



Fort Collins Chapter Newsletter

May
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Your local resource for outdoor adventure

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A cactus blooming in Horsetooth Mountain Park. Wildflowers are out in the northern Colorado foothills and, in some cases, at middle and higher elevations (Wulfschleger).

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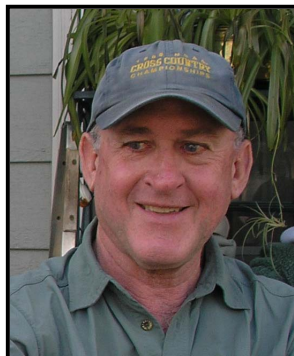
Mountain Hiking School Snow Day

On a recent Saturday, CMC's Mountain Hiking School met at 6:30 a.m. in Pringles parking lot and headed up to Montgomery Pass for a day of "Snow School". The weather forecast predicted cloudy skies, rain on the plains, snow above 7000 ft and temperature below 35 F, - perfect for a spring snow day. But as we progressed up the canyon, the clouds surrendered to Colorado blue skies and the temperature rose into the low 40s.

By 8:15 we were at the Zimmerman Lake Trailhead. There were 12 of us: four instructors (course director David Wasson, Ward Whicker, Terri Gerard, and Mary McElwane) and eight students. On the lower trail we encoun-

tered wet meadows and bare earth, but snow drifts deepened as we went higher. On the hike, Ward presented a trail tutorial: How to identify a snow-covered trail (look for indentations or high

Chair's Corner



packed ridges in the snow); where to take rest stops that give hikers a choice of sun or shade; how to do the rest step; and how to maximize oxygen intake (pressure breathing). The rest step and pressure breathing both are especially useful at higher elevations. For a description of the rest step (as well as the plunge step) visit www.mountain-survival.net/chp8.html.

The pressure breathing technique is demonstrated on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-ZPjiWK0jc>. In the YouTube video demonstration of pressure breathing, oxygenation increased from about 83% to 97%!

As we hiked upward we searched for snow fields. Blue skies gave way to clouds and snow began to fall as we approached the pass. The snow pack changed from a solid surface to very mushy and calf deep. At the top of the pass instruction started in earnest. Our lessons covered measuring the slope angle and avoiding avalanches.

We spread out on a steep snowy slope to reduce our risk of injury and practiced safely using and stowing an ice ax, glissading and slowing down using the tip of a hiking pole, or ice axe; self-arresting with an ice ax; self belaying techniques, and self arresting from a sitting glissade position. We descended the slope by plunge stepping and went down even faster by glissading. WHEEEEE....! What a great day!!

- Don Carpenter,
Chair, Fort Collins Group CMC



Mountain Hiking School Snow Day at Montgomery Pass

Snowdrift Peak

Snowdrift Peak, 12,274'

Flattop Mountain, 12,324'

Trailhead: Bear Lake, Rocky Mountain National Park

Starting Elevation: 9,470'

Cumulative Elevation Gain: 4,750'

Round Trip Distance: 16.6 Miles RT

Route: Flattop Mountain Trail to summit of Flattop; Tonahutu Creek Trail over the west ridge of Ptarmigan Point and down to 11,800-foot level of Bighorn Flats; off- trail west to saddle between Point 12,277 and Snowdrift and from there up the East Ridge of Snowdrift to the summit. Descent by reversing the ascent route.

Participants: Steve Martin and Paul Metz

True to its name, Snowdrift Peak had its drift in place when we made the long hike in just after the first real snow of the autumn climbing season. We had a ball, and didn't need to share the back country with anyone until we met

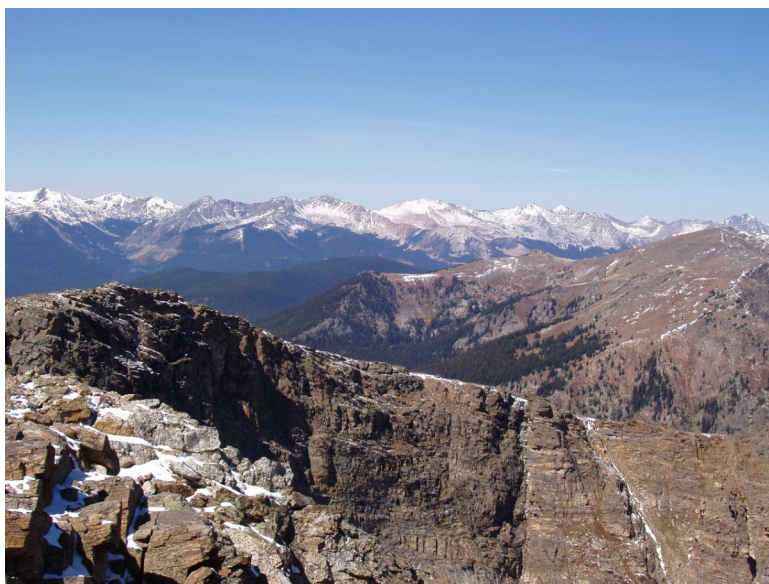
two hikers late in the afternoon as they were descending the Tonahutu Trail toward the Green Mountain Trailhead on the West Side. The weather was great, with good sunshine (how did I

burn my face this late in the season?!) and only light breezes--except for the strong winds that prevailed (they almost always do) as we made the lengthy traverse over Flattop Mountain.

