



# Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

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FEBRUARY, 1997

## MEETING

**Meeting:** PLEASE NOTE THE NEW MEETING TIME AND PLACE: Club meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the lower level meeting room at the Missoula Public Library. This month's meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 12.

**February Program.** Club member Dave Pengelly will present a slide show of some of the alpine climbs he has done in the Canadian Rockies during the past ten years. Notable peaks he has climbed include Mounts Robson, Assiniboine, Sir Douglas, Andromeda and several others. If time permits, he may discuss his 1994 trip to Denali.

**Upcoming Programs.** In March, Jim Wilson will discuss Mountain Safety, and in April, Peter Dayton will present a slide show on caving.

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## CALENDAR

**February 15-17, Saturday-Monday, Warren Peak.** Three-day backcountry ski trip in the beautiful snow-covered 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 Matt Grandy at 728-0647 for details; during the week before the trip call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769, as Matt will be out of town.

**February 16, Sunday, Lolo Pass Ski Touring.** Enjoy a day of ski touring in the Lolo Pass area or other area depending on participants' interest. Call Julie Warner at 543-6508 for more information.

**February 21, Friday, Moonlight Ski Touring.** View rainbow-colored sparkles of the full moon reflecting on snow crystals during a short evening ski trip at Lolo Pass or other location. Call Julie Warner at 543-6508 or Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

**February 23, Sunday, Ice Climbing.** Enjoy a day of technical ice climbing suitable for beginners and intermediates. The location will depend on conditions, but Como Falls, Swan Slabs and Mission Falls are possibilities. Heavy boots, crampons and two ice axes are required, however some equipment may be borrowed or shared. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

**March 1, Saturday, Ice Climbing.** Enjoy a day of technical ice climbing suitable for beginners and intermediates at an undisclosed location. Heavy boots, crampons and two ice axes are required, however some equipment may be borrowed or shared. Call Matt Grandy at 728-0647 for details.

**March 8-9, Saturday-Sunday, Bass Lake.** Overnight ski/snowshoe trip to Bass Lake (6765 feet) which is in the Bitterroots near Florence. The eight-mile route with 3000 feet of elevation gain is entirely on a trail (no road skiing). Endurance and winter camping skills are required. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

**March 15, Saturday, Ice Climbing.** Another day of ice climbing, depending on conditions. It's getting late in the season, so we may have to go on a ski trip instead. Call Gerald Olbu for details.

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

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## TRIP REPORTS

**Ice Climbing, January 4.** For the first ice climb of the season, Mark Gillmore, Matt Grandy, George Kerscher, Jordy Kerscher, Gerald Olbu, Al Ward and Ryan Ward headed for Como Falls. Ice is constantly changing, reflecting the recent weather, which in this case had been several days of warm rain. The ice was very thin and delicate. One section was melted away from the rocks by about six inches. All of this made climbing interesting and challenging. Also interesting, in a different sort, was the steady stream of water running down the rope; it didn't take long for it to ice up. But, there was enough variation in the ice that one had a wide selection of possible routes, some easy, some not easy. Getting wet from running water also was an option. We all had a lot of fun and capped off the day with a great pizza in Hamilton. - Gerald Olbu.

**Gash Point, January 11.** Under clear skies and a cold wind Dale Bickell, Brink, Art Gidel, Mark Gillmore, Gerald Olbu and Dave Pengelly

headed for some fine skiing on Gash Point. We were not able to drive as far as usual and had to ski an extra mile along the road. Once we reached the route leading into the bowl, the skiing was great. We did some exploratory skiing and looked for new routes with mixed success. We skied up the bowl as high as we could (and until we got cold) and had a great ski down through beautiful fresh powder. It was probably colder in the afternoon than it was in the morning since a cold front was moving in. We all had a lots of fun and made it back to Missoula by dinner time. - Gerald Olbu.

**Spring Gulch, January 19.** On Sunday, while Missoula suffered under the fog, Penny Palm, John Walker joined Steve Schombel and myself for a beautiful afternoon ski up Spring Gulch in the Rattlesnake Recreation Area. We waited until later in the day hoping the snow conditions would improve. They did. The snow softened and gave us great skiing as the sun shone. There was enough snow in the ground so that all the knapweed and rocks were covered, making it an unusual Rattlesnake ski experience. We skied about two and a half miles up Spring Gulch, had a nice lunch in the sunshine, followed by a quick and fast ski back out to the fog by the trailhead. No one wanted it to end. - Julie Warner.

