



# Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

SEPTEMBER, 1997

## MEETING

**Meeting:** Club meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the lower level meeting room at the Missoula Public Library. This month's meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 10.

**Program:** Traditionally, the program for the September meeting is a potluck slide show by Club members of their trips during the prior year. If you are new to the Club, this slide show is a good way to get a feel for the kind of trips that members of the Club take (at least the photographically-oriented members). If you were active in the Club during the past year, this slide show is a good way to be reminded of trips you took during the past year, or to see the trips you missed. All members are encouraged to bring some slides and run them through the projector for the amusement and edification of those attending the meeting.

## CALENDAR

**Wednesday evenings, 6:00 p.m., Mount Sentinel.** Need a little bit of mid-week exercise? Meet at the trail head at 6 p.m. for a leaderless tour of Mount Sentinel, or call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for a forecast.

**September 14, Sunday, Lolo Peak.** Hike/scramble to Lolo Peak (9139 feet), which is visible from Missoula to the southwest. The route follows a four-mile trail with 2500 feet of elevation gain to a vista point, which could be a destination for some participants. The rest of the route is a three-mile, off-trail hike and scramble to Lolo Peak. Call Matt Grandy at 728-0647 for more information.

**September 21, Sunday, Mount Evans.** Climb Mount Evans (10,641 feet), which is on the Continental Divide in the Pintler Range near Anaconda. The route follows a five-mile trail with 1500 feet of elevation gain to a lake, which could be a stopping point for some participants. The rest of the route is an off-trail scramble/climb with 2300 feet more of elevation gain to the top of Mount Evans. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

**September 27, Saturday, Creek Inventory with FWP.** Instead of leading a trip this month, I'm going to volunteer to help Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks do a survey on Bull Trout spawning areas. This means I get to spend one or two pleasant fall days high in the mountains between Missoula and Thompson Falls hiking along a tributary and counting spawning redds. I thought this might appeal to other members - the more volunteers we get, the more comprehensive survey we can do. If you are interested, you should attend the Redd Survey Training session on September 27. Participants will meet at Buttrey's Eastgate at 10:00 AM and then car pool to a stream with bull trout redds. Trainees should bring waders, polarized glasses, a lunch and a notebook. For more information, call Steve Schombel at 721-4686 or Tim Swanberg, Missoula office FWP at 542-5500.

**September 28, Sunday, West St. Mary Peak.** Climb West St. Mary Peak (9372 feet), which is in the Missions near St. Ignatius. The route is entirely off-trail with 5950 feet of elevation gain to the summit. The route begins in the valley bottom in thick brush and goes up a steep hillside to gain access to the ridge, which you follow to the north. Once above tree line, it is a scramble along the rocky ridge top to the summit. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

**October 5, Sunday, Sixth Annual Eagle Pass Hike.** Hike the 15-mile Eagle Pass Loop which is entirely on a trail and one of the most scenic hikes in the Missions. The scenery along the route is quite diverse: a quiet and dark cedar forest, a beautiful waterfall which we cross at the base, four alpine lakes, a trail cut into the side of a cliff which leads to Eagle Pass, and great views from the pass. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

**October 12, Sunday, Heavenly Twins.** Climb one of the Heavenly Twins (9282 and 9243 feet) which are west of St. Mary Peak in the Bitterroots near Florence. The route follows a trail for four miles with 2000 feet of elevation gain, then goes off-trail for about three miles, through some very scenic alpine terrain, mostly up and down along ridge tops. The climb of the peak will involve easy/moderate fourth-class climbing. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

