

Up Rope

FOUNDED BY
HERB AND JAN CONN

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HOT SUMMER

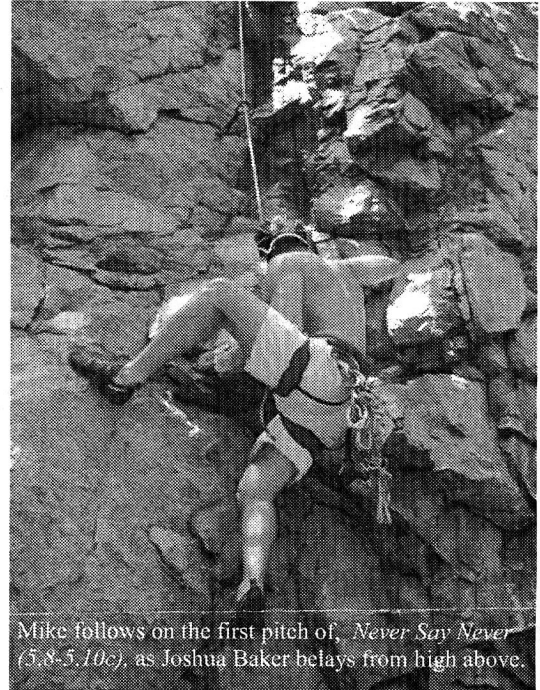
FALL 2005

Return to Nelson Rocks by Nestor Filmagii

The road to Nelson was closed for a brief and harrowing period this August, after the park was overwhelmed by safety and environmental concerns. A few weeks elapsed and the storm of interest festered until the park released a statement re-opening the climbing area to organized climbing groups at the discretion of the NRP. Within 24-hours of the announcement a team was assembled to take the 3 hour trip to West Virginia.

The under construction Corridor-H project, which tears a conduit through the West Virginia heartland, shaved a good 30 minutes off the trip. The weather was a factor in reaching escape velocity, for the fog was rather thick in Vienna. Our Heros assembled in the rally point parking lot, hopped up on Starbucks endlessly chanting the postman's motto...

(continued on page 2)



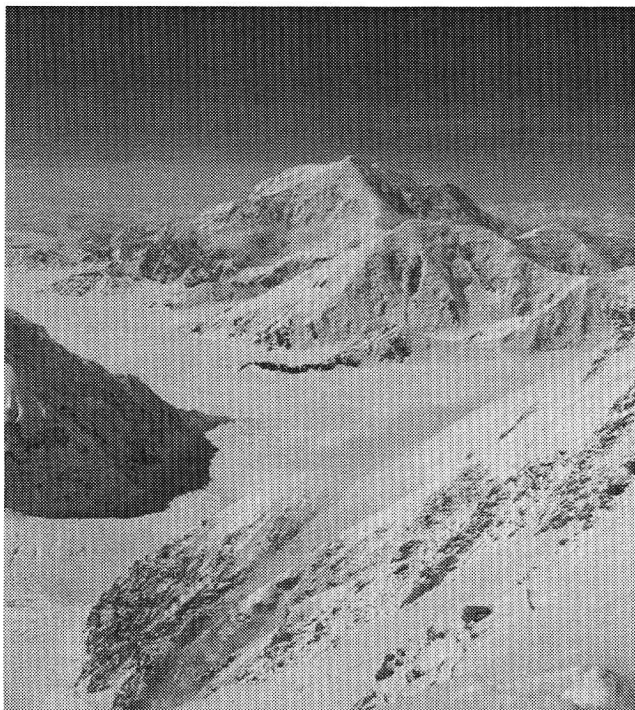
Mike follows on the first pitch of, *Never Say Never* (5.8-5.10c), as Joshua Baker belays from high above.

Denali: Failed attempt

By Jason Sandridge

On May 2nd, Eric (not yet a PATC-MS member) and I flew to Anchorage to begin our month-long expedition in the Denali National Park and Preserve, located in the Alaska Range. Our plan was to climb Denali's West Buttress, the "easiest" route up North America's highest peak. We flew into Denali Base Camp (7,200') on May 5th with 31 days of food and fuel with ambitious goal of "bagging" Denali in 21 days or less and then making an alpine-style push up Mt. Fouraker's Sultana Ridge, which although also the easiest route up this particular mountain, earns an Alaska Grade III by being more difficult and much more dangerous than the West Buttress.

