



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

APRIL, 1996
MEETING

Meetings: Club meetings are 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. This month's meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 10.

Program. Ellen Knight will present a sideshow of a trek through Nepal which she did with three other Missoulians last March and April. They planned the trip themselves and then hired a Nepalese guide. She spent two weeks on the trail and traveled through ecosystems that changed from moist and temperate, to a forest, then to a dry desert, and finally to snow. She also visited Katmandu and Bangkok. Maybe this slide show will inspire you to raise your sights to outdoor objectives a little farther away than, say, Wishard Ridge. And if you can't swing an overseas trip, well hey, at least you can come see the slide show.

CALENDAR

April 20, Saturday, Rock Climbing. Enjoy a day of technical rock climbing suitable for beginning- and intermediate-level climbers. This is an excellent way to prepare for some of the Club's mountaineering trips. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

April 27, Saturday, East or West St. Mary's Peak. Hike, scramble, bushwhack and climb to either East or West St Mary's Peak which are in the Mission Mountains. The route to either peak is mostly off-trail through rugged country. The view from either peak offers great vistas of the Missions. However, there is an interesting possible descent from West St. Mary's Peak down through the Sonielem drainage. [Editorial comment: "interesting" is perhaps not the adjective we would have chosen to describe this descent.] This will be a long and strenuous trip and an ice ax will probably be required. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

May 4, Saturday, Rock Climbing. Another day of rock climbing similar to the April 20 outing. We will have several rock climbing sessions this spring and summer. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

May 5, Sunday, St. Joseph Peak. Hike and scramble to St. Joseph Peak (9587 feet) which is in the Bass Creek drainage in the Bitterroots near Florence. The route will follow the Bass Creek trail for about five miles, then will involve scrambling up the slopes to the peak. There will be snow along the route, but hopefully since it is a southern exposed ridge, we can avoid most of it. This will be a moderately strenuous trip but no climbing is anticipated, so it should be suitable for non-climbers. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

May 11, Saturday, Como Peak. Climb the north face of one of the Como Peaks. These are the three symmetrical peaks which can be seen from the highway south of Hamilton. The middle 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 bushwhacking is required until we reach the snowfield. The snow climb portion should be a great mountaineering experience. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

Kayaking. What do kayaking and golf have in common? Both sports provide vigorous physical exercise in beautiful natural surroundings, combined with raw, unadulterated, spine-tingling, throbbing excitement. If you want to go kayaking, contact Art Gidel at 543-6352 or Peter Dayton at 728-8101.

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

TRIP REPORTS

Swan Slabs Ice Climbing, March 9. On a warm sunny day Len Broberg, Andre Duran, Mark Gillmore, Gerald Olbu and Greg Zlock headed out for ice climbing. Swan Slabs is two-pitch, 200-foot, 50-degree ice slab. On this particular day, the ice was quite soft from the recent warm weather. The soft ice made climbing easy, but it also made it difficult to protect the climb. It was fun and exciting to chisel a ledge in the ice for the belay ledge 150 feet up the route. The sun was bright, and during the day we saw about half of Blodgett Falls across the canyon fall down. We

knew Swan Slabs wouldn't last much longer either. We all enjoyed the climb and were finished by late afternoon. - Gerald Olbu.

Trapper Peak, March 16,17. On the last weekend of the winter, Andre Duran, Mark Gillmore and Gerald Olbu headed for Trapper Peak for an overnight ski trip. We were only able to drive up the road about two miles, but the ridge was free of snow, so we just walked to the trailhead. Once we did reach snow, it was hard packed which made for fast travel. We camped at 8000 feet and dug pits for the tents in the four-foot snow. During the night 6-8 inches of snow fell, which created beautiful powder conditions the next day. The most exciting part of the trip was on the plateau just below the peak. It was extremely windy and snow was blowing like dust bowls across the plateau. It was beautiful, harsh and painful all at the same time. We reached our destination and huddled between rocks as we ate our lunch and looked over the edge and had a spectacular view of the valley below and snow-covered North Trapper. As we were leaving and skiing across the plateau, we noticed that the wind had completely died down and the sky was almost clear blue. - Gerald Olbu.

Lolo Pass to Lee Creek, March 17. Julie Warner, Jim Davis, Bret Doucett and myself skied the A trail from Lolo Pass to Lee Creek parking lot, about 6 1/2 miles mostly downhill. This was one trip that went as smoothly as planned. There is still a lot of snow up high, and a few inches of new snow to smooth and soften the ruts. It was a real warm, mostly sunny day. Near the bottom there were some thin slushy areas, but we skied the whole trail for perhaps for the last time this season. - Steve Schombel.

Como Falls Ice Climbing, March 30. There is very little ice left this late in the season, so Kevin Borden, Jim Day, Mark Gillmore, Matt Grandy, George Kerscher and Gerald Olbu checked out Como Falls, which is north facing and relatively easy to top rope. We were quite satisfied. The ice was deteriorating but still offered excellent climbing conditions. We set up three 60-foot climbs. In places the ice was melting away from the rocks, creating interesting ice caves which were fun to explore. We all had a great time climbing all we wanted, and then we headed back in the evening. - 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: _____

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

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

THE MOUNTAIN EAR
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