

was mostly 5.4 with occasional 5.8 moves. Threatening clouds, our diminishing supply of bolts, and routefinding challenges kept the adventure level high. We rappelled the route, finishing with not much light left. This route could become popular.

BRIAN SMOOT

*Zion, new routes and speed ascents.* I was fortunate in 2003 to have good partners and lots of climbing time in Zion N.P. My season started on February 15. My partner Ammon McNeely and I arrived in the park Saturday morning after working late on a rigging job Friday night. Saturday afternoon we hiked to the base of the Streaked Wall and climbed two or three “approach” pitches, arriving at the luxurious Rubicon Ledge well after dark. The next morning we woke and made the first one-day ascent of Latitudes (VI 5.9 A4+), in 18 hours and 40 minutes. Paul Gagner, of the first-ascent party, was helpful with approach and descent information. I feel this speed ascent is as noteworthy as any other big wall alpine ascent that I know of. The size and technical difficulty of this wall brought us one step closer to achieving fast ascents on the hardest routes in the big mountains of the world.

Two weeks later Ammon and I attempted to climb five Zion walls in a day. Our achievement was cut short by fatigue, darkness, and cold, but we were successful on three walls that day, all in record time. We first climbed Prodigal Sun (V 5.8 C2) in 2:36. (Thank you to Ron Olevsky for the first ascent. I believe first ascensionists are not appreciated enough for their efforts.) From the summit of Angel’s Landing we ran to the top of Moonlight Buttress (V 5.10 C1), rappelled, and climbed Moonlight in 1:57. I apologize to the party that was high on Moonlight filming a video for obscenities I uttered. I point out to the public that the trade routes in Zion see a lot of traffic, and rock and anchors must often be shared. Expect traffic jams on trade routes—you won’t be disappointed if you don’t find them. Ammon and I finished with an ascent of Lunar Ecstasy (V 5.9 C2+) in 4:09. We were out of gas after rappelling Moonlight again, in the dark, and opted for burritos at the local Bit and Spur.

I worked on the FFA of the seven-pitch Ball and Chain on Angel’s Landing during September weekends. This work finally came to fruition October 1. The route was free-climbed except for having to stand on the belay from the fifth anchor. There were three 5.12+ pitches in a row, with each pitch requiring mastery of a different technique. I added three bolts to the route but none to the existing aid path.

On October 12 Ammon and I climbed Spaceshot in 1:36:54. This left us time to get to town and attend our friends Dean and Jill’s wedding. In 37:14 during the next two days Ammon, Kurt Arend, and I did a new hard route on the right side of Angel’s Landing. This route was named South of Heaven (VI 5.8 A4+), and has six pitches: A4, A3+, 5.8 A2, A3, A4+, and 5.5. Hole count: five for belays, four for protection, one Threader.



Ball and Chain’s crux. Andrew McGarry

In December I came back to the park with Kurt and did a new route up the center of Red Arch Mountain. This route, eyeballed by many over the years, is now a reality. It is named Red Awakening (VI 5.7 A4+) and starts left of center up a bushy, dirty section to a small, open pad, continuing up the face via cracks and thin seams under the impressive red arch. The massive roof, climbed with knifeblades, is not to be missed. The steep next pitch did not offer the features we hoped for and accounted for a lot of holes. Six belay holes and 43 lead holes were drilled in the eight pitches (5.7, A1, 5.6 A1, A3, A4+, A3+, A4, and 5.6 A4). For topos and in-depth stories about these ascents, visit Ammon's site [www.rocknrun.net](http://www.rocknrun.net) or Zion Rock and Mountain Guides in Springdale.

BRIAN MCCRAY

## Colorado

*Rocky Mountain National Park, rapid ascents and enchainments.* On the Diamond of Long's Peak in early July, Tommy Caldwell and Topher Donahue climbed five routes, totaling 30 guidebook pitches, in 23 hours car-to-car (probably the most routes climbed on the Diamond in a day), in the process doubling the number of Diamond routes Caldwell has climbed. The pair rappelled from Table Ledge to Broadway, where they had food and water, after each route. The five routes were Yellow Wall (5.11a), Pervertical Sanctuary (5.10d), D7 (5.11c), Curving Vine (5.11a/b), and Casual Route (5.10a). Donahue reports, "We climbed on twin ropes and did minimal simul-climbing. We never climbed faster than seemed fun, and although we wanted to see how many routes we could do, we weren't really gunning for a goal or anything. With true speed-climbing tactics it would be possible to squeeze in another one or do our link-up a lot faster."

Also in July Jonny Copp and Kelly Cordes completed what's likely the first enchainment of the three biggest technical rock faces in the park. They climbed the east face of Long's Peak (14,255') via the Crack of Delight (5.7) to the Casual Route (5.10a), with the Forrest Finish (5.9), then the northwest face of Chief's Head (13,579') via Path of Elders (5.9) to Birds of Fire (5.10d), and finally the Central Ramp (5.8) route on the east face of Mt. Alice (13,310'). They tagged each summit, covered about 20 horizontal miles and climbed 28 guidebook pitches (but simul-climbed throughout). Total time from the Long's trailhead to the Wild Basin trailhead was roughly 22 hours, 45 minutes.

In March 2004 Copp and Josh Wharton made the fastest winter ascent of the Diamond, via the most logical winter route, D7. Traveling incredibly light for winter on the Diamond (a single rope, for example), they reached Broadway via the North Chimney, climbed D7 with short-fixing techniques in one block lead, and finished with upper Kiener's route, continuing to the summit and descending the North Face. They returned to the Long's trailhead 14 hours and 17 minutes after leaving—an impressive time even for a summer round-trip.

*Compiled from conversations with the climbers*

## BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON

*Cheap Hooker.* The Black Canyon hosts some of the country's most adventurous rock climbs and is notorious for epics, runout climbing, difficult route finding, and chossy rock. This past year saw Topher Donahue and I up a few new routes. The Hooker Buttress saw its first ascent