

Mt. Foraker, Sultana Ridge, Notable Ascent. Japanese soloist Masatoshi Kuriaki attempted a winter ascent of Mt. Foraker. He spent 57 days on the *Sultana Ridge* before attaining the summit, which was achieved after the official end of winter. Further details are lacking.

Mt. Foraker, South Face. New Englanders Steve Larson and Joe TerraVecchia established a new route, the South Face (Alaska Grade 6, 9,400'), on Mount Foraker (17,400') from June 4-20. The route ascended the 3,500-foot diamond-shaped wall between the *Infinite Spur* and the French Ridge. A full account of their climb appears earlier in this journal.

Mt. Hunter, North Buttress, Attempt. Flying in with Talkeetna Air Taxi, I could see that Mt. Hunter's north buttress was in condition. I had visited Alaska in 1998 and had a variety of stuff to go at. I set up base on the now-familiar glacier and skied up to do a recce. Everything was there. The night was clear, the 'schrund went well enough, and I was soon moving up to somewhere near *Deprivation*. To its right was an intriguing line. I self-belayed for once in my alpine life, enjoying the feeling of security and the hard sketchy climbing. All went well, though frustratingly slowly. My plan had been to fix my two ropes and go down. I had every bit of gear I needed, though, so I carried on. The plan was simple: climb the first, second and third rockbands, then carry on directly to finish as for the *Moonflower*. Leave the heavy stuff and go for the summit, returning to descend the partly equipped *Moonflower* line.

It took two days to get to a junction with *Deprivation* at the top of the second band of rock, having been dusted by a huge powder and serac avalanche while aiding up a corner below the top of the first band. . . . The good buzz changed to one of electric danger when I realized I was on a windslab slope. I was looking up to my last obstacle: the rock above, then open slopes to the exit off the wall. I just could not push it. Lots of rappels, v-threads, nuts, pegs, more threads, then down the lower section of *Deprivation*. The last throw of the rope off a bollard and I was staggering, dragging ropes back to my skis as the mountain became active.

For a while, the weather hung in the balance; it stormed, people left. The weather changed; it became cold, but not too cold. I decided to climb at night and sleep in the mid-afternoon when the face caught the sun. So no sleeping bag—a bivy sac and down jacket instead, three days' worth of food and gas. I opted for two 5.5mm Dyneema ropes and no self-belaying. On the aid, I'd just put in as many pieces as I could, attaching slings and back-cleaning as I went. I could hang the sack on a fifi hook and pull it up without having to go back down. The system works: I recently fell off while free soloing on the Grandes Jorasses. Tends to send the heart rate up a bit, that's all.

Climbing like this, I reached the foot of the second rockband in only the first day. It being too warm, I stopped to await the night. An all-night, full-bore storm plastered the face in rime ice and new snow. I bailed, battling with frozen gear, clearing the bergschrund as the face woke up.

I went up again a couple of times, but each time it snowed so much that slowly the reality dawned on me that it was finished. I'd lost, failed yet again, but what an experience to be totally at one with my ideal. The second time up, I took real pleasure in the fact that I was evolving my style to that of a purer one. I had some great climbing on one of the world's mythical mountain faces. What more can one wish for?

ANDY PARKIN, *United Kingdom*