

Bears Breast (7197'), The Citadel (7120') & Mons Venus (Ares, Peak 6596')

June 12-14, 2010

W/ Stefan Feller, Carla Schauble and Fay Pullen

Picked up Carla at the leisure time of 6:10a, meeting Stefan at the North Bend P&R at 7am. Greg couldn't make the three day trip and Fay would meet us at Shovel Lake Skies were overcast and I crossed my fingers that the days of heavy rain dumped in the west and we'd have blue skies east. Heading past Snoqualmie Pass the skies clear to a beautiful day. The gravel part of the road (10m) was as rough as always. At Scatter Creek a Subaru ahead of us stopped rather than cross. Water was high, yet no issue for Stefans CRV. At the TH there were 5 big pickup, and one Camry.

It was warm out like a nice summer morning. Heading out at XXXX Stefan stashed beer under two feet of snow (when returned the snow was gone). We immediately hit snow patches and blowdown on the trail. At 4400' solid snow and new footsteps with ice ax marks (must be Mounties). The tracks headed a bit south after the trail disappeared and came upon the covered Squaw lake a bit east of normal.

A bit of shutter delay and I was left to following foot tracks –mistake. They wondered too far north up a cliff then on the north side of the saddle to Cathedral Pass. Up the cliff I heard Carla to the right and she was kind to wait up top. Snow covering, a 48# pack and occasional post-holing made it an interesting approach. Near the Pass I stopped to chat with Mark Sheffer and his Basic group. They bailed on Daniel and were hoping for Cathedral Rock. Looking at the gully they bailed on it and said Tom was up there with a group for Cathedral too. After leaving them we didn't see anymore tracks or the skiers that were at Squaw lake for the rest of the trip. We dropped south of the saddle and traversed under Cathedral Rock. Some bare spots and some thin (12-16") snow, following the bits of the trail. Once in the trees again solid snow to the lower pond and a break below Peggies Pond.

After a food break Stefan lead off NW across the covered pond and up left of a small waterfall (fresh water). Steep and good snow to the ridge and followed right of a cornice and rock to traverse at c6620 south along the face toward Circle lake. Around the ridge we got a great view of Citadel. We dropped then a snort traverse into the basin to watch a small very slow river of snow about 10' wide. Watched it awhile then walked across. Snow was south exposure and soft, time for snowshoes down to the outlet of Circle Lake. A small opening for water and checked out the route up.

Stowed the snowshoes and up the face left of the summit block then right on the ridge to below the east side of the summit block. We dropped our packs. Rock on the left and a small cornice extending right. The pitch was shallower than I expected. We went right to the shallower pitch and around the cornice. A flat snow section to the NW end of the rock for class 3 scramble to the rock ridge and summit. A slight breeze, sunshine and views all around and a great view of our route to Mons Venus. The reg was nestled in the summit cairn –a small waterproof ammo box place in 1978 by The Mazamas, 23 pages in a small notebook, last entry August 09 by a group with Fay in it. I let out a laugh. No wonder she didn't want to come our way. Many recognized names and counting we were the 63rd party in the reg.

We hung out for 15 minutes then headed down. From the ridge we went CCW below the summit block, and tight left to avoid a cornice gaining a pumice ridge (c6910, 17:00), following it west then several long glissades and a walk to the Venus Lake outlet (c5700', 17:33). We followed the lake CW a short ways then up to the Gap (c6000', 17:51) and a break looking up the north ridge of Mons Venus (Ares).

The north ridge started out directly fairly steep –enough to warrant solid kicksteps. Soon the flat ridge narrowed to a knife edge reminiscent of Eldorado when it is narrow, though this one was steeper going up and to both sides falling away. A fall would not be fun. A bump presented a short section with knife edge over 75deg. Left (east side of ridge then up shallower snow to the ridge again. Rock and then an overhanging drop. I down climbed to the east while Carla and Stefan used a hand line to the west. Then shallow snow the remaining 50 vert to the summit (18:55, 6596'). The summit was broad and flat, covered in a layer of snow deeper than ax shaft. No indication of a summit cairn, so no reg this time.

