

summer due to forest fires and locked forestry gates. However, before access control tightened down, Shaun Neufeld, Drew Brayshaw, and Dwayne Barg managed to sneak in and establish The Proof Is in the Pudding (D III 5.10c) on the south face of Ibex Peak. This route is amazingly clean and solid for an alpine climb and is highly recommended.

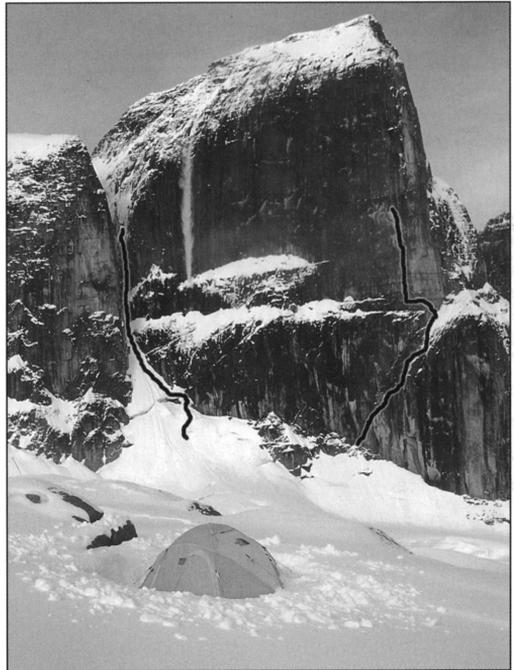
The late fall and winter of 2003-2004 saw several protracted spells of cold weather and produced the best ice for several years. Details will be published in the long-awaited second edition of *West Coast Ice*, which should be out in time for the 2004-2005 winter season.

DREW BRAYSHAW, *Canada*, AAC

*Greyskull Valley.* The Greyskull Valley Expedition included Laura Schmonsees, Trevor Deighton, Andy Rich, and myself. The expedition spent 23 days in June in the Coast Range on the border of British Columbia and Alaska. On June 8 we flew in from Skagway, Alaska, via helicopter to the unexplored valley and established a base camp on a rocky outcrop surrounded by unnamed glaciers and granite peaks. The valley is located about seven miles southwest of Mt. Foster.

The overall weather was extremely unsettled—only three days were without precipitation. We free-climbed and aided 1,000 feet up the north-northeast face of the main tower (Castle Greyskull), before being driven back by storms, lack of continuous crack systems, and friable rock.

On June 28 Andy and I attempted a long alpine route on the same tower, to the east of the aid route. Warm temperatures and slush stopped us after several hard (WI5) pitches. That same evening Laura and Trevor made a 4th class ascent of a peak (“Sweetness”) to the northeast of base camp. Rock climbing in the valley was limited by poor rock quality and bad weather, but alpine routes earlier in the year might have better results.



2003 attempts on Castle Greyskull. Alas, the vertical white line is just a spindrift avalanche. *David Anderson*

DAVE ANDERSON, AAC

*Princess Mountain, Northeast Buttress.* Fred Beckey planned our gathering, and we flew into the Monarch Icefield in early August. Matt Perkins, David Parker, Bill Pilling, Fred, and I set up a camp below the west face of Monarch Mountain. The following morning we set off, without Fred, to explore a possible direct east-to-west route toward Princess Mountain. Matt had seen a photo of a buttress that appeared unclimbed and worth investigating. Fred was nursing a rib

injury from a trip the week before. He elected to rest until he was feeling more fit to climb. As always, though, we were rewarded with his unique humor.

The next day the rest of us crossed the pass that Dudra and Broda had traveled in the early 1950s en route to climbing Monarch, then headed west again to an easy-looking mountain with an elevation of approximately 9,100'. There was a pass on its south rib, and we ascended the rib by walking. There was no sign of human travel on the mountain, so David and I made a cairn on top. We called this mountain The Turtlehead. There was a mountain to the south we called

Flat Top Mountain—over 9,000', with horrible-looking rock and a large, north-facing, low-angle glacier. Flat Top looked nice but would not be an objective for this trip.

The next day we crossed the Dudra-Broda pass again to The Turtlehead and explored west, toward Princess Mountain. We did not know what to expect but encountered only snow slopes, with some crevasses but no icefalls. This shortcut eliminated much time that might have been used traveling north to the main body of the Monarch Icefield.

We camped below the eastern side of Princess Mountain, and the following morning headed onto its northeast buttress, through crevasses and a rotten-snow 'schrund. The four of us climbed mixed terrain, steep snow, ice, and good rock to the summit of Princess. I estimate the difficulty at about 5.5, steep snow and ice, with a little mixed climbing.

On our descent, possibly due to the year's low snowfall, we encountered very different conditions from what Dudra described 50 years before. From the main summit we had to downclimb a pitch of 4th class rock and then traverse and climb to the west snow summit. We descended the Dudra-Broda ascent route on the north arête, then continued south and east to reach camp after sundown. This proved to be a good idea, as opposed to descending snow and ice faces directly, since parts of those descents would have left us above huge crevasses impassable without a parachute or glider. We retraced our route back to Monarch Mountain the next morning.



Approaching the Northeast Buttress route on Princess Mountain.  
Ray Borbon

RAY BORBON, *Kaskade Trad Klan*

*Mt. Blackhorn, Northwest Couloir.* On September 27 I made what I believe was the first ascent of Blackhorn Mountain's Northwest Couloir. Mike King flew Don Serl, Dan Aylward, and me from Bluff Lake to the base of the couloir on the evening before, and we quickly fell asleep on the scree. When we woke at 4 a.m. it felt unsettlingly warm, and we debated whether the couloir