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Mt. Fouraker and NE fork of the Kahiltna Glacier from the "edge of the world". the edge of the world is a 5000' cliff that borders the south side of the basin where the 14,000' camp is located.

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(Nelson-cont from front page)

The official notice from Stu Hammett on the website read like a terminal cancer diagnosis with a glimmer of hope at the end:

Regretfully, Nelson Rocks Preserve has announced that it is closed to rock climbing until further notice.

Several factors influenced this decision. Since the Preserve was formally opened for climbing access in 1998, there have been a number of serious accidents at NRP involving roped climbing parties. Fortunately, none of these were fatal, but some climbers have suffered permanent disabilities, and full-on rescues have been required, involving large numbers of volunteer rescuers, both squad members and individual climbers.

Meanwhile, climber traffic has been increasing dramatically, doubling between the second quarter of '04 and this year. Obviously, this further increases both the risk of serious mishaps, and the potential for environmental impacts. During the period of closure, NRP intends to conduct an internal assessment of these impacts and issues. Input from the public is welcome and may be directed to NRP at P.O. Box 93, Riverton, WV 26814, tel. 304-567-3169, fax 304-567-3244.

Exceptions will be considered for groups organized by established outdoor clubs, schools, etc. If you feel your group may qualify or have questions about this policy, please don't hesitate to contact NRP. Any such exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in NRP's sole discretion.

So, after a historic but brief closure, our heroes, the early rising, motivated, Nelson Rockers, thumbed their noses at weather reports, and soaring gas prices to make the 3-hour pilgrimage for a picture perfect, absolutely private day of climbing at Nelson Rocks Preserve.

We were on the rock before 1000. Ian, Judy and Joe blasted off for area 51. Julia and Brian made short work of the south end. The remaining climbing force began at the 007 wall.

Kurt, Joshua and Jennifer (Kat), did the 3s a crowd thing on ez-wider's 2 pitches, and made very short work of it. Peta and Vincent followed directly behind them, with Vincent leading the first pitch and Peta the second.

Kat did a mock lead of *Diamonds are forever* (5.6-5.8), and then lead it outright! Vincent lead *Disney channel* in order to set up a top rope for *Never Say Never*. The remainder of the day was spent climbing variations of *Snake oil* (5.7) and *Sticky Fingers* (5.7), trading leads and ridiculing each other just for fun!

Near epic of the day. At 3:30, our forward scouts

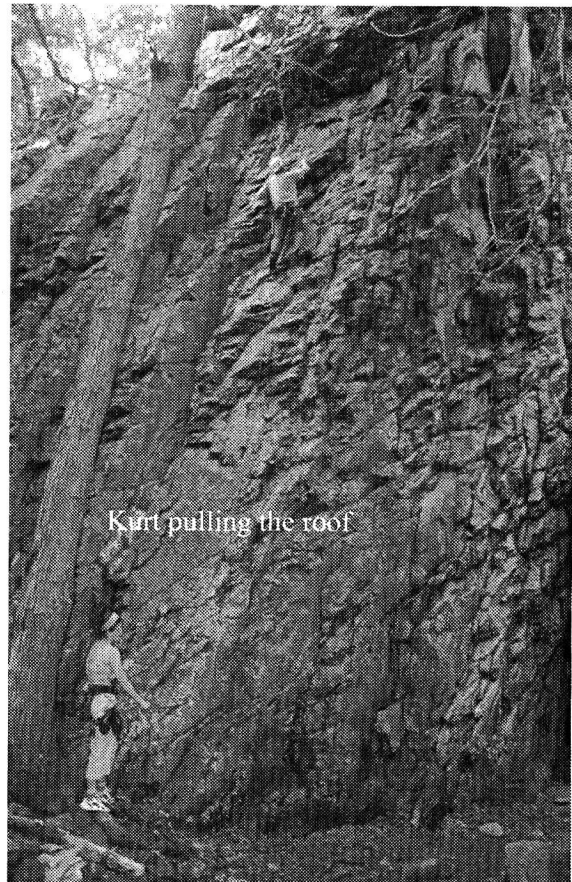
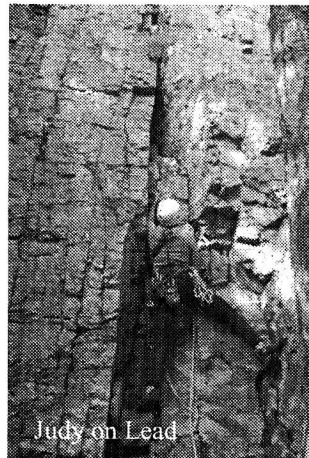
depart for *Sorry Howard* (5.9), a beautiful 14 bolt, 165 foot route 2/3rds the way up the stairmaster towards the summits of the east and west fins on the Upper Corridor west. "Don't leave without me", were the last words. 4 1/2 hours

