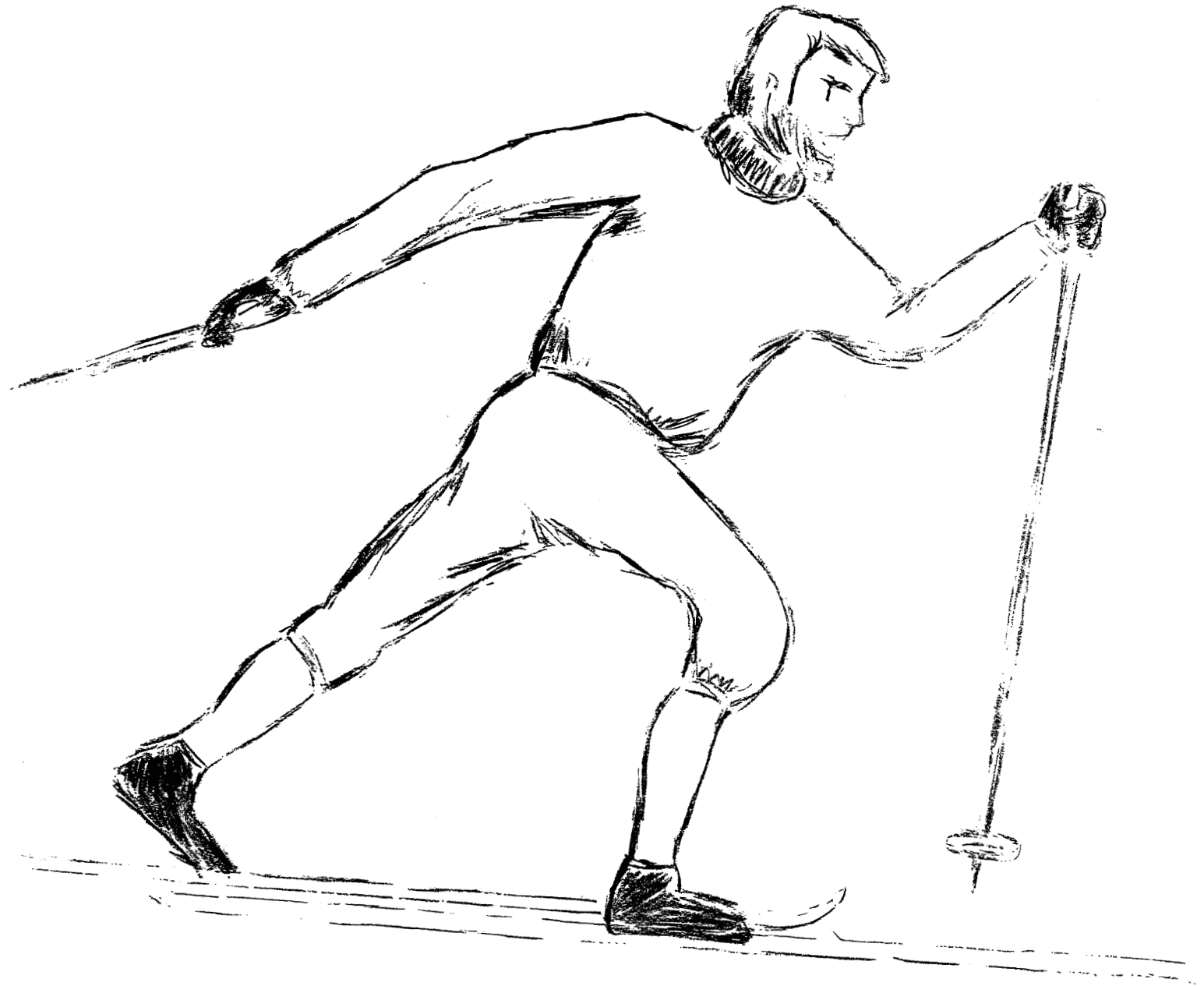


Mountain Ear

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OFFICERS 1973-1974

Bill Ballard - Pres. 549-5097
Andy Butcher - Veep 549-6215
Florence Murray - Sec. 542-2363
Charles Hamma - Treas. 549-0463
Virginia Vincent - Editor
543-8078

As you will notice, this month's MOUNTAIN EAR suffers a bit from Virginia Vincent's absence and from being sandwiched between Christmas and New Years activities. Virginia will be back in time for next month's issue, however, so you have something to look forward to!!! S. Bemben

*****MEETING*****

January 9, 1973, Wednesday, at 7:30 p.m. will be our next meeting. As usual we will meet at the Western Federal Savings and Loan Building on Highway 93 South. Professor Louis Hayes of the political science department at the University of Montana will share his Himalayan experiences with us through slides and words. With all of this new snow, I'm sure you're all anxious to get out on the skis or showshoes - we need your help in planning outings at the meeting, so come prepared with suggestions for trips or a willingness to lead a trip!!

