

■ JUST WATCH THOSE FREUDIAN SLIPS

I am a Clinical Social Worker in beautiful Saint George, Utah, and I utilize bouldering in my therapy with adults and adolescents as a powerful and meaningful tool to assist them with "problem" solving. Let me quickly relate one of my "sessions."

I met one couple in the waiting room. The wife was upset and the husband was just sitting on the opposite end of the couch, silent. The tension was thick. I quickly smiled and suggested we go to the "Oracle" (the name I've give to the bouldering area I take people to). I could tell that they were suspicious. I kept it a surprise, and just told them that the oracle would teach them everything they needed to know about solving problems.

When we got to the boulders, I asked what they saw when they looked at the rock. "Holes, calcium deposits, dirt," they replied. I pulled out my little bag of chalk and said, this will help you. "Cocaine??" he said. No, it's rock-climbing chalk. They quickly connected. I explained the concept of bouldering and got them started.

She initially resisted, but quickly tasted success and got excited (and a few bruises, too). He was spotting her the whole time, and assisted with hints as to where to go next. We repeated the same process for him. At the end of the session I processed the whole thing with them, and told them to go home and solve their own problems with the tools the "oracle" taught them. Sure enough, when I saw them next week, they were excited to go bouldering again, and this time they were cheering for each other, and were on the same team. The problem was solved.

**Iuri Tiago Melo, CSW; St. George, Utah**

■ CLIMBING JOURNALISM LIVES!

Thanks for the excellent articles on the Russian Big Wall Project and Oak Flat's threatened closure [September]. Beyond the quality of the writing and wealth of interesting information, I was particularly impressed with the objectivity of the reporting. Although some of us can't forgive the calculated trashing of mountain wilderness by the Russian siege climbers or Sherman's shameless corporate sellout, we at least got to hear sensitively presented arguments for their attitudes and behavior. It's writing like this, particularly over the past couple of years, that has raised the quality of *Climbing* well beyond that of the other high-profile

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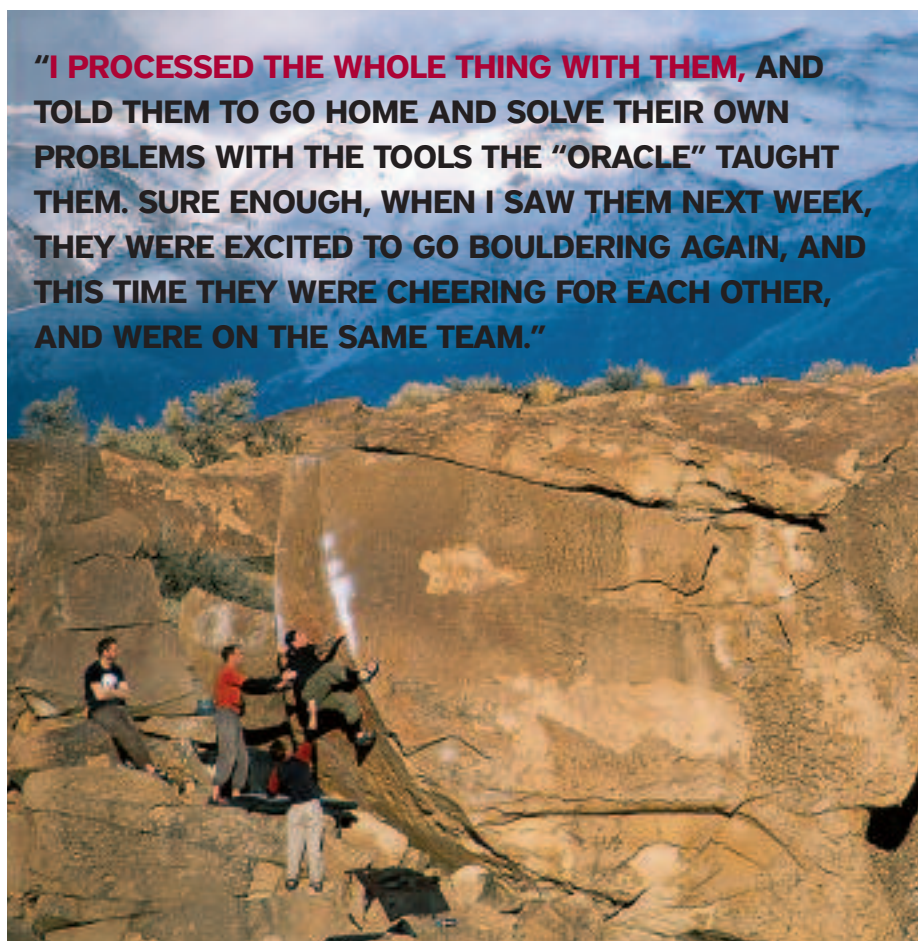


PHOTO CREDIT

English-language mags devoted to the sport. Keep it coming.

— Dave Wachter  
Albuquerque, NM

■ HEADLINE

It was with curiosity that I noticed several new-appearing bolts next to a splitter crack in a photo of Todd Skinner free climbing Wet Denim Daydream [Gallery, October]. When I checked my guidebook, I didn't see any bolts on the 15-foot roof crack on pitch eight (I'm assuming this is the pitch Skinner is climbing in the photo).

