

*Dragontail Peak, first winter ascent of Serpentine Ridge.* Ade Miller (Alpine Club, U.K.) and I climbed Dragontail Peak (8,840') by the popular summer line The Serpentine Ridge on March 13, 2004. The route starts with a single pitch ice smear (AI3) to a snowfield traverse and two mixed pitches to the ledge below the 5.8 twin cracks, approximately following the summer line. From this point we climbed the rock of the summer route. Several pitches of 5.7 and 5.8 climbing with some aid moves (A0) led to a moderately angled iced up crack, which proved to be the crux of the route. The climbing above this point eased, and several areas of unpleasant loose rock in the summer were covered by snow making the upper section of the route very enjoyable. The final short rock pitch to the summit was easily skirted to the left via a short snow gully (4th class in summer). We summited just before dark after twelve and a half hours on the route and descended back to our bivy site via Asgard Pass.

ALASDAIR TURNER

*Mt. Snoqualmie, North Face, first free ascent and speed ascent of New York Gully.* Thanks to a weak snow year and cold temperatures in January and February, N.Y.G. received more ascents over a few weeks than the handful it's seen since its first ascent by Jim Ruche and Bob Cotter in February 1991. This 1,300-foot alpine line was climbed originally at grade IV 5.8 A2 W14, with most teams bypassing the final aid pitch via an unconsolidated snow ramp to the right or a snow-covered 5.7 face to the left. On February 13 Andreas Schmidt and I, both from Seattle, left the car at 7:50 a.m., with hopes for an under-eight-hour car-to-car ascent and a free climb of the aid finish. Prior teams experienced sloppy post-holing on the approach and downclimb, making for a long day. We lucked out with a hard snowpack and gained the 1,100-foot flank of the Phantom Slide in 35 minutes, stashed our packs, and dropped over and down the northwest ridge for 500 feet to the base of the gully. We simul-climbed the first 700 feet of easy 5th class over snow-and-ice-covered rock to the base of a long chimney/corner. For two pitches, excellent climbing up frozen moss, and blocks connected by thin, insipient ice smears allowed us to move fast with good protection. On the final pitch Andreas quickly worked the crux, starting with a perfect 15-foot crack that pinched down to a bottomed corner, exposing just enough ice for delicate movement. Dry-tooling and clipping fixed pins for pro, he finished the pitch in no time, feeling the moves to be around M5+/6-. After Andreas brought me up for our standard cheesy high-five, we glissaded in 10 minutes down just-firm-enough snow to our packs—only to discover that one of my tools had popped out of my pack. Just great. Andreas snickered, knowing how I despise hiking, especially when it's brought on by my own gaucherie. He quickly made it back to my SUV to punch the clock at 12:22 p.m., while I scorned myself for having to climb back up 500 feet to retrieve my tool. Small price, I guess, for such a great outing in Washington's illusive winter alpine conditions.

ROGER STRONG, *Seattle, Washington*