-high upper, and is precise. This well-designed piece of footwear is one of the best for pockets and friction, but if you're using it for edging and longer climbs you'll need strong feet and a high pain threshold.

At a mere \$103, the Kendo is one of the most economical and functional pieces of climbing footwear to come out in the past decade.

Summary: Slipper/shoe for pocket, friction, and competition climbing.

Ballerina Flash

Price: \$40

Sizes: 36-45 in half sizes

Weight: 8 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: leather board

Lining: nylon

Rubber: Spanish rubber sole, Italian rand (non-sticky).

Comments: The Ballerina Flash emerged two years ago only to vanish, supplanted by the Ballerina H.M. This year, Sportiva has brought back this innovative slipper for a limited-supply run.

With a thin midsole and elastic rand to give it some

stiffness, the Ballerina will edge passably, at least while new. The tensioned rand strap keeps things snug once the slipper is broken in, but some people find its slingshot effect painful. A thin toe and high sensitivity make the Ballerina ideal for pocket, friction, and artificial-wall climbing. At \$40, this slipper is the buy of the year. Unfortunately, once La Sportiva depletes the present stock, the Ballerina Flash will be discontinued.

Summary: Inexpensive slipper for pockets, friction, and training.

MEKAN

Psycho II

Price: \$139

Sizes: 4-14/narrow, medium, and wide widths (also available in custom sizes)

Weight: 21 oz.

Upper: leather

Midsole: polyethylene

Lining: Cambrelle

Rubber: Stealth 2 sole, Stealth 1 rand

Rubber Characteristics: Stealth 2 is a very sticky rubber. It wears well and frictions better than European rubbers, but it does not edge as satisfactorily.

Comments: Located in Salt Lake City, Mekan Boots is the sole U.S. manufacturer of climbing shoes. This year Mekan expanded their regular line of custom boots with a comprehensive lineup, from soft slipper/shoes to technical edging boots.

The Psycho II is billed as Mekan's all-purpose shoe, and with an over-the-ankle cut, leather upper, sticky rand, curved last, and modified toe point, it has all of the trappings. Still, we found it to be more of a specialized edging boot than anything; indeed, of the shoes we tested, the Psycho II was the stiffest. Because of its rigidity, this shoe takes some getting used to, but once you are acclimated, it is secure on tiny edges and provides excellent foot support.

Summary: Stiff, all-purpose boot that performs best on edges.

Crag Prince

Price: \$132

Sizes: 4-14 (also available in custom sizes)

Weight: 16 oz.

Upper: leather

MEKAN



Crag Prince

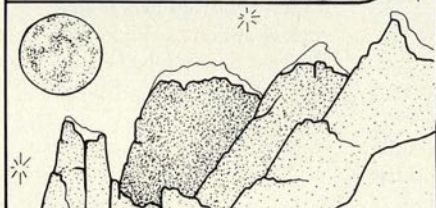
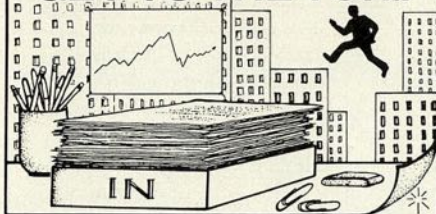


Rampage



Psycho II

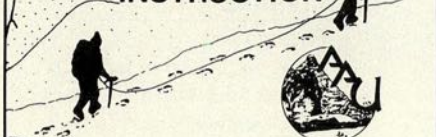
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MERRELL

Flashdance

Midsole: polyethylene or neoprene (firm and soft models)
Lining: Cambrelle
Rubber: Same as Psycho II
Comments: The Crag Prince is Mekan's steep-face and artificial-wall shoe. This shoe is available in both a firm and soft model to fit your individual taste. Of the two shoes, the soft was our favorite because of its sensitivity and friction abilities, while the firm version worked better on edges.

Both models have a sticky, full-coverage toe cap that compress neatly into thin cracks. The upper is cut below the ankle and the shape of the shoe is based on a curved last for a close, anatomical fit. The toe is rounded rather than pointed for front edging support. A generous swath of rubber through the instep also makes the Psycho a great hooking shoe.

Though intended as a face- and sport-climbing shoe, we felt that the Crag Prince was also a highly successful all-purpose performer. It is durable and comfortable for long climbs, jams and frictions well, and has a super-sticky sole and rand.

Changes that we would like to see in this shoe include lighter weight and closer, over-the-toe lacing.

Summary: Face-climbing shoe that also works well for all types of climbing.

Rampage

Price: \$120
Sizes: 4-14 (also available in custom sizes)
Weight: 14.4 oz.
Upper: leather
Midsole: none
Lining: canvas
Rubber: Stealth 1 sole and rand
Rubber Characteristics: Stealth is the stickiest rubber; however, it can roll when edging.
Comments: The Rampage was our favorite Mekan shoe. Similar to the La Sportiva Kendo, it is part slipper and part shoe. As a slipper it has flexibility, sensitivity, and feel. As a shoe it has a good lacing system extending to the toe for compression and stable edging. The Stealth rubber sole mated with the shoe's softness make for what we

feel is the best friction shoe on the market today. The Rampage is one of the few lace-up shoes that allows you to feel irregularities in the rock, a major benefit for climbing hard testpieces and in competitions. The Rampage has a stiletto toe point for pocket climbing and is built on a curved last for a precise fit and comfort.

While superb for friction and pocket climbs, the Rampage is too lightweight and soft for crack jamming or micro-edging. The only flaw we found in this shoe was its unpadded tongue, which bunched up.

Summary: Specialized shoe for friction, pockets, and competition climbing.

MERRELL

Flashdance

Price: \$100
Sizes: 3.5-13
Weight: 25.3 oz.
Upper: leather
Midsole: nylon
Lining: Cambrelle
Rubber: Ilga 2 sole, Duro rubber rand
Rubber Characteristics: The Ilga 2 rubber edges and frictions well. Duro rubber used for the rand is not sticky.
Comments: The Merrell Flashdance is a shoe designed to meet a specific market: beginner climbers who want a sophisticated, quality shoe at

a reasonable price. On some of these points the Flashdance is successful.

The Flashdance's greatest asset is its \$100 price tag, making it one of the least expensive climbing shoes. The cost and function of the Flashdance will interest beginning climbers who want a shoe that will do a little of everything. Experienced climbers should look elsewhere, as we found the Flashdance to be heavy, restrictive, and loose-fitting for difficult grades.

Summary: All-purpose beginner's shoe with a budget price.

SCARPA

Fiamma

Price: \$115
Sizes: 34.5-45.5 in half sizes
Weight: 14.6 oz.
Upper: leather
Midsole: leather
Lining: Cambrelle
Rubber: Italian rubber sole and rand.
Rubber Characteristics: The Scarpa rubber edges and wears very well, but seems slick for extreme friction.
Comments: The Fiamma is an interesting new shoe from Scarpa that is lightweight and sensitive. It is a steep-rock shoe that is equally at home on slabs and thin cracks. This shoe has much of the fit and feel of a slipper, with its thin

SCARPA



Rockmaster II



Fiamma

midsole and curved shape, but it has the added benefit of full lacing and an elastic band around the ankle to minimize foot slippage.

In use, the Fiamma did very well in pockets and on friction moves. However, on steep edges it felt sloppy and required a lot of foot strength. The sloppiness was due to a complicated and strangely configured lacing system that passes around the back of the heel. This setup makes the shoe time consuming to put on and nearly impossible to cinch up. Still, the Fiamma is an outstanding face-climbing shoe, and, like all Scarpa footwear, is well constructed and will withstand numerous resoles.

Summary: High-angle face and friction shoe for experienced climbers.

Rockmaster II

Price: \$142.50

Sizes: 34.5-45.5 in half sizes

Weight: 20.9 oz.

Upper: leather
Midsole: leather
Lining: Cambrelle
Rubber: Same as Fiamma
Comments: The Rockmaster has been a Scarpa mainstay for several years. This year we have the Rockmaster II, which is much the same as last year's model, but with an all-leather upper and a leather insole.

The Rockmaster II is for multi-use, and features a high-topped upper, rounded toe point, and comfortable fit. It has medium flexibility and is so durable that it can withstand several seasons of use. In cracks and on longer climbs, the Rockmaster II excels, but for precision face climbing it is too heavy and unwieldy. Climbers who want a long-lasting shoe that will work on all types of rock should give this model a thorough look.

Summary: Durable, general-purpose shoe with a good fit.

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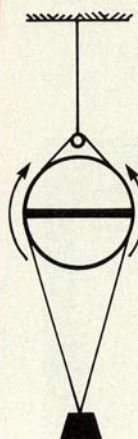
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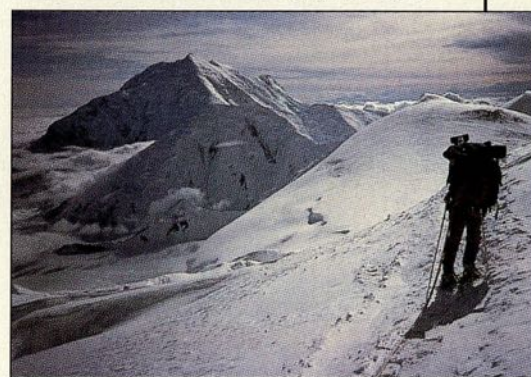
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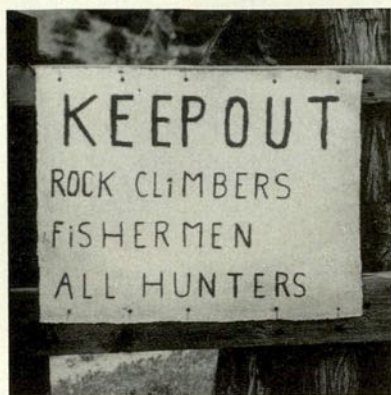
Peshastin Pinnacles to reopen

Peshastin Pinnacles, Washington, which have been closed since 1986, should be open for climbing again later this summer. Although the area's owners had offered to sell the property to climbers in the past, their asking price of \$400,000 was far more than anyone thought the area was worth.

Over the past several months, Donna McBain of the Trust for Public Lands (TPL), with the assistance of REI, Inc. and the AAC Access Fund, began renegotiating the purchase. In March 1990 the TPL and Peshastin's owners signed an option contract which gives the TPL six months to raise the \$135,000 purchase price.

Once the TPL acquires Peshastin, chances are good that the state of Washington will eventually take over the area as a state park. (In March, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Board voted to place Peshastin on its list for acquisition in the 1991-1993 fiscal years, although the state legislature must still allocate money for the purchase.)

Contributions towards this precedent-setting purchase are being sought, and tax-deductible donations may be sent to the AAC Access Fund, P.O. Box 67A25, Los Angeles, CA 90067



Climbing recognizes the importance of continued access to climbing areas. In order to emphasize our commitment to the subject, we have asked Stuart Pregnall, an AAC Access Committee member and frequent contributor to the magazine, to edit this column. Climbers with access concerns may contact Pregnall through Climbing, P.O. Box 339, Carbondale, CO 81623, or by writing him directly at 1304 C Street S.E., Washington, D.C.; (202) 338-6140.

AAC Access Fund takes off

The AAC Access Fund is off to a roaring start. Every dollar donated to the fund is used for direct acquisition of or improvements to climbing areas — none of the money is used for overhead.

The fund also provides a vehicle for accepting ownership of climbing areas (such as Peshastin Pinnacles in Washington), and in the past year has committed \$5000 towards a parking area for Mount Woodson, California; committed funds for a walk-in campground at Joshua Tree National Park, California; and purchased privately-owned climbing areas and ease-

ments at City of Rocks, Idaho.

Climbers around the country have responded to the fund. Rock climber Lynn Hill contributed her endorsement for the fund's first ad; the second features outdoor photographer Galen Rowell. *Climbing, Rock and Ice*, and *Summit* have all contributed space for these ads.

Last winter Randy Leavitt, working with Adventure 16, presented a series of five slide shows in southern California to benefit the Fund, raising nearly \$5000. A small fund-raising auction was also held in conjunction with the Third Annual Washington Mountain Film Festival.

Climbers with questions, ideas for projects, or ideas for fund raising (or funds to donate) should contact Randy Vogel, AAC Access Committee, c/o Ambrosi & Lavoie, 910 West 17th Street, Santa Ana, CA 92706; (714) 836-5116, or the AAC Access Fund, P.O. Box 67A25, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

Davis climbing wall threatened

The freeway climbing wall at the University of California/Davis has been threatened by California Department of Transportation. (CALTRANS). About a year and a half ago locals created a unique climbing resource along the Interstate 80 retaining walls, constructing over 1000 feet of traverses. During a routine inspection, CALTRANS noticed this effort — and promptly tried to stop use of the wall by removing some of the holds.

Davis locals have fought back. Fortunately for them, California has a receptive legal environment, as well as a history of accepting unique recreational activities.

Anybody interested in working on this problem should contact Frank Forencich, 2431 Rivendell Lane, Davis, CA 95616; 916-756-9220.

Park openings possible

Ralph Erenzo, the head of the City Climbers Club of New York, recently met with Ivan Vamos, Deputy Commissioner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

Erenzo reports that Vamos has agreed to open portions of both Taconic and Palisades state parks to climbing, and will consider opening part of Niagara Falls State Park as well. Vamos will also review a proposal to install a permanent artificial boulder at the State Art Park near Niagara.

5.10

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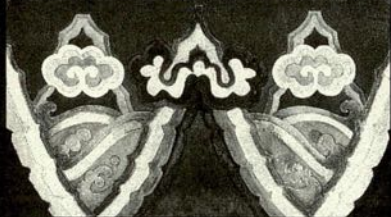
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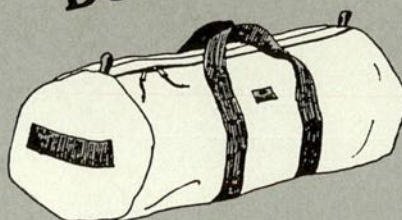
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It appears that the state will also permit climbing around Minnewaska Lake in Minnewaska State Park; however, most climbing in the area takes place elsewhere in the park. Vamos is interested in developing a climbing policy for these areas. The American Alpine Club Access Committee is working with New York land managers and has made other area management plans available to them. Until the acceptance of such a plan by the state, climbing at closed areas could hurt chances of working out a deal.

Finally, Vamos mentioned that the state is looking for properties to acquire as additions to the park system. He specifically mentioned climbing areas, including quarries, which could be developed and managed as "climbing parks." Erenzo said that he would attempt to identify other areas for the state to look at; anyone who knows of any should contact the Access Committee.

New York climbers interested in participating in any climbing management plans should contact Al Rubin, AAC Access Committee, 135 East Leverett Road, Amherst, MA 01002; (413) 549-5872, or Ralph Erenzo at (718) 326-1324.

Locals, officials at odds

Clifton Gorge, Ohio is a wonderful Midwestern climbing area with a 40-year climbing history. Long privately owned, the land was donated to the state in 1982.

At that time the Ohio Climbers Association, Inc. (OCAI) was formed to prevent the threatened closure of the area. Local climber Phil Ballinger spearheaded efforts to convince the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to permit continued climbing at Clifton Gorge. OCAI climbers also proposed to control erosion, install permanent anchors (to prevent damage to trees), and make other improvements to allay ODNR officials' concerns about adverse user impact.

