



THIN AIR

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September, 2007

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SUCCESS ON MT RAINIER !

The 2007 HAMS Rainier trip led by Greg Olson and Brian Murphy on July of this year. All team members, a total of 10, successfully summited Mount Rainier via the Emmons route.

The trip started with a stop at Whittaker's bunkhouse to spend time going through group gear; packing and repacking. We tested stoves, GPS units and other critical gear. One person indicated that they forgot their tent stakes. Better to find out now than on the mountain. The next day was the long slog from White Rivertrail head all the way up to Emmons Flats which lies a couple of hundred feet above Camp Schurman. It was incredible hiking through all the flood damage up to the Inter-glacier. Brian and I opted to camp at Emmons Flats vs Camp Schurman to give the group a more real mountaineering experience, which means blue bagging and having to set up tents amongst



Mt Rainier, continued on page 3

CONGRATULATIONS TO THOSE WHO CLIMBED MT ELBRUS !

SUCCESS ON ELBRUS !

We hit the weather window perfectly earlier this month on Elbrus (18,510'). Summit day for 11 of 13 in the group, including me, was July 4 (happy birthday, America!). Not a cloud in the sky until late in the day, which made for some real "heat" as we battled the sun's reflection off the snow. The two who did not make the top got to the 17,700' saddle between the twin summits, making this the most successful trip out of the six Elbrus visits we've done so far. The ascent from the saddle is now somewhat more difficult due to a route change, but still nicely doable. No serious illnesses or injuries to report. CET-Neva, our outfitter from St. Petersburg, provided excellent service.

Mt Elbrus, continued on page 2



PRIVATE EXPEDITION SEEKING MEMBERS

“TEAM COLORADO — DENALI 2008”

June 2-June 30, 2008 West Buttress Route

Team Training and Preparation: December 7—May 8

Team Leader: Dave Altieri (719) 233-2527



HAMS SOCIAL EVENT

"Winfield Rendezvous"
1st Annual HAMS Instate Outing.
September 21 -23

Join up with fellow HAMS members and guests for an enjoyable and informal weekend of camping, climbing, and camaraderie. There will be multiple hikes, in the Winfield area, available to participate on. The event runs from Friday afternoon through Sunday afternoon. But, come anytime. Contact Andy White (whiteab@eaglevu.com, 303-403-1635) for more details.

This event is held in conjunctions with the following scheduled trips: Mt Belford & Mt Oxford (Trip #2628), and Emerald Pk & Iowa Pk (Trip #1823).

Reply or call, if you have questions. Thanks!
 Andy White
 (h)303-403-1635
 (w)303-530-6262
 (c)720-937-1548

INTERESTED IN LEADING YOUR OWN TRIP, TREK, OR EXPEDITION??

If interested, contact Jim Rickard [jrickard@arber.com]

Mt Elbrus, Continued from page 1

Getting there and back was an adventure. The main group missed one flight on the way, getting finally to St. Petersburg from Warsaw via Munich, at 12:30 AM. Most of us missed another flight last night out of Chicago, but were able to get on the next one. Culprit both times was t-storm activity at O'Hare. 4 large duffels got lost last night, but should show up today. Unfortunately, one person's duffel did not make it to Elbrus. But we were able to outfit him for the climb via several sources within and outside of the group. His duffel was at the Mineralnyevody airport as we prepared to return to St. Petersburg.

Story by Steve Bonowski



Photo credit: David Good.

Elbrus team: Steve Bonowski & Mike Shifman, leaders. Team members included Jim Berryhill, Tom Bonesio, Dorothea Frohner, David Good, Michael Miller M.D., Ron Rapper, Varis Ratnieks, Dennice & John Soderberg, Ron Schmidt, Steve Sprowles.

Continued on Page 3

Mt Rainier, Continued from page 1



MT RAINIER

Leaders: Greg Olson and Brian Murphy

Team Members:

Chuck Cummings, Brian O'Malley, Angela Myers, Chris Kanagy, Dave Cobb, Bill Haneghan, Darrell Johnson and Daryn Harpaz

crevasses. We had a nice rest day to get re-hydrated while we watched climbers descend the route we would go up the next day. The day was spent melting snow and relaxing in the sunny glow of Mount Rainier. We started our climb at approximately 11:00 pm, knowing we wanted to get an early start to get ahead of any large groups that were staying at Camp Schurman. The group made good progress throughout the night, many of us noticing the falling stars. We wended our way through many crevasse fields and large seracs. We approached the summit around 6:15 am only to notice a large thunderstorm rolling over the summit. We hunkered down on the snow and waited for it to pass, after about an hour we quickly made for the summit. It was a nice morning on the summit, thick with clouds and 60 plus mph winds. This was a good mountaineering experience. We walked along the summit ridge, snapping a few photos and amazed that we were the only ones on the summit. Nobody from the DC route had arrived yet. We signed the register and quickly made our way back down out of the wind. Our first 2,000 feet of the descent was in a white out but we had wanded our route appropriately. It took a few hours to get back to camp and again we were the only ones on the mountain that day. No other teams were ascending. We stayed one final night to rest and pack up. The next day we watched as close to 100 people were going up the Emmons route. We hiked out to our vans and headed to the first cold Rainier beer we could find.

