

SLIP ON SNOW, UNABLE TO SELF-ARREST, INEXPERIENCE **Wyoming, Grand Tetons, Middle Teton**

Around 1700 on August 1 in the South Fork of Garnet Canyon, Carrissa Johnson (18) was injured when she slipped on snow while descending from the Southwest Couloir of the Middle Teton. She was with a party of nine other Coulter Bay employees, some of whom had camped at the Platforms on the night of July 31. They left the Platforms about 1000 on the morning of August 1 and arrived on the summit of the Middle Teton around 1500. The group had talked about the use of ice axes, but Johnson had not done any actual practice.

Several of the party descended a snowfield into the South Fork without incident. Johnson glissaded part of the way down the snowfield, then lost control and rolled about 100 feet to the rocks below. She hit the rocks with her back and bounced to a lower ledge.

Brandon Osterman reached Johnson in a few seconds and began checking her condition. She had not lost consciousness and could feel and move her extremities. At 1800 Johnson was helped to the camp of some climbers about a quarter of a mile down canyon from the accident site. One of the group, Stewart Harman, and the occupants of the camp stayed with Johnson during the night. David Albano descended to the valley for help.

At 2145 a climber from a separate group, who had seen the accident from a distance, called Grand Teton dispatch, who contacted the SAR coordinator, Tom Kimbrough. Another passing climber who did some medical assessment reported to Kimbrough at 2240. This assessment indicated a possibility of a back injury and possible internal injuries. After consultation with medical coordinator Lanny Johnson, a decision was made to dispatch two climbing rangers to evaluate Johnson's condition. Rangers Jim Phillips and Andy Byerly started up at 2400 with medical equipment. David Albano reported in with more information at 0030.

By 0600 on the morning of August 2, Phillips and Byerly were searching the South Fork of Garnet without result. While they descended to the Platforms to see if Johnson had reached that point, Rangers Leo Larson and Bill Culbreath climbed the Middle Teton from the Lower Saddle and descended the Southwest Couloir into the South Fork in search of Johnson. Larson and Culbreath located Johnson at 0830.

The Yellowstone LAMA arrived at Lupine Meadows at 0945 and began airlifting equipment and rescuers into Garnet. By 1045 Rangers Alexander, Benham, Wise and Yellowstone Ranger Steve Underwood were assisting Phillips, Byerly, Culbreath and Larson in lowering Johnson to the helicopter landing site. The lowering was complete by 1200 and Johnson was flown to Lupine Meadows, accompanied by Phillips, arriving at 1220. She was taken to St. John's Hospital by ambulance where she was treated for cuts, bruises and abrasions and released. (Source: Tom Kimbrough, SAR Ranger)

(Editor's Note: While the frequency of summer employees getting into situations like this has decreased, there are still one or two major incidents each year. Those who are working for concessions in the park receive a fairly thorough briefing—but they do not always engage in the training that is suggested.)

FALL ON SNOW—CRAMPON POINT CAUGHT IN PANTS, NO HARD HAT, CLIMBING ALONE

Wyoming, Mount Owen, Koven Couloir

At 1300 on August 2, Randy Huskinson (46) was descending the Koven Couloir following a successful ascent of the East Ridge of Mount Owen. He had soloed the route and was alone when he fell approximately 500 feet on snow to the base of the couloir.

Huskinson sustained multiple injuries in the fall and was unable to move unaided. Mark Savage and Clay Roscoe were climbing in the area and discovered the injured climber around 1400. They treated his injuries and sent other climbers in the area for assistance from Grand Teton National Park rangers. Six rangers from the Jenny Lake Rescue Team were flown to the accident site in the evening and climbed to the patient with medical and rescue gear at 2012. The rescue team along with Savage and Roscoe stabilized him and lowered him a short distance to a ledge where they could spend the night. On August 3, at 0845, the contract helicopter from Bridger-Teton National Forest conducted a “short-haul” of Huskinson to the landing zone on Teton Glacier. He was then transported in the helicopter to the rescue cache at Lupine Meadows and then by NPS ambulance to St. John’s Hospital in Jackson.

Huskinson had sustained a C-7 vertebrae fracture, bilateral second rib fractures, multiple lacerations, penetrating knee injury, and various soft tissue injuries.

Analysis

Huskinson had left Lupine Meadows Trailhead around 0500 on August 2 for a solo day climb of Mount Owen. His partner for the climb had not shown up as planned, so he opted to do the climb alone. He ascended the East Ridge route and reached the summit about 1100. The descent was uneventful until 1300, approximately halfway down the Koven Couloir where the angle began to lessen. He had been front pointing down the shaded portion of the couloir. The route now was exposed to the direct sunlight and the snow conditions were changed. Huskinson stamped out a small platform in the snow to evaluate whether to remove crampons and/or face out for the remainder of the descent. The step he had created in the snow collapsed and he took several plunge steps down the slope in order to regain control. One of his crampons caught on his pant leg which caused him to fall head first down the snow slope. He managed to work his body into a self-arrest position and was nearly stopped when he hit a rock and lost his ice ax. Huskinson slid head first again down the slope, hitting rocks along the way and eventually stopped on a small ledge. He believes that he did not lose consciousness, but he was unable to move himself from his location. He attempted to stop the bleeding from his scalp wound through direct pressure. Huskinson owns a helmet but had neglected to bring it with him on the climb. He stated that he had been climbing for 15 years, mostly in the Teton range. He had climbed the Koven Route previously. (Source: Rich Perch, SAR Ranger)

STRANDED, PARTY SEPARATED—OFF ROUTE, LATE START, INEXPERIENCE

Wyoming, Grand Tetons, Grand Teton

On August 14 at 2230, rangers at the Lower Saddle hut were contacted by Chris Riha (39), Rosa Kanning (24), and John Murphy (23) who indicated that two of their party, Jason Osder (22) and Margaret Knight (22), were lost.

At 0400 Osder, Knight, Murphy and Kanning had left the Lupine Meadows trailhead for the camping zone in Garnet Canyon. The party arrived at the Meadows about 0800 and set up their camp. They then continued up to the Lower Saddle, arriving at 1210. The party intended to climb the Owen-Spalding (OS) route on the Grand Teton, and arrived at the Upper Saddle at 1500. At this point they joined with a solo climber, Riha, who offered to lead the party to the summit. The party of five climbed the OS, and summited at 1800. On the descent, the party reached the Upper Saddle, via the normal rappel, at 2015.