from it. The victim began a rappel and the chockstone failed. The victim fell about 200 feet, landing in a gully. The victim spent the night out while the partner went for help. The victim suffered fractures of the skull, vertebrae and pelvis, as well as acute hypothermia. (Source: Michael Mixon, Tacoma Mountain Rescue Unit)

(Editor's Note: Michael Mixon was not able to get ages, gender, and names of these climbers. Obviously the victim's partner chose the wiser course of letting the one who set the anchor go first. But there are some questions going begging here...

Some 1996 data came in, but is still incomplete. One report from May of 1996 involved eleven Seattle Mountaineers being avalanched on Red Mountain near Snoqualmie Pass. Nine of them were swept down a gully or over rock, falling as much as 100 feet. Nine were injured, two of them, including the leader, severely. The group had assessed the route for avalanche danger, but the soft snow travelled over the rock band they were on and caught them.

Of the several accidents included in the Washington data but not reported in the narratives, a few were in what can be called the "classic" category. These include crampons catching on pant legs while descending; at least five unbelayed novices, most on organized outings, unable to self-arrest; a stranded couple who simply needed to be re-directed to a walk-off route; a simple slip of less than two feet while descending a hand-line, resulting in a fractured ankle and an all-night rescue in the rain; two solo fatalities, one hiker and one climber, details unknown; and a "hand hold came off," resulting in a sixty foot fall. There were at least six other cases like the latter reported from other states this year.)

FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING UNROPED, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT—HIKING BOOTS—AND NO HARD HAT

West Virginia, River Rocks

On April 20, Mark Williamson (25) had finished a day of climbing and had already changed from his climbing shoes to his hiking boots. He reportedly spied a carabiner up a climb and decided to retrieve it. It was a 5.9+ route, but he did not change back to his rock shoes to rope up. About 20 feet he fell to rocky, sloping ground and rolled another 20 feet to land head down the slope, where the Rescue Squad found him. Squad call-out was at 6:30 p.m. and the Skills Team was called out at 6:45 p.m. when the need for a roped, belayed descent was determined.

Mark's initial vital signs were taken in the head-down position in which he was found. When he was transferred to a backboard and brought level, his vital signs began to drop significantly. In addition, extensive head abrasions and contusions were obvious, so helicopter transport was called. However, Mark's vital signs stabilized during the descent and remained stable thereafter. He was flown to UVA Hospital in Charlottesville, VA, and found to have a fractured vertebrate, abdominal injuries, and extensive abrasions with a few contusions. He recovered well and came back during the summer to thank his rescuers and apologize to the local landowner. (Source: Jim Underwood, Pendelton County Tactical Skills Team)

(Editor's Note: In situations like this, there must be a formula for calculating the ultimate price of a carabiner, etc., by determining the relationship between the climber's degree of desire and level of climbing skill.)