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Petzoldt party begins Grand Teton climb

Paul Petzoldt leads his 11th National Outdoor Leadership School assault upon Grand Teton peak today with the largest party yet to participate in the New Year's Day climb.

At press time, eight members of the lead group had reached the 12,000 foot level, leaving the rest of the party at the base camp in Moose Meadows. Radio contact with the climbers indicates all is going well, although the stormy weather forecast for the area may hamper efforts to scale the mountain.

According to Peter Simer, director of National Outdoor Leadership School and unable to join the Grand Teton party due to a broken wrist, the 25-member party will try to score the sixth successful climb to the summit. Five of the former ten climbs reached the summit.

Leading the summit climb will be NOLS instructor Tom Warren, former Riverton resident, now of Driggs, Idaho. Other NOLS instructors on the climb are Andy Carlson, photographer for the expedition, Jim Huntley of Lander, Bill Jackson of Roseville, Minn., and Tom Ellis of Humboldt, Calif.

Other members in the party include Audrey Stevens, William Marling of Fortune magazine, Jeff Bidy, Larry Buskirk, Mickey Elmore, Mike Fitz, David Hall, Jay Hauth, Mark Ishkannian, Malcolm Jones, Josh Kaplan, John Keeler, Steve Larson, Bob Lehman, Paul Randolph, Creighton Rauh, Steven Seven, Earl Williams, and Rick Horn, who will also be taking photographs.

According to radio contact with Grand Teton National Park personnel, 67-year-old Petzoldt remained with the party at Moose Meadows.

The climbers took one day to cross country ski to Bradley Lake, another to reach Moose Meadows, and yet another to establish a camp on the Lower Saddle area. This method of working up to the higher elevations gradually enables the party to adjust to the altitude and avoid mountain sickness.

The climbers will sleep in snow caves they construct out of packed snow, protecting them from the 30 degrees below zero temperatures of the high-altitude nights.

On New Year's Eve the nine or ten members of the party actually attempting to reach the summit, will leave the snow caves and climb a steep snowfield to spend the night in a small quonset hut in preparation for the 3 a.m. assault upon the peak.

From the hut, the climbers will most likely follow a 60-degree pitch through a long gully to within 500 vertical feet of the summit. At this point the climbers will begin roping together and climbing near vertical rock wall to the peak. Several established routes up the wall make use of vertical cracks in the rock to "chimney" or "stem" up the rock.

Members of the party are optimistic of the summit attempt, but many had noted avalanche conditions are rather dangerous and may necessitate choosing another route to the peak.

