

Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

OCTOBER, 1998

MEETING

Meeting: Club meetings are held 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 at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 14.

Program: Tim Brown will present a slideshow on Denali - 20,320 feet and the highest point in North America. Tim has summited several times and spent countless days on Mt. McKinley acting as guide and instructor for military personnel. Tim will show slides of the West Buttress route and will have good information about preparation, conditions, etc. for aspiring alpinists regardless of the route they may select.

Next month: Next month's meeting will be held on the third Wednesday of the month, November 18, because the library is closed on Veteran's Day.

TRIP CALENDAR

October 17, Saturday, Heavenly Twins. (**)** Climb one of the Heavenly Twins (9282 and 9243 feet) which are west of St Mary Peak in the Bitterroots near Florence. The route follows a trail for four miles with 2000 feet of elevation gain, then goes off-trail for about three miles, through some very scenic alpine terrain, mostly up and down along ridge tops. The climb of the peak will involve easy/moderate fourth-class climbing. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

October 24, Saturday, Trapper Peak. Fifth-annual snowshoe trip to Trapper Peak (10,157 feet) on the first day of hunting season. The route will follow the normal south ridge trail. In previous years, snow was usually encountered about half way up the peak, so snowshoes were necessary. Since this is the first day of hunting season, orange clothing is advised, although, hunters usually don't go up the trail more than a fourth mile from the trailhead. Call Matt Grandy at 728-0647 for more information.

October 24, Saturday, East St. Mary Peak. (**)** Scramble up East St. Mary Peak (9425 feet) which is in the Missions near St. Ignatius. The first portion of the route is off-trail through brush until the treeline is reached, then the route follows the open ridge top which offers great views of the snow dusted Missions and especially Gray Wolf Peak. Overall elevation gain is about 5500 feet. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for information.

October 31, Saturday, Gray Wolf Area. (**)** The purpose of this trip is to explore the Gray Wolf area for a possible ascent of Gray Wolf Peak this winter. There are two possible routes into Gray Wolf Lake; one begins at the North Fork of the Jocko River and the other begins at Lindberg Lake. The trip this winter will be a three day ski trip with crampons and ice axes. The trip on this day will be a lot more casual. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

November 7, Saturday, Gray Wolf Area. (**)** Another trip similar to the October 31 trip. There are two routes into Gray Wolf Lake; on this day, we will do the route we didn't do on October 31. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

November 14, Saturday, Point St. Charles. (**)** Climb Point St. Charles (8323 feet) which is located near Turquoise Lake in the Missions Mountains. The first portion of the route follows a trail. It is normally a scramble to the peak, but with early season snow, it should be more interesting. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

(**) Note.** Dates for trips marked with (****) are best guesses. The exact date and location will depend on the weather and participants' interests. If the weather is good, other possibilities are Gray Wolf, North Trapper or Holland Peak. So, if interested, make early arrangements. Also, since these are respectable mountaineering trips, we have a couple of simple rules: 1) the group sticks together and 2) these are low impact trips. As always.

May/June 1999, Mount McKinley. A trip is being planned for Mount McKinley (20,320 feet) in Denali National Park, Alaska. If interested, contact Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 or Tony Sabol at 728-7221 to express an interest.

Want to lead a trip? If you are interested in leading a trip, contact Matt Grandy at 728-0647 or e-mail him at matthewg@montana.com.