We left the Bear Lake Trailhead at 6:30 AM and reached Flattop's "summit" fairly fast in the cool fall temperatures. We paused there to admire the symmetrical summit of Snowdrift, a mountain we had viewed many times before from Flattop, but had never really paid the attention it deserves. It's truly a beauty, but who pays real attention to "lesser" peaks until they finally get onto your radar screen? Snowdrift had risen to such prominence for both of us, and this morning we were enthusiastic about viewing and getting to the top of a mountain we had not thought seriously about in all the years we had climbed in RMNP.



The view east from Snowdrift Peak: an unusual perspective of Hallet Peak, Otis Peak, Longs Peak and Taylor Peak (left to right) photo by Steve Martin).



The Never Summer Range from the Summit of Snowdrift Peak (photo by Steve Martin).



Odessa Gorge during the return trip over Flattop Mountain. Visible are Notchtop, Joe Mills Mountain, Odessa Lake, Lake Helene, Two Rivers Lake and the tarns below Odessa Glacier (photo by Steve Martin).

We left the Tonahutu Creek Trail at the cairn marked by the only wooden post along the route down Bighorn Flats. From there, we continued on a descending traverse along the northwest side of Point 12,277 (called Tonahutu Point by some) to the 11,540-foot saddle east of Snowdrift. That was a discouraging almost-800-foot drop from the high point on Flattop Mountain. And we remarked that it needed to be re-climbed on our way out.

From the saddle, it was an easy

scramble over talus all the way to the top, where we were blessed with sun and only light winds while we enjoyed the spectacle around us, accented by the light snow. Enough snow had drifted in on the north side of the summit to remind us why the peak is named as it is. Summit register? Placed last October by Jennifer Roach. Since she and her party signed the log, only nine others had, testimony to how infrequently this marvelous peak is topped out on.

We were surprised by the

shapes of the higher Continental Divide peaks to the east, which are indeed unusual from Snowdrift. It's hard to appreciate how strange and unimposing they appear from this aspect unless you are actually seeing them from this summit's vantage. The photos demonstrate this. And the Never Summer Mountains to the northwest were remarkably displayed, particularly with the light snow cover they showed on this day! Again, see and appreciate the photos. For the two of us, who had recently stood atop 8 of the 15 Never Summer summits, this was a thrilling view. Plus, the 17 lakes and tiny tarns to the north and south of Snowdrift were advantageously viewed from this point. All of this made the long hike and scramble over talus well worth the effort!

We had arrived on Snowdrift at 12:10 PM and reluctantly left at 12:50, recognizing that we had almost 8 ½ miles and 800 feet of elevation regain between Snowdrift and the trailhead. We were back at the vehicle at 5:45, and at Paul's home in south Fort Collins at 7:25 PM. A super day in the Park. Go for it!

- Steve Martin

Fort Collins Group Leadership Column

Combining Collaborative and Authoritative Leadership Styles

As in the leadership models discussed last month, leadership styles on CMC trips show an amazing variability. Each leader has their own natural style, just as each participant has their own range of preferences as to how they want to be led. I maintain

here that each leader needs to be comfortable, depending on the situation, using both collaborative and authoritative styles. Likewise, each participant needs to be comfortable with the mix of styles used by the leader.

Personally, I most enjoy using the collaborative, or facilitative, style where input is sought from participants at major decision points. To me, this style promotes trip ownership by all participants and goes happily with my preference for shared leader-

ship on trips. It fits my Myers-Briggs personality profile of being a “P” (perceiver) as opposed to the more common “J”s (judger), who can rightfully see “P”s as a bit wishy-washy.

My openness to changing plans in response to changing situations does cause concern with some participants who want the leader to take charge. They are happier with the sort of leader I saw on one non-CMC trip where the leader was always on point and everyone followed him. On the way back to our vehicles on one trip, he took a fun and interesting diversion. He then intersected the trail again and took a wrong turn, leading the group back up into the mountains. I noticed this and commented on it to the hiker next to me, and she assured me that I need not bring this up – the leader knew best.

Eventually, we did do a U-turn and headed back out again.

Despite my preference for the collaborative style, I can easily call up an authoritative, or directive, style in emergency situations. For instance, if lighting is striking near you or if you need to move off dangerous cliffs before nightfall, you do not always have time to collaboratively figure out what to do. It is time for the leader to act, and the participants to follow (as long as there isn't an obvious danger in the action). This type of decisive leadership comes naturally to Myers-Briggs “J” personalities, and you'll find a lot of “J”s in the ranks of CMC leaders. Some leaders, like the guy in the story above, use this approach almost all the time, and participants need to be OK with this if they sign up for their trips.

Most CMC leaders combine these leadership styles to good effect. Before a trip with an unknown leader, most experienced CMCers know to query their friends about the leader's style. A little foreknowledge and acceptance of this style by the participant makes for a more harmonious trip for all – there really is no point in “shoulding” all over the leader.

Next month, I will propose some strategies for dealing with one of the most common challenges faced by leaders and participants alike – keeping trips with differently-paced people together.

Happy trails!

- *Eric Erslev*,
Leadership and Safety Coordinator, Fort Collins Group CMC

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.

Editors note: the following list identifies officers for the 2012 calendar year.

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