



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

May, 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 May meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 12. Election of officers for 1993-94 will be held.

March Program: John Herzer, a former professional raft and kayak guide, will present a video presentation on rafting and kayaking on the Zambezi River in Africa.

TRIP CALENDAR

Tuesday Night Mount Sentinel Hikes: If you're bored with the stair machine at the club, meet in the Mount Sentinel parking lot at 5:30 p.m. each Tuesday for a more interesting climb.

Thursday evenings and Saturdays, Rock Climbing. If you are interested in beginning, intermediate, or advanced rock climbing at Kootanai Canyon, Blodgett Canyon or Lolo Pass on Thursday evenings or Saturdays call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769. See last month's report below.

April-November, Boating. You may have been wondering why some of the Club's active trip leaders haven't been scheduling ski trips and hikes. Wonder no more; those who are not heading for Mount St. Elias in Alaska have been boating their brains out. If you are interested in joining the boaters on kayak, raft, and canoe trips, call Peter Dayton at 728-8101 or Art Gidel at 543-6352. Brains are optional.

May or June, Grey Wolf Peak: Non-technical climb of Grey Wolf Peak in the south end of the Mission Mountains. Great scenery, moderate difficulty. Date, route, and mode of travel (on skis or on foot) dependent on conditions. Call Dave Pengelly, 728-6512 for details.

Sunday, May 9, easy day hike: An easy day hike up to Mission Falls, up Bass Creek, or a similar location. Call Gerald Olbu for details at 549-4769.

May 16 and/or 23, Climb or Ski. Climb the Como Peaks in the Bitterroots or McDonald Peak in the Mission Mountains or a ski trip to a suitable location depending on the weather conditions. Call Gerald Olbu for details 549-4769.

June 5, Lolo Peak. Hike up Lolo Peak which is the prominent peak southwest of Missoula. This hike is in conjunction with the Missoula Trails Celebration. Call Gerald Olbu for details 549-4769.

June or July, Granite Peak. Climb Granite Peak, Montana's highest peak, in late June or early July depending on weather. This is a multi-day (probably 4 days) trip and a semi-technical climb. If interested, make early arrangements with Gerald Olbu 549-4769.

TRIP REPORTS

Bass Lake, April 10, 1993. David Bixby, Tom Kenney, Bret Doucette, and Gerald Olbu enjoyed a ski trip to Bass lake. Once we reached the snow, we found it to be firm which allowed for fast travel. The lake, naturally, was still frozen over. We had opportunity to telemark on the open slopes near the lake. The snow was ideal: very firm with a little powder on top. On the way back, it snowed quite vigorously for a while, which created a pleasant atmosphere. --Gerald Olbu.

Trapper Peak, April 18, 1993. Even though it was raining when we left Missoula, six hearty adventurers (David Bixby, Eric Barsness, Chad Murphy, Chris Powers, Rick Murney, and Gerald Olbu) set out to ski Trapper Peak. We were able to drive up the road about half way and luckily the rain changed to snow, which lasted throughout the entire trip. The ski up to the peak was long and arduous, however we made good time. The weather on the peak was a vicious winter blizzard: below freezing temperature, very strong wind, blowing snow, and white-out conditions. All of us considered it to be very exciting and fun to experience. Telemarking down the mountain was great fun. Snow conditions were excellent: firm base with 6-8 inches of powder. Afterwards we remarked how lucky we were that there were no casualties and finished with the customary pizza and beer. --Gerald Olbu.

Gash Point, April 25, 1993. Chris Powers, Carl Kaljot, and Gerald Olbu decided to ski Gash Point (which is located west of Victor) on an overcast day. We were able to drive most of the way up the road, then set out cross country hiking then skiing. Even though the clouds were low, the air was still and quiet and the weather improved as the day went on. After a moderate amount of work, we reached Gash Point and enjoyed the view of the snow corniced ridgeline. Of course, the high point of the trip was telemarking down two great bowls. It was a rush. We were able to ski almost the entire trip back to the car. --Gerald Olbu.

