

ascent of Picos Sin Nombre (ca. 5000 m.), also called Picos Nordeste, and the fourth ascent of Cerros de la Plaza (16,263 feet). S. Gaviria was on each climb. Date and names of other climbers unknown. In January, 1978 Hubert Frank and Sergio Gaviria made the fourth ascent of Pico del Castillo (16,808 feet). The last ascent of this mountain, perhaps the finest in the range, took place in 1946. The recent route was from the south. The official name of this range is as difficult to pin down as are many of the peak names. Both Sierra Nevada de Cocuy and Sierra Nevada de Güicán are used on maps issued by the Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi, the geographical authority for Colombia.

PIETER CROW, *Green Mountain Club*

Pico Colón and other peaks. An expedition of the Club Colombiano de Andinismo made an ascent of Pico Colón (5775 meters, 18,947 feet) on January 13, 1978. The summit group was composed of María Teresa and Carlos Gómez, Cecilia and Guillermo Bernal, Miguel Forero and Alvaro López. Members of the same group also ascended Pico Tairona (c. 5050 meters, 16,560 feet) and La Reina (5535 meters, 18,160 feet).

HUBERT FRANK, *Campo Abierto, División de Montañismo*

Pico Colón, Pico Bolívar and other peaks. An expedition of our club, made up by H. Frank, J. L. Moreno and me, placed Base Camp near lake Usugaca. A very large group of German trekkers also camped nearby. On December 25, our group climbed Pico Tairona, which was also ascended by fourteen of the Germans. On the 29th, with six Germans we climbed Pico Colón and on the same day, Frank and I traversed to the summit of Pico Bolívar (also 5775 meters). F. Kröll led three Germans along the west ridge of El Guardián (5285 meters, 17,340 feet). Unfortunately, one of the German tourists developed pulmonary complications and had to be carried by us to lower altitudes, thus cutting short our climbing program in the Sierra.

SERGIO GAVIRIA, *Campo Abierto, División de Montañismo*

Pico Ojeda, Northeast Face, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Jim Wells and I made the first ascent of this face from January 13 to 15, 1978, including the approach. The face seems to be the largest in the range, vertically higher and steeper than the north face of Colón which we did last year. The route began on the avalanche cone the furthest to the right. Some 15 pitches led straight up to below a prominent hanging glacier on the right side of the face. Two pitches bypassed the glacier to the right and we reached the north ridge which we followed

for three pitches to its end. The two final pitches on the north-northwest face led through cornices to the ridge just west of the summit (18,012 feet). This face is never in the sunlight and in certain parts we encountered very steep unconsolidated sugar snow.

WILLIAM MCKINNEY

Venezuela

Sierra Nevada de Mérida. A stay in Mérida revealed that the long active Club Andino Venezolano has been disbanded. Presently there are three small clubs in the city. The most active seems to be Club Cóndor, Carlos Reyes, Presidente, Calle 24 #8-259, Mérida. There are also clubs centered in Caracas. Permission to hike or climb in the Sierra must be obtained from the Headquarters of the Parque Nacional Sierra Nevada and from the Comisión Regional de Defensa Civil. The refugio Pico Espejo, near the upper terminal of the *teleférico* (4765 m.), was falling into ruins, but still may provide some shelter. It was built in 1955. I was there in March, and made a solo ascent of Pico Bolívar (5007 meters, 16,427 feet) by the Garganta Bourgoin route. There has been a major contribution to the scant literature of Venezuelan mountaineering:

Nieves y Riscos Merideños by R.A. Romero Muñoz-Tebar (Caracas, 1976). Along with Carlos Chalbaud's *Expediciones a la Sierra Nevada de Mérida* (Caracas, 1959), this is one of the best sources of information on the history and routes of the Mérida peaks.

PIETER CROW, *Green Mountain Club*

Cerro Autana. In early November Jim Donini, Mike Graber, Beverly Johnson, and I established a new route on Cerro Autana deep in the Venezuelan jungle. We were accompanied by an ABC TV film crew of Mike Hoover, Peter Pilafian and Don Burgess. The expedition started months earlier when I was researching the so-called Guyana Shield—or Roraima Formation—looking for a rock tower suitable for climbing. The Shield is peppered with strange “Lost World” mesa towers and plateaus rising above the jungle floor. Eventually I located a suitable objective—Autana, a 2000-foot-high quartzite tower that looks like a giant tree stump. After searching for some pals willing to thrash about in the jungle, and obtaining backing from ABC, we flew to Caracas, and then to the jungle outpost of Puerto Ayacucho. Far and away the most enjoyable part of the expedition was the three days of navigating, in dug-outs, the rivers Orinoco, Sipapo, Autana, and Manteca. One more day hacking jungle brought us to the mountain's base. We chose a route on the west face that led directly to mysterious caves 400 feet below the summit. Our Indian guides warned us a dinosaur lived in the cave. Six days of climbing, much of it artificial aid on steep, sometimes over-