

Buttress, and possibly the Lowe route. We followed the Radiator for a couple of loose gully pitches and then moved onto some more serious climbing on JWBMB. This entire adventure was characterized by wild, loose, and difficult climbing, and the JWBMB was no exception. Several cracks on the headwall appeared to be cam cracks, as seen from the ground through binoculars. Closer investigation revealed their true identity: butt cracks with beak seams in the back. Four pitches of thin, intricate climbing brought us to the top of the first headwall crack system. A couple of hooks, a bolt, and a pendulum brought us to virgin territory. We climbed two beautiful previously unclimbed pitches to reach our high camp on a huge ledge, where we rejoined JWBMB. From there the route completely changed character, thankfully allowing our pace to improve. The angle of the cliff kicked back, but we were leaving vertical, clean, thin splitters for choss-filled cracks and gullies. For the next 50' we were on JWBMB, and then I led out an unclimbed roof to join up with Dr. Thunder, a route climbed in 1999 or 2000. We followed Dr. Thunder for a pitch and a half to gain the exit chimney of the Lowe route. The Lowe boys climbed some extremely loose choss in their mountaineering boots. Dave and I were impressed. The top of the chimney is also the top of the vertical rock and the point where all routes intersect, climbing white slabs to the summit. On the second lead up the slabs I found a lone empty drilled angle hole where I was feeling the stress of runout Zion slab climbing, so I attempted to pound a stopper into the hole with my nut tool (it didn't really work). We had left the heavy iron gadgets down at the high camp, so the stopper in the hole was all I got. We summited late in the afternoon, finding no sign of human traffic but a couple of water-filled potholes in which we happily washed our dirty faces. We descended by reversing our route back to high camp without mishap. Dave and I spent one last night on the wall drinking cocktails and trying to consume the rest of our food. Over the previous four days we had successfully linked every known route on the mountain and added three new pitches. We climbed a total of 17 pitches and named our adventure The Connoisseur's Variation (VI 5.10 A3+).

BRYAN BIRD

Various first free ascents. In February Brian Smoot, Colby Wayment, and I free climbed The Locksmith Dihedral (IV, previously 5.11 C1), located on the wall to the left of the Watchman. This formation was dubbed "The Gatekeeper Wall" by Dave Jones, though locals had been calling it G-1 [Peak 6,482']. The first four pitches are excellent, and would make a great half-day outing at a very attainable difficulty of mostly 11+, with one short section of 12-. The upper pitches have sections of loose and/or sandy rock, which must be weighed against summit fever. The entire route can be rappelled with two ropes.

The very next day I walked up to the Apex Wall (erroneously also called the "Angelino Wall") with Eric Coleman to try Hello Mary Lou, which came highly recommended by its first ascensionist Dave Jones. Despite a valiant effort, the route did not succumb within our time frame. Eric then remained in town to woo a cute local, while I returned home to work and family. In March we freed the route (V 5.12+/13-). The first pitch is the technical crux, falling somewhere in the 12+ to 13- range, depending on finger size, ape index, and astronomical sign. Nevertheless, less quantifiable challenges await higher on the route. I learned to be cautious with recommendations from Jones.

A week later I returned to climb the Silmaril with Brian. Another Jones route, it is located on the Watchman and had been repeated a few times. Brian had spotted a promising three-pitch

variation around an A2 pin crack, so we went for a free ascent. The variation climbs a major left-facing dihedral 100 feet left of the original start. I was nearly stymied by the first pitch, which recent rains had coated in a layer of fine sand, but we succeeded (V 5.12R) and found enjoyable 5.11 corners above. The key to the free ascent was a critical ledge that allowed us to regain the original route, and the Incredible Hand Crack on Steroids pitch six was a highlight.

MICHAEL ANDERSON, AAC

Arizona

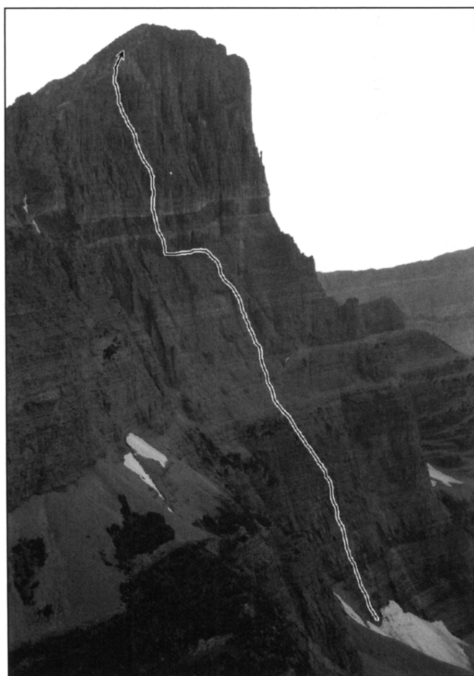
Vermilion Cliffs, More Sand Than Stone. Climbing.com and Alpinist.com reported that, in March, Fitz Cahall, James Q Martin, and Albert Newman made the first free ascent of the 1,600-vertical-foot Tooth Rock in Arizona's remote Vermilion Cliffs. More Sand Than Stone (V 5.11) climbs a prominent 600' dihedral on the south-southwest face, before traversing left to an arête and eventually finishing on the final six pitches of the Lost Love route. We were unable to get a first-hand report, but hope to provide one in the future.

Montana

Mt. Siyeh, Upward Descent. Glacier National Park is home to many alpine faces, but there is one that stands above the rest: the north face of Mt. Siyeh. We knew little about this face; allegedly it had only been climbed once, back in the 70s by Dirty Sox Club members Terry Kennedy and Jim Kanzler. I then found out, though, that my friend Justin Woods climbed it with Ben Smith in 2005. Ryan Hokanson and I were on our summer "Tour de Crap," having just finished long limestone routes on Howse and Alberta in the Canadian Rockies, so we figured we were ready.

When we saw the face after the one-hour approach, it didn't appear any worse than others we'd climbed. In fact, it looked less sustained. Having no idea where the other routes were, Ryan and I decided on what appeared to be the most obvious line: a prominent spine on the left side of the face that went directly to the skyline.

On September 6 we started simul-soloing up the low-angle flanks, quickly finding that



Upward Descent on the towering pile of choss otherwise known as the north face of Mt. Siyeh. Three routes are known to exist on the face. *Ryan Hokanson*