Permission to make these improvements was denied, but climbing was nevertheless permitted for several years. In late 1989 OCAI member Mike Johnson tried to arrange a meeting with the director of the ODNR to discuss continued access to Clifton Gorge, but Johnson's calls were not returned. Then, this winter, the area was abruptly closed to climbing. The ODNR cited "... damage to rare and endangered plants, safety concerns, and general congestion" as reasons for the closure.

The Ohio climbers have responded by forming the Clifton Gorge Climbers Association (CGCA); they have scheduled a series of meetings with the ODNR to talk about the perceived "damage" caused by

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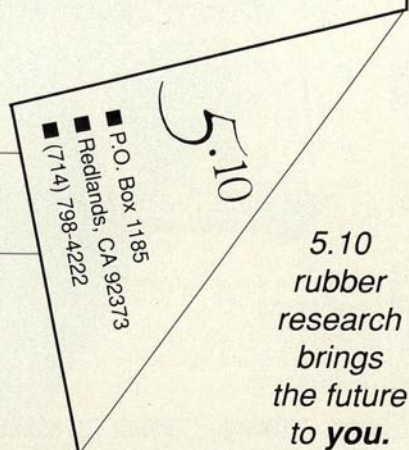
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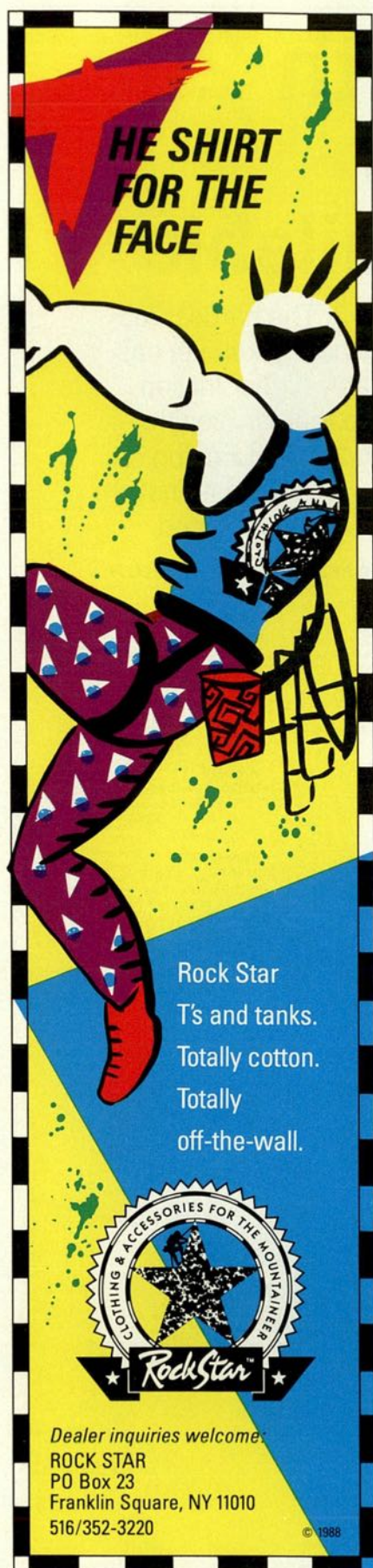
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climbers and to work out solutions for reopening the area. However, so far state officials are firm on the closure of Clifton Gorge to climbing.

Climbers interested in helping to save Clifton Gorge are urged to contact Mike Johnson, 1623 Providence, Springfield, OH 45503; (513) 390-1624, or Jeff Stafford, 1916 White River Boulevard, Muncie, IN 47303; (317) 288-4877. Also, the CGCA has a newsletter; for information, contact Scott Santangelo (513) 721-7254. In addition, letters addressing the closure of Clifton Gorge to climbing may be sent to Joseph Sommer, Director, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, 1980 Belcher, Building D, Columbus, OH 43224.

Tennessee tidbits

Eddie Whittemore reported several items of interest to climbers in Tennessee. Whittemore's second edition of *Heart of Stone* is due out shortly, and will discuss local access issues at length.

The popular Bee Rock, which sports some new high-quality face routes, is open until sunset only. Just down the road, Hidden Rock's old access road is now blocked by a locked gate; climbers must park at the Bee Rock lot and walk in via a new trail, which starts in the field across the road.

Rob Robinson's new Tennessee Wall guide will hopefully address the parking problems at that increasingly popular area. The Tennessee Wildlife Management Department holds control over the climbing area, and has little problem with its use by climbers except during well-posted hunting seasons. However, climbers now park on private land. Fortunately, the landowner hasn't complained about the situation.

The new guide will inevitably bring more climbers to the area. If no alternative to the present parking lot is found, the landowner may object, so please be discreet.

Skytop reminder

Shawangunks, New York climbers are reminded that Skytop, like the cliffs in neighboring Mohonk Preserve, is on private property. Skytop is also the location of the Mohonk Mountain House, a family oriented resort dedicated to providing tranquil and quality outdoor pursuits.

Recently some complaints have been made regarding the behavior of climbers towards the resort's guests. Climbers using this area should keep in mind that their actions could have an effect on continued climbing at Skytop. And don't be shy about informing others of this fact!

Also be reminded that climbing routes left of the Crevice will be closed on weekends beginning Memorial Day weekend and continuing through Columbus Day weekend.

Falcon update

The annual peregrine falcon project that has closed portions of the Central Endless Wall at New River Gorge, West Virginia during the hot months has been a success. Last year, sightings were reported of a sub-adult falcon (released in 1988) which had returned to the New. The project's coordinator, Craig Stihler of the West Virginia Wildlife Resources Division, has asked that climbers report any falcon sightings at the New River; call (304) 636-1767/636-6487, or contact any park ranger.

Other good news at the New involves the tremendous amount of cleanup work that has taken place, both by volunteers and the National Park Service. The Park Service is even rumored to be considering cleaning up the Junk Yard Wall's junk.. Climbers are encouraged to further these efforts by making the New River a trash-free area.



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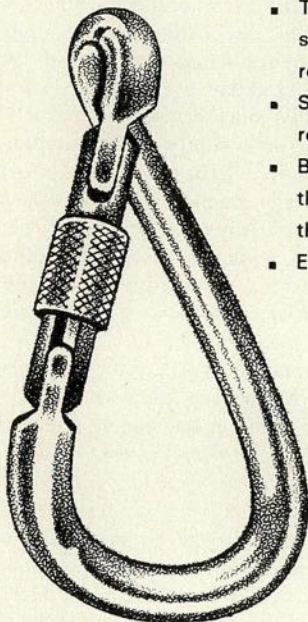
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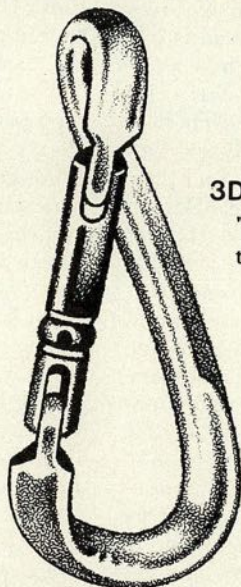
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Mountaineer: Thirty Years of Climbing on the World's Great Mountains

Chris Bonington
Sierra Club Books

San Francisco, California, 1990

Hardback (oversized), \$29.95, 192 pp.

Mountaineer: Thirty Years of Climbing on the World's Greatest Mountains, by the English climber Chris Bonington, is a wonderful collection of pictures and words documenting a lifetime of adventure, from the suburbs of London to Europe, Asia, and Antarctica. Along with his own chronology, Bonington draws readers into some of the history of his peers from a colorful, dramatic era:

Layton Kor, John Harlin, Tom Patey, Don Whillans, Nick Estcourt, Dougal Haston, Doug Scott, Hamish MacInnes, and Joe Brown, to name a few.

In the past 30 years, the name of Bonington has become nearly synonymous with mountaineering. Few have remained so involved with major mountaineering enterprises for such a long period of time. Many climbers know of Bonington through either his writing or photography. His first book, *I Chose to Climb*, published in 1966, has been the inspiration for many young,

developing mountain travelers. In many cases passages from his books have become touchstones of the climbing experience.

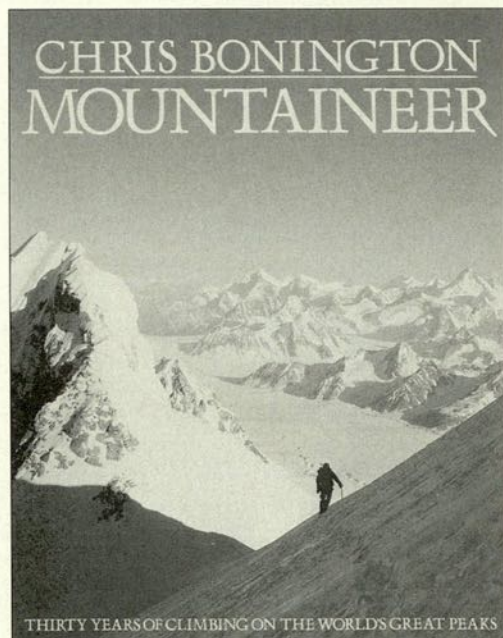
About 12 years ago, while climbing the *Great White Icicle* in Utah's Little Cottonwood Canyon, our party was hit by two fairly substantial spindrift avalanches. As the white sugary snow sifted into every chink of my clothing, the first thing that came to mind was Bonington's account, in his book *Everest the Hard Way*, of how Hamish MacInnes was buried in spindrift on the Southwest Face of Everest. Bonington's description had been so vivid that in reading I had practically felt it, and now my natural response was to "flash back" to it.

Mountaineer not only follows Bonington's

life, but records the evolution of mountaineering as a whole. It begins with accounts of climbs on local crags, and continues through the birth of extreme alpinism on Europe's big walls, and big siege-style Himalayan expeditions. The author finally concludes with accounts of small alpine-style climbs on large remote mountains in China and Tibet. And although this book does err on the side of assuming familiarity with Bonington's previous works, gone from it are the sometimes laborious expedition details that have appeared in *Annapurna South Face* and *Everest the Hard Way*.

The temptation to accuse the autobiographer of furthering his own cause is always there, but most readers will find Bonington to be very honest. He deals with tragedy as frankly as he does success, and the reader feels his sadness for lost friends in such passages as an account of the 1970 expedition to Annapurna South Face. The expedition had been nearly through and the mountain cleared when a serac wall collapsed onto Ian Clough, killing him. "I had enjoyed some of my best climbing days with Ian on the Grandes Jorasses and the Eiger," writes Bonington. "He was ... a selfless, easygoing, yet forceful climber, prepared to take on any task." He also takes a realistic overview of the mesh of emotions, ironies, and even frustration: "We had succeeded on a major route against all odds, faced by deteriorating weather and the growing fatigue of the team, and then, in the euphoria of our success, our joy was destroyed by the loss of our friend in the last moments of the expedition."

Bonington also conveys his love of and respect for the mountain environment and for the people of the remote ranges. He writes of how three different expeditions "covered widely differing terrain, people, and cultures, from the forested valleys of Kishtwar, with their wooden Swiss peasant-style houses, to the windowless mud-clad, flat-roofed villages, clinging above the arid gorges of the Braldu river. ... There were the Hindu villagers of Tapobam, just below the Rishi gorge, the gurgars who take their flocks each summer from the plains to the high mountain valleys of the Kishwar, the Shi'ite Baltis of Askole at the head of the Braldu Gorge, excitable, argumentative, yet warm-heart-





Wee Krause on the Breach Wall - Kilimanjaro Scott Fischer, photo.

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ed and hospitable."

The 400-plus photographs in this book come from Bonington's sumptuous collection of mountain slides, and serve two purposes. They bring the reader closer to the people and events of the text showing Tom Patey "testing" the author's brand-new helmet with a hammer (while it is on the author's head), or Hamish MacInnes hurt and dazed after being hit on the head by stonefall, or Don Whillans "suggesting to the Italians that they climb elsewhere." The photos also provide an exceptionally thorough record of the evolution of climbing technique and equipment.

The text is compelling — but the reader will have already been drawn in by the impact of the book's magnificent photographs. *Mountaineer* is a stunner to look at, a good read, and an accurate history of three decades of mountaineering.

— Mike Vause

The Trekking Peaks Of Nepal

Bill O'Connor

Cloudcap Press Seattle, Washington, 1989

Hardcover, \$24.95, 224 pp.

When I was in Kathmandu at the office of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, I remember thinking to myself, why hasn't someone written a guidebook about the trekking peaks? I had gone to the office looking for concise information and photos of the various peaks but left with only a general map of the country and an application form. Later, at home, trying to research details of these peaks, I was again frustrated by the slim coverage available in the climbing magazines and journals. Recently, I wrote about two of the popular Khumbu Himal trekking peaks, Island and Lobuche (see *Climbing* no. 112), with the aim of making more specific information available. Finally a guide is on the shelves that ably illuminates this terra incognita.

Bill O'Connor has produced a topnotch guide to Nepal's 18 official trekking peaks. For those not familiar with this nomenclature, don't be misled by the name. O'Connor proposes in his book the use of the term "non-expedition" peaks to differentiate these from the 104 expedition peaks, thus providing a more descriptive definition. The trekking peaks are lower in altitude, require only one hired Nepali staff, and permits for them cost very little — \$150 or \$300 — compared to the expedition summits. They range in elevation from Mardi Himal (5587m) to Mera Peak (6654). Some have relatively easy snow walks, while others are difficult by any route; all have potential for new routes.

The guide devotes a chapter to each peak or closely situated groups of peaks. The text begins with a historic introduc-



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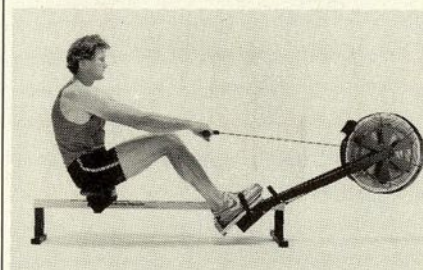
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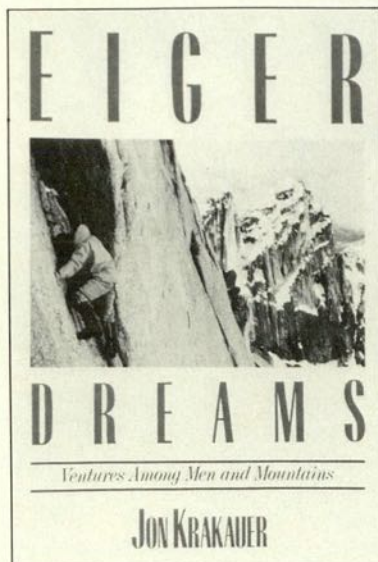
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△ David Quammen

tion followed by approach details to base camp, then information on the peak's standard route and other known routes. O'Connor often hints about unclimbed ridges and faces to fuel the reader's exploratory interest.

Good black and white photos with marked routes illustrate each peak, and basic but adequate sketch maps are also provided. These are extremely valuable for areas not covered by the Schneider topographic maps. The pitiful maps of the Annapurna region, the only ones available until recently, kept climbing of the trekking peaks there on a virtual reconnaissance level into the 1980s.

The book contains two sections of superb color photos; these certainly got me revved up for a Himalayan trip soon. Another extremely thoughtful inclusion are the Nepal Mountaineering Association's rules and regulations and an application form that can be photo-copied and submitted to the Ministry of Tourism. Pre-trip planning and logistics are also well covered.

