

turned to Berg Lake, and at 1430 they reported their friends overdue. Meanwhile, the climbers on Robson bivouacked just above the Kain Face with no food and no extra clothing.

On the morning of August 16, the Kain Face was still in whiteout conditions. K.G. and M.J. began descending the face at approximately 0630. They were off route, and were at the far northwest edge of the face. As they down-climbed simultaneously, they were caught in three loose snow avalanches, but were able to arrest their falls with their ice axes. At 1100 a fourth avalanche carried them down the face. The climbers estimate that they were 200 meters from the top of the face when the fourth avalanche occurred. They were found on top of the avalanche deposit approximately 250 meters down the face.

The weather was poor on Mount Robson when the initial report was received. Robson park rangers were able to conduct an aerial search of the Kain Face area later during the day and at 1600 they requested that Jasper wardens attend the accident site for a rescue. The initial report was that the overdue party had fallen down the Kain Face and that one of the party members was moving but the other was not.

Banff wardens were also requested to assist. When the rescue party arrived from Jasper, both victims were moving. M.J. was on the flat terrain below the bergschrund and was sitting waving his arms, and K.G. was 100 meters up slope above the bergschrund, prone, with face down, slowly moving one hand only. They were located below an icefall, with serac fall creating an additional hazard for the rescuers. Poor weather, continuous avalanches from the face, and the threat of darkness were also factors in the rescue.

Both victims were slung out to the staging area via helicopter, where K.G. was med-evaced to Jasper Townsite. Amongst their injuries were broken ribs, collapsed lungs, fractured vertebrae, head injuries and multiple abrasions and lacerations.

### **Analysis**

Neither had enough experience in mountaineering to attempt this climb. This was the first climb for one and third for the other. They had no training in navigation, snowpack evaluation, etc., and had no experience to draw on to make sound decisions. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service)

## **ILLNESS**

### **British Columbia, Glacier National Park, Mount Uto**

On August 28, five climbers were on their way up the Southwest Ridge of Mount Uto, a 5.1 rock climb. One of the climbers, S.L. (F 45), developed sudden acute and severe right lower abdominal pain. The party managed to get her to a ledge where D.B. (43), a registered nurse, examined her abdomen. S.L. was showing symptoms of appendicitis. A decision was made that one experienced member of the party would descend alone to obtain help. Three hours later, S.L. was heli-slung off the mountain. The remaining three climbers rappelled and down-climbed. (Source: D.B.)

### **Analysis**

While no accident occurred in this instance, this is a situation that could happen to any climber at any time. The party had a first aid kit with painkillers, which were of great help to the victim. The only regret the remaining party had was in only having one headlamp. Much of their descent was made in the dark due to the long wait for the rescue, and the descent would have been much easier and quicker if each person had a headlamp. (Source: D.B., Nancy Hansen)

### **WEATHER**

#### **British Columbia, Comox, Mount Albert-Edward**

Three climbers were reported overdue on September 17. They had been attempting a four- to five-day traverse which involved glacier travel in the Mount Albert-Edward area in the Comox region of Vancouver Island. After spending two extra days out due to very bad weather, the climbers were located safe and sound as they hiked out. The previous year, two members of the same team had been airlifted from the same traverse when one member injured himself. (Source: Scott Larson, Provincial Emergency Program)

### **Analysis**

The three climbers had the experience to complete this traverse safely. They were well prepared and had planned the trip well—including telling someone where they were and when they were expected back. When a nasty, unexpected weather front came upon them, they did a smart thing by waiting it out. They had the provisions for extra days and whiteout navigation could have resulted in their getting lost or finding themselves in dangerous terrain. (Source: Nancy Hansen)

### **SLIP ON ROCK, UNROPE, NO HARD HAT**

#### **Ontario, Milton, Buffalo Crag**

On Sunday, March 28 F.M. (26) was scouting out the cliff top at Buffalo Crag, apparently hoping to set up a top rope on a climb called "Rainy Day Women." He had on a harness but was not tethered to an anchor. About 1300 he was seen falling, trying first to clutch at rocks and cedars, then tumbling to the rough talus 80 feet below. He suffered terrible head and internal injuries and possible broken bones. He was not wearing a helmet. He remained conscious for about an hour while climbers obtained the help of the Milton Fire Department rescue team. An air evacuation was requested, but the climber died as he was being transferred to the helicopter near the Rattlesnake Point Gatehouse.

### **Analysis**

Beyond the obvious reminders to tether in and wear a helmet, it should be noted that this accident occurred in early spring, when melt-water increases cliff top hazard. The clay and the fine-grained dolomitic limestone at Buffalo Crag are very slippery when damp. (Source: David Henderson)