TRIP REPORTS

Canadian Alpine Climbs (I), August 15-23. Tami Resche and Tony Sabol departed for Skaha - an area near Penticton in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia. This area sports over 800 gear and sport routes on countless crags and buttresses. Climbs range from beginner to 5.12's. Two separate guidebooks are available locally at Ray's Sports Den in Penticton. We managed to do five routes on Sunday, August 16 before changing weather altered our plans. Monday, we travelled north to Roger's Pass/Glacier and Revelstok National Parks. Poor weather forecasts prevented our attempt at Mt. Sir Donald, so we pressed on to Banff National Park in hopes of better weather there. Tuesday morning however, dawned wet and moist. We decided a scramble route would be best in the so-so weather, so we hiked up into the Valley-of-the-Ten-Peaks to attempt Eiffel Peak. We reached the base of the peak proper, however it was enshrouded in mist and the scrambling was slick and treacherous. We opted to abandon ship, and so retreated and went into Calgary with destination MEC (Mountain Equipment Co-op) in mind. We were like little kids in a candy store! MEC has lots of climbing/alpine gear at excellent prices thanks to the poor Canadian dollar. We returned to Banff to ponder what we could climb in marginal weather. We awoke Wednesday to beautiful clear skies and so headed north to Jasper National Park to select a climb. We drove to the base of Mt. Edith Cavell where we decided to tackle the East Ridge (grade III, 5.3) the next day. On Thursday, we awoke to clear skies but with a 40% chance of rain forecast. We hiked up a huge long moraine before scrambling up the headwall to a col at the base of the East Ridge. Third- and fourth-class climbing brought us halfway up the lower ridge. The weather turned ominous and we weren't moving as fast as planned. After discussing safety and other factors, we opted to downclimb the route. Friday, we drove to the base of Mt. Robson - the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies. It rises over 10,000 feet from its base elevation to top out just shy of 13,000 feet. Folks, this is a huge mountain! When approached from Jasper, it doesn't come into full view until you round one corner and then be careful you don't go into shock...it's huge. Weather is the main crux of any climb on Robson...a peak that is compared to 16,000-foot peaks in South America. A couple of winter trips up Mt. Sentinel won't prepare you for this one! Humbled after such a site, we returned to Jasper to plan another climb. Saturday morning, we began the long hike around to the west ridge on Mt. Edith Cavell. We met a couple who had similar intentions. Pat and John met rock climbing years ago and have been doing alpine climbs in the Canadian Rockies every year since 1982. We asked them to join our ascent to prevent leap-frogging each other and to minimize rock fall danger to each other. The route led up a 2000-foot headwall full of scree and talus. Once at its top, we began a traverse up the west ridge to the crux of the climb. Edith Cavell is almost entirely quartzite except for the final 200 feet, which is shale. We managed to bypass the shale by climbing a finger of snow to the ridge top. From there, it was a 300-foot walk up to the summit. The view is absolutely unbelievable. You can see all the way out to Mt. Robson and out onto the Clemenceau Icefield. This is a wonderful peak and it has at least three very aesthetic routes on it. Happy to have bagged one big peak, we returned to Missoula and the grind. - Tony Sabol.

Mount Athabasca, September 5-7. Over Labor Day weekend a team of 5 mountaineers summited Mount Athabasca (3491 meters: 12,445 feet) in the Canadian Rockies. Under clear blue skies, Matt Grandy, Penny Palm, Dave Gaeuman, Tami Reschke, and James Bannister made this classic glacier climb, following the normal North Glacier route. An added bonus was the presence of Mrs. Gaeuman and Mrs. Bannister as cooks in base camp. What a luxury! This was a very enjoyable trip for all. - Matt Grandy.

Uncompahgre Peak, September 5-7. I got a call from an old college buddy and one of my first climbing partners, Mark Lindstrom, so the labor day weekend found me driving down to SW Colorado to do one of the fourteeners in the San Juan Mountains. We agreed to do Uncompahgre Peak, class 2, 13 miles with 4200' elevation. At 14,309' this is the 6th highest in the State. Since it was our holiday we drove the famous jeep road to the trailhead and backpacked in and camped in a beautiful alpine meadow at about 12,300'. Since it was a full moon we also agreed to go to bed at sunset and hike to the base with flashlights and experience dawn from the slopes of Uncompahgre. What an experience! We summited at mid morning and were back to the motel that evening. Not bad for a couple of late forties ex-hardrock miners and hell raisers. - Steve Schombel.

