

route. I remember, before the climb, wishing I had one.” Margie said, “If I’d been out with my longtime climbing partner and she didn’t have a helmet, I would have been very comfortable telling her, ‘You’re not a God. Wear your helmet!’ but I didn’t know Shannon that well, so I failed to raise the issue.”

“It seemed like a miracle that Margie had a phone,” Max said, and he was almost right. “I always climb with one,” said Margie, “but that morning, five of us left the car in a rush for Matthes Crest and I realized it was still in the car. I didn’t know everyone in the party well and was afraid they’d make fun of me, so I made some excuse about sunglasses and ran back for the phone. The helmet and the phone were good lessons. I should not be shy about raising safety concerns with new partners.”

Cell coverage in the backcountry is sparse, but several high points can “see” a tower in the distance and the upper part of this climb is one of those. (See Yosemite, Marmot Dome, in this issue.) Even if a climb has no coverage and you have to go for help, you may get cell service long before reaching the car, so bring your phone. Be sure to tell your partners where the phone is, as you may be the patient.

Given the circumstances and the unknowns facing them, Ingrid and Max effectively carried out their plan to work as a team and their presence was a great stroke of luck for Shannon, Margie, and the rescue team. The on-scene help Margie, Ingrid, and Max were able to provide is also an example of why climbers should take some form of a wilderness first aid course. (Source: Shannon, Margie, Ingrid, and Max. Also Jason Ramsdell and John Dill, NPS Rangers, Yosemite National Park)

(Editor’s Note: Shannon’s injuries are not unusual and sometimes they are not obvious. In late August, Colin (29) and three friends climbed Cathedral Peak and started down the back side. Colin tried a steep shortcut while unroped and fell/tumbled 60 feet, losing consciousness briefly. With his partners’ help, he limped out three miles with an obvious wrist fracture, a fractured foot, and a seven-inch scalp wound, but the CT scan at the hospital also found three fractured cervical vertebrae. Incredibly, the neck fractures were stable.)

FALL ON ROCK – SLACK IN ROPE WHILE SIMUL-CLIMBING

California, Yosemite National Park, Commitment

On June 17, Floyd (47), an experienced climber, was with two partners, belaying them from above. They were simul-climbing and slack developed between them. One fell some distance, hitting a tree. He fractured his heel bone. (Source: John Dill, NPS Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

This is a common problem with simul-climbing, which is why it is included here. (Source: Jed Williamson)