

cares, the walls perfectly framing the Liberty Bell group. Before we reached the summit ridge, we met a second chockstone. This crux is shorter, at M3; we climbed it on the left up a small column of ice. Above, Anne stepped off the snow and up the final 125 feet of the line on easy rock, finishing the couloir on the flat slopes a few hundred feet north of the West Peak. We continued south up the ridge and stopped approximately 20 feet below the West Peak summit, where we took a break to grub on a flat bench. Then we descended down the glacier to Burgundy Col and back to the Methow Valley.

MARK ALLEN, AAC



The Central Couloir on the west face of Silver Star, showing conditions like those from the March 15 ascent. Only isolated snow patches remained in August during The Washington Pass Traverse, which roughly follows the skyline ridge for its middle third (through the crux climbing of the Wine Spires, the line deviated some to the NE and briefly to the SW). The Vasiliki Ridge is farther left, not shown.
John Scurlock

The Washington Pass Traverse. At the end of day two, August 25, Mark Allen and I had just completed three-fourths of a traverse that we'd talked about for three years, and we were about to bail and go home. Mark said he had to guide in Mazama the next day, and, regardless, we were out of water. The trip was a series of heartbreaking near-failures anyhow.

The traverse was supposed to be a complete circuit of over 20 high points of the famous Silver Star massif of Washington Pass: the spine-backed ridge of Silver Star, the monoliths of the Wine Spires, and the final continuation of the long, towered Vasiliki Ridge. Although each part of the traverse is on a different mountain, the entire ridge is a continuous four-mile-long knife-edge.

The trip almost ended the first night, when I set my sleeping bag on fire during our below-freezing bivouac. Later that night we ran out of fuel, forcing us to load our camelbacks full of snow to melt against our backs. It almost ended again the next morning, when our morale plummeted after staring down the long rappel off Silver Star that led to the start of the Wine Spires traverse: 1,500 concentrated feet of climbing on four separate towers, with summits only 50-100' apart.

But after beating the odds and getting through what we thought was the worst of two days of solid climbing, carrying minimal packs that looked loaded for a day of cragging rather than a grade VI traverse, we had to go home.

"Yeah, I gotta work Saturday morning, tomorrow. Bummer," Mark said. "Mark, today is Thursday, not Friday," I exclaimed.

Instantly gaining a day, we could yet make the traverse happen. We were still out of water, though, and a tiny trickle draining from the glacier below wouldn't accommodate our bottles. But the whiskey bottle we polished off the night before fit perfectly!

The final day of climbing looked like it would go fairly quickly, but it was just as chal-

lenging as the first two days. Constant ridge climbing, tricky routefinding, and a bit of gardening on the Vasiliki Ridge led us to the final summit and the end of a long traverse: 26 summits, 28 rappels, 4 miles and 34 hours of climbing, up to 5.9+. We stuck to the ridgeline the whole way, in the process establishing new lines on several of the peaks, including the Direct East Ridge of Silver Star and new routes on Pernod, Chianti, Burgundy, and the Vasiliki Spires.

We called it the Washington Pass Traverse because the ridge is one of the most prominent lines you see in the Washington Pass area as you come up over the crest of the North Cascade Highway. This long and uninviting ridge screamed at us to climb it every time we descended to the Methow Valley. Now we can look up and rest, knowing that we finally did it. Vote for Pedro.

Note: the original trip report with photos can be found at www.cascadeclimbers.com

MIKE LAYTON, AAC

Northern Pickets Traverse. No matter how content with success a climber gets atop the heights, the compulsion to gaze from one summit to the next goal is irresistible. In 2003 we had just completed my dream traverse over all 14 summits of the indescribable southern Picket Range. Even before the high fives met atop the final summit, my eyes were working out the intricate ridge of incredible summits to the north.

Cascadeclimbers.com introduced me to a character named Josh Kaplan. I could see he had the spirit for the project, based upon his discourse on the site. We planned it over the phone, eventually meeting the day of departure for our first go in 2004. But a whiteout, fog, and rain forced our retreat from the Phantom-Ghost col. I didn't think I would be back for another attempt.

The next July we made our way up Access Creek to our second bivy, at the start of the ridge itself. The view from Luna Col is one the most incredible I have seen. But the weather totally sucked again, and we had only one small fuel canister left for the traverse.

After the east summit of Fury in a whiteout, the commitment zone lay ahead. From here on, climbing would be difficult and treacherous, the descents scarce. After climbing the Furies we started a staggering series of rappels. Severe, difficult leads took us across the ridge, until we rappled into a glacier col after West Fury. We camped on the snow in a wind hollow.

On day four we rejoiced at the clear skies and raced over the remaining small peaks and ridge mazes, reaching the Spectre Plateau and finding the easy way up Swiss Peak. Phantom Peak provided some off-route fun as we went over the "Cub Scout Salute" and back. As high clouds crept in, I said, "All we need for tomorrow is six good hours to finish the climb." We were to get four.

Across Ghost Peak we zoomed together on day five, in a smooth simul. The amazing knife-edge arête of Challenger turned desperately steep and slippery, as rain began to fall. The winds picked up, and the rain briefly turned to ice pellets. Handholds were the only things keeping us up there. With all we had put into it, we simply weren't going to bail. It was as if the great range was making sure we were worthy. We came over the end with not a bang, but a whimper. I could not talk or think. I saw the same look in my partner; we had survived this time. We had pushed our lives into a zone we may deserve to be criticized for. There would be no time for celebrating; we were two days from being dry or warm. Tough-guy Josh had no rain gear, relying on a down jacket. A miserable and long night was in store, but as we reached