minimized the head injury. Having an M.D. and paramedic in one's party is always good fortune. (Source: Jeff Sheetz, Portland Mountain Rescue)

FALLING ROCK, WEATHER, LATE START

Oregon, Mount Hood, Cooper Spur

On July 27, Dr. Gary Lee (55), an experienced climber, and his son Devin (20) finished the ascent of the Sunshine route in the early afternoon. They descended by the Cooper Spur route, stopping at a snowfield at the 10,000-foot level to unrope and don crampons. Believing that the worst part of the climb was behind them, they continued down the snowfield until a watermelon-sized rock struck Dr. Lee in the back and sent him tumbling down the fall line. He fell about 1000 feet out of sight and became wedged between boulders on the steep north face. Devon continued descending, calling after his father, but was unable to make contact. He was met by two hikers who placed a 911-cell phone call notifying authorities of the accident.

The body recovery by ground teams involved hazards associated with loose rock on the exposed north face and included an airdrop of a 600-foot rope.

Analysis

Nearby climbers observed the pair during their ascent and noted their lateness on route. Also, the previous night remained warm, so the snow surface did not freeze/stabilize. Climbers must adjust their schedules for early starts to beat the diurnal heating cycle and be well clear of rockfall hazards by mid-morning. Rescuers experienced late season conditions (thin snowcover, icy surfaces, and excessive rockfall). The party's upper descent route was completely free of snow/ice, thereby exposing a bed of unstable rock. Though the party did not wear helmets, this choice would probably not have affected the outcome of such a long fall. However, this might be an indicator of their unawareness of the climbing conditions. (Source: Jeff Sheetz, Portland Mountain Rescue)

FALL ON SNOW, UNABLE TO SELF-ARREST, CLIMBING ALONE, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Oregon, Mount Hood, Southside

On October 19, Chris Biddle (30), a novice climber, lost his footing at 10,900-foot elevation while descending the Southside Route. Unable to self-arrest he slid about 300 feet. A nearby climber who witnessed the fall reported his accident via cell phone. The witness and another climber were able to stabilize Biddle until a PMR ground team (supplemented by AMR Reach-and-Treat medics) climbed to the accident sites. The subject was air-evacuated by a Blackhawk helicopter to a local hospital.

Analysis

Late season conditions (normal in October!) existed on the route making the novice climb technically difficult. Biddle later admitted that he had gone beyond his abilities to travel safely on the icy terrain. Without the support of a rope team, a novice solo climber takes great risks on technical terrain. (Source: Jeff Sheetz, Portland Mountain Rescue)

FALL ON ICE, ROPE SEVERED ON JAGGED ROCKS

Pennsylvania, Toby Creek, Buttermilk Falls

Police in Luzerne County say Luke Wolfgang (age not reported) fell 30-40 feet when his rope was cut on jagged rocks as he tried to climb the Buttermilk Falls area of Toby Creek.

Rescuers say the New Hope man was climbing with friends yesterday morning when the accident occurred. They say he was taken to a Scranton hospital with injuries that did not appear life-threatening, though he did suffer some broken bones.

Officials say his friends had to walk to the highway to get help because there is no cell phone service in the climbing area. (Source: From an Associated Press article sent to us with no date or additional information.)

FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING UNROPED

Pennsylvania, Tohickon Valley Park

Joseph McDevitt (26) was in serious condition yesterday after plunging at least 70 feet to the ground in a fall off a cliff in Bucks County. He was airlifted and treated in the intensive care unit at St. Luke's Hospital near Bethlehem, officials said.

Analysis

The 200-foot cliffs of red shale along Tohickon Creek are popular among climbers. While falls like McDevitt's "do occur, it's not commonplace," county spokesman Chris Edwards said.

A witness said McDevitt had no rope or safety harness. Witnesses differed on whether McDevitt wore a helmet. (Source, from an article by Jeff Gammage, in the *Philadelphia Inquirer.* No date given)

(Editor's Note: We are sure that other incidents occur in PA. At the moment, we rely on inconsistent sources for information from this region.)

FALL ON ROCK – RAPPEL ERROR (UNEVEN ROPES)

South Dakota, Needles, Moonlight Ridge

Another climbing legend passed on today. On June 24, Paul Duval (71) died of injuries sustained when he rappelled off the end of an un-equalized rope at Moonlight Ridge.