

Zeitschrift: Jahresbericht / Akademischer Alpen-Club Zürich
Herausgeber: Akademischer Alpen-Club Zürich
Band: 118-119 (2013-2014)

Artikel: Adventure on Lotus Flower Tower
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-583083>

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ADVENTURE ON LOTUS FLOWER TOWER

The Lotus Flower Tower is a peak in the Cirque of the Unclimbables, in Canada's Northwest Territories. Though it is not prominent in relation to the surrounding peaks, it is noted for its sheer rock walls, particularly its striking southeast face. The first ascent of this SE face was made in 1968 by Harthon "Sandy" Bill, Tom Frost and James McCarthy. "Die Alpen" of SAC published an article on it in August 2014 with further information.

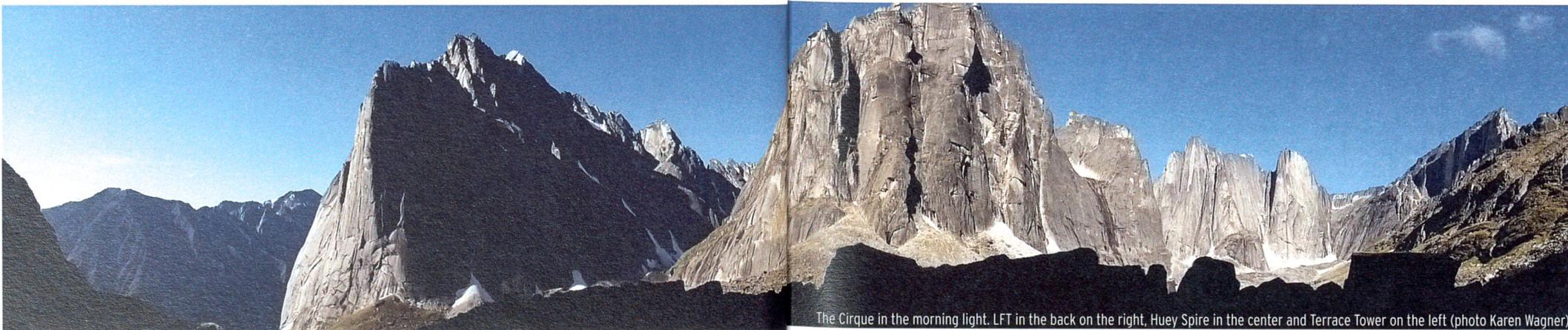
This route is one of the Fifty Classic Climbs of North America. So when in 2013 my husband Alex and I had the chance to quit work and plan a three-month climbing trip, we decided to try the "LFT". We flew via Vancouver to Whitehorse and rented a car to get to a lake in the Eastern part of Yukon where a private air charter service picked us up. The float plane brought us to Glacier Lake from where it is a four-hour hike to the LFT base camp. The base camp is called Fairy Meadows and is a beautiful and wild place (featuring very hungry marmots, mosquitoes and even a grizzly bear). LFT's SE face is known for its headwall featuring two perfect cracks and "chicken-heads", darker knobbles inserted into the

light-grey granite. This headwall becomes steeper and steeper towards the top so it is always towering over your head when you climb. One strategy is to climb LFT in two days with a bivvy after the first ten pitches, but with the days being very long in summer we decided to climb in one day. We started climbing very early and made good progress. The more technically demanding pitches in the headwall (up to 6c and not so obvious to protect) took some time. In the meantime a storm had moved in and hit us with full force in the fifteenth pitch. By the time it cleared, we were soaked and cold. The rock was equally wet, so very sadly we decided to start rapelling. It would have been just two more difficult pitches plus two easy pitches to get to the summit. But rapelling off LFT is a long and tricky exercise.

Over the next few days the weather remained unstable, so we spent some enjoyable days around Fairy Meadows relaxing, bouldering and chasing marmots and mosquitoes until we finally left for other climbing adventures.

Karen Wagner

Karen in the headwall (photo Alexander Issler)



The Cirque in the morning light. LFT in the back on the right, Huey Spire in the center and Terrace Tower on the left (photo Karen Wagner)