

ing a patient suffering from trauma, e.g., the motion may cause spinal cord injury from an unstable broken neck or back, or increased bleeding in damaged organs. Whether to move or stay is often a hard call, but training in wilderness medicine will better prepare you to make the decision and to minimize the risk. (Source: John Dill, NPS Ranger)

## **STRANDED—ROPES JAMMED, HASTE—TO TRY TO CATCH THIEVES, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT—NO KNIFE**

### **California, Yosemite Valley, Middle Cathedral Rock**

On September 13, Chris Heck (39) and Michael Taylor (28) set out to climb the Central Pillar of Frenzy on Middle Cathedral Rock. In Heck's words, "We had planned to do five pitches and descend the route but started down after four, after my climbing partner alerted me to the fact that someone was rifling through our packs at the base. We were in a hurry to get down and see what had been stolen, but we realized we needed to step back, slow down, and not do anything stupid."

"At the third pitch belay station, we butterflied the ropes and very carefully threw them right into the crack! Of course they were stuck. (The third pitch follows a wide, low-angle crack, a classic rope-eater) Michael rappelled with a prusik and worked to free them for an hour. He came back up for water and headed back down again for about another hour. If we'd had a knife we could have cut the rope and continued rappelling with the leftover piece. After about two and a half hours of trying to free them we shouted for help."

Someone alerted the NPS. Two rescue team members climbed to Heck and Taylor so they could rappel off. (Source: Chris Robinson, NPS Ranger and Chris Heck.)

*(Editor's Note: There was no indication as to whether the vandals were successful. It reminds us of yet another dimension the increase in numbers has brought to the climbing scene.)*

## **FALL ON ICE, INADEQUATE BELAY**

### **California, Temple Crag**

On October 4, Gary Niblock, Mike Nichols (both 48) and Mark Harris (42) were climbing an ice chute northwest of Temple Crag. About 1300, Harris reached the top first and began watching his friends climb to the top.

Niblock and Nichols were roped together as they climbed. One of the two lost his footing and slid down the ice. The partner tried to stop the fall but was also pulled down the slope. The pair tumbled and slid an estimated 800 to 1,200 feet before coming to rest on the icy slope.

Harris climbed back down to help, tying his friends to temporary anchors to keep them from sliding further. Both men were seriously injured. Harris covered his friends with sleeping bags and hiked out for help.

Harris reached Glacier Lodge in Big Pine Canyon at 1600 and alerted the sheriff's office. Because of the seriousness of the injuries and the lateness of the day, a rescue team was immediately dispatched.

U.S. Forest Service helicopter 525 flew Nixon, rescuer Arnie Peterson and paramedic Judd Symons to the location and lowered them to a rock outcropping above the victims just before dark. The trio rappelled down, traversed the ice slope and finally reached the victims around 1900.

Nixon said both men were hypothermic and had major cuts, abrasions, and bruises.

Additionally, Niblock suffered from a broken leg and Nichols from a broken arm and ribs.

Rescuers set lines and spent the next five hours moving the pair off the ice to a sheltered rock area about 75 yards to the north. By 0100, both men were stabilized, fairly warm, and had taken some warm fluids.

At 0800 the next morning, Helicopter 525 dropped a litter and technical climbing gear at the scene, then shuttled in additional rescue personnel from China Lake Mountain Rescue. Ice and rock anchors were set and the victims lowered down the last half mile of the ice chute. By 1415 the victims were airlifted to the Bishop Airport. From there they were transported to the Northern Inyo Hospital by ambulance for treatment. (Source: From a newspaper clipping sent in without name/date.)

### **EQUIPMENT FAILURE—WIRED NUT BROKE, FALL ON ROCK, PROTECTION PULLED**

#### **California, Yosemite Valley, El Capitan**

On October 6, about 1900, Baek Man (27) was leading the pitch off Camp 5 on the Nose, using aid. He had placed a few pieces of protection and was standing on a fixed wired nut when it broke. A small Friend he had placed pulled out during his fall, and he landed hard on Camp 5, 15 feet below.

Baek and his partner, Min Yeon Sik (30) spent the night at Camp 5 and, for unknown reasons, did not yell for help until 0700 the next day. They indicated that Man was complaining of mid-back pain. The NPS rescue team flew to the summit and lowered a ranger-paramedic 900 feet to the scene. He immobilized Man in a vacuum body splint and litter. Because of the back pain and the long haul to the summit, Man was hoisted directly from Camp 5 by the helicopter from Naval Air Station Lemoore, with a Navy medic as the litter attendant. Man's spine was not fractured, but he did have ankle and wrist fractures. He was released from the Yosemite Clinic that day.

Both climbers have ten years of climbing experience, and both were wearing helmets. (Source: Lane Baker, John Dill, NPS Rangers)

### **SLIDE/FALL ON ICE, INEXPERIENCE, IMPROPER USE OF CRAMPONS, INADEQUATE PROTECTION—UNCLIPPED, PARTY SEPARATED**

#### **California, Eastern Sierras, Lamarck Col**

On October 22, David Lown (29), a second year family practice resident, and three friends were descending a frozen snow slope below the Lamarck Col plateau. A series of rappels were to be set up with ice bollards for the rappels and ice screws for backup and safety anchors for those waiting to rappel. The slope was 60-70 degrees at the top and gradually decreased to 30 degrees at the base. The sides and base of the slope were surrounded by boulder fields. The four had ascended the slope the previous day without ropes and without incident, except for a borrowed crampon that came loose on Daniel Savelson while ascending. This was resecured without further problems.

David was the first to rappel the initial pitch. The pitch ended at the steepest part of the slope. Prior to removing himself from rappel, David clipped into one ice ax with a daisy chain, thus using the ax to self-belay himself. Once off rappel he set up an anchor with two screws and webbing, and then clipped into the anchor, planning to carve the next bollard. By this time Daniel had rappelled down and was standing on the lip of a sun cup. He was about eight feet to the left and above the anchor, had taken his pack off and secured it to his ax. David removed his own pack and placed it with Daniel's. He was