

**JAMES H. KANZLER, 1948–2011**

James H. Kanzler laced up his boots for the last time and “hiked over the pass” on April 18, 2011. Born April 22, 1948, he grew up in Montana, where he began climbing with his father and younger brother in his grade school years. He became affectionately known as Rat Hole, Ratty, or R.H.

Kanzler was an important alpinist, avalanche hazard forecaster, and mountain guide. Among his better-known climbs were his pioneering attempt (with Pat Callis) on the Emperor Face on Mt. Robson (1974) and his first ascents on the north faces of Mt. Cleveland (1976) and Mt. Siyeh (1979) in Glacier National Park. Kanz also climbed the Northwest Face of Half Dome (1971) and the Nose of El Cap (1972).

When the curved-pick ice axe revolution arrived, Kanzler heated his old straight-pick axe and hammer on his kitchen stove and hammered curves into them. Using them he made first ascents of Green Gully and Hyalite Canyon ice climbs and did routes in the Canadian Rockies before he could afford new tools.

Kanzler pioneered routes in the Beartooth Mountains with Chad Chadwick, Brian Leo, Doug McCarty, Jack Tackle, and me. He did new routes in the Wind River and Purcell Ranges with Fred Beckey. He put up numerous trad routes on local crags in southern Montana and went on expeditions to Minya Konka (1980) and Siguniang (1981) in China. Kanzler influenced many upstart climbers and ski patrolmen in Montana. Alex Lowe autographed the cover photo of *Climbing* no. 166 with “Jim, you started this nonsense—chasing you!—Alex.”

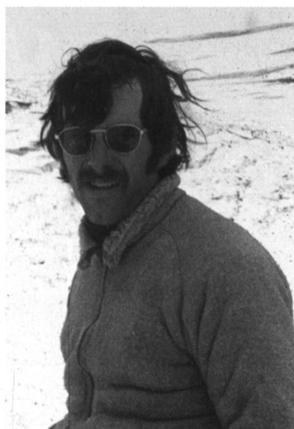
He was revered for his ski patrolling and avalanche hazard forecasting. He began with the Bridger Bowl ski patrol in 1968 and was Big Sky’s first ski patrol director from 1972 to 1978. He was a Jackson Hole ski patrolman from 1978 to 1999. He began avalanche hazard forecasting for Bridger-Teton National Forest and the Jackson resort in 1986 and continued until 1999. He then switched to the resort’s information technology department, where he remained until his passing.

During summers he spent 22 years guiding for Exum, guiding the north face of the Grand Teton occasionally. He was a legend as a gifted, though idiosyncratic, teacher. His first rule of guiding: “Just be yourself.”

Kanzler’s father, Hal, died in 1967. Two years later his younger brother, Jerry, died in an avalanche with four friends on Mt. Cleveland. (I am writing a book on the incident, *In Search of the Mount Cleveland Five*.) Jim searched for them with Pat Callis and Peter Lev. During his avalanche hazard forecasting career, he took every ski patroler’s death or mishap personally. He stressed fieldwork and typically dug 150 snow assessment pits a year.

Kanzler was loved by many and made a difference to the people around him, though his wit and wisdom were seasoned with sarcasm. According to a colleague, as Kanzler once walked out of an avalanche lab, he said, “We made mistakes today, but it was a good day because no one died.”

Ratty often brought us to belly laughs, even ground rollers. He twice killed packrats (no relation) as they threatened climbing gear during bivouacs, demonstrating patience and quickness with a hammer.



Jim Kanzler in 1977. Terry Kennedy

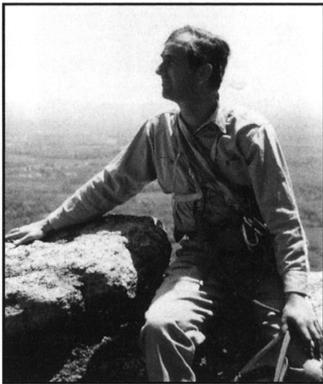
Our friend carried on his shoulders a heavy load that most of us will never understand. He packed it farther than I would have thought possible. I am fortunate to have spent my greatest days in the mountains with Jim Kanzler, as well as nights weathering storms or gazing at the rotating heavens. We shared whacky road trips I will never forget.

Finding our way without Jim Kanzler will not be easy. Life will never be the same. We who are left behind must keep trudging. Save me a flat spot on the ledge and a place by the campfire, my friend. Until you see me coming over the ridge, be safe wherever you are.

Kanzler leaves behind his mother, his son, Jamie, and two grandchildren.

TERRY KENNEDY

### VICTOR CURT MAHLER, 1932-2011



Victor Mahler in 1972. *Courtesy Frances Wallace*

Victor passed away following a bout of pneumonia, on September 7 in New York City. An incredibly brave man, he refused to be knocked down by the loss of his sight and a stroke and continued to attend the New York Section's Annual Black Tie Dinner, with his beloved wife Mimi. Several fellow club members attended his memorial service at the only German-speaking church in Manhattan.

An alumnus of Deerfield Academy, he graduated from Dartmouth with a major in Architecture. Victor's sampling of what Dartmouth had to offer included the Outing Club and the Winter Sports Board. After graduation, he spent time in the Navy, on a destroyer.

After leaving the Navy he received a Masters in Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. His first foray into the field was with the Architects.Collaborative in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He then joined I.M. Pei in New York, before founding his own firm. In 1973 the infamous Hancock Tower problem in Boston brought Victor fame and applause. A design flaw caused the windows to fall out, and Victor diagnosed and solved the problem, which had baffled many experts. His career then took him to Hong Kong, and other exotic locations, and he was elevated to Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

Victor climbed in the Andes, Alps, and Canadian Rockies, where he partnered with Bill Putnam on first ascents. He was a fellow AAC member of whom we can be proud.

PHIL ERARD

### BONNIE PRUDDEN, 1914-2011

Bonnie Prudden, fitness pioneer and founder of Bonnie Prudden Myotherapy, passed away at her home in Tucson on December 11, 2011. She was 97. "You can't turn back the clock, but you can wind it up again," she would tell her students and patients, and that is how she lived her life. She was born on January 29, 1914, in New York City. When she was three years old, the curious