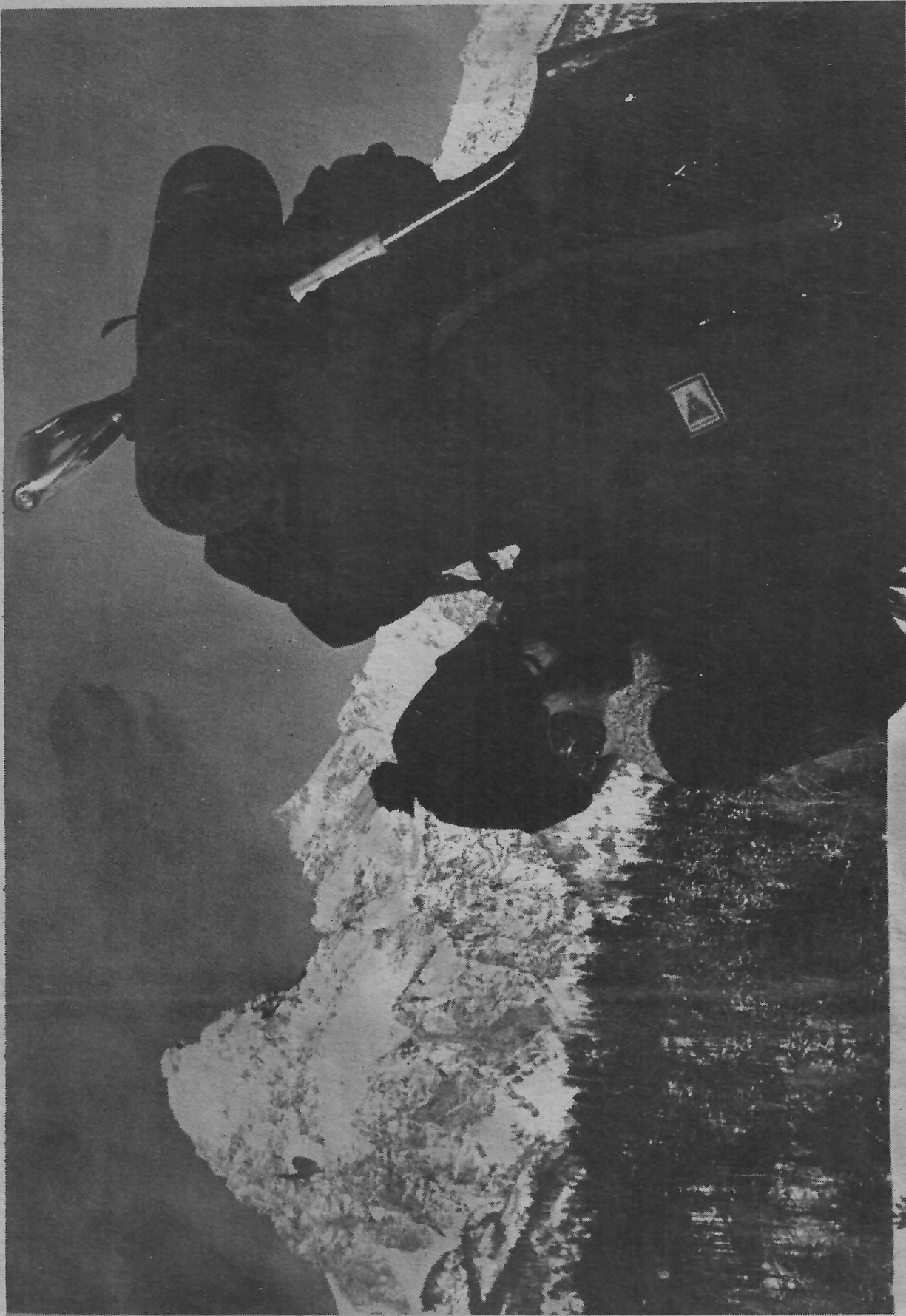


Photo by Bill Jackson

WITHIN SIGHT OF THE GRAND . . . The 11th attempt to scale the Grand Teton New Year's Day is under way, again lead by 67-year-old Paul Petzoldt. The climbers spent two days cross country skiing to the base of the mountain before beginning the vertical assault on the winter route. Each expedition member carries nearly 80 pounds of food, clothing and climbing gear in his back pack carried to the base camp.



Photo by Bill Jackson

NEARLY THERE . . . Approaching TeePee Pillars in the Grand Teton area are two members of NOLS New Year's expedition. Nine members of the climb reached the 13,770-foot

summit, but they didn't arrive at the peak until Jan. 2. Severe weather kept a second party from trying for the top and the 25-member group left Saturday afternoon. Story and photos on page 6.

Teton climbers score sixth summit success

A nine member team of NOLS climbers, led by former Riverton resident, Tom Warren, reached the top of Grand Teton Friday afternoon to make the sixth successful New Year's assault on the icy mountain.

According to a report radioed from the 25-member expedition shortly after 4 p.m. Friday, nine climbers operating in two teams left the 11,600 foot Saddle Hut late Friday morning and both made it to the 13,770-foot summit, although one team was reportedly about 90 minutes behind the other.

The four-member climbing party, led by Warren, arrived first back at the Saddle Hut, shortly before 4 p.m. to announce their victory over the mountain and the weather. Names of the climbers to reach the top were not available at press time.

The 25-member NOLS team, led by 67-year-old Paul Petzoldt is the 11th group of NOLS climbers to attempt the mid-winter climb of Wyoming's most famous peak in as many years. This year's success makes six attempts that reached the top.

With temperatures hovering around five degrees below zero and after waiting out a blizzard with 60-mile-per-hour gusts of wind, the climbers chanced the Friday climb in anticipation of another storm ex-

pected in the Teton area over the weekend. The Petzoldt group is scheduled to leave the Grand Teton National Park area by Monday.

