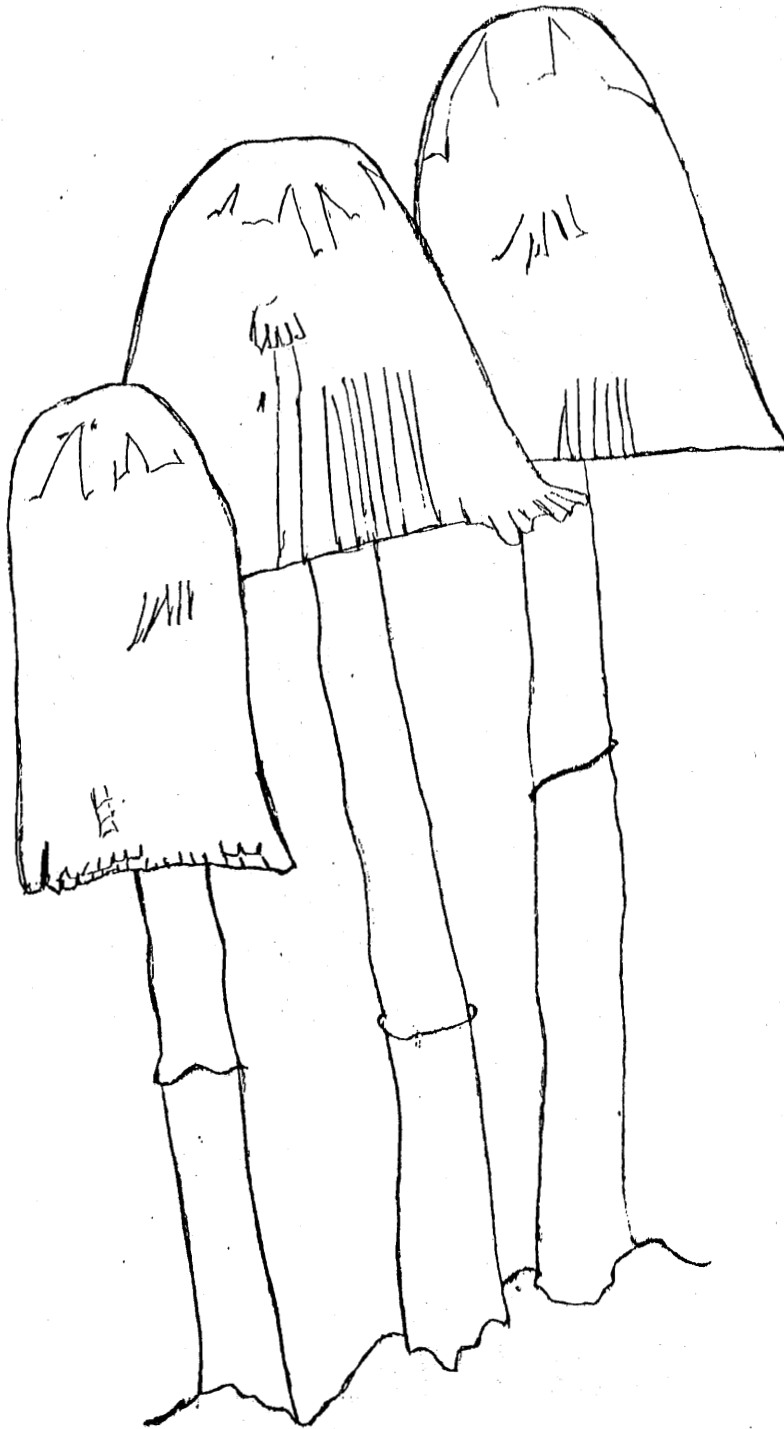




Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS
OF WESTERN MONTANA

Vol. XIX No. 1
October 1979



The Rocky Mountaineers of Western Montana, Box 4262, Missoula, Montana, 59806, welcomes all persons interested in hiking, camping, ski-touring, snowshoeing, river floating, bicycling, and technical climbing--summer, autumn, winter, and spring. Subscription to the Mountain Ear is by membership: \$4.00/yr., single; \$5.00/yr., family; for \$2.00/volume to out-of-town addresses. Eight issues per volume.

OFFICERS

- President- Myra Bair.....728-3616
- Vice-Pres# Katherine Peterson.....721-5200 work
- Secretary- open for election
- Treasurer- Arnold Finklin.....543-8705

Secretary, Sharon Weeks, is moving to Billings where she will be working as an audiologist for Easter Seals. Les Ojala is one nominee for secretary. Other nominations and the election will take place at the October meeting.

* NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, October 10, 1979 at 7:30 pm. *

* LOCATION: Double Front Cafe basement meeting room, 122 W. Alder *

*(Plenty of parking space at Alder and Orange) *

* PROGRAM: John Pierce and Bill Kerling will present Bill's slides *

* of the flora of the Rattlesnake drainage. Refreshments. *

NEW MEMBERS: Bob Deeble, Raymond C. Force, III, Sandi Swarthout, Bob Rayment, Sam and Kristine Miller, Miriam Morgan, Jane Shryock, Laura Fujii, Nancy Tipton, Peter Crago, Rob Holden, Marti and Susan Keller

RENWALS: Jean Pfeiffer, Eugene Stuart, Tom Springer

OCTOBER TRIP SCHEDULE

- Oct. 6-8 Moderate backpack trip up Gaffin Creek near Darby. Myra Bair 728-3616.
- Oct. 7 Sun. 10 miles maximum round trip up Big Creek in the Bitterroots. Jim Schultz 549-0523
- Oct. 13 Sat. 14 miles round trip up Fish Creek west of Missoula to the Fish Creek Falls. Lois Paige 728-8222
- Oct. 14 Sun. Easy to moderate day hike. Details from Arnold Finklin. 543-8705.

