

On Denali 687 climbers reached the summit by a variety of routes, a success rate of just over half. On Foraker the number was just five.

After years of public engagement, a decision was reached to increase the climbing fee from \$200 to \$350 (\$250 for age 24 and under). Though it was a difficult process that at times put the NPS at odds with members of the climbing community, the increased revenue will help sustain our program at necessary levels, particularly at a time when NPS operating budgets are shrinking. We are grateful to the American Alpine Club, the Access Fund, and the American Mountain Guides Association, which worked closely with us to help guide the process and build consensus around what was once a highly contentious issue.

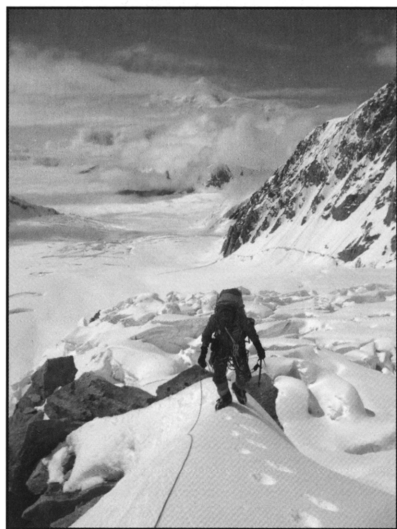
Throughout the range there were several ascents, and one descent, that are not reported below but are worthy of note. British climbers Jonathan Griffiths and Will Sim climbed the Cassin Ridge on Denali in 14 hours and 40 minutes from bergschrund to Kahiltna Horn. This is about 20 minutes faster than Mugs Stump's 1991 ascent. Neither Stump nor the British visited the true summit, and the fastest time to the mountain's highest point is unknown. On May 23rd Andreas Fransson completed the first ski descent of Denali's south face, following for the most part the Haston-Scott route. Icy conditions forced him to downclimb one section, and he made four rappels.

Colin Haley and Nils Nielsen climbed Deprivation to the top of the north buttress of Hunter in just nine hours. There they were caught in a storm and unable to complete the route to the summit. Koreans Choi Suk-mun, Park Hee-yong, and Park Jong-il were the only climbers to reach the summit via the north buttress, with their mid-May ascent of the Bibler-Klewin/Moonflower—possibly only the 13th or 14th time this route has been climbed to the summit.

Over on Huntington, John Friehe and Jason Stuckey made the second winter ascent, via the West Face Couloir. Starting early on March 19, they climbed the route in a 23-hour round trip from camp. A month later Tim Dittman and Jared Vilhauer made it through most of the difficulties on the Phantom Wall, but at their high bivouac Vilhauer became violently ill with flu, and the pair retreated. This route awaits a second ascent.

The complete Mountaineering Summary can be found at www.nps.gov/dena/planyourvisit/summaryreports.htm

Summarized from the DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE MOUNTAINEERING SUMMARY



Marty Schmidt on pitch nine (Tibia) of Dad and Son, six hours into route. Foraker behind. *Denali Schmidt*

Denali, lower southwest face, Dad and Son. My 23-year-old son Denali felt compelled to climb his namesake. While he was studying in San Francisco, he told me over the phone (I being in New Zealand) that he was climbing Denali with or without me. I told him that I would get clients right away for the West Rib; bugger if he was going to Alaska without me.

At the last minute two clients pulled out, but I told Denali we would go anyway and be tight with our budget. Denali is a starving student, and I'm a mountain/

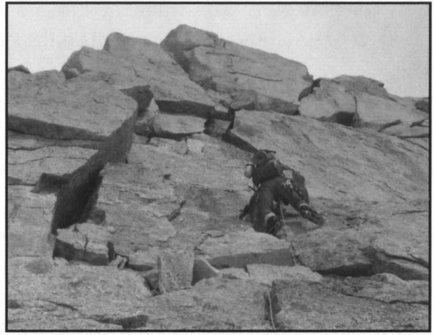
ski guide living out of a van. We flew to Anchorage on May 15. We climbed the upper West Rib over 10 days, made a 15-hour climb to the north summit, and climbed Foraker, via the Sultana Ridge, in a 63-hour roundtrip from Kahiltna base camp. We then skied to the northeast fork of the Kahiltna and established a safe campsite below the unclimbed buttress immediately left of West Rim Route (Southwest Rib, AK4 60° Ehmman-Morrow, 1977).

Taking off early the next day, our hearts and minds were in harmony with each other and with the mountain. After swinging tools through the first section of steep snow and ice, we hooked through the lower five pitches, which brought us to the first crux: the broken glacier between what we called the Big Toe and the main body of our climb. We dubbed this section the Fungus, since it was between the big toes. In six hours of fast climbing, we reached the top of pitch 10, below the main crux of the route, a vertical rock wall split by a few cracks. I started climbing this pitch wearing the full pack but removed it for the most technical move, in a finger crack that slanted across the wall (5.10). Denali attached the packs, and I hauled. It was the only time we took them off until we stopped for a brew at hour 24.

