

Kopp on May 15; a traverse of Mount Logan by four Czech climbers starting from the AlCan Highway in Canada, climbing up the east ridge and down the King Trench, where they built a raft and floated 40 miles to Ultima Thule's lodge on the Chitina River, only to be greeted and escorted back to Canada by the RCMP and U.S. Customs officers for not returning the borrowed car they left near Kluane; the first ascent of Mount Anderson, by Danny Kost and Ruedi Homberger, on May 1; and on June 9, a solo climb of Mount Huxley by Paul Claus after landing at 11,500 feet on its western flank.

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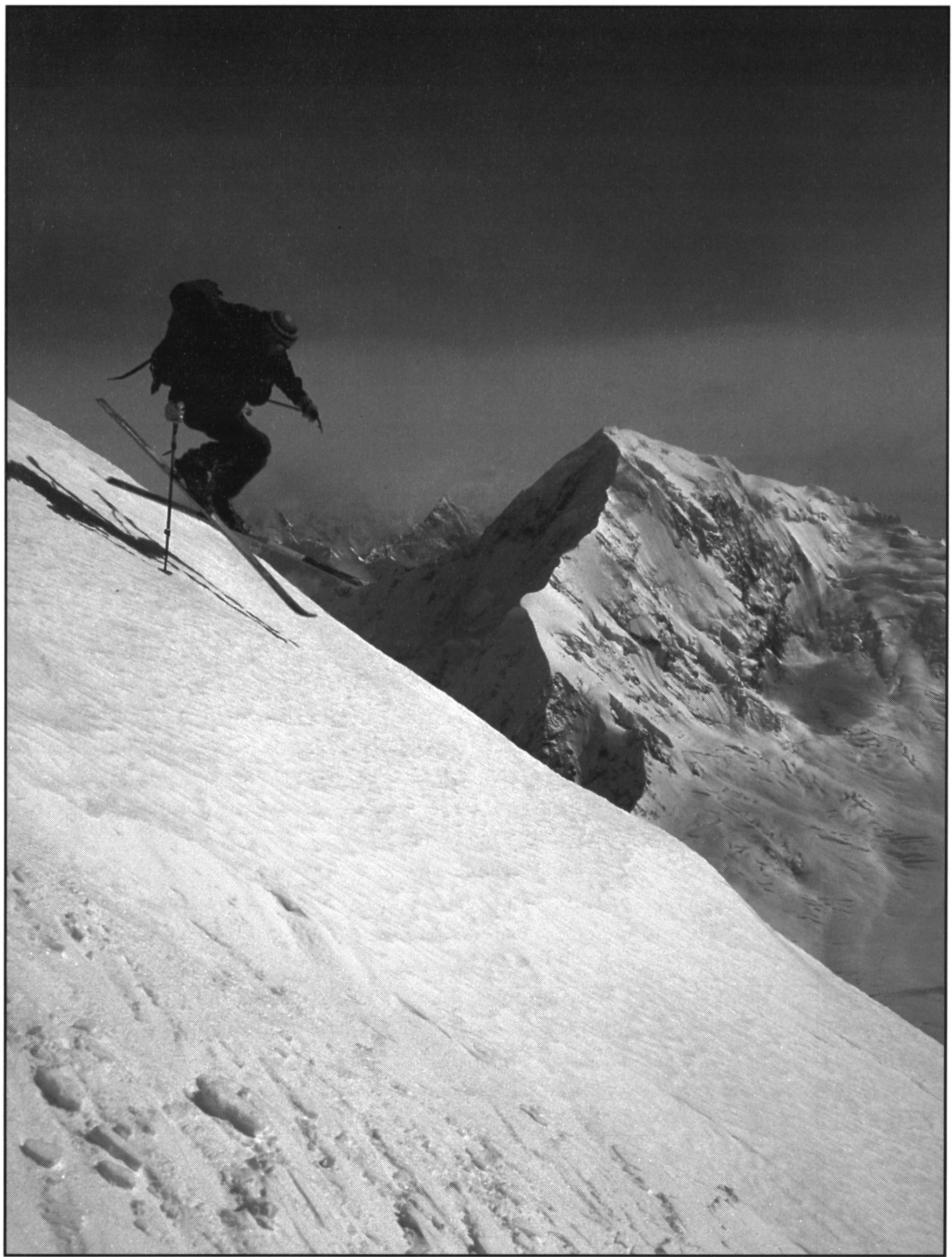
*Mount Saint Elias, First Winter Ascent.* On February 13, 1996, David Briggs, Gardner Heaton and Joe Reichert were flown to 2,300 feet on the Tyndall glacier, and, over the course of the next 30 days, ascended the southwest ridge of Mount Saint Elias. Their goal had been to attempt St. Elias from the ocean, thereby climbing 18,008 feet in less than 18 miles, possibly the largest vertical gain in the shortest distance in the world. Compromise occurred when reconnaissance photos revealed how broken up the first 2,000 feet of the Tyndall was, and the unusually dry winter left it entirely exposed. From Camp I the team made a possible variation (the "Milk Bowl") to the Harvard route, bypassing 2,000 feet of loose fourth class climbing by traversing northwest under a hanging glacier to a couloir that led directly to the 7,800 foot plateau. The team submitted on February 29, and on their descent, on March 5, climbed Haydon Peak via its west ridge. A full account of their climb appears earlier in this journal.

*Mount Fairweather, First Ski Descent.* Dave Braun and I carved rime ice from the 15,300-foot summit of Mount Fairweather on April 29. Shannon Walsh reached 13,800 feet on the 11-day expedition. Fairweather rises just 15 miles from the open ocean, and we were enchanted by views of the Pacific throughout most of the 10,500-foot *Carpe* route. We skied 8,500 feet, all on free-heel gear. Three sections of beautiful, but exposed, knife-edge help make this one of North America's "Fifty Classic Climbs," but they were unskiable.

Summit day was windless but lightly snowing with one to two miles of visibility. On the descent, sections of blue ice below the 13,800-foot false summit were veiled by new snow, rendering them "unreadable" and therefore unsafe to ski. The terrain below 12,500 feet was skied in its entirety. A 40° ridge followed by a similarly angled face provided excellent carving for 2,200 feet above the high camp at 10,300 feet. A strategically located flying buttress off the main *Carpe Ridge* provided an aesthetic, avalanche safe, and wind-protected niche for one three-man tent.

Below, it was 300 feet of 20- to 35-degree powder skiing on a broad ridge. There was a classic ski couloir between 7,700 and 10,000 feet. The lower *Carpe* was depleted of snow from a relatively dry winter in Alaska, forcing us to climb higher in the icefall and find alternative access to the ridge. The couloir increased from 40- to 50-degree and became enclosed by 300-foot stone walls as it narrowed to 200 centimeters.

Kurt Gloyer of Gulf Air flew over Glacier Bay at 10,000 feet for 90 air miles from Haines, and landed our threesome at 4,700 feet, only a stone's throw from the route's beginning. A zig-zagging system of ramps provided fine corn snow skiing for 1,200 feet through the goblinsque formations of the ocean-backdropped icefall. Above it, we skinned evasively up avalanche aprons, which later provided fine skiing to a first camp near the base of the couloir. A summit bid on April 23 was thwarted at 13,000 feet by high winds. Dave and I skied the couloir and



*Dave Braun on the first ski descent of Mount Fairweather.* Tyson Bradley

icefall unencumbered to bring up more supplies in between six feet of snow that fell in four days, substantiating Fairweather's reputation as a gross misnomer.

TYSON W. BRADLEY, *Unaffiliated*