Canyon Peak, September 6. Canyon Peak is usually considered to be a technical climb, but Doyle Gerrard has climbed the east face without a rope. Doyle wanted to show me, Gerald Olbu, his route, so we set out on a beautiful day to reproduce his route. On the trail, we met a couple of young women from Germany who came with us for a while; but, they were more interested in skinny dipping in Canyon Lake than climbing the mountain. We continued on to Canyon Peak. The lower portion of the

mountain was composed of steep slab rock, offering us several possible routes. Doyle has climbed it before, but couldn't remember exactly where he went up. We chose what looked like a promising route and climbed up steep slab rock to a chimney. It was challenging to climb the chimney, but we found a large ledge above it. Here, we had a choice to climb up to the left or to the right. We chose to go right and soon were on top of the ridge and about half way up the mountain. Unfortunately, it was too steep above this point to climb without a rope and it was a challenge to climb back down to the ledge. Eventually, with some slow and awkward moves, we did get back down to the ledge. We looked at the route to the left and were tempted to try that direction, but it was getting late. We climbed back down the chimney, with the aid of a 30-foot length of webbing, and then worked our way down the steep slab. We hiked out to the trailhead. The route to the left probably was the correct route to the summit. This opens up interesting possibilities. The normal technical route to Canyon Peak is fairly long, especially for a group of three or more climbers. The semi-technical route up the face should be a lot quicker. It will require good route finding and also a minimal amount of technical gear for the descent and also for a few difficult places on the way up. - Gerald Olbu.

Canadian Alpine Climbs (II), September 5-14. Tony Sabol returned to Canada with Ronnie Attaway, Paul Gazzo and Rob McLeod. Once there, they rendezvoused with well-known climber/adventurer Paul Jensen and friends Anja and Tom Seneel. They had just finished climbing two peaks on the Freshfield Icefield. On Sunday, we packed into the moraine above Aster Lake and bivied. Monday was clear and warm and we hurried up a headwall and gained the Mangin Glacier. Above us rose the impressive face of Mt. Joffre (11,316 feet). The glacier was "dry" and we were able to travel quickly unroped nearly the entire length of the glacier before encountering a single crevasse. We roped-up the final 200 yards before arriving at the East Ridge/Gully Route. We inspected it for our descent and then we traversed up and over to the North Face route. We found a solid ice bridge across the bergshroud, however, the ice on the face was very hard and it became a logistical challenge to safely belay all seven climbers up at least 2-3 pitches of hard ice. The consensus was for returning to do the East Ridge Route, so we returned to the gully. We did not find the bolted route as noted in September's trip reports, however, we did find a gully with belay/rappel slings and opted for this. Once above the gully, it was easy scrambling to the summit. We had views of such notables as Mt. Sir Douglas, Mt. Assiniboine (the Matterhorn of the Rockies), as well as the Bugaboo Range off to the west! Pictures and memories imprinted, we returned to base camp and finally to the trailhead. Paul, Anja and Tom returned to Missoula, while the Fab Four went into Banff to check weather and climbing prospects. On Wednesday, we were up at 4 a.m. and shuttled vehicles to the descent trailhead for Mt. Aberdeen. Here, we were blocked by a bear closure. This closure made it impossible to climb in the Valley of Ten Peaks, Mt. Temple and many other notable peaks near Lake Louise. A similar closure prevented all but helicopter-aided climbers from reaching the prestigious Mt. Assiniboine. So back to the weather boards. Rain, rain, rain predicted. We decided on Stanley Peak only to find out latter that it was nearly impossible to reach the peak - hot weather had created ungodly crevasses and enlarged bergshrunds beyond passable. Paul Gazzo opted for some solo climbing/hiking northward. Tony, Rob and Ronnie hiked in to do the Eisenhower Tower on Castle Mountain. This is a seven-plus pitch rock route rated grade II, 5.4. Scant fifth-class moves are interspersed with fourth-class. We made the summit without problem. We again had excellent views - northward to Mt. Temple/Lake Louise, south towards Banff and southwest to Mt. Assiniboine. We returned to the trailhead...after some difficulty retrieving our rappel lines, and then back to the weather forecast boards. Friday, we drove to Jasper to scope out Mt. Edith Cavell. We considered the north face, however it was out of shape due to extreme warm weather this summer, so we opted for the easier East Ridge. Reports stated that the ridge route was so dry that no climbers were using crampons or ice axes. We left the trailhead early Saturday. We did take an 8.5 mm rope and ice axes along "just in case." We flashed up the fourth-class lower East Ridge before encountering high winds, poor visibility and cold. We pressed on however, using short roping, simul-climbing and anchored pitch techniques to speed progress. Near the top, the rock was wind blasted with rime ice and we slowed for safety. Soon enough though we were on top...still under the approximate summit time. The views were intermittent - banks of clouds came and went rapidly. We opted to descend the west ridge due to the icing conditions on the east. We made it back to the trailhead in no time and then made camp just out of Jasper townsite. Our sleep was frequently interrupted by bugling elk who ran by our tents more than once. We awoke Sunday with a six- and seven-point bull elk challenging each other within 30 feet of my tent door. What an awesome spectacle! We hit a gear sale in Jasper then returned south to Lake Louise. We decided to do some crevasse rescue and ice climbing up on the Stanley Glacier before ending our trip. On Monday, we trudged up to the glacier and set up top ropes for ice climbing. The final route was overhanging 100-110 degrees - great for monkey hangs. We rappelled off hourglass/Abakalov anchors and finished off the trip with a rappel off an ice bollard. We were fortunate to see three black bear cubs with a sow just prior to leaving. It was unfortunate that many routes in Canada were out of shape due to poor snowfall last year and a hot summer. However, next year promises more fun and climbing. Hope to see some of you up there next year. - Tony Sabol.

