

THE DOVE

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THE PROW - WASHINGTON COLUMN *DON'S CLIMB*

I'm lying here looking at my watch debating whether or not to wake him. With only three hours of sleep since our arrival from LA, will he sleep until a reasonable hour if I leave him alone? Reluctantly I conceded to follow his order... "Miguel, it's 4 o'clock." With a burst of energy, he is on his feet. His arms spread, fists clenched and he looked off into the darkness toward the Washington Column and professes: "I need the rock!" I think to myself, "My God, what have I gotten into?"

Neither of us were very familiar with the details of our route, The Prow, so we stopped to inspect the face on our hike to the base. Cracks were obvious along the first and final pitches of the route, but an 800 to 900 foot section appeared blank. Recalling that I had not climbed a single rock route in the last 11 months I again thought, "My God, what have I gotten into?"

As the climb progressed, the route typically followed small direct aid cracks of flaring soft granite or brittle, fractured rock which occasionally produced delicate flakes. Although bolts and pins were found and many copperheads had been bashed into seam-type cracks, this route maintained a lower percentage of fixed protection than other classic routes in Yosemite. The major part of the route was vertical, varying by plus or minus a few degrees. It passed several small roofs and pitches often required the full rope length.

By late afternoon it became evident that the lack of sleep was catching up to me while leading an 80-foot section of slightly overhanging rock. Along a bolt ladder, Miguel tested his absolute limits of balance in the top step of his étriers as he bridged the gap between placements. These bolts could have only been placed by Glenn Denny, Layton Kor or Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

The whistle blew and we called it quits to the day's climbing at 6 o'clock. Camp was set up suspended from a friendly cluster of bolts that were backed up by an RP for that personal touch in the anchor system. We soon settled into a night of serious squirming in our hammocks. The witching hour brought a cool breeze that was too big a match for my light bivouac gear and I proceeded to shiver until dawn. Miguel faced a more awesome challenge - how to postpone nature's call until morning and avoid the logistics of hammock maneuvers in the dark.

An early breakfast was followed by climbing up a small crack using more RPs, pins, stoppers and a sky hook to bypass a small roof. Sky hook placements were common and usually quite secure, but hooked flakes would "complain" as weight was transferred onto them. By mid-morning we reached the first ledge large enough to stand on after more than 20 hours in slings. Hallelujah! The ledge granted our feet a reprieve from strangulation, a result of extensive aid climbing with etriers in self-soled friction shoes.

We had a 5-minute picnic in early afternoon to celebrate the fact that all five A3 pitches were now history. The route continued through easier aid pitches and even followed a token free climbing section. Finally, after having ascended more than 1100 feet of this superb route, the last pitch offered the most ugly, awkward climbing I could recollect. In final tribute to this excellent route, Miguel stepped out of his étriers and performed a spectacular overhanging layback move to put us on top as darkness fell.

June was a month of recurring storms in the Sierra. The skies had cleared for this ascent, but as these weekend warriors retreated to the 9 to 5 life, the weather window was closing. Two days later, more than a foot of snow fell in parts of the Sierra. DP

CHARLOTTE DOME JULY 3-5

After spending Friday night on the lawn of the Ranger station in Lone Pine, the four of us lined up at 6 AM to get our permit, then up to Onion Valley and Kearsarge Pass. We were Bob Lindgren, Ed Evans, Miguel Rodriguez and Alois Smrz hoping to reach the South face of Charlotte Dome, climb it (III, 5.7) and return to Los Angeles in three days.

Our first day was made very long not only by the distance (10 miles), but by a lot of snow still covering the switchbacks above Gilbert Lake. Going was slow over Kearsarge Pass and down to Charlotte Lake. Paul Harris who climbed the route last year told us of lack of level spots below the dome so we opted for different approach. Camp was made about 1½ miles from the west end of Charlotte Lake. We followed the Gardiner Pass trail and then dropped down to one of the few level meadows beside Charlotte Creek. This however made our climbing day longer as the approach involved about 1½ hour walk to the base of the Dome.

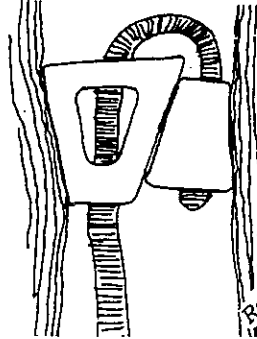
Sunday saw us up at 4 AM and off toward the Gardiner trail which we followed until it turned sharply toward the pass. After crossing two streams and manzanita fields, we traversed the slope toward the large slabs of the Dome.

