

5.8. This route ranks as one of the best and most continuous chimney climbs in California outside Yosemite Valley.

In August, 1998, Em Holland and partner completed the first free ascent of the old Hechtel Southeast Face route on Columbia Finger, climbing a steep offwidth/stem problem to free the aid pitch at 5.9. They found several of Hechtel's old aid pitons on this pitch, some of which they were able to remove by hand, belying the current view that such items are "permanent installations."

Also unreported from August 1998, Bob Harrington and I completed the first free ascent (and second overall ascent) of *Planaria* on Temple Crag in the High Sierra, first climbed 21 years earlier by Gordon Wiltsie and Jay Jensen. The first two (aid) pitches were bypassed by establishing a two-pitch variation to the right of the original line. Higher, we climbed the left side of "The Flatworm" via the same offwidth that had ejected Wiltsie and Jensen with a 30-foot fall during the first ascent. After climbing the route, we continued to the summit via the upper buttress, rating the entire climb V 5.10R.

BRUCE BINDER

*Peak 12,600'+, Direct Northeast Face, Consolation Prize, Previously Unreported.* In August, 1998, Bob Cable and I climbed the large pyramid-shaped unnamed peak half a mile north of the twin summits of Seven Gables. The peak, as seen from the Seven Gables Lakes Basin (i.e., from the east), is separated from the Seven Gables summits by a large col that intersects the long north ridge and east face. Our route began directly below the summit at the base of a slightly bulging column that runs straight up the center of the northeast face. Due to a steep snowfield, we traversed in from the left across a face to reach the column about 100 feet above its base. We climbed cracks on the left side of the column, which eventually took us onto the center, then the right side of the column. From here, an arête arched up and left for four more easier pitches to the summit. We descended the snow slopes, dropping east from the notch that separates this peak from Seven Gables. This was a quality route with good rock and steep climbing. Using a 60-meter rope, we completed *Consolation Prize* (IV 5.9) in 11 pitches.

ERIC TIPTON, *Rim of the World Climbing Club*

*Temple Crag, North Peak, The Crystal Way, Previously Unreported.* The *Crystal Way* (IV 5.10a) provides a day-long adventure up the 1,500-foot wall of North Peak (upper buttress) on semi-difficult ground. Scott Scully and I climbed the route in June, 1996. Find two crack systems immediately left of the Northwest Couloir. Climb the right one for two pitches. Here the route crosses the lower buttress descent route. Climb up 400 feet on fourth-class ground. On the right is a 300-foot tower that is detached from the upper north face. Traverse right to the base of the tower and climb a vertical jam crack, avoiding an obvious loose alcove on the right. Belay on a large ledge, then climb a left-facing corner and traverse up and right onto the right edge of the tower. Belay in a sandy gully between the tower and the north face. Continue up the arête of the tower to its top. At this point you are at the base of the arête that forms the prominent left-facing dihedral (*Mendenhall Route*) on the left side of the north face. Ascend directly up the arête (5.10a) and gain a shallower dihedral just right of the prominent dihedral. Climb this to its top and move right onto the face of the upper buttress. There are many crystal pockets in this area of the face; please leave them in place. A final pitch leads to the summit ridge of the north peak. A few fourth-class