In addition to the official trekking peaks, other lower spires and acclimatization scrambles are described. Before reading this guide I was skeptical about handing over even \$150 for the lower "Group B" peaks, which range from 5587 meters to 5928 meters; they seemed too low to be worth bothering with. Paldor (5928 meters) falls into that category and is the only trekking peak in the Ganesh Himal. The guide reveals that Paldor has four existing routes and numerous other climbs in the area; of permit-free summits at the 5500-meter to 4700-meter elevation, six are listed. I now realize that by applying for one \$150 peak and planning to fully explore the surrounding area, a very satisfying climbing holiday of a month or more can be made at little cost.

I noticed a few minor errors — incorrectly labeled routes on the photos and some photos that are out of place — but these are details that the reader can easily figure out. A well-conceived book, this is currently the best guide of its kind, and should prove invaluable to those planning a Nepal trek.

— Greg Horne

Why I Climb

Steve Gardiner
Stackpole Books

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1990
Hardback, \$12.95, 160 pp.

Why climb? For the thrill, or the peace. To find oneself, or to escape it. To reaffirm life, or to trick death. To reach the mountain's top, or, as the great British climber Chris Bonington says, to see what's on the other side.

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The answers are as different as the motives of each mortal who puts fingers to rock and crampons to ice. Some climb for work; some for fun; some to fulfill a wordless compulsion.

Steve Gardiner searches out such propelling motives in *Why I Climb*, a compilation of interviews with 29 top mountaineers, rambler, and rock jocks. What they have to say is sometimes moving, sometimes mundane, and sometimes hopelessly screwy. If there's a reason to all their rhymes, it lies between the lines.

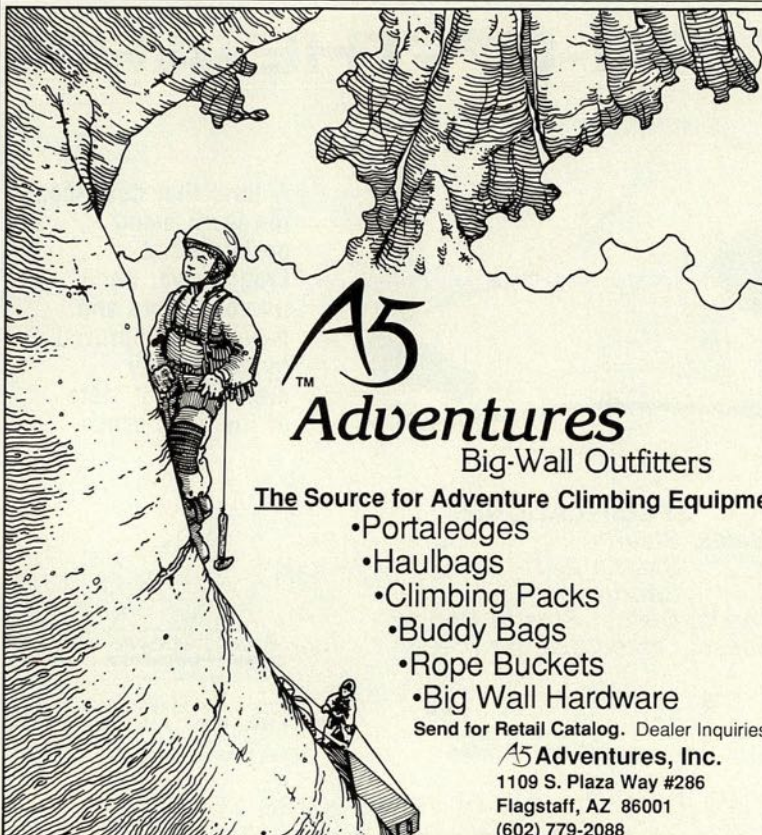
"Climbing is a foolish business," declaims Leigh Ortenburger, the 62-year-old sage of the Tetons and the Cordillera Blanca of Peru. "There is no earthly reason for doing it."

He's right, naturally. But there are reasons of the spirit, and they rise up out of this book, in its best passages, to shake the lapels and enliven the mind. None gives it words better than the late T.I.M. Lewis, climber and one-time editor of *Mountain* magazine: "I've read these psychological articles that say climbers don't get along with their fathers and have a death wish," he says. "I always felt this was wrong. Most of the climbers I know have no death wish at all. They have an enormous life wish."

That propelling "life wish" is the target of Gardiner's work, and the luckiest of his subjects sometimes hits it with an almost breathless rush of words. "We are born to climb," says Glenn Exum. "If you are up there and having a beautiful day and everything is clicking and a few cumulus clouds are sprinkled around and everyone is moving and handling the rope right and the air is clear and you can see forever, well, I think that is really almost an unmatchable experience. It is almost sacred."

More secular views are also expressed, by those who see climbing as a means to make their mark, to test their mettle, to find their place. "Climbing gives you a reason to be," says the Yosemite pioneer Scott Heywood. "You make conscious decisions to take a chance, and when you take that chance you take control of your life," Heywood says. "It's confronting your fears head-on ... fear of death, fear of falling; confronting things like laziness, inertia, and being totally responsible for yourself. ... It gives you a sense of self-worth."

Elsewhere, of course, we get significantly wilder notions. There's Patrick Callis, an early master of ice climbing, who calls climbing a genetic imperative — sort of a biological hangover from the primitive hunting and gathering days. "What you did then really meant something," he says. "I think we are still genetically selective for that type of existence."



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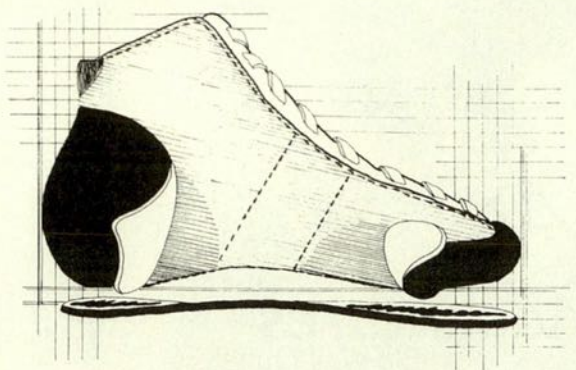


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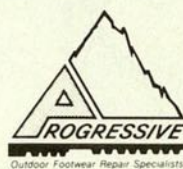
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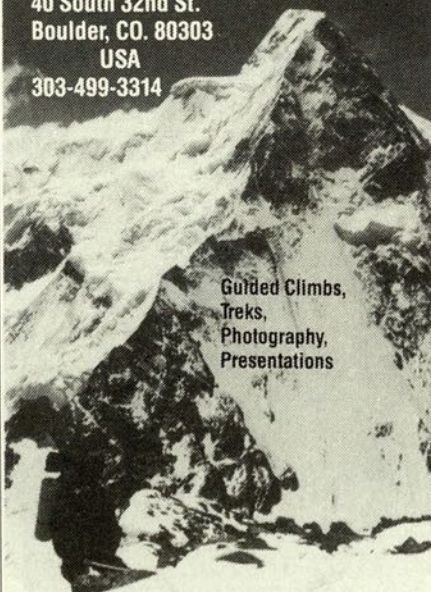
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The reader's response? "Lighten up, Jack," seems appropriate. Still, talk of death coasts through these pages, at times disquietingly. There's the Japanese extreme alpinist Naoe Sakashita: "Maybe in the future I will die if I continue to climb. I realize this now," he says. "I will continue to go. I think — my life is just one time ... climbing is best for me. I realize myself."

There's also Todd Skinner, who has climbed countless extreme routes, and soloed some 5.11s: "The climbing and the soloing aren't worth dying for," he says, "but they are worth risking dying for."

Skinner will find an argument in these pages, mainly from climbers older than his 31 years. Gardiner has interviewed a range of climbers from 29-year-old Lynn Hill to 88-year-old Finis Mitchell. Unfortunately, though, many great climbers are absent — Reinhold Messner, John Roskelley, and many more come to mind — and the selection is overweighted with Americans.

There are other problems with the work. Gardiner's narrative can be flat and unimaginative; far too often he dishes out porridge like this: "For [Jeff] Lowe, making a successful climb alone is a special experience." And the author exercises a neutrality so abject he ends up endorsing his subject's occasional outrages. We learn that Sakashita has many friends in the States: "This has given him an insight into the American people." In one such so-called insight, Sakashita says: "Maybe American people are scared of loose rock and bad weather."

We need not hold this too much against Sakashita. It is a difficult thing to speak coherently about abstract thoughts, and that is this book's greatest shortcoming. *Why I Climb* too often reads like "What I Climbed," its subjects reverting to their war stories — with the acquiescence of the author — rather than tackling the meatier fare we're promised.

Persevere, though, and the effort pays in thoughts like those of Jim Bridwell. "Climbing is an art form," he says. "It is like gymnastics, dancing, painting — you have the rock as a canvas and you express your idea in the route. ... It's a chance to do something new and creative and beautiful."

— Gary Langer

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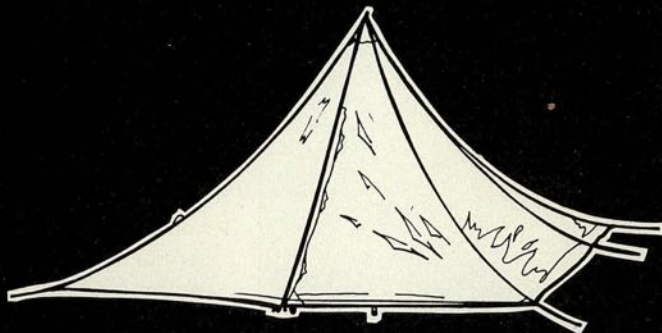
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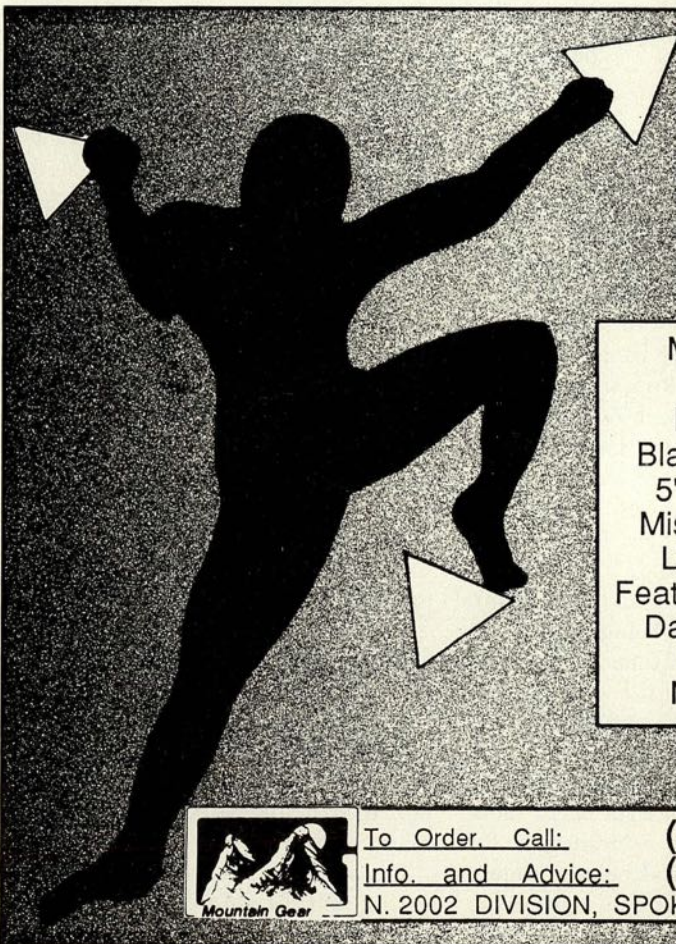
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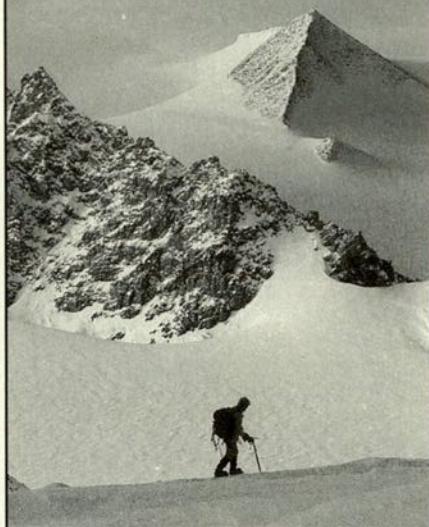


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A Turn of the Cards

Continued from page 76

or flies failed, somebody was bound to die from exposure.

In the meantime, unbeknownst to us, a rescue effort was underway down below. In the deepening snow Werner Braun, Dan McDivet, Sue Bonovich, and Tracy Dorton had hiked up the five miles to Lost Lake, from which they could get the Valley's closest view of the South Face, and were trying to communicate with us through a bullhorn.

In one of the infrequent lulls in the storm, we suddenly became alert, hearing muffled noise. Instinctively we broke out in loud shouts to expose our position. We were able to distinguish from below, "Do you need a rescue?" We looked at each other, quickly decided that we were in dire straits, and yelled in unison for help until we were hoarse. We couldn't see who we were calling to.

Like turtles, we then retracted back into our shelters. As the hours passed, the initial hope and excitement of possible help dwindled and was replaced by renewed concentration on survival. We knew the top of Half Dome would be inaccessible: the hiking-route cables were buried and frozen over, and the storm would prohibit climbing to the top. The uncertainty of our fate made our exhausting, freezing misery that much harder. Right now, the flames of hell didn't seem so bad.

Inside my ledge, I made constant efforts to keep from being completely buried. Huge water-saturated snow piles would rise in moments; I would use all my strength to push them off one end of the ledge, then notice that at the other end snow was piling up fast. A minute of inactivity and the weight of the snow would begin to crush me, tearing the fly apart at the seams, and become almost too heavy to push off. This went on for hours. Because of the angle of the wall

above, and the distance in which the snow could accumulate and slide down, the snow was essentially coming down at the rate of several feet per minute.

Towards dusk, exhausted by my vigilant efforts, I dozed off, though I knew myself to be on the verge of hypothermia. It was pleasant. But then, suddenly, I was in a boxing ring, packed full of every variety of boxer and pro wrestler imaginable, each mistaking me for his training bag before a big fight. One of them was trying

to crunch my skull when I snapped awake. Steve was stepping on my head.

Mike and Steve, seeing that my ledge had become completely buried by snow, had yelled for me with no response and thought maybe that I had died. Unable to see even where my ledge hung, Steve had kicked steps in the frozen layer of snow and ice across the

... I was in a boxing ring, packed full of every variety of boxer and pro wrestler imaginable, each mistaking me for his training bag before a big fight. One of them was trying to crunch my skull when I snapped awake. Steve was stepping on my head.

near-vertical wall to investigate. In my stupor and because of the dampening effect of the thick snow cover, no sounds had penetrated — only his foot. "Glad to see you're all right, old buddy," he said before returning to his and Mike's hovel.

It was dusk, but sleep, I realized, would be fatal. I tried to keep my mind busy. I thought about new portaledge designs, and shook my head, legs, and hands rapidly for warmth in my cramped quarters, by now reduced to the size of a small doghouse. In sets of 100, I counted to 22,000, twitching with each count.

Eventually I told myself that many hours must have passed since darkness fell. I looked at my watch. It was 10 p.m.

Steve and Mike, with the marginal benefit of ensolite and double boots, sat on a single portaledge, one fly draped over their heads, beating on each other for warmth and to prevent sleep.

