

the route would be quite hazardous on a moonless night. The following morning the evacuation was completed without incident and the boys removed to a hospital for treatment. Both will recover fully.

*Source:* Robert C. Gardiner, Altadena Mountain Rescue Squad.

*Analysis:* Snow and ice conditions in a mountain range that is dry nine months of the year poses a particular hazard. For the most part, local climbers have little experience under such conditions, and thus accidents are more prone to happen. In the case of this accident the boys used poor judgment in choosing their route, not realizing their lack of equipment (no ice axe or rope) and lack of experience would make a difference.

*California, San Gabriel Mountains (2), Mt. San Antonio*—David Connors (20), Daniel Ramsey (19), and Rose Marie Kennedy (18) of Pomona, California and Donna Mesell (18) of West Covina, California, left the Stockton Flats campground in the San Gabriel Mountains about mid-day on November 20, to climb Mt. San Antonio (10,800). They planned to follow the north slope of Mt. San Antonio to Baldy Notch, then up the east ridge to the summit. The weather was clear and warm and climbing conditions were excellent for the season of the year. One week previously, however, a moderate snowfall had blanketed the mountain above the 8,000 foot level. Subsequent warm days and cold nights had created an icy crust on the snow that was particularly apparent on the northern slopes, the route followed by the party.

At approximately 4:30 p.m. during the ascent the group crossed an icy slope at the 8,000 foot level, Connors slipped and plunged approximately 1,200 feet into the bottom of Coldwater Canyon. Inasmuch as the slope was slightly convex the party could not see Connors' fate. When no sound was heard from Connors following the fall, Ramsey climbed a short distance down the slope in an effort to see Connors and if need be, go to his aid. Ramsey also slipped and fell into Coldwater Canyon.

When the men did not answer their calls, Miss Kennedy hiked to the ski lift terminal at Baldy Notch and notified the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Office. Miss Mesell remained at the site of the accident.

The Ontario substation of the Sheriff's office notified San Bernardino County Mountain Rescue of the situation at 5:45 p.m., and a team of twelve men was dispatched immediately to the scene. At 10:45 p.m. the rescue team advised that they had located the bodies of Connors and Ramsey. Death had apparently been instantaneous as both had impacted at great speed into jagged rocks on the canyon floor. The cause of death was tentatively established as severe head and back injuries. The team worked the remainder of the night recovering the bodies by standard mountaineering procedures and radioed that all was secure at 8:00 a.m.

It is very obvious that the party was inadequately equipped for travel over snow and ice. Proper footgear was not worn and a rope was not carried. Furthermore, they had no previous experience under such conditions, and used very poor judgment in attempting such a route. The party carried none of the ten essentials, and even had death not been an immediate result, it is doubtful that they could have survived the night in the depths of Coldwater Canyon.

*Source:* Robert C. Gardner, Altadena Mountain Rescue Squad.

*Analysis:* Inadequately equipped and inexperienced climbers slipped on icy snow and fell in an uncontrolled glissade approximately 1,200 feet into a steep canyon. Victims impacted at great speed into rocks at the bottom of the canyon and were killed instantly.

*California, San Gabriel Mountains (3), Thunder Mountain*—On November 24, at approximately 10:30 a.m., Geza Bene (34), accompanied by his wife and daughter and friends boarded the Mt. Baldy Ski Lift for Baldy Notch. The party totalled seven persons. The group planned to spend the day in the vicinity of the warming hut and restaurant at the notch and have their Thanksgiving dinner there. After their meal the party started to hike toward Thunder Mountain a short distance to the south. The group was in no way prepared for hiking inasmuch as they had inadequate footgear for the icy snow conditions present and were poorly clothed for anything but a casual outing. Apparently the closer they got to Thunder Mountain, the more interested in climbing it they became. They entered a closed area, established by the Forest Service, to keep casual hikers off precipitous slopes and ridges that were covered with icy snow. Once into the restricted area, the party, with Bene in the lead, proceeded to the steepest section of one of the ridges. Without warning Bene slipped and fell approximately 800 feet down a steep snow slope. His body hit numerous rocks and trees on the way down and he was no doubt killed instantly. The accident happened at approximately 3:00 p.m. As soon as the remainder of the party could return to the Notch, San Bernardino County Mountain Rescue was called and the body was removed some five hours later using standard mountaineering techniques.

*Source:* Robert C. Gardiner, Altadena Mountain Rescue Squad.

*Analysis:* The party was neither equipped nor experienced for such an area. This was not a planned climb, but a spur of the moment decision that showed very poor judgment by all members of the party.

(On December 18, a party of four persons apparently out of curiosity decided to walk to the scene of this accident, where a member of the party repeated the previous accident and fell to his death. They had ignored signs warning about the dangers in this area.—ed.)

*California, San Gabriel Mountains (4), Echo Mountain*—Early in the afternoon of December 3, Mr. and Mrs. Bowers (27) another adult and six children (two of their own) ages 5 to 9, set out to climb Echo Mountain (3,207). The ascent was accomplished without incident via the easy and popular Sam Merrill Trail. The party arrived on the summit around 4:00 p.m., and after investigating the old cable railway terminal on the summit, decided to descend to their car via the old railway incline. The incline approaches 45° in slope in one place and terminates in a vertical drop off at the bottom.

Near the bottom of the incline the party found themselves on very steep terrain composed of very unstable rock. Daylight was fast running out. The party thought it best to stay where it was and wait for help. It was at this time that Mrs. Bowers slipped and fell a short