



The Mini-Intellectual on Idiot Peak. Will Mayo

occasionally colliding with the wall and exploding into white rock dust like the final flash of a firework with the accompanying delayed "BOOM." We finally staggered back into base camp at 10:00 p.m. on May 9 after having ascended and descended ca 5,100' vertical of demanding terrain in 23 hours.

We named the route The Mini-Intellectual and chose the name Idiot Peak for the summit. We named it for ourselves, for climbing such an insignificant peak with such significant objective hazards, and to continue the longstanding tradition of naming mountains after Presidents.

On May 17 I soloed the striking ice couloir, clearly visible from Mt. Huntington's base camp, that bisects the 2,800' north-northeast face of Peak 11,520'. The face is 2,800' of vertical relief, and took five hours from the 'schrund to the summit-ridge cornice (13 hours round trip from base camp).

It involved a short 80° step of exceedingly thin climbing at 400' and a short 85° step of ice at 1,200'. Otherwise, the couloir arches up like a parenthesis, reaching the ridge just to the west (right) of the enormous cornice and is mostly 70° ice with an easing angle at the top. On the descent I stuck a rope after about eight rappels, cut what I could off the end, and continued for another 16 or so 100' rappels.

Jack Tackle later informed me that, 48 hours after I had climbed it, the couloir ran from top to bottom, leaving a pile of serac debris at its base. This climb was one of the least prudent outings of my life and also one of the most exhilarating.

[Editor's note: Unbeknown to Mayo at the time of his ascent, this couloir on Peak 11,520' was climbed by Marty Beare and Pat Deavoll in 2003.]

WILL MAYO, AAC

Thunder Mountain, new route attempt, and other ascents. Over about three weeks in May, Ken Glover and I climbed a little in the Alaska Range. First, we flew into base camp below the south face of Thunder Mountain, where we endured about a week of good-to-great weather and repeated the Cordes-DeCario mixed line (Deadbeat, 2001) in about 24 hours (including a nice five-hour nap on top while waiting for the gully to calm down). We also did about 3,000'-vertical on the big, unclimbed rock ridge to the right of the snafflehounds' gully [Walk of the Schnitzelkings, Duepper-Traxler, 1999; for lines on this face, see *AJ* 2005, p. 192], retreating after about two days (one bivy plus an into-the-darkness climbing day). We followed the ridge as much as possible, though we went around a few towers, and turned back about 400'-vertical and three gendarmes shy of the summit. Not quite a new route but a worthwhile effort, resulting in much fun and a close call, with a rope-sawing fall on a sharp edge. The climbing was about 5.10 A1 (probably would go free in the 5.10+ or low 5.11 range) on great rock, with the odd ice/mixed move, and lots of easier terrain. This is the line attempted the year before by Jeremy Frimer and Jay Burbee.

Tired from Thunder and all the good weather, we got a lift to Kahiltina base camp and

climbed the West Ridge of Hunter in 21 hours round-trip from base camp (thanks to footsteps placed by John Varco and Sue Nott and another party), and doing the ice gully on the far left of the Mini-Moonflower in a leg-burning (“dog-tiring” in Steinbeck speak) day. This was our first trip to the Alaska Range and hopefully not our last.

KELLY FRANZ, *Canada*

RUTH GORGE

Ruth Gorge, route-line photographs. See Joseph Puryear’s comprehensive photo feature on the Ruth Gorge earlier in this *Journal*.

Mt. Bradley, Spice Factory, and other ascents. Quebec climbers Louis-Philippe Ménard and Maxime Turgeon established a remarkable new route up the 4,300-vertical-foot north face of Mt. Bradley. Their route, Spice Factory (5.10R M7 WI5), is the first on the true north face of Bradley and was climbed in a 55-hour round-trip push from May 20 to 22. While in the Ruth, they also climbed the classic Ham and Eggs route on the Moose’s Tooth and made the second ascents of The Escalator on Mt. Johnson and On the Frozen Roads of Our Incertitudes on London Bridge. See Turgeon’s feature article earlier in this *Journal*.

Moose’s Tooth, The Tooth Obsession to summit ridge. It was our fourth spring on the Root Canal Glacier. After climbing Ham and Eggs, we became obsessed with the idea of a new route on the magnificent south face of the Moose’s Tooth. However, most rock on the Moose’s Tooth, while looking as solid as Yosemite granite, is actually rotten and deteriorated. Often a cam can be easily pulled from a crack with a handful of rock crumbs and sand.

Nevertheless, we kept returning with high hopes. In April 2004, after climbing The White Russian, a new route on the Bear Tooth, we saw through our spotting scope a long dike of perfect granite going up the wall between Shaken, Not Stirred and Ham and Eggs. On April 27, 2004, Aleksey Shuruyev, Taras Mytropan, and I made the first attempt at the new route. The weather turned us away after only three pitches, but we were nevertheless excited, because we knew for sure that the dike was really there and it could be climbed. The next day was our last at base camp, but Aleksey and I scouted a few more pitches. This time we did five pitches, and went down with a strong resolution to come back and finish the route next year.

Our 2005 expedition started with Aleksey attempting the line with Dmitriy Shirokov. They did nine pitches but had to rappel down because they were not pre-



The Tooth Obsession on the Moose’s Tooth, from the Root Canal Glacier. The broken-looking couloir starting in the middle of the photo is the popular Ham and Eggs route. *Sergei Matusevich*