



MOUNTAIN EAR

Monthly Newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers

HIKING-CLIMBING-MOUNTAINEERING-SKIING-
EXOTIC TRAVEL-EXPLORATION OF PEAKS AND
MOUNTAINS OF MONTANA AND OF THE WORLD

August 2001

MEETING NOTICE

The first fall meeting of the Rocky Mountaineers will be at 7:00 P.M. on the third Saturday of September, Sept. 19th. We couldn't get the large meeting room, so this meeting will be held in the small meeting room at the Missoula Public Library, which is on the south side of the lower level across the hall from the large room. For entertainment this will be the traditional showing of slides and photos and stories from the members about their outdoor adventures in the past year. So, who did the longest trip or toughest peak? Come dazzle us with your accomplishments.

On this night we will also have a special election. This is, as reported in the last *Mountain Ear*, due to the confusing situation from last May between us and the new club. A lot of our members came to the meeting on May 16th, and it was decided that the best thing to do would be to let Julie Warner continue as acting President and myself, Steve Schombel, edit the newsletter until next fall. And we also decided to only allow members whose dues are paid up as of August 31, 2001 to vote.

Personally, your editor would like to have one united club again, and he would have preferred to sit down and talk to people from the other group. However, last May we decided to have this special election, and to let the duly elected officers take it from there. There were several people at the meeting last May who like the club the way it is and would prefer to remain independent.

This will be an important meeting. Not only can you elect new officers, but you can also have a large voice in the direction the club will take in the future. What is really needed are candidates for officers - President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. If you want to run or nominate someone, and want the name published in the September *Mountain Ear*, send it to the club e-mail or P.O. Box. We will also take nominations from the floor in September. Here is the motion made by Dave Pengelly on May 16th and passed unanimously:

"To suspend spring election and to hold election in September open to all current members paid up by August 31."

OTHER BUSINESS

Once again, we ask that the nice young lady (name withheld) that I gave the bank bag to, please return it to us, with all of the contents including the slide pointer that was in it. This is easy enough to do, just take it to the main post office and ask the person at the counter to put it in our P.O. Box #4262. Or we ask anyone else from the new group who might have it, and other club property, most importantly the complete collection of Mountain Ear newsletters. Any honest and honorable person would willingly surrender club property upon request.

We have also received the brochure and invitation to the Banff Mountain Film Festival, sponsored by the National Geographic Society to be held Oct. 29th through November 4th. This is a big event, and advance reservations are necessary. So if any of you are interested call Julie Warner at 543-6508.

Finally, remember that we do not send out separate renewal notices. Check the mailing label on this newsletter. If you want to vote in the next election make sure your dues are paid up. And please feel free to submit trip reports and proposed trips to the editor. Call one of the officers on p. 3 or send to: ssbell@montana.com, or to rockymountaineers@hotmail.com. We have a nice core group now, but more would be welcomed.



TRIP REPORTS

Chicago and St. Paul Peaks

The weekend of June 9th was cold and rainy, and there were no calls for a short backpack trip. Instead I pitched the tent along Rock Creek and drove up early Sunday morning. Snowdrifts on the road forced me to park and walk an extra mile to the trail head. Not far above the trail was still covered with solid snow, but I followed snowmobile tracks to Milwaukee Pass at the base of the two mountains. Snowmobile tracks inside the Cabinet Wilderness! Sadly, the Forest Service can't be everywhere and patrol everything. Then the wind howled with stinging snow and I took shelter. Then it cleared enough for a quick dash up Chicago Peak. And it cleared even more so I was able to hike up St. Paul. There were decent views of the nearby Cabinet Mountains and lakes for such an overcast day. Then a fog rolled in, but I got my bearings and returned to the car and town without incident.

-Steve Schombel

Bear Creek Overlook

June 16th was a beautiful sunny day for a hike to Bear Creek Overlook. To reach the trail head drive south of Missoula on highway 93 to Bear Creek road which is 3.3 miles south of Victor. Turn right (west) and go 2.2 miles west. Turn right on Red Crow road and drive .7 mile north. At the road junction turn right staying on Red Crow road. There is a sign here indicating Bear Overlook is nine miles. About one mile past the sign, turn left at Pleasant View Drive. Follow the Forest Service hiker signs up this road for another eight miles. Stay on Forest Road 1325 all the way to the trail head which is signed. The road is blocked with a gate just beyond the trail head and there is room for six or seven cars here. The road is a bit rough in the upper reaches and low clearance rigs should use caution. These directions were copied out of Mort Arkava's book Hiking the Bitterroots, a good reference book for trails in the Bitterroots.

