

a badly sprained left ankle, strained left arch of the foot and a fractured left humerus. Neptune sustained a strained left knee but was able to walk.

Improvised splinting and first aid was done by Neptune and they continued their descent to Emerald Lake. Assistance of two other Park visitors was later obtained and they reached Emerald Lake at 5 p.m. A carryout operation was initiated and Wilson was evacuated from just below Dream Lake. (Source: Larry Van Slyke, Rocky Mountain National Park)

Analysis: It is common practice to change footwear after a technical climb. But Elizabeth Wilson changed into tennis shoes, which were not the best for descending snowfields. (Source: J. Williamson)

AVALANCHE, CLIMBING ALONE—Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Longs Peak. On May 2 at 10 a.m. Alan Russell (26) was swept from his stance about 100 feet above the old "cables" by a slab avalanche. Russell fell down high angle rock and snow for an estimated distance of 600 feet sustaining possible fractured ribs and internal injuries. Russell was climbing solo. He was able to walk back to camp at the Boulderfield where he awaited assistance. Colbourn, his companion, went for help. At 1:30 p.m. Colbourn reported from the Longs Peak Ranger Station by telephone to ROMO Dispatch about the accident. St. Anthony's Helicopter was requested and arrived at the Beaver Meadows Helispot at 2:15 p.m. Mission complete at 3 p.m. (Source: Larry Van Slyke, Rocky Mountain National Park)

Analysis: I telephoned Mr. Russell to follow up on the details of his accident. He said that he had triggered a powdery avalanche approximately 30 × 50 feet in area and was not certain how deep (suspected 6–8 inches) which swept him down the face. He was wearing a climbing helmet to which he gives strong credit for saving severe head injuries, if not his life. He recalled striking his head often and his helmet sustained extensive damage. Mr. Russell did have an ice axe but it was ineffective in arresting his fall. He was released from St. Anthony's after a thorough examination which revealed only minor contusions. He was climbing solo but used an Edlrid rope to ascend the "cables" portion of the North Face. He left his rope in place to use in descent and was about 100 feet above the fixed rope when the incident occurred. As far as he knows, his rope is still there. (Source: Larry Van Slyke, Rocky Mountain National Park)

AVALANCHE AND CLIMBING ALONE—Colorado, Mt. Ypsilon. At 8:43 a.m. on July 6, 1976, Christopher Sommer telephoned ROMO Dispatch to report an overdue friend, Jim Boicourt (29). Sommer believed Boicourt to be in the Ypsilon Lake area. A trailhead check by Park Rangers identified Boicourt's vehicle (Saab, Colo. BE 6365) parked at the Lawn Lake trailhead. On receiving this information, Sommer told ROMO Dispatch he would drive

up immediately from Boulder. In the meantime, Park Search and Rescue personnel were alerted to the possible overdue party and a search of Backcountry Permit files was initiated to establish Boicourt's intentions. No permit was found.

Sommer arrived at Park Headquarters at 10 a.m. and met with Ranger Logan where the following details were noted. Somer and Boicourt had planned to climb "Blitzen Ridge" (a high angle rock ridge, spur of Ypsilon Mountain). Sommer became ill and notified Boicourt that he could not make the climb. Boicourt told Sommer that he would go up on Sunday (July 4) anyway and "look over the conditions" of the area. As far as Sommer knew, Boicourt intended only to hike up to and around the Ypsilon/Spectacle Lakes area. Sommer became worried about Boicourt Monday night (July 5) when Boicourt had not returned to his Denver home, as Boicourt was scheduled to be in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, on Tuesday (July 6). When Boicourt still had not returned home by Tuesday morning, Sommer notified ROMO Dispatch of his overdue friend.

A physical description and clothing/equipment description was obtained from Sommer's memory of that Boicourt "normally" wore on mountaineering trips and what he thought he may or may not have taken on this trip. It was Sommer's impression that Boicourt would not take unnecessary chances, particularly while hiking alone, and that if he had planned to overnight he would have obtained the required permit. Sommer noted also that Boicourt had never been in the Ypsilon/Spectacle Lakes area before, but had 6 years of mountaineering experience and was capable of climbing up to 5.8 technical rock.

