

CLIMBS AND EXPEDITIONS

2005

Accounts from the various climbs and expeditions of the world are listed geographically from north to south and from west to east within the noted countries. We begin our coverage with the Contiguous United States and move to Alaska in order for the climbs in the Alaska's Wrangell Mountains to segue into the St. Elias climbs in Canada.

We encourage all climbers to submit accounts of notable activity, especially long new routes (generally defined as U.S. commitment Grade IV—full-day climbs—or longer). Please submit reports as early as possible (see Submissions Guidelines at the back of this Journal).

For conversions of meters to feet, multiply by 3.28; for feet to meters, multiply by 0.30.

Unless otherwise noted, all reports are from the 2004 calendar year.

NORTH AMERICA

CONTIGUOUS UNITED STATES

Washington

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

Sawtooth Ridge, complete traverse. From August 7 to 9 Wayne Wallace and I made the first full traverse of the remote and rugged Sawtooth Ridge in the Olympic Mountains. Known for its relatively good rock (for volcanic), the ridge includes of 13 named peaks (some more like pinnacles) from Mt. Alpha to Mt. Lincoln. We climbed about 20 peaks and pinnacles, doing our best to stay as close as possible to the ridge and climbing northeast ridges or faces and rappelling southwest ridges and faces. Much of the climbing is on steep pillow lava of moderate grade, with above-average run-outs. The rappels were either off 3/8" webbing slung on horns or blocks or, in a few cases, the rope looped around a pointy summit.

The most popular peak is the highest, Mt. Cruiser (6,104'), which graces the cover of the Olympic Mountains guidebook and is generally considered the only worthy objective in the area. While we believe every summit had been touched, we are quite certain nobody had made the complete traverse in a single push. We approached 10 miles past Flapjack Lakes and Gladys Divide on a wet Saturday and ended up at the base of Alpha in dense clouds with zero visibility. We bivied and hoped the skies would clear that night, as forecast. They did, so we were up early and off.

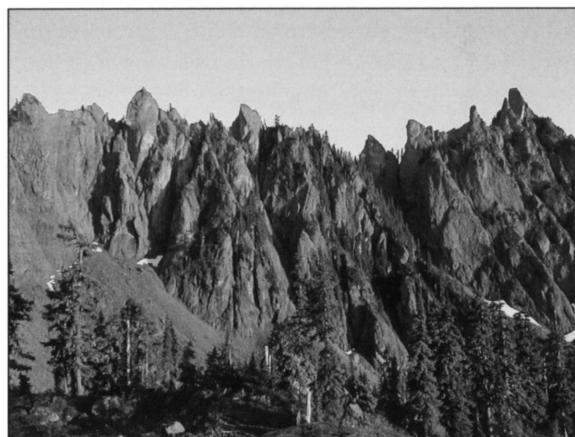
Alpha had two peaks and offered the first view of the complicated traverse. We knew we were in for a great ride with exposure, and our excitement mounted as we rappelled to the base of Cruiser. We chose the purest line by keeping on the ridge, and Wayne led the first of many steep, sparsely protected pitches. Next came an unnamed summit (Blob?), more exposed ridge, and then The Needle. The first pitch of the three Castle Spires was another steep, exposed arête with a memorable overhang. We ended the day by doing The Fin and The Horn. One of the most spectacular pitches was a monster chimney up the northeast face of The Fin. The Horn is not class 4, as rated in the guidebook! Unable to find snow to melt, we were forced to drop from the ridge almost 1,000' to get water. We found a pond and slept well under brilliant stars, in spite of relentless mosquitoes.

