

couloir then led to a high notch. From there it was three pitches of easy roped climbing to the summit.

JOSEPH KISKIS, *Unaffiliated*

*Aiguille Extra.* In June Mike Heath and I climbed the obvious dihedral on the east face of the 1200-foot needle directly south of Third Needle in the Whitney Group. We called this needle or blade Aiguille Extra and rate it V, F8, A3. The earlier route referred to in *A.A.J.*, 1968, was on Third Needle proper.

WILLIAM Q. SUMNER

### California — Yosemite

*The Elusion.* This route is unfortunately typical of the newer Yosemite climbs. It begins less than 100 feet left of an existing route, Commissioner Buttress. At the end of each pitch it is possible to traverse off onto easier climbing, and it connects with the Commissioner Buttress route on the last pitch. Its redeeming feature is that it is hard, so hard that only one member of our four-man party, Tom Higgins, was able to free climb all the crux pitch. We were attracted to the route by an obvious white scar from recent exfoliation on the second pitch. This forms a 75-foot F9 jam-crack. The first lead was a dirty F8 overhang that can be avoided by a third-class walk-up from the opposite side. Then came the third lead! While Lloyd Price, John Kanehejs, and I watched transfixed from below, Tom crawled up the steep headwall like a graceful, black-maned lizard, pausing occasionally to announce that it was F9 or so. His demeanor changed abruptly, and after grunting and groaning, he descended to rest. On the next effort, he mastered two successive F10 sections and his guttural utterances turned to ecstasy. The rest of the party made more noises, less progress, and finished the pitch with a firm grip on the rope. Even though the route is close to a gully and seems at times contrived, it stays on a prow of its own and follows a separate crack system. NCCS III, F10.

GALEN A. ROWELL

*Rainbows.* In late June, Russell McLean and I established a new route on the western wall of the Ribbon Falls amphitheatre. We began this very steep, predominantly direct-aid route about 200 feet in from the amphitheater's outer edge, precisely at the last group of dwarf trees along the western wall. We climbed 200 feet to a good ledge then followed a single crack system up a large dihedral to the top of the wall. A good hammock bivouac can be contrived 200 feet below the top. Several hundred feet of easy climbing above the wall brought us to brushy ledges. Here, rather than try the usual descent which seemed danger-

ous, we ascended to the rim, passing a headwall via a moderate chimney. NCCS V, F8, A3.

KENNETH BOCHE

*Aquarius.* In June, Jim Bridwell and Kim Schmitz put up a new line between the west buttress and the dihedral wall. The route starts near the left side of the great apron between these routes and meanders to a ledge about 1000 feet up, where the wall steepens. Earlier this year they had reached a high point several hundred feet above this ledge. At the end of May, they climbed fixed ropes for 2½ pitches and quickly reached virgin territory 12 pitches up. They then climbed to Thanksgiving Ledge and finished up the west buttress, doing that section free, and reaching the top about 1:30 P.M., June 1, on their third day — fast time for an El Capitan first ascent. They drilled 70 holes into which they placed either bolts, or aluminum dowls which, like Harding's rivets, can make use of shallow holes. Bridwell says the route was the hardest he or Schmitz had done on El Capitan. NCCS VI.

ROYAL ROBBINS

*El Capitan, New Route.* This year Rick Sylvester and Claud Wreford-Brown made a new route between the Heart Direct and the John Muir Route, using part of the lower Muir and going up the right side of the Heart (the Kroger-Davis route goes up the left side). After fixing the first five pitches, they climbed to the top in 9 days. They encountered very difficult free climbing and "a lot of A4". NCCS VI.

ROYAL ROBBINS

*Geek Towers.* Jim Bridwell and Mark Clemens reached the top of two narrow, converging buttresses between Yosemite Falls and the Lost Arrow Chimney, which they named Geek Towers. About 800 feet up; 1 day. NCCS III, F10, A3.

ROYAL ROBBINS

*Stone Groove.* This two-pitch route follows a vertical crack between the Rorp and Independent Pinnacle. Jim Bridwell and I climbed it in May. The crux is a finger jam in a dihedral 20 feet above the ground and the rest of the pitch continues jamming. The second lead is a short F8 squeeze chimney leading to a ledge at the top of the slab. NCCS II, F10.

GALEN A. ROWELL

*Chopper.* The Chopper is a single-pitch climb first climbed by Rick Sylvester and me in September. It is located in the second crack system