



# Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

MAY, 1995  
MEETING

---

**Time and place.** Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 in the County Commissioner's conference room on the second floor of the Annex (new portion) of the Missoula County Courthouse. This month's meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 10. Enter the building through the north door.

**Program.** Gerald Olbu will present a slideshow of some of the Club's trips during the last 2-3 years. Most of the trips were in Western Montana, but Mount Rainier and the Tetons were also visited.

**Elections.** Elections of Club officers will be held at this month's meeting.

---

## CALENDAR

**Thursday Evenings and Saturdays, Rock Climbing.** Come and join the rock climbing group on most Thursday evenings and Saturdays. The group will climb a variety of climbs. These trips are especially well suited for beginners who want some rock climbing experience to prepare for some of the Club's mountaineering trips. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

**May 13, Saturday, Limestone Palisades of the Clark Fork.** Hike up and over the limestone cliffs just east of Bearmouth. This is a joint trip with the Montana Native Plant Society. Peter Lesica, a botanist, will be joining us. There are some rare plant species in the area which we will be exploring. Come and see what else we find. Call Ed Monnig at 721-2707 for further details.

**May 27, Saturday, Eagle Point.** Some of the best views of the Bitterroots can be found in the Sapphires. We'll begin at the Gold Creek campground (4,820') and climb to the Bitterroot Divide (which separates the Bitterroot and Lolo National Forests east of Stevensville) above 8000'. The Easthouse trail runs along the Divide and was featured in Backpacker Magazine last December. How much of the trail we take will depend on snow conditions, and the energy level of the group. On the way up, we'll go off-trail to some unusual, nearly level talus fields which offer Kodak moments of the Bitterroots to the west. Topos: Corley Gulch and Sawmill Saddle. For more information, contact Richard White at 251-6430.

**May 27-29, Saturday-Monday, Tetons.** Climbing trip to the Tetons over the Memorial Day Weekend. There are several peaks to climb; Mount Owen is the most inviting. Last year, we climbed Mount Owen in August, but thought the couloir would be more fun if it was snowpacked. So, now is the time. Technical rock climbing and ice ax experience is required, as well as participation in a previous trip to become acquainted. This trip may be extended to four days. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

**June 3, Saturday, Mountain Bike Ride.** Mountain bike ride from Blue Mountain to Petty Mountain, then to Petty Creek. This area is in the Graves Creek Range west of Missoula. The route mostly follows a road along a ridge and then follows a trail. A car shuttle will be arranged. Call Ed Monnig at 721-2707 for details.

**June 11, Sunday, Eagle Pass.** Day hike, entirely on a trail, through some very pleasant country in the Mission Mountains. This 15-20 mile loop trip begins at Lake McDonald, follows Post Creek, goes past five lakes, over Eagle Pass and out the Eagle Pass trail. Sights along the route include a cedar forest, a raging waterfall (which we cross at the base), alpine lakes, wildflowers, McDonald Peak, Mount Harding, and much more. This will be a long, but fun hiking trip. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

**May/June, Mountaineering.** Several winter mountaineering trips were not entirely successful due to weather conditions, snow conditions, road closures, etc. McDonald Peak, Gray Wolf, Como Peak, and Heavenly Twins are classic climbs and will be rescheduled, but not announced in the newsletter. Possible dates are: May 13-14 (McDonald Peak), May 21 (Gray Wolf), June 3-4 (Como Peak), and June 18 (Heavenly Twins). If interested, call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 to schedule a date.

**July/August, Mount Baker.** Climbing trip to Mount Baker, one of the volcanoes of the North Cascades in Washington, on August 5-10. There will be a training trip on July 21-23. Mount Baker (10,781') will be climbed via the Easton Glacier which approaches the summit from the south. Even though Mt Baker is easier than Mt Rainier, (less distance, lower elevation, less time on glacier), all climbers must be familiar with an ice ax, self-arrest, glacier travel, etc. This trip is in conjunction with a group from Denver. Call Richard White at 251-6430 for more information.

Summer Mountaineering Trips. Plans are being made to climb a few regional mountains in July, August, and September. Possibilities include: Mount Rainier, North Cascades, Canadian Rockies, Grand Teton, Granite Peak, and Glacier Park. If interested, make early arrangements with Gerald Olbu, 549-4769.

Kayaking. This month's home improvement tip: Put your kayak out in your front yard, fill it up with dirt, and plant flowers in it. It looks nice, it makes a social statement, and it will reduce the congestion at the play spots where Peter Dayton, 728-8101, and Art Gidel, 543-6352, are hogging the waves. Call them if you want to go kayaking.

Wanna lead a trip? If you are interested in leading a trip, contact Gerald Olbu at 549-4769.

