



AAC Publications

Harding Tower: New Life

California, Yosemite Valley, Tenaya Canyon

Deep in Tenaya Canyon is a slabby dome hidden by Mt. Watkins to the west and Yasoo Dome to the east. In late September, with no knowledge of any previously established climbs on the formation or the best way to approach, Mark Westman and I hiked to the top from the Olmsted Point parking lot in Tuolumne Meadows. We reached the base by descending a gully on the formation's east side, with a few rappels to overcome a steep drop-off.

After getting over the initial overhang on the dome, we climbed about seven varied pitches, most of which had huge runouts on solid face and slab climbing. (Because it was a very long route and we were trying to finish in a day, we did not place any bolts, but the route could become a very fun moderate with the addition of some fixed pro.) We unroped on the big ledge two-thirds of the way up and scrambled west to an attractive crack system I had spied while climbing on Mt. Watkins. After five more pitches we got to the summit.

We named the formation Harding Tower and our route New Life (2,000', IV 5.10), as that's what it felt like for Mark on his first long climb after recently overcoming a cancer. The name also holds truth for aspiring adventure climbers—not all the plums have been picked, even in Yosemite Valley.

– Vitaliy Musiyenko

Images



Mt. Watkins from the southeast. The ca 2,400-foot south face is far left. (1) Teabag Wisdom (IV 5.11a) . (2) New Life (IV 5.10) on "Harding Tower." Yasoo Dome is on the far right.



The line of New Life on "Harding Tower" in Tenaya Canyon.



Mark Westman at the top of Harding Tower.

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