

tion of mixed and free. The climb was typical of the rock at Mt. Prindle—it's either A4 or runout 5.9. We named the route after the weather, the terrain, and a bad joke about a sheep.

JEFF APPLE BENOWITZ

*Franklin Icefields, Traverse and Ascents.* Craig Deutche and I established a new and fascinating route across the Franklin Icefields in late July. From a small shelf on the Sadlerochit River, we proceeded up Whistler Creek and over the pass that leads to the canyon of the Franklin Ramp. Crossing Franklin Creek, we continued up the adjacent drainage to the base of Peak 8270 (Igluvuk or Mansion Mountain). This very prominent peak is built of steep walls surmounted by an undulating ice-capped roof. This roof was reached from the northwest ridge. The summit, falling away to the Triumvirate Glacier system, affords one of the most remarkable alpine views in the Brooks Range. The glacier under the south face of 8270 leads to an icecap and trunk glacier at the western source of the Canning River. Peak 7200 at the top of the West Triumvirate Glacier was climbed late in the day and in variable weather, and camp was made on the Canning Glacier below. From the upper Canning, we were able to cross the southernmost divides of the Chamberlin Spur to reach a western tributary of the Hulahula, which we descended to the Patuk Region.

DENNIS SCHMIDT

## DENALI NATIONAL PARK

*Denali National Park, Mountaineering Summary.* The 1997 climbing season for Mount McKinley and most of the Alaska Range started with mountaineers making unsuccessful summit bids in the chilly month of December and concluded in mid-July. Thirty-seven different countries were represented as 1,110 mountaineers attempted routes to the top of North America's highest peak. More than half of the mountaineers (51 percent) reached the summit, right in keeping with the historical average.

Mount Foraker, the second highest peak in the Alaska Range at 17,400 feet, saw 27 mountaineers attempting routes to its summit. Nine of those (30 percent) mountaineers were successful in their summit bid. Lower in altitude, but still technically demanding, Mount Hunter (14,573') saw approximately 43 mountaineers attempting routes to its summit. (Because registration for Mount Hunter is not mandatory, summit statistics are not available.)

The number of serious accidents in the Alaska Range continued its three-year downward trend with a total of ten major rescues. Mountaineering accidents this year claimed the lives of two mountaineers: an American on Mount Hunter and a British mountaineer on Mount McKinley. In addition, a Russian climber drowned while crossing the McKinley River in the park's backcountry after completing his Denali climb.

In 1997, the Alaska Range experienced a lower-than-average snowfall for the second year in a row, which led to an early breakup of the glaciers and affected route conditions for the mountaineering season. During the month of May, weather patterns were very unstable. Mountaineers battled strong winds that proved relentless for days at a time. A sudden storm caught climbers, including a guided group, near the summit, stranding them overnight. The effects of this storm were one British fatality in an independent expedition and four guided clients requiring rescue for severe frostbite, which resulted in significant tissue loss including that of fingers and toes.

Fantastic weather in June was a significant factor in the greater-than-normal number of mountaineers standing on the summit. Unfortunately, the mild weather did not hold over