This was a great trip and a great group. Thanks to all UPW members. *Story by Greg Olson*

2007 High Altitude Mountaineering Seminar

7:00 – 9:30 PM - Colorado Mountain Club, Foss Auditorium, 710 10th Street, Golden

- October 1 Introduction to Seminar – Ray Shem
Introduction to HAMS Section
Introduction High Altitude Mountaineering School – Vern Bass
Equipment for High Altitude/Cold Weather Trips – Mike Teger
Slide Show – Mt. Rainier by Greg Olson
- October 8 High Altitude/Cold Weather Nutrition – Cleve Armstrong
Slide Show – TBD
- October 15 High Altitude/Cold Weather Medical Issues – Skeet Glatterer
Pros and Cons of Guided & Outfitted Climbs – Ed Simmons
- October 22 Fitness Training and Acclimatization – TBD
Slide Show – Mt. Elbrus by Steve Bonowski
- October 29 Group Dynamics – Craig Patterson
Slide Show – Aconcagua by Vern Bass
- November 5 Organizing an Expedition – Ed Simmons
Slide Show – TBD

Cost for all six nights is:
 \$45 for Non-Members and Members who do not pre register
 \$40 for CMC Members who pre register
 \$8 for individual evenings, payable at the door

To register call the CMC office, signup on line with your credit care or send your name, address, phone number and check made out to "CMC" to the CMC office. Please note "HAMS Seminar" on your check. For more info, contact Ray Shem at 303-841-4898

Call for Submissions for the 2007 HAMS "Climbers List"

It's time to submit your name and climbs for the third annual list of higher or "exotic" peaks climbed by HAMS members.

Submit your climbs to HAMS.Expeditions@cmc.org (or mail to the CMC, attention: HAMS), please include, as a minimum: Your name, peak name, summit elevation, location, & date climbed.

This is similar to "The 14'ers List" and "Beyond the 14'ers," published annually in the Trail and Timberline, but a bit more -- well -- arbitrary. The rules, such as they are, include:

- 1) Climbs must be submitted by January 31 2008.
- 2) Only climbs during calendar year 2007 will be listed.
- 3) An effort will be made to recognize valiant attempts that failed to reach the summit. If this describes your climb, please also indicate the approximate elevation reached, and reason for turning back.
- 4) For all climbs, commentary and/or photographs are appreciated, and may be published at the discretion of the editor as space permits.
- 5) Finally, what constitutes a "higher or 'exotic' peak"? This is where it really gets arbitrary:
 - a) No Colorado peaks. Colorado has lots of peaks and routes which clearly deserve to be called "exotic," but HAMS doesn't want to be in the position of deciding which are, and which are not. If you've climbed one of these, you are invited to write an article for Thin Air.
 - b) Any peak outside of Colorado of 14,000 feet or more.
 - c) Lower peaks outside of Colorado that present a degree of difficulty, either in climbing or access. For example, Granite Peak (12,745) Montana, counts, Mount Sunflower (4,039) Kansas, probably doesn't. Unnamed 3,353, the highest point in Gabon, does.

CLIMBING MT BLANC - Shane Burns, July 2006 - taken from the 2006 "Climbers List"

I've wanted to climb Mont Blanc since learning to climb back in the days when climbers wore knickers instead of lycra tights. I finally got my chance. We've decided to take the long, but scenic route and traverse Mont Blanc. We will start at the Cosmiques Hut, climb over the shoulders of Mont Blanc du Tacul and Mont Maudit to the summit then descend the northwest ridge to the Gouter Hut then hike down to the train at Nid d' Aigle. It's a long route—climbing a total of about 1200 m and descending nearly 2500 m.

We catch the Midi Téléphérique late in the day on Friday the 14th and are soon in the clouds at the Aiguille du Midi terminal. Not long after we head down the ridge from the station it begins to rain—not hard, but enough to be annoying. I hope it doesn't continue tomorrow. A short crampon walk later we are at the Cosmiques Hut. Of the huts I've seen in Europe (admittedly not many) this is the nicest, but it is crowded with climbers most of whom will be attempting Mont Blanc with us tomorrow. After another nice meal, we head to bed with our alarms set for 12:45 AM.

For the first time in a long time, I'm not the loudest snorer in the room! We get out of bed and join the other 100 climbers for breakfast at 1:00 AM. By 2:00 AM we're weaving our way through the crowd of head lamps in front of the hut toward Mont Blanc du Tacul. There is already a long line of climbers in front of us. We're soon part of the snake of headlamps slithering up the side of the Tacul. It's slow going so Tim breaks the snake and heads left up a slightly steeper slope. It may not be much faster, but at least we can move at our own pace.

