



# Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS  
OF WESTERN MONTANA

February, 1983  
Vol. 21 No. 11

February 9, 1983

7:30 PM Meeting  
Montana Power Co.  
1903 Russell St.

**Program:**

CLIMB OF MT. MC KINLEY  
SUMMER - 1980  
Slides by Jack Hart

\*\*\*\*

THE MOUNTAIN EAR  
P.O. Box 4262  
Missoula, MT 59801



FIRST CLASS



Dave Line  
1135 Whitaker Drive  
Missoula, MT 59803

MEMBERSHIP LIST ADDENDUM

NEW and RENEWAL

Don Baty  
PO Box 305  
Florence, Mt. 59833

Christopher and Marie-Ange Buzan  
108 Bridger Court  
Missoula 59803  
251-4206

James P. Burns  
338 E. Broadway  
549-5375

Jean Doerr  
2217 Gilbert  
721-7582

Lois Crepeau  
2222 Woodlawn Ave  
728-5321

Elaine L. McKinnon  
2331 W. Summit Dr.  
251-4236

Sandy Satre  
817 2nd Apt A  
Cheney, WN 99004  
(509) 235-6068

Mary Ann Schipf  
3100 Bancroft  
728-2995

David A. Smith  
1339 Jackson  
721-1285

Bob and Eleanor Weidman  
409 King St.  
549-7793

CHANGES

Dan Weinstein  
(delete phone no.)

Bob Benson  
(change phone to  
549-1426)

Jeanine Byrne  
(change phone to  
721-5427)

*Tripping!*

Feb. 12 Telemark turn practice. Location to be set later when snow conditions are more certain. (note: we can also probably con the leader into giving us some pointers - ) Leader: Bill Morgan; 363-5339

Feb 19,-21 Three day trip to someplace where there is snow . Strenuous.  
Call Bill Morgan 363-5339 or Bob Benson 549-1426

Feb. 26-27 Little St Joe shelter cabin. Strenuous trip.  
Leader: Bill Morgan 363-5339

Feb. 27 Lolo Pass 12 mile loop ski trip - moderate  
Leader: Nancy DeCou 728-5376

Mar. 5-6 Lost Trail ski trip. For those who havent been on this trip in past years, this provides a variety of skiing opportunities - cross country on the Anderson Mt. trail near Chief Joseph Pass, downhill at Lost Trail ski area, or ride the lift at the area and X-C down through the Saddle Mt. burn. Accomodations at Lost Trail Lodge are about \$12 per person. Meals at the lodge are additional. Cooking facilities available at the cabins.

NOTE: Reservations must be made by Feb. 2. Phone Ralph Flockerzi 549-9986  
*extended for a short time - but get them to Ralph NOW*

Mar 13 Woods Gulch - Marshall loop trip. Moderate. Meet East Gate 8 am  
Leader : Ralph Klawitter 728-4778



# Lloyd's

CONVERSIONS done on lace-up downhill ski boots to make a thinner-soled heavy duty X-C touring boot

CONVERSE with LLOYD'S

1230 West Kent  
(N. end of Tremper's Shopping Center)

\*SHOE REPAIR \* LEATHER CARE \* ZIPPERS \*  
\* "VIBRAM" \* ACCESSORIES \*

# Backpack



# BOB WARD AND SONS

HIGHWAY 93  
AT  
SOUTH AVE.  
MISSOULA

## Trekking Evening

with

## ARLENE BLUM

Arlene Blum, the only Western woman to complete the first traverse of the Great Himalaya Range (2400 miles through Bhutan, Nepal and India), and the leader of the 1978 American Women's Expedition that climbed Annapurna, will be here to present a slide show/lecture on her experiences during the trek.

There will also be a Nepalese dinner before the program, and local import and sporting goods stores will have displays.

The Nepalese dinner and program will be held at St. Francis Auditorium on February 25. For more information, contact the

This is one of the truly outstanding women mountaineers, and our club is anxious to support and participate in the event.

- \* We will have a Rocky Mountaineer Table
- \* Demonstration of making rope climbers for skis
- \* Photo display of Club activities and outings in our area NOTE: Please bring prints, snapshots to Feb. Meeting.
- \* Our table will be set up with some extra MOUNTAIN EARS and sign up for those interested in joining. YOU can help by volunteering to be at the table.
- \* For information call Ilona (721-3832) or Nancy Schrader 728-3334
- \* Tickets will be for sale at the Feb. meeting.

**Forest trails:****Life as a fire lookout**

By VIRGINIA VINCENT  
Stark Mountain Lookout  
Ninemile Ranger District

When one lives on the edge of a cliff one doesn't walk in one's sleep — and that goes for those on fire towers, too! We who do fire lookout duty for our nation's forests often live 10 to 50 feet off the ground and on the rim of a cliff. A small 14- or 15-foot cabin on stilts or a one- or two-story cinderblock base provides shelter from the elements and a place for the firefinder.

Our job is to detect smoke (FIRE!) during the summer months. The firefinder, a map with an alidade mounted on a 3½-foot stand, is our work tool. The alidade is two posts on a rotating ring through which one lines up the column of smoke. This gives a line-of-sight across the map. Degrees from north are indicated on the perimeter.