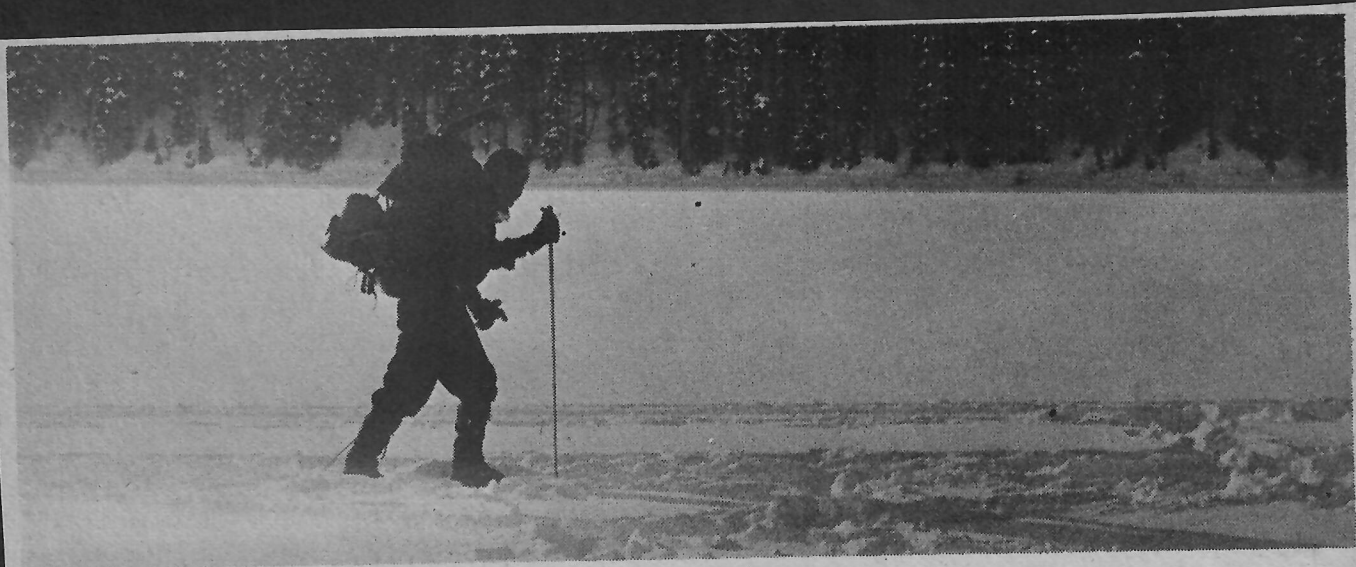
Petzoldt, who first climbed Grand Teton in 1924 at the age of 16 years, was not among the nine who reached the peak this year, but remained

below in the Moose Meadows base camp to help other members of the expedition as 14 climbers moved to the Saddle Hut in relays.

From a radioed report to Chief Ranger Alan Atchison Wednesday, it is believed Petzoldt split the remaining group in Moose Meadows and sent some to nearby Moose Creek so an extended stay in the area, if the blizzard became severe, would not leave waste products from the whole group in a small, concentrated area.

Two smaller groups on the Grand Teton left Tuesday and another group left on New Year's Day, leaving the Petzoldt group and another 20 climbers on the mountain.

Petzoldt had earlier voiced apprehension about the storm, commenting on the possibility of rime, or frost covering on the sheer rock walls, making the final near-vertical 500 feet of the climb extremely hazardous. The radio report to the ranger Friday made no mention of the rime conditions on the climb.



EASY GOING. . . at the lower levels was almost a joy after the days of working their way to the summit.

Nine climbers reach summit in riskiest Teton climb yet

Nine National Outdoor Leadership School climbers topped Grand Teton Friday, Jan. 2 in the 11th New Year's expedition to the peak, but leader Paul Petzoldt said conditions were so bad the group probably shouldn't have tried for the summit.

The nine climbers reaching the summit are climb leader Tom Warren, 29-year old former resident of Riverton, now of Alta; Larry Buskurk, 24, of Sandosky, Mich.; Mark Ishkanian, 22, of Saggerties, N.Y.; Rick Horn of Jackson; John Nicholas, 22, of Lander; Bill Jackson, 46, of Roseville, Minn.; Earl Williams, 23, of Englewood, Colo.; Tom Ellis, 26, of Lubbock, Tex.; and John Keeler, 24, of Kelly.

Petzoldt, who remained at the base camp in Moose Meadows, said he didn't join the climbers for two reasons. He said he didn't feel he was

in as good as shape as he should be for such a climb and he felt the chance to climb Teton should be allowed others who haven't scaled the peak. 67-year old Petzoldt first climbed Grand Teton when he was 16 years old in 1924.

Facing worse weather than his previous 11 mid-winter climbs Petzoldt said temperatures got down to 25 degrees below zero, made even colder by the 90-mile per hour gusts of wind Thursday and Friday.

Because of the high winds during the day, part of the descent Friday was made during the night, Petzoldt said.

After the first nine climbers returned to the Saddle Hut, 11,600-foot taking off point to reach the 13,770 peak, about 4 p.m. Friday, another team of nine wanted to try for the summit. Worsening weather Saturday

caused the group to cancel the climb, however, and the expedition left to return to the base camp and out of Teton National Park.

The 25 members on the expedition to the Grand Teton made up the largest NOLS New Year's group yet, Peter Simer, NOLS director said. Simer was unable to join the expedition because he broke his wrist in Denver the week before the group left.

In approaching the Grand Teton, the NOLS group spent one day cross-country skiing to Bradley Lake in Grand Teton National Park and yet another to reach the base camp, again on skis, at Moose Meadows. By gradually approaching the mountain members of the group can detect any difficulties with equipment before reaching the mountain and can adjust gradually to the higher altitude.