We took in the views and studied Bears Breast to out west scoping out feasible routes to the 7000' saddle from Shovel Lake. Mid lake, work right mid way, then left, dodge cliff bands to below block then right into a large col that would lead to the saddle.

It took nearly as much time getting off Mons Venus as getting up it. Loaded up and headed SW towards the lake. Got in a long glissade then an ever descending southward traverse. Seeming to go on and on south. A quarter

mile from the lake we intersected the creek that feeds Shovel Lake. Looking up stream and down no apparent way to cross. The stream down a steep bank and raging.

In view of the lake, still no crossing. Around the corner a tent and Fay attending to it. Without thinking I said Boo and think I scared the crap out of poor Fay. Sorry Fay, didn't want to just break sticks and have you think bears were coming (20:40, c4190). A happy reunion that the plans to meet worked so well. We'd wanted to camp the other side of the creek, but it was deep and even with the lake being about 4100' elevation we were on several feet of snow. Contemplating many options –walking across, Tyrolean traverse, pole vault...

We finally decided on camping here and in the AM breaking camp and leaving the overnight gear at the lake outlet. Too cold to ford the creek. Hot dinner and a water bottle to warm the wet feet... Off to sleep before needing a headlamp.

Morning had blue skies, warmed the boots with the hot water bottle... We broke camp (7:35am) and followed Fay's approach steps to the outlet and dropped our overnight gear. It looked like a laundry mat with sleeping bags, sock and shirts draped on trees to dry (lv at 7:50). Stefan was off following the lake shore CW. We followed within 10' of the lake and about half way around moved up through boulders, about 50+ feet above the lake traversed through trees and below waterfalls. As far as waterfalls go these were beautiful. Cascading water, dark rock, deep greens and white snow. Leaving the lake following a covered stream up a canyon to where it flattened (8:45, c4830'). We wanted to go left, but rock cliffs held us back. Perhaps from the outlet we could have made the snowfield above. Looking Stefan found a weakness and nearly vert snow to get up onto the snow above. Now the going was a weaving, following the easiest grade working up and around cliff bands in great kickstepping snow (only a few inch depressions). The going was nice having flatter sections and awesome views. We heard a rumble and jets. Tomcats, F18s? I don't know. One above another further over the lake, and another and another. We heard one but couldn't see it. It was dang close but where? Then looking down it appeared from camouflaged by the cliffs of Mons Venus pulling up and twisting 90 degrees sideways banking and pulling away from the walls of Mt Daniel. I wonder if these were the same ones that buzzed TomS on Assassins Spire?

We gathered at a flat spot at c6015 (10:00). View looking west of the teats and the upper gulley to the saddle. There was older avy debris, north facing, not cornices above... A bit of discussion and we decided we'd continue. I lead off and we left space between for the final kick stepping to the north saddle (10:43). Good views of a western teat and looking down a NW gulley. The gulley we came up looked to go all the way to Rowena Lake. We harnessed up then crossed over to the south side of the saddle. More wind and a little cooler. Time for a long break for food and warming/drying the feet. I'd used shopping bags over my socks and was happy to have dry feet. I think Stefan's feet had lost feeling hours before.

Stefan lead out at 12:30. Set a picket for the snow traverse (it was a very long and very steep hill to the west below the climb. Then traversed on rock about 40' past a small gulley/chimney. Up class 5.4-5.6 to under a mini buttress and a belay. He tied off the line and I followed with my Ushpa carrying the second rope. The first pitch had posed an issue with extreme rope drag and we couldn't hear Stefan yelling. There was loose rock and care was needed to not cause rockfall. May have been good to also try leading up earlier up the lower draw. Stefan again lead up leftish on slabby solid rock then around right to the base of the crack/chimney.

NOT DONE...