



# Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

February, 1991 1992

---

## MEETING

Time and Place: Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the Montana Power Building at 1903 Russell Street in Missoula. The February meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 12.

Program: Pat Caffrey, famous international mountaineer from Seely Lake, will give another slide show from his "Seven Summits" series on the highest peaks on all seven continents. This slide show will be on his recent trip to Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa. Pat's spicy and amusing slide shows have always been well received, although possibly rated "PG". After this presentation we are all looking forward to Pat's slide show on Mount Everest, as soon as he bags the big one.

---

## TRIP CALENDAR

Sunday, February 8, Mt. Jerusalem. Steve Niday will lead a "long day trip" up Mt. Jerusalem in the Bitterroot Mountains, south of Darby and Trapper Peak. Call Steve at 721-3790 for details.

Saturday, February 15, Lolo Peak. Exploratory trip up Lolo Peak via the ridge to the south of Carlton Ridge. It looks like it should be fairly straightforward, but I've been wrong before. Contact Peter Dayton at 728-8101 for further information.

Sunday, February 23, Trapper Peak. Ski trip up Trapper Peak, the tallest peak in the Bitterroots, which is located southwest of Darby. The climb will follow the standard approach from the south, which offers great telemarking on open, moderate-angle slopes, and outstanding scenery from the top. Suitable for beginning and intermediate backcountry skiers. Call Dave Pengelly for details at 728-6512.

Sun-Sat, February 23-29, Beckler Canyon, Yellowstone Park. 5-7 day ski tour in Yellowstone National Park, from Old Faithful over the Continental Divide, down the Beckler Canyon, and out the Southwest corner of the park near Ashton, Idaho. Fairly gentle undulating terrain, good scenery, and hot springs - the group intends to stay over a couple days at various hot springs. Suitable for beginning and intermediate backcountry skiers with solid winter camping skills. Call Ed Monnig at 721-2707 for details.

February, Mt. Cleveland Traverse. Steve Niday is interested in organizing a five-day winter ski tour in Glacier Park, with an optional climb of Mt. Cleveland if conditions are good. The trip would start at Waterton Lakes, go over Stoney Indian Pass, and come out the Belly River. Those not interested in attempting Mt. Cleveland are welcome to come and ski in the area during the climb. Contact Steve Niday at 721-3790 for further information.

March, McDonald Peak. Overnight climb of McDonald Peak in the Mission Mountains via its northwest couloir. A bushwack/scramble/ski/climb trip suitable for beginning or intermediate mountaineers. Ice axe and crampons required for some snow pitches below the summit. We'll schedule the trip when the snow sets up enough to walk on. Call Peter Dayton at 728-8101 for details and date.

---

## TRIP REPORTS

Gash Point, January 18, 1992: Bill Cunningham, Peter Dayton, Rick Murney, Abbott Norris, and John Pierce climbed Gash Point, which is located West of Victor in the Bitterroot Mountains, on a sunny and mild day. John showed up with a brand new pair of climbing skins, after years

of skiing uphill assisted only by pine tar, arm power, and sheer determination. He is now even harder to keep up with than before. The view from the top was a pleasant change from the usual fifty feet of visibility. With the exception of the last few hundred feet below the ridge top, which was windblown, the telemarking out through the trees was excellent. Down low, however, the conditions were less than optimal, due to a month of scanty snow, so we decided to try to follow the road out. We picked it up at the last switchback and headed east out the side of the drainage. This was not one of our better route finding experiments; the road dead-ended on a steep sidehill high above the road we wanted to pick up. Fortunately the trees on the hillside were pretty open. All things considered, the route was certainly no worse than the normal route out, which can be pretty nasty towards the end in lousy snow conditions. - Peter Dayton

Gash Point, January 19, 1992: Art Gidel and Dave Pengelly made a quick trip to Gash Point. We had sunny weather (2nd time in one season!). The skiing was actually not very good due to wind and sun. Also, the terrain down low was quite pock-marked by the group from the day before who walked part way down instead of leaving their skis on. - Dave Pengelly [Dave is just sulky because we skied out all the good powder up high the day before - the Editor.]

