

spectacular views in the sunshine and made up for the previous days' abbreviated summit photo session. I then downclimbed the route and skied back to camp. Kelly surprised me by cruising through the pass later in the day to pick me up. I was happy he did, as the weather soon changed, and the next couple of weeks were marginal. Both climbs may have been first ascents, but only time will tell.

DANNY KOST

*Mt. Blackburn, New Route, Previously Unreported.* In May, 1998, Franz Mueter, Martin Truffer, and I walked in from the McCarthy Road to the Kuskalana Glacier, then up to a camp at about 5,000 feet beneath the west face of Mt. Blackburn. From there, we climbed a couloir up to the west ridge and followed the ridge for a few days to a camp where the ridge merges into the face at 12,500 feet. An attempt directly up the face encountered poor volcanic rock and improbable ice. The next day we followed a line to the north, hitting the North Ridge (the normal route) at about 15,200 feet, then walked to the summit. We retraced our route to the road. We graded the route Alaska Grade 4.

KEITH ECHELMAYER

*Mt. Schou, Peak 8625', and Peak 8778', New Routes.* In early July, Gary Green of McCarthy Air flew Chad Taylor and me to White River near Pingpong Mountain. We spent two days bushwhacking, river crossing, and scree scrambling up to our base camp on the Guerin Glacier at the base of Mt. Natazhat's (13,435') north face. The objective was a new route on the peak from the north along the northeast ridge. Our first warm-up was on nearby Peak 9,072' to the northeast, which we abandoned about 100 meters from the summit due to unstable snow conditions. Poor weather kept us tentbound, daydreaming, and writing in our journals for the next four days. The weather finally cleared, and Chad and I decided to make a second endeavor on Peak 9,072'. This time we were more fortunate, and enjoyed favorable climbing heading up the southwest ridge. By the time we had reached the summit, the weather had deteriorated and engulfed us in a whiteout. I named this peak "Mt. Schou" in memory of my grandfather, Hans Schou, a Norwegian-American adventurer and my inspiration for exploring.

We next focused our attention across the Guerin Glacier on Peak 8,625', a mountain just northwest of Mt. Natazhat. We kicked steps up a long couloir that gained the north ridge about three-quarters of the way up. We then plowed to the summit through calf- and thigh-deep snow.

Considering our time restrictions and not wanting to miss our flight out, we decided a push to the summit of Mt. Natazhat would not be feasible. Instead, we concentrated on the west face of Peak 8,778'. We climbed 50- to 70-degree ice and snow, reaching the top of the face 100 meters from the summit on the connecting northeast ridge of Natazhat, in eight hours. Satisfied with our climbing for the day, we opted to descend.

We made it back to our designated pick-up location just in time for our bird to fly us out before an incoming storm broke. To the best of our knowledge, and based on our research of the mountains in the area surrounding Mt. Natazhat, the three mountains ascended were all first ascents.

SEAN BURCH