

The Arizona Mountaineer

December 2009



**JOHN PROUTY AND JUSTIN YORK
WAITING OUT THE WEATHER ON
COLCHUCK GLACIER**

STORY ON PAGE 9

The Arizona Mountaineering Club

Meetings: The member meeting location is:

Phoenix Country Day School
3901 E. Stanford Drive
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253.

The meeting time is 7:00 to 9:00 PM.

Board Meetings: Board meetings are open to all members and are held two Mondays prior to the Club meeting.

Dues: Dues cover January through December. A single membership is \$30.00 per year: \$35.00 for a family. Those joining after June 30 pay \$15 or \$18. Members joining after October 31 who pay for a full year will have dues credited through the end of the following year. Dues must be sent to:

AMC Membership Committee
6519 W. Aire Libre Ave.
Glendale, AZ 85306

Schools: The AMC conducts several rock climbing, mountaineering and other outdoor skills schools each year. Browse the AMC website for information on schedules and classes.

For More Information:

Website:

www.amcaz.org

Mail:

Arizona Mountaineering Club
4340 E. Indian School Rd., Ste 21-164
Phoenix, AZ 85018

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Grant Loper	602-684-3042
Vice-President	Robert England	480-688-5412
Secretary	Erik Filsinger	smorefil@aol.com
Treasurer	Jodie Bostrom	bostrom.jodie.amc@gmail.com
Director	Eric Evans	602-218-3060
Director	Bill Fallon	602-996-9790
Director	Danny Gonzales	602-550-8371
Director	Kim McClintic	480-213-2629
Past President	John Keedy	623-412-1452

COMMITTEES

Archivist	Jef Sloat	602-316-1899
Classification	Nancy Birdwell	602-770-8326
Elections	Dave Van Hook	602-790-6283
Equip. Rental	Bruce McHenry	602-952-1379
Email	Robert England	480-688-5412
Land Advocacy	Erik Filsinger	480-314-1089
Librarian	Richard Kocher	480-966-5568
Membership	Rogil Schroeter	623-512-8465
Mountaineering	Bruce McHenry	602-952-1379
Asst Chair	Grant Loper	602-684-3042
Newsletter	Robert England	480-688-5412
Outings	Frank Vers	480-947-9435
Programs	Grant Loper	602-684-3042
Trng & Schools	Bill Fallon	602-996-9790
Basic	Bill Fallon	602-996-9790
Anchors	Justin York	480-229-8660
Lead	Mike Knarzer	602-751-1701

The AMC Land Advocacy Committee: The Committee works by itself and with the national Access Fund to maintain public access to climbing areas. If you know of areas that are threatened with closures or climbing restrictions, please notify the Land Advocacy representative Erik Filsinger, 480-314-1089.

The Access Fund: This is a national, non-profit, climber's organization that works to maintain access to climbing areas nationwide. Climbers can join The Access Fund by mailing an annual, tax-deductible donation of \$35 or more to: The Access Fund, P.O. Box 17010, Boulder, CO 80308, or calling 888-8MEMBER or giving it to the AMC Club Treasurer to be sent to The Access Fund in your name. A donation of \$35 or more is needed to receive Vertical Times, The Access Fund newsletter. One can also join electronically at https://www.accessfund.org/secure/joinnow/join_indiv.php or at <https://accessfund.org/join/indiv.php>.

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Newsletter

The Arizona Mountaineer is published monthly by the AMC. Members are encouraged to submit articles and photos about their climbing- or mountaineering-related activities. Submit items for publication (subject to approval) to: AMC Editor, 2267 W Periwinkle Way, Chandler, AZ 85248 or through email to robert_england2@yahoo.com. Digital photos should preferably be in JPG format and 300 dpi. Articles can be in any standard word processing format. For more info call or write the editor at (480)-688-5412, robert_england2@yahoo.com.

Advertising in the Arizona Mountaineer is accepted, subject to approval, at the following rates. Personal ads are free to members. Business ads are \$5.00 for a business card, \$10.00 for half page, \$20.00 for full page, and \$25.00 for inserts.

Hot Stuff !!!

Save Queen Creek

Library

You must be an AMC member; i. e., your name must be on the most current membership list.

The circulation period is one month. Materials are due at the next general club meeting. The overdue fine is \$2 per title per month. Please contact the librarian if unable to return your books and tapes.

The circulation limit is three titles per person. One of these may be a videotape, for which a \$50 deposit is required. Each guidebook requires a \$25 deposit.

JAN NL Deadline: 16 Dec

December Birthdays

Lori Del Secco 2, John Hamilton 7, Li Jiang 8, Robert England 9, Frank Fischer 12, Frank Hertz 15, Taylor Clarkin 16, Sherrie Novak 16, Brandon Forrest 18, Al Potter 18, Helga Gier 20, John Keedy 20, Jim Leinbach 20, Philip Goebel 21, Paul Paonessa 21, Julie Dimmery 23, Susan Harnage 24, Jason Weaver 24, Wallace Vegors 25, Alison Cook-Davis 31

Discount Directory

These merchants offer a discount to AMC members:

- **Arizona Hiking Shack** - 11645 N. Cave Creek Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85020, (602) 944-7723. Show your AMC membership card and get a 10% discount.
- **AZ on the Rocks Gym** - 16447 N. 91st St., Scottsdale, AZ 85260. 480-502-9777. Gym membership 10% off for AMC members.
- **Phoenix Rock Gym** - 1353 E. University, Tempe, AZ 85281. 480-921-8322. 10% off membership to AMC members.
- **AZ Cliffhanger** - at the Phoenix Rock Gym. 480-642-9507. 10% off membership to AMC members.
- **Solid Rock Gym** - 23620 N. 20th Dr, Phoenix, AZ 85027 (623) 587-7625 10% off membership.
- **Solid Rock Gym** - 407 S. 107th Ave, Suite A6, Tolleson, AZ 85353, (623) 643-9399 10% off membership.
- **Climbmax Gym** - 1330 W Auto Dr, Suite 112, Tempe, AZ 85284 - 480-626-7755. 10% off membership, Grand Opening 15% off through 4/30.
- **APE Index Rock Climbing Gym** - 9700 N. 91st Ave Suite 118 Peoria 85345 Phone 623-242-9164 10% discount for Day Pass and Membership. Show AMC Membership card.

Rental Equipment

EQUIPMENT	Qty	\$Dep	1-3day	4-7day
MSR Alpine snowshoes	5	32	10	16
Ice Crampons	5	26	8	13
Ice axes (70 cm)	6	16	5	8
Ice axes (90 cm)	5	14	5	7
Snow shovel	1	8	3	4
Avalanche Kit (probe & shovel)	2	10	5	8
Curved Ice Tools (pair)	2	40	20	35

Call Bruce McHenry at (602) 952-1379 for information on how to rent AMC equipment.

Treasurer's Report

Arizona Mountaineering Club Income Statement Period Ended October 30, 2009

INCOME

Advertising.....	20.00
Dues 2009	4441.00
Interest.....	306.37
T-Shirts.....	60.00
Mountaineering Schools	50.00
Rental Equipment.....	208.00
AARS (Anchors) School.....	1575.00
ORC School	6202.00
Lead School	975.00
Other Income	36
TOTAL INCOME	13,837.73

EXPENSES

Admin	621.45
Bank Charges	0.00
Capital Expenditures	1067.69
Equipment Maintenance	35.00
Insurance	2838.00
Land Advocacy	171.03
Library.....	77.09
Newsletter	2447.47
Outings.....	260.94
Programs Monthly Meeting	3282.99
Training.....	4293.77
T-Shirts.....	870.33
TOTAL EXPENSES	16,186.16

OVERALL TOTAL.....(2,348.43)

ACCOUNT BALANCES

Checking	8,240.89
Accounts Receivable.....	00
CD Account	15,000.00
TOTAL CASH ASSETS	23,240.89

AMC Outing Gear.....	3,467.43
OVERALL TOTAL	26,708.32

AMC Board Minutes - 2 November 2009

Call to Order – Vice President England called the Board to order at 7:00 p.m.

Board members present: England, Filsinger, Keedy, Gonzales, Evans

Committee Chairs present: Kreitz

Minutes of the October 12, 2009 meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: Reviewed as received. Approval tabled with questions.

Committee Reports:

Programs. A Christmas party coordinator needs to be identified.

T&S. Outdoor Rock Climbing School completed successfully. Anchors school to begin.

Outings: Written report on Adopt-a-Crag (elsewhere in this newsletter). Thanksgiving coordination discussed. Outing Leader Activity reports for past 4 years reviewed and compared.

Classifications: Need to follow-up with potential new applicants.

Newsletter: Mike Kreitz will investigate updating list of members who previously didn't want electronic copies.

Land Advocacy: Erik Filsinger submitted written report on McDowells Adopt-a-Crag. Erik and John gave a Queen Creek update.

Old Business:

Storing club gear. Still looking for central

location and procedure.

Email Administrator: Possible candidate to be interviewed at next Board meeting.

