



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

DECEMBER, 1994

MEETING

Time and place. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 in the Missoula County Courthouse. This month's meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 14. **THE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE FIRST FLOOR COURT ROOM IN THE OLD PORTION OF THE BUILDING, BECAUSE OUR NORMAL ROOM IS UNAVAILABLE DUE TO CONSTRUCTION.** Enter the building through the north door.

Program. Jim Wilson will present a Mountain Safety for Climbers seminar. Jim has extensive experience leading major mountaineering expeditions and teaching local climbing classes. He is the owner of Pipestone Mountaineering Inc. The information presented here will be invaluable for mountaineers.

TRIP CALENDAR

December 17. Saturday. Holland Point. Ski trip up 8000-foot Holland Point, an old fire lookout site in the Swan Range northeast of Holland Lake. This will be a moderate trip with 4000 feet of elevation gain in six miles. The route begins on a trail through thick timber and near the half way point gains an open ridge that leads to the summit with spectacular views of the Mission Mountains, Swan Range and Bob Marshall Wilderness. The descent follows the same route with excellent telemarking terrain on the open ridge followed by some trail skiing. Call Jim or Janet Surrena at 549-1386 for details.

December 18. Sunday. Lolo Pass. Julie Warner is making plans to lead beginning and intermediate ski trips to Lolo Pass every third Sunday of the month. There are many roads and trails in the Lolo Pass area which are excellent for ski touring. Usually there is lots of deep powder and snow covered trees to make a great winter scene at Lolo Pass. Call Julie at 543-6508 for more information.

New Year's Eve at the Rocky Mountaineer Cabin. Come to the Club's cabin in the Bitterroots, December 31-January 2, Saturday-Monday. This moderately strenuous ski trip is usually an annual event where there are lots of fun times and good food. There should be great telemark skiing on open slopes above the cabin. For entertainment, you can warm your cold hands over a warm crackling fire in the stove. Call Art Gidel at 543-6352 for more information.

January 7. Saturday. Sally Ridge. Easy ski touring trip to Sally Ridge, which is located near Lolo Hot Springs. The route begins on the East Fork of Lolo Creek Road, but quickly turns off the road and follows an old jeep trail. It's an easy ski trip from the jeep trail to the top of the ridge. It's not expected that there will be much snowmobile traffic in this area since this is off the main trail. The overall distance is about ten miles round trip and about 1500 feet of elevation gain. Call Richard White at 251-6430 for more information.

January 7-8. Saturday-Sunday. McDonald Peak. Overnight climbing trip to McDonald Peak, the highest peak in the Mission Mountains. Camp will be made on a flat snowy ledge near the base of the mountain. The normal route follows a very prominent avalanche slope. We will take care to avoid avalanches and will probably stay off to the side near the ridge. The main requirement for this trip is good winter camping skills and endurance. This will be a great opportunity to see the Missions in all their winter splendor. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

January 15. Sunday. Lolo Pass. Julie Warner will lead her second ski touring trip to Lolo Pass on this third Sunday of month. See her trip description above. Call Julie at 543-6508 for more information.

January 28 or 29. Ice Climbing. A day of technical ice climbing will be held for beginning and intermediate ice climbers. The exact date and location has not been decided yet, but will be given in the next newsletter. Call Dave Pengelly at 728-6512 to provide input.

Telemark Skiing. Anyone interested in skiing on a weekend day is encouraged to contact Dave Pengelly at 728-6512. The location and date are dependant on the conditions; he'll go where there is good snow. A good possible date is Saturday, January 14.

Wanna lead a trip? If you are interested in leading a trip, contact Gerald Olbu at 549-4769.

TRIP REPORTS

Glacier Park, November 11-13. On a pleasant day in Missoula, Jack Bell, Jeff Holiday, Eric Moles and Gerald Olbu set out to do some climbing in Glacier Park. Due to time constraints, we scaled back our original plans and decided to climb Goat Mountain. We drove as far as we could along St. Mary's Lake and then set out for a nighttime hike to a good camping spot across the creek from Goat Mountain. The climb of the mountain the next day took us over some diverse terrain: bushwhacking through the trees, crossing a creek, climbing snow covered rocks, climbing a hard packed snow chute which required an ice ax and climbing windpacked upper snow slopes which led to the ridge top. As we traversed the ridge, we found it to be quite cold (15°F) and windy. We couldn't see much because the blowing snow and low clouds made everything white; but it was a beautiful white. We made it to a high point on the ridge, but not the highest, due to a precipitous cliff between it and us. Overall, we all agreed that Glacier Park looks much better with a fresh snow cover.--Gerald Olbu.

