

top of the fourth pitch of Dave Nettle's route, Breaking Point. The following pitches climb the obvious diagonal crack system splitting the face proper. The first is marked by a quartzite-like ramp; the next holds the only aid (should go free with more cleaning and possibly a bolt or two) on the route and is also the most spectacular: a 180' crack-switching splitter up a broad wall. From there, it's back to ramps and corners.

I Fink Therefore I Am, although not the quality of the Hulk or the Valley, is a quality, fun, and direct V 5.11- A1 in a beautiful and pristine setting.

NILS DAVIS

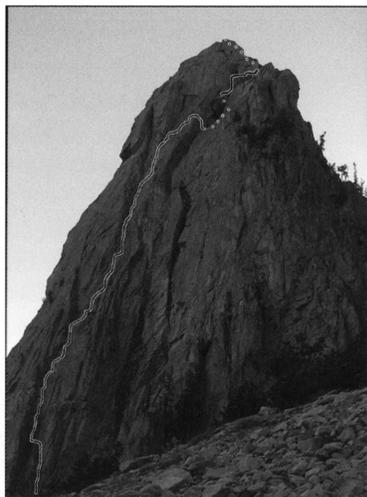
Mt. Chamberlain, Barracuda. On July 12 Dave Nettle and Brandon Thau established Barracuda (9 pitches, 5.10) to the right of the Rowell route on the North Pillar. The route is reportedly complicated to describe, and a report was unavailable at press time.

Idaho

Baron Falls Tower, Carpal Tunnel. John Frieh and I headed out to Idaho's best-kept secret, the Sawtooth Range, in mid-August with the intent of spending four days climbing some of the excellent established routes in the area. We forwent the usual routes and crowds on the Elephant's Perch and hiked back toward Warbonnet Peak. Our plan of attempting an established route changed when we got lost at 3:00 a.m. on the approach to our planned climb. Lucky for us, fortune favors the foolish, and once the sun came up John and I spotted a sweet line on the southwest face of Baron Falls Tower. We named the route Carpal Tunnel due to the finger-intensive crux, as well as the most impressive inset dike either of us has ever seen, running roughly parallel to the route approximately 100 yards to its right. We stretched out (and then some) our 70m rope on each pitch, which allowed us to complete the route in six pitches; future parties should expect additional pitches if they do not use a 70m rope, as well as simul-climb.

The route parallels the dike for the first four pitches and then joins it at the top of pitch four, where you climb under a chockstone, wedged in the dike, that is as large as a bus. Pitch five climbs wedged blocks to gain the top of the chockstone. The rock was exceptional, minus a brief section of kitty litter.

From the summit descend east via two single-rope raps to a ridge that connects Baron Falls Tower to Point 9,211'. Once across the ridge, traverse south around Point 9,263'. Cross over to the south ridge of Point 9,211' and locate a gully system that diagonals northeast across the face. Downclimb this gully until, halfway down, a different gully, trending southeast, appears. This gully requires one single-rope rappel and a lot of downclimbing.



Carpal Tunnel on the southwest face of Baron Falls Tower. John Frieh

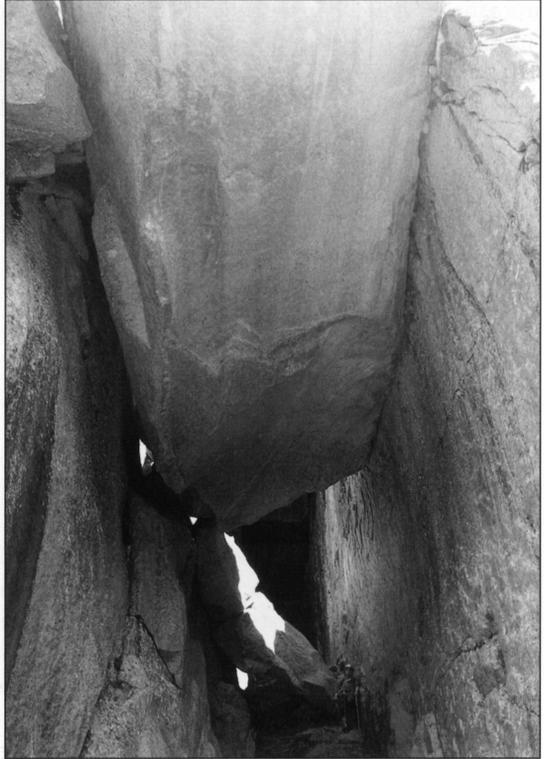
Carpal Tunnel checked in at IV 5.11- A0 and was as good as anything on the Elephant's Perch. The icing on the cake? We returned just in time to enjoy Idaho's other best-kept secret, Josh Ritter, who played a free show at the Red Fish Lake Lodge.

BRYAN SCHMITZ

Utah

ZION NATIONAL PARK

Thunderbird Wall, first free ascent. Michael Anderson and Rob Pizem made the first free ascent, with variations, of one of Zion's biggest routes, the Thunderbird Wall (16 pitches, VI 5.13- R). Both climbers led or followed every pitch free over May 31-June 1. Anderson's recent free climbing efforts in Zion have resulted in ten FFAs of grade IV or longer routes, most of them grade V or VI. See Anderson's feature earlier in this *Journal*.



John Frieh beneath the greyhound-sized chockstone on Carpal Tunnel. *Bryan Schmitz*

Touchstone Wall, first free ascent. The free climbing season in Zion started off with a bang, as Rob Pizem and I freed the last holdout of the trinity of classic Zion big walls. Moonlight Buttress fell in 1992, Spaceshot in 2005, and finally the Touchstone Wall in 2006. Touchstone was a reluctant project for me, despite prodding from various sources, not the least of which was Rob. I had scoured the wall with binoculars and couldn't see a free route. The last straw came from Zion pioneer Jeff Lowe, who implored me to "take care of" Touchstone. My priorities changed.

We tried the route over a January weekend, but were stymied by the brutally thin second pitch. We returned in February to explore a promising face climbing variation to the right of pitch two, which we established from the ground up. Rob placed two bolts from aid slings, but the second bolt was a spinner. From that position, I free-climbed 15' to a stance to tap in the third bolt. This was hairy. The wall's angle and small holds made the hand drilling tenuous. Meanwhile, there was a bad bolt below, followed by a ledge. I only managed a few taps of the hammer before I felt compelled to down climb to a rest and repeat.

The next day, February 12, we made our attempt. Rob led the 5.13a fist pitch easily. I followed, but struggled with the crux, a lingering effect of the lead bolting the day before. I took pitch two, but failed on my first two attempts. I was demoralized; convinced that the fatigue