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**The World's
Most Significant
Climbs**



**AAC
PRESS**

another first descent. We believe that our routes of ascent on Watson and 12,300' were also firsts, as we could find no documentation or sign of previous passage.

On May 17, with time to spare we packed our belongings and started walking back to Haines. The seven-day, 120-mile traverse was a whole other story in itself.

For further specific information contact the Yakutat District Ranger, Glacier Bay National Park/Preserve, P.O. Box 137 Yakutat, AK 99689 (907-784-3295) or the Glacier Bay Chief Ranger at (907) 697-2230. We flew in with Drake, a professional pilot from Haines. We recommend him and his services to anyone going into that area. Drake's Phone # is (907) 723-9475.

BJ BREWER, MAD DOG, and JAMIE LAIDLAW

ALASKA COAST MOUNTAINS



The southwest flank of Mt. Blachnitzky in the Juneau Icefield. The route wanders up snow on this face through haze from forest fire smoke. Keith K. Daellenbach

Various ascents. My father, Charles B. Daellenbach of Albany, Oregon, Scott McGee of Anchorage, Alaska, Fred Skemp III of La Crosse, Wisconsin, and I, of Portland, Oregon, took a helicopter transport from Juneau to the Gilkey Trench in the Coast Range of Alaska. We climbed the previously unclimbed Mt. Blachnitzky (6,552', N58°47'47" W134°23'38") on June 30 via the southwest cirque/south ridge (45° snow, class 3 rock) from a high camp at a previously unvisited tarn, which, located at 3,600' on the southwest flank, seemed like Shangri-la. Fred and I also climbed a route on the previously unclimbed Peak 6,500' (N58°48'17" W134°35'56"). The date was July 4, and we named the route the Independence Route. Our route took us from the Bucher Glacier up the north-northeast ridge, across 55° snow slopes of the northeast face, and finally up the southeast ridge, where we encountered 5.3 rock and WI2 ice.

Our egress off the Juneau Icefield took us from the Gilkey Trench on a traverse into the north side of

Avalanche Canyon, a river ford across the Avacan, and up the steep valley to the "high ice" of the Northwest Taku Glacier. From here, we skied towards Taku D (5,810', N58°42'17" W134°17'530"), a previously climbed peak at the confluence of the Taku and Matthes glaciers.

We all climbed this peak via the southwest ridge (class 3 rock). We spent the final enjoyable days of the expedition on backcountry skis, making our way off the southern end of the Icefield via the Taku, Southwest Taku, Norris, Lemon, and Ptarmigan glaciers, with a descent down Lemon Creek back to the capital of Alaska.

KEITH K. DAELLENBACH, AAC

Devil's Thumb, South Pillar, first free ascent. In July Carl Diedrich and I spent several weeks climbing and exploring around the Devil's Thumb. Our main objective was to free climb the imposing South Pillar of the Thumb. However, we felt we first should climb the classic East Ridge route as a warm-up and to investigate descent options. On July 12, with a forecast of clear skies and high pressure, we set out to climb the South Pillar. From camp at the foot of the East Ridge, we descended toward the Witches' Cauldron. Our plan to approach and climb the initial spur to the base of the pillar in a day proved to be excellent. The spur consists of low angle 5th-class rock that becomes steeper toward the base of the pillar. We bivouacked comfortably on the large ledges below the pillar.

We started up the pillar about 15m right of the crest and climbed a wandering three pitches that led us toward the obvious large, right-facing corner system just left of the crest. The towering, blocky corner offered four rope-stretching 60m pitches (5.9–5.10). (We found several rappel slings in the corner system.) These pitches deposited us on a narrow ledge that led right and back onto the exposed pillar crest. The following 60m pitch, brilliant climbing on excellent rock with small holds, left us at an exhilarating hanging belay at an obvious black band visible from afar. We were committed and began a race with the setting sun to the summit. A thrilling 5.10 flake, crack, and layback pitch ended on a large ledge, easing our minds, as well as the angle of the rock. Success seeming imminent, we comfortably climbed the corners angling toward a large roof. Peering around the roof to the right revealed easy face climbing, with a summit bivouac in sight. Continuing clear weather allowed for a morning of leisure. We spent several hours solving the world's problems, while visually feasting on this grand landscape of white wilderness. We spent the remainder of our trip exploring the glaciers and ridges around the Thumb.

Our free ascent of the South Pillar deviated from the original line (Bebie-Pilling, 1991) with two notable variations. We took the obvious corner system to the left of the pillar crest in preference to the original line. And, where the original line climbs the Quartz Ramp to the right of the crest, our line ascends directly up the crest. The South Pillar of Devil's Thumb as we climbed it comes in at V 5.10.

Air transport was provided by the wonderful folks at Temsco Helicopters. Also thanks to Dieter Klose for his hospitality and information.

PAUL ADAM HARAF

Devil's Thumb massif, everything. Four years ago on an expedition to nearby Oasis Peak, Dieter Klose planted a seed: the complete traverse of Devil's Thumb. This seed grew into a dream that blossomed into reality in July, as Andre Ike of Squamish, B.C. and I were deposited below the East Ridge of the Thumb by Temsco Helicopters. A week of mostly bad weather followed, with just enough sun to advance a camp and scope the logistics of our mission. Finally the skies