Website Update: Robert England discussed progress and status. He will present web site requirements to Board for input.

2010 Calendar: Draft reviewed. Updates and corrections will be made by Robert England.

New Business:

2010 Budget: The Board reviewed and modified draft budget submitted by President Loper. The Board voted to approve amended 2010 Budget for presentation to the Members as required under Club By-Laws.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

NEW MEMBERS:

Climbers - Please Welcome

Kevin Burke
Thad Colgrove
Matthew Schmidt

2010 Proposed Budget

The AMC board presents the 2010 proposed budget for member review. We will vote to accept or amend the budget at the December member meeting.

<u>INCOME</u>	
Advertising.....	200
Dues 2010	5000
Interest.....	350
Mountaineering Schools	200
Rental Equipment.....	75
T&S Schools Rental Income.....	100
TOTAL Rental Income	175
Spring.....	1575
Fall.....	1575
TOTAL AARS	3150
Spring.....	4000
Fall.....	4000
TOTAL Basic School.....	8000
Spring.....	600
Fall.....	600
TOTAL Lead School	1200
TOTAL Training Income	12350
FROM Checking.....	5,525.00
TOTAL INCOME	18275

<u>EXPENSES</u>	
Other	200
Postage.....	125
Printing.....	100
Supplies.....	25
Website.....	1250
TOTAL Admin.....	1700
Mountaineering	350
Rental Equipment.....	350
TOTAL Capital Expenditures.....	700
Insurance	5500

Organizational Contributions.....	150
Operations and Incentives.....	1000
TOTAL Land Advocacy.....	1150
Library.....	50
T-Shirts AMC.....	300
T-Shirts Grand Canyon.....	700
TOTAL Promotion Activities	1000
Labels.....	50
Other	50
Postage.....	600
Printing.....	1800
TOTAL Newsletter	2500
Certifications	500
First Aid Renewal	500
OL Incentives.....	100
TOTAL Outing Leaders	1100
Camping Fees.....	100
Entry Fees	50
Misc.....	100
TOTAL Outings.....	250
Rental Gear Equip. Maint.	50
Facility Rental.....	1100
Monthly Meeting	250
Other (Speakers)	2000
Food	100
TOTAL Programs	3450
Equipment	4000
Facilities.....	1000
Food	200
Other	150
Printing.....	800
T-Shirts & Incentives	200
TOTAL Training	6350
TOTAL EXPENSES	23800
OVERALL TOTAL.....	23800

Adopt-A-Crag – North Access Area – McDowells

The annual AMC Adopt-A-Crag was held Saturday, October 31, 2009 in the North Access Area of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. This year is a very special year for the AMC in its partnership with the City of Scottsdale to keep and manage all of the historic rock climbing in the North McDowells. As part of that partnership, the AMC has obtained a grant from the Access Fund to purchase and install trail signage for the rock climbing access trails. The Adopt-A-Crag Event was devoted to installing those trail signs and to enjoying some of the wonderful climbing resources.

Below please find the AMC members who participated. In addition, we were very pleased to have a solid contingent of Stewards from the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy show up to assist. We broke up into 3 different work parties lead by Claire Miller from the City, Robin Schweitzer from the City, and Erik Filsinger from the AMC. Each group installed 3 or 4 sign posts and signs at points marked the previous week by Scott Hamilton from the City and Erik.

The task involved digging an 18 inch hole, placing the sign post with sign attached, pouring in pre-measured amounts of dry concrete, adding water and stirring to make the proper consistency, and the filling the remainder of the hole with dirt. It was hard work with picks and digging bars. It was also arduous hauling the requisite sign posts, signs, tools, water and concrete mix to the various sites. All in all 11 signs marking the Mesquite Canyon climbs of Girlie Man and Sven Towers I, II, and III were placed, along with trail signage for the Morrell's Parking Area crags.

Great job everyone. Thank you Scottsdale staff. Thank you MSC. And Thank you Access Fund for the Grant to make it all possible.

After the morning's work installing the trail signs, Erik, Bruce McHenry and Jeff Nagel lead an afternoon climbing outing on the Girlie Man and Morrell's Parking Area crags.



AMC Members: Cat Isfan, Nicole Rodriguez, Vince Morgan, Paul Paonessa, Danny Gonzales, Bruce McHenry, David Everett, Jeff Nagel, Eric Evans, Tom Folwell, Randi Folwell, Jan Balogh, Ryan Zahn, Danielle Dedre, Savannah Miller, Erik Filsinger

MSC Stewards: Joni Millavec, Bob Gordon, Pat Brice, Jack McEnroe, Don Bierman, Larry Levy, Bill Parker, Kathy Ann Walsh

Queen Creek Canyon Rock Climbing

Queen Creek Canyon is a world-famous climbing area located four miles east of Superior, AZ. The landscape here is absolutely gorgeous with towering rock spires and endless boulder fields. The larger Queen Creek area, mostly located on the Tonto National Forest, includes the Oak Flat Campground, the Apache Leap escarpment, Devil's Canyon, and Queen Creek Canyon.

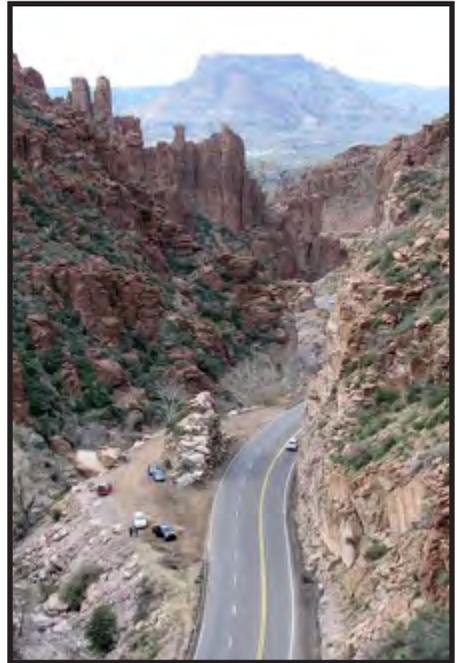
For a rock climber, the Queen Creek area has a lifetime of routes and boulders to explore, and is conveniently located less than one hour from Phoenix or Tucson. With year-round climbing weather, this climbing area has proven very popular with local and visiting climbers who enjoy nearly 1000 routes and 2000 bouldering "problems." Still, climbers have not scratched the surface on climbing opportunities at Queen Creek.

Since the first route was developed in the 1970s, the Queen Creek area has become a Mecca for rock climbers. The 1989 through 2004 Phoenix Bouldering Contests and Phoenix Boulder Blasts were held in the Oak Flat Campground, drawing in hundreds of top athletes from around the world. Eventually Queen Creek became a destination area for rock climbing and other recreation.

A few years ago, the Resolution Copper Company (RCC) purchased the Magma Mine in Superior, AZ and found a large body of copper ore below the Oak Flat campground. Unfortunately, RCC's mine would also destroy much of the climbing in the Queen Creek area. RCC seeks to obtain the land for mining through a Congressionally-approved land exchange, and in the process extinguish a public land order that has protected the Oak Flat Campground from mining since the 1950's.

Many stakeholders and organizations are opposed to this land trade due to environmental and cultural concerns. Once the area is transferred, over time RCC's mine will produce a massive subsidence pit and destroy the climbing and recreation resources at Oak Flat. A local group of Arizona climbers formed the Queen Creek Coalition to preserve as much climbing and recreation as possible in the Queen Creek area.

For more information, visit the Queen Creek Coalition web site: <http://www.queencreekcoalition.com/>.



Mt Stuart - Trip Report

This began as a brief trip report to the Arizona Mountaineering Club. It has however evolved way beyond that. It is about a mountaineering experience, and that includes much more than the actual climb done. Justin told me, "I think there might be too many.....details for the AMC newsletter." Probably true but I think it's the details that make a trip memorable. Most regrettably, we had no camera on Mount Stuart. I did get some photos of the Dragontail Peak excursion. I hope you enjoy this.

John Prouty

In July of this year Justin York and John Prouty teamed up for a climb of the North Ridge of Mount Stuart, Grade IV 5.9. The legendary hardman Fred Becky, has said Mount Stuart is "without a rival as the crown peak in the Central Cascades of Washington." At 9415 feet it is the second highest non-volcanic peak in the range.

I arrived at the airport late Thursday where Justin, already in Washington visiting friends was to pick me up in a rental car. I called Justin and thought I told him that I was at the curb under the second sky bridge. Then I watched him zip right by. Thinking he was making another circuit I waited.....and waited, until he texts me asking "where r u? m at door 2" . " I hope we communicate better on the mountain" I think, as I drag my stuff down the side walk. Seeing the car, I open the back door and start to throw my stuff in the back seat. As Justin turns his head toward me from the drivers seat, I notice he has grown a lot of hair in the last few weeks. Indeed, he has turned into a woman. One with a terrified look on her face. "Oops, sorry!" I say, shutting the door before she can utter a word or a scream. I look two cars up and see the real Justin laughing at me. We are off to a great start. What teamwork.