**Ice Climbing, January 26.** Back for another day of ice climbing at Como Falls were Len Broberg, Andre Duran, , Matt Grandy, , Jordy Kerscher, Gerald Olbu and Martin Oleksiewicz. We found the ice to be well developed, much more than on our previous visit. The ice ranged from good solid ice to delicate chandelier ice. There were still a couple of places where water was running down the ice and we played games trying to climb the ice without getting wet. We all had a good time before heading back in the evening. - Gerald Olbu.

**Winter kayaking on the Alberton Gorge, February 1 and 2.** During December and most of January, cold weather locked up the rivers around Missoula with ice, but at the end of January a spell of warm weather and rain finally began to open up the water, and Missoula kayakers, bored with snow sports, finally were able to get in a weekend of kayaking. On Saturday Peter Dayton, Dave Harriton, Guy Pinjue, and Brian X (who wishes to remain anonymous) headed out to the Alberton Gorge. Ice jams were calving off into the river, and there were many ice floes in the river above Cyr, but something seemed to be filtering them out below Cyr, and the water was relatively free of chunks at Triple Bridges. We stuck our kayaks on end in the deep snow bank beside the road, put on our dry suits, set up a shuttle, and postholed through the snow down to the river bank. The river was at a good level, and surfing was great at Triple Bridges. We kept our eyes on the horizon line at the top of the rapid, but it was real hard to spot ice coming through the waves. Occasionally a small hunk of ice would clank into our kayaks as we surfed, and I had a four foot square berg zip right under my boat. After we wore ourselves out at Triple Bridges, we headed down to other play spots. While most of us were not eager to get rolled over in the cold water, our gear kept us warm, and we played with almost as much aggressiveness as we do in warm weather. There were a lot of sheets of ice on the shore, and we practiced running our kayaks at them and sliding up onto the ice. When we reached Fang, we encountered a couple of hundred yards of bank to bank ice running from right below Fang to just above the next small rapid. It was close enough to the tail of the rapid that none of us was willing to surf at Fang. We beached ourselves on the ice and slid our kayaks across the floe with our hands and paddles, a slow and arduous process. There were no other kayak tracks across the ice; we were the first kayakers to run this section in recent weeks. We encountered two open spots in the ice with fast water moving through them. Not wanting to risk getting sucked under the ice, we carried our kayaks for a while through the rock outcroppings and snow on the shore, and then got back into our boats for the last fifty yards of ice. We took out at the Ralph Yule Access Site, but the road was snowed in, so we had to thrash through the snow with our kayaks up a steep hill to the county road, about three-eighths of a mile away. On Sunday, Peter Dayton, Dave Harriton, Mike Worrall, Brian X, and Paul Y ( both of whom wish to remain anonymous) did the same trip. Some of the ice had left the shores, but the conditions were similar. Then, at Icebox Hole, embarrassing things suddenly started happening. Paul Y was getting some cartwheels and retendos, and he came out of the hole upside down, as is often the case. However, he was wearing a new dry suit which was so slippery that his legs slid off the thigh braces, and he fell right out of his cockpit, and commenced swimming down towards Tumbleweed Rapid. We all peeled out of the eddy and charged off after him. Dave got Paul Y over to the shore before Tumbleweed, and I chased his kayak through the rapid and shoved it over to the shore above Surfer Joe. Brian X, however, made the mistake of grabbing Paul Y's paddle right at the top of Tumbleweed. When he tried to brace with two paddles in his hand, he flopped right over, couldn't sort out the paddles under water, couldn't roll up, and joined the swimming team. We got Brian X and all the gear into the eddy above Surfer Joe, and I got some great pictures of him draining out the kayaks at the edge of the ice in an alcove in the snow covered cliffs. It looked ugly. Paul Y had to hike up and around the cliffs before he could join us in the eddy. Fortunately both kayakers had good gear, and after chugging some hot tea at Surfer Joe, they got back into their boats for some more playing. About two-thirds of the ice below Fang had departed for Lake Pend D'Orielle, and our track from the previous day had frozen into a smooth and slippery path with convenient frozen hand grips. After another trudge up the hill through the snow, we made it back to our cars. It was a great way to start the boating season. - Peter Dayton.

#### OFFICERS

Gerald Olbu, President - 549-4769

Peter Dayton, Newsletter Editor 728-8101

Julie Warner, Secretary-Treasurer - 543-6508

Len Broberg, Vice President - 549-6031

#### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Mail a check payable to

"Rocky Mountaineers" to

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

Rocky Mountaineers Outdoor Club

P.O. Box 4262

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

Missoula, Montana 59806