

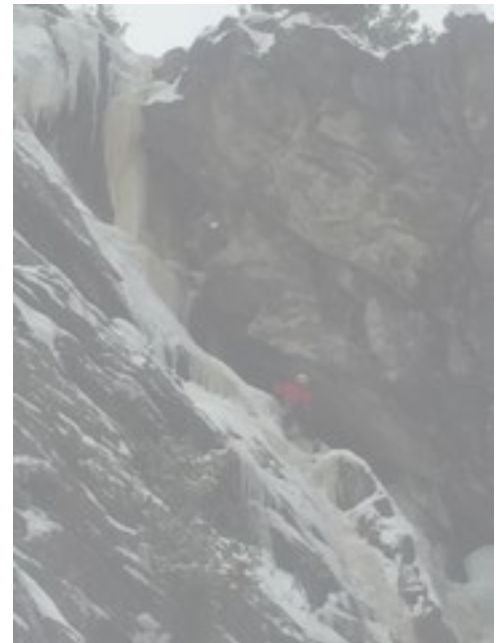


# The Mountain Ear

February 2017  
Monthly Newsletter of  
The Rocky Mountaineers



Cover Photo: Forest Dean ice climbing  
Photo: Quentin Rhoades



Climb, Hike, Ski, Bike, Paddle.  
Dedicated to the Enjoyment, and Promotion of  
Responsible Outdoor Adventure

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#### About the Club

##### Mission Statement:

The Rocky Mountaineers is a non-profit club dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of responsible outdoor adventures

##### Meeting and Presentations:

During September through April, on the second Tuesday of the month, business meeting are generally held at 6:PM at a location in downtown Missoula, before the general membership meeting at 7:PM the Trail Head, with a featured presentation or speaker. General meeting is free and open to the public, business meeting is open to all members.

The May meeting is usually a picnic.

On a weekend in late August we gather in Glacier NP for the Glacier Classic Outing

Dues: Club dues are \$10, and due in April of each year, payment can be made through **PayPal**. Membership application is at the back of this newsletter.

The FaceBook group is used to post short notice and up-to-date news as well as recent trip reports

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/rockymountaineers/>

*The Mountain Ear* is the club newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers and is usually published once a month.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles are encouraged to do so - contact the editor

Cover Photo Submission Guidelines: Should be up and down format (Portrait), prefer no recognizable people  
Retro Photos Submission Guidelines: Should be a former or current dues paying member or speaker to submit, but it doesn't have to be from a Rocky Mountaineers trip, no recognizable people

## COMING FEBRUARY 21ST, 2017

Canyon & Mesa: Southwest Journeys, An Illustrated Talk by Lee Silliman

For the past six years large format photographer Lee Silliman has been exploring and photographing the back-country canyons and mesas of the Four Corners region of the American Southwest. His quest of long-abandoned Native American cliff dwellings, pueblos, and rock art has taken Lee and his hiking companions into a variety of remote locales in Cedar Mesa, Grand Gulch, Chaco Canyon, Hovenweep, and Canyons of the Ancients. Additionally, Lee and his cohorts have enjoyed hiking the trails of Arches, Canyonlands, and Zion National Parks in search of lesser known features of natural beauty to be found when leaving behind the roads and parking lots. Come enjoy a vicarious trip into fascinating country



**MAR. 14TH, 2017 MONTHLY MEETING -Paul Jensen**

**APRIL 11TH, 2017 MONTHLY MEETING -Bryan Kercher, Dues paid in April**

**MAY 9TH, 2017 MONTHLY MEETING Club Picnic and election of Officers, dues paid in April**



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The big news this month is to remind everyone that three of the officers positions are expiring this May. The good news is that three people have expressed interest in filling these posts. We need to encourage them to do so. Actually, our treasurer would be happy if someone took over that post, and our webmaster is planning to work with someone and show them how to keep the website up to date. So, we do need some more volunteers. If anyone is interested there is contact information in the newsletter. More good news is that we have a couple of people who are interested in organizing trips. These will be the more moderate hikes or winter trips that many of us do nowadays. FaceBook is the best place to keep up with these.

The bad news is that the dates and place of the Glacier Classic are up in the air. The group campsites get reserved early. Stay tuned for more news on this.

The last news is also a reminder that our next meeting is on Feb. 21st, not on Valentines Day. We usually have a business meeting at the Brooks and Brown Restaurant in the Holiday Inn behind the Trailhead, but we haven't checked with them about the change in date, so stay tuned for announcements about this, just in case we change the place. We are going to have a very interesting show this month, so I hope to see a lot of you there.

Steve Schombel

#### Trip Notes

Please contact the trip leader for more information regarding any listed trips.