Koch Peak, January 26, 1992: Rick Murney, Gary Palm, Mark Waters (Thompson Falls) and Dave Pengelly made an attempt on Koch Peak in the Bitterroot Mtns. The peak is located on the ridge between Rock Creek (Como Reservoir) and the South Fork of Lost Horse Creek. The weather was great. Despite predictions of rain and/or snow, we had a clear, sunny day. After parking along the Lick Creek road, we skied up the road a bit and then headed south to gain the ridge thru some clearcuts. The ridgetop is quite open due to the fires from 1988. This lower part of the ridge would make a good trip for anyone looking for gentle telemark terrain that is fairly open. The easiest route is to follow the ridge thru the burn, eventually dropping into a gentle basin that runs north-south on the southeast side of the peak. We made the mistake of trying to stay high on the ridge, and had to do a lot of postholing in places too steep to ski across. Also, we had to do a small bit of rockclimbing on the ridge. We lost several hours trying to save a bit of elevation. As a result, when we eventually attained the last ridge before Koch Peak, we were short on time. We elected to scramble up the high point on the ridge just east of the peak and after enjoying the panorama, headed out. The skiing was fairly good most of the way, although the crust down low near the vehicle was impossible. This trip provides a great view of the Como Peaks, Lonesome Bachelor, and El Capitan. - Dave Pengelly

Alberton Gorge, January 26: On Superbowl Sunday, the Missoula Chapter of Kayakers Anonymous held its first meeting in 1992. The meeting opened with the usual introductions (names have been changed to protect the privacy of the participants). "Hello, my name is [Red], and I am a kayaker." "Hello, my name is [Slim], and I'm also a kayaker." The meeting location was attractively and appropriately decorated with a purple Invader kayak standing on end in a deep pile of snow next to [Red's] Izuzu Trooper. After immortalizing this tableau in photographs, the demented duo got down to the main business of the meeting: driving long distances in motor vehicles, and kayaking. For this meeting the driving was to the Alberton Gorge of the Clark Fork River, which starts at Cyr, a few miles downstream from Alberton. The Gorge was at an excellent "low summer" level, with about ten inches exposed on the pedestal at Triple Bridges. The day was clear and sunny, with temperatures in the low forties. [Red] and [Slim] climbed into their kayaks on the shore and slid them across a large sheet of snow and ice and into the water. Since [Slim] had last been kayaking in October, and [Red] had only been out of action since November, it didn't take more than a couple of minutes for them to get back into the swing of things. Despite the early date, the water and weather were typical of spring boating, and drysuits kept [Slim] and [Red] comfortable and aggressive all day. [Red] got several endos, and even took a few practice rolls. The surfing was particularly good at Cliffside II and Triple Bridges, and the endo spot at Split Rock was in great form. The boaters saw many eagles, mergansers, and water ouzels, two beavers, and two deer. One of the eagles grabbed a fish out of the water fairly close to the kayaks. The boaters encountered about forty yards of bank-to-bank ice above Cliffside I. This was a bit of a surprise, because the river generally has less ice in the Gorge than in the area around Missoula, and during the drive out to Cyr the river looked entirely open, with ice only on the shore and in backwaters. Fortunately the water upstream of the ice was essentially stationary, and the ice sloped gradually out of the water, permitting the boaters to slide their kayaks up on the ice and push themselves across the barrier with their hands. There was another section of bank-to-bank ice below the takeout, in the pool above Fish Creek. [Red] and [Slim] found the meeting most relaxing and therapeutic, and after adopting a resolution authorizing another trip at the next suitable date, the meeting was adjourned. (Author's name withheld at his request)

Alberton Gorge, February 2: The second 1992 meeting of the Missoula Chapter of Kayakers anonymous was attended by [Red], [Slim], and Paul Faucett, and was even better than the first meeting. The ice barriers had disappeared from the river, and [Slim] got over his trepidation about cold water and joined [Red] in going for endos, or at least pop-ups. At the end of the meeting another resolution was adopted, this one declaring the intention of the members of the Chapter to go kayaking during all twelve months of 1992. (Author's name withheld at his request)

---

OFFICERS

Dave Pengelly, President - 728-6512  
Arnold Finklin, Treasurer - 543-8705

Peter Dayton, V.P. and Newsletter 728-8101  
Your Name Here - Trip Leader (hint, hint)

---

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Check one: Individual (\$6.00/year) \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$8.00/year) \_\_\_\_\_

Mail a check payable to  
"Rocky Mountaineers" to  
Arnold Finklin  
P.O. Box 4262  
Missoula, Montana 59807

THE MOUNTAIN EAR  
P.O. BOX 4262  
MISSOULA, MT 59806

(STAMP)

FIRST CLASS MAIL