We end up burning about three hours chasing

down a trailhead permit and going to the grocery. Properly equipped and victualled we finally hit I-90 and head over Snoqualmie Pass to Leavenworth on the Eastern side of the Cascades. At the Stuart Lake trailhead along Mountaineer Creek we ready our packs and crash on the ground in the parking lot. I produce my new "summer" sleeping bag which I bought online, on clearance for 27 dollars. Justin laughs at it! It is synthetic and it still stuffs smaller than a six pack of beer. It is very thin but hey, it's modern materials and rated to 40 degrees. 40 degrees my butt. I wake up freezing and resort to getting in my bivy bag. The two combined work well but I think a six pack actually would keep me warmer. Hereafter it is known as my sleeping "rag".

At daylight we head up the trail. As we climb, the trail winds through Lodgepole pine, Spuce, Cedar, Hemlock and Doug Fir trees. I was a timber faller for many years around Seattle and I cant look at a tree without picking its lean and which way I would fall it. Anyone seeing me gazing appreciatively upward would not imagine my piratical thoughts. The underbrush crowds the trail and the sound of the rushing creek makes a soothing background to the sound of our plodding footsteps and labored breathing. We greet quite a few hikers coming down the trail and around mile 4, a man asks if we are going to Stuart Lake. He is with a small group called the Mazamas and warns us that the mosquitoes are fierce up there.

In typically simple terms the guidebook says "Leave the trail at the first switchback (left/south) and cross the creek immediately". Engrossed in conversation we suddenly realize we have missed our turn. We backtrack to the last switchback and check out the crossing. It doesn't look very traveled but we don't want to needlessly lose elevation so we cross on a precarious log. Once

Mt Stuart - Trip Report (continued)

on the other side we are hip deep in blowdown and there is no real path anywhere. After a discussion we decide we may be a bit high (in elevation that is) but we can head down stream until we intersect the path below. We crawl through and hop over and walk the balance beams of downed logs like ants in a pile of pixie sticks until we come upon the path and start following it up the valley. There are many cairns along the way and they lead us out to a talus slope above the creek. We should be on a path along the main creek below but these cairns are very emphatic that we stay up here. Ok cairns, lead on. (does this sound familiar to anyone?)

After about a mile of following these very regularly spaced, well built cairns the boulders begin to get huge and the cairns become more casual and harder to spot. Hopping rock to rock and pulling the occasional 5.8 boulder move with a full pack is testing our patience as we realize we have been had. What jackass thought this way was worth building all these cairns for? Probably some practical joker with nothing better to do. But now we are committed. Why drop 300 feet to the creek where we now know we should be, only to climb right back up? We stay the course and eventually the cairns lead us side hill to where the climbers path comes up to us.

We are now following the creek coming down from the glaciers of the North side of Mount Stuart. After a steep climb we reach the upper valley and the path winds along through the timber with lots of sandy flats and vegetation. Another half mile and we come out of the trees and skirt a swamp at the head of the creek where we are greeted with a fabulous view of our route. It is awesome. A distinct ridge of chocolate colored granite rising nearly 3000 feet, flanked on both sides by small glaciers. The sky is a dark blue backdrop contrasting the crenelated skyline of the mountain.

At the head of the swamp, where the boulder field beneath the glaciers flattens out we find a great campsite amongst the rocks beside the creek. We had fantasies of getting on the route today but the approach, what with our shortcut and all, has taken longer than hoped. Not that we are at all tired from 6 miles of packing and rock-hopping, we decide to chill for the rest of the day and start fresh in the morning. We spend the afternoon lounging, chatting and napping. As I am looking up eyeballing our planned descent route of the Sherpa Glacier I watch some rockfall come down off the wall and slide down the ice. One huge rock manages to leap the lowest crevasses and flies airborne. I'm thinking it will make it clear into the rocks below but it disappears behind a hummock of snow and a huge spray of rocks and ice crystals mark it's impact. I decide that might be an area to avoid. Late in the day the mozzies come out and we start a little fire to keep them at bay. While eating we sort the gear and load our climbing sacks. We decide on a casual 5:30am start and I squirm into my sleeping rag.

About 11pm I am awakened by voices as two climbers arrive and stumble into our camp. They hush their talking as they spot our stuff and pass on through. I lay in my bag wondering are they wanting to do our route? What if they are slow and we can't pass? Should we get up earlier to beat them to the start?

In the morning we get up and the sky is already showing the morning light. Shit! This is not an alpine start. We wolf some food and head out. A short ways into the boulders we look back and see our neighbors are awake so we amble back to see what they are planning to climb and ask what they know about the Sherpa descent. They are from Ellensburg and are wanting the North Ridge. One has a camera on a tripod at the moment and they

Mt Stuart - Trip Report (continued)

don't seem in any kind of rush. After a brief visit we get going.

We start picking our way through the boulders and it is like walking through a demolition disaster area. All the rocks have a coating of coarse sand and sharp shards of rock. There is mud and sticks caked to the everything. It's as if there was a huge explosion and all this stuff just fell here recently. A great avalanche must have come down here and shifted everything around. The slope is not steep at all but even the car sized rocks teeter and move. Before stepping to a rock you need to examine it and push on it first. This is seriously the most unstable boulder field I've ever been in. It's a bit unnerving to be on top of a school bus (the short bus of course) and feel it move. We decide this is way too hazardous and move off right to the side slope and continue upward. Where the slope steepens we angle more directly towards the foot of the North Ridge. There are many rivulets of water threading the slope and all sorts of alpine wildflowers and mosses everywhere. I feel like I am walking through a garden display. I try to step around the many flowers because it just feels wrong to disturb them. You know, leave no trace, blah, blah blah. We gain the top of the old terminal moraine of the Ice Cliff Glacier where it sweeps up to the foot of our route. As we walk up the crest of the moraine we pass several nicely built stone bivouac shelters. I keep looking back expecting to see our neighbors in hot pursuit but they are not to be seen. We drop our packs at the base of the ridge and look it over. Wow. Its big.

This is the moment of truth and for me it's always a mix of excitement and anxiety. No more looking at pictures and dreaming about it. Here it is right in front of me. Do I have the strength and the skill to do this? Shouldn't I be afraid? Managing these doubts and fears is the first step of

my journey on every route. I say manage because I never fully quell them. They are only tempered by the confidence I have gained climbing other mountains. I have the skills. I know I can do this. Or I am deluded, which is just as good. Probably my strongest attribute.

The route begins at the very lowest point of the ridge. So classic. We scramble up about 100 feet to a ledge and change into our rock shoes and rope up. Justin takes the 1st lead, an awkward 5.8 in a right slanting slot which pinches down near the top. It's a hard reach to the crack in the back as the constricting slot pushes your pack and you outward. A tenuous smear with the right foot gets you onto a slab and a crack leads to the belay atop a pillar. As I start up I see the boys from Ellensburg coming straight up the top of the moraine towards us. I take the next pitch which is a primo, sustained 5.9 finger crack. I think I give Justin pause as I run out the last bit trying to stay ahead of the fatigue building in my forearms. I follow a ledge to the right and belay on the crest of the ridge below a crack. As Justin comes up I swat at biting flies looking to get acquainted. I wonder, what the heck do they do up here 600 feet above the glacier at 7200 feet elevation? For one of them, running into a climber is like winning the lottery.

Justin arrives at the belay and tells me "Our camp mates were belaying the scramble so I don't think we need to worry about them catching us." He then leads off on slightly easier ground up the ridge and runs the rope out to where the ridge traverses over to a headwall. We can see a large ramp system following up and just under the west side of the crest so I take off and tell Justin when the rope runs out to break down the belay and simulclimb after me. I climb over to the ramp and zig up some ledges, then I stem up a corner with difficult friction moves after which I place a

Mt Stuart - Trip Report (continued)

bomber stopper and run the rope through a Tibloc. This is more for my own security as it will serve to belay Justin as he makes the harder moves and I won't be pulled off if he slips. It's a great technique, the rope runs very smoothly through the device and we both employ it numerous times on the route.

I have now led out the full 60 meters of rope and Justin starts following. This is not the best way to simul but the ground is easy and I pull and drag the full rope up after me. At one point I dislodge a block with my foot and it goes crashing down. Fortunately we are traversing so Justin is nowhere near. Still, it is quite startling and a reminder to pay better attention. I continue up onto a steeper slab studded with crystals and small chickenheads. I notice the beautiful color and different texture of this area of rock. While placing pro in a small crack I lean in close and take a moment to examine some tiny little flowering succulents clustered alongside. It is so amazing, these micro landscapes are everywhere. Trying to cover the most ground possible I run it out as far as I dare between placements and use every piece possible before stopping. I think I made about 350 feet when I stop at a semi-hanging belay because it's where I can use what I have left to build a good belay. A small cam, a stopper and a little slung horn. Justin arrives, "I knew you'd be stopping soon because you were getting pretty creative with the pro."