OCTOBER TRIP SCHEDULE continued

- Oct. 20 Sat. Morrell Falls family hike with strenuous option. Depart 8:00 a.m. from Tempo parking lot. Virginia Vincent 543-8078.
- Oct. 28 Sun. Chaffin Lakes day hike about 12 miles round trip. Remember to wear your hunter orange. Nancy Decou 728-5376.
- Nov. 3-4 Sat.-Sun. Full moon bike ride to Sleeping Child Hot Springs. From Missoula or from Hamilton options. Camp overnight unless the full moon keeps you awake. Myra Bair 728-3616.
- Nov. 10-12 Sat.-Mon. Veteran's Day long weekend to Glacier Park to check out the eagles, salmon, scenery, and maybe even SNOW. Myra Bair 228-3616.

HALLOWEEN SPECIAL EVENT

Oct. 31 Wed. Halloween Costume Progressive Dinner coordinated by Sharon Howe. Contact Sharon before October 25 for details. 543-4200 or 728-6446 days where you may leave a message.

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THE FINE PRINT
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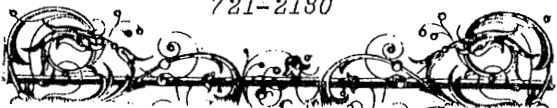
YOUR HEADQUARTERS FOR BOOKS ON THE OUTDOORS

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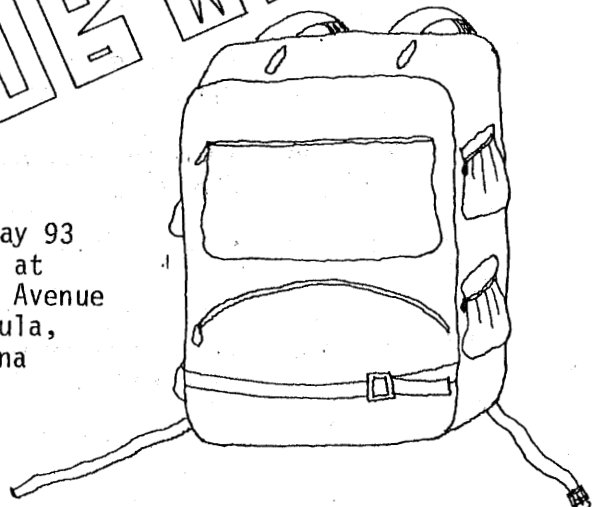


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ON THE TOP OF MONTANA

Folks occassionally ask me why I like to hike up mountains, and at times I'm not really sure I know why. But theb again, an experience like that which was bestowed upon us over Labor Day weekend certainly clears any doubt!

The Mystic Lake trailhead was where our foot journey began. Unknown to me, the Mystic Area was a very popular place. As a matter of fact, we had to search for parking slots among the fifty-odd vehicles already there. Were all these people heading to Granite? A bit apprehensive about a weekend of crowds, we prepared, divided and hoisted our gear on to our semi-awake bodies and fired up the legs.

Once through the Montana Power hydroelectric generating compound and on the trail, a wilderness reality gained strength rather quickly. A three mile hike on a well-used trail up a rocky canyon brought the five of us and an energetic Lab to Mystic Lake and the access to Granite Peak. After a rest and some glucose overloading, I observed most backcountry users heading in other directions than our route. The Mystic Lake area is very inspiring and scenic and any sane person would seek their pleasures there...but with a person like Donald Baty along, one does not take the "laid-back" approach to Labor Day Vacation!

On the move again, we ascended the trail leading to Froze-To-Death Plateau some 3500 feet above, with only eight miles remaining! Heads forward and bodies straining, we worked our way up the Steep Valley wall in a serpentine manner, through the many switchbacks, occassionally glimpsing the shrinking lake below. By late afternoon the upper rim was in sight and we were reassured that base camp on the plateau was attainable after all.

Feeling the day's workout and perhaps some effects of altitude, we slowly eased onto an immense sloping glaciated plain like an Arctic tundra in places. Over talus and rubble, up and down surface irregularities, through wet spongy swails, across a sowfield we at last reached a spot for camp about two miles from the massive monolith which was still not in sight.

Breakfast at the first light showed clouds to the west. A possible change in weather was something to ponder, but I was not as concerned as the one who had attempted Granite four previous times only to be besieged by rain, snow, wind and fog! A degree of paranoia was quite understandable for Baty as he headed off across the barren expanse, delermined to beat the approaching weather front. That was the last we saw of Don for awhile. It was a good thing Bill Morgan was not as motivated, or the rest of us would have been totally unguided! As we quietly moved towards the cairns placed on each mini-horizon, the first rays of light opened the darkness and illuminated our first view of Granite Peak. It seemed so close, but little did I know that one has to drop 100 1000 feet into a saddle before starting the actual climb.

The weather was moving east, the skies were clearing and we were no longer alone, for otherclimbing parties were close. The drop down was softened by the realization that conditions were excellent and the summit within reach by late morning. The rugged mass of Rock, with a large glacier below its base, overshadowed everything around. I was anxious to test myself.

Granite has been climbed many times and the route is marked with cairns. We had little trouble picking our way up a jagged ridge, over large angular rocks, around a snowfield, and up another ridge to the snow bridge. After a brief hesitation upon looking down the steep drop-offs on either side, we scrambled across and continued our slow maneuvering over and around large angular obstructions. As Bill led us up the unclear route after the snow-bridge, a aprty ahead of us pointed to the summit at a figure up top dancing around and waving. Could this be Don Baty? We pushed on and up the most difficult passage of the route, a chimney 30 to 40 feet up. While discussing

