



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

October, 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 October meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 14.

Program: The October program will a slide show by Art Gidel, Beverly Chin, Dave Ryan, Peter Dayton, and Colleen Hunter concerning an 18-day, 240 mile private float trip down the Grand Canyon last spring. The show will be in a dazzling and unique "dueling slide show" format, with three screens and three simultaneous and more or less coordinated slide shows. Security guards will be present to control those presenting the show, and if irreconcilable differences arise in the interpretation of events, the audience will be permitted to vote on whose version they believe the most, or disbelieve the least. We modestly claim that the show is almost as good as actually floating the river, and will put a lot less mileage on your car.

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. until the end of October a group of bicyclers, including several members of the club, go on mountain bike rides around Missoula. Watch the "Around Missoula" column in the Missoulian for details.

Saturday, October 24, Mt. Harding: Climb of Mt. Harding, which is located in the Mission Mountains east of Ronan, via Eagle Pass, weather and snow conditions permitting. Alternate destination possible if snow conditions are poor. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4767 for details.

Saturday November 7, ski trip TBA: Art Gidel will lead a ski trip to St. Mary's Peak, Hoodoo Pass, or some other good early-season ski venue as snow conditions permit. Call Art Gidel for details at 543-6352.

Sunday, November 15, Bighorn Sheep Viewing: During the fall rutting period it is possible to watch bighorn sheep mating activities in the Lower Rock Creek drainage, which is located about fifteen miles west of Missoula. The trip will involve easy hiking and snooping around, and may only take part of the day. Call Ralph Flockerzi for details at 549-7150.

Sunday November 22, ski trip TBA: Art Gidel will lead a ski trip to St. Mary's Peak, Hoodoo Pass, or some other good early-season ski venue as snow conditions permit. Call Art Gidel for details at 543-6352.

TRIP REPORTS

Main Salmon River, September 4-7: Art Gidel, Beverly Chin, Peter Dayton, Colleen Hunter, Wayne Hecker, and Pat Hecker floated the "River of no Return" section of the Main Salmon River in Idaho over an extended 4-day Labor Day weekend. This 82-mile long wilderness float starts about forty miles below North Fork and ends about twenty miles above Riggins. Art got the permit in the lottery, demonstrating that it is not totally impossible to draw a permit. The group used a variety of craft: Art and Peter were in kayaks, Wayne was in a raft, Colleen was in a cataraft, Pat was in an inflatable kayak, and Beverly was in a "Pack Cat" (kind of a cross between an inflatable kayak and a cataraft, which is paddled with a kayak paddle). Although Beverly, Colleen, and Pat have been on many wilderness trips as passengers in rafts, this was their first trip paddling their own craft. Pat and Beverly did some impressive hole-diving and took a few spills, but Colleen completed the trip without a flip in her larger oar-powered cataraft. The river was extremely low but still plenty of fun, with a few rapids harder than at higher levels. The weather was generally cool and inclement until the last day. The scenery is of course top-notch, and we enjoyed a dip in Bathtub hot spring en route. A large forest

fire had burned through this area only a week or so earlier, and we saw many hot spots, smoking stumps, and little crackling fires. In general the fire burned the grass and bushes but only took out about 10-15 percent of the trees, although we did pass a few drainages or slopes on which all the vegetation got torched. On the last day the float was disrupted by helicopters and jet boats ferrying firefighters and gear to portions of the fire which were still active.

- Peter Dayton.

