

Soon the climbing became more difficult than we knew it should be. Others had made the same mistake, so we used bail slings already in place to rap down and left to the correct line.

We maintained our wayward tendencies as we ascended, getting lost no less than four times before knowing for sure we were on route at the unmistakable Guano Chimney. Having wormed up the chimney, and sporting a fresh coat of guano, we wandered up the slabs of the first ledge, scrambled to the second ledge and got off route yet again when Hans led a striking but tricky pitch of climbing to get off the end of the second ledge. Back on route for the Pendulum Pitch, I led across surprisingly dry rock, stepping around just a couple patches of ice. Hans led the final section, topping out in the soft, burnished yellow of evening sun. We summited the Grand at 7:15 p.m., exactly 12 hours from when we had summited Teewinot.

Moving over all-too familiar terrain on the descent, we made it to the developed trail near the Platforms before having to turn on our headlamps, and back to our car by 10 p.m.

MARK NEWCOMB

Mt. Moran, Northeast Ridge, First Descent. On May 14, I completed the first descent of Mount Moran's classic northeast ridge, solo and on a snowboard. Hans Johnstone, Rob Haggart and I attempted the route in February but were forced to retreat due to inclement weather and poor visibility. This ridge is the sight of the November 21, 1950 plane crash, and the route was one of the last of the unskied/unsnowboarded classics left in the Tetons, with over 6,000 vertical feet of elevation gain. I skied across Jackson Lake, then skinned halfway up the ridge on 130-cm skis. After the snow became too steep, I abandoned the skis and post-holed up the rest of the ridge to the top of the face. It was a treat to bask in the sun's warmth, overlooking Idaho! I was traveling very light and took only ski poles, leaving crampons and axes at home. The snow had softened during the day slightly and now, at 3 p.m., the sun had left the face, leaving firm snow. I took the basket off one of my poles and had it ready to use for self-arrest if necessary. On the descent I encountered variable snow, from powder to firm sun-baked snow to breakable crust and back to powder again. It was an incredibly enjoyable descent, looking down the ridge with Jackson Lake looming below. I completed the climb and descent in 14 hours car-to-car.

STEPHEN KOCH, *unaffiliated*

WIND RIVER RANGE

Mt. Sacagawea, Northwest Face. On September 3, after humping into Titcomb Basin with enough gear for 15 days in the wilderness, my brother Jamie and I established a first ascent on the northwest face of Mt. Sacagawea. The incredible *Dixie Chickens* (5.9R, ten pitches) begins 200 meters to the north of the classic South Summit/West Face rib route pioneered by Fred Beckey in 1969. This shadowed 1,500-foot route is everything you want in an alpine tour: classic hand-jamming and finger-locking, runouts, loose rocks, no crowds and over a two-day walk back to safety. The route is named after Arkansas' desperate quest to have more chickens within its political boundaries than people on the planet.

WILLIAM MCREE ANDERSON, IV

Ambush Peak, East Face, and Other Ascents. The Wind River Mountains of Wyoming harbor many unclimbed walls and much beautiful scenery. On August 28, Chuck Calef and I

established a new route on the ca. 2,000-foot east face of Ambush Peak. The year before we had been turned back due to bad weather. This year we were luckier. We spent a few days “warming up,” establishing a few new routes and variations to existing routes, including *McMuffin* (II 5.8R, six pitches) on the left side of the obvious M-dike on Point 12,187, which finishes with the big white dihedral to the gully between Point 12,187 and Point 12,173. We also added a direct start to the Mt. Bonneville traverse, from the southwest.

Having established a direct start of 600 feet of slab climbing (5.8R) to the Grey Ledges last year, this year we solo climbed up via the East Chimney Route and traversed into the Grey Ledges. From this point, the climbing goes straight up (5.6) and trends right (5.9) toward the “Inverted Staircase,” the right end of the big roof system dominating the center of the east face. Remarkable features let us cruise through the feared Inverted Staircase for two pitches (5.9) to a big corner. After a third-class traverse on grassy ledges, a diagonal line through a vertical garden of grass and dihedrals (5.8) led to some wet sections and the “Tower” (5.9), a large chimney system ending in a pillar. From the Tower, the route goes straight toward the main summit (5.8), passing some stacked door-sized death flakes, and finishing up an easy chimney. The climb took 12 hours and included 12 long pitches (mostly 50m) above the Grey Ledges. We expected more difficult climbing, but the route follows surprising lines of knobs and good cracks on mostly excellent rock. We called the route *Wish You Were Here* (IV 5.9).

Last summer there were, as far as I know, two other teams attempting the east face of Ambush Peak. One team made an attempt straight up to what I called the Grey Ledges and returned from there. The other team made an attempt to the left of the middle of the east face, angling out toward the south face. In this region an old fixed rope is hanging. We left nothing on the route; no bolts were drilled and no pitons were used.

THOMAS LEITNER, *unaffiliated*

Mt. Hooker, Northwest Passage. In mid-September, Ryan Hokanson and I hired two horses to pack our luggage up to Hailey Pass. Our objective was the north face of Mount Hooker, a 2,000-foot vertical expanse of beautiful orange granodiorite. After establishing a base camp among the krumholtz and talus below the wall, we began scouting for a passage through the vertical seas above. The western portion of the face was not visible from our camp, but as we approached it, we found it bathed in late afternoon sun. The prospect of climbing in warm sunshine, in this reputedly frigid place, seemed inviting. We studied the wall for a time and decided on a line. Our proposed route started in a conspicuous corner and roof system that travels up and left through the bottom third of the dead vertical northwest face of Mount Hooker. It actually linked more obvious features than most of the previously established routes, but it also sported a conspicuous blank area. During the next five days of intermittently stormy weather, we were able to fix five pitches of sustained A3 broken by periods of intriguing free climbing. This carried us through the initial corner and roof system, and into the bottom of the blank section, which yielded to 5.9 face climbing. After a day spent “hydrating” by soaking up rainwater at base camp, the clouds ebbed and were replaced by a flood of calm, blue sky.

Time to sail! Jugging and hauling brought us to our bivy with time to spare. From this vantage point, the wall above did not appear so featureless. I left my aiders at the belay and began free climbing. Flakes that had been invisible from the ground provided hearty laybacks and locking jams. Soon I was 200 feet above the portaledge. I had navigated the remainder of our