

trivial, in slightly different circumstances it could have been much more serious. When Freitag landed on the ledge, his left leg hung over 1,500 feet of exposure. Had he fallen more backwards, or had he rolled when he hit the ledge, he quite probably would have gone down all the way. The nearness of this possibility raises the question of when to use a rope in the mountains. It is sometimes the case that speed becomes safer than the security of a rope, or that a fall by one member of the party could pull all the others off after him. But normally when a fall is possible, and the results of such an unchecked fall would be severe injury or death, roping is advisable. Too many persons are killed or hurt because the climbing is "easy" and they are in a hurry.

Freitag believes that confronted with the same situation he would do the same thing, being more careful to test the rock and to distribute his body weight. I believe, however, that in such circumstances it would be wiser to rope up. Regardless of what some climbers may think there is no disgrace in using the rope for its intended purpose even on terrain not technically very difficult.

*California, Sierra Nevada, Sugar Bowl.* On 2 January John G. Hurst (33) and Molly Goodman (26) were making a well known ski tour from Sugar Bowl to Benson Hut, on the slopes of Mt. Anderson. Hurst was on skis and Goodman on snowshoes. One normally starts by climbing to near the top of Mt. Lincoln and traversing south across the east face. The Mt. Lincoln chair lift had been closed for several days, therefore, the Sugar Bowl ski patrol had not been up the mountain to trigger avalanches on dangerous slopes. The wind-slab avalanche was great due to previous heavy snowfall accompanied by high winds. Before the pair started up the mountain they were warned by the Sugar Bowl ski patrol to avoid that slope. They had the option of crossing south on top of the mountain or going through the trees low on the east face. They cut across the middle of the dangerous slope, 200 feet below the top. The avalanche carried them into the trees. Hurst was half buried and suffered broken ribs. He extricated himself, probed for her body with a ski pole, and then started down for help, sinking in two or three feet at each step. The accident happened at 1:30. Two hours later he reached Sugar Bowl Lodge. At about 5:00 p.m., with Hurst as guide, the first rescue team started up. Miss Goodman's body was found at 8:30 p.m., buried under eight feet of snow.

*Source:* Royal Robbins and Clyde Deal.

*Analysis:* An unfortunate case of misjudgment.

*California, Yosemite National Park.* On 21 March Marcus Cohen, Bob Snively, Elaine Leachman, and Margo Percival (18) were descending the Monday Morning slabs. The accident occurred at the bottom of the second and last rappel. Margo Percival had gone down first on belay and had untied and the belay rope was being hauled up for the next person when a fist-sized rock was dislodged from the belay ledge by the rope and bounced 140 feet down the 60 degree slope and struck her on the forehead at the hairline, above her left eye. Ample warning was given