

JOSEPH NICHOLI PURYEAR, 1973–2010

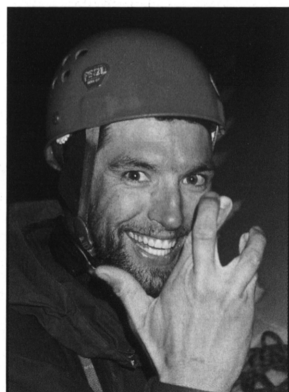
On October 27, 2010, while unroped on a ridgecrest low on unclimbed Labuche Kang in Tibet, Joe Puryear broke through a cornice and fell 700 feet to the glacier below. Joe was one of the authentic talents of the American climbing community, an inspiration to friends and strangers alike, and he lived an extraordinary life of pure devotion to all that he loved. He was only 37 years old.

Joe was raised on a winery in Washington's Yakima Valley. His parents, Gail and Shirley Puryear, are a remarkable couple who provided a supportive atmosphere that would allow Joe's many talents to flourish. Joe was very close to his family, including his sister Tash and her husband, Ben Summit. In his

youth Joe became an expert carpenter, an all-around farmhand, and a professional vintner. In his teenage years he also began to take a keen interest in the mountains. This started with skiing and progressed to climbing after his parents took him up Mt. Adams when he was 15. Throughout his life, Joe had a devious and eccentric sense of humor. He loved puzzles, games, and most of all, pushing people's buttons, but it was always good natured. Unsurprisingly, he took a math degree from the University of Washington, though he knew he would never work in that field. He was a problem solver by nature and endlessly curious, traits that would drive him toward mountain climbing as a full-time pursuit.

Joe and I met in 1994 when we were just starting into the world of alpinism, and we formed a fast friendship that proved enduring and immovable. We were young and highly motivated, with similar goals, abilities, and attitudes. Above all we were like brothers, and we became nearly inseparable, spending the next decade climbing almost exclusively together, with productive results. We worked together for four seasons at Mt. Rainier as climbing rangers, spending all of our off-work days climbing classic routes in the North Cascades. We climbed peaks in Patagonia, big walls in Yosemite, and used Aconcagua to learn about altitude. But our signature venue was the Alaska Range, where we climbed together for nine consecutive seasons. We spent a month making a rare ascent of Denali's full south buttress, an experience that cemented our partnership. We made many progressively harder ascents in Alaska, culminating with Denali's Cassin Ridge in 2000, and a year later, the Infinite Spur on Mount Foraker; these were our finest achievements together. Six years earlier, we had sat wide-eyed at a slideshow of the Infinite Spur's second ascent, given by Jim Nelson in Seattle. It was far from our ability at the time; in retrospect, it made sense that this route would become the zenith of our partnership. In the ensuing years, as our climbing goals diversified, they also began to diverge. Regrettably, we climbed together less often, but we remained everlasting friends.

In his 20s Joe had been an introvert and somewhat lacking in confidence; this was the only thing that really held him back at the time. But in the last ten years he truly blossomed. I think the primary catalyst occurred in 2001, when he met Michelle O'Neil, who was close friends with my future wife. Joe and Michelle fell in love and were married in 2004 on the Pika Glacier in the Alaska Range. They settled in Leavenworth, Washington, where their home became a social hub for climbers and friends. Joe lamented having what he felt was a lack of marketable skills; this discontent drove him to teach himself graphic design. The first result was



Joe Puryear. *David Gottlieb*

his beautiful select guidebook to the Alaska Range, *Alaska Climbing*, published by Supertopo. His skills in graphic design and photography, and his obvious creativity, soon landed him a job as Sherpa Adventure Gear's chief photographer and editor of their product catalog.

Meanwhile, as a climber Joe began to excel. He developed full confidence and became a solid rope gun on both rock and ice. It wasn't long before he turned his attention to the massive peaks of China, Tibet, and Nepal. He made seven expeditions to Asia in seven years, exploring remote valleys and logging many significant first ascents. In China he and Chad Kellogg made the first ascents of Mt. Daogou, the Angry Wife, and Lara Shan. In Nepal he and David Gottlieb made the first ascents of Kang Nachugo, Jobo Rinjang, and Takargo, all just over 6,700 meters. Joe formed a close connection with many Nepalis, and he reveled in the exploratory nature of his climbing. He and Kellogg also did a major first ascent on Kichatna Spire in Alaska. In between these adventures, on only a handful of trips, Joe also managed to climb over 70 desert towers in Utah, Colorado, and Arizona. His drive was unquenchable.

Joe's final adventure was on an unclimbed 7,000-meter massif in a desolate, remote corner of Tibet. Such a setting and undertaking, in the company of a dear and trusted friend, David Gottlieb, was a reflection of all that Joe valued in the experience of alpinism.

Joe's death has cut deeply into our community of friends. I am at a loss to summarize in words the remarkable life he lived or the gifted person that he was. I can only say that my friendship with him, forged in the limitless potential of our youth, was of the sort that may never again be replicated in my life. For that opportunity, but most of all for Joe himself, I am forever grateful.

Goodbye, brother.

MARK WESTMAN

LORNA REAM, 1930–2010

In the fall of 1965, I was a restless 17-year old growing up in Spokane, Washington, and trying to find my place in a tribe of outdoor people known as the Spokane Mountaineers. They had a chalet halfway to the summit of nearby Mt. Spokane, and one Saturday night in the late fall I barged into this Mountaineers Chalet unannounced with a couple of rowdy friends in tow. There at the door was a tall, slender, vivacious woman who introduced herself as Lorna Ream. Lorna immediately took charge of us boys, made sure we ate a proper dinner, stayed away from beer, gave us a place to lay our bags, and made us feel welcome. My first impression of Lorna as a take-charge lady never waned until her passing in 2010.

In 1959 Lorna joined the Spokane Mountaineers at the suggestion of her husband, Joel. From that time onward, while raising her two children, she became very active as a climber, scaling dozens of the peaks in the western United States and British Columbia. A few of peaks she managed to climb while raising her family were Baker, Shuksan, Glacier, Bonanza, Stuart, Rainier, St. Helens, Adams, Hood, Shasta, Middle Sister, Borah, Trout Mountain, the Grand Teton, Athabasca, and the first ascent of Mt. Cooper in British Columbia, in 1962.



Lorna Ream. Rich Landers