Mileage listed is round trip mileage

Elevation listed is gain only

For information on class rating see below:

#### Class Rating System

**CLASS 1 - Hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, biking etc.** mostly on trails or roads, but may include some easy cross country travel

**CLASS 2 - Easy Scrambling** Rugged off trail hiking, no hands required

**CLASS 3 - Scrambling** Use of hands to ascend some sections of rock. Little to no exposure; a fall would not likely cause serious injury

**CLASS 4 - Climbing** easy climbing, great exposure; a fall would possibly cause serious injury. Use of rope and protection at times possible.

**CLASS 5- Technical Climbing** Use of rope, protection and belay a must.

**CLASS 6 - Aid Climbing** Use of equipment to support your weight as you climb

## UP COMING TRIPS AND ADVENTURES

**ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS' CABIN, PAUL JENSEN, DATE NOT SET**

**PUT IN FOR SMITH RIVER PERMITS, JAN. 3RD-FEB. 16, 2017**

**PACK CREEK, LOLO PASS SUN. FEB. 5TH, 2017**

**CLASS 1** This is an eight mile point to point ski from Lolo Pass down Pack Creek Road, to the Crooked Fork Bridge, on the Idaho side. It is all down hill from the Pass to the Hwy 12, with a drop of 1,200 ft. The route is on logging roads with some exposure in places, intermediate level ski experience is suggested. Julie Kahl [jawkal@rockymountaineers.com](mailto:jawkal@rockymountaineers.com)

**SUNDAY, SEPT. 12TH LUBRECHT AREA SNOWSHOE**

The preferred route will be along a road a few miles up the Garnet Ghost Town Road. This gated road runs mostly level for several miles, and, eventually, merges into the upper part of the groomed E trail in the cross country area. We may not get that far. There has been some logging in this area in the past few years. If, for some reason, we can't reach the gate or don't like the looks of the area, we can snowshoe along roads on the north side of Highway 200. E-mail [stephenschombel@yahoo.com](mailto:stephenschombel@yahoo.com) if interested

**CHIEF JOSEPH SKI OVERNIGHTER MAR. 10-11**

We will go for a "weekend" trip to Chief Joseph on Fri. & Sat. Mar. 10 & 11th. You probably need to make your own accommodations, but we will have a pot luck dinner at our cabin at The Broad Axe Lodge on the evening of the 10th. [jawkal@rockymountaineers.com](mailto:jawkal@rockymountaineers.com)

**FREEZEOUT LAKE -BIRD WATCHING, MAR. 22ND & 23RD**

You need to make your own travel and accommodation plans, but we may have a group meal on the night of the 22nd [jawkal@rockymountaineers.com](mailto:jawkal@rockymountaineers.com)

## TRIP REPORTS

**LEE CREEK, LOLO PASS SUN. JAN. 8TH, 2017**

It was another incredibly perfect day for trip. We were divided into two parties. Three people, Lois Crepeau, Steve Schombel and Dave Robertson snowshoed two miles up from the bottom at the Lee Creek Camp ground:

A quick recap: We were saying to ourselves that it's not often there is such good snow all the way to the bottom. We saw lots of interesting formations and all kinds of tracks - moose, coyote, maybe weasel or fox, and smaller animals. We didn't see animals other than birds. We followed tracks and obliterated them on our way up. I've wondered if snowshoeing makes it better or worse for skiers? Lois and Dave Robertson were with me, but none of us brought a camera. We planned to go to the two mile mark and did that. We went to the Jack afterward and had hot drinks and great soup and fries.

We did not advertise this trip but maybe should coordinate in the future. Steve Schombel

We had a very enjoyable day snowshoeing on the lower Leek Creek road trying to figure out what animal/animals made the tracks in the snow. The snow was wonderful powder and quite deep. Great day with fun friends. A decent 4 mile work out round trip. Lois Crepeau

Six people met at the Wal-Mart parking lot and came up in two vehicles, Maria Cassidy joined Kristi Dubois and Bert Lindler, in their van, with Burt & Kristi's friend Wen Fe, studying here from Singapore. David and Julie Kahl went in their Tacoma. While we waited at the Lolo Pass Visitors' Center for David and Bert to shuttle their van down to the Lee Creek Campground and have some lunch, Collen Mathison, from the Visitors' Center looked up the avalanche report. It was moderate, but Idaho was going to close Hwy 12, later in the day to do some avalanche control. We started out shortly after noon and once leaving the Pack Creel Loop found the impression of an old trail, Bert and Kristi had been up here in the recent past. Bert reset the tracks most of the way up to the Lee Creek saddle. At the major switchback just past the China Creek Bridge, a little over 2 miles, we stopped for a snack break. The snow was perfect, not clumping, not too slick to go uphill, just wonderful. The temperature was perfect also, not too warm for all the layers we were wearing, but not too cold to worry about exposed skin or to stand around for a few minutes. Bert continued to break the new trail, but Kristi was feeling under the weather and about 1/4 mile from the Lee Creek Saddle she decided to turn back. Burt decided to go with her, we exchanged car keys so we could get in the van when we got down to the campground, and they could drive the Tacoma down to the campground.



