



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS
OF WESTERN MONTANA

November, 1986
Vol. 25 No. 3

NOVEMBER MEETING

Wednesday, Nov. 12, 7:30 P.M.

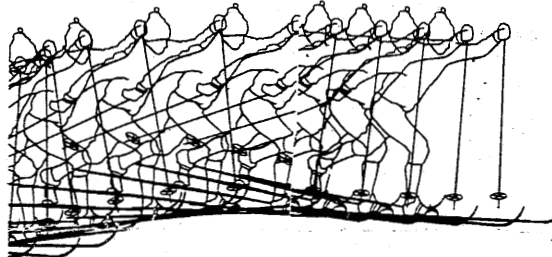
Montana Power Building, 1903 Russell, Msla.

PROGRAM: The Nahanni River and Lotus Flower Tower -
slide show by Grey Thompson

NEW TRIPS

Saturday, November 15 or when snow conditions get good. St. Mary's Peak.
Call Art Gidel at 543-6352.

Saturday, Dec. 6 - X Country Ski Trip - to be announced. Call Ralph Flockerzi
at 549-9986



THE MOUNTAIN EAR
P.O. Box 4262
Missoula MT 59806



FIRST CLASS MAIL

Dave Line
1135 Whitaker Drive
Missoula MT 59803

THINK
SNOW



TRIP REPORTS

Mission Mountains Loop, August 16 - Eight club members and friends hiked a 14-mile loop with 4000 feet of elevation gain through the west side of the Mission Range. Brett Doucette, Steve Cohen, Ethel McDonald, Dave Ryan, Andy Smith, John Westenber, Martha Yale and I made the hike in warm, sunny weather. The group entered the Missions via Post Creek at McDonald Reservoir. After hiking up the drainage through several beautiful, cool cedar groves and enjoying several waterfalls, we followed the trail to the north. The trail climbs steeply out of Post Creek before it passes by a series of lakes; Moon Lake, Long, Frog, and finally Summit Lake on the south-east flank of Mount Harding. After a lunch stop at Frog Lake we lost the trail briefly due to the groups' justifiable unwillingness to believe that Steve "Couch Potato" Lohen could possibly know where the correct trail was. After a short cross country scramble we arrived at Summit Lake with a great view of Mt. Harding. From Summit Lake the trail (once we found it) climbs steeply up to Eagle Pass. We then descended off Eagle Pass to the trailhead where we had left a vehicle that morning. Except for some deterioration of the trail in a few places, it was a very enjoyable trip.

- Dave Pengelly -

Cabin Maintenance Trip, October 4 - Ready for snow and the stove's warm glow we put in some wood, laid out a floor, cleaned up a little and inspected the door. Why the floor? To prevent an early burn of the whole woodpile and save some dead trees for 1994. So how did we do it? Packed in three sheets of plywood, hammer and nails, a chainsaw and gas, an axe or two. Such a rowdy crew:

Ralph Flockerzie, el presidente
Wayne Hecker, axe man
John Pierce, floor designer
Carol Anderson, super stacker
Dabney Eastham, nail Pounder
Dave Pengelly, log splitter
Art Gidel, floor designee
Bill Thomas, saw man

- Art Gidel -

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New member: Hannes Jarka, 741 $\frac{1}{2}$ Woodford

Renewals: Dave Line, Martha Yale, Ethel McDonald

Change of address: Jean Dore, 13 Charis Lane
and Mary Ambrose-Wake, 2316 Woodlawn



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WHY YOU SHOULD OWN AN AVALANCHE BEACON

I am writing to encourage all of the backcountry skiers in the Rocky Mountaineers to purchase avalanche beacons.

Avalanches are the greatest source of danger to those who travel in the mountains in the winter. The unstable snow conditions that create avalanches are often difficult to predict and avoid, and avalanches regularly occur in areas far from the tops of mountains. Many people have been killed by avalanches that ran only fifty or sixty yards, or by small avalanches that piled up in the bottom of gullies.

Many members of the Rocky Mountaineers regularly ski in areas that contain avalanche-prone slopes. These avalanche-prone slopes are found in low-lying areas that those not alert to avalanche hazards might assume are safe, as well as in the high steep open areas where avalanche risks are more obvious.

It is essential that persons caught in an avalanche be located and rescued quickly; of those buried in avalanches, only half survive for half an hour, only one in three survive for an hour, and only one in six survive for two hours. The value of avalanche beacons in rescuing buried persons is clearly shown by the following chart from Avalanche Safety for Skiers & Climbers, by Tony Daffern (Alpenbooks, 1983), which shows the speed and chances of success of several search methods:

METHOD	TIME TO SEARCH 100x100 METER AREA	CHANCE OF SUCCESS WHEN BURIED 3 METERS DEEP OR LESS
Course probe, one pass	20 probes, 4 hours	70%
Fine probe	20 probes, 16 to 20 hours	100%
Rescue dog, quick search	1 dog, 1/2 hour	90%
Rescue dog, detailed search	1 dog, 1-2 hours	95%
Avalanche beacon	1 person, under 10 minutes	98%

At a ski area, large numbers of trained ski patrolmen and untrained volunteers can usually be mobilized for an avalanche rescue within minutes. In the backwoods, however, the members of a party must be prepared to rescue each other. I am pleased to be able to say that many of the backcountry skiers in the club use avalanche-probe poles and carry snow shovels. However, I don't ever remember seeing a club member wearing the most effective piece of avalanche rescue equipment, which is an avalanche beacon.

I think the reason that so few club members have purchased avalanche beacons is because few other club members own them. After all, there isn't much point in being the only person on a trip with a beacon. I figure it's time to do something about this. I believe that if just five or six of the more active backcountry skiers in the club purchased avalanche beacons, they would set a good example for the other members, and more importantly, they would create a "critical mass" of avalanche beacons that would make it worthwhile for other club members to buy beacons.

Avalanche beacons are not cheap. The three major brands, Orthovox, Pieps and Echo(Ramer), all cost approximately \$120-\$140 from mail order suppliers or local stores. But even at that price, they are cheaper than a lot of the other items of skiing clothing and equipment that you probably already own. If you figure that an avalanche beacon could save your life or the life of one of your friends, the price seems pretty reasonable.

I have located an individual who has kindly agreed to procure Orthovox avalanche beacons for \$110.60 apiece or Pieps 2 avalanche beacons for 90.00 apiece, if I can find five or more people who want to purchase the same brand of beacon. Please contact me, Peter Dayton, (H) 549-5805, (W) 721-8300, immediately if you are interested in this deal. I would like to collect checks from all those who are interested and place the order by November 17, which is the Monday after the November meeting.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the importance of educating yourself about avalanche hazards. Knowledge of the factors that create avalanche risks and the ability and willingness to take safe routes are more important than owning an avalanche beacon.