St. Mary's Peak, November 12. On November 12, Rick Rister, Dave Pengelly, David Monnig, Ralph Flockerzi, Cheryl Beyer, Bret Doucette, Matt _____, and Art Gidel car-pooled to St. Mary's Peak in the Bitterroot Mountains near Stevensville. We were able to drive to within a mile of the summer trailhead. We skied, then hiked to the lookout on the summit, which is at about 9,300 feet. Unfortunately, due to a recent warm spell the snow was breakable crust. After eating lunch, we skied and crashed back to the car. We were impressed with David Monnig's agility on alpine boards. However, he paid dearly for this privilege by packing his downhill skis and boots to the top. We reached the vehicles in mid-afternoon, when numerous other skiers were heading up the trail. Perhaps these folks had a moonlight ski in mind. After noting some of their vehicle maneuvers and parking strategies, I propose a new backcountry ski rule: park your vehicle early, before the snow gets too deep, or you may wait a long time to get home. - Art Gidel

Kalispell General Hospital, November 19. On November 19, Art Gidel, Colleen Hunter, and I went to Big Mountain for a day of area skiing. While trying out my brand new plastic T2 telemark boots in the trees, I caught the tip of my left ski on a branch under the snow, which rotated my foot vigorously in a counterclockwise direction (viewed from above), breaking both leg bones at the ankle. The ski patrol hauled me off the hill, Art and Colleen drove me into Kalispell for X rays, the emergency room doc put on a temporary cast, and Art and Colleen drove me back to Missoula for actual treatment. A perfectly ordinary and mundane skiing accident. However, while I was waiting for the ski patrolmen to arrive with a toboggan, it occurred to me that this ordinary and mundane accident would have been a much bigger deal if it had happened while backcountry skiing. It probably would have resulted in an unexpected winter bivouac, followed by a snowmobile or helicopter evacuation. I started wondering how well prepared I usually am for such an accident when backcountry skiing. This is a subject worthy of a little reflection. I don't know of any accidents which have occurred on Club trips during the last ten years, but we may not stay that lucky for ever. Do you carry enough clothing to spend the night on a mountain if you or somebody else had an accident? Do you keep a space blanket or something similar in your pack, so you could keep somewhat dry while lying in the snow? Do you carry sufficient fire starting supplies to get a fire going in the winter? Do you carry any first aid supplies on backcountry ski trips? Do you carry materials or equipment which could be used to improvise a splint or a litter? Do you carry a headlamp? I think I will beef up my emergency equipment a bit in the future. For example, I think I will start carrying a little folding saw, which would be real useful both for getting firewood and for making a splint. A cellular telephone would certainly come in handy if an accident occurred; perhaps we should try to make a telephone part of the group equipment on backcountry trips. I've got plenty of time to think about this subject, unfortunately. Get out there and cut a few turns for me; I'll see you next winter. - Peter Dayton.

South Fork Lolo Creek, November 20. Cheryl Beyer and I took a relaxed 11-mile hike getting as far as Meadow Creek in the Wilderness Area. With more snow later in the season, the trail might be an interesting cross-country ski tour. From where we turned back, the trail continues another five miles south with very mild elevation gain. As it was, there was only about two inches of snow on the trail and that fell as we were hiking. It's a good idea to finish the trail early in the winter day since the sun sets at the beginning of the trail about an hour earlier than the official sunset. The forest is unusually dark (and undoubtedly filled with trolls).--Richard White

Canadian Rockies, November 23-27. On Wednesday, Jeff Holiday, Justin Ivary, Gerald Olbu and Wendy Phillips left Missoula in two cars and Pat Caffery left Seeley Lake. With an amazing amount of luck, we all met Thursday in Canmore, just outside Banff National Park. The climbers hut we were going to stay in was inaccessible due to avalanche danger, so we improvised. There were many options available to us. Not everyone did everything; different people had different interests. We climbed Mount Wilcox and Mount Athabasca. Wilcox was a snow and rock climb along a ridge. We almost made the peak but retreated when the rock became too steep and the snow too deep. Athabasca was a snow and ice climb. We were turned back by a 70 degree ice slope and crevasses hidden by fresh snow. We also skied along a scenic meadow. We had two ice climbing sessions. One day we climbed a frozen water falls and another day we travelled up Athabasca Glacier and ice climbed on its headwall. The ice was very brittle. One of us even enjoyed a dip in Radium Hot Springs. Actually, the only thing all five of us did together was we had a great Thanksgiving beer and pizza and beer dinner. We all enjoyed hearing about Pat's experiences on his many major mountaineering expeditions to some of the world's highest peaks. It was somewhat cold; the temperature ranged between -10 and +15°F. Saying that the Canadian Rockies at this time of the year is beautiful is such an understatement.--Gerald Olbu.

Wisherd Ridge, December 3. Due to the lame excuse given by the Editor of this newsletter (something phoney about a broken ankle) Dave Pengelly led the scheduled trip to Wisherd Ridge on December 3. There was a good turnout, including several newcomers. Joining Dave were John Nelson, Lisa McKenzie, Ken Moe, Jon Bonnicksen, Ralph and Mary Ann Flockerzi, Steve Tarkalson, and Rick Rister. By chaining up we were able to

get quite a ways up the road and thus had a fairly short approach to the bowls on Wisherd Ridge. There was plenty of fresh powder , and we were able to cut fresh tracks in the first bowl for numerous runs. A couple of the participants went for a tour out along the ridge to the north before we all gathered for the return trip to the vehicles. The powder was great and we managed to beat the late afternoon crowd heading up to the bowls.
- Dave Pengelly.

OFFICERS

Gerald Olbu, President - 549-4769
Dave Pengelly, Secretary-Treasurer - 728-6512

Peter Dayton, Newsletter Editor 728-8101
Dave Siemens, Vice President - 549-0102

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Check one: Individual (\$6.00/year) _____ Family (\$8.00/year) _____ (9398)

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