Maria and Fe starting down the Lee Creek side

Figuring on about 4:15 as a meeting time. We took turns opening the old track to the saddle, where it was too windy to stop, so Fe picked out a nice spot further down in the trees for a brief lunch break, it was starting to snow. Setting a new track going down hill was no big deal and Maria and Fe swished on down. We started seeing lots of old moose track coming and going up and down from the road. In mile 3 from the bottom, we found moose tracks from today, like they had spent the night down by the creek in that area. A set of coyote track showed up following the packed trail. At the two mile marker we came on the nice track left by the snowshoers, it made that last two miles much easier to get out, and we could get some nice runs in the remaining down hill. It was seriously snowing now. We got back to the campground at 4:10, took care of our gear and waited in the van for Kristi and Bert to bring the Tacoma down. She was feeling better. Everyone agreed it was a great ski day, and out off all of this trip, that I've lead for over 15 years, I count it among one of the best. I somehow forgot to take both my GPS and camera, but snapped a few photos with my phone. Julie Kahl



**SAWMILL GULCH SNOWSHOE TRIP, RATTLESNAKE REC. AREA, JANUARY 22, 2017**

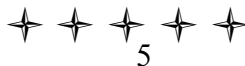


Above: Gully at the bottom of the route

Six of us met for the trip: Dave R., Steve S., Lois C., David and Julie K. Steve Y. had been signed up for the MWA Sawmill Gulch trip on the 14th that was canceled due to the cold and he joined us as well. The day was bright and sunny. We went up the gulch to the far end and took the trail there that climbs up onto the ridge between Sawmill and Curry. The snow was dry and crusty, so we stuck to the main trails, which were a little softer. We took a break up there and had a snack, then continued along the trail on top of the ridge, headed SE. We saw lots of elk tracks, many full of snow fleas, and several elk beds. We came down the switchback trail closer to the parking area. By then it was pretty warm and the snow was getting softer. We hit the main trail and turned left, back to the lot. According to the map, mileage was right around 3 miles and elevation gain was just under 500 ft. Dave Robertson

Right: Stopping for lunch at the ridge summit

Photos Julie Kahl



**JANUARY 27-29 – HOMER YOUNGS PEAK (10,621') - Beaverhead Mountains**



Our camp along Miner Creek

Brett Maier and I left Missoula about 1:30pm on Friday afternoon and drove down to the Big Hole Valley. From the small town of Jackson we drove west on Miner Lakes Road for about 7 miles to the Forest Service Boundary (county plows the road to this point). We parked there and began our trek in a little after 4:00pm. Clear skies, no wind and a snowmobile track made for a fairly easy and quick ski up the road. We passed the Lower Miner Lake, skied about two more miles up the canyon, and arrived at our chosen campsite a few minutes before 6:00 (6.25 mile ski in). Set up tent, cooked dinner and got a nice campfire going. Temps were falling rapidly, so we were into our bags relatively early.

Awoke the next morning to cold (7 degrees) and clear skies. Took some time to get going as we waited for the sun to come over the ridge to the SE. Started up to gain the east ridge of Homer Youngs Peak at 9:45am. Fairly steep ascent to gain the ridge, so had to switch back and forth but snow was fairly firm and things went well (for me). Brent was having one of those days, how-

ever. Energy level just wasn't there. As we broke above tree line on the ridge he decided to just let me go on alone as he wasn't feeling it. The ridge narrows at this point (9000' ?) for the next mile or so. Going was pretty easy though- just had to avoid the overhanging cornice by staying a few feet to one side or the other. After about a mile the ridge becomes very broad (and the snow became sparse as it was all windswept boulders). Hiked most of the next mile to a dip in the ridge to a saddle prior to the final ascent up the east ridge to the summit. Left my ski's here and slowly climbed the last 700' or so to the summit. Arrived on top at 2:15pm (4.5 hours from camp- about 3800' of climbing). Was very windy, so took a couple pics then descended. Backtracked along the same ridge to the spot Brent and I parted ways earlier. Removed skins there and had a mostly pleasant 2000' descent through the open forest back to camp (4:30). Brent hadn't been idle- he had gathered copious quantities of firewood. A great campfire and plenty of wine and tequila kept us up till about 10:30.



Out of the tent around 8:00 on Sunday morning (25 degrees), packed up, and on the trail out by 9:15. Took about 1:40 to get out (300' of loss, but some up and down so can't just cruise out until the last 1.5 miles). Uneventful drive back to Missoula. Capped the weekend with a Brett Dennen concert at the Wilma!

