

Chris Barner, Paul Rydeen, and friends returned to the steep peaks near Doran Creek, climbing numerous summits, around 2,600m high, surrounding the head of the first major south-side feeder drainage. A few summits sported ancient John Clarke registers; some were likely virgin. Later the crew moved north to the Reliance area, again making numerous ascents. The best of these was the Southeast Ridge (550m, D 5.9 A1 or 5.10+) on Determination. This fine route required a few aid points on a 5.9 pitch low down, climbed with mandatory boots and full alpine gear in the packs, as there is snow on the upper sections.

Bruce Fairley and Harold Redekop knocked off the big, steep, imposing, and long-ignored East Face (750m, D+ 5.8) on the superb Mt. Queen Bess. Snow and ice for 350m led to 10 pitches of rock, mostly mid-5th to 5.6, with three pitches of 5.8. They climbed the face in a day, bivouacking during the rappels, which they did via the route of ascent.

Andrew Rennie and I flew to Bifrost Pass on the northern fringe of the Waddington Range and climbed new routes on all three of the surrounding 2,800m+ peaks. The West Ridge (400m, AD 5.10) of Delusion mostly consisted of scrambling on nice, featured, solid rock, with three belayed pitches on the obvious steps, at 5.8 and 5.9, with a finishing 10m steep right-facing 5.9 corner leading to a short, harder bulge. The prominent southeast buttress on the east tower of Frontier proved to be an attractive line (Miles from Ordinary, 300m, D 5.10+). About 150m of scrambling was followed by seven or eight roped pitches, with a fair amount of 5.8, a few 20m stretches of easy ground, a couple of 5.9 sections, and one full-on, pull-like-hell, left-leaning crux crack past a bulge. The looming headwall went surprisingly easily, despite appearances, with good 5.9 face-climbing low down, then a left-angling crack system through solid rock to the flats beneath the previously unclimbed 2,800m+ subsummit. A severe two-and-a-half-day storm interrupted proceedings, after which we attempted one of the fine 250m pillars on the west side of Cornelia. Various difficulties quickly brought the attempt to an end, but we reached the summit by a west-facing snow/ice gully and the upper north ridge (250m, AD+ mid-5th). We passed over the northern subsidiary summit (ca. 2,900m; also previously unclimbed) en route.

DON SERL, *Alpine Club of Canada, AAC*

*Southwest British Columbia (southern Coast Mountains and Canadian Cascades) summary.* The most notable event of 2005 was not a single ascent but rather an unusual winter. Bitter cold in early January was followed by a short rainy season and then two months of unseasonably warm, sunny weather in February and March. While dealing a crushing blow to local skiers, the thin January snowpack, once it consolidated, provided near-perfect conditions for winter alpine ascents, enabling an unprecedented tally of routes in the local mountains, including the following first ascents and/or first winter ascents.

In the Coquihalla alpine zone in March, Wayne Wallace and Lane Brown of Oregon made the first winter ascent of the popular Yak Check link-up on Yak Peak, a summer line that checks in at 12 pitches and 5.9. The first portion of the route follows the diagonal groove of Yak Crack (D III 5.9), while the upper half moves left to climb the finish of Reality Check (D III 5.10c) above that route's crux. Several years ago Yak Crack saw a winter ascent, featuring thin ice, powder snow, and runout dry-tooling on somewhat crumbly granite slabs. What was unusual about Wallace and Brown's ascent of Yak Check was the summery conditions encountered. They had only intermittent verglas, snow patches, and wet rock to deal with, far different

from the true winter conditions of the earlier ascent, despite both climbs having been done during calendar winter.

In the Mt. Rexford area Andrew Rennie made the first winter ascent, solo, of the North Ridge route (summer AD+ III 5.8) of North Nesakwach Spire. Most of the route consisted of rock climbing, with snowy ledges, but the crux chimney pitch was iced and required dry-tooling.

As knowledge of the excellent alpine conditions spread over the Internet, more disgruntled ice climbers and skiers ventured out into the hills. Attention turned to the Cheam Range, a popular winter climbing area with a couple of well-known unclimbed objectives. Don Serl and Andrew Rennie made the first ascent of the north face (III/IV D+) of Welch Peak, via a system of interconnected snow ramps and mixed steps with WI3 ice, with serious runouts and sparse belays. On the same day, Jesse Mason and Toby Froschauer climbed the northeast ridge (III D 5.8 WI3) of Foley Peak, featuring a mix of snow, ice, and mixed ground as well.

In early March, I found firm névé and a 40m water ice pitch while making the first ascent of the east face of Mt. Outram, via a 400m gully line (III AD+ WI3 60°) that tops out between Outram's two summits. There are numerous other potential gully lines on this broad face; the approach via Ghost Pass trail from Highway 3 takes about five hours.

Once the unusual winter conditions normalized with the return of spring rains, a lull ensued that lasted until May and the next period of good weather. On Needle Peak, above the Coquihalla Highway, Merran Fahlman and I set out to repeat the 1972 Douglas-Starr route on the southeast buttress, a route with an obscure history (Fred Douglas, credited in the guidebook as a member of the first ascent party, does not believe he ever climbed the route) and sandbag grade (the guidebook mentions a bit of 5.6-5.7, but recent ascents found sustained 5.9). However, we never actually climbed the Douglas-Starr route, instead following a parallel line of corners and cracks about 70m right of the buttress crest on the northeast face. Wet cracks, extensive vegetation, loose rock, and even a small hanging snowpatch avalanche combined to make our route somewhat less than classic (III 5.9 A0). Don Serl and Andrew Rennie found better conditions on the north ridge of Mt. Roach, near the Stein River, where they found much scrambling, to about 5.7, on the lower ridge, leading to three 30m-40m pitches to 5.9 at the top (D- III 5.9). They were accompanied to the base of the route through the forest by a dog from the local Native reserve, who was rewarded with half the sausage supply for chasing off bears three times.

