

heavy clouds below. The Chinook helicopter arrived at 6:00 a.m. and in approximately 15 minutes, lifted Mrs. Burceag and Mr. Vlad, along with one of the park's climbing rangers, into the helicopter by hoist and cable. Those on scene report that the cloud ceiling had risen somewhat by the time the helicopter arrived and that the rescue occurred amid swirling clouds that threatened to engulf the mountain in fog.

### **Analysis**

Every year, roughly 9,000 people climb Mount Rainier and only about half of them reach the summit. Thousands more take day hikes or overnight camping trips to Camp Muir (48 were registered there on that night). These individuals are attracted by the majesty of the mountain, the wilderness experience, and the breathtaking beauty of mornings like this one, high above the clouds on the side of the volcano. Like many things in life, there are inherent risks in the wilderness. Sudden storms like Monday's blizzard can catch even the most experienced and prepared hikers off guard. Visitors should check in with park rangers for the latest information about conditions on the mountain and should always be prepared for an emergency. (Source: Edited from a report on the [mountrainierclimbing.blogspot.com](http://mountrainierclimbing.blogspot.com))

## **FALL ON ROCK – SCRAMBLING WITH FULL PACK, WEATHER and FALL OFF LOG – STREAM CROSSING**

### **Washington, North Cascades National Park, Inspiration Traverse**

On July 26, Cathleen (50) and Bob Terczak (50's) were on day four of an alpine traverse across the southern section of the park known as the Inspiration Traverse. This traverse involves route-finding from heavily wooded valley floors to subalpine ridges and on to significant glacier crossings. Mountaineers often include numerous peak ascents along the traverse. While the trip can be made without significant technical climbing, glacier experience is necessary and conditions and terrain warrant the ability to negotiate steep forest and rock sections with a full pack.

The Terczaks spent the night of the 25th bivied on the summit of Primus Peak. On the 26th they hoped to make a camp on the eastern Inspiration Glacier, after crossing sections of three other glaciers first (North Klawatti, Klawatti, and McAllister). Near the end of the day, the pair reached the col that separates the Klawatti and McAllister Glaciers, which involves an approximate 150-foot ascent over rock. Complications included deteriorating weather (wind and fog moving in) and a significant mote on their side of the col. Both climbers scrambled up carrying heavy packs and checking for a route over when Cathleen fell approximately 35 feet from a ledge into a moat separating glacier ice from a rock wall. Bob descended, moved Cathleen from the moat down the glacier to a point he could erect their tent. He cared for her for 24 hours, unable to reach a cell connection, before

she died in their tent. (Later medical report indicated head injury as cause of death.) Bob then crossed three glaciers and over several off-trail miles, descending 6000 feet. Just before reaching a road, he fell from a log while crossing a river, nearly drowned and injured one knee, before jettisoning his pack and getting unpinned. Other climbers found him on the road and delivered him to the NPS ranger station during the night.

Continuous fog had replaced the earlier good weather after the Terczak's accident. During the day Bob traveled out, a NOLS group traveled this section of the traverse in the opposite direction, finding the oddly placed tent along their way. The NOLS leader used a satellite phone to call the NPS dispatch and reported a deceased woman at their location. Rangers began to prepare for the recovery and to find the partner prior to his making it out.

Attempts to reach the accident site by helicopter were thwarted for two full days due to poor weather. During a window of clear weather between two storms, rangers recovered the deceased climber's body from the top of the Klawatti Glacier.

### **Analysis**

This couple from Delaware had been spending mountaineering vacations in the North Cascades for many years, having accomplished other alpine traverses and technical peak ascents. They were well equipped with appropriate gear and Cathleen was wearing a helmet during the scramble and across the glaciers. Her husband did not see the actual fall despite being nearby, approximately ten feet below her, when she fell. The two had actually just decided to down-climb and retreat back to the Klawatti Glacier due to the deteriorating weather and it being unclear if the route over the col was a "go". It is not known what exactly led to her falling.

This particular col is traveled relatively often by mountaineers attempting the Inspiration Traverse or climbing peaks in the area. Going west to east it is often rappelled to reach the Klawatti Glacier at the point in the season that snow has melted down and a moat develops. Going east to west as the Terczaks were, it is an inevitable scramble up and over. While one approach could be to get one climber over the col, then belay the other(s) or haul packs, it is believed that most climbers make the approximate 150-foot scramble (depending on snow conditions) unroped.

At any rate, this unfortunate accident is consistent with North Cascades National Park SAR trends in that most mountaineers evacuated (ranging from non-critical immobilizing injuries to life-threatening trauma) get hurt in non-technical, but rugged terrain. The nature of accidents here seems to point to the greater hazards of carrying 50-pound mountaineering packs in steep exhausting terrain over the hazards of roped Class V climbing. (Source:

Kelly Bush, Wilderness District Ranger, North Cascades National Park)  
*(Editor's Note: this was counted as two separate accidents in Tables II and III.)*

## **FALL FROM A SNOW-COVERED BOULDER**

### **Washington, North Cascades National Park, Eldorado Peak**

On July 18th, a party of four mountaineers were on approach to Eldorado Peak on the lower snow slopes of the Eldorado Glacier. While pausing on the upper side of a large rock outcrop, three of the men noticed that the fourth, Bill Stikker (57) had disappeared. They did not see him fall, but quickly found him unconscious at the base of the short rock cliff, an approximate 25-foot fall. The injured mountaineer was in good company, as two of his party are ER physicians and the third made impressive time descending the nearly 5000 feet to the road and driving to the ranger station in Marblemount to request help.

Further good fortune persisted as the NPS' contracted SAR helicopter happened to be at the ranger station and despite notification coming late in the day about this accident, rangers departed within the hour. Stikker was still unconscious and deteriorating. He was helicopter short-hauled from the accident site to a lower flat spot in Roush Creek basin, suitable for an Airlift NW medical helicopter to land. Rangers transferred him to flight medics who departed en route to Harborview Trauma Center, Seattle, just before dark. Mr. Stikker spent two weeks in the Neuro-ICU and an additional four weeks in hospital recovery before beginning outpatient therapy.

### **Analysis**

It is unknown how or why this climber fell from the snow-covered rock bluff that his partners had chosen as actually a good, safe spot to take a short rest stop. Again, the steep approaches to the routes of Cascade peaks can be the trouble spots. (Source: Kelly Bush, Wilderness District Ranger, North Cascades National Park)

## **FALL ON SNOW, CLIMBING ALONE**

### **Washington, Mount Adams**

On October 18, Derek Mamoyac (27) fell as he was descending after reaching Piker's Peak at 11,657 feet, below the mountain's summit. He stepped in some snow he thought was solid, but it gave way.

Mamoyac started up the 12,277-foot mountain Sunday for a one-day climb. Family members reported him missing Monday when he failed to show up for work.

After a five-day search, he was located just below the 6,000-foot level. He was taken by helicopter to a hospital in Portland. He was listed in fair condition. In addition to his fractured ankle, he was dehydrated and had