

CHUGACH MOUNTAINS

Mt. Sergeant Robinson, north face. Cash Joyce and Carl Oswald, who has been extremely active in putting up routes in the western and northwestern Chugach over the last few years, did a 12-hour blitz of the previously unclimbed north face of Mt. Sergeant Robinson (10,450'). The route was about 4,500 feet long, mostly a straightforward snow-and-ice face with alpine ice as steep as 80 degrees. It is probably the fastest way up the mountain from the highway and a good alternative to the knify, long, and loose north ridge. While the hangers in the area might seem frightening from a distance, the route is mostly free of objective hazard. The 13-miles up Glacier Creek is far easier by snow machine or skis in winter than as a summertime trudge. The climb also typifies the potential of these mountains—big ice faces, terrifying rock quality, and relief on the scale of famous big routes in the Canadian Rockies.

EVAN PHILLIPS

Cantata Peak, North Ridge. On August 5 Ryan Campbell and I headed to the south fork of Eagle River, intent on checking out the unclimbed 4,000-foot north ridge of Cantata Peak (6,450'). After hiking six miles we gained a hanging valley above Eagle Lake and gained the ridge through swirling fog. The first half of the ridge was mostly tenuous fourth-class scrambling with one roped pitch (5.4). At 5,000 feet we donned rock shoes to climb a short 5.7 chimney/offwidth. We continued, simul-climbing, until the ridge became a terribly exposed knife-edge. A rappel off a gendarme and a beautiful 5.5 traverse on the crest of the ridge brought us to the chossy upper ridge. Five hundred feet of easy but exposed scrambling took us to the summit. We descended the popular west ridge and cruised back to the trailhead, arriving after 14 hours on the go. The climb was similar to the East Ridge of Edith Cavell, but with crappier rock and a shorter crux. We rate the route III/IV 5.7.

EVAN PHILLIPS

ST. ELIAS MOUNTAINS

Mt. Hobbs; Middle Peak. In early April Ruedi Homberger, Reto Reusch, and a friend they call Gonzo made the first ascent of a 10,500-foot peak between Celeno Peak and Ultima Thule Peak. They accessed the peak from Canyon Creek Glacier and named it Mt. Hobbs, for an Ultima Thule Outfitters cat who has more than nine lives. They then attempted a peak they were calling Middle Peak, but were forced to retreat by avalanches. Charley Sassara and Carlos Buhler also attempted this peak but encountered similar hazards.

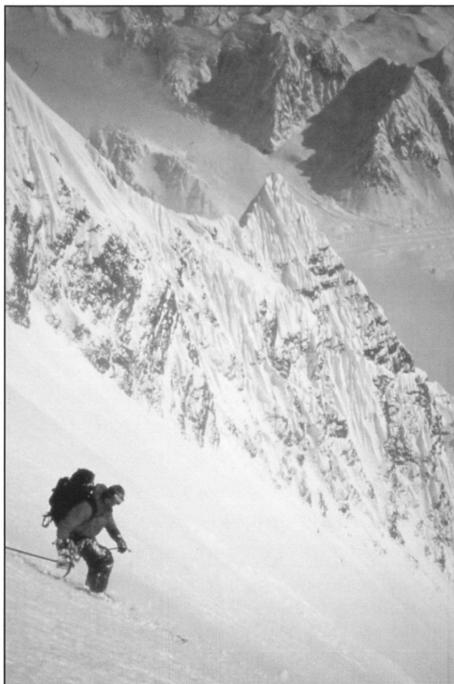
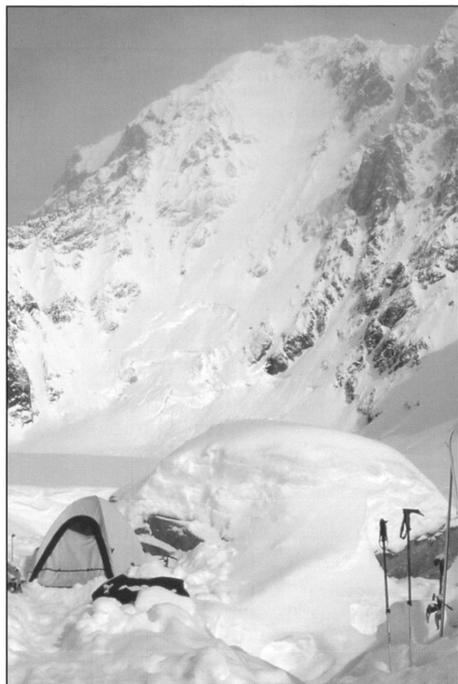
BASED ON INFORMATION FROM PAUL CLAUS AND RUEDI HOMBERGER, *Switzerland*

University Peak, South Face; Barnard Glacier, ascents and ski descents. On April 1 Paul Claus dropped Bob Kingsley, Lance McDonald, John Whedon, and me at 7,000 feet, below the south face of University Peak. We had come to the St. Elias Range to attempt the first ascent of this 7,200-foot face. As skiers we were also drawn to the fall line, unbroken from top to bottom. God's own ski shot! Paul had attempted the face several times and generously passed one of his

dreams on to us. It felt great having the Claus clan behind us. For the next four days we watched the face, skiing some sweet powder to gain different perspectives on our route. We climbed the bottom quarter one afternoon to an overhanging outcrop that offered the only semblance of protection for a tent on the entire face. A forecast from Paul was for the weather to “fall apart in the next day or two.” We decided to go for it in one push.

