

Soloing is not to blame, although if he had had a partner, perhaps something would have been double checked.

This is the first climbing fatality in Zion National Park. There have been two previous deaths in Zion involving rappelling, but these from canyoneers, and were not considered to be "climbing" accidents by the Park. (Source: Dan Stih)

## **AVALANCHE**

### **Utah, Provo Canyon, Bridal Veil Falls**

A large, out-of-the-ordinary storm struck Utah on January 25. It snowed heavily along the Wasatch Front until noon and then switched to a mixture of heavy rain and snow, and later in the afternoon went back to snowing. Ice climbers were on the ice in the vicinity of Bridal Veil Falls during this warming period. The Bridal Veil Falls area in Provo Canyon is world renowned for spectacular ice climbing and it is also the location of the steepest tram in the world. That was until last year when the tram was destroyed by an avalanche.

About 1215, an avalanche came down through a chute just east of Bridal Veil Falls. It caught two roped together ice climbers, swept them off the ledge they were on and took them 250 feet down steep terrain through scattered pines and oak brush.

Other ice climbers in the vicinity responded. One of the victims was buried in about two feet of snow and they said the rope made it easy finding him. They called the Utah County Sheriff's Office on a cell phone while they were digging the victim out. They said that one victim was seriously hurt and that they were doing CPR on a second victim.

Members of the Utah County Sheriff's SAR were immediately dispatched and arrived in under an hour. An avalanche dog and a handler from nearby Sundance Ski Resort also responded in case there were other victims. The ice climbing area is about 800 feet above the canyon floor. The steep ascent combined with knee-deep snow in pines and oak brush made the climb difficult. An attempt was made to stay clear of the avalanche runout zones, but there were not many choices in getting to the victims.

The approaching hasty team was split. Three members went to the injured victim and two to the possible fatality. The injured climber who had been buried was Scott Lee from Sandy, Utah. There is no doubt that the ice climbers saved his life. Scott knew his climbing partner, Doug Hall, was probably dead.

Scott was still caught in a pocket of rock-hard avalanche debris. It was not easy to get him out of the hole and onto a backboard. His injuries included hip, lower back and chest pain, and the whole side of his head was starting to swell. Scott said he broke his back skiing the year before and that this accident might end his winter sports.

Scott's vital signs were stable and his level of consciousness good, but he was shivering uncontrollably and he was soaking wet. Everyone agreed that the best course of action was to stabilize him and go. As he was being packaged in the stokes, an avalanche ran out of Lost Canyon, across the highway from the rescue. It came down at least 2000 feet and it stopped at the edge of the highway. The billowing snow cloud came halfway across the canyon and it was an awesome sight. The command post had the canyon closed. The weather conditions were letting up some, but the blowing rain and snow continued. Scott, the rescuers, and the belay system rope were soaking wet and caked in ice.

Scott was delivered to waiting Provo Paramedics and Doug Hall's body was brought out twenty minutes later. As everyone was driving out of the canyon, another small avalanche ran just west of Bridal Veil Falls. It was good to be out of there!

I checked with the Utah Valley Regional Medical Center the following morning, and Scott was listed in stable condition with internal injuries. (Source: Chris Reed, SAR Team)

## **FALL ON ROCK**

### **Utah, Diamond Fork**

On May 8, we were paged out at 1730 for a fall victim, still hanging from his rope, in Diamond Fork Canyon.

When I arrived on scene the boy (victim) was sitting in a car. Dick asked me to check him out, but the boy did not want any medical attention. He had been up walking around prior to deputies arriving on the scene.

The boy's father requested that he be transported by ambulance to the hospital to be evaluated. Dick asked me to check his injuries. I put a cervical collar on him. He had a laceration to the top of his head, but no other obvious injuries. He was aware of time and place, and I had difficulty in convincing him to stop moving his neck and back. He just kept moving his neck, twisting and reaching over to the other side of the car, after I told him numerous times to stop moving his head and back.

His companions, a guy and two girls, were quite concerned about his well being and one of the girls was quite emotional. She had run down the road to Little Diamond when she was unable to start the injured boy's car.

I talked to the boy who was teaching them to rappel. He said that he was on belay as well as on the rappelling line. That was fortunate. The injured boy had not yet started rappelling when he lost his balance and tumbled over the edge. Since he was on belay, he did not fall very far, but he pendulumed and struck his head. His companions said he lost consciousness and was hanging limp in his seat harness. They said he even had some seizure activity. The one girl ran for help while the others lowered the injured boy to the ground. He regained consciousness and was able to walk down to the road and their car.

Spanish Fork Ambulance transported him to Mountain View Hospital. (Source: Chris Reed, SAR Team)

## **FALL ON ROCK, FATIGUE, MISCOMMUNICATION**

### **Washington, Icicle Creek, Eight Mile Buttress**

On Sunday, April 16, Andy Toning was participating in a rock climbing field trip as a student in the Seattle Mountaineers Intermediate Climbing Course. He was ascending the Tree Route on Eight Mile Buttress. This is a popular multi-pitch route which has been used by climbers for decades and is rated 5.6 or 5.7. The first pitch of the route may be started on the left as a chimney rated 5.6 or 5.5 or may be started on the right at a steep crack rated 5.7. Sam LeBarron was Andy's instructor and was belaying him at the time of the fall. Three other students and one instructor were ahead of Andy and Sam on the route. Two of these had completed the first pitch, and the second rope team was on the pitch, followed by Andy, who was leading.

The climber who was climbing just ahead of Andy was having difficulty because he was wearing a heavy pack which seemed to be pulling him over backward and made it difficult for him to complete some of the harder moves. Andy, now on the route, waited behind this climber while he worked to overcome the difficulty.

In the meantime, two other climbers who were not in the course arrived at the base of the route, accompanied by their two dogs. Another instructor, Vera Dewey, was also