

Pass dropped to 0°F, and several days never went above freezing—along with the concomitant blessing of a complete absence of mosquitos. Hitchhiking the haul road to Fairbanks was quite difficult.

MICHAEL D. YOKELL

Ice Climbing Near Valdez. An explosion of activity in climbing new routes resulted from good ice conditions and increasing interest by locals and visitors, stimulated by the preparation of a guidebook to the area. Starting in early November, by the end of February (which is when conditions are just beginning to reach their peak) 48 new frozen waterfalls were climbed. In one week alone, 17 new routes were done, bringing the total to 148 in the city limits. Many of the routes are easily road-accessible, though some required hiking or skiing for an hour or two on the approach. Notable new routes include the following: *Tortilla Flat* (V, 350 feet, 110 meters, consisting of verglas ½ inch to 1 inch thick over blank 65° rock protected only by slinging the heads of seven rock-stabilizing construction bolts), by Evan Smith, Andrew Embick and Brian Teale; *Excalibur* (V, 210 feet, 65 meters, whose second pitch overhangs 6 feet in 110 feet) by Andrew Embick and Martin Leonard III; *Secret Journey* (V, 550 feet, 170 meters) by John Weiland and Bob Shelton; *Royal Ribbons* (V – , 320 feet, 100 meters) by Evan Smith, David Miller, Brian Teale and Martin Leonard III; *Tsuri Gane* “Hanging Bell” (VI – , 550 feet, 170 meters) by Bob Shelton and Shigeki Nakayama; and *Tokyo Express* (V – , 500 feet, 150 meters) by John Weiland and Yuwa Yamazaki. The greatest activity came at the time of the third annual Valdez Ice Festival, put on by the Alaska Section, which coincided with the visit of four Japanese climbers sent by the JAC as part of an exchange. Masaki Matsumoto, Shomi Suzuki, Yuwa Yamazaki and Shigeki Nakayama were in Valdez for a week. They climbed a number of Grade V routes and first ascents and Suzuki teamed with Teale to do the third ascent of *Wowie Zowie* (VI, 400 feet, 120 meters overhanging) in seven hours. No apparent end is in sight to the discovery of new ice routes in the Valdez area, as the combination of relief, temperatures and precipitation have produced high-quality ice climbs in tremendous and perhaps unparalleled concentration. As a late season note, Roman Dial of Fairbanks free-soloed *Keystone Green Steps* (V, 650 feet, 200 meters) in a little less than two hours. The first ascent in 1976 by Jeff Lowe and John Weiland took three days.

ANDREW R. EMBICK, M.D.

Washington-Cascade Mountains

Burgundy Spire, North Face, Winter Ascent. Two months of no climbing have Kit Lewis, Kevin Joiner, and me desperate for adventure. Kit suddenly decides that we should climb Burgundy Spire over the Christmas holidays. December 26 finds us staggering out of the helicopter on the Silver Star Glacier, fumbling to set up Base Camp. Packed and ready to go by noon on the 27th, our only problem seems to be the cold. Our beer is starting to freeze. We plod up the gully leading to Burgundy’s north face. Soon the afternoon sun makes its way onto the face, a real plus in these temperatures. The conditions are typical of winter—lots of new snow, cracks and holds hidden from view. Carefully we