

ter part of 30 years with top climbers of diverse backgrounds and nationalities. Eight pieces constitute the personal history section: tales of seminal experiences from early Teton adventures to recent hard routes. These accounts are frank and well-written, giving insights into Lowe and his partners . . . when he had one.

The book concludes with a general overview of ice climbs around the world, and 16 selected routes — “World Classics,” as Lowe calls them — in the Americas, Europe, and Asia, complete with topos. I wasn’t really sure about the utility of this section, as fewer than half of them are what I’d actually call destination climbs in their own right, but maybe including them in a list like this will turn them into such.

The instructional sections account for somewhat less than half of this 250-page book, thoroughly covering gear, clothing, and ratings; glacier travel and alpine ice climbing techniques; waterfall and mixed climbing techniques; and a glossary of mountain, snow, and ice terminology. The excellent technique photography, shot in the Canadian Rockies, Ouray, and Vail, is clear and understandable (no small feat), as are the accompanying explanations by Lowe.

I can’t imagine that there is anyone who couldn’t learn something from these two sources (I know I did, but I’m not saying what). If your specific interest is learning how to traverse the discreet realm of waterfall and technical mixed climbing, the video is great. Climbing *is* movement, after all. If you are casting your net not only onto waterfalls but over the big ranges of the world, and you also want to know how the sport has evolved so you can grasp a sense of where it’s evolving to, the book would be for you. About the only thing it lacks are recipes and tips for high altitude cooking.

Through the years I’ve added ice screws to my rack, at no cost, because I found them where someone else had left them after lowering off. It’s interesting to note that both the book and the video are each cheaper than a brand new shiny ice screw. I could make the case that if you invested in either the book or the video you’d probably someday save yourself an ice screw because you’d know a cheaper way to bail, or better yet, you’d have been more likely to have finished the route in the first place. But if I did make that case, I fear that the halcyon days of free gear and booty, alas, would come to a close.

MICHAEL BEARZI

Climbing: The Complete Reference. Compiled by Greg Child. Facts on File, New York, 1995. 264 pages, 60 photographs. \$39.95.

This is a schizophrenic encyclopedia. It seems, at first glance, to be a valuable collection of fascinating and relevant material about our sport. And often it is. Yet the hundreds of grotesque errors that my provincial eye caught make you wonder if you can trust *any* of the information. If you use this book for anything more than a *Scrabble* reference, be vigilant and skeptical and always seek a second opinion. That libraries will automatically fall for this book (who else will shell out \$40?), and thus foist misinformation onto their naive patrons, is a shameful commentary on modern publishing.

The name Greg Child is associated with competence and eloquence; he's one of my favorite writers. But here he has been hasty and slipshod. He should have skipped this project and done what he does best: write funny, unique, and introspective prose about his own marvelous adventures.

On the positive side, most of the information in this book *seems* accurate and where else, in one volume, can you learn what *hand-stacking* and *mono-doigt* and *choss* and *orlatric mountaineering* are all about? An enormous number of climbing areas are well described, and lengthy treatises on such prosaic matters as stoves and sleeping bags and frostbite will tell you all you need to know. Although there's a massive over-emphasis on South America and on hot young climbers, you'll find few major subjects missing.

But was Cassin really born in 1990? And is his first name Ricardo or Riccardo? Child has it both ways. Wiessner or Weissner? Child has it misspelled at least seven times. Garwhal or Garwahl? Kichatna or Kitchatna? Salathé or Salanthe? Wunsch or Wunch? Moffat or Moffatt? Willy Merkl or Willi? Charlotte Dome or Charlotte's Dome? Willi Unsoeld or Whilli or Willie? Kathmandu or Katmandu? Tuolumne or Tuolomne? Kanchenjunga or Kangchenjunga? Is it Elbsandsteingebirge or the other two spellings Child gives? How many Sourdoughs on Denali? Child says three and immediately lists four. The Eiger lies in Austria? The list goes on and on.

Did Terry and Lachenal make the first winter ascent of the Eiger? Is Lhotse the world's highest peak? Is Nuptse one of the 8,000-meter peaks? Was Cho Oyu the third 8,000-meter peak to be climbed? Did Hemming shoot himself in 1970? Is Keeler Needle in Yosemite? Was the east face of Whitney first climbed in 1934? Did I make the first ascent of El Cap's West Face? Did Muir die in 1917? Is the Diamond 2,000 feet high? Did the Vulgarians publish *The Vulgarian Digest*? Is the Oregon club called "the Mazama Mountaineers?" The answers to the trivia quiz in this paragraph? Think negative.

There's a more serious flaw. An encyclopedia should explain derivations of uncommon words and give us the genesis of ideas and controversies. Child does this wonderfully when the mood strikes him, but this is far too seldom. A more patient researcher would have delved further into the nuances and curiosities of our pastime. For instance, according to Child, a

Jümar is simply a device. Was there someone named Jümar? Maybe some of us would like to know that the name is a composite of two Swiss cavers, Jusi and Marti. A Leeper is now simply a generic piton. But was Leeper a human being? I've always wondered how the Paine Towers received their un-Spanish name, but Child hasn't told us. A more enthusiastic researcher would have greatly enriched my knowledge of mountaineering.

The publisher has sullied this book with one of the silliest typographical conventions I've yet seen: the use of small capitals to indicate *every* cross-reference. Traditionally, this practice is used only for people or important place names, never concepts. But here's a sample entry, one of hundreds: "The rock is superb, featuring SLABS, CRACKS, and OVERHANGS pitted with POCKETS."

As if to make the text even more unreadable, the publisher has subjected us to both English and metric with no respite whatsoever and no allowance for common sense. Thus, an approximate 3,000-foot wall becomes an exact 914 meters. A cliff might range from, to use one example, 66 to 443 feet in height. Common rope diameters are .4 and .44 inches. The rounded metric equivalents are given also, of course, but spare my eyes, please.

Adding insult to injury, the 19 photos (not the 60 promised on the dust jacket) are gray and uninformative. The numerous sketches are grossly oversized, ridiculously captioned, and crudely drawn.

It's the compiler's prerogative to choose who and what to include — and a difficult choice it must be. But when John Noel hogs 10 inches of text, and names such as Peter Crew, Hans Dulfer, Jack Durrance, John Gill, Anderl Heckmair, Bob Kamps, Hans Kraus, Wilfrid Noyce, Leigh Ortenburger, Joe Simpson, Allen Steck, Stephen Venables, and Ken Wilson are absent from the main alphabetical entries, then one must challenge Child's selections. Furthermore, if places like Bariloche, Moore's Wall, and the Horsetooth Reservoir are listed, one wonders why the following areas or peaks are absent: the Caucasus, Glacier National Park, Jannu, Kailas, Manaslu, and the Pyrenees. It's true that all the above names and places can be found somewhere in the book — but not alphabetically, and incredibly, not in the index either.

I will not dwell on the hundreds of normal typos, wrong word usages (*premiere* replaces *premier* on every single occasion), wretched grammar, lackluster writing, and illogical, repetitive syntax. Such writing is so common now that the eye almost passes over such infantile text. Almost.

To the publisher, Facts on File, I say: Change your name to Fallacies on File. To Child, I say: Move on.

STEVE ROPER