

*Monster* (III M8, 120m) on Mt. Wilson. After a short ice pitch, two short rock pitches (25m, 15m) were climbed to reach a six-meter overhang that was drytooled to reach a 45-meter section of ice. Because of sloping holds on the third pitch, Thomson used rock shoes and ice tools.

Also on Mt. Wilson, Thomson, Kefira Allen and Eric Dumerac added the beautiful *Stairway to Heaven* (M7+, 100m) above the classic ice route *Midnight Rambler*. Down the road from the popular area of Field, Thomson and Allen climbed an often-looked-at problem on Mt. Hunter described in the guidebook as a route that would be "an exciting exercise in classic Rockies frigging around." At the time, of course, this meant aid climbing with pitons and shaky gear. Nowadays, it means cleaning and drilling. Their *Sure, Why Not?* (V M7 WI5, 410m) follows several classic ice pitches, using two pitches of difficult and overhanging rock to link them.

Thomson and Allen also made the long walk up to the compelling line *Sky Pilot* near Banff. This Grade 6 pillar formed early in the season for only the second time ever. It is unknown if anyone managed to climb the fragile column before it fell off, but in March, Thomson added bolts up to a dynamic icicle that hung down from the main broken-off curtain. Thomson declared *Dog Fight* (M7 WI6 X, 80m) his best mixed route all season, because in one full 50-meter pitch one is faced with difficult drytooling and a significant amount of challenging ice.

The only other route of the season to compare to these is *Unicorn*, next to the popular *Kitty Hawk*. Eyed for years, it was finally attempted by Eric Dumerac, who climbed the first (M7-) pitch with widely spaced but good natural gear. Realizing he needed bolts for the upper free-hanging dagger, Dumerac recruited Thomson and his drill. Re-leading the first pitch, the pair then drilled a number of bolts to reach the ice to create a second spectacular M7 pitch. With its difficulty and quality quickly confirmed by Tim Pochay and Statham, Unicorn may prove to be the best mixed route in the range, although it doesn't always come in enough for an ascent.

A significant factor for all of these climbs is their size and their significant distance from the roadside. Unlike the short 20 to 30-meter mixed routes in Vail and other areas, these climbs are generally started from the bottom and combine long stretches of strenuous rock climbing and drytooling as well as significant portions of ice.

JOE JOSEPHSON

*Mt. Andromeda, Andromeda Strain, First Free Ascent.* In September, John Culberson and I made the first free ascent of *Andromeda Strain* on Mt. Andromeda in the Canadian Rockies. This 2,300-foot route is alpine climbing from the car at its best. I freed the former A1 crack in crampons at 5.10d. Other attractions on the climb included an icy 5.9 pitch, a pitch skirting an ice blob rated M5, and an ice pitch of WI5.

DAVID A. TURNER

## BAFFIN ISLAND

*Mount Thor, Ascent and Tragedy.* A team of Parks Canada rescue specialists were in Auyuittuq late last August in response to a climbing accident on Mt. Thor. A solo climber named Go Abe from Japan was overdue on his second attempt on a central line on the face. It turned out he had been killed in a fall in which he landed on the ledge at two-thirds height. I believe the fall happened as he was approaching his previous year's high point, one rope length above the ledge. It appeared he had tried to follow his own line as much as possible on the lower face,