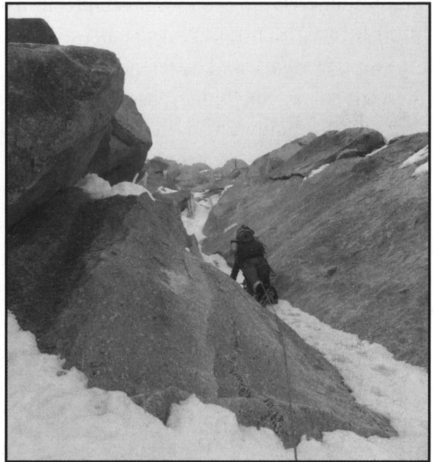
Carrying bivouac equipment encouraged us to wish for a ledge, but none arrived. For the 29 hours we spent on the climb, no ledge appeared, so we just continued up, seeking a path through rotten snow arêtes, vertical chandelier ice pinnacles, thin vertical ice runnels, and big rock boulder moves. We belayed every pitch: Denali is my only son, and nothing was going to get in the way of our safety. Alaska offers the best and the worst of climbing. The worst comes by way of double overhanging corniced ridges, and we dealt with some of those; riding pitch 18 was like riding Brahma bulls in India, waiting for the end to happen.

The next 11 pitches, continuous, steep-angled, hard ice up the backbone of our route, went like clockwork. The final rib we called the Crowning Chakra for several reasons, one being that as the last part of the climb became clear, we finally found the first real sit-down place. We brewed the most wonderful coffees and teas, ate cereal, milk, and bars, and sat absorbing the sights, relishing the past 24 hours. Above, the climbing did not ease in angle, but we found the going easier in those last pitches. After 29 pitches and 29 hours, we reached the highest point, across from Windy Corner on the West Buttress Route.

After negotiating large crevasses between us and the Corner, we headed down the Kahiltna Glacier, following the standard West Buttress Route. We were back at our campsite on the northeast fork by midnight. We packed and were at the airstrip by 4 a.m., the first to register for a flight out. However, our last days on Denali were the longest spent in one place during our expedition. We



Marty Schmidt on crux pitch 10 (Patella), seven hours into route. Line continues to horizontal breaks above, then trends right to skyline. *Denali Schmidt*



Marty Schmidt leading an ice runnel on Dad and Son. *Denali Schmidt*

were stuck for three days while the weather was simply Alaskan. Our route, Dad and Son (5.10 A2 WI5), was the last remaining unclimbed ridge on Denali from the Northeast Fork of the Kahiltna.

MARTY SCHMIDT, *New Zealand*

West Kahiltna Peak (3,914m/12,835'), west ridge. West Kahiltna Peak is just off of the Kahiltna Glacier, and every West Buttress ascensionist looks at its west ridge of as they make their home at Camp 1. It is the obvious ridge closest to the northeast fork of the Kahiltna and may have been climbed previously, but there were no recorded ascents prior to 2011.

On May 23 two Italians, Diego Giovannini and Fabio Meraldi, ascended the ridge in 12 hours and reported finding 75° ice and 5.8 on their Grade 4 route. The climbing was generally moderate and enjoyable, but the final section of the ridge was dangerously threatened by an overhanging serac. They descended the route by downclimbing and rappelling.

Japanese Yuto Inoue and Tatsuro Yamada may have climbed this line in 2008, while traversing West and East Kahiltna Peaks before ascending the Cassin Ridge. However, they perished near the summit of Denali, and as friends could not confirm their line of ascent, the truth may never be known. For now the Italians' feat stands as the first recorded ascent.

MARK WESTMAN, *Denali National Park and Preserve*

Mt. Hunter, north buttress to Cornice Bivouac, the Cartwright Connection. Unrelenting spindrift avalanches and gusty winds blasted and buffeted the portaledge. Our small cocoon of safety on this harsh mountain was slowly being engulfed, as we nervously watched the snow level rise up the fly walls. It had taken five of the toughest days' climbing of our lives to get to this point, and our chances of reaching the top of the north buttress were diminishing. The forecast was for more snow and stronger winds over the upcoming days.

The first day went smoothly, according to plan. Not that night, though, as Matt Helliker and I realized the perils of hanging our portaledge on a 60° ice slope. We were awakened when it collapsed and transformed into a hammock. On day two we faced many uncertainties, as we found a way through steep, complex terrain, with many overhanging snow mushrooms. Matt



Jon Bracey on belay with haul bag, Cartwright Connection.
Matt Helliker

fought hard in the lead all day and at 2 a.m. had us below the steepest rock band of the climb. In overcoming these difficulties our confidence had grown, and I started to think we might have a chance of getting up this climb. Day three was steep and scary—thinly iced slabs, overhanging cracks, aid on loose rock, a pitch of vertical ice, and more. We finally got to bed at 6 a.m. Day four we joined the Bibler-Klewin/Moonflower route; we just needed luck with the weather. Day five it snowed and wind blew.