



JANUARY 2010

THE MOUNTAIN EAR

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The Monthly Newsletter of The Rocky Mountaineers



Climb. Hike. Ski. Bike. Paddle.
Dedicated to the Enjoyment and Promotion of
Responsible Outdoor Adventure.

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The Mountain Ear is the club newsletter of The Rocky Mountaineers and is published near the beginning of every month. Anyone wishing to contribute articles of interest are welcomed and encouraged to do so- contact the editor.

Membership application can be found at the end of the newsletter.

ABOUT THE CLUB:

Mission Statement:

The Rocky Mountaineers is a non-profit club dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of responsible outdoor adventures.

Meetings and Presentations:

Meetings are held the second Wednesday, September through May, at 6:00 PM at Pipestone Mountaineering. Each meeting is followed by a featured presentation or speaker at 7:00 PM.

Activities:

- ☐ Hiking
- ☐ Backpacking
- ☐ Alpine Climbing & Scrambling
- ☐ Peak Bagging
- ☐ Backcountry Skiing
- ☐ Winter Mountaineering
- ☐ Track Skiing
- ☐ Snowshoeing
- ☐ Snowboarding
- ☐ Mountain Biking
- ☐ Rock Climbing
- ☐ Canoeing & Kayaking
- ☐ Rafting
- ☐ Kids Trips
- ☐ Terracaching/Geocaching

January Meeting

SMOKE ELSER

On Wednesday, January 13th, the Rocky Mountaineers will host a show by legendary outfitter Smoke Elser. He has spent more than five decades as an outfitter in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, riding between 1000 and 1500 miles throughout the Bob Marshall every year. He got his beginning as a wrangler and camp cook for wilderness outfitter Hobnail Tom Edward in the 1950's and 60's. This is when his love for, and desire to protect wilderness areas began. In fact, Smoke began advocating for protecting Montana wild places before the Wilderness Act was passed in 1964, and was an important voice for the Lincoln-Sagegoat wilderness, which was designated in 1972.

There are three facets to the character of Smoke Elser. First, he believed that "wilderness outfitters have a very special role: introducing people to the wild, interpreting wilderness, and making sure when they leave, they carry the wild spirit of the land . . . in their hearts."

He is also an outfitting teacher. For over forty years he has taught the course "Outfitting and Packing" to thousands, including the US Forest Service. In fact, in May 2009 the Northern Region of the USFS gave him their "Outstanding Private Sector Partner Award" in recognition of the training he gave. He also taught a course in Wilderness Outfitting and Packing at the University of Montana for decades, and wrote the 'how to' book, *Packin' in on Mules and Horses*.

But Smoke is also a strong wilderness advocate. In recent years he has been involved in the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship group, one of the three groups that hashed out details for an area included in the "Jobs and Recreation Bill" recently introduced by Senator Tester. Also in 2009 he was given the "Brass Lantern Award" by the Montana Wilderness Association, an honor for volunteers. Come to the meeting on **January 13th** and learn more. It will be at **7 PM at Pipestone** on West Front Street, and is free and open to all.

Credit for most of the above information goes to the Campaign for America's Wilderness, and the website <http://www.leaveitwild.org>.

President's Message

Happy New Year Rocky Mountaineers! I'm anxiously anticipating what 2010 will bring. My prediction is that it will be better than what 2009 had in store....at least for me. I am pleased with how the first annual club calendar turned out. If you have not seen it, come to the next meeting and check it out! Much kudos goes to Chris Dunn for his motivation and work on this new project.

Christmas brought a new adventure for me in 2009. I headed up into Canada with fellow Rocky Mountaineers, Minot and Camie. We drove north on highway 93 to Invermere, British Columbia and headed west into the Purcell Mountains. After a 10 mile snowmobile tow, we skied up an established skin track toward our final destination: [The Jumbo Pass Hut](#). We spent 3 nights at the cabin and enjoyed well preserved powder...temperatures were COLD! This was my first trip to one of the Columbia Valley Hut Society's huts, and it won't be my last. Check out the huts at [this site](#).

