

several National Park Service and civilian personnel in very hazardous situations. The park helicopter searched for two hours during thunderstorm and high winds conditions, and ground searchers were placed in a very hazardous rain slick canyon looking for Macias and Bridges. (Source: Mike Mayer, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

*(Editor's Note: While not an accident, this case is reported as a warning that one can be cited for "Creating a Hazardous Condition" on public lands, and as a recommendation that simple, direct communication can both solve the initial problem and avert putting SAR personnel in needless jeopardy.)*

## **YOUTH, RAPID ASCENT, ACUTE MOUNTAIN SICKNESS**

### **California, White Mountains**

On August 2, 1988, William R. Claybaugh, II (39), Martha G. Miller (36) and William R. Claybaugh, III (2) made a six hour automobile ascent from sea level to a campsite at 2800 meters. After establishing camp an automobile ascent to 3400 meters and return to camp was made over a two hour period.

The following morning the younger Claybaugh was listless, refused to eat, and remained in his sleeping bag. He complained of headache and began vomiting about one hour after waking. Testing showed extreme ataxia. An automobile descent to 1200 meters ended all symptoms within two hours of descent. (Source: William R. Claybaugh, II)

### **Analysis**

Rangers at the White Mountain Station and at Yosemite Valley indicated that their experience suggests that children are apparently more susceptible to Acute Mountain Sickness than adults. In this case onset of recognizable symptoms did not occur until nearly 18 hours after ascent; progress was rapid once symptoms appeared.

When taking children into the mountains, it appears advisable to plan on acclimatizing at altitudes below 2000 meters before heading higher. (Source: William R. Claybaugh, II)

*(Editors' Note: While not an accident for our purposes, this example is worth including as a clear demonstration of how insidious a rapid ascent can be, even at moderate altitudes.)*

## **FALLING ROCK, NO HARD HAT, POOR POSITION**

### **California, Yosemite Valley**

On August 12, 1988, Jeff Kasten (25) and Glenn Pinson (23) intended to begin their climb of the regular route on Half Dome, using Tom Rollins (23) to help carry gear to the base. The party was waiting to climb and sorting gear in the afternoon before climbing the next morning. The sound of rockfall was heard and rocks were sighted as the party scattered. After the rockfall ceased, it was discovered that Tom had been hit in the head and had tumbled to the ground, sustaining both a head laceration and a broken wrist.

A runner was sent from among a group of hikers to activate the SAR Team. Jeff and Glenn (an EMT) stabilized the patient and awaited the arrival of SAR members,