This time he takes my end of the rope and ties it to his harness thereby doubling it and I tie into the middle. This is much better for simul climbing as the rope drag is less and it's easier to communicate. I tell him to keep his eyes peeled for the mini flower gardens. With a quizzical look, he thanks me for the important beta and climbs off. When the rope runs out I just leave it through my belay device and follow. As I come to a step or two on easier ground rather than waiting for Justin

to advance somewhere up above, I can use a free hand to pull the rope back through my device and keep climbing upward and then feed it back out when he moves. This keeps him on belay and me moving.

Justin weaves his way up the ridge another few hundred feet and reaches the notch where the entrance gully from the Stuart Glacier brings most parties onto the more commonly done Upper North Ridge route. We have covered something like 1400 feet in about 5 hrs. We sit on a nice sandy bivy ledge and have a snack. The sun is warm and I take off my too tight shoes. I am surprised when Justin says we have been there forty minutes. What slackers! We have a long way to go yet. The guide book says only 20 pitches left! We can see the Great Gendarme, a 200 foot tower high on the route and it looks far away. Time to go.

There is some downclimbing here so I belay Justin over to the true notch and follow him over. He then traverses across some blocky ledges and heads vertically back for the ridge and I start simul climbing after him. I look back to the ledges where we had rested and oh no! A climber is traversing along to the notch. They caught us! We shouldn't have sat sat there so lazily.

This is where the route becomes ultra classic and just amazing climbing. Pristine granite, moderate difficulty, weaving among spires and blocks with huge exposure on both sides. I find Justin at a short step in the ridge and I take the lead. It's steeper here so we decide to pitch it out again. I climb a short headwall via a crack and traverse the ridge to a another steep downclimb. Then I do an amazing, fun finger traverse on a true knife edge and belay. As I am bringing Justin up, the leader I saw below comes along and passes me on a ledge below. This is not one of the guys from our camp. We say hello and he continues up. When Justin reaches me we

Mt Stuart - Trip Report (continued)

wait for the other second to come along so he too can pass. We swap two more pitches then Justin leads a long simul to the base of the Gendarme.

From the notch up to the Gendarme I have been scanning across the face to the East. In the early eighties I climbed the NE Face of the False Summit with my friend John. It was one of those pivotal experiences for me and I look for our route but I can't recognize it from here. Sadly, I learned that John passed away a few years ago so he is very present to me as I climb this part of the route. Once, after finishing a pitch I holler down to Justin, "John! Off belay!" he yells back "I'm not John! You are!" Another time, handing him some gear at a belay I catch myself again starting to say John but he doesn't notice. This is weird I think to myself. Get your mind back to today.

Reaching the Gendarme I find Justin visiting with the other belayer as his partner leads the 1st gendarme pitch above. They are from Wenatchee and this is one of their favorite routes. They are very fast climbers and are doing this car to car no bivy. They have come in from the west side over Goat Pass and he says they passed our campmates below on the second pitch. I mention that I'm definitely feeling the demands of this climb and he tells us "it's not an easy climb, almost 3000 feet of climbing, you should feel good about that." I'm pretty sure this guy is older than I am and that's inspiring. We ask him what the Sherpa Glacier descent is like and he says "I wouldn't recommend it. It's in really bad shape right now and there was a helicopter rescue there two weeks ago. I guess someone had an anchor fail." We have both brought lightweight aluminum axes and crampons, not the ideal for steep, hard ice. We take his advice and accept that we will be doing a traverse of Mount Stuart and dropping down the other side into Ingalls Creek and taking the long

way back. We will bivvy for sure now. Oh well.

During the last two pitches clouds have started curling around the West ridge and the temperature is dropping. Its about 4:30 and there's still a lot of ridge left. As we discuss our mutual fatigue, the menacing weather and the potential difficulty of finding the descent in bad visibility, Justin says "I'm okay with rapping into the gully and finishing that way if you want." He is referring to a variation (actually the original route) which bypasses the two 5.9 pitches of the Great Gendarme. It is so very tempting. The guy from Wenatchee stands up and says "Hey you guys have a great climb." and takes off up the crack.

I watch him for a minute and turn to Justin, "Dude, we need to do the Gendarme. If we don't, we are going to regret it. We totally should do it"

"Yeah I know" he nods "Let's do it."

"OK, so now I feel guilty for insisting,..... because you have to lead the off width."

A blank look from Justin.

"I'm quite fagged."

One eyebrow goes up.

"I think Joe Brown said that once."

Look could not be blanker.

"I'll tell you what, you take the off width and we'll haul the packs on these two pitches so it'll be easier."

"The second pitch traverses." He says

"I'll carry both packs if we cant haul." (Note to reader: NEVER say that.)

I rack up as I watch Wenatchee Man finish the pitch. Starting up the crack I feel a false sense of vigor, liberated of the weight of my pack. The first section is a sweet hand crack in the back of a wide stemming slot to a slight bulge surmounted

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with a bit of laybacking to a good rest. The finish is about twenty feet of perfect hand and finger crack in a left facing, vertical open book. I place a good cam equalized with a stopper above it and clip. Staying in jamming posture I reach up and get one more cam in up higher and clip it and step back to the rest. Like a wind-up toy monkey, I start laybacking upward and about five feet above the last piece I find that the rock I am smearing my feet on is very polished and slick. My feet sketch a little and Justin tells me to “hang in there John”. I reply that the rock is “a bit slippery here” thinking that my casual assessment will assure him that I’m not about to come off. (This is an example of a seldom talked about mountaineering skill wherein you gird up your partners psyche with bullshit) I realize that in short order I will be coming off, so it might as well be while trying to get over the lip up there and I go for it. Another five feet and I have my right hand overhead on a positive grab at the top of the pillar. My forearms are pumped but I know the drill and release the layback with my left hand and just manage to grab the top as my feet fall out of the corner. Breathing hard, I pull with both arms and flop myself up onto the ledge. My legs are still dangling over the side, so I accentuate my grovel move with some enhanced squirming and kicking for entertainment and start laughing. In alpine climbing it is ok to use your knees, your chin and any other body part to get up the climb without dying. Justin makes a joke about graceful something or other and I stand up. The top of this little pillar is amazing. A perfectly flat platform, square to the buttress above and the size of a 2 man tent. The exposure off the right side down to the Stuart Glacier is hypnotically vertiginous. I haul our packs up and Justin cruises the pitch.

“I’ll try to stop short and belay straight above if I can, so I can haul the packs.” he says as he takes the rack.

“Or maybe I can pull the rope up and toss it back to you”

“No f----ing way am I gonna be on this pinnacle without the rope”

Justin clips a fixed pin above the belay and takes off. About ten feet up he does an airy balancey traverse over to the comfort of the off width. Watching him climb it looks hard but he is solid. I am amazed to see him stuff his elbow in above and flex his arm and he then hangs from this elbow jamb and removes his lower hand from the crack and swings it out around his body and reaches higher. I notice that he is wearing a long sleeve shirt and wonder that he is able to maintain enough friction with that elbow as for at least 4 seconds neither hand is touching the rock. A-Fricking-Mazing. He continues to demonstrate superb off width technique and define the word ropegun until the pitch traverses right. He yells down, “There’s no belay here, I’ll need to move over to the right”. That means no hauling the packs. “Ok, keep going, I’ll figure it out.” Worthless bastard.

Justin hollers “off belay” and I put his ice axe onto my pack and shoulder it. I hang his pack (with his 37 pound tennis shoes in it) from a 4 foot runner on the back of my harness. This way it hangs most conveniently just below my feet. I break down the belay and start up. Not surprisingly, nothing is as easy as it looked. As I traverse over to the bottom of the crack the dangling pack wants to pull me off the ledge. I need to use one foot to push the pack away from the rock and swing it ahead as I shuffle over to the base of the crack. I ascend the off width. I am the antithesis of Justin. I have cleverly avoided climbing off widths for many years so have not gained the skills needed here. However, what I have gained is twenty some pounds hanging from my harness. I feel like I’m being pantsed by a small child. I think how this is what it would be

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like to be climbing this crack without Justin's pack if I was on the planet Neptune where the gravity is 1.14 that of the earth. I think I should think instead about climbing. I thrash up to the first big cam. It is deep in the crack so the rope is going horizontally 2 feet in and then up. Not able to unclip it, I grab it and shove it up above me. I yell (more like a squawk) for tension and the rope snugs up a little. I release some of my weight (my appended weight) to the rope hoping I can get the cam out and I slide down the crack about 18 hard won inches. I squiggle back up but still cant unclip due to rope tension. Calling again for slack, I manage to unclip the cam and hang it from my harness. The crack widens here and there is a side-pull crimp on the inside wall for my left hand, I pull on it and wedge my shoulder in the crack and push up with my right foot. What the hell. The pack below is wedging in the crack! I use my left toe to push out on the runner to the pack and free it but it swings right back in. I seriously consider busting out my Joe Simpson Commemorative Edition Pocket Knife and sending the pack into the void but I cant let go. If only I could do one of those elbow thingies.