See more photos of this adventure [HERE](#).

Joshua Phillips - President

A Call For Trips!

I hope you all had great holiday and New Year festivities!

To start off the new year, the executive committee and frequent attendees of the business meetings, we are proposing that we establish a list of monthly trips for the current year. This will provide opportunities for individuals to better plan and to encourage more activities and participation in club events. We understand that our members are diverse and some would like to plan further out than our current system of submitting trips on a monthly basis. This action though does not replace our current system it merely provides an additional option for our members.

We are asking that past trip coordinators or those that would like to coordinate a trip of their own to please attend the next business meeting before the presentation to add their adventures this annual list. Alternatively, if you are unable to attend please send me your suggestions prior to the meeting. We want to encourage and hope to see a wide variety of outings and activities that include all of the interests of our organization - hiking, biking, climbing, skiing, backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, etc. Please include the month and day that you would propose to have the outdoor excursion. We also realize that your plans may change or that the weather may change the plans for you but please do not let this discourage you from submitting a trip as they can always be rescheduled. We plan on posting this list on the web page and in next months newsletter.

Some current proposals by members include the following:

Joshua Phillips -Sky Pilot, Mt. Haugan

Chris Dunn -Granite Peak (Beartooths), East St. Mary's (Missions), Grave Peak

Steve Niday -Lolo Peak, Fisher Peak

Shawn Bennett-Trapper Peak, Electric Peak (Gallatins)

Julie Kahl -Hyalite Peak (Gallatins), Bonner Mt., Lightning Peak, Lolo Pass Hosting in Jan., Mountaineer Peak

Steve Schombel -Chief Joseph, Boulder Pt., Quartz Peak

David Wright -Gash Pt., Great Burn trip, skill learning trips

Forest Dean- Edwards/Gunsight Mtns, Bass Peak, McDonald Peak, Mt. St. Nicholas, Bitterroot Grand Traverse, Leatherman Peak, Granite Peak, Gray Wolf Peak, Canyon Peak.

Alden Wright- Triangle Peak (Rattlesnake)

Thanks for your participation and making this a great year!

David Wright, Vice President

wrightdk@gmail.com

6th Annual Glacier Classic

2010 will mark the 6th installment of our signature event- the Glacier Classic. Planned for the last weekend in August, we are currently seeking input on where to hold this year's event. Two options are the Bowman Lake/Polebridge area or Two Medicine. Other suggestions, feel free to let us know. We try to move it around every year: we have hosted this event this far at Blakenship Bridge on the Flathead River, Two Medicine, Lake McDonald (Fish Creek), Many Glacier and last year, Rising Sun. We look for an area with a number of diverse things to do: mountaineering, hiking, camping, boating, etc. Let us know your preference! Email: Forest at mtnear1@gmail.com

Jan 16-17, Lolo Pass Hosting

Julie and David Kahl will be the hosts at the Lolo Pass visitors center on Jan. 16-17th from 9:AM to 5:30 PM (our time). A few people can stay overnight with the rangers in the old Mud Creek Cabin. Here are some tasks that volunteers participate in.

- Assist visitors with information and parking in the outside parking area and inside the Visitor Center.
- Conduct patrols on Lolo Pass area trails (snowshoe & x-country ski trails). You will need to bring your own equipment for this (i.e., snowshoes and/or x-country skis).
- Help to establish and maintain winter signage at Lolo Pass and assist in emergency situations.
- Assist in snow removal from sidewalks and parking area. Help with general maintenance.
- Assist in the sale of gift shop items and winter recreation passes.

Anyone interested in the goings on that weekend can contact Julie Kahl at 543-6508 or jawkal@hotmail.com

The Rocky Mountaineers turn 50!

Lionel Hall

I had a phone conversation with Lionel Hall recently. Lionel and his cousin Gary Hall were charter members of the Rocky Mountaineers from its beginning. Gary was the second vice president and third president of our club, while Lionel was mentioned frequently in the Mountain Ear as a trip leader and participant, and submitted other articles. But, he said, he got older and married and had children, and drifted away from the club.