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YOSEMITE SLIDE SHOW - EXPEDITION FUND RAISER
Don Pies will show slides of the West Face of
the Leaning Tower, The Prow and Northwest Face
of Half Dome on Wednesday, September 29,
7:30 p.m. at the Santa Monica Public Library,
Main Auditorium (6th Street & Santa Monica
Blvd). Voluntary donations will be accepted
for the Mount Kaijende Expedition in Papua
New Guinea - America's first international
caving expedition.



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C A L E N D A R

Aug 21-22 Suicide Rock: Pies/Ryan
Sep 4-6 Tuolumne Meadow: Fried/Wing
Sep 12 RCS SAFETY TEST
Reservations required by
Sep 7 with leader: Russ

3 PIN SUMMER SKIING: WEST COAST VOLCANOES

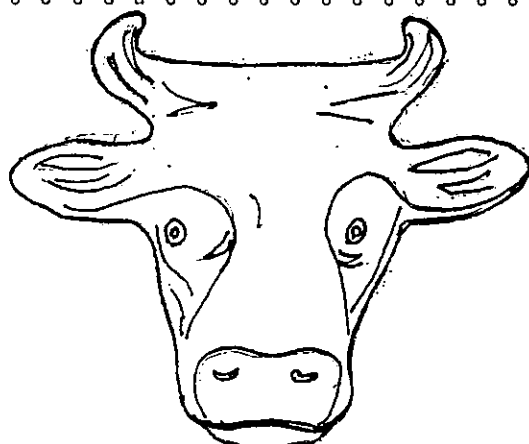
The first day of summer Helen and I skied the southwest face of Lassen Peak (10,457').
The peak has an easy hike to its summit and the bowl offers 2,000' of skiing on fine corn snow.
MT. SHASTA (14,162') Using topo and forest service maps we fourwheeled it to the north side
of the peak and backpacked several hours to a camp at 9500'. The next day we cramponed up
frozen snow between the Hotlum and Bolum glaciers. After a brief stay on top, I put my skis
on at 13,200' and had the mountain to myself; joining up with Helen at 11,000', we skied back
to the front door of our tent at 9500'. (Stop in the FIFTH SEASON mountain shop in Shasta
city for maps of routes, etc.) MT HOOD was next. The ski lifts were still running above
beautiful and massive Timberline Lodge (6,000') but we decided not to pay (the outrageous)
twelve dollars for a lift ticket and skied up the slopes to about 9500'. The steep climb to
the summit was badly broken up due to warm weather and severe rockfall, so we decided to
leave that route for another season. The skiing on the south side is very moderate offering
a fine place to practice telemarks. MT RAINIER: After a five-hour hike up the Muir snow-
field we pitched out tent at Camp Muir (10,000'). The next day we had perfect sunshine for
a 4.5 mile 4500' run down to Paradise on soft corn snow. My last stop was Mt. Adams (12,276')
Starting out from the trail head (5500') for a one day ascent/ski descent, bad weather moved
in very quickly forcing me to bivouac at 9500'. The south spur route looks very skiable
but after 19 hours of waiting in a storm and whiteout conditions, I decided to leave this
route for another day.

Many peaks (former and dormant volcanoes) in Oregon and Washington hold snow well into
the summer and can offer good nordic or alpine skiing. GK, HM-K

CHARLOTTE DOME (continued from page 1)

The face is actually a rounded buttress and the route starts in the bowl left of this
buttress. The route is a beautiful face and crack climb with several moderately difficult,
but well protected sections. First two pitches are 4th class and follow the buttress up
and slightly right. Next pitch is probably the crux of the climb, a steep crack with
hidden holds (5.7). On the next pitch we moved slightly right and climbed a 5.7 dihedral.
Several more pitches of beautiful face climbing with good protection (5.5-5.6), brought us
to deep alcoves and two more pitches to the summit ridge. The climb took slightly less
than 8 hours and descent down the class 3 north ridge another hour. We then traversed
the slopes back to Gardiner trail and to our camp.

The climb is a very special one. The setting of a monolithic dome in the middle of
granite peaks of Sierras is magnificent - and the route is excellent. The long approach
is worth it and I would recommend this climb fully to our RCS friends. I should add,
that Monday early morning start brought us back to Los Angeles at 7:30 p.m., which at
least for me was a welcome change from the usual midnight arrivals. AS



REMEMBER: IT'S M-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-gelnoos . . . RDM

DENALI

Since many people asked me about my recent trip to Denali in the spring, I have written a short account of our climb.

