

Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

MAY, 1999

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 on May 12, at 7:00 p.m.

Program: Greg Munther, who is consulting for the Montana Wilderness Association, will have slides and a presentation on the "Quiet Trails Campaign." This campaign is trying to restrict motorized vehicles to existing roads on our public lands. The presentation will focus on trail damage and impacts to Wilderness Study Areas. The Rocky Mountaineers do not take a position for or against this campaign; but we feel this is an issue many Club members and the general public would like to learn more about. Come with your questions and find out what you can do to help.

Club Business: Elections for club officers will be held at the May meeting. Former vice-president, Len Broberg, as chairman of the nominating committee, has nominated the current Club officers to continue for another year.

TRIP CALENDAR

May 15 or 16 Saturday or Sunday, Como Peaks or Gray Wolf Peak. Weather is often marginal to poor at this time of year. In light of this, the peak and the climbing date will depend on the weather. If Mission Mountain weather is nice, we'll climb Gray Wolf. At 9001 feet, this fourth-class climb includes a long snow/ice couloir ... ice ax required. If the Southern Bitterroots have nicer weather, we'll climb one of the Como Peaks - probably the west and highest peak at 9624 feet. The west peak is rated a scramble with some fourth-class moves near the top. Call Tony Sabol at 273-2566 for more information.

May 15-16, Saturday-Sunday, Rocky Mountaineer Cabin. Enjoy a fun-filled weekend at the Club's cabin. A short ski or snowshoe trip will take one to the cabin where a warm wood stove will provide all the comforts of home (almost). There are ski, snowshoe, and mountaineering opportunities in the area of varying lengths and levels of difficulty. Participants may make it a one-day trip. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

May 22, Saturday, North Fork of the Jocko. Hike and snowshoe along the North Fork of the Jocko River which is in the southern portion of the Missions. The route is entirely on a trail and one option is to do a 15-mile loop hike with 2400 feet of elevation gain. Sights along this route will include the snow survey cabin, Buck Lake, Gray Wolf Lake and Gray Wolf Peak. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

May 23-28, Sunday-Friday, Mt Rainier. Climb Mt. Rainier (14,411 feet) via an advanced route on either the north or west side of the mountain. The route selected will depend upon access by car to various areas of the park. Possible routes are the Liberty or Ptarmigan Ridges, or the Mowich North Face. These are all serious routes with hazards! Interested persons must have above average speed, endurance, experience, and gear. Please call Tony Sabol at 273-2566 to discuss participating on an exhilarating climb!

May 29-31, Saturday-Monday, Rocky Mountaineer Cabin. Enjoy another trip to the Club's cabin over the Memorial Day Weekend similar to the May 15-16 outing. Participants may make it a 1, 2 or 3-day trip. With 2-3 days it should be possible to climb the big mountain which has eluded us on recent trips. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

May 29-31, Saturday-Monday, Emigrant Peak. Climb Emigrant Peak (10,921 feet) which is in the Absaroka Beartooth

Wilderness about 25 miles south of Livingston over the Memorial Day Weekend. The four-mile route with about 5500 feet of elevation gain is entirely off-trail. Even though the route is considered to be a scramble, an ice ax will probably be required. Depending on participants' interest, camp may be made in a campground or a bivi on the mountain. Call Tami Reschki at 273-2566 for more information.

June 5, Saturday, East St. Mary Peak. Snowshoe trip to East St. Mary Peak (9425 feet), which is in the Mission Mountains near St. Ignatius. The first portion of the route will go up a steep and heavily-forested slope until the treeline is reached. From there, hopefully it will be a beautiful snow-covered and windswept ridge to the peak. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

June 12, Saturday, Kakashe Mountain. Climb Kakashe Mountain (8575 feet), which is located in the Missions near St. Ignatius. The 10-mile, round-trip, route with 5100 feet of elevation gain is mostly off-trail and requires snowshoes and an ice ax. Descending down the back side of the mountain provides a nice loop trip. This trip is not technically difficult, but does require endurance. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

June 19, Saturday, Warren Peak, Northwest Couloir. Climb Warren Peak (10,463 feet) which is located in the Anaconda-Pintler wilderness. The first portion of the route follows a snow covered trail for five miles. The climb of the 1000-foot snow couloir will require an ice ax. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

June 26, Saturday, Trapper Peak. Ski/snowshoe trip to Trapper Peak (10,157 feet), which is located southwest of Darby and is the highest peak in the Bitterroots. Hopefully we will be able to drive all the way to the trailhead. The route follows the standard trail up the south ridge with 3800 feet of elevation gain in six miles. Call Matt Grandy at 728-0647 for more information.

July 3-5, Saturday-Monday, Mount Athabasca. Celebrate the Fourth-of-July weekend in Canada and climb Mount Athabasca (11,453 feet), which is located on the border between Banff and Jasper National Parks. There are three main routes on Athabasca - easy, medium and hard, as well as scenic hiking opportunities in the area. We will chose one or two routes that are suitable for participants. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 and make early arrangements.

Drive to Bass Lakes
Early August, Mount Rainier. Climbing trip to Mount Rainier. More details will be in the next newsletter or call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769.

September 4-6, Grand Teton. Climbing trip to the Grand Teton over the Labor Day weekend. More details will be in the next newsletter or call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769.

