



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

FEBRUARY, 1996
MEETING

Meetings: THIS MONTH THE CLUB HAS CANCELED ITS MEETING SO MEMBERS CAN ATTEND THE SLIDE SHOW DESCRIBED BELOW, WHICH IS BEING OFFERED AT 7:00 P.M. IN ROOM 131 OF THE SCIENCE COMPLEX AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA. However, club meetings are normally held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the Missoula County Commission's meeting room, which is located on the second floor of the annex (newer portion) of the Missoula County Courthouse. Please enter through the north door. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 13.

Program. We had Dave Pengelly lined up to present a slide show on some of his recent climbs in the Canadian Rockies for the March meeting. Then we discovered that the University of Montana is offering an excellent climbing slide show at the same time as the club's meeting. Enough interest was expressed in the UM slide show that we decided to cancel the club's meeting so members wouldn't have to choose between the meeting and the UM slide show. Dave will be featured at a future meeting. The UM slide show is being presented by three Missoula climbers, Craig Comstock (who works at Pipestone Mountaineering), Paul Ryan (who works at the Trail Head), and Eric Baldwin. Entitled "Big Walls By the Sea," it is about a trip the three climbers took to Newfoundland in September of 1995. About 30 percent of the show is about climbs on the big granite rock walls found in the area, some of them unclimbed, and the balance of the show is about the area in general.

CALENDAR

February 17-19, Sat-Mon, Warren Peak. Overnight ski trip in the beautiful Anaconda Pintler Wilderness. On the first day, we will ski eight miles with 1900 feet of elevation gain along a road and trail to Edith Lake (about 7850 feet), which is a mile southwest of Warren Peak (10,453 feet). The peak will be approached from the southwest face or the west ridge, depending on conditions. Endurance and winter camping skills are required. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

February 18, Sunday, 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 trip is being coordinated with the outing club from Great Falls. This will be a chance to see some new country and meet some people from out of town. The popularity of this trip has made it an annual event. Call Ed Monnig at 721-2707 for more information.

February 24, Saturday, Ice Climbing. Enjoy a day of technical ice climbing suitable for beginning- and intermediate-level climbers. The exact location will depend on ice conditions at the time; possibilities include: Mission Falls, Como Falls, or Swan Slabs. Two ice axes and crampons are required, however, some equipment may be borrowed or shared. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

February 25, Sunday, Lolo Pass. Beginning/intermediate-level ski touring in the Lolo Pass area. There are many trails in this area providing an array of opportunities. Lolo Pass usually collects a lot of snow, creating great ski conditions. Transportation will be provided. Call Julie Warner at 543-6508 for details.

March 2, Saturday, Gash Point. Backcountry ski trip to Gash Point (8886 feet), which is west of Victor in the Bitterroot Mountains. There are plans to ski a loop around the Gash Point basin. This will be a moderate to strenuous trip and all skiers are required to have skins and ability to ski mixed snow conditions in timber. Call Dave Pengelly at 728-6512 for more information.

March 9, Saturday, Ice Climbing. The ice climbing season is short, so here is another session similar to the February 24 outing. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

March 10, Sunday, Lolo Pass to Lee Creek. Ski touring trip from Lolo Pass to the Lee Creek campground, which is located six miles down the highway from the pass. There are two possibilities: the "A" trail or the "B" trail. The "A" trail involves two miles of uphill skiing followed by six miles downhill. This route is intermediate in difficulty and there may be snowmobiles. The "B" trail is rated "most difficult" by the Forest Service. It begins with a steep climb (requiring skins) to scenic Wagon Mountain. Then, it descends eight miles down a narrow and twisting trail. There will be no snowmobiles on this route. Call Steve Schombel at 721-4686 or Julie Warner at 543-6508 for more information. (Since Steve already has a Lolo Pass parking permit, no one else needs one.)

