

*Shield, The Promise Land.* On Oct 3, 2004, Carolyn Parker and I completed the first ascent of our big-wall project, The Promise Land (V 5.12c), which climbs a 1,200'-tall section of the Shield's southwest face. The Shield, in the Sandia Mountains, is home to a host of routes ranging from alpine scrambles to new-wave aid routes and a lot in between. What the Shield lacked for many years was a modern, high-standard free route on good rock. The granite of the Sandias varies widely from steep and solid faces with in-cut holds to grainy and loose weaknesses of relatively poor quality. It was our vision to establish a route on the Shield that avoided the choss, even if it meant really hard face climbing. Due to an annual six-month falcon closure and my guiding schedule, the route took many forays over nearly two years to complete. To help me when Carolyn wasn't available, I enlisted our friends Marc Beverly and Alan Aiken to help clean, protect, and belay me while figuring out some of the crux pitches.

The route starts 20 feet right of Rainbow Dancer, with eight feet of climbing onto a right-trending ramp system and a step left to a steep face with crystalline knobs. The first pitch has a lot of fixed gear, since it's steep face climbing with no real cracks. The route is sustained and technical. Of the 11 pitches, two are 5.10, seven are 5.11 (three 5.11+), and two are 5.12. The rock and the positions are excellent. The continuous face climbing and discontinuous cracks made the protection devious or impossible with natural gear. Despite this, we went to great effort to add as little fixed gear as possible. The climbing is unrelenting, and the protection can be challenging but, in general, not runout. The exception is pitch six, which involves long run outs on 5.9-5.10a sections. We look forward to strong parties having a go at it. As of December 2005 it awaits a second ascent.

JOHN KEAR, AAC

## Colorado

### BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON NATIONAL PARK

*Atlantis.* Several years ago Kent Wheeler identified an unclimbed buttress below and around the corner from his route Lost Cities. Kent has the eye of a tiger and experience of many years in the Black, so when he asked me to join him for a new route, my answer was easy. Over three seasons we put up a fine line on excellent rock. During a final push to the walk-off terrace atop pitch 13, we made a cold bivy in crumbling rock three pitches from the top; retreat was not a likely option. We went back in late May and put together a quality finish through a maze of unlikely pegmatite bands.

Approach via the Prisoner of Your Hairdo gully past Lost Cities, and continue down and around the corner. A small cairn at the base marks the start. Up 30' and left 30' is a greenish pillar forming a right-facing corner where pitch one begins. Pitch three has a classic Black Canyon traverse: unprotected, balancy, and committing climbing that leads into an excellent 5.11- seam. Pitch six, a full ropelength, traverses under the rotten "black eye." After this traverse a party is significantly more committed to finishing the route. The route steepens above and gives nice 5.10/5.11 climbing for the next seven pitches.

In September Kent and Jay Shotwell added three more pitches above the large terrace to finish the route at the Narrows Overlook. The first of the final three pitches is also the crux, at hard 5.11. If the day is late, however, a party can walk off left past Lost Cities to the escape gully.

Atlantis (16 pitches, V 5.11) is the name of one of the famous Lost Cities. There are likely more cities waiting to be discovered on this new wall of good rock. A topo is available at the North Rim ranger station.

JIM HOWE

*Black Canyon, various activity.* In late April Chip Chace and I linked the opening pitches of the Dylan Wall (IV+ 5.12-) with Charm School Boutique (IV+ 5.13- R) to create the hybrid route Hard Rain, completing what Topher Donahue had referred to in the 2005 *Journal* as “a mighty day.” The route is of extremely high quality, and likely the hardest free route in the Canyon that doesn’t require ice tools. A week later Chip and I linked the lower half of Shadow Boxing (V 5.12+) with the upper half of Tague Yer Time (V 5.12) to create the hybrid Cameron’s Shadow. The route is highly recommended, as it covers the best and hardest stretches of both Shadow Boxing and Tague Yer Time. On October 5 Mike Pennings and I made the first one-day ascent (3rd overall) of the notorious Serpent (VI 5.11+ R/X) on the Painted Wall. We completed the climb in 13½ hours car-to-car and found the route to be of excellent quality, worthy of more attention. Finally, in late October Zack Smith and I made the probable first free ascent of Twisted (originally IV 5.11+ A2) on the North Chasm View Wall, finding surprisingly well-protected climbing up to 5.12-.

Jared Ogden and Topher Donahue added a five-pitch direct start to the Free Diagonal route, calling the line the Rectagonal (V 5.12-). The line, reputed to be of high quality, eliminates much of the undesirable low-angle terrain previously necessary to gain the steep upper portions of the Diagonal.

In April Alan Doak and Stefan Griebel made the long-awaited first one-day ascent of Hallucinogen Wall (VI 5.10 A3 or 5.13- R D10) in 23:29. However, Jared Ogden and Ryan Nelson shattered this record on May 12, using their intimate knowledge of the route to make a base-to-rim ascent in an astonishing 8:59.

In mid-May Jonny Copp and Andy Donson climbed an oft-looked-at line that they dubbed Ouiji Board (5.12-), up the middle of the Checkerboard Ball. They climbed ground-up, trundling a truck-sized ledge and hand-placing three bolts along the way.

Leonard Coyne has been extremely active in the vicinity of Dragon Point Buttress, taking part in several new routes on the steep, shaded wall facing upriver, just across from the Dragon Point overlook. In the summer of 2004, with Keith Reynolds, Coyne established Dragon Rider (12 pitches, V+ 5.12a/b). The route ascends a striking overhanging arête with superb rock quality; Coyne compares the route’s quality to Yosemite’s Astroman. Then, in the fall of 2005, Reynolds and Coyne—this time with the help of Mick Haffner and Colin Stenhouse—opened a free variation to Black Circus, calling the line Black Snake (10 pitches, V 5.11d). Coyne and Haffner went onto establish Silent Rage (8 pitches, V 5.12a X) on a giant arête, approached via rappel, high in the gully. Also on the wall directly beneath the Dragon Point overlook, Coyne and Haffner established Black Adder (7 pitches, IV 5.11b R). Finally, as if they hadn’t been busy enough, they spent several weeks establishing 827 GO! (15 pitches, V/VI 5.13a) on the North Chasm View Wall. Combining stretches of the relatively new aid line Black Planet with the older Air City, 827 GO! achieves the long talked-about goal of free climbing Air City’s massive roof pitch. Although Coyne and Haffner free-climbed each pitch, they approached the route from the top down, and never climbed the route continuously from the ground, so a complete redpoint of the route still awaits willing suitors.