



Fort Collins Chapter Newsletter

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Your local resource for outdoor adventure

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Participants on the third trip of the 2012 alpine backcountry ski tour series contemplate the terrain near Montgomery Pass.(Wulschleger).

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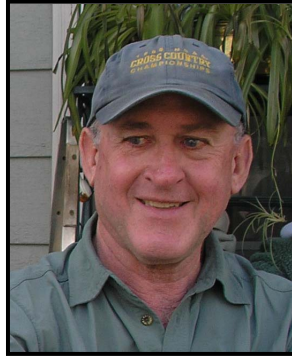
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My First Day at Mountain Hiking School: The Learning Never Stops

Our first class of the Mountain Hiking School, well attended by newbie CMCers as well as by more experienced members, was ably conducted by David Wasson. His equally qualified assistants were Ward Whicker, Mary McElvain and Terri Gerard. This first class focused on gear and knots. David started us off by teaching us the basic art of tying our boot laces. I found that I had not learned everything in kindergarten, after all.

It has always intrigued me to see what others might carry in their backpack for a day hike or back country trips. Ward was brave enough to empty his pack and reveal its mysteries. His selection of gear includes items based on his many years of experience,

Chair's Corner



articles borrowed from other sports, and the latest technologies. He advised us to keep in mind our own individual preferences and needs.

Especially fascinating to me was Ward's all-purpose fisherman's

"buff". This lightweight cloth tube for the neck and head serves a variety of purposes: protection from sun, wind or insects. Lightweight, it takes up very little room in a pack. (You might want to ask Ward about the New Zealand sand flies!)

Mary and Terri had us in knots while they demonstrated, and we practiced, ways of tying them. Besides the 'how' they also taught the 'where', 'when' and 'why' of using them.

Our next class will move us into maps and navigation. I am looking forward to the trip.

- Don Carpenter
Chair, Fort Collins Group, CMC

2012 Annual Potluck

In February, the Fort Collins group holds it's annual potluck and invites several members to give short talks on their recent activities. This year we had a nice variety of presentations from five different speakers.

Ruth Billings spoke about her courageous 1100 mile bike trip to Indiana. Her destination was her 50th high school class reunion. Not only did she make it in one piece, she enjoyed each day of the journey for what it brought her way!

Weather can be precarious at the top of a peak. Mark Lorie shared lessons learned from such a situation, leading a group trip on Static Peak. He illustrated the events that occurred en route to

the summit and discussed options when faced with an incoming storm. Mark emphasized that keeping a group together is one of the must dos for a leader faced with the unexpected.

Bruce Hollenbaugh shared his story and pictures from backpacking the Four Pass Loop in the Maroon Bells - Snowmass Wilderness. The scenery depicted in Bruce's photographs was outstanding! Each of the four passes is above 12,000' and the trip provided a great experience in the Colorado alpine. Bruce traveled with another gentleman and his son; the young man was enthusiastic about the adventure and Bruce described how it left a lasting impression on him.

Though fly fishing is a pastime that is only pursued by a minority of our members, everyone was enthralled by Ward Whicker's tale of fishing in New Zealand. He and two others were helicoptered in to a remote location and spent several days backpacking and fishing. The brown trout they were catching would break records in Colorado! Ward also had the pleasure of rafting down a river from the high point of their trek.

Another fantastic journey was described by Anne Stewart, who visited Alaska on the Snow Goose – a mid-size boat that carried around 20 visitors. Anne had a wonderful time as she enjoyed hiking, kayaking, seeing birds and bears, as well as dining

in style! The photographs she shared were outstanding, with the grizzlies and glaciers being most impressive!

We hope to see you at the February potluck next year!

- Kevin McCartney,

Fort Collins Group Program
Committee

Fort Collins Group Leadership Training

Want more training on mountain leadership? Outdoor leadership is best when shared, both informally (see this month's leadership column) and formally as a CMC-certified trip leader. For our club, we need a continuous influx of new leaders to replace those in need of a break.

CMC trip leader training (required of all CMC leaders) consists of one ~3 hour evening class, certification (for new leaders) in Wilderness First Aid, and a mentored Leader-In-Training (LIT) outing where you lead a trip mentored by an active CMC leader of your choice.

The following are available to members who are interested in becoming trip leaders:

- 1) FC CMC Leader Training class: This will be held at 705

Birky Place (my house) on Tuesday April 10th from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. Please contact me (erslev@warnercnr.colostate.edu) if you can join us or if you have questions. You will be expected to have read the CMC Trip Leader Manual (online at <http://www.cmc.org/members/docs/Trip%20leader%20manual%202011.pdf>) so we can discuss elements of successful trip leadership and what to do when things go awry.

- 2) Wilderness First Aid: We are collaborating with the Overland Mountain Bike Club to sponsor a WFA course, which, as of 1/1/12, is required for all new CMC leaders at the time of their first certification. The club will subsidize some of the \$164 per person tuition for new

leaders, and is considering some help for current leaders with only basic first aid (the previous leader requirement) and other club members. The course will have evening sessions on April 17th and 19th, with an all-day field session on Saturday April 21st.

