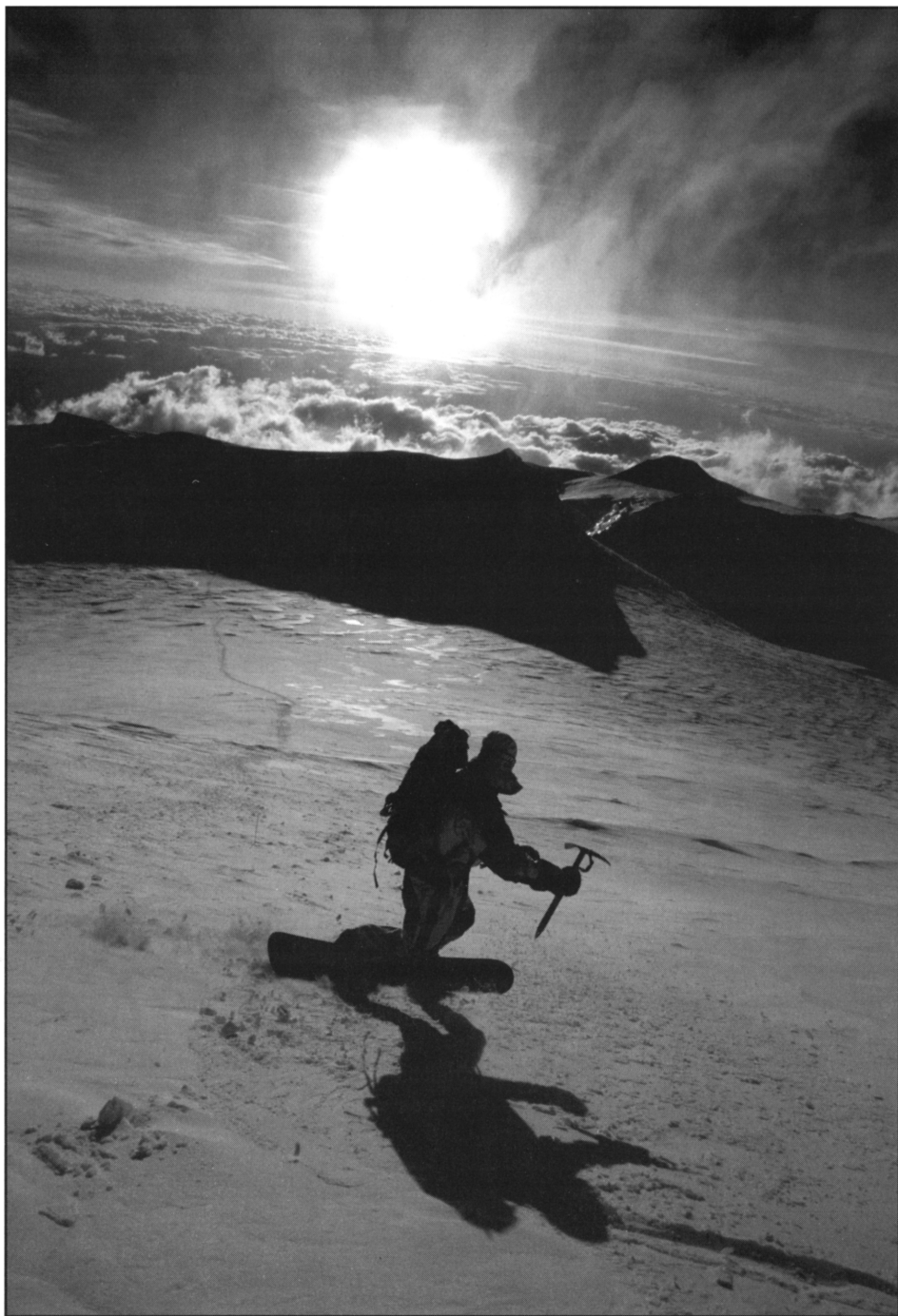


Mount McKinley, Glisse Descents.* In May and June, two mountaineers from Slovenia, skier Dr. Iztok Tomazin and snowboarder Marko Car, accompanied by Ms. Urska Poljansek, were busy on the west side of Mount McKinley. Although the weather and the snow conditions were poor, the pair was extremely successful. Upon arriving at Base Camp (4300 meters), they promptly started their activity. The first target was the *Rescue Gully*, which reaches the West Ridge at 5200 meters, where they made camp. They made the 900 vertical meters up and down, Tomazin skiing and Car snowboarding. After some rest at Base Camp they climbed the *Orient Express*, then continued, Tomazin to the top of Denali, Car up to the edge of the face. Both skied and snowboarded down first the Wickwire route and then the *Orient Express* (VI, 1900 vertical meters). On June 10 Tomazin scaled the *Diagonal Route* and West Ridge to the summit of Denali, which he reached at 8 p.m. His ski descent went via the West Ridge and then the *Rescue Gully*. Despite very bad weather he reached Base Camp at 11 p.m. The next day Car and Urska climbed to the camp at 5200 meters. Storm and cold (-40°) kept them tent-bound for three days with only a minimum of food. On June 14 the pair managed to reach the top. Marko Car snowboarded down, filmed by Urska, who descended on foot. Marko spent the night at Camp 5200 meters and next day continued the descent via the *Rescue Gully*. The same day Tomazin climbed once again to the summit, this time via the Messner Route, which he then skied (VI, 900 meters). During less than a month he made three ascents of the summit by three different routes. All ski and snowboard descents were continuous descents. Urska Poljansek is the first woman from Slovenia to reach the highest point of North America.

