

carried down approximately ¼ mile of talus slope to Hwy 140. Although the air ambulance was ordered, it was later canceled and Davis was taken by ground ambulance to the Yosemite Medical Clinic where she was treated for a greenstick fracture of the pelvis and released. (Source: Ruth Middlecamp, Ranger, Yosemite National Park.)

### **Analysis**

The first 50 feet of this route is rotten (loose) rock, with lousy protection possibilities, so the standard practice is to free-solo that part before setting up a belay anchor. We don't know whether she tested the hold. She leads hard routes and is comfortable free-soloing 5.9. (Source: John Dill, SAR Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

## **EXPOSURE TO SEVERE WEATHER, HYPOTHERMIA, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT—PORTALEGE, POOR POSITION**

### **California, Yosemite Valley, El Capitan**

On May 26 at 1415, Yosemite Dispatch received a telephone call from Robert Burton, who reported that he had received a cellular telephone call from Craig Calonica (45), who, along with Jordi Tosas (30) was climbing "New Dawn" on El Capitan. Calonica asked Burton to call the Park and summon help for Tosas. According to Calonica, Tosas was hypothermic and in "pretty bad shape" after spending the night "sitting in a waterfall" inside his portaledge. Tosas' single, A-5 portaledge fly system was inadequate against the snow/rain storm they experienced the night before. Calonica did not believe Tosas would make it through another night without suffering severe hypothermia.

A rescue effort was immediately initiated to remove Tosas from El Capitan before nightfall. A two-pronged strategy was developed. First, fly the rescue team to the top of El Capitan to implement a raising/lowering system; second, fly a helicopter with winch capability to remove Tosas from the wall. Tosas was removed using the throw bag technique and winch from Naval Air Station Leemore.

Calonica was raised to the top of El Capitan by the rope rescue team. By 2030, all rescue personnel and both climbers were returned to the heli-base. Tosas was transported to Yosemite Medical Clinic for medical observation. (Source: Ruth Middlecamp, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

### **Analysis**

Calonica had a cell phone, lap top, e-mail setup and a weather radio, yet he said the storm was a complete surprise. Tosas is a very experienced international climber and UIAGM guide. Tosas' portaledge was an older style and not adequate for the conditions, especially in the location where it was pitched. Here is part of a transcript from an interview with Craig Calonica:

"We were both getting wet, damp, but not really soaked. We were sitting on the ledge under the fly, getting condensation on us where we touched the fly. We sat there for quite a while, waiting for it to stop. We didn't want to break out the other ledge because we thought it was going to blow through and we weren't planning to stay there.

“That’s when I called a friend in the Bay Area and he said it was clear and should be clearing up in the Valley soon, but it didn’t look like it to me... I’ve lived at Squaw my entire life and we’ll be getting a blizzard when it’s clear in the Bay.

“The next morning (Tuesday) it was cold as hell. Every bit of water froze when it touched something. That’s when I noticed, speaking with Jordi, that he was having problems, chattering, couldn’t do simple functions like grabbing gear from the bag, like clothes, food, an extra ensolite pad. He had all the bags under him.

“I was doing fine. I had all my gear in my ledge before I got in and I changed into my Goretex one-piece suit. This was Monday evening about five. I left everything on. If there was a break I was going to go on.

“In the morning we were getting hit hard first by rain, then it broke up and was clear, steamy on the wall, but bitter cold and windy. And the runoff was turning to ice. There were icicles hanging off my ropes above us and I knew we’d get nailed when the ice above us started releasing. I remember big [sheets of ice] coming off Zenyatta a few years ago. Even though the wall was steep, they were flying back into the wall. So I was looking at the ice above us and thinking this was not a good situation, with it cold like this. More than anything else it was bitter cold. I can’t remember it being that cold that time of year, ever.

“I wanted to move out of there, but I knew Jordi wasn’t in any shape to go. Our bags were brand new Moonstone dri-loft Goretex. If you sit inside those things they’re going to keep you warm no matter what, even if you’re soaking wet. Mine *was* soaking wet—I could have sponged it out. Jordi’s was the same. He said he had a river going through his ledge, big gushes of water at times.

“Everything in my ledge was soaking wet but I had no rivers, just condensation. I stuck some things out late that day to try to get them to drip dry, but they froze solid instantly.

“My ledge was an A5/North Face double and the fly had a tent pole that kept the fly off of me—a great thing to have. It was a standard fly. Jordi had my single A5 ledge, an older model, with a seam-sealed fly, like brand new. Mine was not seam sealed, but it had only one seam.” (Source: From a report by John Dill, SAR, Yosemite National Park)

## **STRANDED, INEXPERIENCE, INADEQUATE CLOTHING, DARKNESS, WEATHER**

### **California, Yosemite Valley, Royal Arches**

On May 28, Kevin Calvert (18) and Kacee Fujinami (19) were benighted while descending Royal Arches. They were able to complete the descent early the next morning, though a rescue effort had been put in place.

### **Analysis**

This seemingly bland incident has some interesting lessons. Below is a summary of information provided to rangers in an interview.

**Experience.** Kacee Fujinami and Calvert were here in Yosemite with the Alpine Club of Santa Maria High School. Both were acting as advisors with