

over significant rock or ice cliffs that would likely have caused major body damage.

None of the climbers appeared to be experienced snow and ice climbers. None had climbed Liberty Ridge before. Adkison was the least experienced but had climbed Mount Rainier via the Emmons Glacier, according to his wife. The Emmons does not compare with Liberty Ridge for difficulty and danger involved.

Both Kellokoski and Remmick were experienced rock climbers, having climbed such demanding faces as El Capitan, Grand Teton, Half Dome, and Devil's Tower. Their snow and ice experience was limited, as was their winter camping experience. None of the three climbers was wearing a climbing harness—an item of equipment almost universally worn by snow and ice climbers. Adkison had rented much of his equipment—the ice ax, crampons, pack and boots. Experienced climbers have their own equipment. Thus, it is surmised that although some of the climbers were well experienced on rock faces, they may have been climbing beyond their abilities on snow and ice. This relative lack of experience may have led them to decide to descend rather than dig in and weather the storm or may have directly led to a slip that could have been the combination of fatigue, hypothermia, lack of nourishment, and inexperience. (Source: John Wilcox, Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

## **STRANDED, WEATHER**

### **Washington, Snoqualmie Pass**

Jim Doub and I set out from Source Lake early Sunday morning to climb the North East Buttress of Chair Peak. Jim was doing his first rock climb rated at class 4. We ascended the route without difficulty, but near the top we saw that the weather was deteriorating quickly. We decided to continue to the summit because I felt confident that I could find the descent route, although I had not climbed the peak in five years. Upon reaching the summit, we encountered a heavy fog with visibility of no more than 15 meters. Several attempts up and down various gullies left us in the approaching darkness and some light freezing rain. Jim and I spent the night in a plastic garbage bag under a space blanket sheltered by a mountain hemlock. I became moderately hypothermic. During the night it snowed about 15 to 20 centimeters. The wind was intense. We reviewed how to deal with hypothermia, ate our emergency food, and consumed our water at regular, scheduled intervals. We chanted a meditation mantra I know, and told stories of even worse situations we had found ourselves in in the past.

In the morning our water bottles were frozen and visibility was even poorer than the previous evening. My wife had been instructed to call the sheriff at noon if we had not contacted her by then. Although it was usually perfectly feasible to descend the peak and get to a telephone in four hours after sunrise, the poor visibility did not allow us to descend easily, quickly, or safely. We found the descent route but all the ledges and traverses were heavily iced. I felt it was better to wait until further warming allowed safer passage, especially for Jim who had no experience with verglass. By the time we were down the descent chimney, it was well past noon and the rescue helicopter was circling overhead. Through the courtesy of the pilot we were lifted back to the parking lot where Mountain Rescue and the Sheriff's Department rescue unit was waiting. Neither Jim nor I was injured or required medical attention. (Source: Dick Hoskins)

**Analysis**

On the positive side, this incident shows that the rescue system works. I left a time with my wife when she was to call for help on our behalf assuming that we were indeed in difficulty requiring rescue. She had all the information needed to find us and start rescue if necessary. Jim and I were cold and miserable but our collective outdoor experience left us reasonably well-off the next morning.

Perhaps we should have left a later time with my wife to call the sheriff, but Chair Peak is in fact regarded as a short day climb. If you are not back by noon the next day, something is likely wrong. We did not expect difficulty getting off the mountain as we in fact encountered due to continuing bad weather. After it was all over, we were very concerned that Mountain Rescue was called out for a simple overdue situation. Nevertheless, it could have been far worse.

Perhaps we could have retreated earlier in the day, but I was anxious that Jim have a successful climb his first time out. It is still not clear to me if this was a judgment error. The weather did not seem all that bad; after all, cloudy weather is common in the Northwest. Not many summits are made in clear, sunny weather. Even with 20/20 hindsight, it seems we got caught in a storm at the summit and we decided to wait it out rather than risk a dangerous descent. (Source: Dick Hoskins)

**FALL ON ICE, CLIMBING ALONE AND UNROPED, INEXPERIENCE****Washington, Morning Star Peak**

On June 26, 1988, Larry Wallinger (41) left home at 0930 to practice using his new ice ax and crampons. He was teaching himself how to climb from the textbook *Freedom of the Hills*. His intent was to allow a five hour round trip from the Sunrise Mine trailhead including his time to practice the ice ax arrest on a secluded snow slope. He was reported overdue to the Snohomish County Sheriff's office at 2230.

On Thursday, July 7, Larry's body was located on Morning Star Peak at the base of a cliff in snow and rock debris. The medical examiner concluded that he had probably died from a fall down an ice face and over the cliff.

It appeared that he had fallen approximately 60 meters, losing his equipment as he fell. His ice ax was located approximately 50 meters above, with his crampons and day pack between the ice ax and the body. (Source: *Bergtrage*, Number 131, September 1988)

**Analysis**

Wallinger was reported to be very reluctant to do anything in front of people if he couldn't do it right, and would avoid others and get out of sight if other parties happened on his selected practice area. He was known to be extremely punctual, and his failure to meet a friend for a prearranged dinner surprised all who knew him. (Source: *Bergtrage*, Number 131, September 1988)

**FALL ON SNOW, DESCENDING UNROPED, PARTY SEPARATED, EXCEEDED ABILITIES, FATIGUE****Washington, Mount Shuksan**

Midway through the Fisher Chimneys about 2000 the evening of July 3, 1988, five of