

to back-clip the protection. (Source: Steve Muelhauser, Park Manager II, Eldorado Canyon State Park)

*(Editor's Note: Steve Muelhuaser indicated in an e-mail that this was the only reported accident of any significance in the park for 2003.)*

## **FALLING ROCK-DISLODGED**

### **Colorado, McCurdy State Park, Blockbuster**

My partner was injured while climbing a route near "Blockbuster" on September 9. A loose block (about 6x6x4 feet) pulled while he was following. He struck his knee on the way down. Thankfully there was no compound fracture injury nor dire blood loss taking place, although the combination of lacerations, contusions, and weather (40 F) were conspiring to put him in to shock pretty quickly. (Source: Ryan Gamlin, posted on the climbing-boulder.com website, sent forward by Leo Paik)

*(Editor's Note: Rocky Mountain National Park reported that there were no significant incidents to report from 2003. There are always a number of "overdues," but this year it appears there were no fatalities or serious injuries.)*

## **FALLING ROCK, POOR POSITION**

### **Montana, Beartooth Wilderness, Silver Run Peak**

On August 24, around 0600, my wife, Rebecca Hodgkin, and I left camp—located just off the West Fork of Rock Creek Trail near Quinnebaugh Meadows—to climb Pensive Tower (III 5.8) on Silver Run Peak. At approximately 1100 we started the fifth pitch of the 9-10 pitch route. Rebecca was leading. Soon she was about thirty-five feet above me and out of sight. She took out a couple more feet of rope and declared, "I'm a little sketched out here!" There was a large loose boulder just laying in the granite seam above her. She said it was lying so precariously that if she did not knock it loose when she climbed above it, the rope surely would. I quickly evaluated my belay stance and determined, based on the small rocks clearing my head when I was standing erect and the fact that Rebecca had moved beyond an overhang, that hunkering down in a small alcove would undoubtedly be a good refuge from raining rocks. I assumed the position and called out, "Let her fly!"

From above I heard, "Here it comes!" I waited for the all too familiar clicking and clacking of falling rock but I heard nothing. Just as I was about to ask if she let it loose, the granite basketball hit me square in my back. The impact knocked me off the ledge and I swung like a pendulum due to my anchor being off to the side. In severe pain, I managed to get back on the ledge and lower Rebecca. She then put me on belay, and I down-climbed four feet to the left where there was a better ledge.

We are both Wilderness First Responders and took all of the necessary precautions for a spinal injury. We did a spine injury evaluation. I had proper motor function in both lower and upper extremities, as well as adequate sensation. I was alert and had no abnormal tingling sensation.