

difficult ascents elsewhere on the mountain. In both cases, climbers can be tired. The combination of steep snow slopes and tired climbers can mean trouble, he said.

The south slope isn't steep enough to generally require ropes, although at 35 to 40 degrees, it's plenty steep enough to trigger uncontrolled slides. Some climbers have called it deceptive.

○ Fred Dunham, a 55-year-old Ellensburg resident who has lost track of how many times he's climbed Mount Stuart since his first ascent 35 years ago, isn't comfortable with that description.

"I would shy away from calling it deceptive," he said. "I say it's the way it is in the mountains." (Source: *Yakima Herald*, from an article by Craig Torianello, July 23, 1995)

LOSS OF CONTROL—VOLUNTARY GLISSADE

Washington, Mount Baker

On July 18, Robert Porter (48) was descending the Coleman Glacier on Mount Baker when he lost control of his glissade and tumbled into a crevasse, landing on a kind of saddle that kept him from going in deeper.

He managed to throw a rope out to his partner, who pulled him out. He was helicoptered out from there, and was in satisfactory condition in the hospital by the next day.

He was the fifth person in two years to have this kind of accident here. (Source: *The Bellingham Herald*, from an article by Mark Porter, July 19, 1995)

FALLS ON SNOW AND ICE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT—CRAMPONS WRONG SIZE AND BROKEN, MODERATE EXPERIENCE

Washington, Mount Rainier

On Saturday, August 12, John Craver (40) of Santa Cruz, CA, was descending with companions from the summit of Mount Rainier to Camp Schurman on the upper Emmons Glacier. While attempting to cross the bergschrund at 13,400 feet, he broke his ankle. Two other climbers returned over the top of Rainier and reported the accident to the climbing ranger at Camp Muir around 1700 after descending the Disappointment Cleaver route.

SMR member Luke Reinsma had standby duty at Camp Schurman on the weekend of August 12-13. Luke checked in at the White River Ranger Station and left the White River Campground at 1000 on August 12. He reached Camp Schurman at 1600 feeling tired and not ready to climb the next day. The seasonal Climbing Ranger Sean Ryan (23) was not there when he arrived, so Reinsma pitched his two-man tent and began preparing food and getting ready to get some sleep. Sean and another Seasonal Ranger, Phil Otis (22), arrived about 1700 via the top of Steamboat Prow, and immediately upon arriving and meeting Luke, asked him if he would like to climb with them the next morning. Luke declined, saying that he thought he needed to sleep. Sean began melting water in preparation for cooking a meal. About 1730, word came from White River on the radio that an accident had occurred high on the mountain, about 13,400 feet. The weather was overcast and cold, with winds blowing up to 40 mph, and it was reported that the party of three was without bivy equipment or fuel. Furthermore, it became clear that rangers on the Muir side were not able to respond immediately, and that the first response would probably have to come from the group at Camp Schurman. Sean, Phil, and Luke quickly ate and prepared to climb to assist the injured party. They understood that the two other climbers from the party of the victim were also staying over-

night with him and that equipment would be needed for three members of the victim's party as well as themselves, so they packed six sleeping bags, six thermarest pads, two tents, stoves, food, fuel, extra clothes, and first aid equipment. Sean, Phil and Luke started up the Emmons Glacier a little after 1830.

As they climbed, it soon became apparent that Luke was traveling slower than Sean and Phil, and was indeed quite tired. After about two hours of climbing at the rate of 500 feet per hour (and reaching about 10,500 feet), Luke decided he was holding the other two back and that he shouldn't continue. At this point, Sean also learned via radio from Mike Gauthier at White River that the other two uninjured climbers in the victim's party had successfully descended the Disappointment Cleaver route to Camp Muir on the south side. Only the victim was left up high. The group redivided the equipment they were carrying, and Luke untied from Sean and Phil and descended with some of the excess equipment to Camp Schurman. At this point Sean and Phil were enthusiastic, eager to get on with the climb up to the injured climber at 13,400 feet.

Luke returned to Camp Schurman about 2130, planning to get some sleep. It was clear, cold, and blowing hard. Shortly after he returned, a group of five women arrived and started trying to set up a new North Face dome tent. Luke assisted them, and boiled water for them in the hut to try to get them warmed up. He returned to the hut, and was dozing off when Sean called White River at 2335. He reported that he and Phil had reached 12,900 feet and that one of them (very likely Phil) was having trouble with a crampon. They were about 500 vertical feet below the injured climber. At 2400 White River Ranger Station called for Sean with no response after three tries. They called again at 0030, and again received no answer. When White River called for Sean at 0100 with no response once again, Luke decided that they were in real trouble and that he needed to do something. Luke found another set of crampons and a smoke grenade in the Camp Schurman hut, joined a climbing party at 0200, and left for the accident scene a second time. This time he reached 11,500 feet before becoming ill. He handed the crampons and smoke grenade off to members of the climbing party, and again descended to Schurman, arriving there at 0500. White River again called Sean at 0530 with no response.

