

*Alberta, Canadian Rockies, Mt. Olympus.* On the morning of 2 July Hartmut von Gaza (23) and Athol Abrahams (26) were ascending the N.W. ridge of Mt. Olympus (9,800 feet) at the head of Fryatt Creek. After mixed fourth and fifth class climbing, they reached a point about 500 feet from the summit where the ridge was blocked by a large gendarme. Hartmut led the first pitch and made a belay with jam nuts. Abrahams then led a rising traverse, placing a piton for his first runner, and a loop over a spike of rock for his second. From the spike he continued the traverse. He was mantleshelfing when a small (quartzite) flake serving as his only hand hold came away. He fell virtually free for about 20 feet, swung under the spike runner, and turned around so that the back of his head struck the rock. He found himself standing on a small ledge with a very sore ankle. He thinks it hit the ledge rather hard when the perlon rope stretched. Hartmut felt almost nothing of the weight of the fall at the belay; the runners appear to have taken most of the stress. Abrahams continued climbing along the ledge to a stance and placed a piton. Hartmut followed, being able to down-climb to the ledge. He led the next pitch (5.4 rock) and then the last 45° snow slope before they could walk to the summit. The ankle by this time was very painful and felt quite swollen. Nevertheless, they descended the S.E. ridge (a walk down snow-covered scree and boulders), and descended a 500 foot 45° snow slope to the glacier under the N.E. face. Abrahams waited on the moraine while Hartmut went to get help from climbers at a hut two miles away.

Abrahams expressed his gratitude to the members of the Calgary Section of the Alpine Club who carried him two miles over difficult moraine to the hut, and to the National Parks Board who provided a helicopter to transport him out of the valley.

*Source:* Athol Abrahams

*British Columbia, Northern Selkirks, Mt. Colossal.* On 19 July Margaret Bland (30) and Al Ramanaukas (29), participants in an Appalachian Mountain Club Climbing Camp organized by the New York Chapter Mountaineering Committee, and Donald Sprecker (48) left Fairy Meadow Cabin to climb Mt. Colossal by the usual route (south east ridge). They reached the summit successfully and decided to descend the south face in order to cross over to climb Horn or Unicorn. They glissaded the slope simultaneously, three abreast and roped together. They triggered an avalanche that carried them over a 50-foot high rock band which resulted in the injuries. Another party, Ed and Joan Nestor, Brad Snyder, and Don Wallace from the A.M.C. group were in the neighborhood and responded to the noise of the avalanche and Sprecker's shouts. The accident occurred about 1300. The other party reached the accident scene at about 1600. Ramanaukas was already dead. Bland was severely injured and died shortly thereafter. Sprecker had compound fractures of both legs. Snyder went down the glacier to send up aid from Fairy Meadow Cabin. He picked up a companion and the two continued on down Swan Creek for eleven hours before they reached the bank of the Columbia River. Here they were fortunately able to hail a passing truck on the other side of the River. Another truck with a two-way radio was flagged down and a helicopter rescue was requested.

In the meantime Sprecker was placed inside three sleeping bags with ponchos under and over him. The rescuers put up a tent where they spent

the night. Next morning, shortly after leaving the tent a large boulder fell on the tent where their heads had been. They therefore moved all personnel and gear to a safe place on the glacier where Sprecker was picked up and transported to Golden and later by ambulance to Calgary. Later in the day a larger helicopter came in with investigating officials and removed the two bodies.

*Source:* Appalachia 39, 143-144, 1972, and Donald Sprecker.

*Analysis:* Sprecker, a physician, reduced his fractures and spent a comfortable night on the glacier. He stated that the original plan had been to fly to Calgary but the vibration of the helicopter was such that Sprecker felt he was going into shock. Therefore they went to Golden. This points out the need to have such injuries well splinted; if not, there is a possibility of inducing shock in the injured person.

Rescuers later observed that the snow slope was an extremely unstable thin layer of wet snow on top of hard ice. The ice and steepness of the slope (about 50°) made self arrest impossible. The slope faced south and the day had been warm and sunny. The climbers apparently had not recognized the potential hazard nor appreciated the effect of a warm sunny day on a south facing slope.

## UNITED STATES

*West Virginia, Wolf Gap Recreation Area, East Face of Big Schloss Mtn.*  
On 5 August at about 1545 Dave Templeton (46) of the PATC Mountaineering Section fell 60 feet to his death from a ledge near the top of Big Schloss. He landed head first on some rocks and died instantly from head and neck injuries. Cause of fall was failure of protection.

Dave had been conducting a training session on lead climbing with two beginners, Gregory Christopulos and another person called Marty. Dave led the climb (a fairly difficult one-pitch climb with a long traverse) belayed by Greg and set up his top belay by placing a single three-quarter inch hexagonal wedge nut down into a crack in a large rectangular block. The vertical crack was open at the top and the side away from the cliff. The nut was wedged about three inches down and between some horizontal ribs which extended in from both sides. [Pete Gardiner saw Dave test the nut by pulling hard several times to the left and perpendicular to the crack, in the same direction as the rope (see diagram).] Then he tied off with a clove hitch and a carabiner on the nut runner. The distance from his single bowline waist loop to the nut was about two feet and probably a secure belay considering the rope angle and his sitting position on the smooth block.

Marty started climbing and fell at the beginning of the traverse 15 feet off the ground. He was belayed from the top and bottom and recovered successfully. After a total of about one and a half hours he finished the climb and had cleaned all of the hardware. Then he untied from both ropes. The rope down to Greg was now allowed to run straight over the edge from Dave instead of to the left as it had before. Also, it ran in the same direction as the crack and at this time there was two feet of slack behind the belay system — from the nut to Dave. Greg started to climb and asked for tension at the beginning of the traverse, fell to the ground unhurt and saw Dave land just beside him. Dave was not wearing his hardhat which he had on during the lead. According to John Bonine and Jan