He said that, in the beginning, the club was mostly a climbing and winter mountaineering group. It was only in the 70's, due to participation from University members, that the club started doing more hiking and other outdoor activities. They were also involved in search and rescue. He said that the biggest thing he remembered being involved in was when he and Gary invented a way to attach ropes to a rescue sled and lower it the same way you would lower someone on a dynamic belay. He said they gave a class on this method in Bozeman to other search and rescue people, and everyone was amazed at how well it worked on steep, icy slopes. Prior to this the rescuers would climb along side and try to carry the sled down.

He also remembered that the club used to give climbing lessons. They would take people climbing on the rocks around Mount Sentinel, and also up Lolo Creek. Also, he and Gary did a winter ski to the top of Lolo Peak, and figured out a way to rig their skis so they could sled out on them. And he said they were involved in the design of the Rocky Mountaineers patch. (I have one copy from the Dave Line collection which should be archived.)

Lionel couldn't remember any club members being involved in first ascents or new routes. But he said he and Gary probably had the record for being the earliest on South Trapper Peak. They left in the wee hours of the morning and reached the top in time to see the sun rise. He did remember an older man in the club who was part of a group that put the first summit register on Granite Peak. He thought this man also did registers on other peaks, but he couldn't remember his name.

Lionel was very interested to hear that we are going to celebrate our 50th anniversary soon. He asked how we were going to celebrate, and I told him the probable date and place. I hope he can come to the party.

Contributed by Steve Schombel

UPCOMING TRIPS AND ADVENTURES

Trip Notes:

Please contact the trip leader for more information regarding any listed trips.

Mileage listed is round trip mileage. Elevation listed is gain only. For information on Class Rating see below:

Class Rating System

CLASS 1 – HIKING Mostly on trails, but may also include some easy cross country travel.

CLASS 2 – EASY SCRAMBLING Rugged off trail hiking, no hands required.

CLASS 3 – SCRAMBLING Use of hand to ascend some sections of rock. Little to no exposure; a fall would not likely cause serious injury.

CLASS 4 – CLIMBING Easy climbing, great exposure; a fall would quite possibly cause serious injury. Use of a rope and protection at times possible.

CLASS 5 – TECHNICAL CLIMBING Use of rope, protection and belay are a must.

CLASS 6 – AID CLIMBING Use of equipment to support your weight as you climb.

Saturday or Sunday, January/February weekends (wherever the snow is best...around Missoula)

Rating: East to Moderate level backcountry skiing, *Elevation Gain:* 2500'- 4000'

Description: I plan on skiing at least every weekend in January and February at various locations in the surrounding area and am encouraging folks to come along. The weather and snow conditions/stability will dictate the locations and the amount of vertical feet gained/descended. The Bitterroots, Missions, Lewis and Clarks and Swans are all in striking distance; let me know if you're interested. Snow stability investigations will be made on every trip.

Special Equipment: Skis/skins, beacon, shovel, and probe. Some lending gear available.

Leader: Joshua Phillips-H: 396-3162, email: mtsurveyor@gmail.com

Sunday, January 10 – FINLEY CREEK (Rattlesnake)

Rating: Class 1-2, *Distance:* a few miles

Description: This is a popular ice climbing spot, but I just want to take a hike and check it out.

Leader: Chris Dunn, phone: 203-4962 email (preferred): hammaneater@gmail.com

Sunday, January 10 - COMO LAKE XC SKI TOUR

Description: You probably read about this new area in the Missoulian. I'm going to see what it is like and invite others to join me.

Leader: Steve Schombel - 721-4686

Saturday, January 16 - GASH POINT (Bitterroots)

Rating: Easy, Class 2 terrain; *Mileage:* 8.5 miles; *Elevation:* 4000'

Description: Easy backcountry ski/snowshoe trip, with very little avalanche hazard. Meet @ the old big lots parking lot @ 7:30am. ***Please contact me prior to the morning of the trip, as I probably won't show up at the meeting place if I don't receive any calls or e-mails.

