

Clyde when roped climbing was introduced to climbers in the West, read a letter describing his fond memories of climbing in Yosemite and the High Sierra from early in the century.

Our last speaker was worth the wait. David Brower, at age 87 an honorary member of the AAC and the climbing archdruid, described his first visits to the Valley and his early Yosemite climbing days, and then brought his history of preservation and environmental advocacy into the present. His appeal for activism by future generations could not have been received by a more favorable audience.

The legacy of the efforts behind this event are far reaching. The old Sunnyside Campground is no more. Camp 4 is the sign, and it will remain. In the new Yosemite Valley masterplanning process, the NPS preferred alternative will expand Camp 4; add more walk-in and walk-to sites in the Valley; emphasize public transportation, day use and recreational uses in the Park to accommodate the summer and holiday visitation bulges; and convert the North Park Highway from Camp 4 to El Cap into a walking/bicycling path. All worthy improvements for preserving the quality of the Yosemite climbing experience.

There is a granite bench next to Big Columbia. It is there in memory of Raffi Bedayn, who in 1976 was the first recipient of the AAC Angelo Heilprin Award. It was Raffi and others like him who, working with the Yosemite NPS in their day, did so much to enable the climbing traditions of ours. There is continuity here. The climber John Muir created national parks. After Raffi Bedayn, David Brower and Tom Frost, new chapters will be written, and new heroes will be needed. But on this one occasion, we became joined in a wide-open, unabashed climbers' sharing of appreciation for the past, present and future of Yosemite climbing and Camp 4. And as the next day dawned under clear skies and the crisp fall fragrance of pine and bay blowing gently across a sea of vertical granite, a chorus of "on belays" rang throughout Yosemite Park.

R.D. CAUGHRON

*Half Dome, New Routes.* Eric Coomer, Bryan Law and I developed some new aid lines on the far right side of the northwest face of Half Dome in 1999. I began solo in late May, carrying several loads of wall gear up the *Bushido* gully while it was still filled with snow. I started climbing on flakes and splitters just right of the *Jet Stream* and continued into the far right corner in a 300-foot high section of layered dihedrals. The corner got quite thin near the top, requiring many beak tips and #1 copperheads. Above the corners, the route follows various smaller and sometimes fragile features linked with hooks and the occasional rivet. The weather deteriorated as I passed the point of easy retreat, and it began raining as I was finishing the fifth pitch. I woke up the next morning to winter conditions. My rack and ropes became completely encased in ice. The storm continued for two days. At this point the route sort of named itself: *Solitary Confinement*. After the storm, another long pitch of aid and a short free section took me near a bolt ladder on the *Bushido* route. I placed a rivet and tried to pendulum into the ladder. After numerous unsuccessful tries at different heights, I jumared back up to the rivet to find my lead line almost cut by an edge I hadn't noticed. I immediately drilled two more rivets to reach *Bushido* (23 new holes for the route). I finished the last couple of pitches of *Bushido* with a knot tied in the lead line.

Eric Coomer and I returned to Half Dome in mid-June. We started at about the same place as *Solitary Confinement*, sharing belays and a few moves but mostly climbing new features for the first two pitches. We then continued independently, through incipient and fragile features, until running out after pitch 5. Eric Coomer executed a successful pendu-

lum ("the Airstream Penji") into a rivet ladder on the *Jet Stream*, saving us a couple of rivets (14 new holes for the route). Inspired by Hunter S. Thompson and Eric Coomer's recent move to a low-rent apartment complex in Colorado, we called the route *White Trash Vacation*. We finished the wall via *Jet Stream* and enjoyed a bivy on the summit under a brilliant full moon.

ERIC GEORGE, *unaffiliated*

*Porcelain Wall, Strange World.* In August, Bryan Law and I climbed a new route, *Strange World*, on the Porcelain Wall. We began with a few moves of *When Hell Was In Session*, then headed right, across *Sargantana*. The first four pitches wander on and off of *Sargantana* on low-angle mixed free and aid. After leaving *Sargantana* on the fourth pitch, the route is independent to the top. We kept a laid back one-pitch-a-day pace after the initial fixing effort. The weather was perfect and there was plenty of food, beverages, music, etc. We had the amenities to travel in comfort and style, and even with an extra haulbag we barely had room for it all.

Bryan led "the Lawnmower Pitch," which took us through dense vegetation to the base of the headwall. After a couple of tree moves on the next pitch, the route is mostly steep and clean from there on, and we were surrounded by some of the most colorful rock I have seen. The headwall gets progressively steeper toward the top, and in places the moves are quite physically demanding. We found many sections of hard aid but overall, most of the climbing is moderate. The line is surprisingly natural for a modern Yosemite nailing route (about 30 holes in 1,700 feet of new climbing) and we both felt it was one of the nicest routes we have done. I am still amazed it was unclimbed until last year.

In spite of an initial scare and the ample evidence of fresh rockfall everywhere near the base, we saw no significant rockfall while we were on the wall.

On all of our ascents last year, we decided not to rate the routes. I personally have found the A1-A5 system to be useless. It has been redefined so many times that no one really even knows what the ratings are supposed to mean. And even if everyone did, exaggeration and sandbagging would persist. I don't expect everyone to agree, but for me, not rating at all is a simple and liberating solution.

ERIC GEORGE, *unaffiliated*

*Half Dome, Peripheral Vision.* On July 17, Karl McConachie and I completed the first traverse of Half Dome's northwest face (VI 5.11c PDH). It is a line we had talked about since our ascent of *Same as it Never Was* in 1986, but just never got it together. Karl, however, knew it was a great line and wasn't about to let it slip away. He was so inspired, in fact, that he completed a reconnaissance of the first six and a half pitches solo during the summer of 1994. With a tremendous amount of scoping, he had pieced together a very aesthetic and natural start, linking features few people could perceive that required minimal drilling. Only five pendulums exist on the entire route, three of which are on pitch three, the "Buku Haiku Traverse." One of the pendulums takes place on an overhanging wall—for sure, one of the most technical swings in Yosemite, 60 feet down, wildly bouncing in space to a series of hook moves followed by beaks and heads. Of course, all must be back-cleaned to regain that 60 feet. Later in the pitch, Karl spent nearly one hour trying to get a single placement—a #0 RP, hook and blade tip equalized—from a fully stretched horizontal position that he had managed during his recon. He refused to drill and eventually succeeded. This will certainly get drilled by