

with the sentence "Climbing is now decidedly mainstream, as proven by the media's insistence on calling it 'extreme.'"

At this late point in the review, I feel obligated to confess that I have a juvenile sense of humor and that I enjoy a glass (or more) of beer. I'm also male, of roughly the same generation as Sherman and am a traditional climber (a bad one, though). While I'm being confessional, I should add that I never saw a bolt I didn't clip; further, I admit with much regret that this year I may "climb" more days indoors than out. I suppose I'm saying that, when I'm reading, Sherman is preaching to the converted. I doubt that he will win many converts, but like all the devout, I believe that even if I don't need Sherman to remind me that "climbing" indoors isn't climbing, others do.

DAVID STEVENSON

*Close Calls: Climbing Mishaps and Near-Death Experiences.* John Long. Helena, MT: Falcon Publishing, 1999. 182 pages. \$12.95.

John Long is a Yosemite hardman from the 1970s and the author or editor of some 17 books on rock climbing. In *Rock Jocks, Wall Rats, & Hang Dogs*, his account of his early career in and around the Valley, he recounts free-soloing 2,000 feet of 5.10 routes in a day at Joshua Tree—and nearly dying capping the day off with a 5.11. Evidently, he has grown more circumspect with age. His latest book, *Close Calls*, is devoted to safety.

In *Close Calls*, Mr. Long applies the droll style he has honed over the years to the accident-and-analysis format of *Accidents in North American Mountaineering*. He can get away with taking a comic approach to such a serious subject because, despite their carelessness and recklessness, the anti-heroes of these dramas all survived (miraculously, in many cases) to tell their tales. Collectively, they constitute a madcap *Accidental Survivals in North American Mountaineering*. Each story is followed by some pointed commentary, sensible advice and a cartoon by Tami Knight that vividly captures either the state of mindlessness of the perpetrator or the dire consequences of the deed. The locations range from Yosemite to local crags and rock gyms, the climbers from world-class to beginner. The names have been changed to protect the negligent, and the stories embellished with amusing details unabashedly supplied by the author.

The morals of most of these fables are timeless verities that every climber knows, but which many occasionally neglect: fasten your harness; rope up; set protection at regular intervals; bring water; don't climb drunk; don't test anchors with swan dives; watch out for rock-fall; be careful with knives when dangling from ropes; be wary of gasoline stoves in nylon tents and romantic entanglements; don't climb with strange felons; don't drop your gear; don't rappel from rotten slings or off the end of the rope.

Other mistakes are more subtle, and yield more advanced lessons: don't belay directly beneath the climber; set anchors to withstand lateral pulls; anticipate both rope drag and stretch; plot the trajectories of both your own and others' likely pendulums; if you must climb drunk, don't puke on your rockshoes; keep in mind that real handholds may break and that gym holds may spin; the speed of long rappels increases as the rope runs out, lowering the tension on the braking device; and, given the extreme difficulty of have sex with harnesses on, the deed is best accomplished on hanging bivouacs by tying off one ankle apiece with a hangman's noose.

Many readers will find themselves sorting the various incidents into such categories as: stunts so wantonly reckless that there is absolutely no possibility of their engaging in anything remotely comparable; blunders which, although egregious, they could at least imagine themselves making in an unguarded moment; and, finally, stuff they've actually done. Others will find themselves recalling antics of their own that were easily as brainless as any in the book, but which, happily, have not been recorded for posterity.

In short, *Close Calls* is entertaining enough to keep the reader going and serious enough to be worth the investment. While no one is going to remember each incident, their cumulative impact should be adequate to make many a bit more careful, which amply justifies the project.

JOHN MCINERNEY

## CORRECTION

In the 1999 *AAJ* (pp. 430-431), I reviewed the Everest IMAX film and mistakenly suggested that the "summit" footage was shot lower on the mountain. According to David Breashears, this is not true; the footage in question was indeed shot from the summit. After watching the film twice, I had incorrectly assumed from the unusually high camera angle (which eliminated background and placed the climbers on a mound of snow in a blue sky) that this shot must have been covered under the disclaimer that appears in the front of the film, "some shots were recreated." As Mr. Breashears explained to me, with only a mono-pod to stabilize the 65-pound camera, they were forced to secure it to the summit slope to achieve a viewable image. I particularly regret the implied comparison to Frederick Cook. I certainly did not mean to suggest that the film makers were perpetrating a hoax on their viewers. My abject apologies to David Breashears and his teammates for a mistake that could easily have been avoided.

I hope that this error does not detract from my attempt to convey my belief that the filmmakers of Everest made super-human efforts to complete its production. The result is the best IMAX film made to date.

MICHAEL GRABER

## IN BRIEF

Despite our general policy of not reviewing how-to manuals and guidebooks, at least two titles stand out as exceptional: Mark F. Twight's *Extreme Alpinism: Climbing Light Fast, & High* is a manual for accomplished climbers who want to push to the next level. Twight is one of the few people who use the word "extreme" accurately. Excellent photos, many by Jim Martin, and first-rate anecdotes bolster a text that could be useful to most of us.

R.J. Secor's *The High Sierra: Peaks, Passes, and Trails* is now in its second edition. Secor has added 80 new routes and 60-plus new pages to the book that was already the definitive guide to the Range of Light; 570 peaks are described here. Both titles are from Mountaineers Books.

*Ultimate High: My Everest Odyssey* is the story of author Goran Kropp's bike trip from Sweden to Kathmandu and subsequent "solo" ascent of Everest. Reviewer Jeff Apple Benowitz notes that anyone who enjoyed the death-mongering accounts of the 1996 Everest tragedies will like this one, and that the title should be changed to Ultimate Kropp to better fit the cover and text behind it. Discovery Books.

*The Top of the World: Climbing Mount Everest* is a beautifully illustrated book for children