Special Equipment: Ski's with skins/snowshoes

Leader: Shawn Bennett – shawnedwardbennett@gmail.com (cell – 493-4892)

Saturday, January 30 - STUART PEAK (Rattlesnake)

Rating: Class 1-2; *Mileage:* 17.2; *Elevation:* 4500'

Description: We will meet at the Main Rattlesnake Trailhead at 6am; bring a headlamp. The Spring Gulch route gains 4,500 feet of elevation in 8.6 miles so be prepared for a FULL day. Bring the 10 essentials and whatever form of snow travel you prefer. We should get into some deep snow but exposure to dangerous slopes should be minimal! ***Please contact me prior to the morning of the trip, as I probably won't show up at the meeting place if I don't receive any calls or e-mails.

Special Equipment: Ski's with skins or Snowshoes

Leader: Shawn Bennett – shawnedwardbennett@gmail.com (cell – 493-4892)

Fri-Sun, February 5-7 – LITTLE ST. JOE/TRM CABIN STAY (Bitterroots)

Rating: Class: 1-2, *Mileage:* 3.5 miles one way to cabin, *Elevation:* 2000+

Description: Meet at old big lots parking area @ 7:30am Saturday, drive to bass creek TH, park at the gate and follow the ridge up to the cabin. Drop off overnight gear then, if time, energy and snow conditions allow ski/snowshoe to the Little Saint Joe summit. ***Please contact Shawn prior to the morning of the trip, as I probably won't show up at the meeting place if I don't receive any calls or e-mail.

OR...Chris plans to go up on Friday if anyone interested.

Special Equipment: Ski's w/skins, Snowshoes (heel lifts highly recommended), Summertime Sleeping bag, clean pot to cook in and eat out of.

Co-Leaders: Shawn Bennett – shawnedwardbennett@gmail.com (cell – 493-4892)

Chris Dunn, phone: 203-4962 email (preferred): hammaneater@gmail.com

Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club Outing. Free and open to the public. There is a donation box at the parking lot to help pay for grooming expenses. Liability release - signatures required.

Friday, January 29, Sunset/Moonlight Cross-Country Ski at Lubrecht Forest, under a full moon. We'll ski the gentler trails as they wind through this beautiful forest. Plan on taking a long break at the mid-way shelter, so bring hot-drinks and snacks. This is an easy ski for people who are not accustomed to low light skiing. Harsh weather will cancel the trip and no pets please. This is a joint trip with **The Rocky Mountaineers**. For the late afternoon meet-up / ride-sharing info call Steve Schombel at 721-4686 or John Wolverton at: yodelingdog (at) hotmail.

Trip Forum

Smith River Float- Just a reminder-several of us have talked about putting in applications for a Smith River Float next summer. The time has arrived to submit those applications. People who are interested should start talking to each other. We have to decide what time of year we want to go, and if we want to have several people apply for the same launch date. Or do we want to stagger them, Sun., Mon., Tues etc.? There are several other details involved, but we have until the end of February to get organized and submit applications. Joining this group who are going to submit applications will not require you to go on the trip, unless you are the person who gets the permit. The rest of the group will be very upset if you back out after that. Julia Kahl can give information, or contact me, Steve Schombel at 721-4686; stephenschombel@yahoo.com . We should exchange phone numbers and e mail addresses.

Cover Photo: Mt. Karnak near Jumbo Pass, British Columbia. Joshua Phillips photo.

TRIP REPORTS

January 2- Lolo Pass Moonlight Ski

There seems to be a lot of interest in skiing under the moonlight around the time of the full moon. A lot of people called about this trip. Roughly half of them actually showed up. There were five who have gone on RM'ers trips before; John W., Lois C., Robb L., Shawn B., and leader Steve S.. We also had two newcomers, Julia and Mary Beth. We arrived at the pass slightly before 6 pm, unloaded food and stoves and had a nice cookout dinner. It was warm with only light snow falling off and on. Then Steve, Lois and John put on snowshoes and walked down to the 2-mile point on Elk Meadows Road and back. The others opted to ski the longer loop. We had a nice mellow snowshoe trip. The moon never came out, but we rarely needed headlamps. When we got back to the parking lot the two newcomers came back. They thought the long loop was too much for them in the dark, so had turned around. We all enjoyed the evening and agreed to get together again, perhaps at Lubrecht on Jan. 29th. Then when I was about to fall asleep around 11:45, the last two guys called like I asked them to, to report that they had gotten back safely. It was a successful trip for everyone. *Steve Schombel*