It occurred to me that we were experiencing some of the worst storm conditions to be found anywhere. If the route

was steeper, things might have been OK. If the winds weren't accelerated by Little Yosemite Valley's venturi effect, things wouldn't have been so bad. But mostly, if the temperatures had remained either above or below freezing, we would have been sitting pretty — relatively — either in a wet rainstorm or a blizzard.

Sometime in the early hours of Sunday morning, the storm faded and the stars appeared. The absence of the deafening wind seemed strange and eerie. Steve and Mike were the first to broach the potent silence, and we briefly discussed first-light retreat plans. It soon became apparent that the clearing storm was a mixed blessing: radiation heat loss into the clear sky sucked the last bit of heat from our bodies. The most bitter of bitter cold prevailed. We struggled through each remaining moment of a long night.

In the morning, the sun finally appeared. The comparative warmth stunned us into passiveness for a while. We basked in the above-freezing temperatures and procrastinated for a few blissful moments. But we could see another storm approaching in the distance, so we started hacking out the ropes and made ready for what would be a horrendous descent. We were all functioning slowly and clumsily, but thought we could probably make it down alive. Not a bit of rock was visible; the entire wall was covered with a four-inch layer of ice.

Then came the avalanches. As the sun warmed the loosely attached stratum, hundreds of pounds of softball-size chunks of ice began to crash down on us. Mike and Steve had helmets, while I stuffed soggy socks in my Peruvian hat for protection. Under one barrage, Mike suddenly plummeted several feet, when the bolt supporting his ledge popped. Luckily, the anchors at each side held. From above Steve and I stared for a few moments at a wide-eyed Mike, still standing upright in his ledge. Wordlessly, except for a few "Hoo-mans," we resumed our descent preparations.

The ropes were still only partially cut out of the ice when we heard it: the whop-whop-whop of a helicopter. An emotional wave swept through us. In silent disbelief, we watched the chopper pass and fly almost out of sight. "I sure hope that's for us," I thought. Then it returned, and amidst continued

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avalanches, locked into place hovering 100 feet above us. An angel in a pilot's suit lowered out — Petty Officer Davis from the nearby LeMoore Naval Air Station. We were saved.

Mike volunteered for the first ride, and was hooped under his armpits with a "horse collar" and lifted off. Steve and I happily watched Mike and Officer Davis dangle from the helicopter as it disappeared down the valley. We tossed some haulbags and sleeping bags and endured more avalanches.

Eventually the helicopter returned, picked up Steve, and took off again. Ten years ago, helicopters that could lock into a stationary flight pattern so close to a cliff didn't exist. Despite technological advances, I was amazed at the pilot's ability to counter every gust of wind. The spinning rotor blades sometimes came within a few yards of the cliff. The wind was whipping up again, and it seemed like the pilot had a more difficult time locking in place for Steve's hoist. Fearing the worst, I imagined being stranded on the wall alone, bivy gear tossed.

After what seemed like ages, the helicopter returned, but it took a couple of tries for the pilot to lock into place. Officer Davis, dangling 100 feet below the machine, darted to and fro just out of my reach, signaling to the pilot for positioning. Then, with a thumb's up signal to the pilot, he stopped right in front of me. I grabbed his outstretched hand, slipped into the "horse collar," unclipped from the belay, and went for the ride of my life.

As we flew towards the valley, dazed by the view, I didn't notice that we were being winched up. Unexpectedly, the helicopter was directly above us, and I clambered into the cabin.

A huge crowd and several other helicopters greeted us in the Ahwahnee Meadow. The extent of the rescue effort astounded me, with over 30 people involved (many of whom had hiked all night in waist-deep snow and were still near the base of the Half Dome cables), and four helicopters ready to

go. A sudden feeling of overwhelming gratitude intoxicated me. The LeMoore Station and the Yosemite Rescue Team had coordinated the effort admirably, and it was thanks to them that we were all alive.

I stepped out of the helicopter and my legs buckled; I hadn't walked for a week. I staggered towards my friends, Jim and Tory, who whisked me away (barely escaping the pouncing paramedics) and

took care of me in Jim's warm house, where I shivered uncontrollably for several hours. Meanwhile, over at the Yosemite Clinic, Mike was being poked and prodded, given IVs and warm oxygen, and a splint for his finger.

At Jim's, I mindlessly leafed through the Sunday newspaper. I became entranced by a particular photo in it, nothing registering at first. Then I realized I was looking at a picture of Warren Harding in 1970 standing on The Ledge. He

seemed to be smiling at me. Coincidentally, the newspaper had done a feature article about the South Face the same day we were fighting for our lives on it.

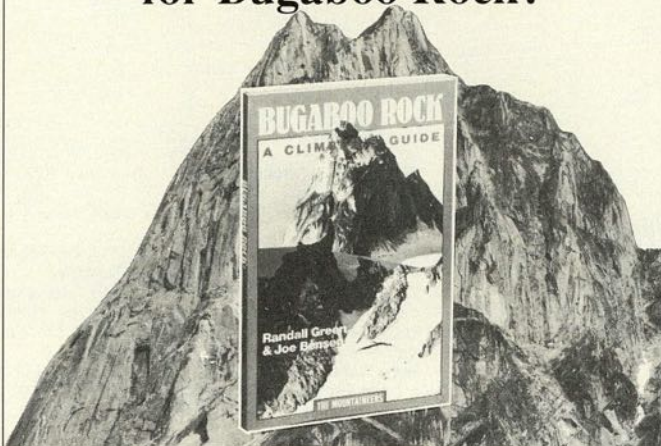
Later that evening, an unidentified feeling gnawed inside of me. The transition from one reality to another made both seem unreal. I realized that all my instincts insisted that I return to a soaked sleeping bag, shiver, stay awake, and generally fight for my life. It seemed we had been up on Half Dome for a lifetime, and I had developed a routine for staying alive that I could not shake.

Instead, I hobbled back to my dry VW van, pulled out a dry sleeping bag, cranked up the propane heater, and passed out — not to stand in etriers on a big wall again until the fall of 1989.

During his epic-induced, big-wall hiatus, John Middendorf has focused on getting his climbing supply business, A5 Adventures, off the ground. He and his skilled staff also do research and development of big-wall and rock climbing gear. Last fall, after regaining his "psyche," Middendorf and Valley local Walt Shipley completed a difficult new route on the Northwest Face of Half Dome, Kali Yuga (VI 5.10 A4).

*... he stopped
right in front of
me. I grabbed his
outstretched
hand, slipped
into the "horse
collar," unclipped
from the belay,
and went for the
ride of my life.*

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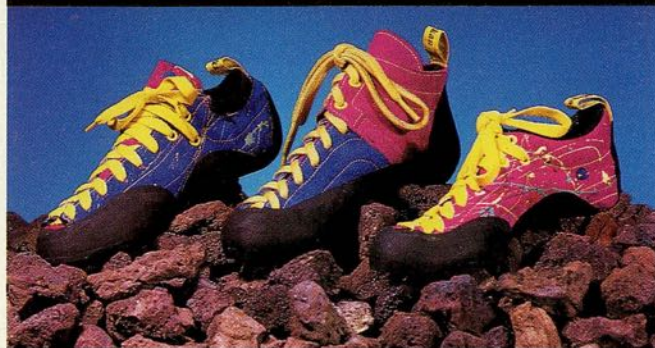
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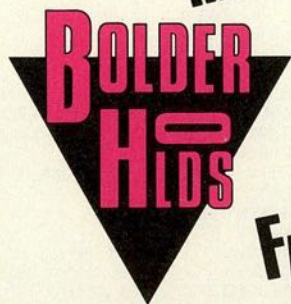
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Approximately 10 miles north of Bishop on Highway 395, go east on Gorge Road, located at the base of the Sherwin Grade. Continue 3/4 of a mile on Gorge Road to a T, go left for approximately three miles to the southern entrance and take the first paved road on the right. Park before the gate and follow the paved road either on foot or bicycle down to the bottom. For the northern entrance go three miles beyond the south entrance and park just before another gate on a

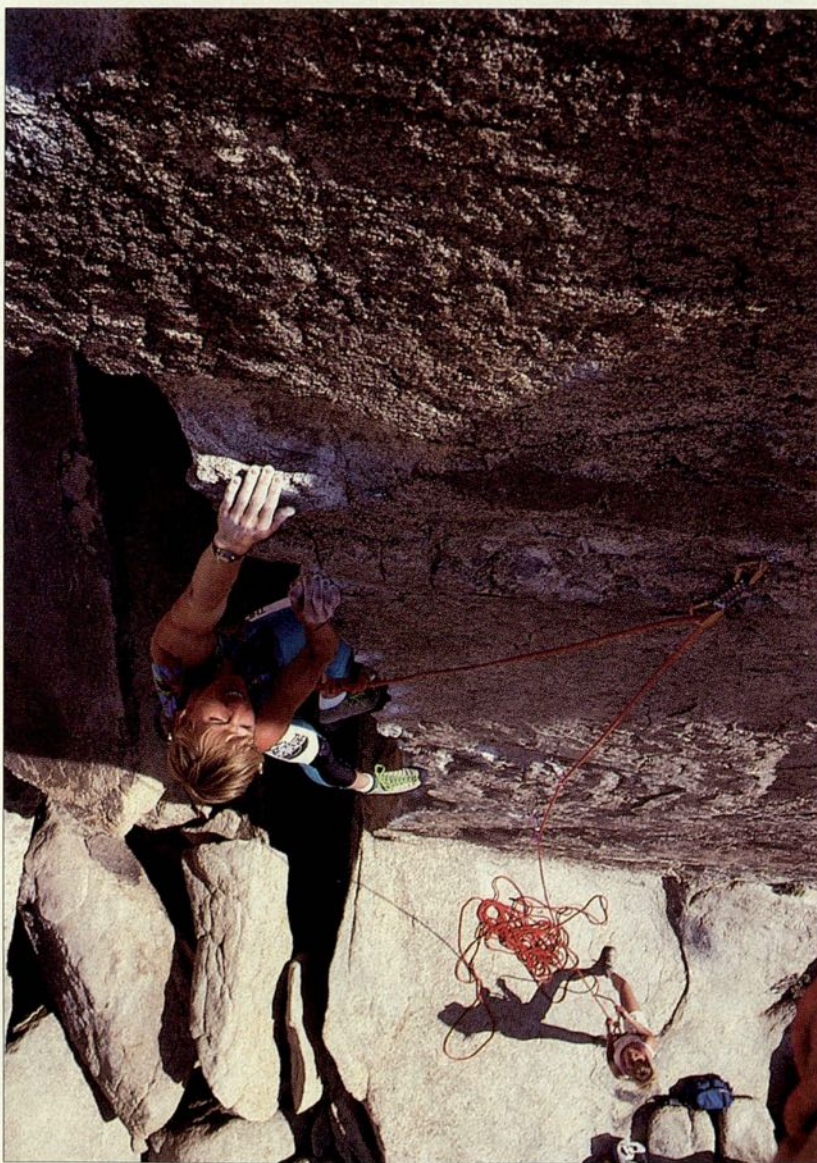


Photo: Ron Wolfe

Troy Mayr on *Split Personality* (5.11c), Joshua Tree, California.

paved road going right into the canyon. Walk about 1/4 mile down the road, then down a talus slope just before the road turns. Follow a broken trail straight down to the dihedrals.

Routes are listed from south to north. All routes have 2-bolt anchors:

20/20 (5.10a) Face on 1st prominent W-facing buttress, 1/2 mile before Gray Area. 4 bolts. (FA: Sondra Utterback, Tom Herbert, 1/90.)

Michelin Man (5.10b) Face around corner from 20/20. 4 bolts. (FA: Bill McChesney, 2/90.)

Sneak Preview (5.10a) Short arete at far R side of Gray Area. 3 bolts. (FA: Utterback, Herbert, 1/90.)

Coming Attractions (5.8) Slab L of Sneak Preview. 7 bolts. (FA: Dave Focardi, Mike Robinson, Grant Schumacher.)

The Big Screen (5.10c) Obvious S face on Big Tower where road flattens out. 5 bolts. (FA: Bruce Pottenger, Jeff Neer, 10/89.)

Exit Stage Left (5.10a) Shares 1st 2 bolts of Big Screen. L on arete for 2 more bolts. (FA: Pottenger, Neer, 3/90.)

Bust a Move (5.12b) Shares last 2 bolts of Exit Stage Left. 3 bolts over roof. (FA: Herbert, Tom Kleinfelter, Sean Greer, 3/90.)

Held Over (5.10c) N side of Big Tower, start off pedestal. 6 bolts. (FA: Greer, Focardi, 12/89.)

Naked Gun (5.11a) Face on R side of short buttress, N of Big Tower. 2 bolts. (FA: Pottenger, Neer, 11/89.)

Shell of a Man (5.9) Face L of Naked Gun. 3 bolts. (FA: Pottenger, Neer, 3/90.)

Whirlpool (5.10d) Face L of Bot's Folly. 4 bolts. (FA: Pottenger, Neer, Kleinfelter, Greer, 3/90.)

Flash or Splash (5.10b) Broken face L of Whirlpool. 3 bolts. (FA: Kleinfelter, Greer, 3/90.)

Eleven D Face (5.11d) 50' L of Bob and Eric Crack. 5.9 loose crack to gold streak w/3 bolts. (FA: Dave Turner, Stanley Parker.)

Zig Zag (5.10a) 100' L of Eleven D Face. Hand crack in dihedral. (FA: Sue Farley, Charlie Johnson.)

Look Out Below (5.11a) Face to thin crack in dihedral. 4 bolts. (FA: Johnson, Farley.)

Short Cake (5.11d) Short S-facing buttress 30' L of Death by Mudhen. 4 bolts. (FA: Herbert, 1/90.)

Membership Has Its Privileges (5.11a) 50' L of Short Cake. 5-bolt face. (FA: Greer, Neer, Pottenger, 2/90.)

Subdivisions (5.10c) 10' L of Membership Has Its Privileges. 4 bolts. (FA: Pottenger, Neer, 1/90.)

Land Before Time (5.9) Prominent tower on E side of gorge behind the old power house. Face through horizontal. 5 bolts. #3 Friend. (FA: Pottenger, Neer, 12/89.)

Pitstop (5.11d/5.12a) W face of gorge across from power house, 20' off road. 6 bolts. (FA: Herbert, Greer, 1/90.)

Late for Work (5.10a) R of Pitstop. Crack to face. 2 bolts. Pro to 3.5. (FA: Focardi, Greer.)

Boating Prohibited (5.10b) 150yds. L of Land Before Time. Obvious face, 6 bolts. (FA: Greer, Focardi.)

If I Told You, I'd Have to Kill You (5.11a) S side of parking lot. Small roof. 5 bolts. (FA: Pottenger, Neer, 1/90.)

Thing That Wouldn't Leave (5.12d) Vertical face, center of parking lot. 8 bolts. (FA: Steve Schneider, 3/90.)

Cement Overshoes (5.12b) Face on S side of Penstock Rock. Face w/7 bolts. (FA: Schneider, 1/90.)

D.W.P. (5.11c) L arete on Penstock Rock. 8 bolts. Direct start 5.11d. (FA: Schneider, 1/90.)

Flash Flood (5.12b) Face at center of Penstock Rock. Face w/8 bolts. (FA: Schneider, 2/90.)

Pumping Ground Water (5.11d) R of Flash Flood. Finger crack to arete. 8 bolts. (FA: Bill Russel, 2/90.)