- 3) There may be an additional session if this session is oversubscribed. We are working with the State CMC to offer an even lower cost, one weekend course in late May/early June. Please contact me (erslev@warnercnr.colostate.edu) if you are interested participating in either of these sessions.

- Eric Erslev

Fort Collins CMC Leadership and
Safety Coordinator

Little Matterhorn

Editor's Note: Little Matterhorn is a spectacular peak in the Fort Collins Group's "backyard". It has been a popular destination for many CMC trips and in recent years has become the one of climbs completed for the Basic Mountaineering Course High Peak Day.

Dates: 06/14/05 & 06/18/05

Elevation: 11,586'

Trailhead: Rocky Mountain National Park, Bear Lake

Roundtrip Distance: ~11.7 miles RT on 6/14 trip; ~11 miles on 6/18

Cumulative elevation gain:

2,975' on 6/14); 2,860' cumulative on 6/18

Route: Odessa Lake Trail to Lake Helene; snowfields from there to base of Little Matterhorn Ridge; ascent on rock to summit ridge and summit; descent by glissading

Participants: Carl Benvenga, Mary Gilbert, Steve Martin, Andy Smith, Wally Wahlen (on 6/14) Lori Abe, Bob Dietz, Steve Martin, Paul Metz, Carolyn Randall (on 6/18)

I was scheduled to lead a CMC group on Little Matterhorn on Saturday June 18th, but wanted

to evaluate snow and route conditions a few days in advance. Others asked if they could accompany me on my "scouting" trip, so there were five of us along on Tuesday and five on Saturday. I'm reporting on both climbs here, because snow conditions and the extent of snow cover changed markedly over the three intervening days!

On both days the groups left the Bear Lake parking area about the same time, 6:35 to 6:40 AM. Travel on the snow-free trail portions of the route went fast on both days. We encountered con-



Little Matterhorn is a spectacular summit in Rocky Mountain National Park that provide an exciting day climb for Fort Collins CMC members.

siderable snow over the trail beginning about 1 mile above the Flattop Mountain/Odessa Lake trail junction, and were essentially on packed snow from that point to where we left the trail near Lake Helene. Whereas the snow on the trail was fairly firm on Tuesday, it was soft and mushy on Saturday's outing.

On both days we put on crampons just below Lake Helene's outlet into the steep upper reaches of Odessa Gorge. We descended down fairly sharply on moderate-angle snow to a reasonable crossing line, and then up on snow to the base of the Little Matterhorn formation, just west of its southern cliff band. There was a significant reduction

in the amount of snow between the two outings. On Tuesday, reasonably firm snow was present for the entire distance; by Saturday, the extent of snow was quite reduced and it was very soft, even early in the day. On Saturday water was flowing extensively over the trail and under the snowfields, and conditions worsened during the day as temperatures reached into the 60s and 70s in the Odessa Gorge vicinity.

On both days, we worked our way diagonally to the north across snow and ultimately climbed a snowfield just south of Little Matterhorn's bluffs. Just west of the cliff bands, where we could look up at the Little Matter-

horn summit ridge and clearly see the entire structure that Dan Gayton calls "Pacman Pinnacle", we stopped to remove and stow crampons and ice axes. Pacman Pinnacle lies immediately west of the "saddle" along the Little Matterhorn ridge, where the Class 3 climbing begins. It's a fairly large structure, and is shaped just like the "Pacman" in the old computer game; it serves as an excellent landmark to keep oriented on during an ascending route to the saddle.

The 500 feet up to the saddle ascends large talus. It's easy Class 2 scrambling, and goes fairly fast. At the saddle, we ate lunch while previewing the ridge-line to the East. The actual sum-

mit cannot be seen from this point. A couple of guidebooks suggest keeping to the right (south) side of the summit ridge for the final distance to the summit. This "route" used to be cairned, but after several fatalities the cairns were removed and most climbers now keep to the north (left side) of the summit ridge. There is good, interesting exposure all the way from the saddle to the summit, but hand and footholds are abundant and there is little reason for an accident if weather is good, the rock is dry, and the climber uses good judgment and has route-finding skills.

On the left side of the ridge we soon encountered two corners that are easily passed on ledges

around them on the left. Upon reaching a third corner, we gained the actual ridge via easy blocks and made a short traverse along the right side of the ridgeline on an easy crack system just below the ridge top. A short distance later, we descended a 6-7 foot dihedral on the North side and immediately climbed back up to the ridge. The summit cairn was visible from here, and exposed climbing brought us to the airy summit with spectacular views of the north side of Flattop, much of Notchtop, a portion of Knobtop, and all the interesting features of Gabletop. The North and West faces of Longs are nicely visible, and views North to the Mummy Range are some of the best in RMNP. My thanks to Dan Gayton

for his suggestions on route-finding along the final summit ridge before I made my first climb of this marvelous peak..