Lightning Peak, September 11. It was a beautiful day as Jack Powers, Genny Andrus, Steve Schombel and I drove the 80-some miles to the trailhead, early Sunday morning. We didn't see any bears so the hike up to Heart Lake was uneventful. There were lots of bear sign on the trail between Heart and Pearl Lakes, where Genny and Steve stayed to enjoy the beauty and hike up to the saddle between Pearl and Dalton Lakes. Jack and I moved on and then as I climb slowly, Jack went on to the summit alone, summiting by our turn around time. It was a beautiful drive back. A good time was had by all. - Julie Warner.

Daughter of the Sun Mountain, September 12. Daughter Of The Sun Mountain is one of the more pleasant climbs in the Mission Mountains. It is an easy hike with no bushwhacking and a good challenging fourth-class climb with excellent views from the top. Len Broberg, Doyle Gerrard and Gerald Olbu took advantage of one of the last great days of the summer to do this climb. We hiked to Turquoise Lake, then went off trail from there. As we were climbing the scree slope, we spotted a mountain goat a short distance above us. The goat stayed still on the ledge and watched us slowly climb the scree slope. When we were level with him, he was probably about 100 feet away. We kept climbing the scree slope and he kept watching us. The headwall looks formidable from a distance, but when you get up close it is not quite so steep. It is characterized by a maze of big blocky rocks with lots of exposure. The challenge is to find a route through all the blocks that will lead to the summit ridge. The route involves climbing short pitches and traversing ledges and slowly working your way through the maze of rocks. There is a lot of loose rock and quite often about 200 feet of exposure. We reached the summit ridge, and after climbing an easy chimney, were on the summit. We celebrated, posed for photos, ate a quick lunch and took in the views of the beautiful surrounding Mission Mountains. About this time, we looked down the ridge and saw that the goat had followed us up the mountain. We packed up and left the summit. I was hoping the goat would show us the route he took up the mountain, but he disappeared and we never saw him again. The climb down the mountain was easier than climbing up and soon we were at Turquoise Lake. It turned dark before we reached the trailhead, but we decided not to use our headlamps just for the fun of it. - Gerald Olbu.

