

through snow bridges. As the reader will note, this one year accounts for 20 percent of this category over the past 30 years. (Source: J. Williamson)

## **AVALANCHE, INEXPERIENCE**

### **Wyoming, Tetons**

On April 25, Tim Drew (24) and Jerry Lucas (22) signed out at Park Headquarters to climb the Grand Teton by the East Ridge Route. The climbers were friends, working at the Targhee Resort on the west side of the Teton Range. Drew was the more experienced of the two climbers and had made an unsuccessful assault on the East Ridge earlier this winter.

The night of the 25th was spent at the base of the East Ridge in a tent. Their light packs, on the day of the ascent, indicated that they did not plan to bivouac on the climb, but intended to return that same day.

The next morning the pair climbed the first 2,000 feet of the ridge and, from their tracks, it appears that they traversed from the right side of the ridge to the left on the snow slope under the Molar Tooth, the first prominent rock tower on the ridge. At this time, it was probably between 10 a.m. and noon on the 26th. Their tracks were visible up the ridge to this point, but ended in avalanche debris just below the Molar Tooth. They were caught in a wet snow avalanche and were carried to their deaths, 1,200 feet below, over the southeast side of the mountain. (Source: Ralph Tingey, Grand Teton National Park)

### **Analysis**

Wet spring avalanches are visible over much of the mountain. Apparently the two were unroped at this point. Their tracks indicate that they had been breaking through warm, wet, soft snow which is very prone to avalanche at this time of year. Here at the base of the Molar Tooth, they were apparently caught, unroped, in a wet slide on the steep snow slope. This was apparently caused by the climbers themselves who were probably very close together. They were carried down the slope about 200 feet and then down a steep south-facing chimney-gully another 1,000 feet, coming to rest about 20 feet apart near the top of the north side of the Black Dike Couloir on the southeast side of the Grand Teton. Lucas had had some experience rock climbing in Kentucky and North Carolina, but neither climber had much experience with snow or with avalanches. (Source: Ralph Tingey, Grand Teton National Park)

## **SLIP ON SNOW, CLIMBING UNROPED**

### **Wyoming, Tetons**

James (24) and Claude (29) Kelly were climbing the Exum Ridge of the Grand Teton on July 2. After climbing the "Open Book" pitch on the ridge, approximately 200 to 300 feet below the summit, the Kellys were crossing a small, steep snowfield approximately 30 feet wide. About 3 p.m. James was leading across the snowfield when he heard a noise. James turned and saw Claude slide down the snow, lose his ice axe and disappear from sight. James did not see what caused Claude to slide. Claude fell approximately 2,000 feet down the Stettner Couloir to his death. He stopped 200 feet below the Black Dike. (Source: R. Howard, Grand Teton National Park)

**Analysis**

James Kelly stated that he considered the route easier than expected and that he and Claude had done harder routes in the Sierras. James felt they were experienced with ice axes. Also, he was only slightly tired and felt that Claude was a stronger climber. James said they were not bothered by altitude problems. He considered the late afternoon snow soft and the steps he kicked good. James Kelly had no idea why the accident occurred or why Claude did not self-arrest. They were climbing unroped. (Source: R. Howard, Grand Teton National Park)

**LOSS OF CONTROL, VOLUNTARY GLISSADE****Wyoming, Tetons**

On July 13, Gary Price (22), Mark Hasson, Barry Thomas, and Ethan Rathburn were climbing the East Couloir route on Disappointment Peak. After reaching the summit, the party began its descent by the same route. At 12:30 p.m., while descending the moderately steep upper section of the couloir in a sitting glissade, Price lost control and attempted to self-arrest. The strap of his backpack broke and became tangled with his axe. He then slid out of control about 90 feet down the couloir and landed in a moat, injuring his right knee and ankle.

Mark Elder, a park visitor hiking in the Amphitheater Lake area, observed the accident and reported to the Jenny Lake Ranger Station that Price was being assisted down the trail to the valley by his friends. At 7 p.m., Hasson and Rathburn arrived at Lupine Meadows to report that Price was in the vicinity of the eighth switchback and did not feel that he could descend to the valley without assistance. Park personnel reached him by 10:30 p.m. with a pack horse and evacuated him to Lupine Meadows shortly after midnight. (Source: Jim Olson, Grand Teton National Park)

**Analysis**

This is a common occurrence in the Tetons. Many climbs end with a final descent down a snowfield or couloir. It is the classic time for things to go wrong because of fatigue and the change of pace from climbing. The reason more of these "incidents" do not become "accidents" is due to somewhat merciful out runs on some of these snow chutes. (Source: J. Williamson)

**FALLING ROCK****Wyoming, Tetons**

On August 6, Shad Dusseau, Terry Green, and Leo Larson, Park Rangers, were climbing the Black Ice Couloir on the Grand Teton on a routine mountain patrol. Dusseau had led the first ice pitch and was belaying Larson when a massive rockfall came down the couloir. Dusseau was hit on the leg and Larson's left femur was fractured. Green was not injured and was able to assist with the ensuing rescue. Dusseau's injuries turned out to be a severely bruised knee as well as a cracked and chipped femur. Despite his injuries, he was able to assist with Larson's medical treatment and was also able to rappel the entire route to the eventual helicopter landing site. After lowering Larson to the bottom of the pitch, the party was able to call for help with the Park Service radio which is carried on all mountain patrols.