

intended line, which would have placed us next to the summit on the northwest ridge, we moved slightly right, gaining the south ridge (Beckey's route) below the summit ice mushroom for a second cold bivouac. I then led through a beautiful ice fantasia, occasionally stepping into crevasses on the dangerous ridge. Slab avalanches fractured at my feet, forcing me dangerously out towards the lip of the cornices. On the descent we opted for the most direct line, setting up six successive rappels down the Yanert Headwall. After finding a route through the third Yanert icefall, we regained our first bivouac site and continued on down. A massive snow-bridge collapsed under Topher, dropping him 60 feet free. After an eternity of "engineering" in the cold night, Chris finally came over the lip. We spent the next day descending the lower two icefalls.

OMAR HANSEN

*Neacola Range.* On May 4 Peri Chickering, Todd Denman, Jon Stevens and I were the first climbers to enter the Neacola Range of central Alaska. We were greeted by a compact and severe range that offered numerous opportunities for short difficult alpine climbing. The rock was surprisingly good, reminiscent of Yosemite but in a Bugaboo configuration. Neacola, the largest peak, rose for 4600 feet above the glacier to 9426 feet. There were many steep snow routes that in late summer would probably offer good ice climbing. The first two weeks were plagued with bad weather. Poor visibility allowed only limited exploration and the avalanches restricted climbing. We were able to sneak in one climb up the west ridge to the summit of P 6820. The route involved a beautiful snow ridge broken by rock sections (F6). After eleven hours of climbing Todd, Peri and I reached the summit, as yet another storm surrounded us. During the hasty descent Todd slipped on a verglased granite with snow hiding the ice. He fell about 35 feet landing on his back. Though he was badly shaken-up, his only injury was a very bruised tailbone. He hobbled back to camp on his own but his immediate climbing future looked grim. The continuing bad weather and Todd's debilitating injury convinced Todd and Jon to attempt the 25-mile ski out to Telaquana Lake to try to flag down a plane. It was an epic adventure. After two days of difficult travelling they reached the lake. With food running out they discovered a rowboat, rigged a sail out of their tent-fly and crossed the ten-mile whitecapped lake to an old village marked on the map. It was deserted. They luckily were able to flash down a float plane and leave the Neacolas. With two weeks left in the trip Peri and I decided to tempt the gods and try the 4500-foot northeast face of Neacola. We ferried a light camp and spent the next three days tent-bound waiting for a break in the weather. In the morning twilight of one A.M. on day 21 we began the face. We managed to climb

2200 feet of 40° to 55° snow and ice before increasingly bad weather and a 250-foot rock section caused us to retreat. We had to descend the route dodging avalanches as the fresh snow plastered the face. The storm continued for several days before we were able to return to Base Camp. Base Camp greeted us with beautiful weather and fine climbing conditions. We were able to climb P 7230 by a fantastic snow and ice route up the north face to the north ridge. The weather continued to be inspiring so we skied ten miles to explore the northwest side of Neacola, for a potential route up the face. This side of the mountain appeared just as imposing as the other. It was not until we skied several miles down the glacier that we discovered a 2000-foot couloir that offered access to the summit ridge. It contained 300 feet of blue ice and looked beautiful. As the final days of the expedition ticked by, Peri and I climbed a mixed route up the 2900-foot west face of P 6959. The actual highlight of this climb was the 1000-foot descent down an old avalanche runnel. We spent the next four days experiencing the worst weather of the trip. There were very high winds that lifted the tent off the ground with us in it. But on June 5 pilot Cliff Hudson picked us off the glacier.

MICHAEL WITZ, *Sea-Level Mountaineering*

*Shot Tower, Northwest Face and Other Peaks, Arrigetch.* Mike Biarzi, Savvy Saunders, Roman Dial and I were landed at Circle Lake on July 18. We had no airdrop. Base Camp was in the Aiyagomahala valley, south of the Arrigetch valley. We next had to wait out a week of rain. Biarzi and I made the second ascent of Shot Tower by a new route, the northwest face and descended the west ridge. Climbing continuously, we took 36 hours. (NCCS V, F9, A3+.) Saunders and Dial on July 31 climbed the Shot Tower by the west ridge. I made the first ascent of "Scorpio," one of a series of spires south of Independence Pass and west of the "Pyramid." It is the third spire counting from south to north. NCCS III, F7. Biarzi and Dial made a new route up Badile, the southwest buttress (NCCS III, F10, A3), following a single 700-foot crack from the base to the summit overhangs. Saunders and I made a variation of the original east face route on Badile. We were picked up at Takahula Lake on August 17. We had 13 days of bad weather out of 30. We found an amazing amount of humans and trash. Trails have already formed in the extremely delicate tundra. Trekking companies are intolerably exploiting this area, bringing in as many as twelve people at a time. We urge those who go to the Arrigetch to go in small groups and be aware of their impact, keeping it to a minimum. Firearms are totally unnecessary if food is properly stored and cooked. The Arrigetch is a wild paradise and it is the duty of every person who ventures into the area to keep it so.

DIETER KLOSE, *Alaskan Alpine Club*