St. Mary's Peak, May 2, 1993. Chris Powers, Chad Murphey, and Gerald Olbu skied to the old Forest Service lookout on St. Mary's Peak which is located west of Stevensville. We were able to drive all the way up the road except for the last two switchbacks. We proceeded to ski uphill until we reached the ridge top where it was more open and the skiing was quite enjoyable. As we continued

skiing up the ridge, we found the wind to be extremely strong and the gusts would easily blow you off balance. The lookout tower was a real mess due to its winter use and abuse and neglect. Skiing down was an experience. The snow below the peak was frozen and crusty which made for fast skiing, but you couldn't do any turns. The middle half was great--soft snow with widely spaced trees. Down lower, the trees closed in which required us to be more precise with our turns. --Gerald Olbu.

Rock Climbing, April 1993. The rock climbing group is off to a good start. It can be described as a "loose affiliation of local climbers." We have climbed consistently on every Thursday evening and Saturday since April 22. At Kootanai Canyon, we find easy climbs which can be top-roped for beginners, as well as more challenging climbs for others. It has become a social event where we take turns trying to climb things we've never climbed before and cheer for others as they reach for their limits. Everyone has a great time; successfully climbing the obstacle seems to be of secondary importance. Climbers during last month include: Rich Cronn, Gerald Olbu, Chris Powers, Marian Stuart, Kathy Toohey, Bret Doucette, Tom Keeney, and Mike Triske. -- Gerald Olbu.

Selway River, April 23-25: The Selway River, which is located west of Darby and Hamilton, just across the Idaho border, contains a nationally-known 47-mile section of wilderness whitewater. You must obtain a permit to float this river between May 15 and July 31, and the USFS only allows one group to launch each day during this period. 16 of these permits are allocated to commercial trips, and the remaining 62 permits to private trips. Unfortunately, during most years a number of permit holders cannot float the river due to snow blocking the pass, high water, or low water. As a result of these restrictions and problems, and the high quality of the whitewater and wilderness experience offered by the river, the Selway is the hardest river in the country on which to get a permit. In fact, the probability of obtaining a permit is so low, and we are getting so old, that we have calculated that we have virtually no chance of drawing a permit during our lifetimes. Consequently, we decided to organize a pre-season trip. My original plan was to snowshoe across the snow which is blocking the pass, dragging our loaded kayaks behind us with a bicycle and trailer on top, and then bicycle the rest of the way to the Paradise launch site, towing our kayaks behind us. I constructed a bicycle cart, but encountered difficulty in drumming up any other kayakers willing to attempt the trip. So many people seem unwilling to let themselves go and really have fun. Therefore, I lowered my standards and organized a vehicle shuttle across the pass. Five people signed up for the amended trip; me (Peter Dayton), Art Gidel, Doug Kolwaite, Steve Lock from Hamilton, and Doug's friend Jeff from Salt Lake City. Doug was particularly pleased to join the trip, as he had drawn a Selway permit for May 17, but then lost it when he failed to confirm it in writing. Jeff rowed a raft, and the rest of us were in kayaks. After overcoming numerous logistical hurdles, we met our shuttle driver early Friday morning. The shuttle driver gave a virtuoso driving performance in his specially-equipped vehicle, and brought us across eight or nine miles of snow on the pass, and down to the Paradise launch site. We were the first group to float the river in 1993, unless a group flew into one of the air strips further down the river. The river was only at 1.7 feet, which is a moderate to low level, but the whitewater was great fun. During the first day we saw hundreds of elk, and in fact were almost never out of sight of groups of elk. Below the Selway Ranch we saw fewer elk. Although some of the upper canyon was burned by the 1910 fire, the lower canyon is very lush, with cedars and mossy rocks lining the banks. The trees were barely beginning to bud out at the put-in, but became progressively greener as we floated downstream. We spent three days and two nights on the river, with pretty nice weather for late April. It was a great trip, and everything went smoothly. In fact, the person we hired to pick us up above Selway Falls drove up just as we floated up to the take-out, an event even more rare than drawing a Selway permit. - Peter Dayton.

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: _____

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

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

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

(STAMP)

FIRST CLASS MAIL