later there is no sign of our climbers. The leader at the time made it up 10 bolts and ran out of gas but didn't have enough rope to lower since the route was so long. They had to lower and clip and lower etc until they had enough rope to switch leads and finish the route. Judy Joe and Ian returned to the south end for some leads.

Kurt finished the day by climbing a 5.8 ramp on the south end and pulling the roof in typical conan climbing style!

All in all, an utterly fantastic and historic return to Nelson Rocks for the Potomac Mountain Club.

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Buzzard Rocks Trip report

By Robert Graver

Others please feel free to correct my rapidly deteriorating memory and fill in the blanks.

Everyone that took the chance and fought their way through the morning fog to Buzzard Rocks on SUN was rewarded with a stellar day of fun climbing and wonderful weather - definitely the coolest it's been in a while.

Myself, my son Jeff, a friend Mark as well as Nancy, Taylor, Rose, Alex, and Johanssen all made the journey to the Front Royal highlands.

My son, Mark, and I headed out about 0700 after a party at the house SAT night that raged (this is a very relative term for a fat old guy) into the wee hours of SUN morning and everyone showed up right on time at the trailhead. After sorting and dividing gear and water for the approach we headed up about 0930 and were climbing sometime after 1000.

Nancy joined Mark, Jeff, and I at the Three Amigos are while Taylor, Alex, and Johanssen headed to the slabs to the right. I believe they lead Raising Arizona, Failure to Communicate and the other slab routes between there and Melungian Brotherhood. Mark lead and Jeff Nancy, and I followed Three Amigos and then I lead Unknown Slab. Rose joined us Unknown and while Mark belayed her there Jeff, Nancy, and I moved right. I lead Pulp Friction and then belayed the other three up while I enjoyed the view and slight breeze wafting across the top of the Fort Valley. We were force to climb the easier start of this route as the crux first 12 feet or so were still dewy, slimy, and unclimbable. I tried everything from rubbing and chalking to cursing and begging the indistinct bulges and seem that serve as holds on this section - all to no avail. This was the only section we came across all day that was adversely affected by the wet weather of the previous day.

The rest of the route was perfect and we still had the small blank crux section up high to keep the challenge up. After everyone made it up to my belay and lowered I rapped down the routes just to the right. We pulled the ropes and took turns leading and racing each other (not really) up Raising Arizona, Failure to Communicate, and Failure... Right. Taylor joined us here for a while and then went to join Alex and Johansson and lead Melungian. He promised to join us later at Anonymous Flake.

Nancy headed home, our group gathered our stuff, and headed to the Anonymous Flake area to close out the day. We rigged an anchor and I rapped the route on double ropes while the rest of the group opted for the thrash down to the right. I've lead AF a couple times before but thought that given my stamina and the state of my hangover from the previous evening, I wanted to have the option of NOT LEADING it this day. I opted to TR the route and was VERY glad I did. This is a great route but I almost puke from the run out every time I lead it. I DEFINITELY would have painting the rock on SUN! I climbed AF and also the 20 Feet Right route. This is the first I've climbed 20 FR. This is a GREAT route but there's no way I would lead it on the ONE rusted bolt it offers as pro. Maybe we can talk someone into upgrading (not adding more) this and the bolt on AF. The bolts on both of these routes are wonderfully placed (easy run outs below and challenging gear placements above) but definitely need to be whipper-proofed.

Taylor linked back up with us and after everyone enjoyed a turn on AF. Afterwards Mark, Jeff, Rose, and I broke down and headed home while Taylor went in search of the others and a couple more routes before heading off to the flatlands of Ohio.

Thanks to everyone that turned out!

Bob