

Lumpy Ridge and Estes Park Rock Climbs. Scott Kimball. Chockstone Press, Denver, 1986. 184 pages, black and white photographs, line drawings. \$15.00 (paper).

This guidebook represents a compilation and updating of Scott Kimball's three earlier works: the unpronounceable *Thath-āā-ai-ātah* (with Chip Salaun), *Solitary Summits*, and *Long's Peak Freeclimber*. It has a modern, professional appearance that is well organized and designed.

The main focus of the book is Lumpy Ridge, whose subalpine granite walls beckon with easy access to climbers first arriving in Estes Park. Several more obscure areas, with lengthy approaches but worthwhile climbs, are also included and are lumped into two sections called "Estes Valley Rocks" and "The Craggs." At the tail end of the book are the popular alpine walls of Long's Peak, Hallett Peak, and Spearhead, but these, curiously, almost seem to have been added as an afterthought, perhaps to increase sales.

My first impression of *Lumpy Ridge* was favorable. The stylized indigo cover with its pattern of silver stars is quite original and attractive, and strongly evokes images of the Milky Way on a cold, clear Rocky Mountain night. The author's sensitivity to the environment is then pleasantly continued inside the book with a lengthy essay on the seasons, flora, and fauna, and complementary illustrations by his wife, Annegret. It's nice to see a guidebook that is more than just a mechanical recitation of routes, rocks, and ratings.

The crags are organized in a logical sequence from the rocks of Lumpy Ridge, north of Estes Park, to the remote walls in the Long's Peak area to the south. The 579 route descriptions are usually quite detailed and often provide helpful suggestions on protection and rope drag, but the language is disappointingly dry and lacks the tongue-in-cheek humor that enlivens many other guidebooks. Most of the descriptions are accompanied by a mixture of photographs and line drawings that often clarify when the descriptions confuse. All are conveniently cross-referenced with numbering systems except, oddly enough, those in the High Mountain section.

Kimball has adopted the use of the increasingly popular 0-3 star quality rating system and the shorthand R and X protection grades for routes containing serious runouts or dangerous moves. He has also elected to discard the NCCS roman numeral grade for overall commitment on the subalpine routes because they never were very practical and unnecessarily cluttered the text. These are all big plusses.

On closer inspection, however, there are numerous problems that tend to undermine the book's effectiveness. Although the writing is sometimes eloquent, all too often it is clumsy and hard to follow because of awkward phraseology and missing or incorrect punctuation. Literally scores of hyphens have been left out of such descriptive combinations as right-facing dihedral, 155-foot pitch, eight-legged creatures, etc. I gave up counting misspellings after finding twenty-three on the first twelve pages, including nine on page four alone! Inconsistency in usage also haunts the reader from one end of the book to the other.

When three items are listed and the word “and” connects the last two, sometimes a comma precedes “and” and sometimes it doesn’t. Off-width appears as both two words and one. And the author never can decide whether Long’s Peak has an apostrophe or not. While most of these errors are relatively minor, many obscure the meaning of what has been written and, together, they distract the reader and cost the author much loss of credibility.

Some of the illustrations depicting routes leave much to be desired as well. Excessively dark shadows on the photos and grainy reproduction too often obscure detail, and many of the line drawings are unclear, especially where the starts of routes are concerned. Because of the nature of the rock, photo treatment across the board would probably have been more successful. In addition, the use of squiggly little arrows to point out lines of ascent is unconventional and looks odd (see page 67). Continuous lines (solid, dashed, or dotted) would have been easier to follow and less confusing (see, for example, the bottom of the photo on page 87).

My final comment is concerned with the section on style and ethics, which is rather weakly entitled “Further Considerations.” In the long run, this is one of the most important parts of the book. Every guidebook author has a heavy responsibility to use his or her influence as strongly as possible to maintain the traditional standards of the sport and prevent the wholesale desecration of the crags from indiscriminate bolting on rappel. And yet the author, whose concern for the environment is apparent throughout the book, lamely writes that “Climbers should proceed in any manner or style they deem appropriate, be it free or aid. . . .” This phenomenal statement is then followed by a couple of willowy qualifications that defy definition. Kimball’s strongest statement about the crisis that is polarizing American climbing is actually buried on page 50 in the route description for “Pizza Face!” Wisely, he did not give first-ascent credit to the perpetrators of this pizza farce.

Lumpy Ridge and Estes Park Rock Climbs is not a literary masterpiece, nor is it one of Chockstone Press’s finer creations. But it is bound to be a successful guidebook anyway, because most climbers are more concerned with climbing than commas. And when all is said and done, the guidebook does, in fact, do a good job of describing the quality routes surrounding Estes Park, Colorado.

KEN NICHOLS

Devils Tower National Monument: A Climber’s Guide. Steve Gardiner and Dick Guilmette. The Mountaineers, Seattle, 1986. 136 pages, black and white photographs. \$6.95 (paper).

Devils Tower is a fantastic volcanic plug that erupts hundreds of feet into the sky above the gently rolling hills of northeast Wyoming. Its remarkable vertical columns provide climbers with classic corners and cracks that cannot be matched for purity of form anywhere else in the world.

Being somewhat off the beaten track, the Tower has been out of the mainstream of climbing until recently, but in the last ten years its superb quality has