



*Sylvia Vidal on pitch eight, Sargantana, first ascent.*  
PEP MESIP

for 11 days (no pre-fixed ropes), including one day of bad weather. It is a very beautiful route, but it was very difficult to get information about it, because few people actually gave us any. In the end, we had to go with the topo from the poster of El Cap. It was a very laborious route on every pitch, without exception.

SYLVIA VIDAL, *Spain*

*Half Dome, Blue Shift.* On June 1, Karl McConachie and I completed a new route on Half Dome. *Blue Shift* (VI 5.11c A4) follows crack systems that lie between *Arcturas* and *Same As It Never Was*, a route that Karl, Randal Grandstaff and I put up in 1985. It then follows *Arcturas* for a pitch and a half before cutting out left on new ground again. The last few feet join the Regular Northwest Face route to the summit. We spent four nights on the wall after fixing and drilled a total of 46 holes, of which 20 were for belays. Seven of those were used to pass a stack of loose blocks on pitch 11. *Blue Shift* is a modern aid route up thin and expanding

flake systems characterized by some difficult free climbing and exciting direct aid. This route is sure to become as popular as *Same As It Never Was*, which I doubt has seen a second ascent. Bring plenty of beaks, hooks, RURPs and a 60-meter rope.

JAY SMITH, *unaffiliated*

*El Capitan, The Nose.* Single-day ascents of this 3,000-foot vertical granite wall have become rights of passage for top rock climbers in their prime. On September 23, Galen Rowell became the oldest climber to do so. Starting by headlamp with no fixed ropes at 4 a.m., the 57-year-old Rowell and Conrad Anker shared leads to reach the summit just before eight in the evening. They brought only a single rope, a two-quart water bottle each, plus enough PowerGel and chocolate-covered espresso beans to pass other teams from France, England, Norway, and the United States during the first half of the climb.

Thirty-one years earlier, in 1966, Rowell had made the fifth ascent of the *Nose* in five days. The 1958 first ascent led by Warren Harding required 18 months of siege climbing and