Trip stats: Approx 20 miles round trip from "winter" trailhead. About 4200' of elevation gain overall. Easy class 2 ridge ascent (winter conditions always make things a little more strenuous however).  
Forest Dean



Above: First view of Homer Youngs Peak from along the long East Ridge  
Right: Great way to wind up the day!



**BEAR GULCH/CAVE GULCH SNOWSHOE TRIP, JANUARY 28, 2017**



There were seven of us in three vehicles who drove up to the parking area they call Beartown, just east of Garnet ghost town: Dave R., Todd k., Lois C., Steve S., Julie and David K., and Steve Y. While driving, we saw a bald eagle just north of the Clark Fork River. Bonus!

We snowshoed from the parking area a few hundred yards to Cave Gulch Road, where we turned right and went up. (The other way to Garnet continues up Bear Gulch and is marked First Chance Gulch on the USFS map. That road is very hard packed snow, due to vehicle traffic, and wouldn't be very good for snowshoeing or skiing). The Cave Gulch road has been used by snowmobiles, but no vehicles, so it's decent for snowshoeing. It climbs steeply at first, then levels off higher up with some good views of the surrounding mountains. There were some tracks up there: coyote, deer, and lots of smaller critters. The forest there is mostly Douglas

fir, with some juniper and ponderosa pines mixed in. We also saw some aspen and cottonwoods along the road. We climbed for roughly an hour and a half, then stopped for a snack/lunch break in a spot where we could see across a narrow valley to the mountains beyond. The day was partly sunny with a lot of clouds. After some more climbing, we eventually turned around (due to time constraints) and headed back down the way we'd gone up. In all, we covered 4.35 miles with around 400 feet of elevation gain. Dave Robertson



Above: Cave Gulch Rd  
Right: Looking South towards the John Long Mts.  
Below: Great Cloud formations  
Photos Julie Kahl





#### **PLANT CREEK, MILLER CREEK, JAN. 26TH**

Lois Crepeau and I did a snow hike up Plant Creek in the Miller Creek Area. Compared to this time last year, we were pleasantly surprised, as we only saw one piece of large garbage and almost no empty firearm shells. We did see one thing that was unique. On the road cut slope above the road, there was an old set of moose or elk tracks, that when they were made the animal had left a pile of scat behind. It had melted out of the snow and individual pieces had rolled down the slope like snowballs, each leaving a distinct track. **FLAT BOB** got to pose with the phenomena. Julie Kahl





## RETRO PHOTOS ESSAY



In the summer of 2004 Steve Niday and Steve Schombel went down to Utah and bagged King's Peak. We were joined by Mark Lindstrom, from Arizona, back then.

We backpacked into one of the prettiest basins, we agreed, and spent two nights. The summit was easy, but long, probably class two and mostly on trail. There was some nasty loose rock on the last part. Steve N. took a shortcut on the way down, I should have too. There were lakes, waterfalls, moose and tons of flowers in the basin. It was a wonderful trip, comparable to the best of the Bob or Glacier. Steve Schombel, Photos Steve Niday



# ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Annual Membership Fee \$10

Note: Membership includes all members of a family or household

Make Check payable to “the Rocky Mountaineers” and send to: The Rocky Mountaineers, PO Box 4262, Missoula MT 59801

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

Additional Family Members’ Names:

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

Best Phone include area code: \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Phone (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

2nd E-Mail (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Pay by **PayPal** available on the Rocky Mountaineers’ Website.  
Click on the membership link on the main page

Rocky Mountaineers’ Meeting Minutes 1/9/2017

I. Call To Order: 5:57, Brooks & Browns Rest.

II. Attendees: Steve Schombel, Lois Crepeau, Alden Wright, Julie Kahl, Forest Dean, David Kahl, John Bardsley, Dean Stensland, Brent Maier

III. Treasurer’s Report: \$898.28

IV. Discussions:

A. Suggestion to make Pat Caffery an honorary member

1. Unanimous

2. Steve S. should be set up some guidelines on honorary members? discussed briefly  
- no conclusions

3. Didn’t decide who would tell him.

B. New officers: John Beardsley and Brent Maier are interested in positions

1. **Forest Dean was thinking of running for president**

2. John -new sec. or Tres.

3. Discussed electing a new Tres.

4. Don’t elect new officers until May

C. Glacier Classic

1. Forest will organize

2. Apgar, Aug. 18th-20th

3. Get Steve Niday to reserve sites now

D. Got new comers up to date on the GMAR and it’s left over funds

E. Back up person for the Website

1. Julie was interested in doing it, but some new comers maybe a better fit

2. Alden ex-plained particulars to them

F. **Someone suggested that the person who keeps track of new members and renewals should send them a short “thank you” note for joining or renewing**

G. Trips: Briefly discussed the Chief Joseph and Freezeout Lake trips

V. Adjourn 6:45 PM



Pat Caffery  
Photo Julie Kahl

**Bold items are minutes corrections and additions**