J. Phillips photo

The Rocky Mountaineers – Business Meeting Minutes -12/9/09

Called to order 6:11 PM

Attendance: Joshua Phillips, David Wright, Steve Niday, Julie Kahl, Alden Wright, Steve Schombel, Paul Jensen, Shawn Bennett, David Kahl, Karen Millhouse

Old Business (items with follow through):

- Website updates completed (Advice Forum & Online Library). Members must now follow through with participation in listings for online library resource (currently, about 70 titles) **-This project considered done**
- Membership Renewal Date –in Dec.newsletter **no one pays until May 2011**
- Calendars – sales, **can turn around in 2 days for a new order, will order more**
Cost \$12, David Wright wondered if we could put stuff in the empty calendar grid spaces
- Website costs- Has Alden been reimbursed? **Yes \$60 today**

New Business:

- Treasurer's Report: TRM \$1110.62, GMAR \$874.77
- How much unsold merchandise do we have? **Not Much**
How do we sell it more effectively? Website?
Yes with PayPal -Alden will work on it
Put in another order, maybe more caps -beanies not baseball caps?
- Avalanche Field Day – Minot Maser – proposed dates
He's gone most of Jan, maybe early Feb. Not enough snow right now
Alden -earlier in the season the better
Shawn -UM students have winter break until end of Jan
David Wright can we run a higher level class?
Consensus -not a good idea others are doing it
Becky Richards is here tonight and she wants us to pass the hat for The West Central Avalanche Center and she'll match the donations.

New Proposals/Concerns:

- Holiday Party – Use of club funds to buy some beer and food? **VOTE! NO**
- Special Meeting in January (trip leaders and officers) to settle on a scheduled list of trips to be published for 2010
Most don't want another meeting to attend, instead do what we can by
E-mail and finalize at Jan. business meeting

Items that need to be discussed in the future

Bitterroot Summit Registers

50th Anniversary Celebration planning

set date at May 15th. Sat after May meeting, at Charles Waters Park or Larry Creek Pavilion,
club funds ok for this, maybe do some easy hikes in the area

Alden announced a Nordic Ski Club clinic for this weekend

New Business Julie a new 1st part of trail to cabin

Steve Schombel The CD's that Steve Niday made of the old newsletters may have become obsolete (equipment wise)

Adjourned 6:58 PM

Rocky Mountaineers Merchandise

Short Sleeve T-Shirt	\$13.00 (\$17.00 non-members)
Long Sleeve T-Shirt	\$18.50 (\$23.50 non-members)
Caps	\$18.00 (\$23.00 non-members)
Fleece Beanie's	\$16.00 (\$20.00 non-members)
Stickers	\$ 1.50
Newsletter Archive CD	\$20.00

All of the Mountain Ear newsletters since 1960 on one CD!!



Shirts and hats are available in various sizes and/or colors. For more information, or to place your order email: seniday@yahoo.com or call Steve at 721-3790. Additionally, all of the above will be available at the Club meetings as well as the racks at Pipestone Mountaineering



THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Annual Membership Fee: \$10.00 for electronic newsletter

Note: Membership includes all members of a family or household.

Make checks payable to 'The Rocky Mountaineers' and send to:

The Rocky Mountaineers, PO Box 4262, Missoula, MT 59806

Name: _____

Additional Family Members Names: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone (optional): _____

Email: _____

Additional Email (optional): _____

Joining or maintaining your Rocky Mountaineers membership has never been easier!

PayPal is now available on the Rocky Mountaineers website. Click on the membership link on the main page.