The East Buttress of Denali rises 5,500' from the cirque at the head of the N.W. Fork of the Ruth Glacier, from 9,100' to 14,600'. Our original plans called for an alpine-style ascent of the East Buttress and then an attempt at a new route on Denali's East Face. These were really two separate climbs since the top of the East Buttress is three miles away from the East Face across the flat expanse of Thayer Basin. The East Buttress was first climbed in May of 1962 by a group of Teton guides. Its second ascent was not made until July of 1977 - and its third ascent in May of last year. All of these groups ferried loads and/or fixed lines.

There were three of us in my expedition: Ted Waltman, Mike Danaher and myself. Since there are only two or three safe campsites on the route and the climbing involves much steep snow and technical ice, it was crucial that we carry as little as possible in order to make these camps. This still meant starting out with packs that weighed sixty-five pounds. As it turned out, we made five camps. These were placed at 11,000', 12,500', 12,800', 13,500' and the summit itself. The proximity of camps two and three was forced upon us when I lost a crampon while traversing a 50° to 60° ice slope covered with six inches of powdered snow. We spent many hours trying to recover it from near the edge of a 100' serac. Camp 4 was forced upon us by deteriorating weather in the afternoon. It was placed fifty feet down inside the bergschrund and was referred to as the "Hell Hole." It was actually a wonderful spot and a lifesaver since the nearest campsite was one thousand feet higher.

We spent nine days on the Buttress itself, finally reaching its summit on May 28. We did not fix any ropes nor haul any packs. The climbing was challenging and exposed. The ice was in excess of seventy-five degrees in places and the avalanche danger was severe. This danger bothered us all the way to the Buttress summit.

The day we reached the summit of the Buttress was the best weather we had for ten days. We spent four days in the tent due to bad weather, and each of the other five days were spent climbing in light snow, low visibility and temperatures around 0°F. Since the day-time temperatures never rose above 20°F for any extended period of time, we were probably saved from the avalanche danger.

At our camp inside the bergschrund, the decision was made not to attempt the East Face since we didn't have the gas we felt was necessary to do it safely. After weathering a horrendous storm on the summit of the East Buttress on May 29, we started off for Thayer Ridge. Gaining Thayer Ridge is usually a trivial climb since it involves only a 35° snow slope. The high winds that had plagued us for the last few days had blown most of the snow off this exposed slope and so we were faced with one thousand feet of moderate ice. Since we wanted to make 15,800' on Thayer Ridge that day, we chose a rock rib which extended almost to the flat of Thayer Basin. We were able to weave the rope in and out of the rocks for running belays. This eliminated the placement of screws and belays. This facilitated the ascent and we made the ridge in the early evening. A freak windstorm, a warning of deteriorating weather, managed to make us all hypothermic for awhile also.

On May 30 we quickly climbed along the easy crest of Thayer Ridge and made camp at 17,000'. The summit was a long day's climb away and the weather was excellent. We started to feel the joy of conquest. We ate a big meal and prepared to go to the summit via the Farthing Horn. Unfortunately, we awoke early to high winds with a wispy lenticular cloud circling Denali's summit. We knew bad weather was imminent.

The storm raged for the next three days. We were out of food by then and only had a half pint of fuel remaining. All three of us were mentally and physically drained, not only because of a lack of food, but also because we had used our bodies to support the wall of the tent against its collapse from the winds which gusted to 100 mph. By the time it was over it had been partially destroyed. On June 4, we dropped down onto the Harper Glacier during a lull in the storm and headed for Denali Pass at 18,200'. If we could not find food there, then we would have to descend the West Buttress without a bid for the summit. Because we were physically weak from the food rationing, it took us three times as long as it should to reach the pass. When we got there, we located a huge cache that had probably been left by a group making a South-North traverse of Denali. We knew we could now make the summit if the weather cleared. Depression set in as we waited in the tent through three more days of storm. By the time the storm was over, we had lost one tent pole and most of the pole sleeves were ripped. The tent was essentially a total loss since it could no longer be pitched in winds.

We finally managed to reach the summit on June 8 in a whiteout with temperatures about -12°F. We took a few hero shots and then quickly started down. We almost took a shortcut down the South Face before I noticed that I was teetering on the corniced summit ridge. A few desperate moments were spent in the plateau at about 19,500' when blinding snow driven by high winds made it difficult to see the sparsely placed wands. We eventually found the notch we were searching for and quickly descended to the pass.

