

later, found fun, moderate climbing without any significant cornices—likely due to the exceptionally warm and dry season and the effects of climate change experienced throughout the range and beyond. Nettle and Zanto used a variant start: “We followed the ridge closely, except for a logical direct variation up a 3,000-foot thin ribbon of snow that splits a large triangular face above the upper Lacuna Glacier and joins the main ridge at 12,000’.” Nott and Varco also climbed McKinley and Hunter, becoming the fourth and fifth people to climb the three prominent peaks in one season.

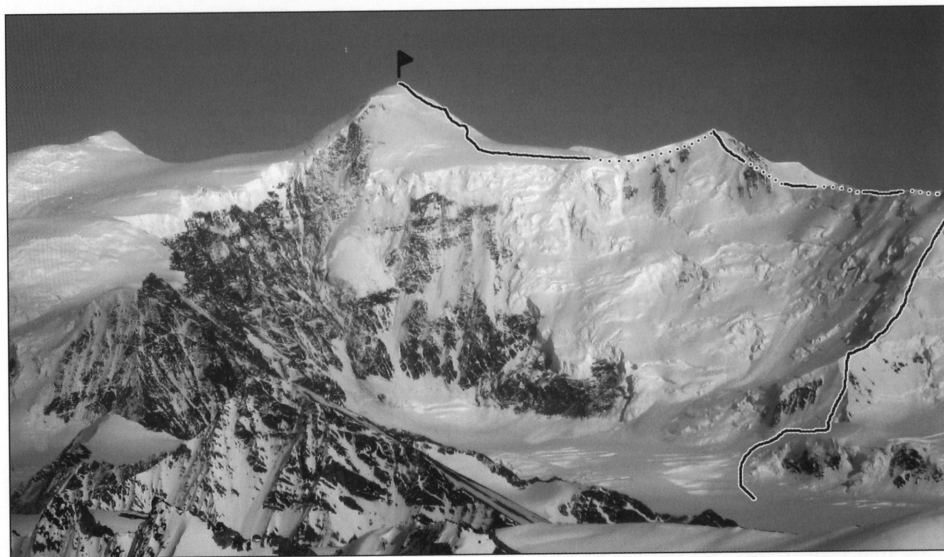
As another example of typically fearsome corniced ridges being in excellent condition, on May 19-20, Nate Opp and Eric Pallister climbed Mt. Huntington’s French Ridge from base camp in a 26-hour round trip.

On Mt. Barrill in the Ruth Gorge, on June 29, Ryan Nelson and Jared Ogden made the fifth ascent of the Cobra Pillar and the first free ascent of both the route (with variations) and the east face. On the third and final previous aid section, a hooking headwall on pitch 18, they found a wet crack variation to the right. They rated the route 5.11+ and made incredible time, climbing the route in 15 hours (20 hours roundtrip from camp).

CHUGACH MOUNTAINS

Mt. Marcus Baker, Sanctuary Ridge. After abandoning our original objective, the northwest ridge of Mt. Marcus Baker (13,176’), because of extremely fractured rock at 8,400’, we cast about for an alternative objective. We selected a rib dividing the walls of the amphitheater to the west of the summit of Marcus Baker, safe from the serac fall that threatened the rest of the face. To avoid the difficulty of climbing with an overnight pack, we decided on a single push.

At 7:00 a.m. on May 9 we left camp at just over 7,000’ on a south branch of the Marcus Baker Glacier, a little less than three miles west-northwest of the summit of the peak. We skied south, circumventing the lowest rock face (capped with a hanging glacier) to the left, ascending gentle slopes. We left our skis on the glacier above this lowest face and climbed 150’ of névé and ice (up to 60°) to the ridge coming off to climber’s right of a flat-topped projection extending a couple hundred out from the main face. As the ridge steepened, we traversed right onto the face, and up on to the flat-topped projection, which dead-ends in the face proper, at about 8,700’. From here we ascended the broad rib, winding around crevasses and seracs and crossing bergschrunds and crevasses. All were either bridged or narrow enough to lean across and plant tools, then pull across and up to the slope above. Being north-facing and relatively protected from wind, most of this ridge was soft snow. With the exception of two short sections, the entire ridge was less than 40° until the top 300’, which became icy and steeper toward the top, cresting at about 60°. We achieved the main west ridge of Marcus Baker at about 10,800’. Following the ridge toward the summit was easy walking on gentle ice and névé slopes, until the rise to the summit of the subpeak labeled 12,207’ on the USGS Anchorage B-3 15-minute quadrangle map. Our altimeters, which read accurately on the summit, gave the elevation of this subpeak as 12,000’. The slope leading to this peak was névé, becoming ice as it steepened, with about 600’ steeper than 40°, maximum about 50°. It may be possible to avoid the steeper ice by climbing the knife-edge ridge, on the left side of the face, that divides the Marcus Baker and Knik Glaciers. From peak 12,207’ it is a gentle 250’ descent on névé to the broad saddle between the subpeak and the summit. On the main summit dome we ascended right, hoping



Mt. Marcus Baker (13,176') from the northwest, showing Sanctuary Ridge (Smith-Turner, 2005). The Knik Glacier route (Hoeman-Tschaffert, 1966) reaches the pre-summit plateau (solid line) from the southwest, then finishes left of SR up the summit pyramid. The Matanuska Glacier route (Bright-Dyhrenfurth-Gabriel-Washburn, 1938) approaches from the northeast, climbs over the ca 12,800' point on left, and roughly finishes along the left skyline. *Gordon Smith*

for a gentle line to the summit, but found the gentle ice slope broken by steps of up to 70°. One could probably ascend left and climb névé or ice no steeper than 40°.

We descended the route, reaching camp after a 17-hour round-trip. Our total time from Talkeetna, including a reconnaissance day on the northwest ridge, was less than four days, making this a quick, moderate route to the summit. In addition the climbing was enjoyable and safe from objective hazards.

GORDON SMITH AND ALASDAIR TURNER, *Seattle Mountain Rescue*

Pt. 6,000' of Mt. Yukla, The History of Things to Come, and The Positive Side of Negative Thinking. After many failed attempts, with several partners, I finally got up two new routes this winter, 2006, on the northwest face of Mount Yukla (7,535'). I approached both routes from Icicle Creek, and both top out on the 6,000' subpeak that's approximately 0.75 mile northeast of Yukla's summit.

From the toe of the Icicle Glacier there are three obvious ice/mixed lines on the far left side of the face that feed from a hanging glacier. In the last week of January, Josh Varney and I climbed a steep, narrow chimney that starts right above the toe of the glacier. We third-classed about 700' of steep snow and ice, to WI3, to where the three lines separate. From here a ramp system heads out left, a snow and ice couloir goes right, and a narrow chimney goes straight up. We climbed six pitches up the thin ice/mixed chimney, making one bivy. Once above the chimney we crossed the hanging glacier and traversed left to the summit of the 6,000' subpeak. We descended the Northeast Ridge route and headed down the glacier back to our high camp. We named the route *The History of Things to Come* (2,800', V M7 WI5 A1). The warmest it got on the route was -20°F.