Annual Reminder. Trips that Gerald Olbu leads are generally respectable mountaineering trips in beautiful pristine wilderness areas and as such there are two simple rules for these trips: 1) the group sticks together and 2) these are low impact trips. If these trips appear too hard, then you should call Gerald. Trips are almost never more difficult than advertised in the newsletter, however lots of times they are easier. Also, quite often it is possible for hikers to come along for the hiking portion of the trip. Hikers might enjoy basking in the sun at a deep-blue glacial-carved alpine lake; we don't go to ugly places.

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

Wisherd Ridge, April 11. Doyle Gerrard, Matt Grandy and Gerald Olbu decided to have a casual day of skiing at Wisherd Ridge. We drove up the road as far as we could, which was farther than anyone else. We parked, then walked and skied up the road. Judging from the number of vehicles parked on the road, we knew there would be lots of people in the bowl, so we headed for an adjacent ridge and had the area mostly to ourselves. We found a nice spot, ate lunch and practiced some tele turns and touring skills under a clear blue sky. Then we skied back to the Bronco. - Gerald Olbu.

Sonielem Ridge, April 17. Len Broberg, Doyle Gerrard and Gerald Olbu wanted to check out the prominent snow couloir on Sonielem Ridge which is easily visible from the highway. We hiked up the Mission Creek trail a short distance, then left the trail and crossed the creek. Since snow was gone from the lower portion of the couloir, we had to go around and enter the couloir from a higher elevation. We enjoyed a couple of hours of good ol' Mission Mountain bushwhacking. When we arrived at the snow couloir, we found it to be hard packed and icy, requiring crampons as well as an ice ax. We climbed up the couloir about half way, had lunch in the warm sun, then descended. We had beautiful weather all day long. One member of the group did not

have crampons and was new to using an ice ax. He cut steps with the ax and was able to climb up the couloir, and made use of the ax on the way down. By the end of the day, he was quite proficient with an ice ax. - Gerald Olbu.

Mt. Powell, April 25. Dave Gaeuman, Bob Kocha, Tami Reschke, and Tony Sabol took off early this Sunday and navigated towards the highest peak in the Flint Creek Range. We encountered snow, as was somewhat expected, and so had to park and hike over four extra miles to the trail head. Utilizing skis or snowshoes, participants made their way up the broad ridge and through the trees. By noon we were positioned below the peak. We opted not to go all the way to Martin Lake, rather we headed south and ascended a 50 degree plus snow ramp up to a large connecting ridge. Once on top it was a fairly easy traverse over to the rocky-lightly snow covered basin on the northwest face of Mt. Powell. Easy scrambling soon brought us to the lofty summit and breathtaking views of the Boulder, Tobacco Root, Highland, Pioneer, Anaconda-Pintlar, Bitterroot, Mission, Swan, and Scapegoat Ranges. Numerous lakes, on varying elevations, lay frozen in a sea of white below us. We reluctantly departed whence we came, including an exciting down climb on the snow ramp. We were soon back to the car and on our way home after some dinner and a beer in Deer Lodge. This was a great early season trip as we had great weather, a great hike, wonderful views, and got to use a lot of mountaineering equipment and techniques. - Tony Sabol.

Gray Wolf Area, May 1-2. Even though the weather forecast called for less than marginal conditions, Tom Collins and Gerald Olbu headed for Gray Wolf Peak. We hiked up the ridge to Upper Riddell Lake and made camp at the base of Gray Wolf. The clouds were so low we couldn't see the bottom of the south couloir of Gray Wolf. Even though we dug snow pits and made a wall for a wind break, the wind blew so hard during the night that we had doubts about the tents holding up. We headed out at 8:00 the next morning and snowshoed up the nearby ridge. We looked across into the Scenic Lakes basin; it was beautiful, but most of the time we couldn't see the opposite ridge and had a little trouble plotting a route. We crossed the Scenic Lakes basin and found a way up onto the opposite ridge, which is the southeast (or east) ridge of Gray Wolf. The top of the ridge was broad and we hiked up and into the clouds and enjoyed many shades of white. We continued along the ridge to directly above the cirque at the head of the Scenic Lakes basin and were right below Gray Wolf Peak. At this point there was a saddle and the ridge became very narrow. It was very steep on the left hand side and completely vertical on the right. There was a huge cornice hanging over the right side. We could imagine the wind blowing up the valley and over the ridge at the saddle and creating a cornice like this. On the opposite end of the saddle, about 200 yards away, was a notch in the ridge which looked very exposed. Beyond the notch, the rocky ridge climbed steeply and after 30 feet disappeared into the clouds. We couldn't see any way to climb the opposite ridge even if we did cross the cornice and notch. It was only 10:30, but due to the exposure, the cornice, whiteout conditions, and uncertainties, we decided to retreat. We enjoyed the trip back to camp, packed up and hiked out. - Gerald Olbu.

OFFICERS

Matt Grandy, President - 728-0647
Tony Sabol, Vice President - 273-2566
Steve Schombel, Vice President - 721-4686

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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Phone: _____

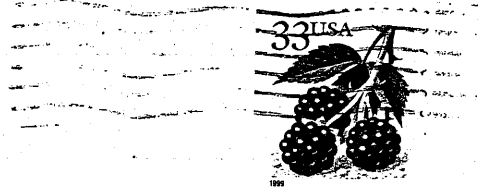
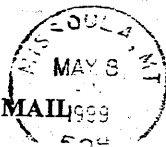
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Check one: Individual (\$9.00/year) _____ Family (\$12.00/year) _____

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