NEW MEMBER: Edward and Linda Kieres, Saltese, Montana 59867

***** The Western Region of the MSPS (Ski Patrol) will hold a combined Circle M and Circle A (mountaineering and avalanche) course on Feb. 16 and 17, 1974. Also a Ski Mountaineering Patch Course will be put on in the Bitterroot Wilderness Area on March 22, 23 and 24. The courses will be free to registered ski patrollers, however, non-patrollers will be charged a fee of \$15 for the combined Circle M and Circle A Course and \$25 for the Patch Course. Schedule for the combined course includes:

First Day

8 a.m. (4 hrs) Circle A Lecture
Noon (1hr) Lunch Break
1 p.m. (2 hrs) Circle M Lecture
3 p.m. (1 hr) Break to get equipment ready
4 p.m. (½ hr) Meet at top of chairlift
4:30 p.m. (½ hr) Ski to designated campsite
5:00 p.m. (1½ hr) Build snow caves and set up camp
6:30 p.m. (1 hr) Supper
7:30 p.m. (1 hr) Search & Rescue Lecture (campfire)
8:30 p.m. (2 hrs) Search & Rescue Exercise (Night Ski Tour)
10:30 p.m. Show Cave

Second Day

6 a.m. (2 hrs) Breakfast & pick-up
8 a.m. (2 hrs) Mountaineering and Second Aid
10 a.m. (2 hrs) Probe line dry run and snow pit analysis
Noon (1 hr) Lunch break
1 p.m. (2 hrs) Simulated avalanche rescue
3 p.m. (1 hr) Off-area evacuation techniques
4 p.m. (1 hr) Catch Chair ride for sweep
5 p.m. Take home exam and critique

Further information on location, equipment, etc. may be obtained from Charlotte Gill or other ski-patrollers.

MANDAN RIDGE

The ridge is a 300' high blade separated from Flathead Buttress by a small rock amphitheatre. The upper, low-angled part of the ridge has several 50' high pinnacles, while the lower part of the ridge, facing south, forms a vertical wall about 75' wide with a classic open book set into its SW corner.

On one trip, Tom Daly & I got about 20' up the open book before turning chicken. We traversed to the west face, which appeared considerably easier, and got up to the double crack move - the crux. we took turns falling out of the right hand crack until it got dark, then gave up, knowing it was possible, but we lacked strength and coordination to make it.

Al Kyle, Chuck Dalby & I returned by crossing the creek on four logs which lie below the left-hand side of Flathead Buttress, then climbing into the V-shaped gully which cuts the slabs left of the base of Flathead. (Flathead Buttress is the last, giant, spade-shaped protuberance in the canyon before the trail crosses to the north side of the creek. Mandan Ridge is hidden behind Flathead from viewpoints on much of the trail, & is omitted from the sketch in Vol. XIII #2.) From the head of the gully, we traversed right to bypass a small cliff with scimitar-like, arched overhangs, then scrambled to the amphitheatre. We cut left to Mandan Ridge, & swung around the corner past the open book to the cairn at the base of the W face route.

WEST FACE: The first lead worked left up easy slabby ledges to little trees in a hook, then up a vertical wall past an out-jutting flake or needle, obvious from below. The 2nd lead was easy - up & left over a series of ledges & walls, then up across blocks to reach a large old pine tree at the left or north side of the steep slabs below the summit overhangs. On the 3rd, short but difficult, lead we used a small tree to get started on a wall, then went 10' up a shallow vertical open book on tricky foot jams. We traversed horizontally north out of the open book on a narrow downsloping ledge, then edged up & north on steep, exposed slabs to reach a small tree & ledge below the double crack move, our previous high point. The 4th lead tackled the double cracks directly, with good protection from an angle or nut in the right hand crack. The cracks are about 3½' apart; Al led them on sight by climbing up between them, then moving into the left crack above the difficult part where both cracks narrow. From the cracks to the summit ridge was easy, straight up.

We descended from the ridge by rapelling, but future parties should attempt to continue up on the ridge. The 1st obstacle is a fine pinnacle, which could be easily climbed by small holds directly up its S side. The 2nd pinnacle appears to overhang, & might be more challenging. Possibly it could be bypassed by traversing down & around. From the N side of the 2nd pinnacle, it might be possible to traverse off on easy (?) ledges to the W, or it might be more feasible to continue up on the ridge for some distance, in which case the entire climb would be quite long & demanding, the major disadvantage being the ease of escape by rapelling at almost any point. The double crack move is about 5.7 in difficulty; the entire climb as we did it to the ridge crest is Grade II. We recommend the climb for good rock, exposure, interesting moves & spectacular views of Blodgett Canyon to the W, & of Flathead Buttress to the east. A lot of time can be lost on the approach if you are not familiar with the creek crossings & the tricky gully entrance to the rock amphitheatre, so start early!

