

FALL ON ROCK, WASPS, NO HARD HAT**New York, Shawangunks**

On May 15, a climber (22) was leading Disneyland, a 5.5 route, when he was stung by a wasp. He fell and hit his head, which resulted in a loss of consciousness for 30–40 seconds. (Source: Brad Snyder)

Analysis

This is the third year running for this kind of accident. Unfortunately, there seem to be a number of locations for wasps and snakes in this area. It seems that a hard hat, among other possible protections, is warranted here, even when relieving oneself, for another climber was doing the latter under a large boulder when he was bitten in the ankle by a copperhead. The problem came when he stood up quickly from his stooped position; he cracked his head on the overhanging rock and cut himself. (Source: J. Williamson)

RAPPEL FAILURE**New York, Shawangunks**

While descending Easy Overhang on July 28, a climber (18) rappelled off the end of his rope and fell 20 feet, suffering cuts and bruises. (Source: Brad Snyder)

Analysis

In many places in this climbing area, a 150-foot rope length brings one to the ground or a ledge. It is not known if this climber expected this or not. The accident is presented because it is now such a rare occurrence. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALL ON ROCK**New York, Shawangunks**

On December 2, a climber (age unknown) fell while setting up a top rope on a route called Reefer Madness. He sustained arm and back injuries which warranted a visit to the hospital. (Source: Brad Snyder)

Analysis

This is not an uncommon situation. Last year, a similar accident occurred in North Carolina and was reported in this journal. When the climbing part of the climb is over, there is that potential relaxation of awareness, that feeling of security. Turning one's back to the edge, not securing one's position, and focusing only on such things as rope coiling or setting up a belay are among the activities that can distract one from the immediate danger. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALL ON ROCK, FAILURE TO FOLLOW ROUTE, ROPE SEVERED**New York, Shawangunks**

On April 29, a climber (20) became tired while attempting High Exposure, a 5.6 route. He was also off route. He fell, and his rope severed as a result of impact on a sharp edge of rock. The climber fell 150 feet to the ground, sustaining only a broken ankle thanks to his fall being broken by trees along the way. (Source: Brad Snyder)

Analysis

This is one of the very few accidents over the years in which the climbing rope parted. It is important to note that the rope did not “fail” in the fatigue sense of the word, but rather was cut as a result of impact on a sharp edge. The capabilities of modern climbing ropes have come under the scrutiny of “advanced technology,” but for the best analysis and perspective on ropes, you should read “Climbing Rope Myths” by Royal Robbins in the February-March 1979 issue of *Summit*. (Source: J. Williamson)

LIGHTNING, BAD WEATHER

Oregon, Mt. Jefferson

On September 1, a party of seven moderately experienced climbers departed Pamela Lake (3,884 feet) at 6 a.m. in clear weather to climb Mt. Jefferson (10,497 feet) via the Southwest Ridge. About 8 a.m., one member of the party sprained his ankle and returned, alone, to camp. It was about this time that the party first noticed high, thin clouds.

By 9 a.m., the party noted increasing clouds to the west, but concluded, due to light winds, that they were not threatening and decided to continue the climb. At noon, the party was climbing on an eastern exposure of the ridge at about 9,000 feet and was unable to see approaching weather. As the party reached Red Saddle (10,000 feet) about 1 p.m., clouds began to engulf the top thousand feet of the mountain. One of the party decided to remain at Red Saddle while the remaining five chose to make a summit attempt, hoping the poor visibility would break. They left Red Saddle at 1:45 p.m.

Climbing the west face of the summit block unroped as a group of three and a group of two, the three reached the summit first and descended about 30 feet to a sheltered spot to await the second group. By 2:15 p.m. the wind had increased, and it had begun to rain. Shortly after the final two reached the top, the first of a series of lightning bolts struck the summit. Robert Jack (22) was sitting while his companion, who was standing, was thrown into nearby rocks and received facial lacerations. Jack, although dazed, was conscious and asked, “What happened?” Just as his companion began to reply, a second bolt struck the summit. During this second strike, one of the group of three—waiting in the sheltered alcove about 30 feet away—received an eight-inch spark from the rock to his right arm.

Jack’s companion, finding him not breathing and without a pulse after the second strike, yelled for help from the others. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) was administered on the summit with no positive results. While CPR was being performed, a third lightning bolt struck the summit area, and the party decided to move Jack’s body to the alcove before continuing CPR. After 20 minutes, without any signs of improvement, the party presumed him dead, left his body in the alcove, and descended the mountain. They reached Red Saddle at 2:45 p.m., Pamela lake at 6 p.m., and reported the accident at 8 p.m. (Source: Bob Freund, Corvallis Mountain Rescue Unit)

Analysis

Determination to get to the top in spite of the poor weather discovered at Red Saddle was a significant factor contributing to the fatality of one climber and could have cost