I consider this next move to be the crux of the entire route. I reach down again with my left toe and swing the pack out and free of the rock. I hold it out there and put all my weight on that side pull with my left hand and raise my left leg and the pack yet higher. I am like Dan Osman doing that flag maneuver on that poster. Well... sort of. With a scream I pull my right hand out and throw for the fixed cam above me. With French precision I nail it and pull on the sling with every thing I have. I yard myself up to the cam and the pack is past the obstruction. From here, I quickly dispatched the off width (I've always wanted to say that). I traverse over to the belay, dragging and spinning the small child along with me. "Nice lead Justin". Looking at his pack dangling at my feet, Justin

says "Oh, that's clever, I wondered how you were gonna do that". "It was no problem" I reply.

By now the clouds are sweeping past pretty thick on the wind. The summit is still a long ways and this weather adds an element of uncertainty to our climb. Its been twenty some years since I did the descent and I don't really remember much of it. Route finding in clouds is not preferred. I take the rack and we start simul-climbing again. I use up most of the gear and reach a notch on the ridge after which is a thirty foot step with a double 5.8 hand crack up it. I stop there. Justin arrives and it is getting chilly. It's surprising how fast the rock gets wet when the clouds are washing it. The rope is also wet with the mist. As I'm handing him gear I drop my belay device and we watch it go clinking down into the mist. Justin looks at me, "What would Joe Brown say now?"

Justin heads off and makes the crack look easy. I follow and find it very difficult with all the moisture. I reach the belay and a shivering Justin says his hands were freezing in that wet crack. We can tell the ridge is easing and we are close. "Well, you can have the last run to the summit" he says handing me the rack. We simul again, single rope, through easy blocks and steps along the ridge crest. As I find my way up to the ridge top I come on about fifty feet away from the summit and stop in a flat spot out of the wind. As I bring Justin up with a hip belay the clouds begin to thin out. He comes around the last boulder and we do the high five, intentionally missing each others hands. We laugh and shake hands.

We unrope and scramble over to the top and take in the moment. Broken clouds are wafting by on a brisk wind. Openings in the clouds grant moving glimpses of the glaciers and ridges far below us. Likewise, bright sunbeams sweep across the summit like a hot searchlight. Justin finds an

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old register box stuffed with a mess of papers. The wind is turbulent and I remember the tremendous gusts of wind that would come out of the blue on another mountain last month and flatten the tents before vanishing into dead calm. I thought how easy it would be to get plucked right off the mountain by one of those blasts. I grip the rock and move back over to the gear.

We have been approximately 11 hrs on the route, not fast but respectable. I think next time we could shave at least 2 hours 18 minutes and 37.04 seconds off our time. For sure. We decide to get moving and find the descent gully before the clouds close in again. There is a lot of traffic on this mountain so it's fairly obvious but it would be harder in low visibility. We follow the ridge down and East skirting under the South side of the false summit. The Cascadian Couloir is a wide gully of loose sand and boulders. Almost five thousand feet long and seven empty-your-shoes stops. It goes on and on and it requires continuous concentration from a fatigued climber to stay on his feet. An ankle injury here would significantly increase the grade of the adventure.

We both seem to enjoy allowing our night vision to transition with the fading light and walking in the darkness so we resist breaking out the headlamps, each wondering who will cave first and switch on. I am beginning to question the actual wisdom of this philosophy as I stumble a time or two just as we reach the timber at the bottom of the talus. With the moon not yet up and the cloud cover it's quite dark even in the open and as we brush through the branches of some hemlock trees into the forest it's like parting a curtain into a dark room. We both stop abruptly and the headlamps come on. Although there are many threads of pathways down the wide couloir we seem to have intuitively found the main one and are now

standing on a sweet path through shoulder high slide alder and brush. What luck!, bushwhacking through this terrain to the creek in the dark would be a nightmare. Much relieved, we follow this well defined trail down through the timber, talking with satisfaction about what a fantastic route we have just done, stopping occasionally to gawk at the huge fir trees along the way.

We cross the main creek on a log and intersect the trail coming upstream. Resisting temptation we wait until we cross a smaller rivulet coming off the mountain to fill our bottles and drink. We are both dogged tired and ready for a nap. I am considering every meager flat spot we pass as a potential bed but I recall having bivied years back in more open timber so we continue up the trail. The trail bends left and I spot a crusty wooden sign on a tree saying Ingalls Pass. This is not right. We decide to go a bit farther and crash so we can sort things out in the morning. We pass some tents and find a flat spot by a fire ring and stop.

Trying to go light I have only a fleece jacket and a rain shell. Justin has a silk sleeping bag liner (ooh! fancy) and a space blanket. He generously offers the blanket to me but I thank him and decline. "Well, I'll just leave it right here if you want it later" and he emphatically sets it off to the side. I stack up a couple of logs and empty out my rucksack, arranging the contents into a little windbreak and lay along side. This will work I say to myself. I eat my last morsels of cheese and salami and a goo packet. This fuel will keep me warmer I say. I lay down and barely cover my torso with my pack. This is pathetic I say. I do the math and understand that 7 hrs of this is going to suck. I close my eyes and try to sleep. There is a docile doe grazing about thirty feet away and I have this vision of opening my eyes to her sniffing at my face.

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I manage to doze a bit and wake up shivering. The moon is out and the trees are dancing in a growing breeze. I am now cold and know I will sleep no more. I think how it's only about fifty degrees and I am a wuss for being cold. Joe Brown wouldn't be cold. I go get Justin's space blanket and open it up. It's like trying to peel an onion. They are so thin and vacuum packed you can't tell if you are ripping it to pieces or not. I had one of these years ago and it was like a flat sheet. Sitting on the ground I unwrap it and spread it over myself. This thing is small. It's only about 3 feet wide and 6 feet long. I have to tuck it under my sides to hold it down and not move a muscle or the breeze lifts it off me. They should call this a barely-any-space-blanket. However I can instantly feel it retaining my body heat. I guess that it is minimally sized to be just enough to drape over an unconscious victim and no more. I battle with trying to stay covered this way and curse the idiot who designed this piece of crap. This can't be right. I pinch the top edge by my face and slide it between my fingers. I can feel two layers there but it won't separate. Like the edges are welded or stitched. It must be a laminate. This sucks. I am going to write a letter to the f-ing manufacturer of this travesty. I lay on top of my pack and cover up. I balance my rock shoes on my chest and drape some runners over me hoping to keep this g-string of a sleeping product from blowing away. If I twitch, it comes loose so I lay there like a disgruntled corpse until fatigue overcomes me and I finally sleep.

I awaken and it's been light for some time. Justin is wandered off some where. I cast off this bitch of a blanket and stand up. I can hear campers talking here and there and a friendly lab comes up and says good morning. Justin returns and says he backtracked and found our correct trail. Right there by the sign, duh. We start packing and I roll up the so called space blanket. I laugh out

loud and swear. The family over there making their breakfast turn their heads. You know, when a mountaineer is severely fatigued his judgment is impaired. The simplest tasks can become supreme tests of intellect and dexterity. Mistakes are easy to make and he can hardly be held accountable in such a state. At the other end of the "blanket", which I had wrapped around my feet is an opening. It is a BAG not a blanket. Cancel that letter.

We leave our bivy at 5000 feet and go North on the trail up Ingalls creek toward Stuart Pass about two miles away. After about twenty minutes the burning fatigue in my legs fades and I feel invigorated by the chill air and the residual high of yesterday's accomplishment. We wind through more flower choked meadows divided by huge timber. The deer are fearless here and don't even take notice as we trudge past. We stop and drink from the stream and fill our bottles. I think about how beautiful and remote this place feels and yet we are just 4 hrs out of Seattle. Nearing the pass the trail switches right and sidehills Eastward. On the hill above us another doe is coming down a game trail converging onto our man trail. She merges on a short distance ahead and strolls up the trail around the bend. The game and the people are one community up here.

We reach Stuart Pass at 6400 feet and gaze North down into Jack Creek and miles of forest. From here we will head Eastward for Goat Pass a little over a mile away. We exit onto the climbers path up the shoulder of the West Ridge of Mount Stuart. It is a well traveled sinuous way through rust colored boulders and stunted conifer. At a flat spot we encounter two climbers taking a break. They left Seattle this morning and are getting a late start on the West Ridge route. The obvious leader looks to be in his fifties and the other his early twenties. We visit a while and wish them well as they depart.

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Justin notes their resemblance to each other and comments how awesome it is that father and son are out here climbing together. Continuing up the ridge for thirty minutes we stop for a break at a pair of stones with wildly vibrant green and yellow lichen contrasted against a shiny blue mineral stain. Looking closely we notice the leaves of the lichen are thick and curled up toward the sky, blooming in their own manner during the brief mountain summer like the flowers in the meadows below. I prepare my late breakfast of my last Raspberry goo packet. Justin eats an energy bar then comes across a forgotten package of salmon somewhere in his pack. He offers some to me and I mix it in my mouth with the raspberry goo. It doesn't get much better than this. I don't ask if there is an expiration date on lost and found pack salmon.

