

pons. The ridge was exposed, with a mixture of broken rock and knife-edge snow and the occasional cornice. There was a 30' tower of loose and broken rock midway along the ridge. Once over the tower, we traversed a corniced ridge to the base of the summit pyramid and belayed a couple of pitches. We crossed a narrow notch, broke through a small cornice, and continued up a short mixed section to a rock outcrop that afforded a belay. We unroped for the final slopes. Exposed traversing and another short mixed section led to the final icy traverse and, finally, we reached the summit and enjoyed awesome views. Mountains everywhere.

Before long we were back in camp looking back up at the summit—our recon turned out to be 15½ hours and over 5,000' of elevation gain.

The weather then turned and kept us in camp for a couple of days, and on May 22 we started down. We struggled back down the rock-covered glacier onto solid ground, and the next day finished the hike to Hubert's Landing and set up camp on the huge gravel plain near the airstrip.

From this camp, on May 24, Cory and James got a 3:00 a.m. start to try Pk. 9,110'. James turned around at 7,950', but Cory kept going and summited via the south-southwest ridge and face. Hubert's sits at around 2,150', so it was a 7,000' elevation gain from camp. On their descent, they surprised a large boar grizzly that had sprawled out across a tiny knoll to sleep the afternoon away. They said he looked up a couple times, but paid them no attention. They said he looked like a big dog stretched out snoozing the day away.

On May 25 Kelly was right on time to pick us up. He got us all on one flight, and we enjoyed sightseeing on our flight back to civilization. It is possible that our climbs of Peaks 10,320' and 9,110' were both first ascents of the peaks.

DANNY KOST, AAC

## ALASKA SAINT ELIAS MOUNTAINS

*Note: Climbs of Mts. Alverstone and Cook, border peaks between Alaska and the Yukon (Canada), are covered in the Canada section of this Journal.*

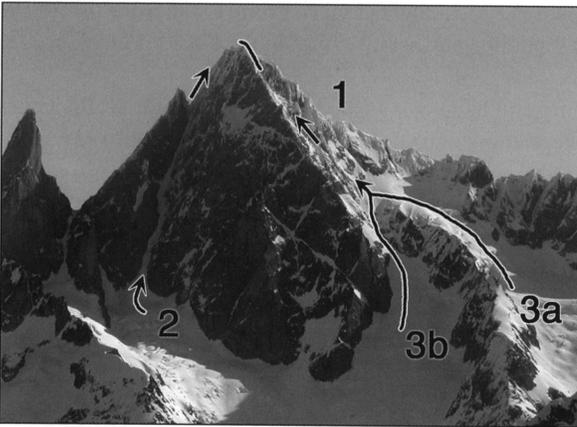
## ALASKA COAST MOUNTAINS

*Mt. Boullard, Foster-Ricci.* Mt. Boullard, a relatively benign-looking peak bordering both the Juneau Ice Field and the terminus of the Mendenhall Glacier to the east, rises abruptly from just above sea level to its 4,200' summit. Unusually good ice conditions in January proved just adequate enough for Nick Foster and me to get up a rarely formed line I have been looking at for several years. We started up the left of two promising ice formations on Boullard's southwest face. We began by simul-climbing for several hundred feet, with ice up to 80°. The steep ice eventually gave way to lower-angle snow, before steepening again. The middle of the route was characterized by brittle, rolling, and ever-thinning 60-80° ice covering compact and poor-quality rock. For lack of a belay, we were forced to simul-climb through the crux section, which, being generally off-vertical save the odd move here and there, was not particularly strenuous, yet insecure and hard to protect. The final 1,000' to the ridge consisted of perfect 50-70° styrofoam, with gear every so often among the rocks, which we quickly shot up in the

setting sun. We climbed the face in five long pitches, taking nine hours, and walked off, taking 15 hours car-to-car. 3,000', IV+ 5.7R/X 85°.

On March 19 Nick Foster, Will Wacker, and I completed the second winter ascent of the Main Tower of the Mendenhall Towers (possibly the second winter ascent of any of the seven towers) by the standard route (IV AI4). The first winter ascent, by John Svenson and company, took place more than 25 years ago. Our ascent took 13 hours round-trip from the south branch of the Mendenhall Glacier.

