

both John Auden and Michael Spender, brothers of famous poets and who were with him in the Karakoram, hated one another; and that Smythe was a cold-blooded ego maniac.

Steele does offer fresh perspectives on Shipton's climbing career: the degree to which he had to live off his writings, his development as a self-taught surveyor, his absent-mindedness and lamentable organizing skills, his naïveté about those enemies in the Alpine Club and the Royal Geographical Society that sacked him from the leadership of the 1953 Everest expedition. Steele's chapter on this incident seems to reflect good research and reporting. In the appendix, Steele cites the names of over a dozen sources interviewed, including Hillary and Hunt (who checked the draft for accuracy). The conclusion Steele draws is that Eric brought this on himself more than he was ill done by others. This account should demolish whatever remains of the old rumor that he'd made enemies by cuckolding one of the climbing Establishment.

Thus far, my review has failed to convey the pleasure this book gave me. It is not a great evocation of the man, but an enjoyable reminder. The reader is left with a hundred fresh little details that would have dissolved in time and floated into the ether unless rescued by Steele. There is also a wonderful sprinkling of old photographs. The climbing community is lucky to have this presumably last look at the great explorer who defined the mountaineering ethics of a later generation.

JOHN THACKRAY

Addicted to Danger: A Memoir about Affirming Life in the Face of Death. Jim Wickwire and Dorothy Bullit. Pocket Books: New York, 1998. Black-and-white photos. 352 pages. \$24.00.

On a grass field 100 yards long in the desert area of Central Washington State, a football star named Jim Wickwire ran beyond the goal posts to a career as a pioneer alpinist in world mountaineering. Jim Wickwire's memoirs, written with his friend Dorothy Bullit, are a collection of some of his expeditions that unfortunately involved tragedy—tragedy beyond talking about until this book.

In the introduction, Wickwire says his co-writer, Dorothy Bullit, “insisted I deal with issues I had never before faced, let alone published.” Perhaps for most of us who have been close to tragedy in the mountains, dealing with the truth and circumstances of a death are hard enough to cope with on a personal level, let alone share and communicate to the public in a book.

The first chapter tells the tragic tale of young Chris Kerrebrock's death in a crevasse on the south face of Mt. McKinley. I don't believe any mountaineer—no matter how case hardened—cannot help but shed a tear upon reading this chapter. Next, Wickwire tells of his love of family and how he first started climbing. He recounts nail-biting adventures on the Willis Wall of Mt. Rainier and the failed attempt on K2 in 1975. His tenacious desire and drive would see him return to K2 and reach the summit, but on a training climb in Alaska, in preparation for his second attempt, his good friends Dusan Jagersky and Alan Givler would perish before his eyes while descending Peak 8440'. The tale of this accident and subsequent search for the bodies is emotionally described.

The fifth chapter recounts what Wickwire considers his greatest achievement: the first American ascent of K2. This adventure was a great expedition that showed true grit and brings out the usual in-house personality issues that had to be overcome to succeed. The following chapters go from “good times” to another high-altitude accident at 26,000 feet, this time on the north face of Everest, where Marty Hoey tragically falls to her death while climbing to high camp with Wickwire.

Unfortunately, Wickwire's association with death up close and personal does not end. One chapter tells of his futile attempt to find his missing friend, Japanese hero Naomi Uemura, on Mt. McKinley. Another relates the unbelievable circumstances of the senseless murders of his law partner, Chuck Golmark, his wife and two sons by a crazy man. Finally, climbing out of the "death zone," the reader relives happier times and expeditions as Wickwire tells of first ascents in South America and more attempts on Everest with his good friend John Roskelley.

Fate (fortunately!) also blessed Wickwire, giving him a wife as tough as himself. Mary Lou Wickwire, his wife of 37 years, is the heroine of the book, as he unabashedly admits.

I have not read a mountaineering book in a long time that held my attention so thoroughly as did this memoir. Its weakness is that if the reader is looking for a literary artwork, this book is not it. However, the truth of these tales and the candor of how they are told transcend the vertical world of white-knuckle adventure to a soul-bearing catharsis as a personal witness to tragedy. Jim Wickwire, on his long journey as a pioneering mountaineer, is a victim of circumstance. He chose to tread a razor's edge between the abyss of death and the ecstasy of life. Fate had him straddling that edge more often than he deserved.

CHRIS KOPCZYNSKI

On Belay! The Life of Legendary Mountaineer Paul Petzoldt. Raye C. Ringholz. Mountaineers Books: Seattle, 1998. 272 pages. \$24.95.

Paul Petzoldt is a mountaineering icon who, at 91 years of age, represents a lifetime of achievement in exploration, alpinism, mountain guiding, outdoor education, and environmental awareness. In *On Belay! The Life of Legendary Mountaineer Paul Petzoldt*, Raye Ringholz takes the reader on a tour from the farm country of southern Idaho to the upper reaches of K2 in 1938, discussing these and many other facets of Paul Petzoldt's life. The book provides answers to questions that I have always had about this legendary climber, such as: what was the 1938 K2 expedition like from Paul Petzoldt's perspective? What really happened during his falling out with NOLS? Was Petzoldt really put on trial for murder in India?

Petzoldt's Teton years, the part of his life with which I am most familiar, are, for the most part, accurately portrayed. His Teton career is fascinating not only because he was, beginning with the fifth ascent of the Grand, one of the great pioneers of the range, but also by the fact that he is still very much alive today. Petzoldt is a living bridge between modern American climbing and its early beginnings, which were really not very long ago. Ringholz chronicles some of the great Paul Petzoldt/Glen Exum stories, such as their chivalrous defense of Jackson local Dorothy Redman one Saturday night. This good-old western barroom brawl ends with local villain John Emory being thrown across the porch and down the front steps of the old Jenny Lake dance hall by a well-placed Petzoldt punch.

Ringholz also provides, for the most part, accurate, well-researched historical detail concerning early Teton climbing history. A few errors are noticeable, such as the dialogue with an inquisitive Billy Owen over Petzoldt's ascent in 1924 of the Grand Teton with friend Ralph Herron. When asked what the youths had found on the summit, the plaque commemorating Owen's ascent is given as "proof" that the boys had made it to the top. They had actually seen the metal "Rocky Mountain Club" pennant that the Owen party had left up there; the plaque did not arrive until the dedication ceremony of Grand Teton National Park some five years later. Generally, however, the key role that Petzoldt played in making so much of the early Teton climbing history is handled well.