

## ELLESMERE ISLAND

*Various ascents, descents, and exploration.* Flying to Ellesmere Island on June 17, Blue Eisele, Jonas Cabiles, and I (all U.S.A.) landed at Mt. Barbeau, intent on trekking to Lake Hazen, the largest freshwater lake in the Arctic, some 50 miles away. We set up camp on the ice cap to the west of Barbeau's summit. From this camp I made the first snowboard descent of Barbeau (8,535'), the highest mountain in the Canadian Arctic, while Eisele and Cabiles made ski descents. The next day Eisele and I climbed, skied, and snowboarded Barbeau's nearest neighbor. I believe these split-board descents, at 81° north, to be the northernmost snowboard descents ever.

From Barbeau Camp we moved toward an unnamed valley that leads to the upper reaches of the Henrietta-Nesmith Glacier. Park wardens previously at Lake Hazen had told us that, to their knowledge, no route from Barbeau to Lake Hazen had been completed, and that no parties had ever traveled via the Henrietta-Nesmith Glacier. We set up Camp II at the entrance to the valley, which we dubbed "Deception Valley," because the scale of the landscape was deceptively large. The following day Cabiles nearly fell into an unseen cavernous crevasse, so we fine-tuned our crevasse-rescue system at Camp III, from which the Henrietta-Nesmith Glacier could be seen. We had chosen to travel with no communication device, but park officials issued us a personal-locator beacon before we were dropped at Barbeau.

As we descended to the upper reaches of the Henrietta-Nesmith Glacier, the ice cap turned from a hollow to a solid compact ice sheet running with melt water. We crossed the five-mile-wide glacier encountering many small ice-river crossings. Arriving near the eastern side of the Henrietta-Nesmith Glacier about 11 miles from its terminus, we erected Camp IV among pools of melt water. As we traveled farther across, the following day, we set ice-screw belays to protect large snowbridge crossings over steep drainages and encountered many more small ice-river crossings.



Rest break before crossing the Henrietta-Nesmith Glacier, Ellesmere Island. Pete Dronkers



Just another melt-stream crossing on Ellesmere Island. Pete Dronkers

Camp V was placed on the edge of the glacier about four miles from its terminus near 100' ice cliffs. We lowered our equipment down these cliffs, because the only option was to attempt to cross several massive drainages that we had noticed in satellite images of the area. We touched down on solid ground after free rappelling and double-carried loads beside the remaining stretches of the glacier and one mile past its terminus. We put Camp VI just a few miles from the north shore of Lake Hazen.

When we reloaded our sleds on the deteriorating lake ice of Hazen, we wondered how much open water would separate us from the shore when we approached the air strip and warden station 11 miles to the east. On the last day of June we arrived safely—and eased the minds of the park wardens who had worried about us. This trip received the Helly Hansen adventure grant, and \$300 for the REI challenge fund.

PETE DRONKERS

## BAFFIN ISLAND

*Great Sail Peak, Rubikon.* Baffin Land—astonishing land of vertical walls, unearthly landscapes, permanent sun. And erotic dreams. Our gang included Alexander Odintsov (continuous leader of crazy project “The Russian Way—Walls of the World”), Valery Rozov (flight leader of even crazier “Russian Extreme Project,” Moscow Batman, Man with Wings), Alexandr Ruchkin (just climber, versatile, moves often, cosmopolite), Alexander Klenov (good climber, singer, doctor, has female fan club), Michael Devi (climber, partner of Klenov), Michael Bakin (kind doctor but jobless during the expedition), Ivan Samoilenko (coordinator), Lev Dorfman (tireless director of video scenery), Dmitry Lifanov (relaxed director of video scenery, singer of Russian folklore, Muscovite), Sergei Porodnov (businessman, porter, sponsor), Vladimir Morozov (Russian-Canadian adventurer and researcher, fisherman and hunter).

Getting to Baffin Land is difficult; it is difficult to get into any fairy tale. Russian emigrants met us at the Toronto airport. Their encounter with us only sharpened their nostalgia for