



## AAC Publications

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### Haystack Mountain, The Far Side, First Free Ascent

Wyoming, Wind River Range

**"Here are the same pins and hammer we used to put it up in '96," Norm Larson said, handing over four pitons and a bright-red, lightweight wall hammer. "You should place a pin or bolt at the A2 crux on pitch five, and then I remember a knifeblade was particularly comforting on the last 10c pitch."**

Armed with this trusty iron and a hand-drawn topo from Norm and partner Lorna Corson, first ascensionists of the Far Side (IV 5.10 A2), Madaleine Sorkin and I, along with photographer Henna Taylor, headed to Haystack Mountain in the Deep Lake area of the Winds.

On August 27, we racked up at the lowest point of the slabs on the southwest face of Haystack. [The Far Side is the farthest route to the right on the peak's western exposure, to the right of the Jim Beyer route Southern Wall Right (IV 5.10 A1).] We simul-climbed as a three-pack up the first three low-angle pitches, and then a pitch of 5.9 brought us to a belay at an umbrella-shaped roof. From there we could see the angling finger crack that would take us all the way to the top. Madaleine deployed our borrowed hammer and placed one of Norm's pitons (which we left for future free climbing parties) and then free climbed the tricky A2 crux with powerful moves and technical footwork. Beautiful, thought-provoking cracks continued past mostly good rock (we trundled the really loose ones) to a stance below the second-to-last pitch.

The 10c pitch still hosts a garden of lichen between finger locks and crimps. It angles up to the summit ridge with a striking V-notch to finish. We may or may not have shed a tear after forgetting the recommended knifeblade, but ultimately we hammered in a final pin, tiptoed past multiple #000 C3 placements on thin edges, and then threw one last hand jam in the V-slot to gain the summit ridge. After a short, slippery 5.8 step, we were scrambling to the summit.

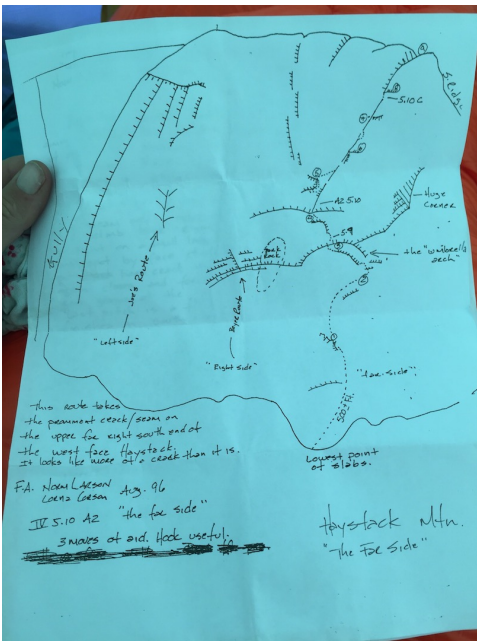
The Far Side, which Norm and Lorna named after those kooky cartoons, is a beautiful route, not for the faint of heart. The nine-pitch line now goes free at IV 5.11+ (if you're a 5.13 climber like Madaleine) or something more like 5.12a for mere mortals.

– Kate Rutherford

## Images



The southwest face of Haystack Mountain in Wyoming's Wind River Range, showing the line of the Far Side (IV 5.12a). The route was first climbed by Norm Larson and Lorna Corson in 1996 at 5.10c A2. Madaleine Sorkin freed the route's A2 pitch at 5.12a in the summer of 2017.



A hand-drawn topo for the Far Side (IV 5.12a) from Norm Larson, who, along with Lorna Corson, made the first ascent of the route in 1996.



Madaleine Sorkin uses Norm Larson's aid hammer to place a pin before embarking on the free crux of the Far Side (IV 5.12a), which was originally climbed in 1996 by Larson and Lorna Corson.



Kate Rutherford, Madaleine Sorkin, and Henna Taylor on the summit of Haystack Mountains after making the first free ascent of the Far Side (IV 5.12a).

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