

Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS
OF WESTERN MONTANA

VOL. 25, NO. 109
May, 1987

MONTHLY MEETING

TIME: 7:30 p.m.
PLACE: Montana Power Building - 1903 Russell
PROGRAM: Coral Reefs of Belize by John Pierce

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TRIP CALENDAR

- Every Thursday in May - 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th - Mountain Biking - Watch AROUND MISSOULA column in Missoulian for time and place or call Ralph 549-9986.
- May 22-25, Friday-Monday - Mount Assinibone in the Canadian Rockies, North Ridge Route, Class 4, very easy Class 5. Call Steve Niday 721-3790
- May 31, Sunday - Mountain Bicycle up Rattlesnake Creek - 14 mi. hike into Carter Lake. Call Ralph Flockerzi, 549-9986.
- May 7, Thursday - Bicycle up Miller Creek over Holaman Saddle to Clinton. Return via frontage road and freeway. Call Ralph Flockerzi.

TRIP REPORT

Grey Wolf Peak, Mission Range, April 18-19 - In spite of inclement weather, Ralph Flockerzi, Peter Dayton and Art Gidel decided to make a second attempt to climb the East Ridge of Grey Wolf Peak in spring conditions. I was a bit hesitant after last year's unsuccessful attempt, but prodding by the determined participants convinced me it would at least be memorable.

From the Jocko trailhead, we hiked and skied to the west end of Grey Wolf Lake, stopping near the inlet to brew up dinner. After dinner, we climbed to the highest spot considered safe from avalanche to set up camp. Early the next morning we headed in the general direction of the mountain hoping for a break in the fog and snow so we could find the route we wanted to climb. After an hour or so, the weather lightened up a bit, and we easily climbed up to the plateau east of the peak. At this point we roped up. We continued on to the saddle at the base of the summit ridge only to find that the Class 4 summer scramble looked a tad intimidating when covered with snow and ice. To avoid this nastiness, we climbed south, up and back north to the ridge. The remainder of the climb went quickly (madman Ralph in the lead). we reached the summit about 1 p.m.

We made good time back down to just above the saddle. A short rapel avoided some tedious and dangerous down climbing, putting us back at camp by 2:30 p.m. we reached our car at 7:30 p.m. A super trip!

- Art Gidel

TORREY PEAK TRIP REPORT

On Saturday, April 4, 1987, Carol Anderson, Scott Belknap, and Bill Cunningham, Peter Dayton, Art Gidel, Wayne Hecker, Margaret Hillhouse, Steve Niday, and Bill Wilmot from Missoula and Ely Arguimbau from Helena climbed 11,147 foot Torrey Peak in the East Pioneer Mountains Northwest of Dillon. We drove down to Dillon on Friday night, where, demonstrating again the uncompromisingly hard-core spirit of the Rocky Mountaineers, we camped at the Sacajawea Motel. The East Pioneer Mountains are quite high and rugged, with at least fourteen peaks over ten thousand feet high. We entered them from the east via the Birch Creek drainage, and climbed Torrey Peak by its East ridge, a long and for the most part gradual ascent. The weather had been very warm all week, and the snow seemed pretty heavy, isothermal, and avalanche-prone. We could easily plunge our ski poles two or three feet into the warm snow, and breaking trail was slow and arduous. As we ascended the lower half of the ridge the snow repeatedly subsided under our skis, often over an area five or ten yards in radius. It was one of those days when the survivors later say, "the snow was talking to us, but we didn't listen." However, only one short section of the bottom half of the ridge was steep enough to avalanche, and the snow on it was windblown and firmer. Once we climbed above the trees the ridge was largely blown clear, so we ditched our skis and hiked to the top. It stayed warm and clear all day, with scenery visible all the way to the horizon. When we descended into the trees, we found that the warm day had caused the snow conditions to take a turn for the worse. Every ten or fifteen feet the snow would collapse beneath our skis, and we would find ourselves buried over our knees in an alien white substance with a consistency similar to wet concrete. Each time this happened it took several minutes of effort to struggle free of the snow. After only a couple of hundred yards we gave up on skiing out in the normal fashion, put on our ropes, and walked down the path we made climbing up. If we hadn't done this we could easily have ended up spending the night on the ridge. The consensus of the group was that it was a great trip, and a mountain range definitely worth returning to, but easily the worse snow conditions that any of us had ever seen.

Peter Dayton

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE: _____

Mail a check payable to

"Rocky Mountaineers" to Arnold Finklin

P.O. Box 7795, Missoula, Montana 59807

CHECK ONE: Individual \$6.00/year _____ Family \$8.00/year _____

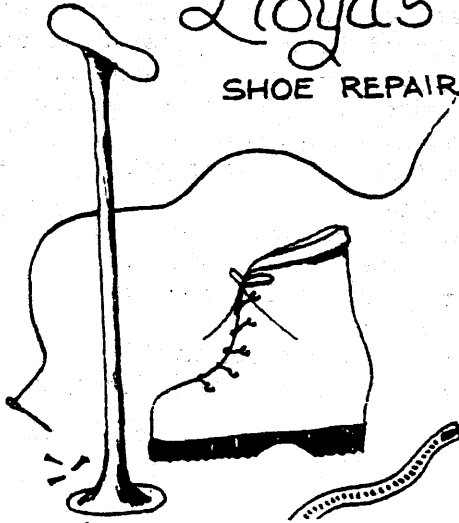
ANNOUNCEMENT

Bikecentennial is seeking a small cadre of local or area residents to work as paid leaders for one or more week-long mountain bike or paved road bicycle tours in the north-west. Requires travel experience, basic mechanical ability, some cooking skills, and an outstanding ability to enjoy being with groups of adults. Also CPR and first aid knowledge required. Contact Stuart Crook, Bikecentennial, P.O. Box 8303, Missoula, MT 59807. Phone 721-1776.

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