

On April 4 at 5:30 a.m., Patterson and Dill were able to spot Squire and Caryl through the Questar scope. Pahl said that both climbers had beefed up their anchors and were awaiting rescue. Dill and Patterson determined that a ground team could rescue them rather than a helicopter.

At 7 a.m. Petterson and two Sunnyside climbers, Mark Chapman and Bob Williams, started up Michael's Ledge with rescue gear. Ranger Cowan was positioned at Swinging Bridge with the Questar and got them to a point directly above Squire and Caryl. Once they reached a position about Caryl and Squire, they rappelled to them and belayed them safely to the ground at 12 noon. (Source: John Rohrbach, SAR Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

Many individuals who started climbing about the same time that modern, ready-made equipment, such as harnesses and ascending devices, was developed have not learned some of the basic techniques, nor do some of them seem to have the knack for improvising. (There was a time when alpine cord used for a boot lace was considered as potential sling material for a rappel, for example.) Another observation is that some climbers have come to rely on guidebooks; when they somehow stray from the planned route, they tend to be unable to cope with the "new" territory—mostly because they have not brought additional equipment, including flashlights, clothing, and food. Some guidebooks suggest what kind of hardware will be needed for a given route which may result in climbers taking *only* that hardware, thus reducing their chances of dealing with contingencies. Today's climbers might find themselves in a situation where they would be thankful for the knowledge of such antiquated but basic techniques as the body rappel, which would enhance the possibilities of the more elusive art of improvisation. But you can't improvise if you don't have the skills and equipment. The prusik knot, lest we forget, was named after Karl von Prusik, an Austrian, who made a variation on a knot used by sailors so that he could extricate himself from a crevasse. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALL ON ROCK, PLACED NO PROTECTION

California, Yosemite Valley

On April 8, 1980, Bunny Phillips (29) fell from the second pitch of Split Pinnacle. He fell a distance of 100 feet to a point below the belay ledge. His rope did not catch the fall, according to his belayer. Rescue was done with a 150-foot litter lowering and a half-mile carry out. (Source: Michael Durr, SAR Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

FALLING ROCK, NO HARD HAT

California, Yosemite Valley

On June 3, 1980, Jeff Jackson (21) and Bill Crichlow were climbing the Jam route on Glacier Point Apron. Jackson was leading the first pitch when he was struck twice by a rockfall and fell about 25 feet to the first belay station. He sustained serious injuries and was evacuated. (Source: Hal Grovert, SAR Officer, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

This is one of those accidents that probably could have been prevented. Because of the possibility of rockfall, we recommend the use of hard hats. (Source: Hal Grovert, SAR Officer, Yosemite National Park)