The Saturday group witnessed two avalanches that began on the upper snowfields of Notchtop before plunging over vertical cliffs and dropping onto lower snowfields to cascade down the steep snow. The Tuesday group watched lesser avalanches -- soft slabs and "snowball" avalanches, some that turned into "snowman"-sized balls bounding down the steep snow couloirs of Notchtop and Knobtop before hitting the lower-angle snowfields below, where the velocities of the snow falls lessened.

On Tuesday, we had planned to



Participants of a June 14, 2005 climb of Little Matterhorn on the summit. From left, Andy Smith, Steve Martin, Mary Gilbert and Carl Benvenga (photo by Wally Wahlen).

leave Little Matterhorn by traversing the entire length of it's ridge-line to the fortress-like cliffs of Knobtop, and to ascend it via the first snow couloir west of the ridge's connection with the larger mountain. We made this entire Class 2-3 traverse, but upon nearing Knobtop we noted considerable recent (that day) avalanche activity and quickly decided against attempting an ascent of the couloir. Instead, we enjoyed two nice glissades down

safe snowfields before ascending back up to Lake Helene where we stowed our axes and hiked out on the trail.

On Saturday, we simply descended the talus below Pacman Pinnacle to where we had left axes, crampons, and other items we had not needed for the final ascent of Little Matterhorn. We packed our crampons and had a nice glissade descent down the snowfield adjacent to the cliffs of

Little Matterhorn.

In any event, a trip up Little Matterhorn is a thrill that should not be missed.

This trip report is dedicated to Dan Gayton, who years ago introduced many CMC members to this marvelous peak!

-Steve Martin

Fort Collins Group Leadership Column

Mountain Leadership II: Expedition Behavior (EB)

The Colorado Mountain Club takes leadership seriously, requiring leadership and first aid training of all trip leaders (see announcement on page 3). This contrasts with many outdoor "meetup groups" which have "event organizers" who set a trip's format but are not required to take responsibility for people's health and welfare. Thus, CMC trips are a far safer place to stretch your personal limits as you can be assured that there will be a competent leader (or leaders) who will be truly present. If that turns out not to be the case, let us know and we will rectify the situation!

In my last column, I stated that mountain leadership is fundamentally different from many other leadership opportunities and ended with a quote from Paul Petzoldt about the transformative effects of wilderness on people. Paul used the term "Expedition Behavior" (or EB as it is frequently called at NOLS) to describe the suite of behaviors that allow groups to cooperate and attain difficult goals. In 1996, the NOLS Leadership Education

Project identified the following Expedition Behaviors:

- Serve the mission and goals of the group.
- Be as concerned for others as you are for yourself.
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Support leadership and growth in everyone.
- Respect the cultures you contact.
- Be kind and open-hearted.
- Do your share and stay organized.
- Help others, but don't routinely do their work.
- Model integrity by being honest and accountable.
- Admit and correct your mistakes.

Most of these behaviors can be seen as simply putting the needs of the group over your own needs. In another column, I will talk about ego, which I see as the most dangerous thing in the mountains. Teamwork is such a fundamental part of mountaineering, both explicitly, when attached by rope to your climbing partner, and more subtly, when trip participants all keep positive attitudes during foul weather.

Putting aside your own needs requires the trust that others will be looking after your needs as well, and this trust bonds individuals into a team that can accomplish far more together than separately. This lesson is why so many programs for troubled kids use the mountains as a way to teach them how to be effective in life. In my opinion, the TV show "Survivor" illustrates how people who do not do this are voted off the island!

The admonition that we must "support leadership and growth in everyone" is a critical element of EB. It is not enough to be a passive participant on a mountain trip – leaders can fail (accidents can occur to anyone) or need assistance. Additional leaders will be needed if a group needs to split up – it is CMC policy that anyone needing to leave a trip early be accompanied by at least one leader back to the trailhead. And if there is a case where someone is out-of-line, the group can be more effective in pulling them back to collaborative ways than just the leader(s) acting alone.

And this admonition to "support leadership and growth in every-

one” applies most critically to leaders as well. If a leader does not allow his or her compatriots to develop leadership skills, the group can be at great risk should the leader be compromised in some way. Without leadership practice, participants can panic or

allow more strong-willed folks to overrule their common sense when situations dictate that leadership is needed.

Next time, I will discuss different leadership models, and how they can be adapted to specific moun-

tain challenges.

- Eric Erslev,

Fort Collins CMC Leadership and Safety Coordinator



A Fort Collins CMC group takes a lunch break at Bear Lake during a February ski / snowshoe trip from Sprague Lake to Bear Lake (photo by Michael Smillie).

Fort Collins CMC wishes to thank businesses that have previously supported us with paid advertising in our newsletter. However, due to a policy change, we will no longer be including paid commercial advertising.

This newsletter is published by the Fort Collins Group of the Colorado Mountain Club. Please send submissions to jgw311@hotmail.com by the 10th of the month to include in the next month's edition. Please call the CMC State Membership office at 800.633.4417 to notify them of address changes.

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