Save Mono Lake (5.11d) Arete R of Pumping Ground Water. 8 bolts. #3 Friend. (FA: Schneider.)

Funky Cole Patina (5.11d) Face above, R of Penstock Rock. 6 bolts. (FA: Schneider, Scott Cole, 2/90.)

Penstock Slab (5.10d) Short slab R of Penstock Rock. 3 bolts. (FA: Pottenger, Neer, 12/89.)

Stress Puppet (5.11a) 10' R of Penstock Slab. Roof to slab w/3 bolts. (FA: Cole, Mike Strassman, 2/90.)

Humjob (5.10b) Buttress on E side of gorge across from new power plant. R side. 4 bolts. Pro to 1". (FA: Cole, Errett Allen.)

Approach Pitch (5.10b) Face to slab L of Humjob. 3 bolts. Pro to 1.5. (FA: Schneider, Cole.)

Jeff's Route (5.10a) Face L of Approach Pitch. 3 bolts. Pro to 1.5. (FA: Jeff Schone.)

Electric Laundryland (5.10a) Dihedral to slab on L side of buttress. 2 bolts. Pro to 2". (FA: Unknown.)

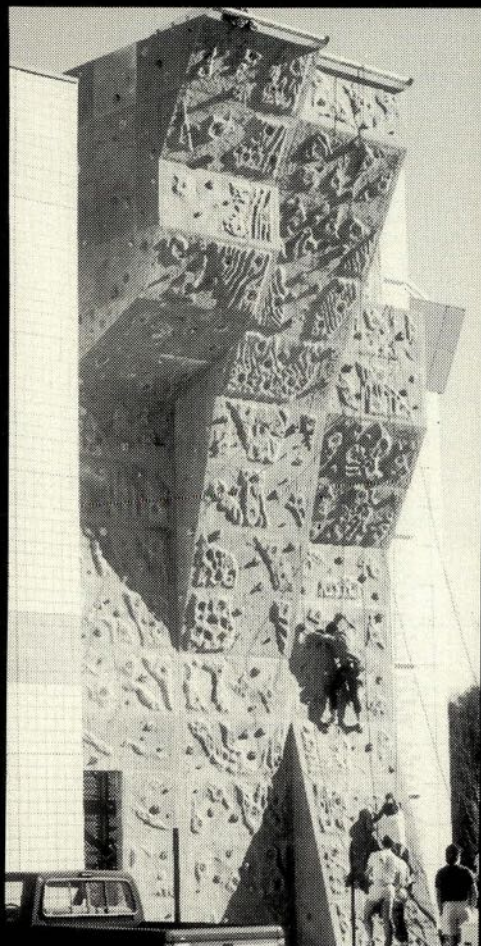
Go Back Where You Came From (5.12a) Thin slab above Electric Laundryland. 5 bolts. (FA: Schneider, Herbert, 1/90.)

Pinch it, Pull it, Pimp it (5.12a) Severely overhanging boulder N of new power plant. 2 bolts. (FA: Schneider.)

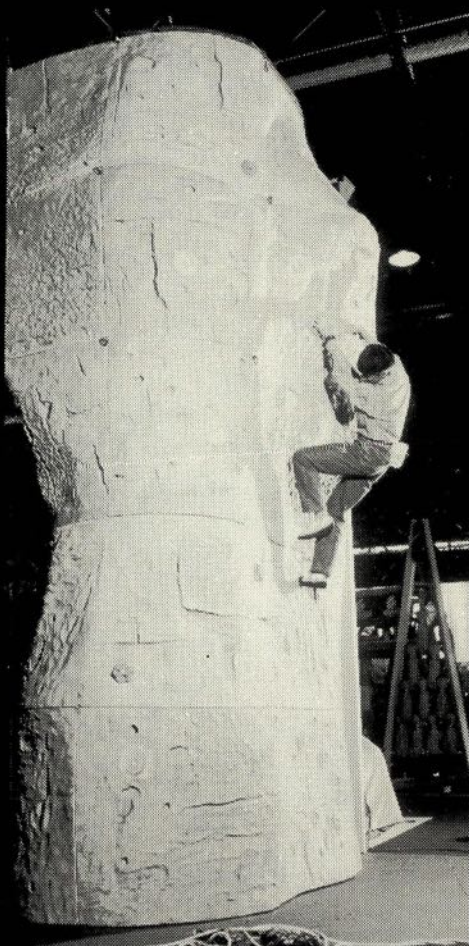
Shout Around (5.11d) Overhanging face on big boulder above, N of Pinch it, Pull it, Pimp it. 3 bolts. (FA: Schneider, 1/90.)

Idol Maker (5.12a) Short overhanging face on front of boulder in front of Shout Around. 3 bolts. (FA: Schneider.)

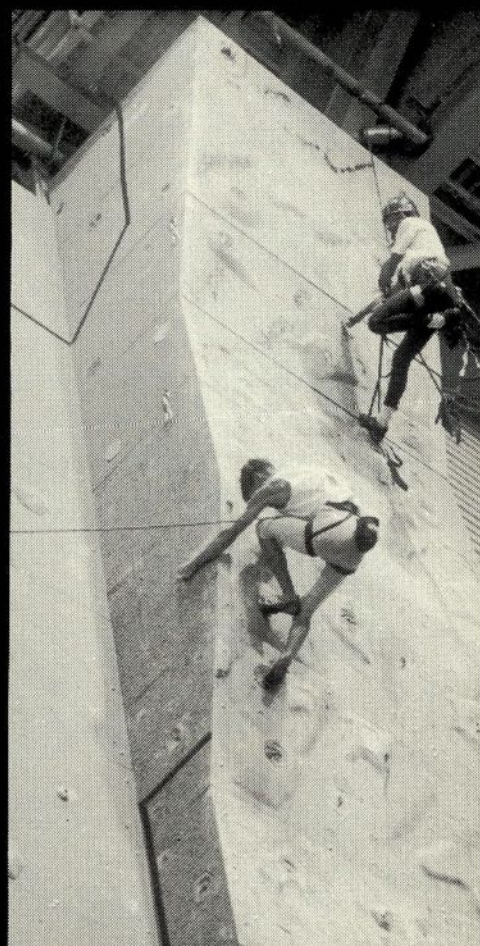
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Bloody Pawprints (5.12a) Face 40' R of Hip Pockets. 6 bolts. (FA: McChesney, Cole.)

Rim Job (5.11b) Long pocketed face L of Hip Pockets. 8 bolts. TCUs. (FA: Schneider, Strassman.)

Love Stinks (5.11a) L of Rim Job. 2-rope rappel. 11 bolts. 2 #1 Friends. (FA: Gary Slate, Joe Rousek, Tony Puppo, 2/90.)

Hard Copy (5.12a) Overhanging face L of George Bush. 5 bolts. (FA: Herbert, 11/89.)

Embrace This (5.12a) Arete L of Hard Copy. 6 bolts. #3 Friend. (FA: Herbert.)

Conquistadors Without Swords (5.13) Overhanging face R of Malibu. 10 bolts. 8D. (FA: Herbert.)

Schneider's 11d (5.11d) Face R of Bachar's 12. 5 bolts. (FA: Schneider.)

Fresh Squeezed (5.11c) Vertical arete R of Orange Peel. 4 bolts. (FA: Herbert, Pottenger.)

Pop Tart (5.11b) Obvious short arete 100' L of One Holer. 4 bolts. (FA: Herbert, TM Herbert, Puppo, Utterback, 11/89.)

Crybaby (5.12c) Overhanging seam on R wall of Faulty Tower. 7 bolts. (FA: Herbert, 11/89.)

Desire (5.13a/b) Overhanging thin face R of Crybaby. 4 bolts. Stick-clip 1st bolt. (FA: Herbert, 11/89.)

Crash Landing (5.10c) Arete R of Desire. 4 bolts. (FA: Herbert, Puppo, 11/89.)

Start Me Up (5.10c) Face around corner from Scrotal Hot-pack. 4 bolts. (FA: Rousek, Puppo.)

Flush Twice (5.11a) Overhanging face L of Start Me Up. 4 bolts. (FA: McChesney, Cole, 2/90.)

Tiananmen Square (5.10c) Face joining anchors of Beijing. 3 bolts. (FA: Herbert, Utterback, Greer.)

Sendero Luminoso (5.10d) Face R of Cobra. 8 bolts. 100'. (FA: Rousek.)

Psmead (5.11c) Vertical face 40' L of Cobra. 8 bolts. (FA: Jay Decker, McChesney, 3/90.)

Fingertip Ledge of Contentment (5.10b) Crack to face R of Berlin Wall. 6 bolts. (FA: Focardi, Greer.)

Brandenburg Gate (5.8) Finger crack R of Precious Route. Pro to 2". (FA: Focardi.)

Pump up the Trust Fund (5.11b/c) Face L of Cobbler's Delight. 4 bolts. (FA: Kleinfelter.)

Excelsior (5.12d) Face 100yds. R of Cobbler's Delight. 10 bolts. (FA: Herbert, 3/90.)

Bird of Prey (5.11d) Obvious arete 40' R of Excelsior. 8 bolts. (FA: Rousek, Puppo, 3/90.)

Missing Link (5.11b) Face R of Destination Oblivion. 8 bolts. (FA: Mark Blanchard, Phil Green.)

Photon Torpedo (5.10d) Face in center of Dillithium Crystal. 5 bolts.

No Known Cure (5.11b) Face R of Malala Gorge. 4 bolts. (FA: Greer, Focardi.)

Hacking and Spitting (5.12a) Face between No Known Cure and Pretty in Pink. 8 bolts. (FA: Cole, 2/90.)

Please Baby, Baby, Please (5.12b) Dihedral to face between The Upper and Lower Elbow Rooms. 10 bolts. (FA: Schneider.)

Crumb Doughnut (5.10d) Face 50' R of Maltese Flamingo. 6 bolts. (FA: Rousek, Puppo.)

Shadow Catcher (5.7) Face L of Chuckwalla Wall. 3 bolts. (FA: Green, Cindy Phares.)

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Stargazer (5.10b) Comic Book. Obvious arete 100yds. SW of and facing Bottle in Front of Me. 3 bolts. (FA: Ron Wolff, Troy Mayr.)

Moonshadow (5.12c) Arete L of La Cholla. (FA: Mayr, Rob Mulligan.)

The Iconoclast (5.13a/b) Arete R of Raging Bull Dike. (FA: Mayr.)

Illusions (5.13a/b) 2nd pitch of Mamunia. (FA: Mayr, Mulligan.)

Cosmic Trigger (5.13a/b) Desert Queen Mine. W face of Fraggle Rock. (FA: Mayr.)

I Have the Touch (5.12c/d) Desert Queen Mine. W face of Fraggle Rock. (FA: Mayr, Dave Robinson.)

Sensory Deprivation (5.12b) Desert Queen Mine. Obvious N-facing huecoed wall R of I Have the Touch and Cosmic Trigger. (FA: Mayr.)

Top Guns (5.11a) Punk Rock. On same formation and directly opposite Bombs Over Libya. (FA: Mayr, Steve Anderson.)

Cactus Dog (5.9) Pea Brain. L of Joan Jetson. (FA: Mayr, Anderson, Beth Anderson, Kelley Penix.)

Garden Angel (5.10a) 3 bolts L of Lazy Days. (FA: Charles Cole, Mayr, Penix.)

Wish You Were Here (5.11b) Soviet Block. (FA: Mayr, Curt Lyons.)

Do In Life (5.10a) R of Casual. 3 bolts. (FA: Mayr, Penix, Anderson, Bob Wolldorp.)

Pinnacle Aerobics (5.11b) Back of Saddle Rocks. (FA: Mayr, Penix, Stanley Roy.)

Frisco Knight (5.10b tr) The Blob. Face between Smear Tactics and Berkeley Dyke. (FA: Alan Nelson, 11/89.)

Too Old to Bolt (5.10b tr) Echo Rock. Face between Team Slug and Too Bold to Bolt. (FA: Nelson, 11/89.)

Funny Money (5.8+) Snickers. Crack L of Rock Shark. (FA: Nelson? 12/89.)

Extra Chunky (5.10b) Snickers. Face L of Grain Death. 2 bolts. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Grain Death (5.9) Snickers. Handcrack L of Toxic Wasteland.

(FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Ten Years After (5.9) Hunk Rock. OW/chimney R of Death of a Decade. (FA: Nelson, 1/90.)

Into the Black (5.8) Junk Clump. R-slanting crack L of Big Brother. (FA: Nelson, 1/90.)

Ronnie and Clyde (5.11b tr) Cat Pinnacle. SW arete. Bolt on top. (FA: Nelson, 1/90.)

Big, Dumb, and Ugly (5.7) Desert Queen Dome. Chimney L of Get the Balance Right. (FA: Nelson, 1/90.)

Dweeb (5.7) Desert Queen Dome. Corner L of Face Race. (FA: Nelson, 1/90.)

Tweedledee (5.7) Loveland - Heartbreak Gulch (SW of Vector Rock, N of Tiger Rocks). R of 2 handcracks on S wall at W end. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Tweedledum (5.7) Heartbreak Gulch. Handcrack L of Tweedledee. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Spare Me a Dime (5.10a) Heartbreak Gulch. Layback seam w/bolt on N wall 100' E of Tweedledum. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Rant (5.10a) Heartbreak Gulch. Handcrack R of Spare Me a Dime. End on Rave. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Rave (5.10b) Heartbreak Gulch. Hand/finger crack R of Rant. Move R, over bulge at top. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Main Squeeze (5.7) Heartbreak Gulch. Squeeze chimney R of Rave. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

In 'n' Out Burger (5.9) Heartbreak Gulch. Squeeze R of Main Squeeze to arete w/bolt. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Streets of Gold (5.4) Heartbreak Gulch. Gold, R-slanting corner on S wall, 100' E of Rant. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Broadway (5.6) Heartbreak Gulch. Face L of Easy Street. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Easy Street (5.3) Heartbreak Gulch. 150' E of Rant. R side of flake to fingercrack on slab on N side. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Skid Row (5.8) Heartbreak Gulch. Face between Easy Street and Freeway Jam. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Freeway Jam (5.7) Heartbreak Gulch. R-slanting crack R of Easy Street. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Cul de sac (5.10a) Heartbreak Gulch. Fingercrack R of Freeway Jam. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

Freckleface (5.11a) Stirrup Rock. Bolt added to protect original start. (FA: Nelson, 12/89.)

References.

Joshua Tree Rock Climbing Guide, by Randy Vogel, 1986; Joshua Tree Supplement, by Randy Vogel and Alan Bartlett, 1989; Climbing nos. 112, 113.

Events

June 9-10, College Park, Maryland
Springstone '90 Climbing Competition.
 Second annual event. Men and women's recreational and elite divisions. For application and information, send SASE to Recreational Equipment, Inc., 9801 Rhode Island Ave., College Park, MD 20740. Application deadline May 20.

July 4-8, Snowbird, Utah
Danskin U.S. Team
Sport Climbing Championships.
 Contact LoweCo, 2400 Industrial Lane, Suite 1510, Broomfield, CO 80020; (303) 466-9119.

October 1-5, Joshua Tree, California
Sixth Annual Technical Rescue Seminar.
 Morning lectures and demonstrations; afternoon hands-on practice. Technical equipment, meals provided. For more information contact The American Search and Rescue Institute, Inc., P.O. Box 2399, Yucca Valley, California, 92286; (619) 228-9155.

