



AAC Publications

Half Moon, Uncle Wehrly's Toupee

Washington, Washington Pass

In July, Eric Wehrly and I headed up to Half Moon (7,960') and its subpeaks near Washington Pass to attempt a new route. Due to short attention spans, we cut off early to Wallaby Peak and found some misadventure there on terrain that had likely been explored by earlier climbers. But during our outing we spotted some interesting terrain that was very likely unclimbed on Hai Tower, the right-most summit of Half Moon (as viewed from the highway), to the right of the route Digging for Dreams (AAJ 2012).

I returned the next weekend with Jimmy Voorhis to check it out. While he and I should have been concerned that a gaping bomb-bay flare would block passage to the stellar-looking pitches above, we decided to try our luck. With big cams in tow, we climbed an approach pitch that turned out to be both harder and more interesting than expected. From here, Jimmy embarked on his quest for glory up into the gaping flare, henceforth known as "The Maw."

Disintegrating footholds and a suspect nut placement (which nearly pulled off a giant block when tested) led to more trustworthy small cams and allowed Jimmy to reach the roof inside the flare. I enjoyed my view from the belay as he stemmed, crawled, and tunneled horizontally toward the light. After plugging the number 5, Jimmy then "rode the sail"—exiting the chimney required placing full trust (both hands and feet) on a refrigerator door—size flake. Miraculously, he persevered and disappeared around the corner before bringing me up. Following this pitch with a pack was not easy.

Beyond the Maw we were rewarded with three more pitches of enjoyable, sustained, and aesthetic finger cracks—this in addition to copious amounts of the black, flaky moss typically found on certain aspects in the Cascades. In the end, our five-pitch route ended up shorter than Digging for Dreams to the left, but we still found quality fun. (It's possible that the start of our fourth pitch is shared with Digging for Dreams.) Though Eric didn't join us on this adventure, he was there in spirit. Because of the grovelly climbing, of which Wehrly is a master, and because we are skeptical of his boyish blond hair at 50, we named the route Uncle Wehrly's Toupee (5 pitches, III 5.10-).

– Chris Mutzel

Images



Jimmy Voorhis following the first technical pitch of Uncle Wehrly's Toupee (5 pitches, III 5.10), a new route on the southwest end of Hai Tower, a subsummit of Half Moon, near Washington Pass.



Jimmy Voorhis engaging the Maw, a massive bomb-bay flare that forms the second pitch of Uncle Wehrly's Toupee (5 pitches, III 5.10-) on the southwest end of Hai Tower, a subsummit of Half Moon. Chris Mutzel and Voorhis completed this new route in summer 2017.



Half Moon (7,960') near Washington Pass, showing the line of Uncle Wehrly's Toupee (5 pitches, III 5.10-). This new route summits Hai Tower, the furthest right subsummit of the mountain. The clean face in the background is the south face of Big Kangaroo.



Half Moon (left) and Wallaby Peak (right) showing the line of Uncle Wehrly's Toupee (5 pitches, III 5.10-), a new route completed by Chris Mutzel and Jimmy Voorhis in summer 2017. Half Moon features two prominent subsummits to the right of its main peak, Choi Oi Tower and Hai Tower (which Uncle Wehrly's Toupee climbs).

Article Details

Author	Chris Mutzel
Publication	AAJ
Volume	60
Issue	92
Page	0
Copyright Date	2018
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions