

Aconcagua, Expedition Inspiration. An expedition of breast cancer survivors attempted to climb Aconcagua to raise awareness of the disease and to raise money for breast cancer research. The 17 women were divided into two teams; six attempted to summit Aconcagua, while the remaining eleven members, following a week later, climbed to lower camps in support of their teammates. All eleven support team members reached their basic goal of climbing to Plaza Argentina, the 14,000-foot basecamp accessing the Polish Glacier route to the summit. A few climbed still higher, to camps at over 16,000 feet and 19,000 feet. Of the six women who finally attempted the summit, three succeeded. In the process, they raised \$2.3 million for breast cancer research — \$100 for every foot of climbing.

Aconcagua, Ascents and Tragedy. It was reported that Lucien Berardini, who led the first ascent of the 3000-meter South Face in 1954, returned to Aconcagua in January with Hugues Beauzille to repeat the route. Arriving unacclimatized, and finding the face dangerously loaded with new snow, Berardini decided to attempt the Normal Route. Beauzille began up the face solo on January 19. He met up with Corsican guide Pierre Griscelli and his client, Celine Rambaud, and continued with them for eight days in bad weather to the summit. Beauzille and Rambaud were too exhausted to descend, so Griscelli left them in a tent while he descended for help. He became disoriented, and was lost for two days. By the time the rescue party reached the tent Beauzille had died. Both Rambaud and Griscelli suffered frostbite and lost toes.

Also on the French Route, Steve Sustad, after an ascent from the base of the face to the top of the second buttress in nine hours, was avalanched 100 meters as he was trying to exit the Messner Direct Finish, then a similar distance as he was retreating. He bivouacked, but the following day had route-finding difficulties and only managed 80 meters of horizontal travel. On his third bivouac, he had just dug a snow cave and burrowed inside when he heard a huge explosion. Much of the snowcave had fallen away with a serac, taking with it his sleeping bag, ropes, and axes, and leaving him with his crampons, stove and the top compartment of his backpack, which held two spare axe picks. The next morning he made a descent of an extremely steep ice wall to reach the top of the French Ridge, where he located "old and dubious" fixed ropes (one of which disintegrated in his face while he rappelled). He reached the foot of the face that evening, suffering from, among other things, frostbite. (*High Mountain Sports* 153)

Aconcagua, Polish Route Variant. A Spanish group from Aragon opened on January 18 a variant to the 1934 Polish Route. This new variant follows the original Polish Route to 5900 meters, then shifts to the right edge of the Glacier de los Polacos (north), where the climbing alternates from rock to