By about an hour before sunrise we've crossed over the shoulder of the Tacul and are approaching the Col du Mont Maudit. If this long climb has a technical crux, this is it. It's a rather steep snow slope just before the top of the col. There is a fixed line running about 100 m up the slope and today it's choked with climbers. In fact it's somewhat of a zoo. One climber tries to lead his group around the mess. He succeeds only in getting his rope tangled in the morass of climbers. When our turn comes, Tim dodges falling fist-sized pieces of ice and manages to get us through the mess in only a few minutes, but we'd had to wait about an hour before getting our turn.

Mt Blanc, continued on page 6

Upcoming Trips

Upcoming trips approved by the ExCom, as well as tentative trips in the planning stage are listed below. For more information, and for other trips offered by Adventure Travel, be sure to check listings on the CMC website at www.cmc.org/events/events.

To request an application for approved trips, or for even more information, contact the leader at the phone number or email shown.

Don't forget to submit your story to Thin Air!

You do not have to climb an exotic peak in a foreign country to be eligible for a submission! Please submit your latest adventure or other article to

spykerd@comcast.net

APPROVED TRIPS

Climbs in Ecuador December 08th to December 22nd, 2007 - STILL A FEW SPOTS OPEN !

\$1350 Land Cost plus \$900 Airfare (Airfare is only estimate)

Greg Olson and Lisa Herter C: 303 587-2847 email: gpolson2@comcast.net

Still a few spots open. Register now to get a spot on this exiting adventure to South America.

See last years trip online: <http://systems.cs.colorado.edu/~schelleg/Photos/ecuador/index.html>

OUTING DESCRIPTION: Climb Peaks in Ecuador in December. We will be back by Christmas. Experience the culture on the Equator. Climbs that are included will be Guagua Pichincha (15,728ft) Iliniza Norte (16,817ft), Cotopaxi (19,347ft) and Chimborazo(20,703ft). We will be staying in a hotels, huts and one night in tents. Includes our own bus, guide and a cook while climbing. Also includes 2 nights at the beautiful Papallacta Hot Springs. All meals while climbing and breakfast at hotels are included. Other BMS and HAMS graduates or equivalent experience necessary for the Difficult D-E trip. Maximum 12 participants plus leaders; so sign up early. Participation in conditioning trips, including an overnight trip and crevasse rescue practice, is required. Climbs subject to change dependent on route conditions. Contact leaders for trip packet.



August/September, 2008

Gran Paradiso National Park, northwest Italy, 13,300'

Steve Bonowski will lead another Alps trek in this historic national park in the Italian Alps. The end of the trek will feature an optional climb of Gran Paradiso itself. The climb requires low angle roped glacier travel skills with ice axe and crampons. The summit block requires either an easy rock scramble or a little mixed climbing if snow is present. **Applications will be available after September 15.**

COMING ATTRACTIONS

July 2008

EXPEDITION TO: Muztagh Ata, China



Upcoming is the first ever HAMS expedition to western China. Trip leaders will be Steve Bonowski and Andy White. This will be a 21-25 day expedition with multiple camps on the mountain. Approximate cost at this time, subject to change, is about \$3,600 plus \$1,800 air fare. As the leaders are still researching outfitters, this amount may change a little. Participants will need prior experience climbing above 18-19,000' and camping above 15,000'. A climbing resume, with references, will be helpful, and will be required if a member is not known to the trip leaders.

The sun rose as we got to the top of the Col du Mont Maudt. We were past the crowd of climbers now and all was serene. A few clouds drifted through the peaks, making the views spectacular. We began the long trudge up relatively low angle snow slopes to the summit. They seem to go on forever, but at about 8:00 AM we arrive at the top of Europe. At 15,780 ft this is an altitude record for me. We take in the view. The valleys are partly covered with clouds, but all the higher peaks rise above them. I see the Matterhorn for the first time, but it's quite a ways away. There is little wind on the summit, but it is quite cold—probably about 20° F. After a few photos we head down the ridge on our way to the Gouter Hut. We've only come half way, but the rest is all downhill—2500 m of downhill.

So far the entire climb has been on snow and ice. This theme continues all the way to the Gouter Hut. We stop here for a short break and take our crampons off. We descend from the hut on loose rock and soon end up in line behind about four other groups of climbers. The going is slow until Tim takes a slightly different route and soon we are far ahead of the other groups. Within about an hour we've crossed the final snowfield and unrope. We've still got about an hour hike to the train, but the climbing is over. We hike down the trail and wait for the train, which takes us to the tram, which takes us to bus station in the valley at Les Houches. The next bus won't arrive for an hour so we hire a taxi for the trip back to Chamonix. We arrive back in Chamonix in the late afternoon and have a wonderful celebratory dinner at a wonderful restaurant called Le Munchie. Chamonix is a climbers paradise. I'll be back.



Story by *Shane Burns*

See Shane's full posting at <http://web.mac.com/mshaneburns/iWeb/Climbing/Alps-2006.html>



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