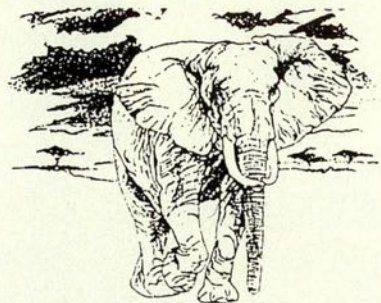
November 5-9, Centerville, Utah
International Rope Science Workshop.
 Specialized inquiry into engineering, physics, and testing of rope systems. Papers, panel discussions, demonstrations. Open to people with test experience or interest in the field. Immediately precedes North American Technical

Rescue Symposium, to be held November 8-11. Contact: IRSW '90, Arnor Larson, Research Section, British Columbia Council of Technical Rescue, Box 339, Invermere, B.C., Canada V0A 1K0.

December 1, Wakefield, England
4th Festival of Mountaineering Literature.
 To be held at Bretton Hall College. Chris Bonington, keynote speaker; also debates, humor, Boardman/Tasker Award, exhibitions, rare books. Contact Terry Gifford, Bretton Hall College, Wakefield, W. Yorkshire, WF4 4LG, England, (0924) 830261. Fax: (0924) 830521.

UIAA World Cup Schedule
 7/26-29 Madonna di Campiglio, Italy
 8/17-19 Berkeley, California
 8/24-26 (date to be confirmed) Boulder, Colorado
 10/10-14 (location to be determined) United Kingdom
 11/2-4 Nuremberg, Germany
 11/16-18 Lyon, France
 11/30-12/2 Barcelona, Spain
 12/12-16 Grand Championship, Turin or Sestriere, Italy

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SUGARLOAF

Blue Velvet (5.10b/c) Face L of Farley. 1) 9 bolts; 2) 4 bolts; 3) 7 bolts. Pro to 2". (FA: Will Cottrell and party, 8/89.)

Ethics? (5.10) L of final pitch of Harding Chimney. 4 bolts. Pro to 1". 60'. (FA: Bart O'Brien, Richard Swayze, 12/89.)

The Naked Edge (5.11c/d) Continue up arete from 1st bolt on The Man Who Fell to Earth. 5 bolts. 60'. (FA: Ray York, Dave Kennedy, summer/1989.)

Farley Mowat (5.10c) Headwall directly above 3rd pitch of Farley. 2 bolts. 30'. (FA: Gordon Ainsleigh 5/89.)

Never Cry Wolf (5.10a) R of Farley Mowat. Bolt. 30'. (FA: Ainsleigh, 5/89.)

Direct Start to Fly Trap (5.11a) Sugarbun. 2 bolts. (FA: Swanson, Hicks Spring, 1989.)

Dog Fight (5.11b/c) Sugarbun. L of Dirty Dog. 3 bolts. 40'. (FA: Unknown, 1989.)

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SPOKANE AREA

Body Scarfer (5.12a) Dishman Rocks. Start as for Free Installation. Face climb over prominent bulge. Bolts. 70'. (FA: Pat Mahoney, et al, fall/1988.)

Slave Labor (5.12a/b) Dishman Rocks. Face 10' R of Body Scarfer. Bolts. 60'. (FA: Mahoney, et al, summer/1989.)

Southern Exposure (5.5.11d/5.12a) Minihaha Rocks. Face 10' L of Smokey Overhang. Start under big roof. Dyno swing on thin holds for jugs. Bolts. 40'. (FA: Mahoney, et al, fall/1989.)

Reference.

A Guide to Rock Climbing in the Spokane Area, by Bob Loomis.

NORTHERN IDAHO — SELKIRK MOUNTAINS

Black Cat (5.11c)

Chimney Rock, W Face. Flake system 20' R of Berg's Breeze on W side of S Nose. Steep fingertip laybacking. Finish on ledge below S Nose Exit. 75'. (FA: L. Peterman, C. Fagen, fall/1988.)

An Eye in your Eye (5.10+) Chimney Rock, W Face. L side variation of 1st half Berg's Breeze. Dirty w/new bolt where route joins Berg's. 60'. (FA: K. Austin, B. Templeman, summer/1989.)

GRANITE POINT, LAKE PEND ORIELLE

Point Special (5.11c) Big Wall. 10' L of Fingerling. Overhanging face/thin finger crack. Bolts. 80'. (FA: R. Green, et al, summer/1989.)

T 'n' T (5.9, A1) Big Wall. Small buttress 300' R of Fingerling, 100' R of obvious gully. Discontinuous cracks/face. 75'. (FA: T. Jensen, T. Green, summer/1989.)

LACLEDE ROCKS, PEND ORIELLE RIVER

Land Shark (5.11a) The Outback Cliff. 300' L of Achilles Weakness. Prominent clean face, discontinuous thin cracks. Bolts. 80'. (FA: G. Klein, K. Berkenkamp, T. Rowe, fall/1988.)

Attitude Problem (5.8) The Outback Cliff. 600' L of Land Shark. Clean face/thin incipient crack. 3 bolts. 40'. (FA: R. Mathieu, J. Kittle, fall/1989.)

Edge of Destruction (5.11b) Janitor's Rock. 10' R of Sensitive Dependence. Face split by horizontal cracks/grooves. 3 bolts. 40'. (FA: Green, spring/1989.)

Mean Creature (5.11b) Upper Main Cliff, S face. 20' R of Weasels Ripped My Flesh, Side 2. Overhanging start to interesting face/crack/groove. 4 bolts. 70'. (FA: Austin, Templeman, summer/1989.)

Down's Syndrome Disco (5.10c) Upper Main Cliff, S face. 10' R of Poster Child. Face climb that crosses Poster Child arete, finishes on steep face L of Weasels, Side 2. 5 bolts. 75'. (FA: Austin, Templeman, summer/1989.)

SCHWEITZER ROCKS

Planet Dread (5.11c) East Face. Start as Eleven-to-Seven. Direct line on overhanging face to original finish. 5 bolts. 80'. (FA: Austin, fall/1988.)

Reference.

Idaho Rock, by Randall Green, 1987.

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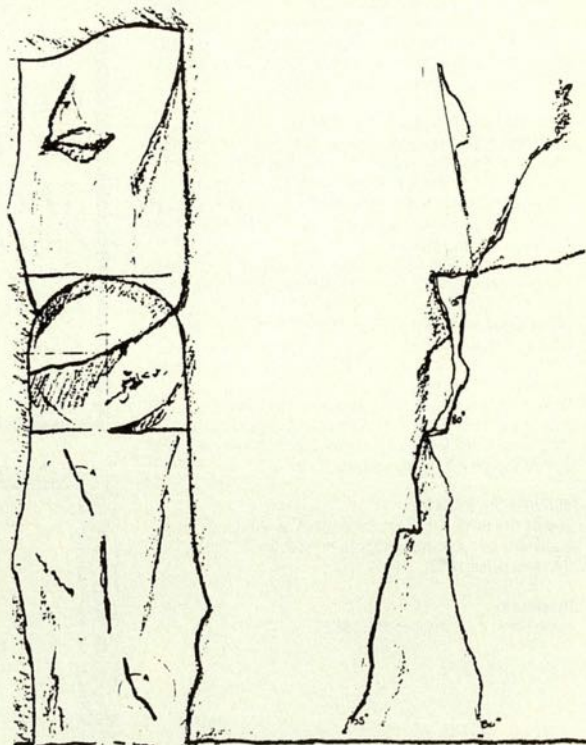
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Mental Training for Climbing

It takes more than muscle

by Eric Hörst

Climbing is known to take an equal mastery of mind and body. Recently, though, many climbers have over-emphasized physical preparation, and omitted training the less tangible mental skills. We've whittled down the cognitive aspects of our sport to simply planning strategies and memorizing sequences, but those will gain us only part of our full potential.

In fact, improbable as it may seem, many climbers would be likely to gain more in performance from mental training than from their present physical training programs.

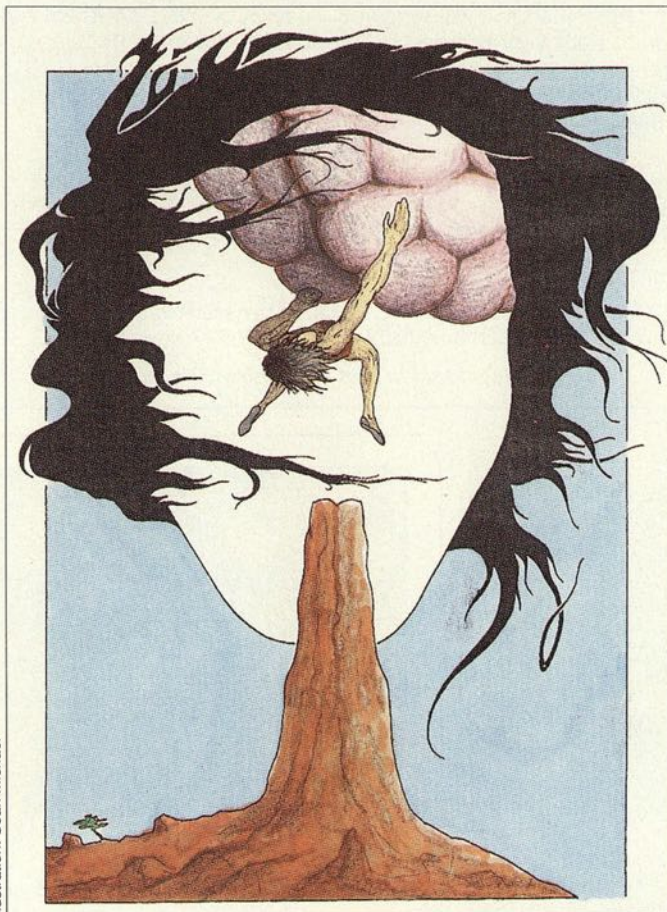


Illustration: Sean Michael

The most consistent climbers, such as Lynn Hill and Peter Croft, have a well-developed integration of mental and physical training. Realizing the value of such a combination should put you on the road to improved performance.

The first step is to become aware of things you may be doing or thinking that effect your performance. These thoughts or mental barriers can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Even the slightest negative or self-defeating thought can generate worry, anxiety, and muscular tension. The antidote is relaxation.

Relaxation Training

Muscle tension occurs daily in everyone. At home or work, in the gym, in the car, or on the rock, we all have excessive muscular tensions. We all know what it's like to lose our cool on a climb. However, it need never happen again if you learn how to regulate your tensions.

Being able to recognize how even slight muscular tension reveals itself in your everyday life will help. You might over-grip a pencil or steering wheel, or have tightness in your back and neck or face. Even a seemingly harmless motion such as tapping your foot or fidgeting your hand signals tension. On the rock, tension shows in the way you over-grip a hold or needlessly muscle through a move, or through a general lack of fluidity and balance. Your goal is to know how to regulate these tensions when they begin, before they snowball.

You will want to learn two types of relaxation: progressive and differential. Both will help you lower general muscular activity or localized tensions, facilitate recovery when you only have a short time to rest, and increase your apparent strength by reducing over-gripping and muscling.

Edmund Jacobson, a Harvard physiologist, developed the training procedures for progressive relaxation. He found that relaxation could be best "learned" through alternately tensing and relaxing a muscle, and developing a keen awareness of the difference. Regular use of his procedure (see Table) will enable you to discriminate between very small increases and decreases in muscle tension. Soon you will be able to eliminate stress and tension at their first signs.

Mastering progressive relaxation, which means relaxing all muscle groups as completely as you can, will aid you in learning differential relaxation: relaxing all muscles except those needed for the task at hand.

Test yourself in this skill next time you go to the gym. Try to relax all your muscles except those being trained. If you can do this, you've accomplished differential relaxation! However, most people strain their whole bodies while working just one muscle group.

Applying the technique to climbing, your focus must be twofold: avoid contraction (over-gripping) of the muscles being used, and relax the muscles antagonistic (opposite) to the prime movers.

Tension in antagonistic muscles can interfere with even the simplest movements. Notice how climbers who try too hard or get gripped on a route become very rigid and stiff, even when performing the easiest moves. Instead of using their

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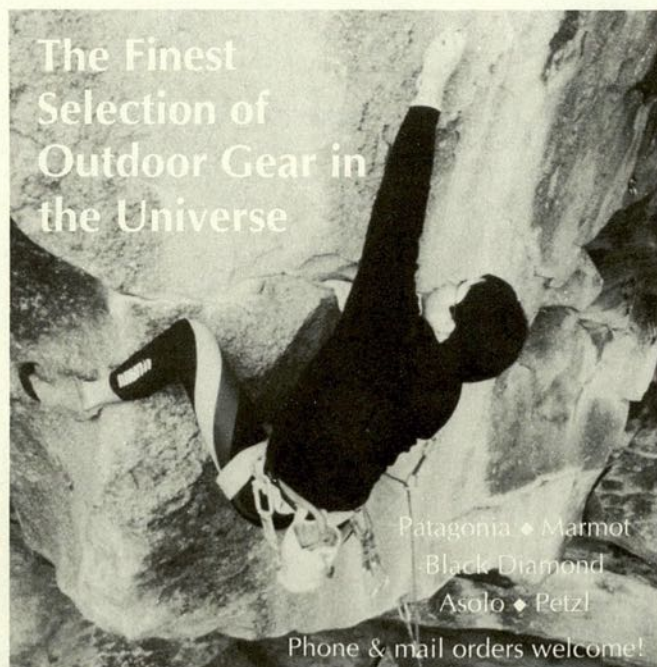


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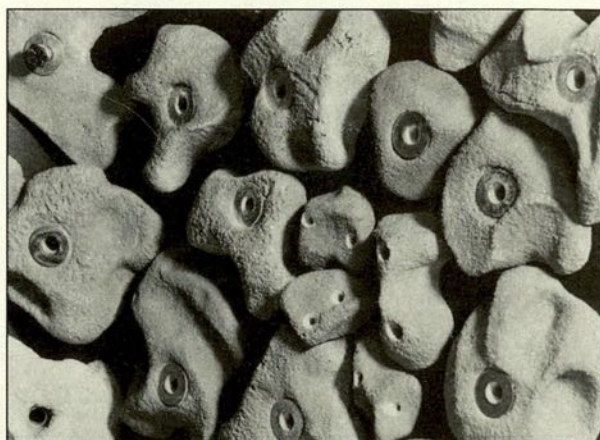


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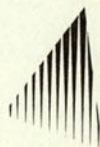
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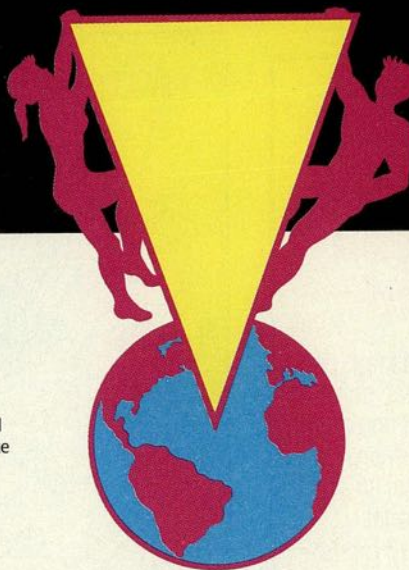
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Mark Robinson

M.D., Orthopedic Surgeon. The prevention and treatment of climbing injuries is Mark's specialty. He has published a number of articles and is currently co-authoring a book on the subject. Among his many difficult climbs was the first free ascent of the Lotus Flower Tower.