Early the next day we ascended scree gullies back to the ridge where we had left it. The last day of climbing was slightly lower elevation, and there was considerable vegetation, mostly small pine

trees, between pinnacles such as Tin Cans 1 & 2 (so named because we found old rusty cans near the summit), The Cleaver, Slab Tower, The Rectagon, Picture Pinnacle, The Trylon, and North Lincoln. We believe our routes up the northeast ridges of Slab Tower, The Rectagon, and Picture Pinnacle to be first ascents. After a complicated series of rappels off North Lincoln, we found the only (obvious!) descent gully, where we dropped our packs, made a quick scramble over to the true summit of Lincoln, returned, and finally dropped off the ridge around 2:00. The steep chute of dirt was puckering, but mellowed to scree, then talus and boulders, before we entered the forest and bushwhacked around a ridge and back to Flapjack Lakes. Slide alder and devil's club reminded us we weren't done yet. The 500' descent down cliffs to the lake was more of a controlled fall; we hung onto bushes and tree limbs until we almost splashed into the crystal water. A swim in the lake cooled and cleaned us for the 7.8-mile hike out to lukewarm



Wayne Wallace balances on a section of the Sawtooth Ridge near Mt. Cruiser. *David Parker*



The northern half of the Sawtooth ridge showing much of the ground covered on the second day of climbing. *David Parker*

beer and chips in the car. Fish and chips and a dozen Hood Canal oysters on the half shell fueled us for the drive home. Grade V 5.8R (old school). Gear: two ropes, medium rack to 3", several small pins, tat cord.

DAVID PARKER, Bainbridge Island, WA

CASCADE RANGE

Washington, summary of activity. [Note: this summary supplements individual reports, mostly of bigger routes, below—Ed.] Previously unreported were two ascents of Poster Peak, by probable new routes, in the summer of 2003. Poster Peak is shown on the Washington Pass quad as Point 7,565', one mile southeast of the Early Winters Spires. It is the terminating high point of the long but mostly flat ridge extending toward Copper Point from the Early Winters massif. Larry Goldie and Blue Bradley climbed the leftmost of the two prominent east-northeast buttresses, as seen from Highway 20 just below the hairpin turn. This high-quality moderate route, which they named Blue Buttress, makes for a great day out, with a one-hour approach. It traverses onto the nose of the buttress from the left on a broad ledge, 200 feet up and left from the toe. From there, staying true to the ridge crest on delightful, sound rock takes one right to the summit in about 12 pitches, the most difficult pitch being near the summit (III 5.7). Steve House free-soloed the rightmost of the two east-northeast buttresses in 45 minutes. The climbing is less continuous than on Blue Buttress but is 5.9 at its hardest. The route begins in a shallow depression on down-sloping, awkward climbing. Two pins are fixed on this first pitch. Subsequent parties have reported as many as 17 roped pitches (III 5.9). Descent for both routes is by a walk-off to the south to the base of the route.

In February 2004 Mt. Fury saw its first winter ascent, by a soloist from the Skagit Valley who prefers to remain anonymous. Mt. Fury was arguably the most impressive and obvious peak in the Cascades to have not been climbed in winter. The reclusive Pickets Range aficionado approached by following the Goodell Creek drainage all the way to Fury from Newhalem. In addition to the main summit, he climbed the West Peak, which is rarely climbed, even in summer.

Over February 19-20 Sky Sjue, Ross Peritore, and Corey Bloom made a ski descent of Mt. Buckner's North Face, making the first winter ascent of the route in the process. They approached up the Quien Sabe Glacier and through the Boston-Sahale col to gain the Boston Glacier.

On June 20 Mike Layton and Jordan Peters climbed a new route on the west face of Cutthroat Peak. They named the six-pitch route Community Service Project (III 5.8R), alluding to their altruistic discovery of the rock's low quality. The climb begins below a dihedral system, trends rightward avoiding blank headwalls and gullies, and finishes at the top of the second southwest gully.

On June 27 Layton and Eric Wolf climbed a new route, Der Dihedral, on the northeast face of Dragontail Peak. The route begins just uphill of the Northeast Couloir route, between the 1962 and 1972 northeast face routes, climbing seven new pitches up the dihedral before joining the Northeast Buttress route at about two-thirds height. Most of the dihedral was 5.8 or easier, but they rated the crux roof 5.10b.

On July 31 Layton and Eric Whirley made the long-awaited second ascent of the North