---

#### TRIP REPORTS

Petty Mountain, March 11. Richard White and Ed Monnig tempted spring with a hike to Petty Mountain. Petty Mountain is at the north end of the Grave Creek Range, a not-much-visited area west of Missoula. The trail to Petty Mountain follows along south and west slopes and was free of snow to the 6300 foot level, which is surprising for early March. The area is noted for a growing herd of bighorn sheep. We saw a herd of 45, almost all adult males. They were camped out on the trail and watched as we traversed a couple hundred feet below and around them. They seemed disinclined to yield the right of way. The day started out clear but the weather deteriorated slowly with our ascent. By the time we reached snow at the 6300-foot ridge, we were in a whiteout. Faced with the prospect of post-holing the last 1.5 miles to the top in a driving snowstorm, we instead declared victory and returned home. - Ed Monnig.

April 1-8, Green River/Colorado River through Canyonlands National Park, Utah. Ed, David, and Nathan Monnig, Jackie Wedell, Cheryl Beyer and sons Clark and Lewis, Jon Bonnickson, Tom Roberts, Lindsay Richards, Nancy Fitch, and Regan Whitworth spent eight glorious fun-filled days in the sun canoeing and hiking through Canyonlands National Park. We started on the Green River at Mineral Bottom just north of the park and canoed 55 miles to Spanish Bottom on the Colorado, just above Cataract Canyon. The river experience combines the tranquil flow of the Missouri River with the scenic grandeur of the Grand Canyon. Although hard-core whitewater junkies might feel deprived, the absence of rapids is more than compensated by the geologic and archeological wonders and spectacular country in these canyons. We allowed two layover days and hiked numerous side canyons to explore petroglyphs, cliff dwellings, and geologic features. One of the highlights of the trip was a 12-mile loop trip up and out of the canyon to an overlook of the Mazes section of the park. From our takeout at Spanish Bottom, we arranged a jet boat shuttle up the Colorado to the Moab area. The remoteness of the country and cost serves to limit the number of people who do this trip (at least in Spring). We saw only two other parties on the river. With a week of blue skies and temperatures in the 70's and 80's, it was a good break from springtime in Missoula. I highly recommend this trip for those who want to get into the canyon country of the Southwest. - Ed Monnig.

Grand Canyon, April 7-21. Dave, Marilyn, Cory (age 12), and Justin (age 7) Ryan, Tom Bell, Bill Burnett, Peter Dayton, Wayne Hecker, Colleen Hunter, Terry Jones, Joyce McDonough, and Pat Uhlik floated 226 miles of the Grand Canyon from Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek from April 7-21 in four rafts and two kayaks. It took Dave Ryan nine years to get the permit for the trip, from the time he joined the wait list to the time we launched. But I am sorry, I think that this trip is overrated. The scenery can be described in one word: rocks. Buy a post card and save yourself the drive. There isn't a merchantable tree along the entire stretch of canyon, and I suspect that a lot of the vegetation along the river does not have American citizenship, if you know what I mean. I will admit that there is plenty of hiking, which is a good thing because the rapids were certainly a disappointment. The river is 90 percent flat water, and the 10 percent of the river which has rapids is nothing but a bunch of big waves. I floated the Alberton Gorge the day after I got back, and got in more surfing in one afternoon than I got in the entire 226 miles in the Canyon. Nor are the rapids that hard; Bill Burnett is an experienced whitewater canoeist, but he had never rowed a raft before this trip, and he did just fine. So much for the fearsome reputation of the Grand Canyon's rapids. On the other hand, there is plenty of sand; I'm still getting it out of my gear. We had a brief thrill when Terry Jones flipped his cataraft, with Colleen Hunter aboard, in Crystal Rapid. However, the biggest excitement was monitoring the residual capacity of our porta-potty to see if we would be able to make it to the end of the trip without fertilizing the desert. I over-ate in a grotesque manner, as everybody tried to out-do everybody else when it was their turn to cook. Towards the end of the trip I started to feel a bit more at home when the rain and wind really set in, and we started to see fresh snow on the canyon rim. So if somebody offers to let you join a Grand Canyon trip, I recommend that you give it a pass. Then call me and let me know that there might be some room on the trip. - Peter Dayton.

Como Peak, April 22-23. Even though the weather in Missoula was questionable, Gerald Olbu and Tim Page set out to climb Como Peak. We encountered snow about half way up the trail. The fun began once we left the trail and began going cross country toward the peak. We found a very pleasant and scenic place to camp on one of the flat areas below the peak. The next day, we headed out for the peak. The weather was beautiful. It was very sunny with intermittent snow showers. Occasionally, the blowing snow would produce whiteout conditions; but it would end and the bright sun would come back out. We continued on the route to the peak and skied/snowshoed to the top of the ridge leading to the peak. From there, it was not possible to ski or snowshoe the last 400 feet to the peak and it would have been a post-holing slog, so we declined. We'll give it another try when the snow firms up creating good ice ax conditions. - Gerald Olbu.

---

OFFICERS

Gerald Olbu, President - 549-4769

Dave Pengelly, Secretary-Treasurer - 728-6512

Peter Dayton, Newsletter Editor 728-8101

Dave Siemens, Vice President - 549-0102

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

P.O. Box 4262

Missoula, Montana 59806

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

(STAMP)

FIRST CLASS MAIL