Russ Clune

M.S., Teacher's College, Columbia University. Russ is one of the world's best-travelled climbers, and probably the funniest. Among his many epic adventures has been his personal transformation from climbing bum to full-time professional in the climbing business. He is also co-authoring a book on climbing.

Alison Osius

M.S., Columbia graduate School of Journalism. A member of the U.S. Climbing Team, Alison placed first in last year's North American Continental Championships. She is also an associate editor of *Climbing* magazine and an accomplished freelance writer.

Alan Watts

B.S., University of Oregon. Alan has been the main force behind the development of Smith Rock as well as sport climbing throughout the United States. In addition, he was the second American to climb 5.14, with his ascent of *To Bolt Or Not To Be*.

Kev Arends

B.S., College of Human Development and Performance, University of Oregon. President of the Oregon Paragliding Association Inc. and Dimension 5 Inc., Kev integrates the science of exercise physiology into practical programs that improve performance. A well-rounded athlete, he has climbed, skied, paraglided, and kayaked throughout North America.

Scott Pengelly

Ph.D., Licensed Sports Psychologist. Scott has worked with athletes from over 20 nations and in an equal number of sports, including rock climbing. Besides helping to prepare athletes for two Olympics and two World Championships, he has published several articles and appeared on CBS and CNN Olympic coverage.

Rich Phaigh

L.M.T., R.D.M.T. A practicing sports massage therapist for over 12 years, Rich is the founder of the Onsen Technique. He is also a popular lecturer on the subject, and the author of the book, *Athletic Massage*, and the video, *Therapeutic Massage for Sports and Fitness*.

Michael Kennedy

College Dropout, Editor. Best-known as the editor of *Climbing* magazine, Michael is also an accomplished alpine climber, skier, and photographer. He has several major first ascents in Alaska, Colorado, and the Himalaya to his credit, as well as a number of difficult rock climbs in his local areas.

Eric Hörst

B.S., Penn State. Eric is the owner of Peak Performance America, a training service for climbers. A top Eastern climber best-known for his many first ascents in the New River Gorge, he has also published a number of articles in *Climbing* and *Rock and Ice*.

Mary Ann Kelly

R.D., Sports Nutritionist. Mary Ann is a nutritional consultant for athletes. She was also a nutritional consultant for and team member of the 1986 North American K2 Expedition. She has climbed throughout North America.

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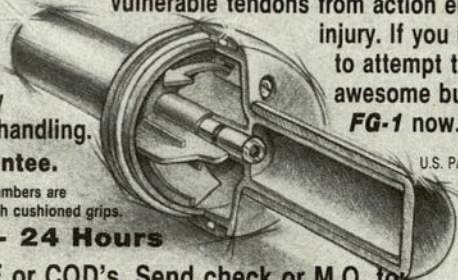

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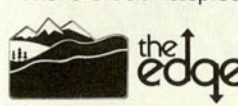



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Progressive Relaxation Sequence

Perform the following procedure at least once a day. At first it will take about 15 minutes, but with practice you'll be able to reach the state of complete relaxation in less than five minutes. Be sure to flex only the muscle(s) specified in each step. This is a valuable skill you will learn very quickly. Finally, it's a big help to make a tape of these steps (reading one step per minute), then play it back as you perform the sequence.

1. Go to a quiet room and sit or lie in a comfortable position.
2. Close your eyes, take five deep breaths, and feel yourself "let go."
3. Tense the muscles in your lower leg (one leg at a time) for five seconds. Become aware of the feeling, then "let go" and relax the muscles completely. Be aware of the difference between feeling "tense" and "relaxed."
4. Now perform the same sequence in the muscles of the upper leg. Tense for five seconds, then relax. Compare the difference.
5. Move to the arms. Start by tensing the muscles below the elbow, making a tight fist for five seconds. Now relax those muscles completely.

6. Tense only the muscles of the upper arm (one at a time), and relax.

7. Now tense the muscles of the torso for five seconds, then relax. As you get better, try to tense the chest, shoulder, back, and abdominal muscles separately.

8. Finish by tensing the muscles of the face and neck. Relax them completely, noting the feeling of relaxation in each part.

9. Now concentrate on relaxing all the muscles in your body. Mentally scan from head to toe for any muscles that might still be tense. Maintain this state of total relaxation for at least three minutes.

10. Open your eyes, stretch, and feel refreshed; or begin visualization and imagery work. Or maybe just crash out.

Instant Centering Sequence (ICS)**

Perform the ICS while you're in an upright position, sitting or standing, almost anytime or anywhere, as long as your eyes are open and you're alert. At first, take a few minutes and go through the steps slowly. With practice, you'll eventually be able to do it in a second or two.

1. Uninterrupted Breathing: Continue your normal breathing cycle, concentrating on smooth, deep, even breaths.

2. Positive Face: Flash a smile, no matter what your mental state. Research shows that a positive face "resets" the nervous system so that it's less reactive to negative stress. You'll feel the difference.

3. Balanced Posture: Lift your head up; keep shoulders loose, back comfortably straight, and abdomen free of tension. A balanced posture makes you feel light, with a sense of no effort in action. A tense, collapsed posture restricts breathing, reduces blood flow, slows reaction time, and magnifies negative feelings.

4. Wave of Relaxation: In this step you perform a "tension check." Scan all your muscles in a quick sweep to locate unnecessary tension. Let go of those tensions, making your body calm but keeping your mind alert.

5. Mental Control: Be focused, positive, and uninhibited about the task at hand. Then go with it.

**Adapted from *Health & Fitness Excellence*, by Robert Cooper, 1989. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, MA.

muscles optimally, they end up pitting one muscle against another, resulting in more stress and fatigue. On the other hand, the best climbers move with a grace and fluidity. They are masters of differential relaxation.

Skill in differential relaxation comes with increased sensitivity to various degrees of relaxation and tension — something you will learn quickly through daily use of progressive relaxation. Practice by releasing tensions in unused muscles while performing common everyday activities. Whether you are in your car, at your desk, or even lying down, you can scan your body for tensions. Move on to relaxing unused muscles during weight training or aerobic activity.

Finally, on the rock, experiment with different levels of muscle tension while moving and during rests. Try to find the minimum level of contraction necessary to keep yourself on the rock. Practice often, and you'll soon be climbing more smoothly and with less effort.

Centering

Centering is a simple, effective means of maintaining complete control of your mind and body as you head up on a difficult climb or into competition. When you're centered you feel strong, relaxed, balanced.

To become centered, deliberately direct your thoughts inward for a moment to mentally check and adjust your breathing

and level of muscle tension. By doing this regularly, you can consciously counteract any involuntary changes that may have occurred due to the pressure of the situation, such as hyperventilating and/or hanging on too tightly. Centering will allow you to be aware and to make critical changes. If you don't center, excessive muscle tension and increased fatigue can interfere with your coordination.

Centering is a momentary mental clearing and readjustment that places you in your most efficient physical state, as well as in a calm, conscious mental state. Center yourself before every climb to develop a base that will lead to consistency of performance. On the route, center at every good shake-out. With practice, it'll only take a second to release unneeded tensions, clear your thoughts, and attain control.

The best means of centering is called the "instant calming sequence" or "instant centering sequence" (ICS), a simple five-step method (see Table). The ICS is simple to learn and use, especially if you've learned progressive and differential relaxation. Initially it will take five or ten minutes, but with practice you'll learn to do it in a matter of seconds, or even in a single breath.

Practice the ICS many times each day. Use it while waiting at a stop light, or before making an important phone call. Use it first thing in the morning or as a re-energizer in the middle of the day. The

more you use it the more quickly you'll be able to put it to work on the rock. Some skilled users claim that the ICS can become an involuntary response to stress. Imagine the power of having such an automatic, unconscious relaxer.

Once you've learned centering with the ICS, you must then remember to use it — this is often the most difficult part! Ideally you'd like it to become as automatic as chalking up. However, that takes practice.

After about eight weeks of this type of mental training, you should be ready to begin work on the more advanced mental skills of visual-motor behavior rehearsal (visualization), self-talk, and countering. These subjects will be discussed in next issue's Training Department.

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Athlete's Guide to Mental Training, by Robert M. Nideffer. Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc., Champaign, IL 1985.

Eric Hörst is an East Coast climber best known for his pioneering efforts at the New River Gorge. At home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, he is on the science staff at Millersville University, and runs a training service for climbers, Peak Performance America.

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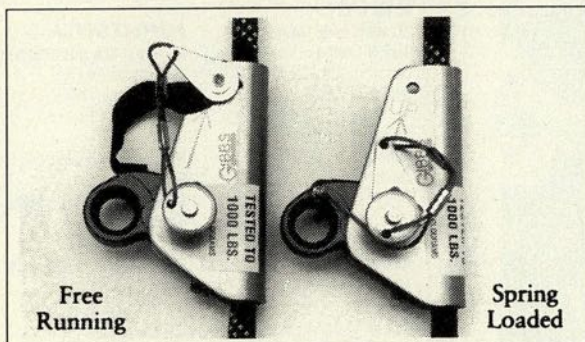
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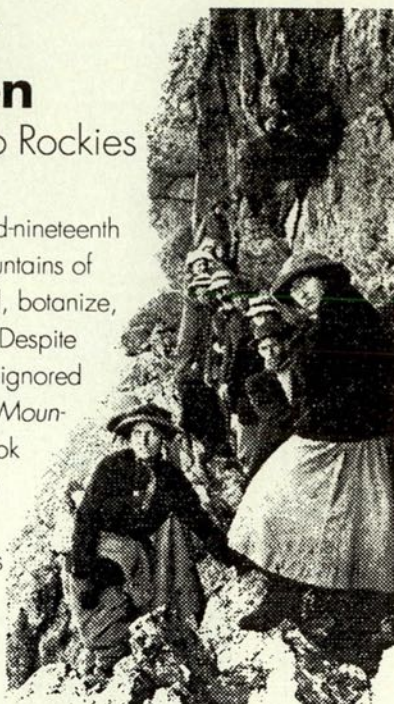
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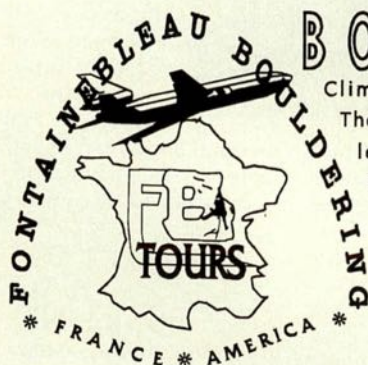
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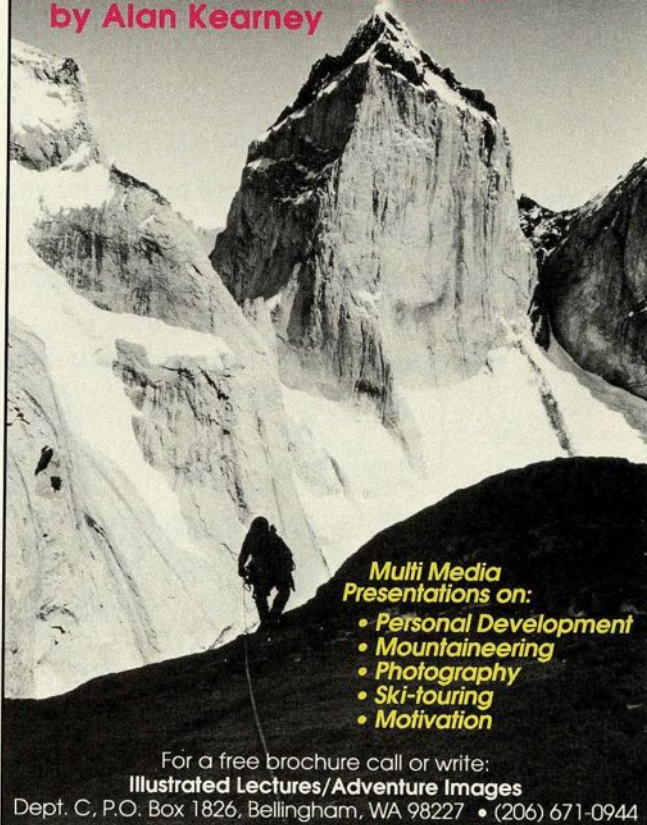
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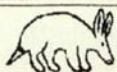
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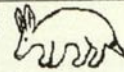

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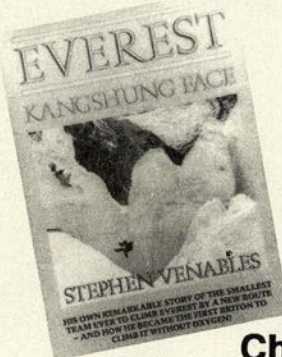
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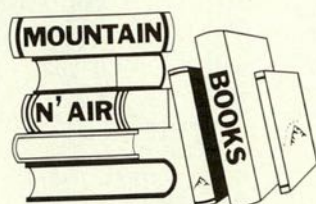
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Continued from page 144

jected to persecution. Sympathizers are frowned upon.

Foreign climbers in Nepal have been subjected to harassment as well. During a climbing expedition to Nepal several years ago, Jeff Long, a climber and author from Boulder, Colorado, spent four months in jail for allegedly smuggling watches. He was innocent, a "fall guy" for an ousted member of his expedition, who was indeed responsible (a person who then disappeared quite rapidly). In jail, Long befriended many Nepali and Tibetan prisoners. "I've seen people who have been tortured," Long later told the *Boulder Daily Camera*. "I can tell you what human rights abuse looks like. It looks like a car accident. It's grave and horrible and humbling."

Long has since become an activist for human-rights issues. He worked diligently, writing articles and letters to editors to question the Boulder-Lhasa Sister City Project, whose interest in Lhasa is seen as entrepreneurial rather than cultural. The project has since been suspended.

More recently, Dr. Blake Kerr and John Ackerly, American climbers who were in Lhasa after an attempt on Everest, were arrested for having Tibetan flags sewn to their packs and possessing postcards of the Dalai Lama. The two were interrogated, accused of "endangering national security," and ordered to leave the country within 10 days. Several days later, they watched as the army shot down Tibetan citizens and monks who had been holding peaceful demonstrations in the streets of Lhasa. Kerr, with few medical supplies at hand, did his best to help. At least 15 Tibetans died that day, he says. Among the people he treated were 14 with gunshot wounds, 20 who had been badly beaten, and two with severe burns.

Back in the United States, Ackerly and Kerr resolved to pursue rightful treatment for the citizens of Tibet. Ackerly became legal counsel for the International Campaign for Tibet, and he and Kerr have made several trips to India to interview Tibetans in exile and document the conditions under which they had been forced to live in their own country.

The world is continually witness to the ways in which many governments attempt to appease the powerful Chinese

administration. Somehow China manages to dictate the United States' and other countries' foreign policies. This influence affects relations not only between the United States and China, but also the relations between United States and many other countries: currently Tibet and Cambodia, and perhaps Hong Kong and Taiwan in the future.

A stronger stance needs to be taken by all, and individuals and organizations can apply international pressure and create change. During this dynamic political era, the moment is ideal to denounce repressive policies throughout the world.