Snowshoe Peak, September 12, 1992: Snowshoe Peak in the north part of the Cabinet Range is much closer to Libby than to Missoula. Eric Jones, Rick Murney, and Mark Waters therefore drove to Libby Friday night for a Saturday climb. Their rooming plans were shot down by the Nordic Fest crowds, but they were lucky enough to crash at an unsuspecting friend of Mark. Be sure to check with someone who really knows when the Nordic Fest happens rather than a certain out-of-touch Libby native if you go in September. The northeast ridge of Snowshoe is just north of Leigh Lake, which is reached by a popular, steep trail one-half hour drive south of Libby. The group followed a typical lakeshore trail and gained the ridge by walking and scrambling up creekbed, rockbands, and beargrass slopes. Wind was blasting the col but eased off higher up the ridge. The peak remained obscured by cloud above 7,500 feet and it was snowing lightly. The scrambling was not difficult despite slick conditions. Eric's fun meter peaked before reaching the main north-south ridge which Mark and Rick followed until it leveled off. That seemed good enough at the time and they headed down. Time from the trailhead and back was 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. This is a fun route up the highest peak in the Cabinets (8,738 feet). I'd like to go back sometime I can actually see where I am. - Rick Murney.

Lolo Peak, September 13, 1992: In conjunction with the Missoula Trails Celebration, the Rocky Mountaineers sponsored a hike to Lolo Peak on September 13. A total of 11 individuals showed up, in spite of blustery cool weather. We quickly encountered snow after leaving the trailhead. All participants hiked to Carlton Lake, and the four Mountaineer members (Roger Ehret, Bret Doucett, Ed Monnig, & yours truly) continued on to the north summit. Due to the six-inch snow accumulation, footing was poor. The wind howled, and we howled back. A fun trip. Everyone was home in time for afternoon tea. - Art Gidel.

Heavenly Twins, September 19, 1992. Due to an accumulation of snow on Gray Wolf Peak, the Gray Wolf trip was cancelled and instead Shirley Zylstra, Bret Doucett, and Gerald Olbu climbed the Heavenly Twins in the Bitterroot Mountains west of Stevensville. We hiked up the trail near St. Mary's Peak, then proceeded cross country, mostly following the open, rocky east ridge of the Heavenly Twins. The white rock on Disappointment Peak was quite beautiful. The most challenging (and funnest) portion of the trip was an 800-foot climb up a ridge about a half mile from the peak. We then traversed over talus until we came to a couloir. From the top of the couloir, a short 100-foot foot climb took us to the summit. We all enjoyed the impressive views of the Bitterroot Mountains and the perfect weather. To avoid downclimbing, we scrambled down the west side of the south ridge. This was a long day trip and most of us were thoroughly exhausted, especially after the 1,000-foot uphill hike back to St. Mary's Peak. - Gerald Olbu.

Turquoise Peak Attempt, September 26, 1992. Bret Doucett, Hamilton Smith, and Gerald Olbu attempted to climb Turquoise [also known as Glacier] Peak, which is in the south end of the Mission Mountains above St. Ignatius. We hiked past Mission Falls and Lucifer Lake. At Picture Lake we began to get into snow, and by the time we reached the cirque below Turquoise Peak the snow was two feet deep. We attempted to climb the headwall to the peak but the rocks had a heavy coating of ice which made climbing very dangerous. We traversed northward and reached the top of the ridge overlooking Icefloe Lake. We experienced winter conditions. It was cold, the wind was blowing snow so hard that it hurt my face, and the clouds were so low and thick that we could only see upward about 20 feet (in fact, after the clouds lifted a bit, we realized that when we attempted the headwall we were only about 50 feet from the top but didn't know it at the time). The trip down was very quiet and uneventful. - Gerald Olbu.

Little St. Joe Cabin Workparty, October 4, 1992. The Little St. Joe cabin maintenance trip was completed as scheduled. Elizabeth Morgan, Art Gidel, Steve Niday, Rick Murney, Eric Thorstad, Ron Rosser, Roger Ehret, Paul Jensen, and Dave Pengelly participated. A full supply of firewood was cut, split, and stacked, and a new visitor's log book was placed in the cabin. Let's hope for a good snow year. - Dave Pengelly.

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: _____

Check one: Individual (\$6.00/year) _____ Family (\$8.00/year) _____ Missoula, Montana 59806

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

THE MOUNTAIN EAR
P.O. BOX 4262
MISSOULA, MT 59806

(STAMP)

FIRST CLASS MAIL