

Eventually they were able to cross back south via a high pass between Mt. Sporli and Ronald Ridge. The team encountered bad sastrugi on the lower Driscoll Glacier but climbed Charles Peak on December 13 before returning to the ALE camp next day.

DAMIEN GILDEA, *Australia*

MARIE BYRD LAND
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RANGE

Mt. Sidley (4,285m). Nowadays, any climbing expedition to inland Antarctica, outside the Ellsworths, is significant. Mt. Sidley, highest peak in the Executive Committee Range, and highest volcano in Antarctica, was first climbed on January 11, 1990 by Bill Atkinson (NZ), who worked as field assistant for a team of vulcanologists studying the area. They also ascended nearby Mt. Wae-sche, mostly on snowmobiles. Atkinson climbed from a camp at 2,380m on the west side of Sidley, reaching, in poor visibility, what he ascertained to be the highest point on the crater rim.

In January 2011 an ALE team made the first non-government ascent. Mike Sharp and Scott Woolums, with Alex Abramov, Mario Trimeri, and Crina Popescu, flew from Union Glacier to the flat ice near Sidley, landing ca 16km from the summit. They then skied for seven hours and made camp on the mountain. The next day, January 24, all but Sharp climbed over sections of soft snow and blue ice to the crater rim. It turned out to be a 13-hour day, as the party continued around the rim, first crossing one top, which they thought was the highest, but later discovering another a few meters higher. They found the terrain quite unusual and ephemeral with snow features along the rim seemingly formed by the mountain's thermal activity and then sculpted by the wind. Popescu and Trimeri became the first climbers to attain what they have termed the Seven Volcanic Summits: the highest volcano on each continent.

DAMIEN GILDEA, *Australia*

ANTARCTIC PENINSULA

Overview. The first team to visit the Peninsula during the season comprised Sergy Baranov, Rissa Bullock Ivory, Kris Erickson, Kip Garre, Nikolay Veselovskiy, Doug Stoop and Ilyas Mukhtarov. Traveling aboard *Australis*, skippered by Roger Wallis, their first successes were the summits of both Delaite and Emma islands, which they climbed and skied. On the latter, an attractively steep, small island peak, their initial route was up the short, steep north face; but afterward, while skiing couloirs on the eastern flank, they saw that sea ice had come in, forcing the yacht to move. Though they were able to reach the boat by Zodiac, it is a reminder of one of the unique objective hazards of climbing in this region.

After spending three days skiing lines on and around the popular Jabet Peak, and being stopped from entering Lemaire Channel due to thick ice conditions, they headed back to Paradise Harbor and skied lines on the north side of Bryde Island, above Alvaro Cove. Later, they headed to Lemaire Island, where they climbed and skied Rojas Peak—at first down the east side, and then south, right down to the water. From here they moved to the western side of Wiencke Island, where they repeated the steep, north-facing line on Noble Peak (720m) skied once previously by Erickson. Noble Peak was first climbed in 1948, six months after Jabet, and has been visited a number of times since. On November 27 they were forced to abandon attempts at skiing on Lion Island, but this

resulted in one of the best descents of their trip, when as an alternative they climbed and skied a large couloir on the east side of Ronge Island, between Sherlac and Kerr points. Later that same day they skied more lines on Sable Pinnacle, up the coast of Ronge Island opposite Cuverville Island. Unfortunately, Garre was killed skiing in California's Sierra Nevada in late April 2011.

The season on the Peninsula continued with the ambitious Alpine Club Antarctic Expedition sailing aboard *Spirit of Sydney* (see below). This expedition brought to light one of the significant errors on the 1:250,000 British Antarctic Survey (BAS) map *Brabant Island to Argentine Islands*, published in 2009. The obvious and popular Mt. Shackleton is unnamed, and instead the name "Mt Shackleton 1300" is placed on another peak to the northeast, further up the Wiggins Glacier. Recent visitors to the area have taken to calling this latter peak "False Shackleton." Ludovic Challeat's French team made its first known ascent in January 2010. On December 4 the AC team made the second known ascent. Their GPS showed 1,475m on the summit of this peak, for which they have proposed the name Mt. Faraday. A little later, finding good conditions, Jim Blyth's party ascended and descended this peak on skis—three times (see Blyth report below).

Despite the increase and success in recent years of yacht-based expeditions to Antarctica, sailing remains a serious mode of transport for these regions. In February 2011 the Norwegian yacht *Berserk* was lost with its three crew during a severe storm in the Ross Sea. Some weeks previously the owner, Norwegian adventurer Jarle Andhøy, had been put ashore with 18-year-old Briton Samuel Massie, reportedly to attempt a crossing to the South Pole by quad-bike. February is extremely late in the season to be doing anything in inland Antarctica, much less anything near the South Pole. Ships usually aim to leave the Ross Sea by the third week in February due to ice conditions, and yachts generally do not go there at all, deeming it too dangerous.

Other private operators had advised Andhøy against this plan, but he chose to ignore them. He obtained no permits, despite needing to transfer quantities of fuel in a hazardous and sensitive environment, and he had no search and rescue logistics in place. Most nations are signatories to the Antarctic Treaty and its associated Environmental Protocol, and most of those nations have domestic legislation that applies to their citizens in Antarctica.

Andhøy and Massie had to be evacuated to Christchurch on a U.S. government flight. Private expeditions to Antarctica have long walked a delicate line, drawn and monitored by the relevant governments operating in the area. On occasion, relations between the two have been severely tested. Poorly planned and executed ventures, such as Andhøy's, jeopardize access to Antarctica for all non-government people, and provide authorities with easy examples of why private expeditions, including those of climbers, should be banned. Most adventurers applaud risk-taking, rule-bending, and plans that seem a little crazy, and we all want to think we can venture into the wild without government interference. But when we court publicity, involve media, and activate rescue beacons, we bring others into our plans, and we should act accordingly.

2010 saw the passing of Lieutenant Commander Malcolm Burley, who died aged 82. In 1964 he made the first ascent of South Georgia's highest summit, Mt. Paget, one of the world's most elusive peaks.

DAMIEN GILDEA, *Australia*

Various ascents. The 2010 Alpine Club expedition set sail on November 25 from Tierra del Fuego aboard the Australian yacht *Spirit of Sydney*, skippered by Darrel Day and Cath Hew. On board were seven climbers: Derek Buckle, Mike Fletcher, Stu Gallagher, Richard MacIntyre, Olly Metherell, Dave Wynne-Jones, and me as leader.