*It is time to transform
outrage into action: for
human rights concerns to
be placed above economic
interests; for tyrannical
administrations to be
denounced, not appeased
for climbing permits.*

Galen Rowell, an acclaimed adventure photographer who has been to China and Tibet repeatedly, has recently begun to speak out. In the March/April issue of the environmental magazine *Greenpeace*, in an article called "The Agony of Tibet," he wrote, "If I had to do it all over again, there's one thing I would have done differently. I wouldn't have compromised the story of Tibet's environmental destruction as much as I did. Then, I was worried about going back. Now I simply want to tell the story."

He once went to document wildlife in Tibet, to an area where Chinese authorities had said there were sheep, wolves, bears, and dense virgin forests. He found only overgrazed land, and neither forests nor wildlife; one shot among the various photos he published contained a caption saying as much. The next time Rowell tried to get back into the country, he was informed that there had been a formal complaint from the Chinese Embassy about his work. In order to stay he had to write a letter of "self-criticism" saying that he had been wrong.

Now Rowell is working for political and cultural sensitivity toward Tibet

with such organizations as the National Geographic Society. He has also turned down a chance to publish images in *A Day in the Life of China* because he did not want his images of Tibet included in a book on China.

Many people have shared Rowell's concern that activism may prevent one from being allowed back into the country, and feel that the ability to move in and out of Tibet may be the only way to get and spread information. At this point, however, the situation is clear: Tibet is the victim of systematic genocide, its culture on the verge of extinction.

Climbers, who have spent a great deal of money in the Himalaya, bear responsibility to the inhabitants. In the 1950s Nepal reopened its borders after a century of seclusion, rapidly altering both the geography and culture of the region.

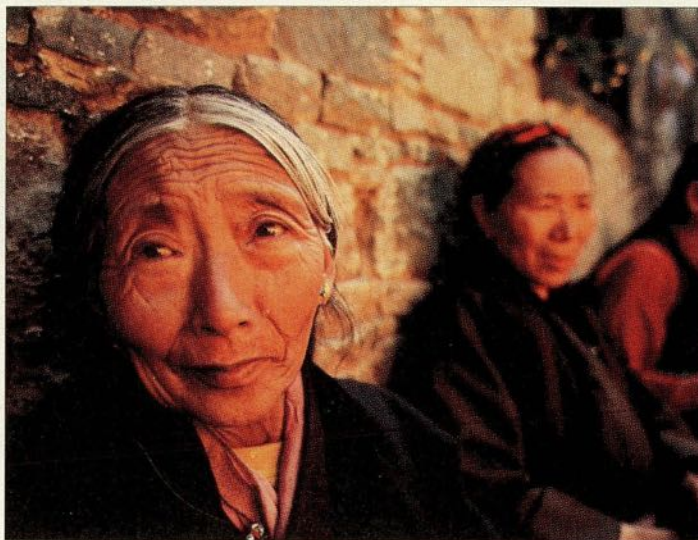
The Sherpa people adapted their lifestyle to accommodate mountain tourism, and the amount of money brought into the Khumbu region replaced the amount made by the tradition of trading. A healthy mountain culture became dependent on mountain travel.

During the period between 1965 and 1969, various areas of Nepal were closed to climbing, and many Sherpas went hungry due to the lack of expedition currency. Their lifestyle had come to depend on the climbing/trekking traffic.

Although expedition currency often benefits individuals within the communities, large expeditions tend to disrupt the local economy. Their wages are higher, and therefore many natives come out of the woodwork to be involved. Food prices escalate because of supply and demand, and local people suffer due to the inability to pay the inflated prices, according to Gary McCue of Mountain Travel, who is working on a "responsible travel" book for Tibet.

Perhaps the quintessential over-inflated expedition is Jim Whittaker's "Mount Everest International Peace Climb" with its million-dollar-plus budget. The expedition unfortunately came at the worst possible time, given that this year

the world has finally understood China's oppressive policies. Whittaker's group has received a great deal of press, and Whittaker has publicly lauded China's thoughtfulness at allowing Tibetans to climb. What he does not seem to recognize is that the Chinese government would want an American to portray its



A woman in tears prays for jailed Tibetans.

regime as congenial, and is using the Tibetans for that purpose.

Whittaker's praise is terribly damaging; it encourages the already short attention spans most Americans maintain concerning foreign affairs. As Elie Wiesel stated in his 1986 acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize, "I have tried to fight those who would forget. Because if we forget, we are guilty, we are accomplices. The world did know, and remained silent."

Virtually all sovereign nations have recognized China's belligerence as a flagrant violation of international law. The Dalai Lama, the spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan people, now living in exile, has said, "though the Tibetans have lost their freedom, under international law Tibet today is still an independent state under illegal occupation."

China asserts that such attention is interference in its internal affairs. But human rights are internationally recognized. China is a member of the United Nations, is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, and is an active participant in the international community. China is therefore bound to observe the standards set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

What can you, as an individual, do? One mountain guide living in Nepal recommends that all climbers boycott travel in Tibet. If you do go to Tibet or Nepal, express your concern to people in repressive straits. Knowing that the rest of the world is behind them can help raise their spirits. If you would like to make donations to monasteries, give money, food, or clothing discreetly to monks.

When you return home, give slide shows, write articles; talk, act. Lobby the Bush administration and Congress; support H.R. Bill 3705, the Tibetan Immigrant Act of 1990, which would give visas to 1000 Tibetans. Ask that the U.S. government maintain economic sanctions and a harder diplomatic line with China.

Climbers are a community steeped in ethics. Now, it is unethical to remain apolitical. It is time to transform outrage into action: for human rights concerns to be

placed above economic interests; for tyrannical administrations to be denounced, not appealed for climbing permits.

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Martha Bellisle is a human-rights activist studying international affairs and political science at the University of Colorado, Boulder. The former owner of Dante

Sports Apparel in Boulder, she is now moving to Ventura, California, to work in research and design for Patagonia, Inc.

The opinions expressed in "Perspective" are personal, and do not necessarily represent those of Climbing.

The China syndrome

by Martha Bellisle



In an unusual act of charity, the queen of Nepal recently visited a woman who was hospitalized after being arrested and then raped by police. The distraught woman, a student, spat at the queen, and cried out her contempt of the government responsible for the oppression in Nepal. The queen walked out and handed down an order for the woman's execution.

The report citing this incident, which appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor*, did not say whether or not the young woman, in the end, was killed. But under the Treason Act, the death penalty may be imposed on anyone who "disrupts the sovereignty of Nepal." Persecution, abuse, and callousness underlie the splendor of this Himalayan nation.

On the other side of Mount Everest lies another blatantly oppressive government. China's aggression threatens the entire Tibetan culture with complete destruction. In the past few years China has also taken a more aggressive attitude in an effort to influence the government of Nepal. Tibetans wishing to cross the border into Nepal have not had the freedom to do so since 1959. In the past three years border control has become even stricter. If caught in

His face covered to hide his identity, a Tibetan monk protests the Chinese occupation, at the Jokhang Temple, Lhasa, Tibet.

an attempt to cross, Tibetans may be sent back to authorities in Tibet, often for imprisonment and severe torture.

Both China and Nepal have undergone far-reaching changes in the past year. June 4 is the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacres, when troops and tanks crushed thousands of Chinese who were demonstrating for democracy. In March 1989 the Chinese placed Lhasa, Tibet, under a state of martial law.

April saw the culmination of months of upheaval in Nepal. As more than 200,000 people demonstrated in Kathmandu for political change and a multi-party system, the army opened fire on protesters, killing hundreds.

Kathmandu literally shut down. By April 6, electricity had stopped, airlines were paralyzed and vehicles immobilized. In the first curfew in the country's history, citizens were not allowed outside their homes, and troops were ordered to shoot violators on sight. Among the people shot for curfew violation was a woman on her way to a temple to pray.

As a result of the turmoil, the King of Nepal opened up the country's political process by negotiating for a multi-party system to be established.

Political activists have not been the only victims of police brutality. Many religious organizations are also sub-

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Photo: Jeffrey Aaronson

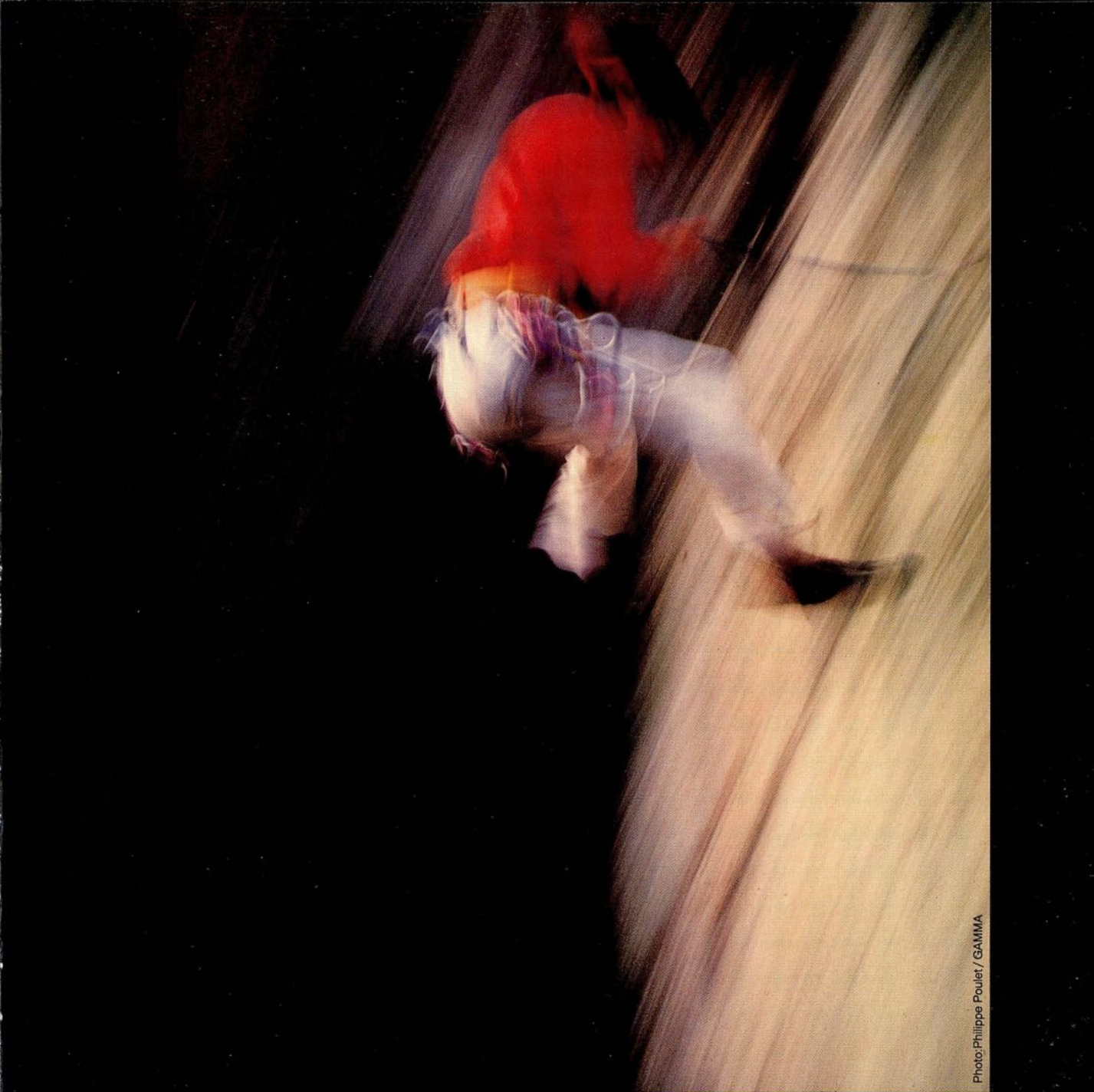


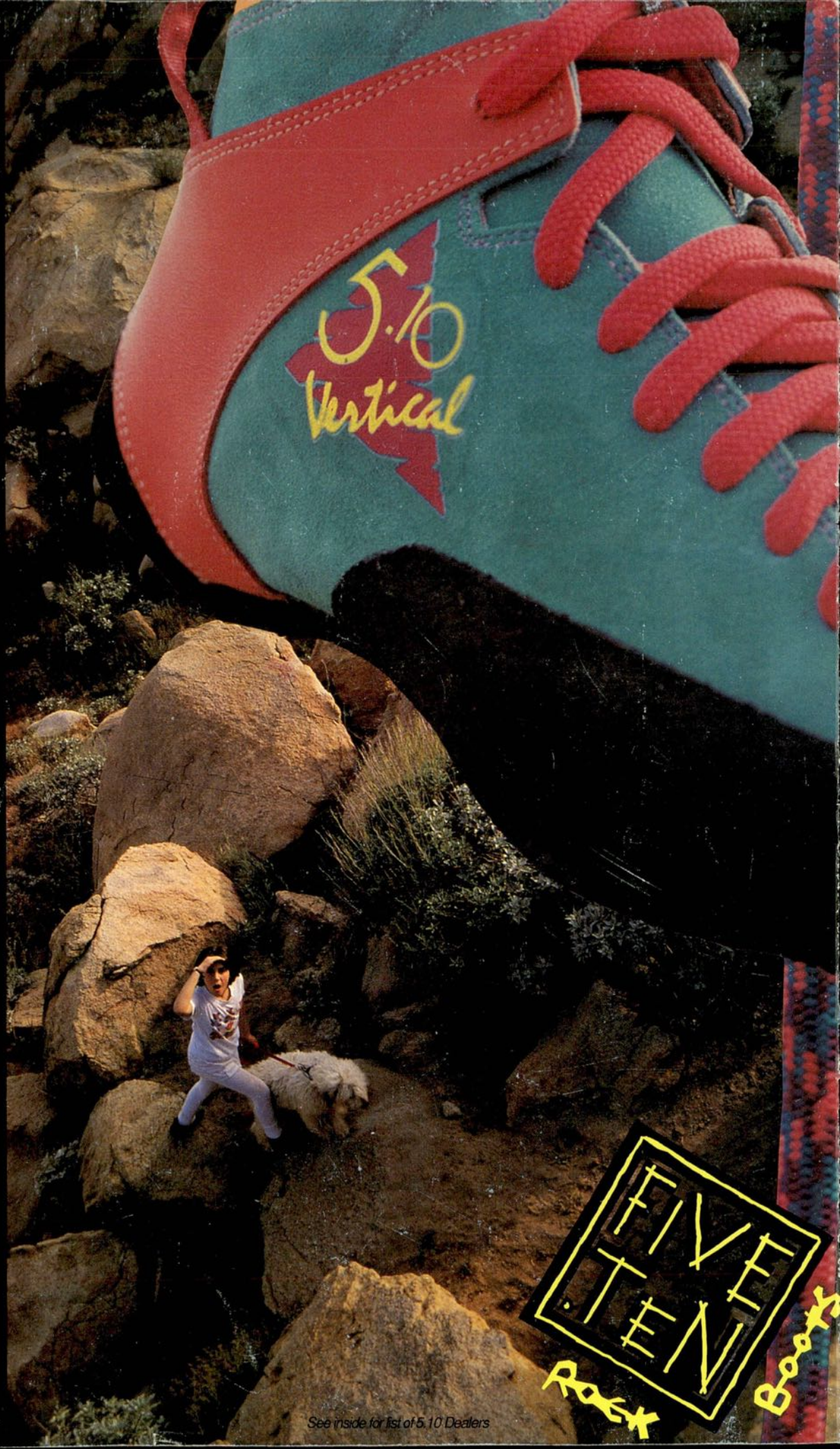
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