As we eat, we observe dad and son wending their way up the ridge. From our vantage the rock is foreshortened and compressed and looks like a vertical wall but they are high up still zigzagging on ledges and steps. You can't always tell in the mountains what the terrain is really like until you are in it. Many an improbable route has been done by just "going up for a look".

We drop off the ridge on a steep sandy path down into a huge bowl under the Northwest Buttress. There is a large talus slope here which Becky calls a "rock glacier". We start across it in the direction of Goat Pass. I fall into a rhythmic trance of motion and momentum. My mind and eyes focus on making sense of the confusion of rocks ahead of me while my body reacts to the variations of footing and terrain. Sometimes a rock rolls and you must flow to the next rock before you go down. Two moving boulders in a row is particularly engaging. The challenge of maintaining balance while continuously moving, and route finding at the same time is a unique pleasure I find only in the

mountains. I assemble the way in my mind as my legs move and react beneath me and I get a sense that I am floating. Up, down, over, around. Feet, hands and mind fully involved. Floating Talus. These are joyous moments.

We each exit the rock glacier at different elevations, cross the remaining slope and climb up to Goat pass (7600') together. At the saddle, placed in a nook beneath a rock we find a crusty pair of strap on aluminum crampons and a single straight shafted ice tool. It is old gear and looks like it's been there for years. It surely has. It is intriguing to think about the circumstances of it's being left here. Even though it may look long forsaken, most climbers would never move such essential gear in case the owner might return for it. I imagine it will be there for years to come.

We are happy that we have made our last elevation gain and need now only traverse below the Stuart Glacier into Mountaineer Creek and our camp 2200 feet below. To the Northeast we can see Stuart Lake 2 miles distant at 5000 feet. It looks serene with a lush peninsula jutting out at its West end and surrounded by huge trees, The thick greenery round its shores agree with the mosquito tales of the Mazama man. Best of all, looking Southeast across the Stuart Glacier we can see in profile the stunning North Ridge. Most parties traverse across the glacier from here and gain the ridge at it's halfway mark via a chossy gully. We are glad we were able to experience all that fun climbing on the lower ridge also.

We sit with our backs against a warm boulder out of the wind and finish our water knowing we can soon drink from the glacier melt below. As I am staring fixedly down at Stuart Lake, suddenly the lake wavers and dances like quicksilver, stretching and expanding diagonally up into the sky. I realize I am starting to dream and snap back with a jolt

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as Justin is finishing a sentence. The warmth of the sun is like a drug and a moment later Justin succumbs to a two minute catnap.

While climbing yesterday we had looked over this direction and discussed our probable descent route. Now, after locating a few landmarks we head down. With the eternal freeze and thaw cycles of the years, nothing is stable in the mountains. We scratch our way down from the pass through slopes of loose rock and boulders tenuously adhered to the slope, pausing when necessary to let the lower climber move out of the fall line of the rocks beneath our feet. This afternoon the snowfields below the glacier are soft enough to kick slushy steps in as we traverse amongst benches of granite. We are both using scavenged walking sticks for stability and I rehearse in my mind how I would employ it to self arrest as I suddenly find myself above a sick run-out to a waterfall below me. I decide a little extra caution at this point will suffice rather than risk stopping midslope to bust out the axe. This type of continual risk assessment and fluid decision-making is one of the appeals of mountaineering.

We stop at the stream below the Stuart glacier. As I drink my eyes follow the splashing cascades upward to where they emanate from under the ice far above us next to our beautiful North Ridge. I swallow a gulp and say "Water doesn't get any better than this Justin". Just as my spirit has received something from our climb, my body is also partaking of this mountain.

We cross over beneath the foot of the North ridge to the the path atop the terminal moraine of the Ice Cliff Glacier. Rather than retracing our track of yesterday we decide to go directly down the moraine toward camp the way our camp mates had come up. This moraine marks the maximum extent of the glacier's snout which is now

receded and left an arcing pile of earth hundreds of feet high. Very narrow at the top and steep sided it's like walking around the rim of a giant mixing bowl. This direct route will take us back into the treacherous boulder field we encountered yesterday morning. More towards the center it looks a little flatter, with smaller rocks so we head that way. The slope going down the moraine is steep so there are few large rocks but as we near the bottom we enter acres of boulders. Now we encounter a different phenomenon. The flatter areas with smaller rocks where you naturally would think to walk through are like walking on crusty snow only it is all dirt. The area underfoot collapses and your foot drops in almost to your knee, followed by the surrounding dirt and rocks burying your foot. If you try to step on larger rocks they tilt and plunge downward. You get the feeling sometimes there is a huge cavern below waiting to swallow you. About 100 feet into this booby trap I decide I've had enough and bolt for the area of the rock explosion we traveled yesterday. I look back and Justin has made the same decision. I watch as he flounders through the sinking flats and into the "safer" area of the teetering boulders. This is a very active area. It is quite stressful having to test each rock before moving onto it. I am anxious to escape to the sidehill. Once off to the side I watch Justin again working his way over. Where he wends his way out my view I hear the grinding and clunking of the boulders marking his passage. About 200 yards from our camp a smaller rock rolls and I lunge forward onto another roller with the other foot. I do the splits and go headfirst into a hole. I barely manage to catch myself with my hands, spread eagle over the rocks. This is a not-so-joyous moment. So near to camp and a very close call.

We arrive at camp gratefully and relax on the grass. We have climbed and descended about 7000 feet over something like 8 miles in the last 31

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hours. The physical effects of such exertions and the satisfaction of accomplishment instill in me a deeply profound bliss as we bask in the warm sun. This is why I climb.

We drink water from the stream and eat a little food and decide a short nap is in order before heading down. I sleep soundly for about thirty minutes and wake up refreshed. As we are about ready to leave we see our neighbors coming out of the boulder field. Waiting for them to arrive we are curious to hear how their climb went. They tell us that one of them had felt ill yesterday so they bivied at the notch mid way and came down via the chossy gully this morning. They enjoyed their night high on the ridge and describe their experiences happily. They tell us they found some old gear on the glacier while coming down. Some '80's vintage wind pants, a sleeping bag and some rope. I wonder if there is any connection to the old gear we saw at Goat pass.

We head down valley, this time avoiding the high talus route and find the climbers trail down along the main creek. Winding along the stream through lodgepole, spruce and fir is a good path, easily followed though indistinct through areas of blowdown. We meet another pair coming upsteam on their way to climb Colchuck. One of them is with the local search and rescue organization and tells us about the incident on the Sherpa. He also knows the two fellows we met up on the North Ridge. He tells us the weather is supposed to be stable and clear for a few days more.

We find our way back up to the main trail and see now how we missed our turnoff. Now we know

the way in and it will be easier next time. Making our way down the main trail I introduce Justin to the Huckleberries, Salmonberries, and Mountain Blueberries growing along the trail. He had heard of this bounty from other hikers when he was walking the south end of the Pacific Crest Trail and is thrilled to partake. Our progress is slowed by our frequent berry breaks. We nibble our way down



Mmmm, berries!

another mile to the junction where the trail goes up to Colchuck Lake and Dragontail Peak, our next objective. We have decided to head down to the trailhead for the night and go to town tomorrow, re-stock and see if we can get a legitimate permit in the morning to stay at Colchuck Lake. We put all the climbing gear and rope in our daypacks and stash it in the woods, delighted not to have to carry it up tomorrow and head for town.

After sleeping next to the car again at the trailhead we drive into Leavenworth in the morning and find the Ranger Station. Each morning they have a lottery and give out an allotment of permits for

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the Alpine Lakes region. We pull up and there are about ten people there already. The ranger comes out precisely on time and counts us. He asks where we each desire to go and says that if Justin and I don't mind going on a permit with another pair going to the lake then everyone can get permits without the lottery. He does the same with another group. I appreciate his creativity and that he actually wants to let as many people into the areas as the regulations will allow. Now we are bonified.

We pull up at the grocery and see our permit mates. Our per-mates. They say they are wanting to do the same route as we and plan to jet up and climb today. Seems to us like a casual start but they have done the route before. We plan to climb in the morning so we are in no hurry. We buy some things and go looking for breakfast.

Leavenworth is a theme town. Everything is done up in Bavarian style. Steep roofs and Der This and Das That. All the clerks and workers wear aprons, dirndls and lederhosen. The streets are piped with Bavarian folk musik. It's crazy but it seems to work because this town is packed by 9am with tourists seeking trinkets and the alpine experience. My aching toes remind me my nails need trimmed and not seeing a farrier I go into an old-school drug store on Main for some clippers. There is a fleshy woman behind the counter. Her apparent fondness for brats and bier is testing the buttons of her dirndl. She appears a wealthy resource so I ask where we might find a good breakfast. She is sincerely willing but of no help at all. Trying to pick from her twelve favorites pretty much includes the whole of Main street. We randomly choose a quaint cafe with lacy curtains and walk into the smells of pork, eggs, pork, onions, cheese and pork. This is fine for it helps to obscure our own distinctive aroma. After a really good and not overpriced breakfast we ask the waitress (her

name tag say's Heidi and I doubt it) where we can copy some pages from our guidebook and she tell us to go over above the Bier Garten to Der Copy Haus. Of course.