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

## TRIP REPORTS

**Mount Jackson, August 2-3.** The Rocky Mountaineers took advantage of Glacier National Park's new advance back country reservation system and hiked to Gumsight Lake, one of the most popular campgrounds and closest one to Mount Jackson. On Saturday, six of us, Brett Doucett, Ann Hopkins, Gerald Olbu, Martin Oleksiewicz, Steve Schombel and Angie Valdez did this easy backpack. Unfortunately, it was a record breaking year for flies and mosquitoes in Glacier, which made the hike and dinner less pleasant than normal. Two of us had just planned to do the backpack and left Sunday morning, while later, embarrassingly enough, the trip leader quit about 1/3 way up the mountain. "@#\$^ mosquitoes have sucked

out half my blood" he muttered. The other three, all accomplished climbers, made the summit of Jackson and enjoyed views of Glacier Park's Continental Divide. The four of us hiked out to the trail head before dark. Glacier is great, and we should try to reserve another campsite next summer. - Steve Schombel.

**Mount Athabasca, August 9-11.** Gerald Olbu, Martin Oleksiewicz, and Tony Sabol decided to head to Canada to give Mount Athabasca another attempt, after being rained out a month earlier. It was the height of the tourist season and the highways were filled with people like us. We came to a mess of cars parked along the highway and knew it must be something so we stopped. A grizzly bear was wandering along about 50 feet off the highway, at the edge of where the roadside had been cut back. The campgrounds were full except for a walk-in section, which actually was the nicest place. We chose to climb Mount Athabasca via the Silverhorn route, which is a 40-50 degree slope of mostly ice. The crux of the route was where we had to cross a crevasse on a marginal snow bridge and then climb about four feet up the other side of the crevasse while standing on the snow bridge. On the other side of the crevasse was a 50-degree slope, which was the steepest we encountered on this trip. The slope was composed of brittle ice with a bit of frozen, crumbly snow. We used a combination of front-pointing and French technique with our crampons. We needed to use the pick of the axe to penetrate the ice, so we used our mountaineering ice axe as a climbing axe. As we climbed higher, the slope lessened, and soon we were on top of the Silverhorn. The route to the summit took us along a very scenic ridge. We climbed ten feet up to the top of the snow ridge and were on the summit of Athabasca. Views of the Canadian Rockies with a clear blue sky overhead were great. To our west was the Columbian Icefield, which is the apex of the continent. We had spectacular views of Mount Andromada, Mount Columbia and Snowdome, which is the Triple Continental Divide. The trip off the mountain was fast and soon we were back in Missoula. - Gerald Olbu.

**Fischer Peak, August 17.** Brett Doucett and Gerald Olbu headed for Fischer Peak on a day with beautiful weather. The route to Fischer Peak is fairly short, but almost all off-trail. We began hiking along an old road, then went up a creek drainage. The approach to Fischer Peak is interesting and enjoyable. Soon, we were scrambling up beautiful solid slab rocks with a small creek nearby. We scrambled up a ridge and then traversed along the top to the summit. We had great views of George Lake, which is a beautiful, blue-colored lake at the base of Fischer Peak in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. For the descent, we decided to go down the other ridge, which required a little exploration to avoid exposed areas. Soon we were scrambling down the gentle ridge, until we came to a road which we followed for a while, then we bushwhacked straight down until we came to another road, then we followed that road, and magically, we came to where the car was parked. We were out by late afternoon. - Gerald Olbu.

**Holland Peak, August 24.** Brett Doucett, Bill Gaeuman, Charlotte Kasl, Aimee Lasrich, Gerald Olbu, Martin Oleksiewicz and Penny Palm met for a trip to Holland Peak on a day that was filled with rain. I announced to the group that I couldn't do the hike because I hurt my foot in a stupid household accident the night before, so Brett would lead the group on this trip. I agreed to wait at the trail head and entertain myself with some reading material. It was raining like crazy, so I didn't expect them to go very far. Charlotte was the first person to come down and she and I went for lunch in Seeley Lake. The other five continued to hike up the mountain in the steady rain. As explained to me by the survivors, at the lower lake they stopped for a bit to assess the situation and built a fire. After a while, the rain stopped and the sky looked like it was going to clear up. Aimee unexpectedly announced that she had to be back in town by 5:00, so she and Penny headed for the trail head. Brett, Martin and Bill headed for the upper lake and since the weather was quite nice by now, they decided to go all the way to the peak. Just as they were approaching the peak, they noticed some black clouds off in the distance. They reached the summit and were greeted by a huge thunderstorm with lightening and buckets of rain. It was quite suspenseful to climb down the smooth slab rocks with rivers of water running down them. They made it off the mountain and began the long hike out. Meanwhile, down in the valley, I drove back to the trail head. The parking lot was cleared out and Aimee's car was gone. I mistakenly assumed they all had hiked out and were gone, so I drove back to Missoula. By the time I found out what had happened, they already had a ride to Missoula. This was the most horrendous trip the club has done this year and also the most messed up trip this year. Seven people in four groups should have been a warning. - Gerald Olbu.