Upon sighting smoke, be it lightning or man caused, we assess the location (we hope as close as within ¼ mile) and report to a forest dispatcher such items as color of smoke, wind on the site, position and degree of slope and what fuels are in the vicinity. A firefighting crew is then sent out. From moment of detection until the crew is on its way should take no more than eight minutes.

Communications are by FM radio, powered by 11 flashlight batteries. Here on the Lolo National Forest the higher lookout sta-

tions can hear forest transmissions from the upper Blackfoot Valley to Thompson Falls. With six ranger stations, a dozen lookouts, and innumerable personnel all with radios at their disposal, conversations are limited.

However, in the evening when there is no other traffic, the lookouts can compare notes and chat. Some conversations are about how to use huckleberries, how to get rid of flies and yellowjackets, how far did one hike on a day off, or did the retardant bomber buzz your tower.

Life, on-high, is a lot simpler for the fire lookout nowadays. Most towers are equipped with propane cookstoves and refrigerators. Most lookouts no longer maintain trails and telephone lines (only a few towers have phones), haul water on their backs, or fight fires. We remain on the tower to observe conditions on a fire such as wind changes, spotfires, and to act as radio relays.

In fact, a big consideration for the lookout is to keep from being bored. Having a variety of projects is a wise precaution, and fortunate is the person who is a nature-lover. Even the highest peaks have flowers and wildlife, and often snowbanks well into July. It is fascinating to watch glacier lilies and spring beauties appear while harebells and goldenrod bloom in the valley.

Many lookouts photograph the various cloud formations, lightning, and scenery about them. Weather study is of major interest to many of us. Those artistically inclined produce paintings (and we all paint walls, railing and decking, and unending maintenance duty). Some women haul a treadle sewing machine up and fashion their winter wardrobe. Other indulge in crafts and music.

The duty is eight hours a day, five days a week or 10 days on and off. A relief lookout makes the rounds between two or three towers. Observation periods vary, some scan the 20-mile radius of their area every 10 or 15 minutes, while some study their seen-area for 20 or so minutes, alternating with an overlapping tower's observations. Mainly we are in our towers 24 hours and, hence, find many smokes during off-hours. Lightning is still a predominant cause of forest fire in western Montana, but during the drier periods man-caused fires (automotive, railroad

## Recent trips

Just goes to show you can't judge a book by it's cover, or Lolo Pass by Missoula's snow cover. On Jan. 9, Joe Kipphut stayed the course in spite of rain in town, and he, Dan Weinstein, and Charles Hamma were treated to a foot of powder on their trip from the pass down Lee Creek trail, and on all the way to the Hot Springs. Good shot, guys! Those of us that pooh-poohed the trip are envious!



and carelessness) become more prevalent.

People from many walks of life will spend a summer on the mountaintop. Many school teachers return year after year when a fire season coincides with their vacations. College students earn their tuition during three to five seasons of availability, while a few "professionals" rack up anywhere from 10 to 20 years of service. The lookouts, as do other U.S. Forest Service personnel, go through a preliminary training early each summer where they are introduced to, or help reach, radio usage, map reading, and fire-fighting.

The fire lookout must be able to judge distance under varying light conditions besides equating visual landmarks to their maps.

Brown, white, green and blue  
Mountains stretching afar.

A lookout's summer view.

**Wildlife film festival**—This year's wildlife film festival, Feb. 23-27, will begin with showings of "Beat the Crowd" Feb. 23 and 24. Regular festival films will be shown Feb. 23-27.

The festival, in conjunction with the annual meeting Association of Conservation Information, will also offer workshops on filmmaking and wildlife.

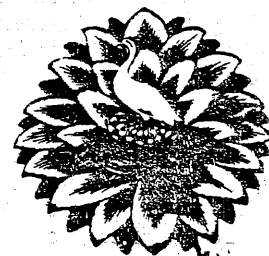
Admission is \$2.

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## ROPE CLIMBERS

**SUPPLIES:** Approximately 12' of 1/4" braided polypropylene rope for each 195 cm ski (14' for 210 cm ski). This makes a rope climber for  $\frac{1}{2}$  the length of the ski. If a full-length climber is desired, use 6 to 7 more feet.

READ DIRECTIONS THROUGH FIRST!!

1. Place center of rope length across ski where binding is attached to ski. (See Fig. a)
2. Bring rope together on ski bottom. (Each end of rope around opposite side of skis)
3. Make a Figure 8 knot on bottomside of ski where middle of boot would be. (See Figs. b and c)
4. Bring rope to topside of ski and make an overhand knot just behind heelplate/locator. Pull the rope tightly towards the tail of the ski. (See Figs. d and e)
5. Bring rope to bottomside of ski and make a Figure 8 knot. (Make this knot only several inches from the overhand knot.) (See Fig. f)
6. Alternate overhand knots on topside and Figure 8 knots bottomside until you reach the tail of the ski. The last knot should be a Figure 8 knot on bottomside of ski. Leave at least 8" of loose rope.
7. Twist ends of rope together tightly and bring to topside of ski over the tail of the ski. (See Fig. g)
8. Pull the rope tightly towards the last topside knot. Slip each end of rope under rope near the last knot. Pull tightly and tie a square knot. Tuck in the loose ends. (See Figs. h-i)
9. When using climbers for skiing, wrap duct tape around end of ski to secure rope to ski. (See Fig. j)