About 0700 Climbing Ranger Jennifer Erxleben and other rangers climbing from Camp Muir reached the injured climber at 13,400 feet, found that he was in good condition and out of the wind, with adequate clothing, food and fuel. They quickly realized that Sean and Phil had not arrived, and notified White River of this. They also arranged for a helicopter evacuation of the injured climber. An Army Chinook came in at 0900, picked up the injured Craver, and deposited two more Climbing Rangers near the summit who joined in the search for Sean and Phil. Craver was flown to Good Samaritan Hospital in Puyallup.

About 1000 the Chinook came back with Climbing Ranger Mike Gauthier on board and began assisting in the search. A short time later Sean and Phil were spotted from the air at the 12,000 foot level at the foot of a small cliff. Around the same time, Climbing Rangers found slide marks at 13,200 feet directly above the location of their bodies, and the climbing party to whom Luke had given the crampons and smoke flare found a part of a crampon and a blue ice ax (both of which turned out to belong to Phil Otis). The Chinook picked up the bodies of Ryan and Otis about 1100. (Source: *Bergtrage*, Seattle Mountain Rescue, Number 146, January 1996).

Analysis

Icy conditions, inexperience and faulty equipment all played a role in the deaths.

"Even the best climbers, had we sent them, could have met a tragic end under those conditions," said John Krambrink, chief ranger at Mount Rainier National Park. The

two rangers confronted one problem after another, but were determined to prevent John Craver's death from exposure. They fell when they stopped at 13,200 feet to fix their equipment on August 12.

Otis had climbed Mount Rainier once and Mount Baker once, while Ryan had climbed Mount Rainier 11 times. They had enough experience to handle a rescue under less severe conditions, Krambrink said. But "I don't think any of us would have sent (Otis) up there had we known what the conditions were."

Otis did not thrust his ice ax deep into the snow and snap his rope to it, a technique most climbers use for an anchor, the report said. His ax was later found with only the tip in the snow. Also, one of the crampons didn't fit his boot properly, and the other had broken in half and was no longer screwed in tightly.

In their last radio contact, Ryan said Otis was having trouble with his crampons. He used duct tape and then white athletic tape to try to secure them, the report says.

Otis probably found the park-owned crampons in the hut at Camp Schurman, the base camp for ascents up the northeast face. (Source: From a report issued by an eight member panel of National Park Service employees and independent climbers who reviewed Mount Rainier National Park's internal investigation)

FALL ON ROCK, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Washington, North Cascades, Liberty Bell

On August 14, Stim Bullit (75) and I (47) were climbing the third pitch (I led the first two pitches)—a crack above a ledge. Stim got to the crux of the 5.8 crack, couldn't figure it out and backed down. I volunteered to try to lead it, couldn't figure out how to climb the crux either, so I began to down climb. I fell while down climbing. My feet slipped off the wall. The protection held well, but my right leg apparently took full force of the fall on a ledge or other protrusion. After the injury, my leg would not hold my weight. We rappelled to the base of the climb; I bivouacked and Stim left and drove to phone mountain rescue people.

Analysis

I'm not a skilled technical climber and have never led above 5.7. I have done only a few top roped 5.8 pitches. My partner is much better technically and has led up to 5.9. In the hot flush of summit fever, I allowed desire to overcome judgment, exceeding my limit, and paid the price.

My repeated training in Mountaineering First Aid was very helpful. It allowed me to remain calm, set up a comfortable bivy, treat myself for shock, and even sleep until rescuers came. As much as I complain about getting recertified every three years, it's worth it. (Source: Kathy O'Toole)

FALL ON SNOW/ICE, MODERATE EXPERIENCE

Washington, Mount Rainier

On August 20, Scott Porter (32), Karl Ahrens (35) and Brian Nelson (32) were descending the upper Emmons Glacier after summiting. SMR members Kim Klasch and Bob Schumaker were on standby duty at Camp Schurman. At 1405 Klasch was watching parties on the route when he saw the group of three begin falling about the 13,400 foot level. They slid and fell about 2,400 feet down to the 11,000 foot level before coming to a stop in a crevasse. Klasch, Schumaker, and a Park Service Ranger left Camp Schurman