



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

January, 1992 (1993)

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 January meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 13.

January Program: Tom Cook will give a presentation concerning his recent two-year tour of duty in Costa Rica with the Peace Corps, where he was teaching the locals how to fight forest fires, which are a big problem on the west side of the mountains, which are in a rain shadow and are quite dry. He says he has a lot of good ideas for trips in Costa Rica, for those who are willing to travel outside the Bitterroot Valley, or those who at least like to dream of such trips.

TRIP CALENDAR

Sunday January 10, ski mountaineering trip: Steve Niday will lead a summit attempt on a destination which is dependent upon snow conditions; a southern Bitterroot peak is a possibility. Call Steve at 721-3790 for further information.

Saturday-Sunday January 16-17, Sky Pilot Peak. Overnight trip to Sky Pilot Peak, which is located west of Victor behind Gash Point in the Bitterroot Mountains. A very scenic trip which involves a fairly long approach up the South Fork of Bear Creek, followed by an open and low-angle route up the southwest side of the mountain. A group of club members did this as a tough day trip a few years ago; it should be moderately strenuous as a two-day trip. Call Rick Murney at 543-7586 for details.

Sunday, January 24, Koch Peak. Ski trip up Koch Peak, which is in the Bitterroot Mountains northwest of Como Lake. Fun and fairly laid back backcountry skiing in the approach, with the possibility of a summit attempt if snow conditions are good. Call Peter Dayton for details at 728-8101.

Saturday, January 30, Lolo Pass Area. Moderate ski tour up Lee Creek, Moose Ridge, or a similar destination near Lolo Pass or a comparable area, with the exact destination depending on snow conditions. Call Kathy York for details at 543-6274.

Saturday, February 6, Blue Point. Ski trip up Blue Point, which is located above Marshall Ski Area in the Rattlesnake Mountains. Blue Point is connected to Wishard Ridge and Sheep Mountain by a horseshoe-shaped ridge. Call John Pierce for details at 542-2640.

April 3-10, Desert Float Trip. Ed Monnig is interested in going on an easy spring multi-day family-style wilderness desert canoe and/or raft trip, with the San Juan and Dolores Rivers being prime candidates. Both have outstanding scenery, do not have difficult white water, and should have decent stream flows at that time. Call Ed at 721-2707 with your questions and suggestions.

Early April, Selway River. The Selway River is one of the most difficult rivers in the county on which to get a permit, with only 62 private permits offered each year, many of which prove to be difficult to use due to snow blocking the pass, high water, and low water. Undeterred by these obstacles, the Crackpot Capers Committee of the Missoula Chapter of Kayakers Anonymous is planning a pre-season trip down the Selway which will involve skiing over Nez Perce Pass before the road is open while dragging a bicycle and bicycle trailer on top of a loaded kayak, bicycling down the Magruder Corridor Road pulling the kayak on the cart, ditching the bicycle and cart in the trees, and taking a three or four day self-contained kayak trip down the Selway. If the purity and audacity of this concept appeal to you, call 728-8101 and ask the occupant, who requests that his name be withheld, for details.

Spring and Summer Float Trips. Art Gidel (543-6352) and Peter Dayton (728-8101) are busily planning their spring and summer float season, with a number of multi-day wilderness

float trips penciled in already. Give them a call if you are interested, and don't forget to apply for those river permits!

TRIP REPORTS

Bitterroot Mountains, Ward Mountain area: Feeling bored with the usual list of backcountry skiing opportunities, Dave Pengelly, Art Gidel, Peter Dayton, and Hamilton Smith decided boldly to go (notice I didn't split the infinitive) where no person, or at least not too many persons, had gone before. After reviewing topo maps for the Bitterroot Mountains, we decided to try the ridge which lies south of Ward Mountain and Camas Lake, and north of Lost Horse Creek, a few miles southwest of Hamilton. The ridge looks a lot like Gash Point on a map, although with fewer open areas, and a road which leads to the Lost Horse Observation Point provides pretty good access. The trip got off to an inauspicious start when the trip leader (whose last name is the same as a city in Ohio) failed to operate his doze alarm correctly and was about half an hour late to the rendezvous point. We were able to drive fairly far up the road before bogging down, and climbed up to the top of the ridge before retreating into the trees to avoid the cold wind. At this point Hamilton switched from snow shoes to a snow board, and we took a couple runs through the trees. Although Hamilton had to work harder than the rest of us while hiking uphill on snowshoes, his performance while shimmying down through the trees made me wonder if I should take up snowboarding. The powder was quite satisfactory, the angle of the slope was constant and reasonable, and the trees were not excessively dense. This is a trip worth trying sometime; I would be interested in returning to explore the open bowl on the far side, and to enjoy the tree skiing again. - Peter Dayton.

Little St. Joe Peak, January 1-3: Mary Ann McClain, Ralph Flockerzi, Beverly Chin, and Art Gidel began the New Year at the spacious Rocky Mountaineer Lodge on Little St. Joe Peak. Waist deep powder, gourmet food, warm surroundings - yes, we had it all, folks. The always exhilarating ski approach was enhanced by the new road closure, which is located about one-half mile below the site of the historic Bass Creek Commune. As a result of the road closure, our concerns about over-occupancy were unfounded. With plenty of powder, the ole tickers did double-time, once breaking trail and another waiting for the big slide. Lots of figure eights, fresh air, and good company. - Art Gidel.

OFFICERS

Art Gidel, President - 543-6352
Dave Pengelly, Secretary-Treasurer - 728-6512

Peter Dayton, Newsletter Editor 728-8101
Rick Murney, Vice President - 543-7586

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

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

Mail a check payable to
"Rocky Mountaineers" to
Dave Pengelly
P.O. Box 4262
Missoula, Montana 59806

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

(STAMP)

FIRST CLASS MAIL