

CHILE

NORTHERN ANDES

Cerro Pajonales. Our aim was to ascend Cerro Pajonales (5958 m), highest in the Pajonales chain north-northeast of the railroad station of Socompa. We reached the end of the motorable road at the Llano (plains) de Pajonales and then marched southwest to the base of the mountain. From a camp at around 15,100 feet we reached the summit on February 10 over talus and varying ground, but no snow or ice. Although it was believed that the peak was unclimbed, we found a short metal rod encrusted into the summit ground, possibly the work of surveyors. Climbers were Ricardo Artalejo, Luis Durand, Eduardo Ruiz and I.

JOSÉ MARTÍNEZ H., *Madrid, Spain*

Cerro Zorrita, Sierra Almeida. On March 2, Edward T. Hobaugh and I departed Antofagasta with Chilean Gaston Oyarzun providing logistics and transportation. We established a base camp near the Lullaillaco massif in Quebrada de las Zorritas at an estimated 13,500 feet on March 3 under perfect weather conditions. On March 4 and 5, Hobaugh and I dodged threatening weather, including severe lightning, and ascended two remote points some distance from our base camp in order to acclimate. On the 6th we made an alpine start and ascended the quebrada to the east and climbed Cerro Zorrita (17,780'). The route of ascent was from the south col, thence the east ridge. The summit held a roughly constructed stone windbreak. On the descent we climbed over the 16,800 foot point separating Cerro Zorrita and Cerro Inca. On the summit we found a maze of beautifully wind-sculpted rocks. Plans to attempt Lullaillaco were thwarted by continued severe weather. Research conducted at the Club library upon arriving home, and by Dr. Evelio Echevarría, failed to reveal a modern ascent of Cerro Zorrita.

JOHN EDWARD LONGNECKER

Agua Negra Region, Central Andes. In January, Horacio Sánchez went to this important zone with many virgin peaks. He ascended solo a peak (ca. 5100-5200 m) between the Paso de Agua Negra (4779 m) and the Glaciar de Agua Negra, a little north of the summits ascended by our party some years ago (see *AAJ* 1993, p.174, and *AAJ* 1994, pp. 203-204). It was the second ascent of the mountain, named Cerro Raquel by the first party in 1986. Cerro Raquel lies on the border between Argentina and Chile.

MARCELO SCANU, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Famatina Ridge, La Rioja. This range is the highest of the Sierras Pampeanas, a Precambrian ridge. The major summit is Famatina or Cerro General Manuel Belgrano (6096 m). There are many minor summits around the principal. One of these, of 5800 meters, was ascended solo in May by Horacio Sánchez. He departed from Los Bayitos (4300 m) and took a snow tongue of 40 degrees and 400 meters up to the rounded top.

MARCELO SCANU, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Cerro Bonete Chico, New Route, Central Andes. This mountain, with a revised height of 6759 meters, has been misidentified many times. Only with the new maps of a few years ago has the confusion ended. Bonete Chico ("Little Cone," this because of the cone summit)—is really much higher than Bonete Grande, a modest summit of 5943 meters ascended some years ago by a party

from La Rioja. These summits, as nearly all of the zone, are really volcanoes; Bonete Chico is one of the highest volcanoes on earth. Bonete Chico has been ascended mostly from the east and in later years from the north.

In October, 1993, a large group from La Rioja reached Laguna Brava. From there Horacio Sánchez and Pablo Ticac attempted the south face of the volcano, reaching 6300 meters. In 1986, Mir from Mendoza claimed the first ascent of the face, but the group that made the 1996 ascent found no traces of his ascent. On November 9, 1996, a large group directed by Jaime Suárez (a Spanish resident in Argentina) that consisted of Mexican Himalayist Mari Carmen Peña, Hans Siebenhaar (a German resident in Argentina), and Argentines Juan Herrera, Laura Suárez, Alejandro Giménez, two others and I departed from the village of Vinchina, to Laguna Brava, a huge 14 kilometer lake with salt islands, a large destroyed airplane and pink flamingos—all at 4200 meters. We camped in the refugio Laguna Brava on the northwest part of the lake. On the 10th we went to the nearby Inca ruins and part of the group ascended Cerro Diente de Leche (ca. 4400 m), ascended by Mir in 1986. On the 11th some of us went by car and others walked the 21 kilometers to Base Camp on the southwest flank of Bonete Chico. I had to descend by car because of altitude problems. The next day, I climbed solo a nice shaped hill (4368 m) named “Torte Chica” by Mir who ascended it for first time. I was the second. On the 14th, I ascended solo Cerro Morado o Tambero (5230 m) by its south flank. I departed at 5 a.m., and ascended the lower summit (5158 m, second ascent), where I found traces of Mir and other companions. Before midday I stood on the highest summit, making its second ascent and finding a document of a 1986 party (not Mirs). My GPS reading was 5230 meters.

Meanwhile, the group began to ascend the southwest route. They departed from Base Camp at 4650 meters. The first camp was erected at 5250 meters and the second at 5900 meters. On the 15th they all made the summit, calling the route *Ruta Gepese*. On the 16th we all met in the hut and descended to Vinchina by the Comecaballos road, the same used in the approach.

MARCELO SCANU, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Cerro Polleras, New Route, Central Andes. This Himalayan-like mountain, on the Mendoza border with Chile, has not yet had a revised height. Estimates range from 6232 meters to 6295 meters; Chilean authority Dr. Evelio Echevarría states that it is 5947 meters. It was first ascended by Reichert in 1908 after his fourth attempt. In 1946 it was climbed by Argentines Huerta, Parra and González, in 1954 by Argentines Joos, Kark and Guajardo and in 1957 by Chileans Bión González, Tangol and Meier. All ascended the west route, the Argentinians approaching from Punta de Vacas and the Chileans from their country. Reichert tried to ascend the east route but couldn't because of the difficulties of this ridge. In January, 1995, Martín Molina and Adrián Cangiani from Mendoza tried to ascend the route but only reached a subsidiary summit of 5000 meters, the high point reached by Reichert in his attempt.

In February, 1996, the same pair went to the east ridge once more, which has 45- to 70-degree ice with sections of rotten arsenic. Many rock towers break the ridge so the team was forced to go slightly to the north face. They also found penitentes and bergschrunds. The Base Camp was on the glacier's base at 4200 meters, the first camp at 5000 meters, the second at 5500 meters on the ridge and the last one, a bivy at 6100 meters. The summit was reached on February 8, 1996.

MARCELO SCANU, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*