Considering that (1) Sommer's impression was that Boicourt planned only a day-hike into the area, (2) Boicourt was a young man (29) and in good physical condition and (3) Boicourt's commitment to a meeting in Glenwood Springs which (according to Sommer) Boicourt would definitely not have neglected, a hasty search was initiated with four park rangers (later a fifth was dispatched from the Lawn Lake area). The search team was mobilized at 11 a.m., July 6, and departed the Lawn Lake trailhead at 12:30 p.m. for Ypsilon/Spectacle/Fay Lakes areas.

At 5:19 p.m., July 6, Ranger Anderson reported sighting a red pack on the snowfield immediately below the "Y Couloir" (snow filled gullies forming the letter "Y" on the Southeast face of Ypsilon Mountain). At 5:20 p.m. Anderson reported what appeared to be a person, fatally injured, adjacent to the pack. At 6:01 p.m. Anderson reported that it was, in fact, Boicourt (from driver's license) and that it was a fatality.

Since Boicourt was alone and there were apparently no witnesses to the incident, it is difficult to establish what actually led to Boicourt's death. However, evidence at the scene strongly suggests: (1) Boicourt was attempting a technical climb of the Y Couloir. He was found wearing one crampon (the other apparently ripped from his other boot was found down the snowfield below the body). An ice axe was allegedly taken (Sommer) but not recovered. (2) Boicourt fell a great distance over rock and snow. His body was badly contused, lacerated and suffered a severe avulsion of the scalp. His clothing was torn and much

of it ripped away from his body. His pack (apparently being worn at the time of the incident—flaps tied down and contents secured inside) was torn from his body yet the pack waist strap was still secured to Boicourt's waist when found. Boicourt's climbing helmet was found with the chin strap fastened as though he were wearing it at the time. The helmet had several crushed spots in the fiberglass suggesting that it was subjected to point impacts (rocks) while being worn then was lost sometime during the fall. (3) That Boicourt was the victim of either a wet slab avalanche or a cornice fracture. The body was found partially covered by snow and appeared to have "melted" out from snow cover. Fresh avalanche debris was noted all around Boicourt's location. Troughs were noted in the snow-filled gully of the Y Couloir indicating fresh avalanche activity. (Source: Larry Van Slyke, Rocky Mountain National Park)

Analysis: The potential of an avalanche in July was probably considered nil. But the cornice overhanging the Y Coulior was awesome and should have been recognized as a possible hazard. Again, climbing alone is an additional risk. (Source: Larry Van Slyke, Rocky Mountain National Park)

RAPPEL FAILURE, INADEQUATE PROTECTION—*Missouri, Mark Twain South County Bank.* Evelyn F. Mooers (54) fell 40 feet to her death during a rappelling exercise. A group of ten bank officials and friends were present. Police said she had attached her climbing rope to a drain pipe grating on the roof of the three story building. The grating gave way. (Source: *Boston Globe*, April 30, 1976)

Analysis: Climbing has become a national sport. Many television advertisements show climbers in a variety of thrilling situations. Rappelling has often been used as a "demonstration" exercise to show the general public an aspect of the climbing world. When attempting to use buildings for such purposes, one must attend to the same safety precautions as if in the mountains. *The Night Climbers of Cambridge* provides good advice on techniques. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALL/SLIP ON ICE, EXCEEDED ABILITIES—*New Hampshire, Mt. Washington, Huntington's Ravine.* On March 25, Margaret Snyder Cassidy (24) of Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, her husband Daniel (24), and her two brothers Jim (19) and Mike Snyder (13) of Elkins, New Hampshire, traveled to AMC Pinkham Notch Camp with intentions of staying 2 nights at AMC Hermit Lake Shelter Area in Tuckerman Ravine. Their gear included skis, snowshoes, ice axes, and crampons, although not every member of the party had all of this equipment. The party arrived at Hermit Lake that afternoon. The following day, March 26, the party left Hermit Lake ascending the AMC Lion Head Trail and started across the Alpine Garden. It was a spectacular day; light winds, dark blue sky, brilliant sunshine, temperatures in the 50s. The party