

the side of the area in question helped prevent them from being caught in the avalanche. Had they wanted to protect themselves further, they could have roped up again and climbed to the top using belays and protection.

*(Editor's Note: During the spring skiing season in Tuckerman, there were several falls that required Snow Rangers, members of the Mount Washington Volunteer Ski Patrol, and AMC caretakers to assist with lowers and medical conditions. Sometimes skiers put themselves in poor positions that can and often do result in being struck by falling ice or falling into moats.)*

*The source for all the incidents on Mount Washington is the Tuckerman Ravine website and conversations with Justin Preisendorfer, Snow Ranger/Backcountry & Wilderness Supervisor)*

## **FALL ON ROCK**

### **New Hampshire, Cathedral Ledge**

In August, Christopher Townsend (27), an experienced climber from Cambridge, MA, took a twenty-foot fall that left him hanging unconscious on his rope for about two minutes. He walked out of the hospital later in the day "courtesy of his helmet."

*(Editor's Note: No other rock climbing incidents were reported by the Mountain Rescue Service located in North Conway. Rick Wilcox, the President of MRS, indicated in a phone conversation that there were probably more incidents, but unless rescue is required, climbers tend to leave without telling about their mishaps.)*

## **FALLS ON ROCK (16), FALLING ROCK (1), RAPPEL ERROR (1), INADEQUATE PROTECTION (10), PROTECTION PULLED OUT (4), INADEQUATE BELAY (3), NO HARD HAT (1)**

### **New York, Mohonk Preserve, Shawangunks, Various Routes**

Eighteen reports were submitted for 2008, with dates ranging from March through November. Most incidents occur in July and August.

The average length of the falls was sixteen feet, with seven of them ending up on the ground, mostly because of inadequate protection on the first pitch. The average age of the individuals injured was about 46 and the level of difficulty of the routes averaged 5.7. Eleven of the individuals directly involved were experienced climbers. Most injuries were relatively minor, with sprains and strains being the most common (10).

The rappel error incident was the result of a climbing rope mid-point not being correctly marked. The climber (59), who had 36 years of experience, rappelled off one end of the rope—luckily for only ten feet.

There was one fatality. An experienced climber (58) was on a route rated 5.2-5.3. He climbed out of sight beyond his belayer. He fell past the belayer to the ground. There was a cam and sling behind him, indicating that either he was in the process of setting protection or that it had come out.