

out but couldn't seem to move diagonally, only downward."

At first the avalanche was not moving all that fast. He remembers having enough time to think about wanting to remove his skis, but he didn't think he would be able to undo his safety straps.

In seconds this relatively slow-moving avalanche accelerated. A powder cloud formed and Gregory lost visibility; he could feel and hear wind. Gregory continues his story: "I knew I was in real trouble. A few seconds later I hit something—maybe a rock—that was hard. It flipped me up, and I hit something else hard. Then I hit a branch or small tree and heard and felt it snap and I pushed it away from me. I hit several other things but I'm not sure what. Each collision hurt and knocked the wind out of me. I couldn't see them coming and wasn't expecting them.

"Again I began to accelerate even faster and I consciously thought that I was moving fast enough that when I hit a tree it would be all over for sure. I tried to decide which would be the best way to hit but figured it didn't really matter. I knew that there were trees and cliffs all over where I was headed. I assumed I was dead, for sure. I spread my arms slightly to help balance and keep me up in the snow and grimaced waiting to hit a tree.

"My speed now was faster than I care to recall; it seemed it was like tucking High Rustler [a very steep expert ski run at Alta] from top to bottom. On I flew and then in a few more seconds I really did fly. I was launched off something, and I was airborne. I was up for what seemed like a hell of a long time. Then I landed. I sank in a little but wasn't hurt. After landing it seemed as if I wasn't moving with the snow any longer and it was over. I could still move and began struggling to get higher, but I don't know if I was moving up or down.

"Then the snow began pounding down on me...it solidified instantly. I wanted to get my hands to my face but didn't make it. I could barely wiggle my finger tips, and so I decided I would use them to dig a tunnel to my face. I tried this but obviously didn't get too far. Then frustration and panic set in and I wanted to move, God I wanted to move. I think I flexed every muscle in my body as if I could move the whole mountain, but nothing moved. I realized it was stupid to panic and struggle and that I should just try to relax.

"I started to calm down and it seemed like a surrealistic dream or nightmare. I'm not sure if the things I remember as happening next were after [a rescuer] cleared my airway and I began breathing or while I was still underneath the snow. I remember dreaming and there was lots of pain...I can't remember what hurt, just that it was seemingly unbearable."

## Rescue

Amy Kadleck, a long time Alta skier, was riding the Albion lift when she heard a rumble that developed into a roar. She first thought the ski area was doing avalanche control work as she watched the avalanche tear down the steep slope. When the avalanche poured over the cliffs it looked like a waterfall and caused a huge powder cloud. Alta patroller Jeff Brewer was also riding the Albion lift and watched the powder cloud and moving snow envelope the summer road and pile into a beginner ski run. During the winter, skiers from the Albion lift can ski down the snow-covered road to reach their homes. At 1356 hours—before the powder cloud had settled—Brewer had radioed ski-patrol dispatch about the avalanche. Kadleck had to wait until she reached the top of the lift to report the slide.

Ski patroller Dan Howlett was in the main the office when the avalanche was reported. He hopped on a snowmobile and headed toward the avalanche. As he drove he heard another patroller report over the radio that there was a skier track going into the slide. While racing up a ski run Howlett flagged down Dr. Rick Brown, a medical doctor that skis with the patrol, and towed him behind the snowmobile to the slide. Patrolmen Gus Gilman, also riding a snowmobile, pulled up to the debris at the same time, about 4 minutes after the dust cloud had settled.

Howlett and Gilman turned their beacons to receive and started to search the debris below the summer road. They found a broken ski and a pair of ski poles, though one pole had been tossed just outside of the debris. They soon picked up a beacon signal and quickly zeroed in on the buried skier. They knew the victim was buried deeply. With their beacons set to the lowest receive setting, they could not hear a signal.

The patrollers started to dig. Three minutes after arriving on scene they hit Gregory's boot buried 2 feet below the surface. Additional patrollers arrived so Howlett