April 6 was spent maximizing caloric intake. At 10:30 p.m. we left camp in a light snow. The full moon had risen over Mt. Donna, surrounded by a huge halo. All of us expected this to be just a little full moon ski tour. We reached the outcrop in three hours. As we brewed, stars appeared overhead. Continue we must. Dawn found us covered in frost and level with the seracs that hang from the south ridge. Snow conditions were optimal: six to eight inches of sloughed powder over ice. At around 8 a.m. we traversed left, hoping to find a place to chill on the ridge. Exposure there was even greater: huge granite cliffs dropped to the Hawkins Glacier. At 10:30 a.m. we finally reached a level spot at the very top of the south face. We were still roughly 300 vertical feet below the summit but decided to save our energy for the descent. We climbed down into a tight tube, where we found good ice for a V-thread. A 200-foot rap brought us to skiable snow. The first few thousand feet were 50 degrees or more, tapering to 45 degrees below. As we relaxed on the final 40-degree powder, Paul’s Beaver rounded the corner, carrying the next of several University Peak ski-descent teams.

Just before dark a knock on the Megamid had us revelers tipping over assorted kettles and bottles. Paul, after swapping planes, had cut his engine near the summit and coasted into the



Left: Base camp beneath the 7,200-foot south face of University Peak. The highpoint of the various ski descents was the final rock outcrop 300 feet beneath the summit. All skiers followed the main snowy face, some on the left, some on the right. *Dave Hanning* Right: John Whedon during the first ski descent of the south face of University Peak (from 300 feet beneath the summit, with some rappelling). *Lorne Glick*

alpenglow to bring us congratulatory beers. On the 10th, with six days left, three of us (Lance had frostbite) made a plan with Paul for a pickup to the east. We crossed an easy pass east of University via a straight and narrow glacier. After setting up camp at 7,000 feet on the main Barnard, we skied several 10,000-foot peaks. Incidentally, Paul, having flown very near the summits of the peaks in this area with an accurate altimeter, thinks that actual elevations are higher than those listed on maps. He believes that University Peak is almost 15,000 feet high, rather than the accepted 14,470 feet.

LORNE GLICK

University Peak, south face skiing. Shortly after the above ascent and ski descent, on April 18, Brad Barlage and Dave Hanning climbed high on the south face and descended on skis. Barlage turned around about 1,000 feet from the summit and skied the face from 13,780 feet. Hanning reached about 14,300 feet. After nearly disastrous attempts to ski from higher, he down-climbed to the ledge from which Barlage started and skied from there. Hanning writes, "However, the face itself still has not seen a summit. This jewel will shine brightly among the many in the University Range of the Wrangell-St. Elias Mountains until someone comes to claim her." The team skied many chutes in the area as well, and ski-toured in the western Wrangells.

On May 13 the husband-and-wife team of John Chilton and Lisa Korthals also climbed high on this face and skied down. Photographer Blake Jorgensen and Chris Korthals, Lisa's brother, who served as a safety guide for Blake, were also on the trip but did not ski the face. Chilton and Lisa Korthals reached a high point of about 13,500 feet. Writes Chilton, "It seems both the previous descent parties climbed and skied the climber's left side of the face. Being two weeks later in the year, with the sun packing more punch everyday, we felt there were more threatening objective hazards on the left side and elected to tackle the face from the climber's right side. During our descent slides scoured the left side three times. I read my inclinometer eight times that day, and every time it was between 48 and 52 degrees, for over 7,000 vertical feet." Both parties experienced frigid nighttime temperatures but observed considerable solar warming of the snow during the day.

BASED ON REPORTS FROM JOHN CHILTON, BRAD BARLAGE*, AAC, AND DAVE HANNING*, AAC
*RECIPIENTS OF AN AAC/HELLY HANSEN ADVENTURE GRANT

Baldwin Glacier: Peaks 10,460', 9,450', 10,142', 9,100'. On June 14 Marcus Collins, Phil Fortier, Greg Mueller, and I flew in to the upper Baldwin Glacier with Ultima Thule Outfitters pilot Paul Claus. With our base camp located at 8,000 feet, we climbed several nearby peaks. We made the first ascent of Peak 10,460' by its glaciated west face. The route consisted mostly of 40- to 45-degree snow and bare ice, with a short and notably steeper section of ice around mid-face. After this ascent, we skied across the glacial valley to the west and climbed Peak 9,450' by its south ridge. The most aesthetic mountain of the area is Peak 10,142', of which we made the second ascent by the unclimbed west face. The west face contains a glacial tongue that flows steeply down the edge of a cirque from the summit. The route began with several pitches of moderate ice, followed by long slopes of frozen snow (40- to 50-degrees) interspersed with short bare sections. After summiting we began an unknown descent down the south ridge, where we linked steep snowfields between the cliffs along the ridge. We also skied up Peak 9,100'