

cam three feet below the stopper I didn't consider it much, but when it pulled it allowed me an extra 6 feet of fall. Sitting around for a month with my foot in the air allowed me to realize how often I have let poor placements slide because I didn't think I would fall. It's kind of stupid to place a piece of protection that won't catch you just because you don't think you will fall. By that thinking I might as well free-solo. I learned two things. One, place solid pro, and two, check the potential fall, particularly at a crux. I knew these things intellectually, but the pain, cost, and inconvenience and out of commission time has me really knowing them now.

All accidents are learning opportunities. Read (no Study!) the following excerpts from *Accidents in North American Mountaineering*. They deal with common incidents that we experience almost every time we're on the rock. Note how many times a minor decision or small incident led to grave consequences.

I understand more fully what Kathryn has always said: that anything happening should be considered a "mishap or accident," something to train us. Right down to many scrapes and rock rash on "My First Time Rock Climbing Trips" can indicate something more serious about to happen... Get a low-cost lesson!

Also, on another matter, we have the following from Steve Pack about a report in ANAM 2001, pages 82-83: "One particular error sticks out in the accident description for Seneca Rocks. It lists it as being in VIRGINIA. The last time I checked, unless they moved it, Seneca Rocks is in WEST VIRGINIA, a completely different state since 1863! There is even an editors note... This is a bit of a sore point with me, since I still run into people who are incredulous when I tell them West Virginia is a separate state from Virginia." Apologies, especially to Steve, as he is a West Virginia native.)

OUT OF BOUNDS—LOST, INADEQUATE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Rock Spring Canyon

On February 6 at 1330, Cameron Morgan (25), Jonathan Gagne (25), and Katherine Gagne (24) left the Teton Village Ski Area boundaries with the intent to ski out of bounds in Rock Springs Canyon. They were on alpine skis and a snowboard. The avalanche danger was listed as "Considerable." They took a wrong turn and entered Granite Canyon in Grand Teton National Park and headed north, not south. They were unable to retrace their tracks and spent the night at the bottom of the canyon. On the following afternoon, a fourth member of the group reported that his companions had not returned.

Grand Teton National Park rangers were notified by the ski patrol at about 1430. Rangers and a ski patrolman were flown by helicopter to search the Granite Canyon area and located the missing party from the air. They were picked up just before nightfall and flown from the backcountry. Despite the ordeal, all three members of the party were in good condition and were released.

Analysis

Aside from the clothes they were wearing and a Camelback with water, they had no other survival gear, such as food, extra clothing, matches, shovel, probes,

or transceivers. They did have a Teton Village ski area map in their possession. They were sure that they were skiing through Rock Springs Canyon to the south of Teton Village, as they had done previously. When they reached Granite Creek, the water was flowing the wrong way. When skiing out of Rock Springs, one has to turn left to get back to the ski area. The stream was flowing to their right. Assuming that the water wasn't really flowing downhill, they went upstream to where they spent the night. The next morning their discussions about the direction of the water continued. Interesting group dynamics undoubtedly took place. Leadership was asserted, and the party spent the day going about a quarter-mile further upstream before they were spotted from the helicopter.

Leadership skills and backcountry survival preparedness are just as important when accessing the wilderness from a developed ski area as they are when heading into the wilderness with a mind-set of seeking a wilderness experience. A second night out in -20 degrees F. in their condition might have been grim.

Another factor was the reporting party. He assumed that they didn't meet apres-ski in the bar and that they didn't get back to the motel that night "because they were partying." He searched the lifts at the ski area the following day until 1430 before reporting the party overdue. (Source: Dan Burgette, SAR Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

(Editor's Note: While this is not a climbing incident, it is included as a classic example of a backcountry situation that required mountaineering skills for which the participants were not prepared.)

OFF ROUTE—UNFAMILIAR WITH DESCENT, WEATHER

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Grand Teton

On June 11 around 0100, Swis Stockton and Michael Feldman left the Lupine Meadows trailhead with the intention of climbing the Exum Ridge on the Grand Teton in a one-day effort in an attempt to beat a predicted storm. They had just arrived in Jackson Hole from the east coast and left at 0100 after an hour's sleep. They moved slower than expected and discussed turning around at the Lower Saddle and again at Wallstreet—but didn't. They started their descent of the Owen-Spalding Route from the top of the Open Book pitch in the last of the daylight. As they began the rappels, a severe storm engulfed them. With high winds, blowing snow, and limited visibility, at 0100 hours they decided to bivouac for the night in snow caves in the Wall Street Gully. They started moving at 0500 and assumed they were not on the standard descent. They went back to the Upper Saddle and started following cairns until they became cliffed-out. They went back to the Upper Saddle to get reoriented and started down the Idaho Express gully. They reached a drop-off with a rappel station and realized that they were disoriented. They started to climb back to the Upper Saddle, the last point on the mountain they were sure of. If they couldn't find the right descent route, they intended to start rappelling.

Stockton and Feldman had left gear in their cabin at the AAC Climbers Ranch. This was reported to Grand Teton National Park by another person who was lodging there on the morning of June 12. The weather was deterio-