

face of Phantom Tower. They previously made the second ascent of the Flavelle-Lane Couloir (980m, TD+ 5.8 55° [minor 90°]) on the Northwest Summit of Waddington and continued to the Main Summit by making the second ascent of the loose Northwest Ridge (220m, D 5.7). They also climbed the 630m, D+ South Face of Tiedemann Tower, with a beautiful 5.10c splitter variation on the middle pillar.

- Chris Atkinson and Kevin McLane established Line of Fire on the Northwest Peak of Combatant. This 14-pitch, stonefall-threatened ice line climbs a couloir immediately right of the Skywalk pillar, with bulges to 90° on pitches 11–14. Four pitches of rock to 5.9 then reach the summit.
- John Furneaux and Matt Maddaloni's new route on the southeast side of the Incisor was the highlight of the summer. See individual report below.

It was the most productive season in the Waddington Range since the days when the "old-timers" were knocking off first ascents.

Elsewhere in the Coast Mountains, the finest route of the summer was the Northeast Ridge of Mt. Talchako (3,037m), east of Ape Lake. [See individual report below.]

Chris Barner and Paul Rydeen climbed among the peaks at the head of Gillman Creek. This area south of Doran Creek had only previously been visited by John Clarke, who did several first ascents in 1974. Barner and Rydeen found excellent rock and fine lines, including one nine-pitch 5.9 that they likened to the East Ridge of Bugaboo Spire.

Jordan Peters, Andrew Rennie, and Don Serl walked into the Falls River valley. The highlight of the trip was the third ascent of the fine, and underestimated, 1964 National Pillar on Mt. Winstone (D+, scrambling plus 14 pitches to 5.8). Rennie and Serl later climbed a short but enjoyable rock route on the steep, crack-riddled granite of the southwest face of the Beehive.

In May, Gord Betenia, Drew Brayshaw, and Don Serl made yet another spring foray into the Niut Range. Basing themselves on a lovely 1,950m bench about 3.5km east of Quartz Peak (2,942m), they made a couple of ascents of 2,600m+ summits to the northwest of camp, then tackled Quartz. About 450m of 45°–55° neve on the east face led to a notch on the northeast ridge. This encompassed about 10 ropelengths of entertaining mixed snow and rock, with a few significant slab avalanches being kicked out of pockets on the right (lee) flank. Direct descent back into the access valley not being possible, they made a long descent involving 2.5km of ridge traverse southeast, a short rappel, 1,000m of descent east over another 2.5km to the lake at the head of Whitesaddle Creek, and finally a 350m ascent northwest back to camp. The outing consumed 22 hours (650m, D+ 5.8 M4 45°–55°).

DON SERL, *Alpine Club of Canada, AAC*

*Southwest British Columbia (southern Coast Mountains and Canadian Cascades) summary.* Although it was a great year for new routes in the Coast Mountains as a whole, 2004 was not particularly newsworthy in the southwest BC region, probably because the good weather took climbers further afield.

The Powell River and Vancouver Island regions were quiet, with some alpine activity ongoing but not much with respect to long routes or new alpine climbs. Squamish saw quite a lot of activity, which is being compiled by Kevin McLane for the latest edition of his guidebook, which should come out in spring 2005.

One of the biggest local alpine routes was the March new route and first winter ascent of a north face route on the remote and impressive Mt. Judge Howay. See details in the individual report, below.

Also in March, Drew Brayshaw and Fern Webb attempted a line on the east face of Arthur Seat Mountain, which had not seen climbers since the 1960s. After retreating in a snowstorm, Brayshaw returned solo in late May and climbed the entire route, which consisted of a system of ridges and gullies. The route length was approximately 1,400m, but only about six pitches featured technical climbing (mostly easy 5th class on loose rock, with a few moves up to 5.9); the remainder of the route was Class 2-4 scrambling on what was described as "good training for the Rockies," in other words, choss and rubble.

In late June, Jeremy Frimer and Cedric Zulauf (Swiss) climbed a prominent six-pitch flake chimney on the right side of the west face of South Nesakwatch Spire, at 5.10 C2, calling it Sublimation. Unaware of the earlier ascent, Craig McGee and partner made an ascent of more or less the same route in July, via a variant right-hand start. Craig returned later in the summer with Jim Martinello to free the line, which went at 5.11+/12- in seven short pitches. The free version is named *Fairytales and Fantasies*; McGee compared it to the best routes in the Bugaboos in terms of rock quality and purity of line. This brings the number of new routes and variations climbed in the Nesakwatch Spires since 2001 to nearly a dozen; a detailed topo will appear in the next edition of Fred Beckey's *Cascade Alpine Guide*.