Red Mountain, September 27. On Sunday, Sept. 27, Brett Doucett, Bob Koca and Steve Schombel set off to climb Red Mountain north of Lincoln, at 9411' the highest point of the Bob Marshall/Scapegoat Wilderness. One nice thing about a small group - if you have a forecast of rain on the advertised day then it only takes a couple of phone calls to change the climbing day. Sunday was one of those crisp and bright and sunny fall days, perfect climbing weather, with fall colors and beautiful new snow on the highest points. We left the car at 9:30 AM at the gate near the junction of Red Meadow and Copper Creeks. Then we did the steep scramble to the NW up to the top of the ridge to the W of Red Meadow Creek. Unfortunately what used to be 2' high pine seedlings in the old clearcuts are now 5' tall trees and so close together to form tiresome time consuming thickets. But we persevered and got out of the timber about noon and made the summit along this scenic ridge about 1:30, encountering many grouse and 3 mountain goats along the way. We lounged on top for quite awhile enjoying the view. From the Bitterroots to the Highwoods, from Glacier to the Pioneers, it's fantastic how much of Montana one can see from this lonely summit. Then we decided to descend via the ridge to the E of Red Meadow Creek. This worked fairly well. There was some nasty Krummholz along the top and many twists and turns and route finding, but the big bonus was that the lower slopes have not been logged and thus consist of open parklike stands (interesting observation). We got safely back to the car at 5 PM. The three of us agreed that Red Mountain, with its 3850' elevation gain and 9 1/2 to 10 miles of almost all off trail route finding, is a real challenge and a worthy peak, at least equal to some that may be rated 4th class in some guide book but are so popular that they almost have a trail all the way. - Steve Schombel.

Warren Peak, October 3. The east face of Warren Peak is normally an easy fourth-class rock climb under dry conditions. We had our first snowfall of the season this weekend, so Doyle Gerrard and Gerald Olbu expected a bit of snow on the face. We found about an inch of snow as we hiked through Maloney Basin and about two inches of snow on the talus rocks below the peak. Fortunately, most of the snow was wind blown off the east face, except for 1-2 inches of snow on the ledges. The climbing was fine; you just had to be a little bit more careful. When we reached the ridge top, we found quite a bit of snow and it was exposed on both sides of the narrow ridge, making it a little bit tense. We traversed along the ridge until we were about 50 feet below the summit. This last little bit was composed of steep rock, snow and ice and was challenging to climb. On the 10,463-foot summit, we celebrated under mild white out conditions and a slight snowfall. We decided to descend via the northwest couloir, hoping that this would be easier than the route we came up (it wasn't). The first portion of the northwest couloir was steep, with scree rocks mostly frozen in place, and 2-4 inches of snow on top. We descended it the same as we would a snow slope - backwards, kicking our toes into the frozen scree. Much to our surprise, the middle half of the couloir contained last year's snow which was now solid ice. We climbed down some of it where the ice was thin enough to kick through or had enough snow on top to support us. But, most of it was hard ice, 12 inches thick, 45 degrees and not enough snow on top to support a fall which was very likely since neither of us had an ice ax or crampons. We traversed off to the side and descended a series of snow-filled chimneys and eventually reached the base. Then, we came to the snow-covered talus rocks, which seemed to go on for too long. Soon, we were at Upper Carpp Lake and hiked out to the trailhead at which time it was snowing quite vigorously. We completed our loop trip from trailhead to trailhead in slightly less than 10 hours. This was one of the best rock, snow and ice climbs and was a great way to celebrate the first snowfall of the season. It was excellent and exhilarating; we were on the edge, but we pulled it off. - Gerald Olbu.

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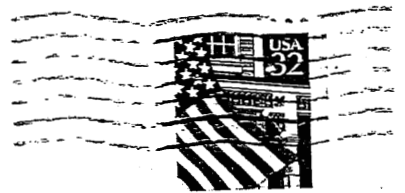
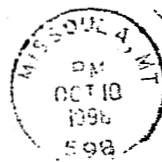
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10