

III and then go for the summit. Several of us carried loads to the top of the fixed lines. On that day, the weather took a turn for the worse. The next day, we all headed down to Base Camp to wait out the storm. Time was running out. Without consulting the team members, our leader had made arrangements for porters to arrive a month after we had arrived in Base Camp. Most expeditions plan to spend five or six weeks to climb Gasherbrum I. If the weather had held, this would not have been a problem. But the storm dumped much snow and made the route dangerous. We returned to Camp II on the Gasherbrum La and checked the couloir, but it was loaded with snow. We had no choice but to give up the climb.

GARY BOCARDE

*Gasherbrum II Ascent and Tragedy.* The expedition in which I took part was a commercial one of 14 members organized by Frenchman Bernard Muller and his wife, Laurence de la Ferrière. We left Skardu on May 19 and got to Base Camp on May 31 at 5150 meters on the upper Baltoro Glacier where it is joined by the glacier that lies at the base of Hidden Peak. Despite 18 days of unstable weather, we placed Camp I on June 4 at 6050 meters where the real ascent of Gasherbrum II begins. Following the first-ascent route of Austrian Moravec, we placed Camps II and III at 6650 and 7400 meters on June 19 and 21. On June 22, after a three-hour climb, Muller, Bernard Vallet, Jean Pierre Renaud, Georges Lozat and I reached the summit in fine but very cold and windy conditions. This was my fourth 8000er. On June 23, Jackie Peche reached the summit from Camp II solo. On June 24, Henry Albet, Marc Buscail and Pascal Hittinger, with two Balti porters, reached the summit. The mission of the porters was to carry up monoskis, with which Albet proposed to ski from the very summit. On the 25th, after having spent a second night at Camp III, Albet got ready to continue on the second part of his descent, despite the hardness of the snow. During his first turn, Albet slipped on the ice and fell 1200 meters to his death at the base of the glacier not far from Camp I. Hittinger gave up his idea of making the descent on a monoski. The other members of the expedition were Christian and Patrice Davi, Californian Mike Price and Swiss Monsieur and Madame Russenberger.

JORDI PONS, *Centre Excursionista de Catalunya, Spain*

*Gasherbrum II Attempt and Tragedy.* Our expedition was not the only one to experience tragedy in the Gasherbrum group. A Mexican climber succumbed to pulmonary edema on Hidden Peak and a French monoskier fell 1200 meters to his death on Gasherbrum II. After I departed, another Frenchman died of pulmonary edema at the Gasherbrum Base Camp. But the loss of Gary Silver was a crushing blow for me. Our expedition consisted of Gary Silver, Dr. Chip Woodland, Phil Boyer and me as leader. Our plan was to climb Hidden Peak (Gasherbrum I) by the original American route. We had unexpected delays of 16 days (!) with the Ministry of Tourism. About halfway up the Baltoro, we experienced a porter strike, settled by paying them 30% more than we had planned. Shortly after reaching Base Camp, Boyer developed pulmonary edema. Though his condition was never terribly serious, Dr. Woodland thought

it was best to evacuate him and so the two returned to Rawalpindi and the United States. In addition, the liaison officers in the area told us that the American route was off limits because of a 100-man army base at the start of the ridge. We tried to negotiate with the army, but apparently their orders were firm from higher-ranking officers: no climbing! After three days of fruitless negotiation, we gave up Hidden Peak and opted for Gasherbrum II. It was just Gary Silver and me trying for an 8000-meter peak, but the French had fixed ropes, so our task was infinitely easier. Gary and I established Camp I on June 24. We made a few carries over the next days and were well provisioned by the 26th. Then the weather turned poor and we remained at our 19,500-foot Camp I until July 2. Since Gary wasn't feeling well, I decided to take advantage of the weather to climb Gasherbrum II solo. We already had made a carry to Camp II and had food and a tent there. I reached the area of Camp III on July 3 and used a half-destroyed French tent for shelter. I set off for the summit on July 4. I climbed to about 26,000 feet but was forced back from the actual top by exhaustion and concern about the weather. The next day, my concern proved well founded. As I began my descent in strong winds, two young Swiss started for the summit. At 23,000 feet, I met Gary Silver and a Canadian member of the Swiss expedition, Roland Willenbrock. They had agreed to team up and looked fit and strong. By the time I reached Camp II, the weather had deteriorated into a full-fledged storm. The Swiss joined me at Camp II after making a surprisingly fast summit climb. The following day, we returned to Base Camp. Roland and Gary were trapped at Camp III. Over a meter of snow fell. Gary was having problems, probably the initial symptoms of pulmonary edema. When the storm temporarily abated on July 9, the pair began their descent. Gary collapsed at the level shoulder at 23,000 feet. Despite my attempts at persuasion over the radio and Roland's heroic attempt to get him lower, there is little that can be done when your partner lapses into a coma at a high altitude in a storm. At six P.M., Roland opted to save his own life and started his descent to Camp II, which he reached at two A.M. During the ordeal, he suffered third-degree frostbite in all his fingers. I teamed up with Dr. Dave Bong and Ethan Van Matre of the Portland Mazama group and the two Swiss and climbed back to Camp I. We met Roland that evening, July 10, and he was given emergency treatment for frostbite. Both Roland, a heart surgeon, and Bong agreed that Gary could not have survived the night. Given the avalanche conditions and the fact that Gary was unequivocally dead, I made the most difficult decision of my life: not to climb to the shoulder and bury his body. Instead, I asked an all-women's expedition which was attempting the route please to put his body in a crevasse. The Japanese women agreed, although I have not heard if they found his body or if they got high on the route.

GARY SPEER

*Gasherbrum II, a Third 8000er by a Woman.* On July 13, after 11 days of trekking from Dassu, Lut Vivijis, Ingrid Baeyens, Raf Snoeck and I arrived at