Also in June, Don Serl, Jia Condon, and Janez Ales attempted the direct western arête of the Gnomon, a prominent tower on the Randy Stoltmann Buttress on Mt. Athelstan. After climbing a half dozen pitches to 5.8/9 on runout terrain, they traversed left to join the existing route Lillarete, which they followed to the top of the buttress. A few weeks later Jim Martinello and Damien Kelly made the ascent of the complete line to the summit of the Gnomon. They found several pitches of sparsely protected 5.10 climbing on good rock above the point where the earlier trio moved left. The full ascent of Gnomon Direct to the summit of Randy Stoltmann Buttress makes for a D+ IV 5.10R line that is close to 20 pitches long.

In the Cathedral Park area, Drew Brayshaw and Merran Fahlman climbed a short new route on the southwest face of Matriarch Mountain (PD II 5.8+) during an exploratory visit in June. They returned in late August to attempt a long aid line but were driven away by unseasonable snowstorms. As a consolation prize they visited the Anderson River Range and established a five-pitch PD III 5.8 line, *Al-Pika Slabs*, on the northeast face of Alpaca Peak, completing a line that Brayshaw had begun with John Simms 10 years previously.

Steven Harnng and Reinhard Fabische continued to explore the southern Chehalis Range. On the southeast face of Stonerabbit Peak, they established a 600m line of 4th and easy 5th class slabs, notable for being one of the cleanest alpine climbs in the region. The potential for getting a lot of rock mileage unencumbered by a rope proved attractive, and the climb saw several repeat ascents within the season, a rarity for climbs in the local mountains.

In the Kookipi Creek drainage, Jordan Peters and Michael Layton revisited the large buttress on the unnamed peak on which they had established *Back of Beyond* in 2002. This time they climbed an eight-pitch line on the right side of the buttress, finding harder climbing and fewer continuous crack systems. *Brambles Buttress Sky*, named after a Philip Larkin poem, goes at D/D+ III 5.10 A1. A massive forest fire burnt through the Kookipi drainage several weeks later, cutting off access to the peaks and preventing any possibility of repeat ascents for the remainder of the season.

Finally, just before the Indian summer weather ended in early October, Drew Brayshaw, Steven Harg, and Don Serl snuck into a remote area north of the well-known Chehalis area to make the second ascent of Robertson Peak. This summit has had a reputation for inaccessibility since the first climb in 1978, and several parties had been defeated on the approach while attempting the second ascent. A new logging road in Tipella Creek diminishes the remoteness and makes a weekend ascent feasible; the area may see more interest in the near future, as parties attempt to climb before the now-inactive logging road becomes impassible.

DREW BRAYSHAW, *Canada, AAC*

*Mt. Talchako, Northeast Ridge.* In the last week of July, Fred Beckey (2003 Subaru), Drew Brayshaw (Chilliwack, B.C.), James Nakagami (Woodinville, WA), and I (Redmond, WA) flew from Hagensborg, B.C., with Richard Lapointe of West Coast Helicopters, to the northeastern edge of the Monarch Icefield, not far from the Talchako River and Jacobsen Creek.

We made a brilliant camp among small pines and a pond at 5,400' elevation. Across Jacobsen Creek to the south we had the great scenery of Beelzebub and Ratcliff peaks nearby.

The next morning Fred was still recovering from a back injury and was not able to climb, so Drew and I made an 11-hour roundtrip climb to the eastern of the four summits just north of Talchako Mountain. We then took a rest day.

James, Drew, and I headed out the following morning on the mosquito-inhaling, smoke-ingesting (from a forest fire raging to the east) hike to the bottom of the northeast ridge. This ridge is the most defined feature on the mountain and unmistakable from long distances, and was the obvious objective. We climbed about 16 pitches to a spectacular ledge, where we bivouacked with a view north to the Borealis and Ape peaks, while we had dinner and watched the sun set.

In the morning clouds were gathering. My previous trip's weather experiences told me to get moving. We did, and climbed a pitch of ice, then another on mixed ground, where we used one piton for safety. Between the two snow arêtes on the ridge, this rock section provided one of the more difficult sections. We reached the eastern summit in the early afternoon. After



The Northeast Ridge Route of Mt. Talchako. *Ray Borbon*

traversing to the central summit, we took a peek at the register and saw only two previous entries. The most recent was by George Whitmore, a member of first team to scale The Nose on El Cap, noting a climb in 1982 where he claimed "Indian priests hurled nude virgins over the northern precipice to propitiate the rain gods." If you say so! I can think of better things to do with nude virgins myself. Shortly after we arrived on top, the clouds started to dissipate and provided us with great views to the south.