



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

September, 1992

MEETING

Time and Place: Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the Montana Power Building at 1903 Russell Street in Missoula. The September meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 9.

Program: The September program will be the traditional retrospective slide show of trips from the past year. All members are encouraged to bring in slides taken since August 1991 or thereabouts. This is your chance to see all of the trips that you missed, get ideas for future trips, show off your photographic prowess, and embarrass your friends with candid shots. A Kodak carousel slide projector will be provided.

TRIP CALENDAR

Tuesday night Mount Sentinel climbs: Meet at the Mount Sentinel parking lot each Tuesday evening at 5:30 p.m. for climbs of Mount Sentinel, as soon as fire restrictions are lifted. A great way to stay in shape.

Thursday Night Mountain Bike Rides: Every Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m. a group of bicyclers, including several members of the club, go on mountain bike rides around Missoula. Watch the "Around Missoula" column in the Missoulain for details.

Sunday September 13, Lolo Peak. Last year club members led a hike up Lolo Peak in connection with the Missoula Trails festivities. In case you just moved to Missoula, Lolo is the prominent peak lying to the southwest of town. The hike was very popular, and we're going to do it again this year. Call Art Gidel at 543-6352 for details.

Saturday September 19, Grey Wolf: Climb of Grey Wolf Peak in the south end of the Mission Mountains. This is the rocky mountain which is visible from south of Arlee. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

Sunday September 20, Blue Point mountain bike ride: A loop trip on mountain bikes to Blue Point, which is located in the Rattlesnake area near Marshall Ski Area. Call Jim York at 543-6274 for details.

Saturday September 26, Mountaineer Peak. Bill Burnett didn't make it to the top of Mountaineer Peak on August 15 (see trip report below), and he intends to restore his self-esteem by bagging it on September 26. Trip will need to start early and move fast. Call Bill at 549-6089 for details.

Sunday October 4, Little St. Joe Cabin Maintenance Trip: This is the tentative date for the annual maintenance trip to the club's cabin on Little St. Joe Peak in the Bitterroot Mountains. Everybody who uses the cabin should pitch in to help set the cabin up for the winter, and/or contribute to the club's cabin maintenance fund. The work goes real fast if a lot of people show up. Call Dave Pengelly at 728-6512 for details.

Sunday October 11, Fischer Peak: Climb of Fischer Peak, which is located in the Swan Range between Holland Lake and Seely Lake. A moderately challenging scramble with great scenery. Call Art Gidel at 543-6352 for details.

TRIP REPORTS

Storm Lake-Mt. Howe, July 18: Art Gidel led Joyce McDonough, Bill Burnett, and Peter Dayton on a trip to his childhood stomping grounds near Storm Lake, which is located in the Anaconda Range about seven miles south of Georgetown Lake. The section below the lake is owned by Washington Corporation and is being pretty heavily loggerized, but the activity did permit us to drive all the way to the lake, which did not use to be possible. From the lake we headed south to a ridgeline which includes Little Rainbow Mountain, Mt. Howe, and Mt. Evans. This end

of the Anaconda Range is quite nice and well worth a visit. We climbed Little Rainbow and were heading along a gradual ridgeline for Mt. Howe when I (Peter Dayton) stubbed my toe on a rock, took a couple fast steps, and crashed to the ground, hitting my head, crunching my wrists, and getting a massive hematoma on the outside of my calf. I therefore decided to take a pass on Mt. Howe and headed back the four or five miles to the car while the others bagged the peak. My injuries proved to be minor except for the hematoma, which created a bump about the size of a second kneecap and is still fairly prominent six weeks later. It was a pretty silly accident on very easy terrain; I could have received the same injuries by slipping on my front steps. However, it was a sobering lesson for me on how quickly an ordinary stroll in the woods can turn into a dangerous situation. I find myself being a bit more careful while boulder hopping, and more likely to tote along extra clothing and first aid gear. - Peter Dayton.

East and West Saint Mary's Peaks, August 8: On Saturday, August 8, Brett Doucett, Roger Ehret, and Gerald Olbu climbed East and West Saint Mary's Peak. The trail began at the north end of Saint Mary's Lake and went straight up the ridge. Even though the trail was faint in places, it allowed us to avoid the bushwacking of the other route which began at the Mission Reservoir. Scenic sights on the trip included Gray Wolf Peak, No Fish Lake, Sonielem Ridge, East and West Saint Mary's Peak, and several other mountains in the Missions. On the way down, we decided to look for the remains of a recent plane crash. This took us down some extremely scenic snowfields and yellow rocky ledges and plateaus. We found that the plane had been removed and a rock cairn memorial was now at the location. - Gerald Olbu. [Editor's note - Brett Doucett was instrumental in locating this crashed airplane.]

Grand Teton, August 14-15: On August 13th, Maryanne McLain, Ralph Flockerzi, Gerald Olbu, and Dave Pengelly headed for Wyoming to climb the Grand Teton. Maryanne was "eager" to try out her recently discovered rock climbing skills (having taken a climbing class in July). We checked in with the climbing rangers at Jenny Lake on Friday morning and registered to climb the standard Upper Exum route. We were able to get the last available campsite at the lower saddle. The sites are nice if the wind isn't blowing. The seven mile/5000foot climb to the lower saddle was slow due to the heat, but otherwise uneventful. We arrived in plenty of time to inspect the route for the next day and to chat with the guides who take their clients up the same route. After a nice moonlit night, we got started Saturday morning about 6:30 a.m. on the 2100 foot climb to the summit (13,770 feet). The guides left about 4:30 a.m. so we weren't slowed by their larger group due to our later start. The climbing is quite enjoyable with generally good rock and great views. We used a rope to belay several short pitches including the gap at the end of "Wall Street and the "Friction Pitch." After summiting and obtaining the requisite group photos, we descended the standard route, including the 120 foot rappel. We returned to our camp at about 3:00 p.m., and due to an impending storm, packed up and hiked out rather than spend an extra evening as planned. A great time was had by all. Maryanne has decided that now that she's mastered rock climbing it's time to get some crampons and go climb Mt. Rainier (just don't stay in any motels around Renton, Washington!) - Dave Pengelly [Editor's note - While Dave, Steve Niday, and Rick Murney were returning from their last foray to Mt. Rainier, Rick's 4-Runner and much of their gear was stolen from a motel in Renton.]

