



# Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

NOVEMBER, 1996

## MEETING

**Meeting:** Club meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the County Commissioner's conference room on the second floor of the new portion of the Missoula County Courthouse. Please enter through the north door. This month's meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 13.

**Program.** The Aerie School of Backcountry Medicine will present a program of interest to all outdoor users. They are the local school that teaches the Wilderness First Responder Course, as well as several other certification courses. They will discuss their courses and briefly teach the audience some aspect of first aid that would be useful for mountaineers.

## CALENDAR

**November 16, Saturday, East St. Mary's Peak.** Hike to East St. Mary's Peak (9425 feet) which is in the southern portion of the Missions. The route is mostly off trail with about 5400 feet of elevation gain. The first portion is through heavy timber and brush, but after tree line is reached, one will have spacious views of adjacent mountains in the Missions with their early season snow. Depending on the weather, this could be an opportunity to experience winter conditions with wind, cold and blowing snow and breath-taking scenery. Members of the Tribal Council are trying to close the entire portion of the Tribal Wilderness Area lying southeast of East St. Mary's Peak and north of the Jocko River to use by people who are not members of the Tribes, so you better visit this area while you can. Call Dan Chisholm at 542-1266 for more information.

**November 23, Saturday, Boulder Point/Peak.** Hike to Boulder Point (7753 feet), or if more energy abounds, go all the way to Boulder Peak (9804 feet). The Boulder Point/Peak ridge is the impressive ridge south of Trapper Peak in the southern end of the Bitterroots. There is a trail leading to the lookout tower on Boulder Point. This may be a good sheltered destination with great views of the southern Bitterroots in Idaho. If participants wish, they may hike/bushwhack/posthole to Boulder Peak. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

**Nov 28 - Dec 1, Thursday - Sunday, Winter-Type Mountaineering Trip.** Loose a couple of pounds over the Thanksgiving weekend on a mountaineering trip. The exact location will depend on conditions and participants' interest. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

**December 7, Saturday, Devine Peak.** Hike/ski/snowshoe to Devine Peak (8024 feet), which is in the southern portion of the Swan Range near Seeley Lake. The route begins along a road, then climbs directly up the peak with an overall elevation gain of about 3800 feet. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

**December 14-15, Saturday-Sunday, Overnight Ski Trip.** Enjoy an overnight ski trip to a location yet to be determined depending on conditions and participants' interest. 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

**Cabin Work Party II, October 12.** With chain saw in hand, Peter Dayton, Art Gidel, Colleen Hunter and I (Gerald Olbu) went back up to the Club's cabin and finished the job we began a couple weeks earlier. Art operated the chain saw, Peter and I chopped and Colleen stacked. We had so much energy and worked so fast, that before we knew it, we had more wood cut than would fit under the cabin. We stacked the excess on the side of the cabin. We won't need a chain saw next year. - Gerald Olbu.

We saw a new side of Art on this work trip. He seemed intoxicated by the power of the chain saw and the smell of the exhaust, and attacked every horizontal log in sight like a frenzied red-haired mechanical beaver. Even after the rest of us decided we had chopped enough wood for the day, he wouldn't quit. On the hike back to the trailhead, every time we came to a downed tree across the trail he would light off the saw and dice it up. ~~When we got back to the car, I expected him to spin around and around with the roaring chain saw in his hands, just like the crazy guy in the final scene from "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre."~~ - Peter Dayton.

**St. Mary's Peak, October 19.** This was going to be an attempt at the Heavenly Twins, but with an early-season storm, Brett Doucett, Andre Duran, Matt Grandy and I (Gerald Olbu) opted for St. Mary's Peak instead. It had been snowing for the last few days and we found about two feet of fresh snow halfway to the peak. It was beautiful powder and we were the first ones to walk through it. It was downright cold; the temperature was 22 degrees with about a 30-mile per hour wind, which made the windchill -18 degrees. The lookout tower provided a nice shelter, but we

wished we had brought a campstove so we could cook hot things and warm up the building. Fortunately, master fire builder Matt managed to get two big logs to burn in the wood stove. Just as we got warmed up, we decided to head back down. - Gerald Olbu.

**Trapper Peak, October 27.** On October 27, four mountaineers embarked on the Third Annual Climb of Trapper Peak on Opening Day of Hunting Season. Trapper Peak is the highest peak in the Bitterroot Mountains. Jo Ellen Lyng, Gerald Olbu, Rick Rister and Matt Grandy met at K Mart at 7 a.m. By 7:30 Matt already had his deer. Unfortunately, the driver's side of his Bronco was demolished. Heavy snow covered the logging road to the trailhead. Four-wheel drive was needed, chains would have been nice. In previous years, we have not encountered snow on the road at this time of the year. Donning blaze orange at the trailhead, we headed up the mountain. Within a quarter mile, we also donned our snowshoes. It was a tough grunt up the mountain, but all four mountaineers made the summit. Our progress was slowed considerably by the snowshoes. The snow was very deep at the top. Matt removed his snowshoes on the summit ridge and sank in to his waist. Last year we carried our snowshoes but never used them. We enjoyed watching a golden eagle soaring on the updraft near the summit. As in the past three years, we did not see any hunters on this trip. It is enjoyable to take the same trip on the same weekend of each year. So far this year, it looks like a big one for snow. It was a good trip to get ready for winter, try out snowshoes, break out the wind pants and gloves and get a good aerobic workout. The view from the summit was endless, the sunset was spectacular and the moonrise even better. - Matt Grandy.

**Bass Creek Craggs, November 2.** We've climbed the Bass Creek Craggs in the spring and summer, but this was our first fall attempt with fresh snow. Brett Doucett, Andre Duran and I (Gerald Olbu) took our usual route to the circ below the crags which involved minimal bushwhacking. It was supposed to be a warm day with a high near 56 degrees. But, it was rather chilly since we were on the north face of the crags, and we never saw the sun except for a brief 15 minutes. The snow was dry powder, sometimes two feet deep, and some of the rocks were covered with ice. This made the climbing more work than in the summer, but also more fun and interesting. We climbed up and selected routes hoping to avoid deep snow and steep rocks. We climbed to one of the points near Crown Point, ate lunch and took in the views. The trip down was fairly fast and we reached the main trail at dusk. - Gerald Olbu.

**Lolo Pass, November 3.** Early-season snow in the Lolo Pass area made an excellent trip for Joan Brehm, Steve Schombel and Julie Warner. Since the road was plowed, we were able to drive down the Elk Meadows Road to Low Gap which is five miles from the Visitors' Center. We had a pleasant day with warm, sunny skies as we skied through timber toward Moose Ridge. We were almost all by ourselves, so it was very secluded. - Steve Schombel.

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#### OFFICERS

Gerald Olbu, President - 549-4769

Peter Dayton, Newsletter Editor 728-8101

Julie Warner, Secretary-Treasurer - 543-6508

Len Broberg, Vice President - 549-6031

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#### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail a check payable to

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

"Rocky Mountaineers" to

Rocky Mountaineers Outdoor Club

P.O. Box 4262

Check one: Individual (\$9.00/year) \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$12.00/year) \_\_\_\_\_ (9398)

Missoula, Montana 59806

THE MOUNTAIN EAR

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