

CLIMBS AND EXPEDITIONS

2004

Accounts from the various climbs and expeditions of the world are listed geographically from north to south and from west to east within the noted countries. We begin our coverage with the Contiguous United States and move to Alaska in order for the climbs in Alaska's Wrangell-St. Elias Mountains to segue into the St. Elias climbs in Canada.

We encourage all climbers to submit accounts of notable activity, especially long new routes (generally defined as U.S. commitment Grade IV—full-day climbs—or longer). Please submit reports as early as possible (see Submissions Guidelines at www.AmericanAlpineClub.org).

For conversions of meters to feet, multiply by 3.28; for feet to meters, multiply by 0.30.

Unless otherwise noted, all reports are from the 2003 calendar year.

NORTH AMERICA

CONTIGUOUS UNITED STATES

Washington

Washington, trends and new routes. The summer of 2003 unfolded as the driest in a century, with rainfall 70-85% below normal. Seattle temperatures topped 70 degrees for a record 61 consecutive days. The unusual number of hot, dry days resulted in closed campgrounds, limited wilderness access, and fire bans. Pesky fires like the Farewell Creek in the Pasayten Wilderness, which was spotted June 29, obscured views throughout the Cascades, burned until autumn rains, and exhausted federal funds. Alpine glaciers and snow routes took on new character, as new climbing options appeared in the receding wake. A project by Lowell Skoog documented change by retracing, 50 years to the date, the photography of Tom Miller and the Mountaineers' crossing of the Ptarmigan Traverse (www.alpenglow.org/climbing/ptarmigan-1953/index.html). What characteristically would be easy glacier and snow travel in late summer turned to ankle-bending kilometers of talus and scree and mind-numbing on/off crampon cycles. Washington's weather did, however, promote a number of luxurious and comfortable high alpine traverses. To further support the record of regional climbing, local enthusiasts established the Northwest Mountaineering Journal site (www.nwmj.org/). The goal is to collect regional accounts of mountaineering that does not meet the AAJ criterion of Grade IV. In addition to individual reports below, the following summarizes other significant new alpine routes.

On the northeast side of Vasiliki Ridge (a mountain with a broad summit from which many pinnacles rise), Jordan Peters and Mike Layton established the Carlo Rossi Memorial Tower route (III 5.10dX), up a tower that had likely been climbed before. The route, climbed on September 13, ascends the tower's east ridge for many pitches, traverses to the south face of the summit tower, and continues to the summit. The crux was a 5.10dX offwidth on which the rock was "total garbage." In general, however, the rock is good. Other pitches included a 5.8 open book with a fun roof, and a summit pitch that required "walking the plank."

In April, also on the northeast side of Vasiliki Ridge, Mark Bunker and Colin Haley climbed what is likely a new route on Ares Tower that is parallel to, and just right of, the route Never Enough. Their route (IV AI3 M4) followed gullies and chimneys on generally good rock.

Paisiano Pinnacle received a new route (III 5.10c) in mid-July from Scott Harpell and partner. The route starts at the West Ridge notch, climbs roofs and cracks up and across to the dihedral route, Rampage, then toward the skyline, following more cracks, an offwidth, and a final chimney.

Jay Brazier and Eric Sweet climbed a new line on the western flank of Mt. Shuksan on November 8, between the Upper Curtis Glacier and the Sulphide Glacier. The route (Satan's Sidewalk, 280m, III 5.7X, WI3+) is the obvious late-season ice flow 200m left of Hell's Highway. Access to the ice was gained by climbing corners and ramps to the left for 60m. The second pitch traversed right, onto the ice. The remaining three pitches followed the ice to the Sulphide Glacier.

In July 1999 Mike Preiss soloed a new route (III 5.8) on the south face of Mt. Garfield's West Peak on sight, without bolts or pins, self-belaying the harder pitches, with one bivy. The March 2004 *Rock and Ice* reported a variation (Infinite Bliss, 23 pitches, V 5.10b, by Steve Martin and Leland Windham) which is a fully bolted sport route that climbs the upper face straight-on. The middle third of the original solo and the variation are approximately the same line. On the original solo, a traverse in from the trees to a large shelf bypassed the four- to five-pitch lower third of the bolted variation. On the upper third Mike climbed a chimney/corner on the left and finished with four or five pitches on a rock rib (5.8), exiting the face 40-50' left of the highest point.

On February 6-7 Sean Courage, Tim Matsui, and Andreas Schmidt made what they believe to be the first winter ascent of Mt. Buckner. They'd planned to traverse Sahale Peak and climb Buckner's North Face, but due to wind and "general lethargy" ascended the Southwest Face. Schmidt traversed to the slightly lower East Summit, as they couldn't recall which summit was higher.

On Pyramid Peak's northeast face, a new route (and the first on the face) was climbed on February 9 by Robert Rogoz, Coley Gentzel, and Chris Koziarz. The route (IV+ M4) climbed 400' up the gully on the far left side of the face before cutting to the right, up a groove, and onto the northeast face proper. From here they climbed seven pitches of steep névé, thin ice, and difficult mixed climbing to the summit. While leading the crux pitch, Rogoz jammed the shafts of his ice tools into a vertical crack. The climbers descended by the standard southeast slopes and Colonial Glacier. The route name, It Ain't Over MFers (a Polish rap song by Liroy), was decided upon after wandering around in the dark returning to the car, then getting in a car wreck at 2 a.m. It is recommended that teams bring a set of nuts, a set of cams, several pitons, a few short screws, and protection for frozen turf.