In the Slesse area, Shaun Neufeld and I climbed a new route on the east face of Labour Day Summit in midsummer. The climb begins at the base of the northeast face and climbs slab and snowpatches to the notch behind the obvious gendarme. From there it crosses the existing (2003) route and climbs steep cracks on the upper pillar to the summit (D III 5.10d).

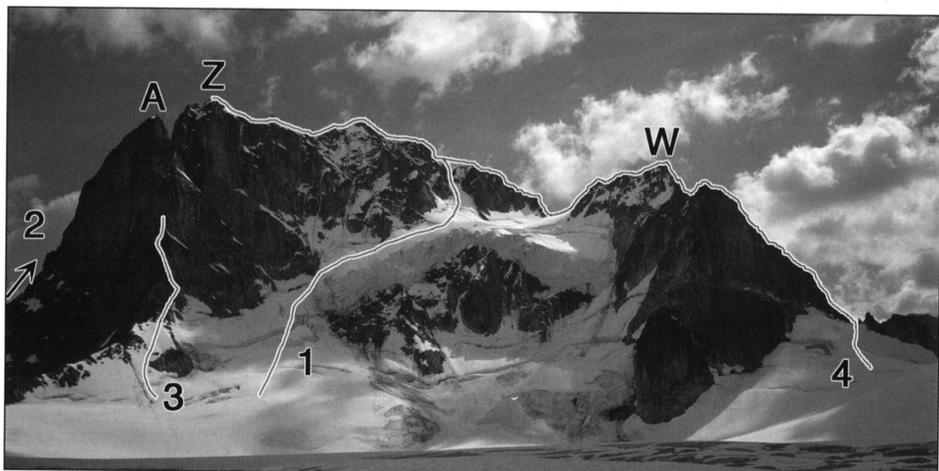
Big news from the Powell River area over the summer was the completion of Call of the Granite, in the Eldred Valley, by Aaron Black and Sean Easton [see report below]. A DVD called "No Permanent Address" is now available which documents the climb and Aaron's seven-month road trip in preparation for it.

On Mt. Ossa in the Tantalus Range, Don Serl and Andrew Rennie climbed a direct route up the north face that they dubbed Reaction Time (D+ IV 5.10-). The route begins off the north glacier with a difficult 'schrund crossing and climbs up the shadowed face above on generally good rock. They completed the route in 15 hours round-trip from camp, with a day to approach and a third day to walk out.

Few new routes were reported in the fall, owing to an infestation of wasps in the forest. Some climbers were stung up to 36 times while bushwhacking to the base of a route near

Chilliwack Lake. One much talked about face that did finally get climbed was the north face of Grant Peak, which gave Tyler Linn and Nick Elson a long 5.7 (AD+/D- III) on good rock. Climbers had been eyeing the face for years, but it took a local—Linn from the nearby town of Hope—to work out the best approach to the relatively remote face, which is guarded by massive thickets of slide alder in the valley below.

DREW BRAYSHAW, *Canada, AAC*



Athena Tower (A) and the main (Z) and west (W) summits of Mt. Zeus: (1) Northwest Face (de Saussure-Firey-Knudson-Renz-Rose-Schurr, 1980) of Zeus. (2) East Buttress of Athena (Collum-Pilling, 1983). (3) 2005 attempt on Athena. (4) Northwest Ridge of Zeus (Richardson-Robson, 2005). *Simon Richardson*

*Mt. Zeus, Northwest Ridge.* The many rock towers and pinnacles in the Pantheon Range often get overlooked in favor of the better-known peaks around Mt. Waddington, just south. The Pantheons have seen only a handful of visits from technical climbers. Mt. Zeus (2,959m) is the second highest peak in the group. It comprises solid granite and dominates the central part of the range.

Mark Robson and I visited Zeus to attempt the striking 500m-high northwest pillar of Athena Tower on the north side of the mountain. Athena Tower was first climbed by Bill Pilling and Greg Collum via the East Buttress in 1983, but had seen no further ascents. Unfortunately, our attempt ground to a halt at one-third height, when we encountered an almost featureless 50m-high wall. With no cracks for aid or protection, we were forced to retreat.

Instead, we turned our attention to the 2km-long northwest ridge of Zeus. We left base camp on the Zeus-Pegasus col early on the morning of August 7, crossed the glacier, and front-pointed up a short snow slope to the foot of the ridge. The route followed corners and chimneys, interspersed by smoother slabs (5.7 to 5.8), and although the climbing was technically not too testing, the rock was loose in places and covered in black lichen. Once we reached the narrow ridge leading up to the West Summit, the quality of the rock improved, and the climbing became increasingly exposed. The crest was clear of snow, and we were able to continue in our rock shoes, even though steep, mixed icy faces fell away just below. When we reached the unclimbed West Summit, we saw the Waddington group for the first time, gleaming white with fresh snow.