



*Kath Pyke on the fifth (crux) pitch of Medusa on the southeast face of Arrowhead Peak.*

ANDY DONSON

the route (see additional notes below). From left to right, a route by Bernard Gillet and partner attacked the next dihedral system to the right of *Ithaca*, producing a four-pitch 5.11. This was followed by *Medusa* (Donson, with newcomer Brit, Kath Pyke), a five-pitch, 5.11a “J” crack system of real quality status that is the third system to the right of the *Airhead Dihedrals*. Caught in a hair-on-end and carabiner-sparking thunderstorm, the pair named the route after the goddess Medusa, known for the snakes in her hair. On Arrowhead Peak’s southwest face, *Independence* (5.10, three pitches), a splitter dihedral, was put up by Pyke and Dylan Taylor. The higher you go on Arrowhead, the better the quality of the rock.

Over on the Longs Peak massif, up and behind the Diamond, the elegantly positioned Palisades was the scene of three new multi-pitch lines, the first new routes here for over two decades. Mark Howe and Joni Dutton found themselves doing a striking line, *Beat the Heat* (5.10d, three pitches), on the central dihedral system of the Great White Tower simply because people were

already on the popular Flying Buttress further down the valley. Kath Pyke focused her efforts on the left arête of Wisteria Tower to produce the fine *Slumgullion* (5.11d, three pitches). This is the hardest addition to the Palisades and probably one of the only new routes in RMNP where all the pitches were led by a female. The belayer, Mark Howe, wanted no part of it! Also in the Palisades, *Earth, Wind and Fire* (5.10d, two 60-meter pitches), climbed by Doug Byerly and Kath Pyke, takes the west face of Great White Tower.

KATH PYKE, *United Kingdom*

*Rocky Mountain National Park, Various Ascents.* The summer of 1998 was a productive one for new route activity in Rocky Mountain National Park. At least 20 new routes were established, three quarters for which I was responsible. I kicked the season off with Terry Murphy, finding a fine new line on the southeast face of Dragontail Spire in Tyndal Gorge. The seven-pitch *Dragonslayer* offers varied climbing up to 5.11d. Next, the two of us climbed an excellent four-pitch route, *Ravensong*, on the west face of Notchtop Peak above Ptarmigan Glacier. This route follows obvious cracks to a white roof band that succumbed (after several long falls) at 5.11c. The two of us found a huge unclimbed face a week later in the Andrews Glacier cirque and climbed *Wings of Desire* (5.10d) in seven pitches, finding difficult sections interspersed with frighteningly loose rock. For my next project, I teamed up with Bruce Miller and tackled the

dark, compact northeast face of Sharkstooth Peak, also in the Andrew's Glacier area. This promising face turned out to be a haunted house of sundry horrors, including excessively licheny rock and disposable holds, one of which landed squarely on the small of my back as the rain began to fall, heightening the peril of the situation. Needless to say, we persevered on our route, *Decline of Western Civilization*, finding climbing up to 5.10 and wishing to never find ourselves on this chunk of choss again. On the walk out, I spied a line Matt Hobbs had told me about and he and I returned with Sari Nicoll to establish a six-pitch climb, *Heat Wave* (5.11c), that we held in very high esteem. This line climbs the sunny pinnacle on the south face of Mt. Otis, also in the Andrew's Glacier area. With solid rock, four pitches of 5.10, and one acrobatic roof at 5.11, it ranks as one of the best free climbs in the Park at its grade.

Later in the summer, I teamed with up Sari Nicoll again for an exciting, three-pitch variation to the *Flying Buttress* route on Mt. Meeker's south face. *Kiss The Sky* featured a 5.11 hand-to-finger crack through a small roof and some very loose rock that was cleaned up for subsequent ascents. Next on tap was a trip into the Glacier Gorge to the south face of Arrowhead Peak with Kath Pyke. We climbed two excellent three-pitch lines, one, *Goldfinger*, a beautiful 5.11d crack on the golden central buttress, and the other, *Raindance*, a 5.9+ on the slabby left face. I returned a couple of weeks later with Jon Allen to establish another climb, *Refugium*, to the left of *Raindance*, finding excellent rock and intricate climbing up to 5.11. That same day we established a wonderful 5.10d/5.11a, *Dreams of Babylon Burning*, a seven-pitch route up the center of the east face of McHenry's Peak.

After another new route with Kath Pyke on Wisteria Tower (see above), I wrapped the summer season up with a great climb, *Solar Arête*, on Solar Wall above the Loch Vale near Zowie Pinnacle. Jon Allen and I found five pitches of stimulating face climbing through roof bands on a sunny arête, the crux being a stemming dihedral that fell at 5.11b. No bolts or pitons were placed on any of these routes, nor were any taken along. I'm certainly not against use of bolts in the Park, but wish only to see them used tastefully. It is hoped that the huge resource of rock will be respected for future generations to enjoy and cherish.

The 1998 ski mountaineering season in RMNP was somewhat bleak, as there was precious little snow on the steeper aspects. Nonetheless, I managed to repeat some of the classic testpieces established by John Harlin III and Jimmy Katz in the early 1980s. I skied the north face of Longs Peak, twice solo, and the ominous, committing Y Couloir on Mt. Ypsilon, also solo. I then added a few testpieces of my own, including the West Face Couloir of Mummy Peak, the South Couloir of Chuiquita Peak, both alone, and the western-most couloir above Ptarmigan Glacier on Flattop Peak with Jon Allen.

In the Indian Peaks Wilderness, I skied the stunning South Couloir of Shoshoni Peak and the exposed East Face of Apache Peak in a fine solo outing.

DOUG BYERLY

*Longs Peak, Four Pitches, 24 Hours.* In the first week of September, Mic Follari and I completed a new route on the Upper East Face of Longs Peak in Rocky Mountain National Park. Three brilliant pitches of 5.6-5.8 were done to get to Broadway. Pins were noticed along the way; we later learned that this was the 1956 *Glendennings Arête*. After reaching Broadway, it is possible to solo up another 400 feet; a short section of 5.7 is encountered upon leaving Broadway, then it is easy fourth to fifth class scrambling. A prominent right-facing dihedral