

drew, she was reportedly talking with some of the other people at the base of the climb when she reached the end of the rope and it passed through her belay device before she could react. Andrew had not yet reached the top of the pillar and, when the rope went slack, he fell on to the pillar and then off of it and on to the ground. The total distance of the fall was approximately 30 feet. He suffered only lacerations and contusions.

### **Analysis**

Andrew and Glenda Lainias were reportedly very experienced, competent, safe climbers with 8+ years of rock climbing experience, and many previous years of mountaineering experience. The difficulty of the route, "Sudden Pleasure," and the lowering system which they used for descent were consistent with their past experiences on sport climbs.

Though the route is often descended using one rope and then a down climb to the ground, it is often accomplished by a rappel. (The climbers had reportedly seen someone rappel to within a few feet of the ground from the top of the route just before their climb.) Using the lowering system which the Lainias's chose requires the belayer to move up the rock a few feet to allow the person descending to reach the top of the pillar. With the position of the climber and belayer, the rope was not long enough to accomplish the descent and, without the attention of the belayer on the ground or a knot in the end of the rope to prevent it from passing through the belay device, the rope became free of the belayer. (Source: Maura Longden, Ranger, City of Rocks National Reserve)

*(Editor's Note: On August 23, 1992, another climber was being lowered on the same route when the same thing happened. He fell 50 feet, but was uninjured.)*

## **FALL ON ROCK, CAUGHT FOOT ON EDGE, EXCEEDING ABILITIES**

### **Idaho, City of Rocks**

On August 29, 1992, Tim Mooney (24) decided to "Pink Point" a route which his partner, Paul Hodges (24), had already led. At the last bolt clip in, which he failed to make, he slipped and fell. Before he could push away from the rock, he caught an edge of rock with his foot, resulting in a fractured ankle. His partner lowered him, carried him out, and drove him to Salt Lake City for treatment.

### **Analysis**

Hodges had recommended to Mooney that he did not feel it was a good day for him to try this route. He stated that the only two ways to have prevented injury would have been not to have led the route or to have fallen in a more controlled way. (Source: Tim Mooney and Paul Hodges)

*(Editor's Note: Another sketchy Case Incident Report from the same day indicates that one of the above climbers, Paul Hodges, was belaying a woman on a top rope on "Rye Crisp" when she fell two or three feet and "somehow broke her leg." That's all we know!)*

## **FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING ALONE AND UNROPED, EXCEEDING ABILITIES**

### **Missouri, Kansas City, Cliff Drive**

Cliff Drive is a limestone crag near downtown Kansas City, Missouri. There are six to 12 routes of varying difficulty. I was climbing with friends on October 4, 1992. Two climbers

that we didn't know showed up and one, Russ Engle (19), started climbing the route known as "The Book" (5.9). He was solo climbing and was well within view from the route we were top roping. As he got near the top of the climb, he was obviously having difficulty. He was only a few moves—about eight feet—from the top of the climb when he fell approximately 45 feet, landing on his feet and tumbling over backward after impact. He rolled five to eight feet down a scree type slope where he came to rest. Immediately Bill Leo took control of the situation. Bill is a certified EMT. Chris called for an ambulance on his car phone and Melissa stabilized Russ's head. Engle was in a great deal of pain. An ambulance and emergency help arrived within 15 minutes. He was transported to North Kansas City Hospital where he was listed in critical condition. This was upgraded to serious by 2000 that evening. He sustained two severely broken ankles. (Source: Robert Scheier)

## **FALLING ROCK, ROCK DISLODGED BY PARTNERS**

### **Montana, Beartooth Mountains**

On September 2, 1992, Kimberly Paulson (22) was with seven other members of a Minneapolis, MN, YMCA group when she was struck by a falling rock that had been dislodged by the person in front of her. The rock weighed an estimated one ton. She died from her injuries later that evening, before rescuers arrived. (Source: Star Tribune article, September 4, 1992)

*(Editor's Note: This will be reported as a "mountain related" accident to the National Safety Council and other agencies. We call it a hiking accident and do not include it in our data. It was the only report received from Montana this year.)*

## **FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE BELAY, MISCOMMUNICATION**

### **Nevada, Red Rocks, American Sportsman**

On January 25, 1992, Matt Spydell of Santa Barbara, California, reached the anchors on American Sportsman (5.10c) on the Wall of Confusion, Red Rocks, Nevada. His partner asked if he was off belay, heard what she thought was a yes, and took him off. Spydell leaned back and dropped 40 to 45 feet to the deck. Medivaced to the hospital, he was found to have luckily only fractured a heel.

### **Analysis**

The belayer had not sport climbed much, and expected Spydell to belay or rappel from the top. Usually, sport climbers clip in and are lowered, so you never take them off belay. Also, no one should weight a rope without checking with his belayer. (Source: *Climbing Magazine*, April-May 1992)

## **FALL ON ICE, FAILURE TO TEST ICE TOOL PLACEMENT, ICE TOOL PULLED OUT, INATTENTION**

### **New Hampshire, Crawford Notch, Hitchcock Gully**

On January 9, 1992, my partner, Charles Narnold (22) and I (21) went ice climbing, after spending the night in the AMC hostel in the Notch. We walked down the tracks to the base of Cinema Gully, a moderate ice climb on Mount Willard. The ice in Cinema Gully was generally in good condition with the first pitch being a bit thin. We reached the top around