The trail climbs right off the jump go, but there are many switchbacks and the grade is relatively easy with several views of the valley through out the hike. The trail head elevation is a tad over 5800 feet. At the summit where the remains of an old log cabin is still visible the elevation is somewhere around 7000 feet. Follow the trail to the south (left) past the cabin and slightly downhill to the spectacular promontory. The overlook is perched on the edge of a sheer cliff overlooking Bear Creek Canyon. Please use caution when in this area, as it is a long drop into the canyon if a person should slip and fall. I would suggest not bringing small

children to this overlook.

My fellow hiking partners for this trip were Fred and Eileen Schwanemann, Steve Schombel, Nancy Fritz, Eileen Evans, Bret Doucett, Karen Aplan, and my daughter Michele from Helena. Take plenty of water as there is no water available on this hike.

-Louis Crepeau

Walman Trail

Fred and Eileen Schwanemann set out early on Sunday, June 17th up Spring Gulch passing at least fifty pairs of Mtn. Lady Slippers. Starting part way up the Walman Trail to Strawberry Ridge were lots of Bear Grass in various stages of bloom. By taking just a bit of a spur trail at the top of Strawberry Ridge, we had lunch with a picture window view of most of Missoula and the Bitterroots. The Indian Paintbrush and Sego Lilies were beautiful. Towards the bottom of the Walman Trail and along the way to the Fishing Trail along the Rattlesnake Creek were pale pink Prairie Smoke flowers. We took the Fishing Trail instead of the main trail to stop at the Beaver Pond. Just before we left, a very large cinnamon colored black bear appeared at the South end of the pond to take a drink. This was the most beautiful black bear either of us had ever seen. For a hike in the Rattlesnake Recreation Area on a lovely Sunday, we only saw four bikers until we got back to the main trail to finish up the hike.

-Eileen Schwanemann

Sleeping Woman Peak

On July 1st we had a good climb of this prominent point northwest of Missoula. The snow was gone and the weather was great! The road was a little rough in places but we reached the trailhead on the divide late in the morning. We kept up a good pace on the well maintained trail with a few stops for everyone to catch up. Then on the scramble up the summit scree we had three groups of two following their own pace. All had no trouble reaching the top.

The greatest thing about Sleeping Woman is the view. We spent a lot of time exchanging stories and naming the mountains we could see in the Bitterroots, Swans, Rattlesnakes, Missions, the Bob, etc. Even the Missoula valley was relatively smog free on this day. We hiked down and stopped at the Nine Mile House for refreshments and more stories, and still got home late in the afternoon.

The hikers were: Fred Schwanemann, Steve Schombel, Louis Crepeau, Julie Warner and Bret Doucett.

-Charles Tree

TRIP CALENDER

Please note: The distances and elevations are estimates of a one way hike. Call the trip leader early in the week to get an idea of experience and gear required. And be prepared to give a definite yes or no on if you will be going. It is generally assumed that participants have at least average outdoor skills and know what clothing is needed for different Montana seasons.

Most members also do a lot of outdoor activities that they do not put in the newsletter. Do we have a volunteer to update our contact list, or create a web page to go along with the e-mail address? Feel free to call other members you may know.

July 29th Youngs Pass and Youngs Mountain. Hike up a good trail from Lodgepole Creek to Youngs Pass on the edge of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. It's about 3½ miles of steady but moderate uphill. Those who wish can continue off trail for another two miles to Youngs Mountain, 8530'. This is a long drive so the group will leave a 7:00 A.M. Call Julie Warner at 543-6508 for more information.

August 5th The Beacon behind Mt. Sentinel. An opportunity to meet some of the people who do these hikes without spending a lot of time or driving. There are other hills and loop trails in the area. The group will meet at 8:00 A.M. at the "M" trail head. Call Charles Tree at 549-7547 for more information.

August 12th Hike the Spring and Curry Gulch trails with some Rattlesnake Recreation Area regulars. This is about 10 miles long and involves a lot more up and downhill than a stroll along the creek. Call Fred Schwanemann at 542-7372 for more information.

August 18th Daughter of the Sun Mountain. We will follow a route passed along by former Rocky Mountaineers which is reputed to be easier than the route followed by the new club. Still a challenging climb at 8777'. Hikers are welcome to come along to beautiful Turquoise Lake, about 6 miles and another 1½ to the top. Call Bret Doucett at 543-4927 or 728-6461 for more information.

August 26th St. Mary Peak. Always a scenic and popular climb. There is a trail all the way to the top, a lookout and even a stone altar for those of you of a religious persuasion. About 4½ miles. Call Julie Warner at 543-6508 for more information.