STEFAN RICCI



Mt. Burkett (9,730') from the southwest. (1) Southeast Ridge (Bryan-Harhill-Liddle-Thompson, 1965). (2) Golden Gully (Bearzi-Klose, 1980). (3a) South Face (Cauthorn-Collum, 1994). (3b) South Face (Hoyt, 2005). The prominent spire on the left is Burkett Needle. *Zac Hoyt*

*Mt. Burkett, South Face, solo.* After waiting in town for three weeks of unsettled spring weather, Leo Smith (Paines Ford, New Zealand) and I (Petersburg, Alaska) flew via helicopter on April 23 to the Baird Glacier below the southwest face of Mt. Burkett (9,730'). The moon was full, the weather unseasonably warm with little to no wind, and the forecast for extended good weather. After much scrutiny from both the helicopter and spotting scope, we determined that only the south face was in condition. The three-plus weeks of unsettled weather had left the upper reaches of the

mountain heavily rimed, and with warming conditions the southwest face and Golden Gully (Bearzi-Klose, 1980) had great objective hazards. I left camp at 22:30 with a bivy sac, 40m of rope, and two days' worth of food and fuel. The snow was soft and the going slow for the first 400m. Near 00:00 on April 24 the temperature dropped, conditions improved, and climbing was superb, with the full moon lighting the south face until sunrise. The climbing remained moderate until the final 200m, where the face grew steeper. Gaining access to the southeast ridge was challenging, and finally I left my pack and dug a small tunnel through the rime. The rime allowed for fast travel over the exposed ridge, below the south summit to the middle summit (which was believed to be the highest; however, the south summit may be higher). Using the 40m rope, I fixed the exposed and rimed summit pitch for the descent and reached the summit at 6:30 a.m. Once off the ridge and reunited with the pack, I called Leo at base camp via VHF and enjoyed views of the northwest face of the Devil's Thumb and Cat's Ears, along with a breakfast of smoked salmon and Snicker bars, before making a rapid descent by the ascent route. I made six 20m rappels along the summit ridge and upper headwall. I down-climbed the remainder of the route, except for two raps over 'schrunds on the mountain's lower reaches. I returned to camp extremely exhausted at 12:00 p.m., before the mountain shed its skin that afternoon. Difficulty AI3, Alaska Grade 4.

On the afternoon of the 26th Leo and I put up five new routes on Burkett's Boulder (15m), a large erratic on the lateral moraine closest to Mt. Burkett, from grade 14-22. The next two days consisted of skiing south-facing slopes, eating, and sun bathing, before we were whisked back to Petersburg on April 27.

ZAC HOYT

*Editor's note: Upon entering the concave south face (sometimes called southeast), Hoyt's line generally follows the 1994 Cauthorn-Collum route. Hoyt's climb was the first solo of Burkett, and the peak's fifth ascent overall.*

*Devil's Thumb, first winter ascent and epic, solo.* On March 11 Zac Hoyt had an early breakfast at his home in Petersburg and helicoptered to base camp below the southeast face of the Devil's Thumb (9,077'). Immediately he soloed the Krakauer route, calling me on his sat phone from the summit before lunch. Afterward he started on the three-day ski to tidewater, and his luck changed. While negotiating an icefall, he fell 100 feet into a crevasse, deeply injuring a shoulder and bloodying a hand.

The climb had gone quickly in calm, sunny skies, at 0°F, but the crevasse incident happened during a vicious, unpredicted storm, with 70 mph winds and temps of minus 24°F.

Zac spent the night in the 2½'-wide crevasse on a false floor, alternately shoveling out the tent and warming himself. The amount of spindrift pouring in was suffocating at times. His fingers became frostbitten. In the morning he climbed out of the crevasse with just one axe and crampons; he says it was the hardest climbing he's ever done. Standing there in the raging tempest, he called me again.

"Hey Dieter, it's Zac!" "Zac, where are you?" "In the middle of the icefall." "How's it going?" "Not so good." Then the phone went dead. I initiated a rescue.

Zac rappelled back into the crevasse and packed only the very essential items. After a grueling ascent of the free hanging rope with a Tibloc and a prussik, he had an exhausting episode hauling the pack up and over the lip of the crevasse. He managed to set-up the tent. Using snow that had remained in the tent, he brewed tepid water mixed with blood, hair, and detritus. "It was really gross, but it went down just fine," he said.

He soon heard our helicopter (they invited me on board), a Coast Guard Jayhawk, and called in on his VHF radio. He couldn't see us, nor could we see him. He said he couldn't get his frozen boots on with frozen fingers. I hung out the open door, since the windows were too frosted to see thru. Finally, after 20 minutes of harrowing flying I spotted his half-buried tent. It took two tries to get to him, with the chopper operating fully at its margins. The flight crew displayed extraordinary heroism, saying, "We pushed ourselves to our maximum limits." The pilot radioed Zac: "This is a one shot deal. If you can't get your boots on, forget them." They lowered the basket, and he got in with socks on. Immediately after the basket became airborne, a gust of wind blew the helicopter sideways. The basket slammed into the side of a serac, almost ejecting Zac. A minute later he was on board, saying, "Hey! What's up?"

He is expected to make a full recovery from his injuries. Zac left about \$4,800 worth of gear on and in the glacier. I am accepting bids for the Booty Trip. Winner gets the GPS coordinates.

DIETER KLOSE, *Stikine Icecap Manager*