We have both had enough and are anxious to return to the mountains and escape the fantasy land of Leavenworth. We stop by the climbing shop so I can replace the belay device I dropped from the North Ridge and head back up Icicle Canyon. Auf wiedersehen leibe Leavenworth.

Back up on the trail we retrieve our gear from the woods and head for Colchuck Lake. It is Monday and there are not many people on the trail. We both notice that everyone we meet coming down from the lake and from the Enchantments above is literally beaming. They smile and greet us with glowing faces and those we talk to are animated with a palpable joy. It's really very notable and amazing. The Enchantments region is world famous for its alpine beauty and classic climbing routes. Trite as it sounds, these people are indeed enchanted.

Reaching the lake around three o'clock we enjoy a stunning view of Dragontail Peak and the Serpentine Ridge route we are hoping to climb. A brisk wind has kicked up and we don shirts as we take a break on ledges above the turquoise waters of the lake. Clouds are building and shrouding the summit. We wonder how the two climbers sharing our permit are doing up there.

The trail takes us around the west side of the lake through large timber and every available campsite is occupied. At the South end where the trees taper off into the talus below the North Face of Dragontail we find a good camp out in the boulders somewhat sheltered from the wind which is now pushing waves ashore and stripping wisps of foam off the water.

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Dragontail Peak

Once the tent is anchored down and tied to small boulders we organize our packs for the morning and dive into our stores. I have indulged in the luxury of bringing a stove and gorge on hot soup and mashed potatoes followed by fresh tomato chopped up with an avocado and some goat cheese. As we eat we watch swirling gusts charge across the lake. They form into water devils, little twisters on the lake picking up water and dissipating as they hit the shore in a horizontal blast. I watch the timber over by the lake lurching and swaying in

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great arcs with each gust of wind and the logger in me is glad not to be camped in there. The clouds are now thick and dark halfway down the wall of the North face. Beside our tent is a sheltered space with huge boulders on three sides and we sit in there and talk for awhile. Frequently Justin remarks on how awesome it is to be where we are and how far removed we are from the environment of Phoenix. It begins to sprinkle rain and we dejectedly hit the tent.

A dark-thirty start is unnecessary and we wait to see the mountain before heading up in the morning. At daylight I peek out and the clouds are still way down on the wall. We can wait as late as noon and still pull it off if it clears up. We decide to have a some breakfast and stroll up and hang at the base in the hope that the mountain will lift her skirt for us.

It takes about forty five minutes to climb the 900 feet to the base of the route right below the Colchuck glacier. It is windy and cold. Sitting against a rock hiding from the wind we watch the clouds pouring over the pass and swirling down the ice. We sit for an hour or so and the clouds will lift and reveal some of the route then descend again. We know it will take some time for the rock to dry even if it clears but it will dry quicker if the wind remains. Several times large rocks release from the slope on the far side and we watch them slide and tumble down the glacier. One actually makes it over the final mound and goes a little way into the area we had come up this morning. A reminder to be always assessing your position below snow and ice.

Once the clouds appear to thin and I actually think we should try heading up. Just to “check it out”. We can always rappel the first few pitches if need be. Then the clouds return and it starts to sprinkle rain. Damn. We decide to eat our snacks

Mt Stuart - Trip Report (continued)

and turn our gaze to the view below. The clouds are congealing ever thicker and we give up on the mountain.

Disappointed, we descend the slopes back toward the lake. Just above the trail coming down from Asgard pass we come across our per-mates sitting in the rocks. They tell us they barely made it to the top as the clouds socked in yesterday afternoon. Having done the route several times they were comfortable negotiating the descent in low visibility. They had been talking about us and hoping we were not climbing today in this weather. We share their relief. Still, we wish the weather would have held and we could be up there. Looking at how dramatically the weather has changed we realize how very fortunate we were to have waltzed in and breezed up our main goal of Mount Stuart. Lesson Learned; never take a rest day when the weather is good. At least not in the Cascades.

Back at camp we watch the dark clouds coming in from the west and decide to go back down to Leavenworth. Maybe the lower elevation will be drier and we can do some cragging before heading back to Seattle tomorrow. We take our time packing up. I have some wine and there's no sense in carrying it down the hill so we share some. My philosophy is that wine, like water, wont do you any good in your pack so we make a diligent effort to lighten that load. Suitably fortified we decide it's time to go.

We shoulder our packs and circle the lake, dropping down through the trees past waterfalls edged with devils club and berries and make the 5 miles back down to the car. Once back in Leavenworth we go to a burger stand on the edge of town for grub and then drive north into the canyon of the Wenatchee River to Castle Rock, hoping to get a route in before it gets dark. We trudge up the

trail about a quarter mile to the crag. On the trail we talk again about what a fantastic time we have had and how we wish we didn't have to leave for home tomorrow.

As we near the base of the rock we meet a shirtless lone climber walking down carrying his rockshoes and wearing only shorts and a chalk bag. He smiles and rhetorically asks if we are out for an evening climb. We affirm so and he wishes us well. I am silently and selfishly grateful that we have found another happy climber and not a bruised body at the base of the crag. Soloing has already been in my mind for I have suggested we climb a fun route which I, in my early twenties had soloed with the same partner with whom I had done the NE Face on Mount Stuart.

Walking along the cliff I point out the different routes and the names I can remember until we arrive at the start of Canary, a stiff 5.8. We look up at the 1st pitch and I am stunned. It is way higher and more intimidating than I recall. Gazing upward Justin says "You soloed that?...dude." As if apologizing I say "Well, you know, I was young. And feeling strong."

We gear up quickly because it is getting late and I ask Justin if he wants to lead it. "No go ahead, you seem like you want to do it" He's wrong. My toe is killing me and the climb looks hard. And I keep seeing myself falling, unroped, from way up there and smacking the ground. Talk about pre-visualization.

Castle Rock is an old school trad area and to start this climb you step off a boulder about six feet up and you don't get any pro until you place gear in a small crack about twelve feet higher. I step across onto the wall and climb a few moves rightward finding myself on greasy slopers in a pair of polished seams. I have no gear in and I see no opportunity for pro and it looks hard just above

Mt Stuart - Trip Report (continued)

me. Looking over to my left I realize the route goes over there and remember having followed these sucker holds this way before. My hands are sweating, my toe is barking and I do not want to fall here. I am not well composed. I am gripped and need to get off this rock. The whole scenario tonight of seeing the soloist and the thought of having soloed this with a friend who is now dead is just totally psyching me out. I don't want to verbalize my defeat until I'm safely on the ground so without warning Justin I downclimb back and over above the boulder. Asking him to spot me, I twist and jump, landing on the boulder. I tell Justin I am sorry but my mind is f-ed and my toe is killing me and I just cant lead this. I can only think of maybe two times I've ever done that.

"Hey no problem, it's cool" he says and takes the rack. He heads up leftward and fiddles in the first cam and agrees it's a dangerous start. Once in the big corner he jams and stems his way up and comments about the gymnastic quality of the moves required. The final exit move requires that you reach way out right for a no feet mantle, commit and let go of the crack swinging over and hucking yourself onto the ledge. He asks for my attention to the belay as he makes the final moves.

I start up and soon forget about my throbbing toe. I am too engrossed in the moves but mostly I cant stop ruminating on the fact that I did this ropeless so long ago. Every soloist rationalizes his decisions and indeed his safety is very relevant to his physical condition, degree of practice and mental confidence. But now, I realize the risk I took then as I think of all the life I have lived since. I remember feeling strong at the time and proud that I had done it but I also knew that for me, it wasn't really necessary. Now, I keep looking down at the rocks below and pretending I have no rope on. I am being mentally mean to myself for some

reason. Perhaps for backing off today? Or for my impetuous youth? I don't know, but I feel like a new climber and the fear makes my mouth as dry as dust. As I make the mantle at the end I see again my old partner John, squatting on the ledge giving me words of encouragement.

The sun has gone down and the light is fading fast in the canyon. Justin heads off on the second pitch which begins with an airy, exposed step out above the overhang at the top of the 1st pitch. He climbs up and around the corner and is out of my sight for the rest of the climb to the top. Standing there belaying Justin in the growing darkness I shift my feet trying to find a comfortable stance for my toes. Leaning out on the belay, I look once more down the 1st pitch. I tell myself to lighten up, it's ok, young men do crazy things, all's well.

I am getting anxious and wishing I had brought a lamp when I hear Justin's voice, vague and far above, muffled and scrambled by the noise of the river. Only by the cadence of the words and the rhythmic strokes of the rope going out do I surmise I am on belay. I grab the last three feet of rope with my hand and stop it snugly. After waiting a few seconds I let go and it snakes up the rock and comes tight to my harness. Yes, he's belaying me. While breaking down the anchor I look below once more. Straining to see into the shadows, I re-climb the pitch with my eyes. It's a great route, I like it.

