

# Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

DECEMBER, 1998

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## MEETING

**Meeting:** Club meetings are normally held on the second Wednesday of each month in the lower-level meeting room at the Missoula Public Library. However, this month's meeting will be held on the third Wednesday of the month, December 16, at 7:00 p.m.

**Program:** World-class climber, Gray Thompson will present "Climbing in Canada's Northwest Territories: Lotus Flower Tower and Baffin Island." Lotus Flower Tower is one of the "Fifty Classic Climbs of North America," and Baffin Island has become the hot new spot to put up first ascents on hard mixed routes in this land of snow and ice. Gray, a Missoula local and climbing icon, says the show should be excellent. We can't wait, Gray!!

**Note:** Next month, we will be back to our usual schedule of having meetings on the second Wednesday of the month.

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## TRIP CALENDAR

**December 19, Saturday, Bass Creek Crag.** Climb one of the Bass Creek Crag, which are the jagged spires easily visible from the highway west of Florence. The first portion of the route follows the Bass Creek trail for a few miles, then goes cross country into the cirque below the crags. The snow conditions will be uncertain, so we'll climb whatever looks inviting. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

**January 1-3, Friday-Sunday, Rocky Mountaineer Cabin.** One-, two- or three-day trip to the Club's cabin over the New Year's weekend. In addition to good skiing and snowshoeing opportunities, hopefully, we can coordinate fine food and have a feast. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

**January 2, Saturday, Moonlight Ski Trip.** Enjoy a moonlight ski trip under the full moon to the Rattlesnake area if the snow conditions are good, otherwise to the Lolo Pass area. We will leave in the late afternoon and keep this and other night-time trips short and mellow and suitable for beginner and intermediate skiers. We also stay on definite trails so there is no danger of getting lost in the dark. The quiet and solitude is great at night. Call Steve Schombel at 721-4686 for more information.

**January 9, Saturday, 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 Matt Grandy at 728-0647 for more information.

**January 16-18, Saturday-Monday, Bass Peak.** Two- or three-day trip to the Bass Peak (8855 feet) area, which is a nice peak in the Bitterroots southwest of Florence and immediately west of Bass Lake. This trip will involve either skiing or snowshoeing, your preference. We'll trek to the Bass Peak area and assess a suitable winter ascent route, if feasible. This will be a great trip to practice snow caves, winter camping and route-finding. Call Tony Sabol at 728-7221 for details.

**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](mailto:matthewg@montana.com).

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## TRIP REPORTS

**Point St. Charles (almost), November 14.** Doyle Gerrard, Matt Grandy, Mark Mencil and Gerald Olbu set out after this fall's first heavy snowfall and attempted Point St. Charles. We began hiking in snow at the trailhead and were post-holing in two feet of snow as we began the long traverse to Turquoise Lake. We left the trail and went straight up to the top of the ridge. Directly ahead of us was a 7650-foot point and beyond was 8323-foot Point St. Charles, with a jagged rocky ridgetop separating the two. We made the closer point our destination. We followed the ridge to our destination and enjoyed some slippery snow and rock climbing on the point. The trip back was fast and uneventful except that it began raining as we descended and this, combined with the wet snow already on the ground made for some pretty wet conditions. When we got back to the trailhead, we all poured

water out of our boots and gloves. - Gerald Olbu.

**Lolo Peak Vista, November 21.** Taking advantage of the early fall snow, Doyle Gerrard and Gerald Olbu headed for the majestic mountain on Missoula's southwest horizon. Fortunately, we were able to drive all the way to the trailhead and we began in six inches of snow. It was raining in the valley but we had a moderate snowfall. We broke trail all the way up the ridge to the 8252-foot vista point. We circled the vista point area and enjoyed being in this winter wonderland with three feet of fresh snow. It really wasn't much of a vista today with the heavy snowfall and whiteout conditions, so we headed back. As we descended, we met about 20 people coming up, who appreciated us breaking trail for them. The Lolo Peak area was a happenin' place on this day. - Gerald Olbu.

**East Trapper Peak, November 29.** On a chilly, windy Sunday, Tami Reschke and Tony Sabol went south and drove to within a mile of the Trapper Peak trailhead. They strapped on snowshoes and began the long trek towards the summit. Conditions turned blizzard-like and so once above treeline, they held to the more easily navigatable east ridgeline. The windchill dropped well below zero and visibility was limited. Rather than fight for the main summit in whiteout conditions, they opted for East Trapper Peak, which juts up from the broad east ridge. The final 50 feet is only a scramble over large talus. Once of top, they had very brief views of North Trapper Peak and of the basin far below them. The storm began to worsen and Tami suggested they get off the peak before a complete whiteout. Tony asked for a minute, then with freezing hands, produced a ring and asked Tami to marry him. They quickly descended whence they came, finding along the way that most of their tracks were already filled with fresh and windblown snow. As for Tami's response to the above question... a July wedding is planned. Rocky Mountaineers are invited! - Tony Sabol.

**Ice Report, December 12.** Ice usually forms sometime in December in the Missoula area, and since the ice climbing season is short, you want to take advantage of it as soon as it forms. Matt Grandy ventured out and checked Swan Slabs, one of our favorite ice climbing areas. The ice was just beginning to form and was 1-2 inches thick and quite wet on this warm day. It seems like we'll need to wait for slightly colder conditions before the ice will be good for climbing.

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#### OFFICERS

Matt Grandy, President - 728-0647  
Tony Sabol, Vice President - 728-7221  
Steve Schombel, Vice President - 721-4686

Julie Warner, Secretary-Treasurer - 543-6508  
Gerald Olbu, Newsletter Editor - 549-4769

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#### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

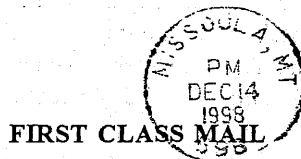
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Mail a check payable to  
"Rocky Mountaineers" to  
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