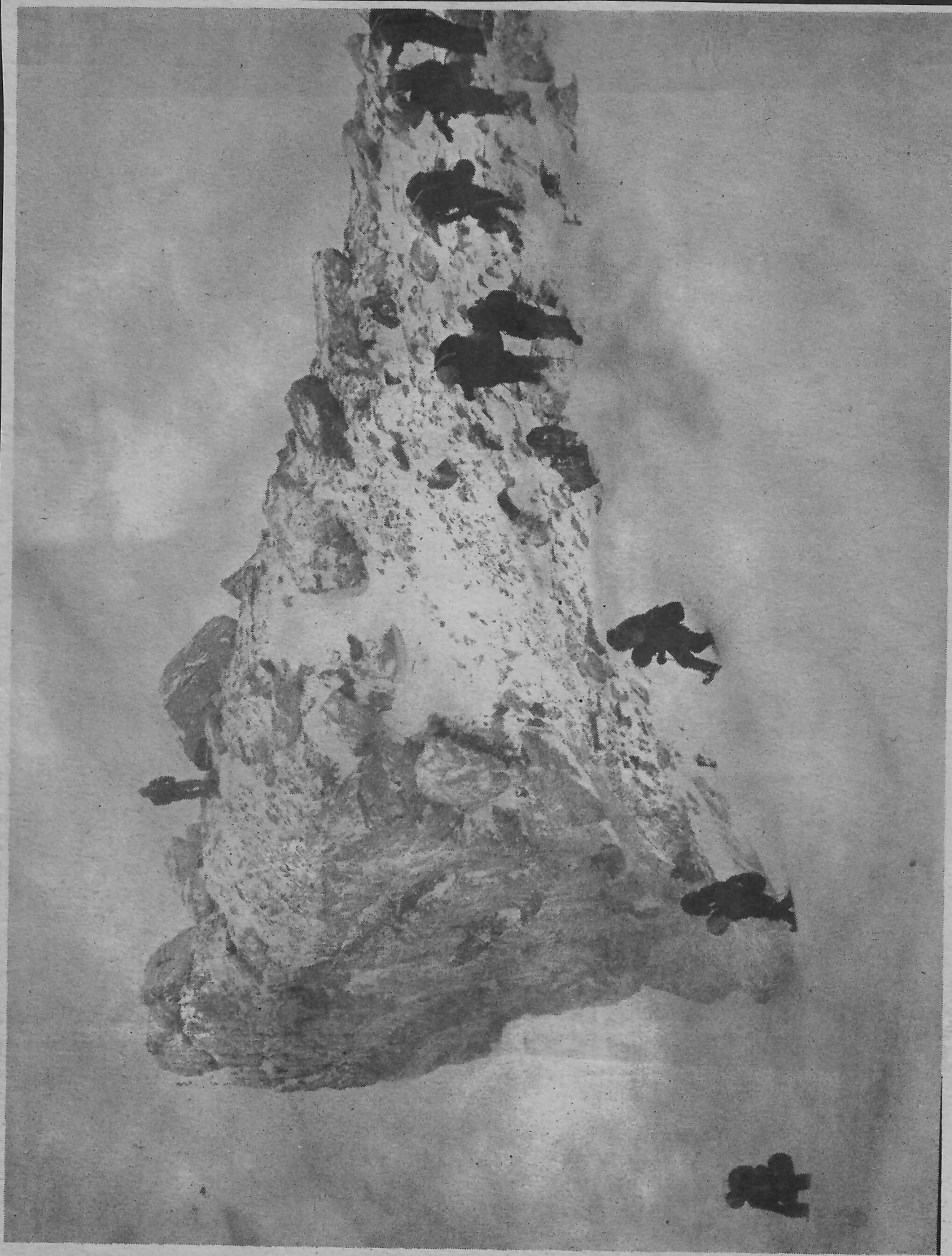
When leaving the park after reaching the summit, the group skied directly from the mountain out to the roadhead area near the Moose ranger station.

The 80-pound packs each member carried with him to Grand Teton were lightened considerably after the climb and as the group skied out. Most of the weight was food and clothing, and consumed food relieved much of the burden.

In the park area at the same time as the NOLS group were four other groups. These other groups left during the severe storms Thursday and Friday. Those with Petzoldt in the base camp remained in their snow caves, which maintained a constant 28 degrees temperature and weathered out the storms.



WHAT WERE YOU DOING? . . . over the New Year's holiday? Few of us were in a position to enjoy the scenery presented to the Grand Teton climbing party as they tried for the summit.



Photos by
Bill Jackson

LET YOUR IMAGINATION . . . run freely. Eerie photo of Grand Teton
climbers making their way carefully through stormy weather makes them look
like something out of science fiction.



HOME ON THE RANGE... Teton Range, that is. Grand Teton climbers made their homes in snug snow caves while waiting to try for the summit.



ON THE WAY DOWN... climbers carefully work their way down the side of the Grand Teton.



ONLY WOMAN... on this year's climb was Audrey Stevens. Audrey said she didn't make the summit this year -- but would be back next year, and would make the top of the peak.