

CLIMBS AND EXPEDITIONS

2009

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 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 2008 calendar year.

NORTH AMERICA

CONTIGUOUS UNITED STATES

Washington

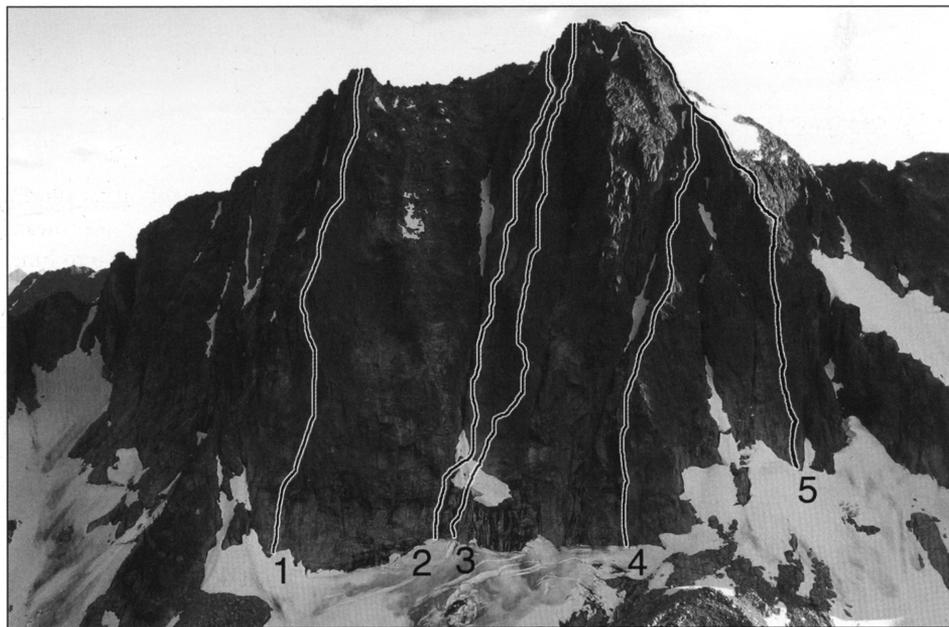
Summary of activity. [This summary supplements individual reports, mostly of bigger routes, below—Ed.] While skiers had fun, lingering snowpack and unstable early season weather meant a late start to the 2008 climbing season. Many access roads did not open until well into June. July was not a great month for climbing, and the first reported new alpine climb came on August 2, with Forest McBrian and Tasha McIlveen's route on the north face of Courtney Peak (III 5.10). John Scurlock's aerial photos continued to provide inspiration and ideas, such as for Rolf Larson and Eric Wehrly's August 17 route, Unearthed Obscurity (III 5.9), on the north arête of West Tillies Tower in the Auster Towers. On August 24 Mark Allen, Leighan Falley, and Joel Kauffman established Southern Man (IV 5.9+ Cl) on South Early Winter Spire. They started with a variation to the 1965 Anderson-Myher-Richardson-Young route, then climbed new ground up the crack system in the upper southeast headwall before finishing with the final pitch of the Beckey-Leen. Blake Herrington and David Trippett established Playin' not Sprayin' on Silver Horn (III 5.10) on August 31. Tim Halder and Ben Kunz climbed what was at least a partial new route, Rilikpa (5.7/8), on the southwest face Sherpa Peak on September 16. With the climbing season winding down, on September 25 Mike Schaefer made the first free ascent of Thin Red Line, an old aid classic on Liberty Bell, with five pitches in the 5.12 range.

The winter of 2008-09 turned out to be unusually good for ice climbing in Washington—visit www.nwmj.org for more information. Meanwhile on January 16 Ade Miller and John Plotz found amazingly dry conditions for the first winter ascent of Backbone Ridge, a classic grade IV rock climb on Dragontail Peak.

One interesting report involved taking mountain bikes on a commuter bus to Darrington, then pedaling to Three O’Clock Rock. Self-propelled trips to the mountains have long appealed to a small number of enthusiasts, and this wasn’t the first time anyone took a bus to go climbing, but it was an interesting response to high gasoline prices. Fitz Cahall did a good job with an audio story of the climb (“No Car No Problem” at www.dirtbagdiaries.com). Cahall may be ahead of his time, but rangers at North Cascades National Park say they are looking into some kind of public transportation to the Cascade Pass trailhead as part of an effort to make park visitation more carbon neutral.

MATT PERKINS, *Northwest Mountaineering Journal*, AAC

Castle Peak, Herrington-Hirst. Inspired by tales of steep, clean granite and impressed with the attention given to Castle Peak by the likes of Fred Beckey and Alan Kearney, I recruited Peter Hirst into joining me for Castle’s north face, which is approached from Canada but lies barely south of the border in the North Cascades. We’d intended the second ascent of the so-called Colorado Route, a line scoped by Beckey and climbed by a trio of Coloradoans whom he’d recruited. However, detached snow patches above the main glacier kept us to the left. On August 3, following cracks and corners up the cleanest granite above the hanging snow patch 80m up, we climbed 14 pitches, including some simul-climbing, in a direct line along the left margin of



Castle Peak, north face: (1) Harrington-Kearney, 1986. (2) Herrington-Hirst, 2008. (3) Colorado Route (Glick-Medara-Pennings, 1993). (4) Beckey-Noling-Tindall, 1979. (5) Sod on Me (Berdinka-Layton, 2005). *Blake Herrington*