Mountaineer Peak Area, August 15: Bill Burnett, Joyce McDonough, and Peter Dayton took a hike to the base of Mountaineer Peak and the Garden Wall, which can be seen from St. Ignatius in the south end of the Mission Mountains. The trail is pretty clear and well beat out all the way up to Lucifer Lake, but it gets real steep above Mission Falls, with various interesting alternate usage routes. The main trail now leads around the twenty-foot high "Weiner Dog Cliff" which used to be a significant feature in the trail. (Ask Sally and Tom Daer about the sad story behind this name.) At Lucifer Lake the usage trail poops out, so we plunged into the bushes and started thrashing blindly uphill until we resurfaced at Picture Lake. Above Picture Lake the vegetation gets more alpine and open, and we hiked up to the base of the Garden Wall. From any distance away the Garden Wall looks like a cliff, but in fact you can walk right up it on the north end. From this point the summit of Mountaineer is only 2,500 vertical feet of boulder hopping and scrambling away. We were fresh and enthusiastic, but after adding up how much time it would take us to bag the peak and retreat to our car, we realized that if we went for the top we wouldn't make it out until well after dark. Therefore, after spending a while soaking up the scenery and listening to Bill serenade the mountain goats with his yodeling, we made the sensible and mature decision to head out. In retrospect, of course, we made the wrong decision, and should have gone for the peak, regardless of the consequences; it would have made the trip much more memorable. If we had wanted to be sensible, we should have stayed at home and watched television. - Peter Dayton

Swan Peak, August 29: Bill Burnett, Brett Doucett, and Peter Dayton climbed Swan Peak, which is northeast of Condon in the Swan Range. We started from a logging road part way up the west end of the ridge to the north of Squeezer Creek. We did not follow the hunters trail which runs along the south face of this ridge, but bushwacked straight up the west end of the ridge,

and then proceeded east along the undulating crest of the ridge. The numbers say it all: round trip, 12 miles; net altitude gain, 4,600 feet; total distance climbed on ascent, 6,500 feet; total distance climbed on descent, 1,700 feet; total distance climbed on trip, 8,200 feet; sunset, 8:22 p.m.; time of arrival at cars, 11:15 p.m. Dave Pengelly and Steve Niday climbed this peak last year and found the logging road which leads to the hunters trail to be overgrown and impassable quite low down. On their trip they spotted a clearcut to the north which looked like it would be a better way to reach the peak. I called various Forest Service and Plum Creek employees and was unable to find out anything about this logging area. Everybody told me that the best approach would be up the west end of the ridge north of Squeezer Creek, via some logging roads which Plum Creek is currently using for logging high into Section 23, T23N, R17W. We were also told that the roads would be gated down low, so we brought mountain bikes. In fact we were able to drive up the roads, and did not need the bikes. The bushwacking above the logging roads is rather ghastly for a while, but after a bit you are hiking along game trails through bear grass and fairly open trees, with little underbrush. The ridgeline rolls up and down a lot, and you have to drop down off the ridge into a basin in order to reach the west ridge of Swan Peak, so you put in lots of extra altitude gain during the day. The climb was enjoyable and uneventful, with clear weather, decent visibility, and great scenery at all times. Darkness caught up with us as we dropped off the top of the ridge towards our cars, and we bushwacked downhill for a couple hours with flashlights. We hit the logging activity a bit south of our cars, and spent a while roaming the maze of roads in the dark before we located them. It certainly was fun.

During the trip we saw the clearcut to the north which Dave and Steve saw last year, and it definitely looks like a better route up to Swan Peak. The clearcut is on the west side of the ridge between Scout Creek and Bethel Creek, above Scout Lake. The roads and the clearcut run all the way to the top of the Scout-Bethel ridge at 6,300 feet, which is quite a bit higher than the roads on the west end of the ridge north of Squeezer Creek. Even if the road is gated, you should be able to mountain bike right up to the top of the ridge. From the end of this road, the route to the summit is about a mile shorter than the route which we took, making the round trip two miles shorter. The Scout-Bethel ridge undulates up and down much less than the ridge north of Squeezer Creek, and we located a pretty good trail running along the top of the Scout-Bethel ridge. If you end up coming out after dark, the trail hits the clearcut and the road system at the ridgeline, so you won't have to bushwack down 2,200 feet to the roads. We recommend that future trips try this route. - Peter Dayton.

OFFICERS

Art Gidel, President - 543-6352
Dave Pengelly, Secretary-Treasurer - 728-6512

Peter Dayton, Newsletter Editor 728-8101
Rick Murney, Vice President - 543-7586

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Mail a check payable to
"Rocky Mountaineers" to
Dave Pengelly
P.O. Box 4262
Missoula, Montana 59806

Check one: Individual (\$6.00/year) _____ Family (\$8.00/year) _____

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MISSOULA, MT 59806

(STAMP)

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