Then I read the issue more closely and saw mention in Hot Flashes that

Skinner and Jim Hewett "added 15 protection bolts, including a few within reach of the aid line." I've been climbing for over 15 years and I always thought that placing bolts next to splitter cracks was unacceptable by American climbers. I'm really curious what Yosemite locals think about these additional bolts, and wonder if this is an accepted technique for attempting to free climb aid lines. I always thought that the accepted ethic was that

bolts were only added to climbs with the permission of the first ascensionists.

I am very much a recreational climber, who will never free and old aid line, but I really question the tactics that Skinner and Hewett used and am looking for an explanation.

**Steve Orr; Lakewood, CO**

■ YIKES!

Heinz Zak's tale ["Reality Check," October] recounting his spook-fest solo of the historic *Separate Reality* was riveting and strangely inspirational, akin to Derek Hersey's hat trick day on the Diamond, John Gill's early bouldery ascent of the Thimble (above the guardrail), and Scott Franklin's groundbreaking solo of *Survival of The Fittest* (Gunks), not to mention Croft's, Bachar's, Potter's, and Yabo's additions to this illustrious genre. Although the dreadfully exposed *Separate Reality* (5.11d) is not cutting edge in difficulty as compared to other recent hard solos, it was one hell of a way for Zak to validate himself, albeit late in his already impressive career.

**Dan Levison; Boulder, CO**

■ A THOUSAND (WRONG) WORDS

Thanks for the nice photos and the continued inspiration to get out as much as possible. I would take issue with the caption that accompanied the fine cover shot for the September issue, however. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and while the photo [a climber on Mount Stewart's North Ridge] is outstanding, the words you chose were way off base.

Having bivied a few hundred meters below those slabs I can assure you that were we to wake up to such fine weather in the Cascades we would have been ecstatic. What the climber is actually heading into is a fine day on some outstanding alpine granite with plenty of time and good weather to enjoy the route, make the summit, and descend Ulrich's Couloir on the other side. Facing the North Ridge, as this image does, it's obvious that this is early morning (light coming in from the left, or east) and the wispieness of the clouds suggest low-lying morning clouds or fog that is warming, rising, and likely to be burnt off in a matter of hours.

— Mike Endres/Wanderlust Photo  
Pyongtaek, South Korea (for the time being)

■ SMOKE AND MIRRORS

In the June issue, the cover shot was *The Green Adjective* in LCC,

Utah. It wasn't Serenity Crack. But that's not my main concern. I feel that photographers are going too far in trying to make climbs look difficult. I would rather see a picture of a climb just as I would see it if I were looking at the climb itself. I didn't even recognize *The Green A* until I flipped the magazine over and even then it was hard to see. I've done that climb many times and it is nowhere near as steep and difficult as it looked in the picture. Where do we draw the line between a great shot and pure illusion?  
**Tony Bozzio**

■ BETTER THAN WOOD

Majka Burhardt [Tech Tip, September, page 94] notes that stove boards made of plywood are great for basecamp but not for schlepping up a mountain. So why bother with it in the first place? For over 20 years my partners and I have been using a simple stove pad made from lightweight Ensolite and tin. Making one is simple: Cut a 12- by 24-inch piece of foam and a slightly smaller piece of lightweight tin (newspaper printing press tin works great). Round

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Each issue, we pick a photo from our popular PhotoPost on [www.climbing.com](http://www.climbing.com), and award the lucky winner with a choice gear item. This issue's winner was posted by Birmingham, Alabama, student Jonathan Miller (AKA climbingnerd).

**Miller wins the Franklin Powerstation but has to share it with Chris Luker, who too the photo.**

**As an addition to the home wall, gym, closet, or stariwell, the Powerstation will have you seeing results in as little as 20 seconds a day, three days a week. With a regular workout, you'll get strong, burn off your friends, and start lapping your project.**

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Jonathan Miller traversing the moss at Foster Falls, Tennessee.

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the corners so there are no sharp edges. Glue the tin on to the foam using contact cement. Viola — a super-lightweight stove pad. The tin adds rigidity yet can be bent to level out uneven surfaces, and the Ensolite insulates the stove much better than plywood.

The pad can be folded if necessary, but I typically just put it in my pack next to the back support before stuffing everything else in. I have used a couple of pads like this on dozens of trips, including three trips up Denali.

**Allen Sanderson; Salt Lake City, UT**

■ STYLE IS IN THE MIND OF THE BEAUTY, OR SOMETHING

Regarding Steve House's comments on alpinism and recent Russian climbs in the Himalayas: Beauty is not contrived, whereas style is contrived. The two are in totally different realms. There is no connection between beauty and style. Style is merely a matter of personal preference. Style is psychological and so it's a prison in effect. Beauty has nothing psychological about it.

Therefore, climbing in any style is to be discon-

nected from both beauty and from the mountain itself. Serious relationship cannot have any style to it, and so to the extent that alpinism is a style, it is false. Style pushes beauty out the door.

Beauty is always in relationship and so it's the relationship of the climbers to the mountain that is crucial. Style is destructive in all ways. Unless these kinds of distinctions are made and kept in mind, then exchanges between climbers won't get anywhere.

**Ted Gannon; Talkeetna, AK**

■ THE WEB WE WEAVE

Just writing to say thanks for having the best website on climbing. I climbed a lot in the Boy Scouts, mainly rock gyms and bouldering. Here I am now, 23, recovering from a blood infection and knee injury. Rock climbing has been the best activity to rebuild some muscle tone and most of all, self esteem. Thanks for all the great info.

**Kevin Davis; via the internet**

**weblink:** For topos, directions and more information go to [climbing.com/letters/](http://climbing.com/letters/)