

arrest a sitting glissade in soft snow down a 30 degree chute while descending the mountain. She had successfully executed two self-arrests during practice, but was unable to do so in the chute. She lost her ice ax 65 meters after the start, though she was using a waist loop. She slid for 90 meters and hit a rock outcrop. Multiple fractures and abrasions resulted, and a rescue operation ensued. (Source: Bart Hine, China Lake Mountain Rescue Group)

### **Analysis**

The leader concluded that "practice" arrests may not effectively simulate "real" conditions for some people. A lack of upper body strength may have been a contributing factor to the ineffective arrest response. (Source: Bob Hicks, Chairman—Safety Committee of Angeles Chapter of Sierra Club)

## **STRANDED, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, EXPOSURE, WEATHER** **California, Yosemite Valley**

On July 28, 1985, Paul Borne (25) was free-solo climbing on Sentinel Rock when he got caught in a thunderstorm. He spent the night on the rock and had to be given self-rescue equipment lowered by a rescue helicopter from the Moore Naval Air Station in order to get down. (Source: Michael Murray, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

### **Analysis**

In summer, the vast majority of free-solo climbers travel "unencumbered." Borne got caught, but came out of it more fortunate than five young hikers on Half Dome, two of whom were killed by lightning during the same storm. Borne realized the conditions and was familiar with standard safety practices and recommendations. He was cited to appear in court for violation of 36 CFR 2.34 (a) (4) – "creating a hazardous condition." He pleaded guilty, with \$1,000 set as a condition for probation. (Source: J. Williamson)

## **DEHYDRATION, EXHAUSTION** **California, Yosemite Valley**

On August 4, 1985, about 1000, Mike Corbet reported to John Dill at the Park SAR Cache, that they had heard Chuck Goldmann (35), who was soloing the Dihedral Wall on El Capitan, yelling for water since the previous evening, when he had about two liters left. Ranger Russell and I took size-up gear and communicated with Goldmann at 1030, and determined that he was not sick or injured, had water remaining, and could continue his climb if he got water. Goldmann also indicated that if someone reached him with ropes, he would prefer to jumal out rather than continue climbing.

Rescue site climbers Grant Hiskes, Mike Corbet and Avery Tischner volunteered to take water and ropes to Goldmann. NPS SAR supplied them with the necessary ropes, a park radio and miscellaneous items of equipment, and transported them to the summit of El Capitan with the park contract helicopter about 1325. The three rescuers rappelled the West Buttress to Thanksgiving Ledge, traversed the ledge above Goldmann, descended to him with water and fixed ropes, and they all reached the summit of El Capitan about 2030, where they spent the night.

The four climbers descended the East Ledges and hiked down to the road on August 5, and were picked up at 1000. (Source: Gary Colliver, SAR Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

### **Analysis**

In an interview at the SAR cache later that day, Goldmann said he had spent two days planning and packing for his solo attempt on the Dihedral Wall, and took plenty of food, warm clothing and rain gear, and four and a half liters of water—plenty, he thought, for the seven days he planned to be on the wall. On the evening of his third day, at the top of the tenth pitch (he said he planned on making three pitches a day), he discovered that one of his water bottles had been leaking, and was almost empty. Goldmann said that at this point he was feeling very strong, the climbing was going well, and that with just a little rationing of his water he would have no trouble finishing the climb. He said he did not really consider going down, that he was very much “into” the climb, and wanted to finish it.

During the next three days on rationed water, Goldmann said he became progressively weaker, and climbed slower, getting only halfway up the 16th pitch by the end of the sixth day, when he began calling for water. Corbet and Tischner, not far away on the Heart Route, heard his cries for water, and descended the next morning to report that Goldmann was in trouble.

Goldmann, in retrospect, said he thought his decision to continue was poor, and that if faced with a similar circumstance, he would consider his options and the consequences more carefully. Descent, he said, would have been relatively easy from the top of the tenth pitch, but almost impossible from the top of the 17th. (Source: Gary Colliver, SAR Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

### **FALLING HAUL BAG** **California, Yosemite Valley**

On September 16, 1985, I received a call indicating that some park visitors had observed a climber fall from El Capitan. I responded with climbers Grant Hisker and Bill Russell, and we began interviewing spectators along El Cap meadow. Finally at the far west end I encountered a group who said they had seen a climber fall and indicate an area on The Nose route. Hisker was sent with a radio and medical size-up gear to contact the descending climbers. He soon reported back that these two climbers had yelled warning about 45 minutes before. After yelling—they had thrown off a large haul bag. (Source: Gary Colliver, SAR Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

### **Analysis**

This was not an accident, but an example of the kind of report we get five to ten times per year. The National Park Service strongly discourages climbers from routinely jettisoning their haul bags, garbage, and so forth. With the number of other climbers and hikers around, this is a very dangerous activity. We will prosecute for “creating a hazardous condition” and/or impound equipment. Dropping a haul bag in an emergency—such as to allow a self-rescue—is understandable, but being too lazy to carry down what you carried up is not. (Source: Michael Murray, SAR Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

### **FALL ON ROCK, FAILURE TO TEST HOLD, PROTECTION PULLED OUT** **California, Yosemite Valley**

On September 19, 1985 Daniel Pisciotta (22) was reportedly leading the second pitch of the Absolutely Free, Left Side route (rated 5.9). A hold came loose in his hand and he fell, pulling out two pieces of protection (a stopper and a Friend), tumbling fall about 15 meters. His