



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

APRIL, 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 April meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 13.

April Program. Rick Murney and Brendon Bady will present a slide show which they entitle "How to Avoid Altitude Sickness in Alaska: Low Altitude Climbing on Denali, Mount St. Elias, and Other Peaks." Apparently much of this low altitude activity was the result of adverse weather and other factors, rather than by choice, but it didn't keep them from having a great time anyhow. This should be an excellent slide show, and should demonstrate once again (yes, Grasshopper . . .) that it is not necessary to reach the summit of the peak in order to have a successful trip.

TRIP CALENDAR

Thursday evenings and Saturdays, Rock Climbing. The rock climbing group will meet again this year on most Thursday evenings and Saturdays. Last year this group climbed a wide variety of technical climbs, some easy, some hard, most top roped, some multi-pitched. The group plans more of the same this year. Beginners are encouraged to come and gain some experience on the rocks; rock climbing experience may be a prerequisite for some of the Club's trips this summer. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 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.

April 16, Saturday, McDonald Peak. Climb McDonald Peak, the highest and most prominent peak in the Missions. This will be a long and strenuous trip with about 6000 feet of elevation gain. The route will begin at McDonald Lake, cross the creek, and then bushwack up to the snow chutes and bowls that lead to the summit. A ice ax will be required and crampons may be needed. The Mission Mountains, capped with their spring snow, are quite scenic at this time of year. Call Art Gidel at 543-6352 for details.

April 24, Sunday, Trapper Peak. Trapper Peak is like a magnet in the winter. It's a favorite place to ski because the skiing is relatively easy and there is lots of it. The scenery along the ridge and at the top of the 10,157-foot peak is some of the best in the Bitterroots. This is a moderate to strenuous trip, which will probably involve about 2-3 miles of road skiing followed by 6 miles along the ridge top. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

April 30, May 1, Saturday-Sunday, Vacation Pass. Overnight trip to Vacation Pass in the south end of the Mission Mountains. This pass lies west of Grey Wolf Peak, between St. Mary's Peak and Lowery Peak (formerly Peak X). We will have to carry our skis through the brush at the lower elevations. At higher elevations the route enters spectacular open basins. We will probably camp on the ridge leading to St. Mary's Peak at the treeline. There will be many opportunities the next day: ski to St. Mary's Peak, ski to Vacation Pass, continue skiing down the other side to Grizzly Lake, or just hang out and enjoy the scenery. This will be a long and strenuous trip. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

May 8, Sunday, West Como Peak. Climb the north face of West Como Peak. This is one of the three symmetrical Como Peaks which can be seen from the highway south of Hamilton. The west peak has a large snowfield which is composed of three ramps leading to the summit. An ice ax will be required and crampons may be needed. This will be a long and strenuous trip. The first portion of the trip follows a trail, and then bushwacking is required until we reach snow. The snow climb portion should be a great mountaineering experience. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

May 15, Sunday, Boulder Peak. Ski to Boulder Peak, which is the impressive peak south of Trapper Peak, south of Darby. The ridge leading to this peak is similar to the Trapper Peak ridge, and may have some good springtime intermediate-level telemark skiing. If the snow is blown off the top, some scrambling over the rocks will be necessary to reach the peak. This will be a moderate to strenuous long day trip. Call Ralph Flockerzi at 549-7150 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

Mission Falls, Ice Climbing, March 6. A fun and exciting day of ice climbing was enjoyed by seven mountaineers: Jack Bell, Jeff Holiday, Jamie Green, Tim Page, Gerald Olbu, and Jim and Janet Surrena. We set up two 50-foot climbs on mostly vertical ice. The ice was in good condition; it was soft, so our ice axes stuck fairly well, but it wasn't overly wet. Some participants had never climbed ice before, so this was a new experience. Others had ice climbed before, but this gave them a chance to try out different ice tools. It became a social event; most of the time people were watching others climb and having a good time critiquing climbing styles and relating personal experiences. Afterwards, we all went to the Alex Lowe slideshow. - Gerald Olbu.

St. Mary's Peak, March 20. The Skiing was great on St. Mary's Peak in the Bitterroots. The spring-like conditions were enjoyed by seven skiers: Dave Siemens, David Lathrop, Dave Gaeuman, Homer Lambert, Julie Warner, Steve Schombel, and Gerald Olbu. Even though it was very spring-like, we could only drive about half way up the road. We skied up the road to the trail head and then proceeded up the gentle ridge. We made good time and it was a relaxed trip with a nearly completely blue sky overhead. Just as we approached the peak, a weather front moved in and obscured our view of the surrounding peaks. It was windy and chilly so we stayed in the lookout tower for our lunch. The ski down the low-angle ridge with widely spaced trees was lots of fun. The snow was pretty manageable, although it was heavy, which made turning somewhat difficult. - Gerald Olbu.

Gash Point, March 20. While Gerald and his crew were climbing St. Mary's Peak, Dave Pengelly, Peter Dayton, Art Gidel, and Ann Gidel (Art's sister) climbed Gash Point, which is two drainages to the south, by Victor. We were able to drive several switchbacks up the ridge which leads to the north end of Gash Point. We started out hiking on dirt and ethafoam-like snow, but after about 500 feet were able to put on our skis. The snow softened up as the weather got warmer and we gained altitude. There was a snowmobiler running amok in the bowls (well inside the wilderness area) during the morning. The high point of the day was the ski out through the trees. The snow was heavy but quite turnable. - Peter Dayton.

South Fork of the Clearwater, April 3: This month's outdoor quiz: (1) Which section of the South Fork of the Clearwater sounds more impressive, the "Golden Canyon" section or the "Mickey Mouse" section? (2) Which section of the river did Art Gidel and Peter Dayton decide to kayak? Correct answers: (1) Golden Canyon, (2) Mickey Mouse. After a day of kayaking on the Lochsa, Art and Peter headed over to the South Fork of the Clearwater, which lies east of Grangeville, and flows into the Clearwater at the beautiful town of Kooskia (motto: "More trailer houses per capita than any other town in Idaho"). After driving through Harpster, Stites (motto: "Only town in Idaho registered in its entirety as an automobile junkyard"), and other scenic points, we performed an automotive reconnaissance of the Mickey Mouse and Golden Canyon sections of the South Fork, which were somewhat swollen with rain. These sections lie upstream from the junction with the road to Grangeville. The Mickey Mouse section contained a number of interesting looking rapids, but the Golden Canyon was non-stop class III-IV action, with a couple of V's thrown in. Grant Amaral's guidebook states that Coyote Rapid, the first rapid in the Golden Canyon, has been run by a couple of people, and he fondly recounts an epic thrashing which he received in Fish Jump Rapid, which is in the middle of the Golden Canyon. Art really wanted to run the Golden Canyon, but I talked him into doing the Mickey Mouse section. Doug Kolwaite showed up and joined us for the run. Art was grumpy about our choice of section until we blasted through the first rapid, after which he allowed that perhaps it was a good thing we hadn't tried the Golden Canyon. Funny how those rapids look smaller from the road than they do when you are in them. We left occasional groups of fishermen standing slack-jawed in amazement as we bounced through the rapids. Towards the end of the run some spudheads followed us from rapid to rapid in their cars, jumping out and cheering wildly as we ran each one. We'll be back to do this river some more, and may even try some carefully chosen sections of the Golden Canyon next time. - Peter Dayton.

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
"Rocky Mountaineers" to
Dave Pengelly
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Missoula, Montana 59806

THE MOUNTAIN EAR
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(STAMP)

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