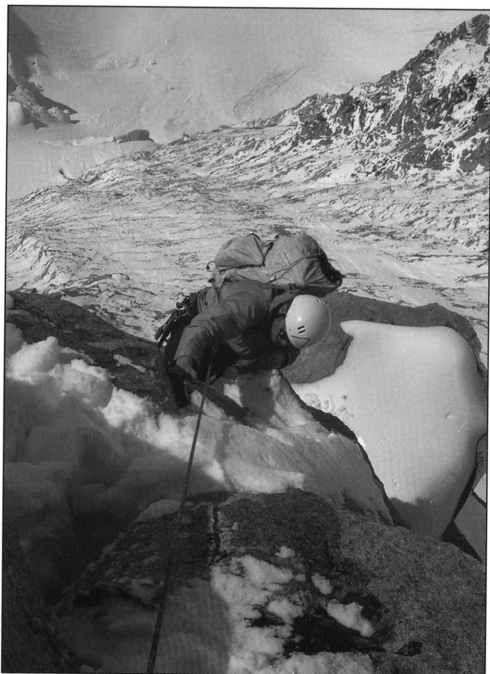


The Handicapped Ramp on Mt. Balchen. *Jeff Apple Benowitz*

HAYES RANGE

Mt. Balchen, The Handicapped Ramp.

The granitic massif of Mt. Balchen (Peak 11,140') sits at the head of the east branch of the Gilliam Glacier. Jed Brown, Seth Adams, and I landed eight miles (via Talk-eetna Air Taxi) down from the peak's West Buttress (climbed in 2003 by Michael Williams and me, descended by us in 2005). We got a slight break, after 16 days of uncooperative weather, and on May 25 we climbed Balchen's south ridge in 16 hours camp-to-camp, mostly in a whiteout. Along the way we found enjoyable rock climbing at a moderate grade, on pristine granite, in a truly wilderness setting. We dubbed the route The Handicapped Ramp (700m, 5.4c) due to my non-unionized tibia and fibula. Jed led the entire route, Seth carried a pack with gear, and I dragged a leg that resembled John Holmes' limp. It was the peak's fourth ascent.



Seth Adams jamming his way to the "handicap parking belay." *Jeff Apple Benowitz*

JEFF APPLE BENOWITZ