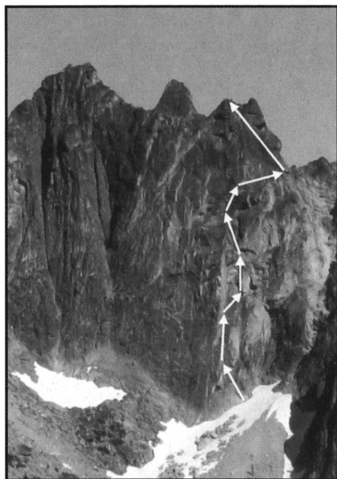
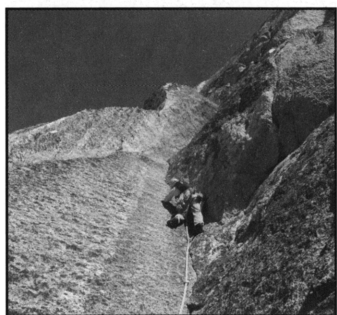




Forest McBrian on The Misunderstanding.
Kurt Hicks



Diggin' for Dreams, as viewed from
southeast face of South Early Winter Spire.
Mike Pond



5.11 fifth pitch of Diggin' for Dreams.
Mike Pond

two, which deviates 15m right at mid-height).

The crux was a roof draped with icicles on pitch five. It was the finest pitch we had ever climbed in the mountains, and Forest led it impeccably. Above the crux we discovered an incredible ice chimney that led to yet another ice pitch and finally a short snow slope to the crest.

Technical climbing ended at a small notch in the summit ridge, where we took in a spectacular view of Johannesburg and Formidable in evening alpenglow. It was a perfect day in the mountains. The Misunderstanding (2,200' of climbing, IV M4R AI4).

KURT HICKS, *kurthicks.com*

Hai Tower, Diggin' for Dreams. The Half Moon, Choi Oy, and Hai Tower massif forms a giant open book, easily visible from the nearby Liberty Bell group near Washington Pass. It was hard for us to believe that such a massive face was unclimbed. However, in speaking with several generations of local climbers, as well as Fred Beckey, we learned of no routes on the northwest face of Hai Tower. Alan Kearney and Beckey had done first ascents there, but they climbed much farther north, on Half Moon proper.

On August 25 Mike Pond, Rob Schiesser, and I climbed a prominent right-facing dihedral toward the right side of the face and then followed cracks to the summit. Of the nine pitches, seven were 5.10, one 5.11, and the "easy" one was a 5.8X lichen slab. We climbed the route onsite, in eight hours, with no bolts (1,000', IV 5.11R). There was an old sling 250' up, likely from an exploratory ascent that retreated where the corner runs out of good rock, protection, and features. We highly recommend this route; it follows high-quality, well-protected granite, except for two run-out slab pitches near the top (the R rating applies to pitches of 5.8 and 5.10, not to the 5.11). We plan to return to bolt two belays, as well as the X-rated eighth pitch, to make it safer and more enjoyable.

Diggin' for Dreams is named for pitch four, which features two body lengths of large-grained kitty litter. As Mike tossed yet another handful, groping for something solid, Rob yelled up, "You dig for that dream!"

ALAN ROUSSEAU, AAC

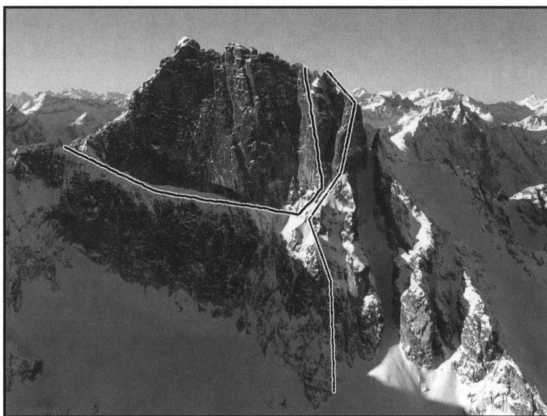
Tower Mountain, Tower of Babble.

Rolf Larson and I bushwhacked up Swamp Creek on September 4, aiming for a new route on the northeast face of 8,444' Tower Mountain, whose shattered rock is notorious for turning back adventurers. Only one known route has been established on this face (III 5.10, Pete Doorish and Alex Cudkowicz, 1989), and that route traversed onto the face at half-height before ascending. We hoped to climb the entire face.

From our bivy at Snowy Lakes, we approached over a col on the northwest side of the mountain and descended snow along the mountain's northern arm, getting a good view of the face. In the morning light, its looming steepness had us a bit skeptical. Rolf had attempted the face before but bailed a few pitches up. Lines leading directly to the summit appeared steepest and loosest, and we turned our attention to a more moderate and solid-looking buttress on the far north side of the face.

We began with two simul-climbing pitches of 5.7/8 below the big ledge, then some third class on the big ledge system to reach the line we had spied. The five upper pitches were the business and went at 5.10- (50m), 5.9 (50m), 5.9 (50m), 5.6, and 4th class to the summit crest. We descended the standard West Gully route and the next day climbed the insecure Northeast Arête of Golden Horn.

ERIC WEHRLY



Tower Mountain, showing (left) Cudkowicz-Doorish (1989) and Tower of Babble (2011). John Scurlock

Sloan Peak, Full Moon Fever. Sloan Peak has been described as the "Matterhorn of the Cascades" because of its commanding stature. On December 12, under a full moon experiencing a lunar eclipse, Braden Downey, Will Hinckley, and I climbed a long snow and ice route on the northern aspect of its west face, above Bedal Basin. A couple of highlights included the first pitch with its full 60 meters of grade 4 ice with a texture like shampoo, and the insecure and runout ice of pitch four, which we coined "The Window" due to a large hole that revealed its delaminated status and did nothing for our confidence.

After 950' of steep ice we bagged the ropes and carried on with an additional 1,000' of steep snow and ice to 50° that brought us to a prominent notch, followed by 40' of snow-covered 4th class



Good rock on the upper face of Tower of Babble on Tower Mountain. Eric Wehrly