March 16-17, Sat-Sun, Trapper Peak. Overnight ski trip to Trapper Peak (10,157 feet), which is southwest of Darby and the tallest peak in the Bitterroots. The trip will involve some road skiing and/or off-trail skiing until the trailhead is reached, then the trail will be followed. There are several possible campsites. The overall elevation gain to the peak will probably be about 5000 feet. This is a moderately strenuous trip and endurance and winter camping skills are required. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

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

TRIP REPORTS

Daly Peak, January 9. The first two times I climbed Daly Peak, I did it in a whiteout, so we never really got to check out the telemarking potential of the mountain. However, as the maxim says, the third time was the charm. Art Gidel, Rick Rister, John _____, Ralph Flockerzi, Bret Doucette, and I (Peter Dayton) drove out to Ovando under sunny blue skies, parked near the old school to the south of Cooper Lake, and headed up the south ridge of Daly Peak. The weather was warm and the snow was heavy at lower elevations, but with adequate coverage. We made good time up through the trees to the subsidiary peak, where we encountered wind and more open, alpine conditions. After dropping down a few hundred feet to a saddle, we continued up the corniced ridgeline to Daly Peak. The wind was howling and had carved the snow into ornate sastrugi, but the scenery was pretty good. The difference in altitude between the trailhead and the summit is about 4,000 feet, so the total climb is slightly more. A large open bowl runs down the west side of Daly Peak. The snow was windblown and challenging, but the bowl has nice slopes with very few trees. In the wrong snow conditions this bowl has a lot of avalanche potential, but in the right snow conditions this could be an excellent backcountry skiing area. John, who has just moved to town from Helena, proved to be an outstanding telemarker. The rest of us were struggling with the snow conditions and looked like a bunch of dorks by comparison. At the beginning of the bowl we began a long and nasty traverse which brought us back to the ridge. A few hundred feet above the cars, the snow got so heavy and the vegetation got so obstructive that most of us took off our skis and walked. The next time I do this trip, when I reach the bottom of the bowl I will try continuing straight down the drainage until I reach the road to Cooper Lake, rather than traversing back to the south ridge of Daly Peak. If you are interested in checking out some new areas, the west ridge of Echo Peak, which is the next mountain to the north, looks like it could have real good telemarking terrain. - Peter Dayton.

Lolo Pass, January 21. Beginner Genny Andurs and intermediate Kent Perelman went along on this month's ski trip. There were about 18 inches of new powder at Lolo Pass and almost no snowmobiles. We ended up following the tracks of others who had broken trail, up part of Pack Ridge. Going back down to the Pack Creek Road, we had lunch, then broke trail down to the Pack Creek Bridge. After a short break to enjoy the sun and scenery at the bridge, we started back to the Visitors Center. Everyone had a good time in the snow and the quiet. - Julie Warner.

Ice Climbing, February 4. Despite a week of record cold weather, nine climbers headed for Como Falls. Climbers on this trip included: Dale Bickell, Laura Bickell, Len Broberg, Mary Kathryn Rountree, Andre Duran, Mark Gillmore, Andrew Martin, Julian Maurice, and Gerald Olbu. We skied across Como Lake and were surprised when we found water running down the face of the ice, even though it had been so cold. We set up two 60-foot climbs; one climb was at about a 45 degree angle and the other climb was mostly vertical. This allowed a wide variety of climbing conditions. After climbing all we wanted, we headed back to the trailhead and were greeted with hot steaming pizza, compliments of Len. - Gerald Olbu.

Gash Point, February 4. After a week of below-zero weather, it finally warmed up on Sunday, February 4, so Art Gidel and I (Peter Dayton) headed out to Gash Point. The road isn't being plowed out to the last house any more, so we had to ski an extra mile or so on the road. Nobody had been skiing during the cold weather, so we had to break trail all of the way up. Actually Art had to break trail almost all of the way up, because I couldn't keep up with him even when he was breaking trail. Occasionally, just to be polite, he would wait for me and let me break trail for a while. Then he would get bored and zip on ahead. What an animal. The snow in the northern bowl was very dense and somewhat windblown, which made every turn an exciting experience. Still, when viewed from a long distance away, our ski tracks looked relatively professional, and that is what really matters, right? Down in the trees the snow wasn't as heavy and the skiing was really fun. The skiing in the draw above the road, where you defy death while zooming through brush, deadfalls, tight trees, and rocks, was as good as I have ever seen it. Peter Dayton.

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: _____

Mail a check payable to
"Rocky Mountaineers" to

Dave Pengelly

P.O. Box 4262

Check one: Individual (\$6.00/year) _____ Family (\$8.00/year) _____ (9398)

Missoula, Montana 59806