

gear, an enormous rock-and-snow avalanche swept the face. Luck was with us that day. We moved camp to just north of the base of the southeast ridge and tried to find a route onto the ridge from this side. Charlie Carr, Chip Morgan and I climbed steep avalanche-prone slopes beneath séracs and over large slanting bergschrunds. Charlie led the last steep pitch on loose snow and rock to a knob on the ridge where we could assess the 2000-foot exposure on both sides of the knife-edged ridge that grew to 5000 feet where the ridge leveled off. Immediately ahead lay loose steep snow that with the slightest loading appeared ready to collapse onto the Newton Glacier. Then came a steep multi-pitch rock section that looked loose and slightly overhanging near the top. These sections were minor in comparison to the steep rock and ice 3000 feet higher. It was obvious it was too late in the year for safe snow conditions. Regrouped for the east ridge, we carried loads and camped just below 11,000 feet. We had a choice of either the sharp, jagged ridge or a long, steep snow face. Charlie Carr led onto the steep face and discovered loose granular sugar snow that would not pack and offered no protection. On our return we found that the face would have involved at least eight pitches of completely unprotected, steep, exposed and avalanche-prone climbing. The next day we tried the jagged ridge. An hour and a half of painstaking step-cutting and stamping put me near the top of the ridge where one slip would have sent all of us tumbling 2000 feet to the Newton Glacier. I put in all my remaining protection, plus both my tools; the snow could not have been more dangerous. Karen Bush led past me onto the ridge and found slightly denser snow. Steve Bain climbed along the ridge and Charlie Carr went past him. They found weak cornices. We agreed that we could not justify the objective hazards and quit. One last note: for most of the climb we had a commanding view of the Abruzzi route. The huge avalanches that swept down all parts of the upper Newton Glacier, some starting from Russell Col itself, others sweeping across the glacier and up the other side, deposited sérac blocks larger than small houses and made this route and its approaches highly dangerous. It would be foolhardy to consider the route, especially in May, June and July.

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Washington—Cascades

East McMillan Spire, North Buttress, Southern Pickets. From Terror Basin, Rachel Cox and I walked north along the Terror Basin-Azure Lake divide. Where this ridge steepens and merges with the east ridge of McMillan Spire, a horizontal ledge leads to Stetattle Ridge, the divide between McMillan Cirque and Azure Lake. We followed Stetattle Ridge to a col (class 3), made two 165-foot rappels, climbed down ice and snow to benches in the upper McMillan Cirque and traversed west on slabs which were exposed to falling ice. A rock spur led up between icefalls directly to the base of the north buttress of East

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McMillan Spire. We began at the toe of the buttress, scrambling east around a large gendarme to a prominent notch. From the notch a fifth-class pitch and 200 feet of third class brought us to a bivouac on a large shelf. From there it was possible to walk down and right to active springs in a large shallow cave. There was no water higher. In the morning we climbed six fourth-class pitches up and left to a large rubble-covered platform on the crest of the buttress, overlooking the huge chimney-and-corner system on the lower east face. We climbed up and right for three pitches to the base of a long open-book. This is the first corner system west of the crest of the buttress, ending in a series of blocky overhangs. Three beautiful pitches of 5.7 to 5.9 on excellent rock led up the corner to grassy ledges immediately below the overhangs. A short horizontal pitch to the left on ledges brought us back to cracks and corners near the crest. Here we made a second bivouac. After a pitch, crack systems to the left and right were blocked by overhangs. We opted for an improbable outside corner leading straight up between the overhangs, which provided a surprisingly moderate and safe 165-foot pitch. After one passes the overhangs at about mid height on the buttress, many lines are possible. We climbed up and left along the crest for several pitches of solid, enjoyable fourth and fifth class. Where a loose and blocky vertical step about 60 feet high blocks the crest, we traversed up and right, emerging on a huge ledge. Above this point the rock deteriorates. Whereas the lower two-thirds is solid gneiss, the upper portion is loose, slabby schist. However, the climbing, mostly third class, is much easier. We climbed seven rope-lengths just west of the crest, then traversed 200 feet right to join the 1977 route for two pitches to the summit. We descended the west ridge and couloir to Terror Basin. Bergschrunds necessitated two 150-foot rappels. (28 pitches, 10 of which are fifth class. V, 5.9.)

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Johannesburg, Northeast Face, Winter Ascent, North Cascades. In mid February Josh Lieberman and I took advantage of perfect weather and low snow cover to drive 18 miles up the Cascade River road. We walked the last four miles up the road. Johannesburg was nearby. We traversed out onto the glacier beneath the northeast face to the bottom of the prominent couloir on the left side. This couloir is described by Mark Bebie in *A.A.J.*, 1986. We were drawn upward. Instead of traversing right as Bebie and Stoddard did, we stayed in the couloir. Most of the climbing was third class. Large chockstones occasionally blocked the parallel-sided gully, forming vertical steps. Snow beneath the chockstones was unconsolidated and so these steps entailed climbing on one of the walls on thin ice and rock over the abyss. Once we followed a tunnel beneath a big block. As darkness fell, we dug in under another block. The couloir reaches the top of the face several hundred yards east of the summit. After traversing the horizontal crest toward the summit for some time, we saw the last few hundred feet: jumbled gendarmes and crazy cornices. We decided not to proceed. As it was, we were benighted in the "wrong" couloir as we descended the south side of the east ridge.

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