

cisco State University. For many years he taught math at Saratoga High School. Of all the many achievements in his life, he was most proud of the number of students he had inspired to go into science and mathematics. He was also proud of the four children he had by his first wife, Heidi Irvin. In 1998 he married Kris Carter, who warmed the remaining years of his life.

One's memory of him is good climbs and good times. Often when I think of a climb, I realize, "I did it with Dick Irvin." He was the kind of friend that when he went, a piece of you went with him. Now he has moved on. "The route goes up there. Dick, you lead!"

NICK CLINCH, AAC

SUE NOTT 1970-2006

In 2003, in Chamonix, France, conditions were good, and alpinists in heaven. I heard whispers in the lift lines of an American woman, an accomplished alpinist. The whispers carried awe, respect, and stories of the Croz Spur on the north face of the Grand Jorasses, the 1938 route on the north face of the Eiger, the north face of the Droites, Scotch On The Rocks—all names of routes I could only dream of ticking. I wanted to meet this woman. I want to *be* this woman. I think a lot of the people passing whispers wanted the same.

A native of Vail, Colorado, Sue was at home in the mountains, when alpine climbing, on expeditions, or big technical objectives. Wintering in Chamonix, for the ease of access to big, hard, alpine lines, Sue could only be found in town, or on the stair stepper, if weather was bad and avalanche hazards high. She was most commonly found in the winter rooms of the refuges or on snowy, icy, north faces.

Over the past few years I shared a rope, ski tours, bivies, many dinner parties, too many bottles of wine, and a thousand dreams with Sue. I watched her float down ski slopes in mountaineering boots, because they were more comfortable than ski boots. I watched her float up hard mixed climbs slow and steady, always in control. I saw her pass smiling and giggling, always in pink, up and down the West Buttress of Denali as she tackled Mt. Hunter, Mt. Foraker, and Denali in one month—climbing the Cassin on the first all-women's team. I received emails of a new route on Kalanka in the Gharwal Himalaya. Each note, each interaction, each adventure an inspiration.

In the spring of 2006, I shared a winter in the Alps with Sue and a spring in Alaska. Each morning in Chamonix, my phone would beep with a text: "Off running, call me when you wake up. We'll go skinning." Evenings we'd convene in her small apartment for a gourmet meal served on paper plates to a heaving crew of hungry mouths. She nudged us out touring on days so filled with snow we'd break trail downhill as well as up. We'd lust over topos of Mt. Hunter's Moonflower Buttress on bad weather days in coffee shops. Sue's motivation and drive were endless.

In April 2006, we landed on the Kahiltna basecamp, with over a 1,000 pounds of supplies. As John Varco and I, hypo-glycemic and lost in a sea of poles, attempted to construct the dome tent, Mamma Sue, affectionately referred to as "Grubby," produced a handful of cheesy, bacon quesadillas, her hands glistening with butter. In a few hours we had constructed our compound, which would be Sue's home for the next month and a half. Each day she unveiled a new



Sue Nott *Courtesy Mountain Hardwear*

treat: candy necklaces, a small paddle-ball set, pink cups and straws to drink cocktails, facials, toe-nail polish, even a razor to shave her legs. On snow days Sue sat reading fashion magazines and business journals. We chatted about our families, and what we would do when we were old. Sue calmed me in the mountains, I calmed her in town.

We packed to make an attempt on Deprivation. I stared skeptically at the handful of energy gels and bars, the few hundred calories per day, the light sleeping bags. Sue smiled. She knew she could suffer; I wasn't so sure I could. She looked at me as we lifted our packs to leave the boys behind at camp and said, "Zoe, I picked out your pitches. I don't care how slow you go, but I want you to share some leads." I smiled. Sue was far stronger than I, tougher, and more experienced, and yet for some reason she had confidence in me. She saw a potential I can only dream of living up to. That's how she saw everyone.

We suffered slowly up hard dry-tooling, a route of ice and dry rock, Sue picking slowly, clearing away sugary snow and finding minute gear placements. We found a bivy spot, chopped away at the snow, and created a platform big enough for one set of shoulders not two, two feet, not four. I looked quizzically at Sue. She smiled and giggled, "It's ok, we'll just hang the tent, and I'll sleep on the outside cradled by the tent." I stuffed myself in the drooping tent while Sue patiently handed each item in to me. She finished melting water and crawled into her half-sized bed, snuggled into her sleeping bag, and smiled. After a few days of slow movement and heavy packs, we decided to descend. At the base Sue looked up and said "That route's stupid." Giggling, "We'll get it next year."



Sue's passion and comfort in the mountain environment was bred deep and young, her childhood was spent in the mountains on skis. A successful downhill ski racer, Sue learned the attributes of a committed training regime and high goals and expectations early in life. Eventually storing her skis, Sue ventured into rock and ice climbing for the first time in 1989. Showing her natural athleticism, she led the Fang in Vail (WI 6+) a year later. After a few years of university and collegiate running, Sue traded in her books for a full time climbing life and buggered off to Yosemite.

Shortly after, in typical Sue style, she decided the best way to properly learn to ice climb would be to winter in Valdez, climbing things like the Glass Onion (WI 5-). The long, cold, gray winter was likely good training for her alpine climbing career to come. Sue's adventures and expeditions took her across the globe, from India to China, Peru, Europe, North America, and beyond. She set standards, opened new routes, and pushed limits that few people, let alone women, have pushed. All the while with a smile and a small puffy pink jacket. I will forever remember Sue as an alpine goddess, one of the ladies in pink, climbing hard, with a handful of sweets, an enormous smile, and an inspiration to us all.

ZOE HART

Editor's note: Sue Nott and Karen McNeill disappeared together on the south face of Mt. Foraker in May 2006. The McNeill-Nott Memorial Route, recounted on page 42 of this Journal, remembers them.