



# Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

MARCH, 1994

MEETING

**Time and Place:** Club meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the County Commissioner's conference room, which is located on the second floor of the Annex (new portion) of the Missoula County Courthouse. The March meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 9.

**January Program.** Ever wonder how the big name climbers manage to take off about four months of each year for high-altitude climbing trips in exotic locales? Ever wonder if those folks are all independently wealthy? Ever wonder if it is possible to have word-class fun with a middle-class vacation schedule? Wonder no more; Pat Caffrey, a famed climber from Seely Lake, will give a slide show on "mini-expeditions" involving less than one week, door-to-door, from Missoula. Pat has bagged the highest summit on six of the seven continents, but enjoys taking his kids out on trips as well. In fact, many of these min-expeditions are suitable for outdoors persons who are handicapped with children. You can count on Pat's presentation to be entertaining as well as informative.

## TRIP CALENDAR

**South Mission Mountains.** We didn't go on the exploratory ski mountaineering trip in the South Missions due to possibly hazardous snow conditions, but still want to do it. The route is along the ridge to the east of the Fall Creek (Scenic Lake) drainage to Weather and Blacktail Peaks, which lie generally between Grey Wolf Peak and Grey Wolf Lake. The scenery should be spectacular, the climb is only about 3,500 feet, the slopes and ridgetops are open but low angle, and the bushwacking down low could be gross. Call Peter Dayton at 728-8101 if you are interested.

**March 5, Saturday, Stemple Pass to Fleisher Pass.** Cross-country ski trip between Stemple Pass and Fleisher Pass, which are located southeast of Lincoln, and are separated by 12-14 miles of rolling terrain along the continental divide. This door-to-door crossover trip is being coordinated with the outing club from Great Falls. The groups will meet in Lincoln and swap cars, each group will go to a different pass, and the groups will pass each other while heading for their own cars at the other pass. This will be a chance to see some new country and meet some people from out of town, although only briefly. Call Ed Monnig for details at 721-2707.

**March 6, Sunday, Mission Falls, Ice Climbing.** This will be an opportunity to learn a little bit about and practice some ice climbing, which will be suitable for beginners or anyone interested in mountaineering. Mission Falls, located near St. Ignatius, is easily accessible and has been described as an "ice climbing arena" in Ron Brunkhorst's book "Big Sky Ice." There are many places to ice climb in this area and several can be top-roped. Two ice axes and crampons are required; some equipment may be borrowed or shared. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

**March 12, Saturday, Ketchikan Peak.** Ski to Ketchikan Peak, which is in the Bitterroots, northwest of Corvo Lake and south of Hamilton. This will be a long day trip and will involve some on-trail and some off-trail skiing. Depending on the conditions, if the snow is windblown off the peak and the rocks are exposed, the final approach may involve scrambling over the rocks to the peak. Call Dave Pengelly at 728-6512 for details.

**March 20, Sunday, St. Mary's Peak.** Day ski trip to St. Mary's Peak in the Bitterroots. The trip will involve skiing along a road and then the ridge to reach to 9,351-foot summit of this peak which contains a lookout tower. The ridge has moderately gentle slopes which should be quite manageable. The trip is of moderate difficulty for the average telemark skier. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

**April 2-3, Saturday-Sunday, Hut Skiing.** A few very energetic and devoted backcountry skiers have built a 6-man snow hut which is located near the top of a wide flat ridge. It is only a 2-3 hour ski trip to the hut. Everybody should bring fine food and enjoy the accommodations. For entertainment, participants have the choice of skiing along the flat ridge top or tele skiing down some great bowls. This is an opportunity for an easy overnight trip and to stay in a warm snow hut. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

**April 2-16, ski tour of Yellowstone National Park.** Ten to 12 days of back country skiing through the beautiful northern high country of Yellowstone Park. Those interested should commit by March 10, so all participants can take part in the trip planning and arrangements. Call David Bixby at 721-4224 for details.

**April 10, Sunday, Wisherd Ridge.** Easy to moderate ski trip to Wisherd Ridge, which is located about 20 miles northeast of Missoula. Most of the trip will involve skiing along a road to reach the ridge. Once at the ridge, participants may ski along the flat ridge top or ski the

wonderful bowls. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

Kayaking. Whoa Daddy, the kayaking season is really here now! If you have water on your brain, call Peter Dayton (728-8101) or Art Gidel (543-6352) for good times.

Wanna lead a trip? If you are interested in leading a trip, help is only a telephone call away; Gerald Olbu, 549-4769, will be delighted to sign you up.

#### TRIP REPORTS

Trapper Peak, February 5-6. Even though this trip was scheduled as a day trip, due to popular demand we made it into an overnight trip. Six enthusiastic skiers came for a great weekend: David Bixby, Dave Siemens, Jamie Green, Cheryl Beyer, Torbon Storgaard, and Gerald Olbu. After a half day of skiing we came to a very inviting spot for a campsite where we all enjoyed digging snow pits for the tents. We had a great camp. David and Jamie cooked a delicious stew and we all envied Cheryl with her warm booties. We all stayed quite warm at night. The next day, we proceeded to the peak. The clear blue sky made a gorgeous day and the views were great. The ski down was fun with foot-deep powder in places. We packed up our camp and headed out, making the trailhead by dusk. The ski down the road completed a very long day. It was a lot of work, but it was fun work. - Gerald Olbu.

Moose Ridge Rumble, February 13. A group of 9 intrepid skiers departed the K Mart parking lot at 9:15 on February 13th to tackle Moose Ridge at Lolo Pass. Alice O., Richard White, Kathy Kessler-York, Barb Farrell, Chris Weigand, Tom ?, Jon Bonnicksen, Ken Moe, and leader Julie Huck braved the moderate weather. They have great maps up at the Lolo Pass Visitors Center. Looking at the map it appeared to be more like a 40 mile loop instead of just the 14 that we skied, but that did not stop this gang. We began skiing at about 10:30 and started down the Packer Meadows Trail. We continued on this trail until we reached the Elk Meadows road intersection, and then followed F.S. Road 373 to Road 5671. The route was a gentle climb up, then some rolling hills (never too strenuous). We munched lunch while waiting for everyone to catchup. It was a cool day with no sun, somewhere in the mid-20's, so we did not stand around long. The final leg of the ski was up to the top of Moose Ridge, where we could enjoy the Champion/Plum Creek clear cuts. By this time the snow had begun to fall. The ski down the ridge was kind of slow (oh well). The last two miles went slowly (I think we were all a little tired). This road crosses over Pack Creek and then we turned right on F.S. Road 5670 and headed back to the visitor center. A good time was had by all (right?!). I think the good turn-out shows the need for more intermediate level adventures. Any leaders out there? - Julie Huck

Como Peak, February 19-20. We began this trip not knowing exactly what we would find. Jack Bell, Jiff Holiday, Justin Ivory, and Gerald Olbu set out to see what we could do. We skied up the side of the steep ridge and were pleasantly surprised to find a flat spot with two-foot deep snow which made a wonderful campsite. The next day we headed straight up the ridge and then began traversing to reach Como Peak. We found lots of avalanche slopes but were able to travel safely above most of them. Then we came to a large open slope right below the peak.. It was too large to go around and it was very definitely avalanche prone; the snow had at least five layers and two layers were granular snow with little cohesion. We decided not to risk it. The mountain beat us this time, but we'll come back for another try. - Gerald Olbu.

#### OFFICERS

Gerald Olbu, President - 549-4769  
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) \_\_\_\_\_ (9398)



Mail a check payable to  
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