We knew that we had to descend from Denali Pass the next day - storm or no storm. On June 9 the weather was bad above us, but worse below. The traverse from Denali Pass down to 17,000' on the West Buttress was extremely treacherous since the snow conditions changed every fifty feet or so. Frequently, one could not see the next man on the rope only one hundred and fifty feet away. When we reached the plateau at 17,000', we were greeted with

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DENALI (continued from page 3)

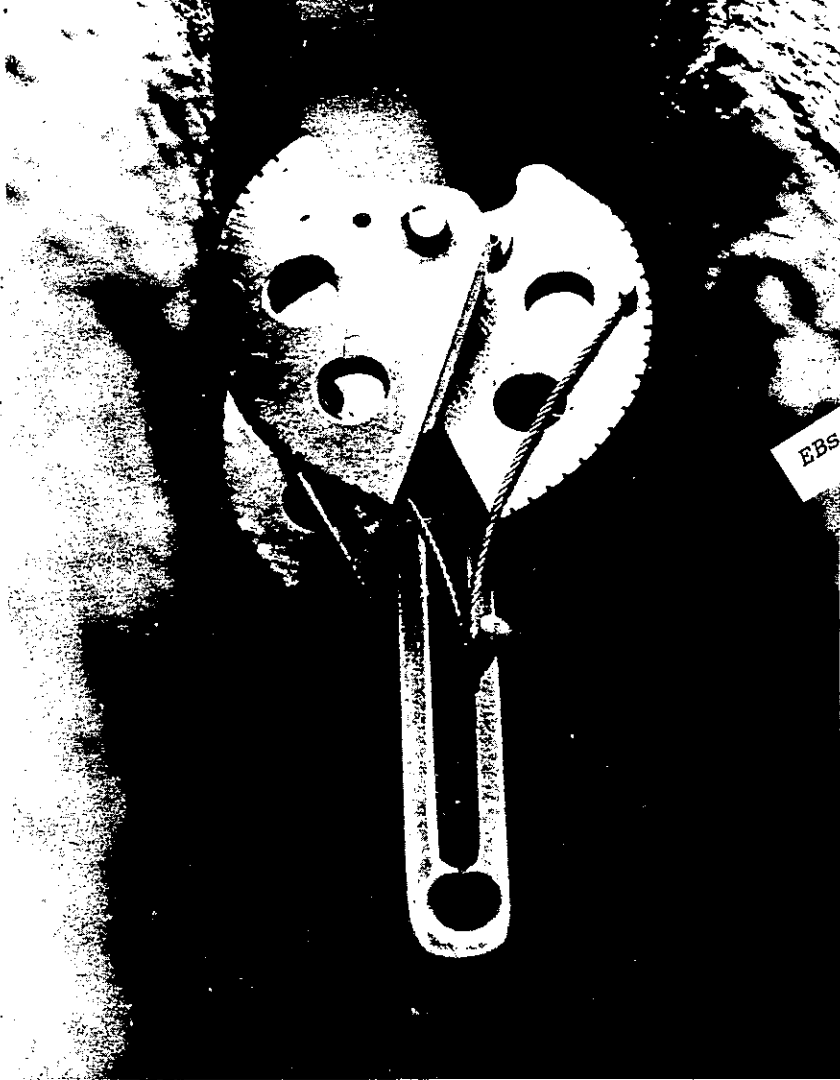
60 mph winds which had blown all the snow away. It looked like a huge ice skating rink. There was no hope for pitching the tent and so we spent the next six hours chipping the snow and ice out behind a big rock. At about eleven that night we crammed ourselves into the ice cave and got our first food and water for the whole day.

That night was the coldest night I have ever spent. It was probably the cause for the frostbite Ted and Mike suffered on their toes. We spent seven hours in the cave and quickly left it early the next morning. The weather was still bad and so we descended to the notch at 16,200' in high winds with low visibility. We quickly descended to a spacious igloo at 14,000' in the "tent city".

The descent from here was routine, though we had to spend another night at 11,000' since the storm was still raging over the Kahiltna Glacier. In all, we spent thirty days on the mountain. Fifteen were spent climbing and fourteen were spent in the tent due to bad weather. Ten nights were spent above 17,000'. There were only seven clear days of weather the whole trip. Due to this bad weather, the success rate on Denali will be lower than normal this year. Even Peter Habeler tried twice and failed both times. When it was finally over, we had made the first alpine-style ascent of the East Buttress and the first East Buttress-West Buttress traverse of Denali. It was a successful and rewarding epic.

BK

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