

system to the east was taken after the angle increased. The dihedral yields four pitches of 5.9-5.10 climbing. Descent was made via the Loft between Mount Meeker and Longs Peak. The route was named *Four Pitches, 24 Hours* for humiliating reasons I'd rather not discuss.

MATT HOBBS

*Longs Peak, The Diamond, Left For Dead.* During the first week of August, Shane Wayker and I finished a new route on the far right side of the Diamond, approximately 50 feet to the right of Sunshine. Peter Takeda and I fixed the first four pitches of this route in the fall of 1996. Terrible weather forced us to retreat one pitch from the top. I then returned in the fall of 1997 with Mike Duncan. Once again we were stopped by horrible weather. This year, to increase the likelihood of clear skies, Shane and I hiked in on August 3. There was one drawback to going in during the summer. The runoff from the melting north face would be draining down the route.

We hiked in under stormy skies and bivied under a tarp on Broadway. Unfortunately, we awoke to an inch of fresh hail, but by mid-morning the sun came out and dried things off nicely. As I started up the first pitch (5.7 AI wet), dark clouds moved in and it started to rain, hail and snow. Shane led the second pitch (5.9 AI) in relative comfort due to the steepness of the wall. We fixed these two pitches and retreated to the tarp.

During the night three inches of snow fell. We slept in, and by 9 a.m. the sun was out and most of the snow was gone. We jugged our lines to the start of the fixed ropes Pete and I had installed on pitches 3 and 4 in 1996. The old lines looked great, so we jugged on lead and placed gear every ten feet or so. (Pitch 3 was AI+; pitch 4, which required some thin nailing, a few beaks and heads, was A3.) By the time we arrived at the start of pitch 5, we were both soaked. The weather was stable, but the north face had started to drain. Luckily, it was my lead. (I would rather climb in a cold shower than belay in one.) Forty feet of tied-off knifeblades, beaking, heading and hooking took me to the base of a large roof (A3+). Easy aid led out right for 15 feet and then up an overhanging chimney and onto the north face. Incredibly, Shane had not gotten hypothermic while belaying for three hours in an icy shower. He cleaned the pitch and we carefully rappelled the route (which we called *Left For Dead*, VI 5.7 A3+, 800'), stripping the fixed ropes as we descended. The tarp was warm and dry!

DAVE SHELDON

*Longs Peak, Lower East Face, Babies 'R' Us. Babies 'R' Us* (III 5.12a) is a five-pitch route on the Lower East Face of Longs Peak that offers steep slab climbing on mostly high quality granite. It starts 250 feet right of the North Chimney, immediately right of a conspicuous black streak, and eventually crosses the black streak several times. Because the black streak is often wet, the best times to do the route are either late May/early June or late August/early September. The first three pitches weave their way up discontinuous weaknesses and when these features end, you can expect some difficult thin edge climbing with bolt protection. The first pitch is 5.11a and requires some route-finding skills at the bottom, but four bolts steer the climber to a nice belay perch. The second very difficult pitch involves a fair bit of 5.11b face work with an improbable 5.12a crux sequence and eventually crosses the black streak. The third short pitch traverses leftward to an arête (5.11a) and reaches a comfortable belay. Pitch four traverses back right across a tenuous face section to reach a welcome crack system (5.9+) that leads to another good belay. The last pitch traverses rightward to avoid easy cracks

above, and gains a nice corner. When the corner fades, the route forces the steep wall above, protected by small wired nuts and two bolts (5.11a).

The route took Randy Farris and I seven days to establish over the summers of 1997 and 1998. All bolts were drilled on lead except the last two. Progress was slow, and on some days we would merely place one or two bolts. In the summer the route can stay sunny until around 2 p.m. and is well out of the way of the usual rock fall hazards from the North Chimney and Diamond. We rappelled the route in five rappels; there is one fixed station at each belay.

The name of the route derives from the fact that we both had newborns at home—perfect training for those alpine starts.

BRET RUCKMAN, *unaffiliated*

*Ships Prow, Sarchasm.* As reported in last year's volume, Pat Adams and Jim Redo climbed the three-pitch *Bologna Pony* (5.12c) on Ships Prow. This was one of the hardest climbs in the Park until Tommy Caldwell upped the ante with a 120-foot direct start that weighs in at 5.14a, and is thus one of the hardest climbs in Colorado. Writes Caldwell, "There are more battles to be fought in doing a climb like *Sarchasm*. Its distance from the trailhead (five miles or so) is a big incentive to put forth a strong effort with each attempt. The altitude and the almost certain afternoon storms affected the strategy of the climb and lent an extra measure of urgency each day as the clouds rolled in. Several good climbers have said to me that it will be a long time before *Sarchasm* gets repeated, if ever. I hope this is not the case. The perfect rock and magnificent setting make all the effort more than worthwhile. I will certainly seek similar opportunities."

*Mt. Evans, The Rusty Dagger.* *The Rusty Dagger* was poised over our heads in a dead straight line. It seemed inconceivable to Cameron Tague and me that this compelling and pure feature could have been overlooked, since the rest of the cliff had received considerable attention by the free climber. At that time, the route existed as an aid climb, with ratings around the A2/A3 level. The system kicks off as a shallow right-facing dihedral that slowly tapers away after 100 feet. At the third pitch the dihedral system reappears, switching to face left. The crusty red right wall of the dihedral gradually widens as height is gained, resembling a rusty dagger. Huge unweathered granite blocks were piled at the base of the wall, suggesting that the system hadn't been around too long.

The celebrations started early on August 16 as we smugly congratulated ourselves for reeling in the big one; we even went so far as posturing for the camera à la El Cap Meadows. Oh brother, were we headed for a big fall.

We managed to dispatch the first two pitches, which looked to be the crux of the route, without incident. The granite turned out to be a little crunchy with the occasional huge spine of detached rock along the way. Protection was generally abundant. On a roll, and prematurely flushed with success, we relaxed, as the next pitch looked casual by comparison. Wrong. Although not technically too hard, the red crud proved to be highly unpleasant. Crumbly and unsound in surprising ways, this pitch slowed us down and put a bit of a damper on our victory march. The fourth pitch had a little extra water and attendant mud and vegetables. Some risky detours and imprudent gardening got me past these obstacles and on to a spacious swampy ledge, from which I could survey the final hurdle: the dripping offwidth triple roof stack. Fifty feet of reasonable-looking dihedral led to this. A loud voice in my mind