



## AAC Publications

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### Lake Basin, Various New Routes

California, Kings Canyon National Park

**In July, Chaz Langelier, Cam Smith, Brian Prince and I made the long haul to Lake Basin to check out this photogenic place and attempt a large and likely unclimbed arête, photos of which had intrigued us for the last couple of years.** With an abundance of possible climbing objectives in Lake Basin, the 17-mile approach over Taboose Pass and Cartridge Pass seemed like a reasonable price of admission.

The day after arriving in the basin, Brian and I climbed the attractive north-facing feature we had come for, in the drainage above Marion Lake. The feature ended up having about 1,300' of good and challenging climbing, with several nice pitches and a few 5.11 cruxes—I dubbed it Alexandra's Arete (IV 5.11b) after my grandmother who passed away this year. After climbing the wall, we traversed the long ridge west to the top of Marion Peak and returned to our camp.

The following day, we climbed another attractive wall (36°58'19.00"N, 118°29'50.04"W) on an unnamed peak (12,091') that Chaz and Cam had climbed a new route on the day before. We are unaware of any previous climbing history on this cliff and did not see any signs of previous ascents where we climbed. We dubbed the feature the Hessen Wall, and Chaz and Cam's route, the Swish Dike (5.10+), featured cracks, corners, and a stellar section of steep, unprotected dike climbing. Our route, the Ring Finger (1,000', 5.10d) was a good crack climb, and from the top of the wall we traversed east to Mt. Ruskin, which was a great scramble!

While Brian and I were on the Hessen Wall, Cameron and Chaz did two routes on the east side of Lake Basin. The first route they climbed may share several pitches with the Brownstone Buttress (III 5.10, Fiddler-Nettle-Shelton, 2016). These three had dubbed the peak they climbed Point A.J. Reyman, but my research shows the more commonly used name for this rarely climbed mountain is Staghorn Peak (ca 12,828', 36.990278, -118.475254). It is roughly halfway between Mt. Ruskin and Vennacher Needle, and the Brownstone Buttress faces northwest. Chaz and Cam called their route the sBelle Arete (5.10+).

After descending a chute on the west side of Staghorn, Chaz and Cam continued along the west-facing wall that extends toward Cartridge Pass. About halfway to the pass, they decided to climb an attractive fin of rock on which they found steep and difficult cracks (5.10 to low 5.11) in a nice corner system, which they named the Zahir Corner. About four pitches took them to the top of the wall, from which they descended a west-facing chute back to camp in Lake Basin.

The following day, Cam felt sick, so Chaz joined Brian and me on a climb that may have been done in the past. (Someone online said a friend might have done it, or thought about climbing it, although no first-hand information was provided.) The north-facing route was on a formation above camp said to be called the Hershey's Kiss and featured one of the most continuous corner splitters I have done in the Sierra: Sugaree (1,200', IV 5.11c).

– Vitaliy Musiyenko, with info from Cam Smith

## Images



The unnamed wall above Marion Lake, in Lake Basin, Kings Canyon National Park. Vitaliy Musiyenko and Brian Prince's route, showing the line of Alexandra's Arete (IV 5.11b).



A feature possibly previously named the Hershey's Kiss, showing the line of Sugaree (1,200', IV 5.11c). Chaz Langelier, Vitaliy Musiyenko, and Brian Prince climbed this likely new route in July 2019.



A previously unnamed and likely unclimbed wall named the Hessen Wall by the 2019 party. They completed two lines on the wall, the Swish Dike (5.10+, shown), and the Ring Finger (1,000', 5.10d),

which follows the prominent shaded arête on the right side.



Chaz Langelier leading one of the several clear corner splitters on Sugaree (1,200', IV 5.11c) on the Hershey's Kiss, in Lake Basin, Kings Canyon National Park.



Brian Prince climbing one of the nice pitches on Alexandra's Arete (1,300', IV 5.11b). A photo of this feature is what brought Vitaliy Musiyenko and Brian Prince to Lake Basin in July 2019.



Brian Prince celebrating a successful first ascent on top of Alexandra's Arete (1,300', IV 5.11b) in the Lake Basin area of Kings Canyon National Park.



The scenic basin above Marion Lake, in the Lake Basin area of Kings Canyon National Park. Vitaliy Musiyenko and Brian Prince's route, Alexandra's Arete (IV 5.11b) follows the obvious arête along the sun/shade line that goes to the wall's highest point.

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