I start off from the ledge and swing out over the deepening void. In this twilight I can't see the rock as well as I can feel it and as I brush my hand across it searching for holds, gripping and pulling, I can tell that the character of the rock up here has changed. It is a different stone now, from what it was down below, at the beginning. I breathe and climb into the darkness above.

Outdoor Rock Climbing School Participants

STUDENTS

Chelsea Beechel
Ashlee Beishline
Mickey Bennett
Kevin Burke
Nick Cap
Thad Colgrove
Alison Cook-Davis
Matt Crego
Staci Curtis
Lori Del Secco
Sheri English
Daniel Erwin
Michael Faux
Steve Hovanec
Cat Isfan
Li Jiang
Colten Kollenborn
Lia Mann
Lance Morris
Ubon Nawayot
Dan Pelander
Ray Richardson
Brian Scharpf
Matthew Schmidt
Tyler Sharp
Diane Taulborg
Adam Wells
Ryan Zahn

INSTRUCTORS

Ronald Auerbach
Nancy Birdwell
David Cameron
Steven Crane
Scott Davis
Eric Evans

Bill Fallon
Tracy Fleming
Shannon Flowers
Randi Folwell
Tom Folwell
Jason Garvan
Daniel Gonzales
John Gray
Susan Harnage
Eve Hoffman
Nick Hoffman
Sheri Kenly
Robert Kessenich
Rich Kocher
John Kynyk
Tim Lange
Aaron Locander
Linda Locke
Grant Loper
Kristis Makris
David McClintic
Kim McClintic
Bruce McHenry
Monica Miller
Jeffry Nagel
Kathryne Nason
Matt Percy
Rogil Schroeter
Kathy Sharp
Curtis Stone
Mark Tallan
Jutta Ulrich
Keith Waldrup
Patti Waldrup
Jeff Watkins
Steven Wolpert

December Program - Photo Contest



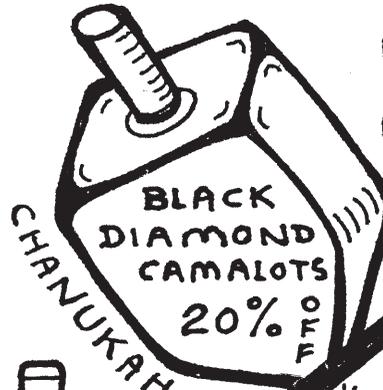
Come in December to the AMC meeting and annual photo contest. There are multiple categories including, climbing, landscape, humor, alpine, travel and others. Just for entering a photo you are entered into the raffle to win the much coveted pink Tri-cam. Members vote on the best photo's and winners share how they came to take the winning picture. If you don't have a photo come to see the pictures and vote, we have some real talent in the AMC.

See you at the Monday, December 21th 7:00 p.m. meeting! Remember it is at Phoenix Country Day School 3901 E. Stanford Drive P.V. 85253 It is between Lincoln and Camelback. From Lincoln use 36 St. and go south to Stanford and then head east. From Camelback turn left on 40th St. followed by a left on Stanford. The auditorium entrance faces the parking lot.

DECEMBER



HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!



CHRISTMAS

AZ CLIFF HANGER

LOCATED INSIDE THE PHOENIX ROCK GYM
WWW.AZCLIFFHANGER.COM MARTY KARABIN
1353 E. UNIVERSITY DR. TEMPE, AZ 85281
PH 602-642-9507 FAX 480-237-0095
MON-FRI 4:00PM-9:00PM SAT 12:00PM-5:00PM



AMC ICE COURSE



Dates
February 13-14th
2010
Ouray, CO
\$ 295 per person



online registration at www.swaguides.com

970-259-0370

Outing Leaders

Requirements for becoming a leader: take the Basic, Anchors and Lead classes (or equivalents), be a member for at least one year, complete a basic first aid and CPR class (8 hours or more), and be approved for leadership by at least five current leaders through formal application process and by the Board of Directors. Contact Nancy Birdwell at (602) 770-8326.

Outing Leader

Contact Info

Jodie Bostrom	bostrom.jodie.amc@gmail.com	
Robert England	480-688-5412	robert_england2@yahoo.com
Bill Fallon	602-996-9790	bill.fallon@cox.net
Erik Filsinger	smorefil@aol.com	
Jason Garvin.....	480-734-6801	beach_bum43@hotmail.com
Richard Horst.....	623-434-4769	
John Keedy.....	623-412-1452	jwkeedy@cox.net
Mike Knarzer	602-751-1701	thrashndangle@gmail.com
Grant Loper.....	602-684-3042	grantloper@loperandassociates.com
Bruce McHenry.....	602-952-1379	
Monica Miller	623-362-0456	
Jeff Nagel	602-312-9538	
Matt Percy	928-420-2065	pearcy.matthew@gmail.com
Rogil Schroeter	623-512-8465	rogil@cox.net
Frank Vers	480-947-9435	climbrox@gmail.com
Clay Vollmer	602-595-7266	skatrash@cox.net
Justin York.....	480-229-8660	

Your Name Here!

Calendar of Events - Outings/Schools/Events

Dec 12 - Alpine Rock - The AMC Mountaineering Committee will offer the 1-day Alpine Rock Seminar on Saturday, December 12. The hands-on field seminar is for folks with solid rock climbing skills who may be interested in taking their adventures into alpine and mountainous conditions. Topics to be covered include: Mountain terrain, weather, altitude, judgment, equipment, and team considerations. Field exercises include alpine rope work, route finding, alpine considerations for anchoring and belaying, and alternatives for descending will be discussed and demonstrated. Silent communication will be shown and practiced. The Seminar will be offered locally at a place to be determined. It is recommended participants have taken AMC ORS, Anchors, and Lead Schools or equivalent. For details or questions contact Bruce McHenry bamchenry@att.net . Fees will be \$50 for new students and \$25 for refresher students. Number of participants is limited.

Dec 30 - Jan 3 - Ouray Ice Climbing. It's hot – let's start thinking about ICE CLIMBING! This is a 5 day event, 2 travel days, 3 days of climbing. We will climb 2 days in the Ice Park and one day in the back country. A condo will be rented and shared. Special requirements for participants. Limit 6. Contact Outing Leaders for details Richard Horst horstrichard@aol.com or Bruce McHenry bamchenry@att.net

Footnotes: Car-pooling is optional on all outings and is not part of the outing. The outing begins at the trailhead designated by the Outing Leader and ends at the same place. Each participant should bring a First Aid kit. If you leave the outing, with or without the leader's permission, you are considered to be on your own until you rejoin the group. Each participant will be required to sign an AMC Activity Release Form at the beginning of the outing. Participation in AMC outings requires club membership. Outings vary in degree of danger: When you participate in an outing you should be both physically and mentally prepared and equipped with the appropriate gear. You should always be aware of the risks involved in outdoor activities and conduct yourselves accordingly. The Outing Leader is not responsible for your safety; you are. Please contact the Outing Leader before going on an outing, discussing your capabilities with the Outing Leader. You must be over 18 years of age to participate, or must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult, and obtain prior consent from the Outing Leader. Those accompanying minors are responsible for the minor's safety.

Billboard—Other Scheduled Events

Outings listed in this section are not AMC sanctioned outings. Any AMC member can list an event he or she is planning and which is open to other AMC members. The member does not have to be an approved AMC Outing Leader. If you wish to participate you should be physically and mentally prepared with the appropriate gear and should contact the member planning the outing. You are responsible for your own safety, not the person leading the outing. You should always be aware of the risks involved in outdoor activities and conduct yourself accordingly.

Mondays **Solid Rock Gym at 6pm-8pm. Call Rogil (623)-512-8465 for info.**

Wednesdays **North Mountain hikes after work. Rogil Schroeter (623) 512-8465**

Commercial Event:

Feb 13-14, 2010 - AMC Intro to Ice Climbing – by Southwest Adventures Guides. Learn ice climbing in Ouray , CO. \$295. Contact Southwest Adventure Guides 970-259-0370. Or register online at www.swaguides.com

December 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Sunrise 7:15 Sunset 5:20 M-rise 5:45P	3	4	5
NOTE: Celestial events occur about 10 minutes earlier on Arizona's eastern border; 10 later on its western edge.						
6	7 Board Meeting	8	9 Sunrise 7:21 Sunset 5:21 M-rise 12:39A	10	11	12 Alpine Rock
						
13	14	15	16 Sunrise 7:26 Sunset 5:22 M-set 5:37P	17	18	19 Holiday Party
						
20	21 Member Meeting	22	23 Sunrise 7:30 Sunset 5:26 M-set 12:00A	24	25 Christmas	26
						
27	28	29	30 Sunrise 7:30 Sunset 5:32 M-set 4:28P Ouray Ice Climbing	31 Ouray Ice Climbing	Ouray Ice Climbing	Ouray Ice Climbing
						



**Arizona Mountaineering Club
4340 E. Indian School. Ste.21-164
Phoenix, AZ. 85018**

