McKinley, Solo Winter Ascent. Overcoming the usual high winds, extreme temperatures and blustering storms, Vern Tejas became the first man to climb Mount McKinley solo in winter and live to tell about it. He had previously climbed the mountain 13 times in summer. Trapped under the snow in makeshift shelters for 16 of his 30 days on the mountain, he climbed the West Buttress route from February 16 to March 15. He turned 35 years old the day after completing the climb, partially inspired by Japanese Naomi Uemura's near miss in 1984. Uemura was credited with reaching the summit but disappeared on the descent. Tejas left a small Japanese flag on the top in honor of Uemura when he reached the summit on March 7. "Naomi did this for me," said Tejas. "He made it a possibility." Tejas, who trained for the ascent by leading a climb of Aconcagua in Argentina in January, then climbing it twice more and descending once by mountain bike and once by paraglider, used a 16-foot aluminum ladder for protection crossing crevasse fields on McKinley's slopes. Only once, near the end of the climb, did he come close to crevasse danger, barely jumping across. He pulled 150 pounds of gear on a plastic sled. A stocky, 5-foot-9, powerfully built climber with a bushy beard and a shaven head, but for a wisp of a pony tail, Tejas brought no tent and only enough food for 16 days. At times when storms pinned him in one spot, he put himself on half rations. He also found an abandoned cache of food at a high camp and had additional supplies dropped to him by bush-pilot Lowell Thomas, Jr. "I probably had five sunny days," said Tejas. "One of them was the day I flew in and another when I flew out." During the time spent in his snow caves, Tejas amused himself by playing the harmonica and listening to Alaska Public Radio by transistor radio. Denali National Park rangers estimated that Tejas faced weather comparable to the original winter summit party's stormy climb in 1967 — temperatures as low as  $-40^{\circ}$  and winds that drove the windchill factor to colder than  $-100^{\circ}$ . "I didn't realize my climbing would go beyond the climbing community and touch so many people in Alaska," said Tejas. "This has been the greatest reward from the climb."

LEWIS FREEDMAN, Sports Editor, Anchorage Daily News, Alaska

McKinley, South Buttress Alternate. Our route may be a valuable alternative for attaining the crest of the South Buttress from the Kahiltna east fork. Our choice was based upon a desire to avoid the objective avalanche hazards to be found on the Japanese Ramp. Bill Alexander, John Chaklos, Chuck Crago, Zach Etheridge and I were landed on the strip on the southeast fork of the Kahiltna on May 1. We established a camp below Kahiltna Notch on May 10 and from that vantage point we could observe the well-known Japanese Ramp as well as a broad rib farther southeast, which appeared less threatened by séracs. Its pronounced crest, as opposed to the almost bowl-like concavity of the Ramp route, might also give us protection from slab avalanches. A band of séracs at the start of our spur was the first obstacle. Steep ice, crevasses and some route-finding resolved the problem. A camp midway up the spur at 14,500 feet was



made beneath an enormous ice block adrift on the snow slope. From there, the final sérac band at 15,000 feet was the major question before attaining the crest of the South Buttress. We carried through this obstacle on May 18 and continued along the buttress to an exposed campsite at the top of the Japanese Ramp. We then followed the regular route directly from Thayer Col to the summit ridge, reaching the summit on May 24. We believe our route was safer, though perhaps more difficult, than the Japanese Ramp.

## ANDREW CARSON

Scott Peak, Northwest Face. On August 24, Mark Stasic and I climbed a new route on the northwest face of Scott Peak (2691 meters, 8828 feet). This route runs from 6500 to 8500 feet and tops out on the ridge between Scott Peak and its subsidiary summit to the east-northeast. It was mostly grey ice between 40° and 50°; the last two pitches were 60° and required intermediate protection with a two-foot cornice at the top of the route. We climbed from Base Camp at 5400 feet on the Toklat Glacier, 12 miles from the Toklat Road Camp on the Park Road.

## CLIFF BEAVER, National Park Service

Royal Tower, North Face, and Other Climbs, Little Switzerland. Bill Mc-Kenna and I spent nine days at the end of May in Little Switzerland on the Pica Glacier. We established a new route on the north face of the Royal Tower and did a few other hard new rock climbs. On the Royal Tower, we climbed the central couloir which splits the two rock faces. Starting at nine P.M., we climbed through the night with the midnight sun. The 50° to 60° 1800-foot-high couloir dead-ended in a rock headwall. Hugging the right side of the headwall, we found six pitches of beautiful mixed climbing. There were two cruxes, a tricky verglas-coated chimney just above where we left the couloir and a section below the summit ridge with loose snow over rotten rock. We rappelled to the couloir, which we down-climbed. The whole climb took 16 hours. Another good route was Maneater (5.10b) on the right corner of the Throne, which had a 130-foot, 3-inch arching crack. We found short approaches and high-quality rock on two small crags south of the Throne. We repeated many routes and established a few other new ones

## JAMES SWEENEY, Homer, Alaska

Mount Hayes, East Face. In April, Tom Walter and I flew to the Alaska Range to try a new route on the unclimbed 6400-foot east face of Mount Hayes (4216 meters, 13,832 feet). The face consisted of 50% snow and 50% blue ice, much more of the latter than we expected. The angle varied from 45° to 65° with occasional steeper rock bands. We climbed roped but opted to ascend without placing protection for the sake of speed. Initially, we planned on climbing about 3500 feet to the major rock band that cuts across the face at 10,900 feet and