JÓZEF NYKA, *Editor, Taternik, Poland*

*The term glisse descents is adapted from Louis Dawson's book, *Wild Snow* (AAC Press, 1996), and refers to descents made on either skis or snowboards. Dawson derives the term from the French verb *glisser*, meaning to slide. Glisse alpinism refers to ski (either free- or fixed-heel) or snowboard descents.

Mount McKinley, Snowboard Descents. In June, I was on Denali to climb and snowboard. Joining me were Wade McKoy, a photojournalist, and Rob Haggard, who was shooting video. We set out for the summit on a windy June 18 in the midst of unstable weather. After about an hour, Rob turned around with a respiratory problem. Wade and I continued at our separate paces unroped. At Denali Pass the wind was so strong I nearly got blown down, and I told myself I would turn around if I were blown to the ground. Fortunately I was not, and continued. After about five hours I reached the summit via the West Buttress at about 6 p.m. in fine weather and not much wind. I waited for a while, thinking Wade had turned around at Denali Pass, but to my delight I spotted him on the football field as I was scoping the best line of descent. I waited for him; he arrived after another hour. We descended from the top soon after his arrival. Wade carried skis, but decided to walk down the exposed summit ridge. I put my snowboard on at the top of North America. This was the third part of my "Seven Summits Snowboarding Quest," a seven-part dream to climb and snowboard the seven summits of the world. (I had already completed Aconcagua and Mount Elbrus.) It was a treat to finally stop fighting gravity and descend in minutes what had taken hours to ascend. Wade skied and shot pictures. We got back to Camp 2 as the sun set. We descended to the 14,000-foot camp the next day, Wade and Rob by the West Buttress route and me on my snowboard down the *Rescue Gully* again, having done it after an acclimatization climb a few days earlier. On June 21, after a rest day, I climbed the Messner



Stephen Koch, glissading from the top of the continent. Wade McKay

Couloir alone in about six and a half hours and descended it* in less than 15 minutes—seven feet a second! The conditions were windpack that I broke into occasionally on the ascent, but not at all on the descent. It was one of the best descents of my life.

STEPHEN KOCH

*This was the first documented snowboard descent of the route.

Mount McKinley, Northwest Face, New Route. On May 19, Juraj Hreus and I climbed a new route on the northwest face of Denali. From the 14,200-foot camp we started climbing at 8 a.m. and climbed on the northwest face until 7 p.m., encountering 10 pitches of ice and bad snow, then 25 pitches of mixed (40° to 75°) ice, rock, and snow through rock pillars. When our route joined the West Buttress route, we stopped for one hour, made hot water and then climbed the rest of the buttress to the top of Denali. We returned at 3 p.m. to the 14,200 foot-base camp. The complete climb had taken us 19 hours nonstop.

JAN SVRCEK, *Slovakia*

Mount McKinley, Northwest Face of the West Buttress, Beauty is a Rare Thing. In June, Steve House soloed a line to the left of the Collins-Powers-Walters route on the northwest face of the west buttress of Denali. A full account of his story appears earlier in this journal.

Mount Hunter, Moonflower Buttress. It was reported that in 1995, Alex Lowe and Conrad Anker spent 36 hours camp-to-camp on the *Moonflower Buttress*, reaching a point below the “Come Again” exit, which is approximately five pitches below the Stump-Aubrey 1981 high point. Their effort represents amazing proficiency on a route that, at Alaskan Grade 6 ice/mixed 95° 5.8 A3, is still considered an Alaskan testpiece 16 years after it was established. (*Climbing* 167)

Mount Hunter, Southeast Ridge, Hard Saying Not Knowing. In early May, Judd Stewart and myself (Wesley Bunch) were flown into a seldom-visited arm of the Tokositna Glacier by pilot Doug Geeting. We arrived with the intention of attempting a new route on the southeast face of Mount Hunter. After heavy snowfalls and the near-loss of our Advanced Base Camp, we decided to change our plans as the face was just too dangerous. We decided to attempt the once-climbed southeast ridge, but we intended to start the route over a mile lower on the ridge. The initial climbing entailed interesting mixed rock, ice, and snow climbing to reach the ridge proper. Once on the ridge we continued to climb untrammelled ground with hideous snow conditions. Belays and intermediate anchors were non-existent or useless for the better part of three days of corniced ridge traversing. An irreversible rappel of a rock gendarme sealed our commitment. After intersecting the original Southeast Ridge route we bivouacked and decided to make for the summit the following night. Our summit attempt was thwarted a couple of hours from the top due to the never-ending fear that the snow conditions presented. Climbing the heavily corniced ridge with sugar snow was one thing, but downclimbing over two miles of it was unthinkable. After seemingly endless hours of rappelling down the original route we returned to advanced Base Camp and laid our tensions to rest. We flew to Talkeetna two days later. We named our variation *Hard Saying Not Knowing*. For any alpinists seeking high adventure there is still another