September 1st and 2nd Table Mountain. We will drive over Saturday afternoon and pitch tents in the meadows near the site of Highland City. You used to be able to drive to the site of the Red Mountain Lookout, at 9,700'+ once the highest lookout in the State. Now you have to hike the last mile, but it is still a fairly easy scramble up and down along the ridge to the large, flat summit, at 10223' the high point of the Highlands south of Butte. About 4 miles. Call Steve Schombel at 721-4686.

Trip Report (cont.)

On July 9th Steve Schombel and Mark Lindstrom from Arizona left for a backpacking trip in Glacier. We looked at Mt. Stimpson and talked about it, and looked at the Middle Fork forks; and decided to try something less challenging and less lonely. Luckily, at the backcountry desk we found there had been a cancellation, and we were able to get on one of the neatest loop trails in the Park.

We hiked from Two Medicine and camped at Oldman Lake. The next day we backpacked up to Pitimakan Pass, then over to Cutbank Pass. Here we saw a herd of at least 30 Bighorn Sheep feeding and playing in the Meadow. A small one was laying in the trail, and Mark was almost able to touch it before it moved out of the way. Occasionally one or a few would walk up to the pass and then dash and slide down the snowbank, apparently just for the fun of it. There were also a few goats along here.

Then the trail skirted two mountains and dropped to Dawson Pass. We stopped frequently, enjoying the views, especially of Mt. Stimpson and Mt. St. Nicholas. We ended up spending most of the day above timberline, finally trudging down the switchbacks to our second camp at No Name Lake. The third day we hiked along Two Medicine Lake back to the car, and did some sightseeing before returning to Missoula.

-Steve Schombel

DEFACTO OFFICERS

President	Julie Warner	543-6508
Editor	Steve Schombel	721-4686
	ssbell@montana.com	

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

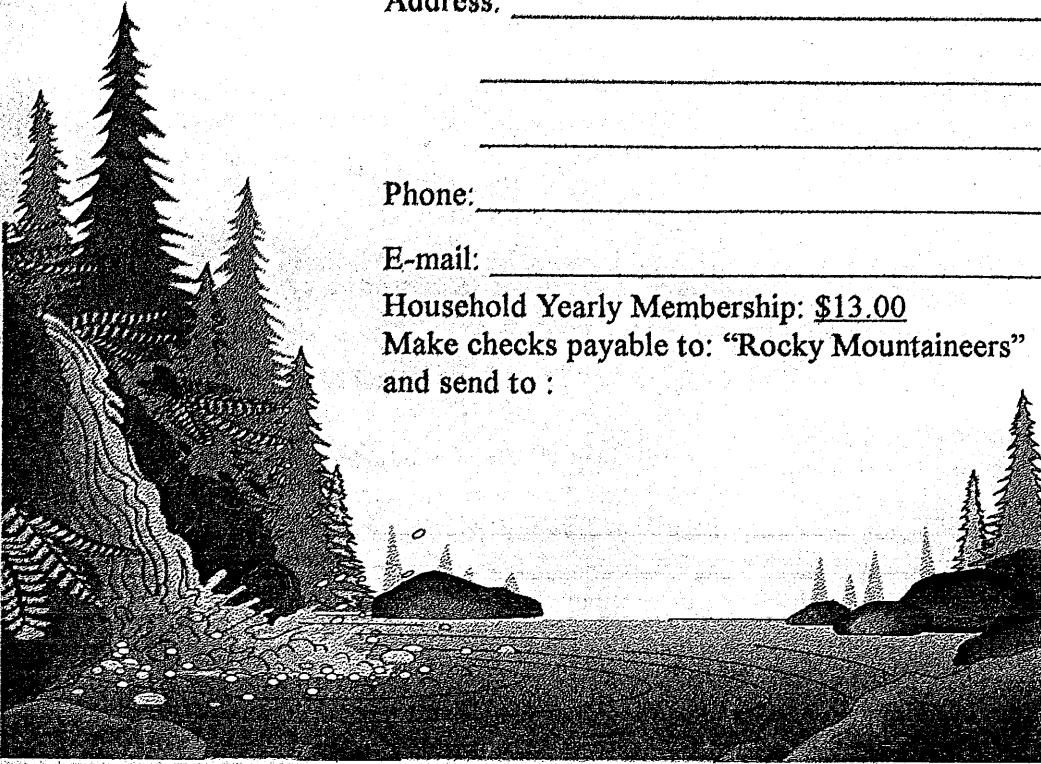
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