**Warren Peak, August 30-31.** For an easy and rewarding trip to cap off the summer, Brett Doucett, Matt Grandy, Charlotte Kasl and Gerald Olbu headed out for the fourth-annual Warren Peak trip over the Labor Day weekend. We found a secluded campsite in the trees next to a large meadow with a full view of the north face of Warren Peak. Charlotte cooked a great meal with potatoes, lentils, curry and wine and had enough to share. We lounged around the next morning and had great conversation. Matt saw two elk. We saw someone on top of Warren Peak. Later, we found out that it was fellow mountaineer Pat Caffrey who had come to meet up with us. He climbed the north face of Warren Peak looking for us. At about noon, we decided to go about our daily activities. Charlotte went for a hike to several nearby lakes and the rest of us headed for Warren Peak. The route we chose was mostly an easy fourth-class climb on solid rock. It was a wide face, so we could traverse right or left to choose the steepness and difficulty of the route. Soon we were on top of Warren Peak and had views of the Continental Divide as it snakes its way through the Pintlers and the Big Hole Valley on the other side. The trip off the mountain to base camp was quick. Back at camp, for some unknown reason, we decided to hike out that evening instead of the next day. We reached the trail head shortly after dark and had time to observe some night life in Phillipsburg. - Gerald Olbu.

**Point St. Charles, September 7.** Seeking refuge from the chaotic crowds of kayakers on the Alberton Gorge, Peter Dayton and Art Gidel climbed Point St. Charles, which is located directly north of Turquoise Lake in the Mission Mountains. While this mountain is not well known, I recommend it to you for the following reasons: (1) The scenery is outstanding, (2) most of the route from the Glacier Lake trailhead is on an excellent trail, an amenity in short supply in the Mission Mountains, (3) the total altitude gain is only about 3,400 feet, (4) the scrambling is pretty mild, and (5) the

scenery is outstanding. We followed the trail which goes to Turquoise Lake, via way too many flat switchbacks, until it began to drop down to the lake, and then left the trail and headed west up the big rock slabs to the top of Point St. Charles. As we approached the top, we were spotted by a mountain goat, which scurled off around a butress. From the top, the scenery was excellent. Directly below us was Turquoise Lake, and we could through Lone Tree Pass to Lake of the Clouds. Glacier Peak, the back of the Garden Wall, and Mountaineer Peak rise to the south of the pass, Panoramic Peak sits to the north of the pass, and other features of the Mission Mountains, the Swan Valley, the Swan Mountains, and Glacier Park lie in various other directions. Rather than returning the way we came, we scrambled down to Island Lake and Heart Lake, and then followed the trail back to our car. This route to Point St. Charles is less attractive than the route above Turquoise Lake because there is much more boulder-hopping, route-finding, and bushwacking. But we did encounter some jumbo-size huckleberries. - Peter Dayton.

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**OFFICERS**

Gerald Olbu, President - 549-4769  
Julie Warner, Secretary-Treasurer - 543-6508

Peter Dayton, Newsletter Editor 728-8101  
Len Broberg, Vice President - 549-6031

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**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

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Check one: Individual (\$9.00/year) \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$12.00/year) \_\_\_\_\_ (9398)

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