



SKI TRACKS

Newsletter of the Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club
Box 431 • Corvallis, Montana 59828

February, 2002



ON THE TRAIL By Gordon Reese

With a number of items to share with our members - I decided a column title would be in order!

In the 14 days from January 18 through February 2, the Chief Joe area received about 60 inches of new snow. Some of it had lots of moisture and some was very dry, feathery powder. Our settled, consolidated snow pack is probably about 90% of what would be considered average for early in February.

The grooming crew and all who have used the Chief Joe trails lately owe a huge thanks to everyone who skied or snowshoed our trails when we had so much new snow. It is amazing how much easier our machines move up and down the trails when there is some type of track to follow. Thanks again.

On the last Saturday and Sunday of January the Club held "On-the-Trail" ski lessons for 52 people. Lots of progress was made. Thanks to **Ed and Pat Hastings, Bill and Lois Sweet, Diane Boyd, Tony Neaves, Annie Creighton** and **Mary Ellen Reese** for a great job of teaching.

Friday, our regular grooming day, is becoming a very popular skiing day. It has become quite common to see 20 plus vehicles in the parking lot. With the crew riding grooming equipment (I could have said "driving" but that might be a stretch - and actually, one of the crew does not always ride on his machine) and with skiers out on the trails we should consider safety. (In some parts of the world this is considered "job hazard analysis.")

When you hear a machine approaching (we are herd animals and usually travel in a group of three - which is actually necessary to keep one of our groomers from getting lost) it would be most helpful if you looked back at the approaching machines for hand signals as to which side of the trail for you to move towards. Usually this will allow us to navigate past without any problem. It would actually be most helpful if you would step out of your bindings, throw your poles and skis at least 10 feet off the trail and dive head first into the powder snow!!

The grooming crew is probably most aware of the fact that some skiers fall while skiing. The reason we know that this is actually happening is that when some one falls, they leave a rather personalized landing mark! Contrary to what a certain person named Max wrote in the Warming Hut regis-

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NUPTIALS NOTICE

Art Shigley and Jane Burnham tied The Knot on February 2. They met during a BRXC Ski Club outing in 1993 and started dating almost right away. They will be hosting the Gordon Reese Warming Hut on March 2. Stop in and say hello to the newlyweds!

FEBRUARY MEETING

Thursday, FEBRUARY 12, 2002 - 7:00 p.m.

Corvallis High School Lunchroom.

JANUARY 10, 2002 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

President **Sonny LaSalle** opened the meeting with 57 persons present. In the absence of the Treasurer, Sonny gave a short financial report, noting that the Club's balance was approximately \$3500. Also, he mentioned that donations have increased: \$228 at the Warming Hut box, \$362 at the trails entry box, and \$150 from individual anonymous source. Sonny reported that following the Club's last potluck, the school custodian pointed out that school policy prohibits alcoholic beverages on school property.

Leo Joron, Membership chairperson, noted the current membership was 387, plus those who joined at the January meeting, making a total of 396; this includes family and business memberships. About 265 newsletters were printed this month.

Sonny continued the discussion of e-mail and/or website dissemination of the newsletter, noting the prospective savings from this versus mailings. A volunteer has been found to assist with website set up. **Pat Leonard** and **Toddy Perryman** volunteered to assist with an e-mail system. **Annie Creighton** noted that the Missoula Nordic Club has a web site and uses that to post newsletters. The consensus is that we have options to be pursued.

Sonny announced that the Club had been asked to endorse a "Community Statement of Non Violence" that is currently being circulated by the Human Rights Alliance. Discussion followed with no action.

Gordon Reese reported on trails/grooming. It was noted that the hut hosts are doing a good job, and that this season's dates are almost filled. Gordon also noted that the trail grooming crew brings in 30 gallons of water on Fridays, and that it goes fast with increased hut users. It was suggested that hut hosts bring in another gallon of water and paper towels.

Annie Creighton reminded members of upcoming clinics [February 8 and March 15] and **Mel Mooers** reported that Rocky Mountaineers had contacted him regarding possible joint efforts on outings. Sonny commended **Tony Neaves** and **Annie Creighton** for a job well done on the first annual race event at Chief Joseph, suggesting them as a standing Race Committee. **Bill Stoudt** seconded the motion, and it passed by acclamation.

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On the Trail – continued

ter, these round (usually) bathtub shaped (small to large) depressions are not made by wolves sleeping on our trails. Extended research shows that when skiers sit or fall down they often do not take the time or make the effort to fill in their “butt print.” Filling in these holes is a courtesy to other skiers. It takes only 30 seconds or so once you have determined that all parts are still attached and most of them still function - to use your skis to scrape snow into the crater and smooth and pack it just a bit.

Snow shoeing on or along our groomed trails is increasing. While this is great exercise and fun and it allows people to get out and enjoy our National Forest lands - snow shoeing on groomed ski tracks is thoughtless and disrespectful to all who have worked to get the trails ready for skiing. If you encounter this happening please kindly invite them to use the packed groomed trail to either side of the ski tracks. Snow shoeing in that area actually helps us as it compacts the snow.

Please help us to discourage walking, running or crawling on any part of our groomed trails!

Finally, as I put on my Nordic Ski Patrol hat, I want to make a strong pitch about skier safety. Winter conditions can be very unforgiving. About the middle of January I left home at 8:30 a.m. on a very clear, beautiful sunny morning. I just knew it was going to be a great day on the trails. By the time I got to Sula I knew I had been wrong and there was not going to be sunshine. By 11:30 a.m. a few flakes were coming down and the winds were gusting at the parking lot to over 25 m.p.h. By 1 p.m. it was snowing hard and blowing harder. The lodgepole trees were bending and whipping around, unloading lots of snow. By 3:30 p.m. we had experienced three mini-blizzards.

The point is, that even on our groomed trails, conditions can and do occur that could make your trip very uncomfortable, or worse. Be prepared to handle changing weather conditions as well as the other unknowns you could encounter. Don't hesitate to change your plans or head to the “Hut” for a cup of hot chocolate. Be prepared.

OFFICERS - BITTERROOT XC SKI CLUB

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| | Mel Mooers | (see above) |
| | (vacant) | |
| Programs | | |
| Publicity | Diane Williford | 363-6290 |
| Trails | Gordon Reese | 642-3007 |

January Meeting Notes– continued

Sonny brought up the idea of refreshments at meetings and the possible need of a committee. **Chris Johnson** suggested continuing refreshments. Several members at the meeting volunteered for the committee: **Judy LaSalle, Nola Edgar, Barbara Losensky, and Jan Driscoll.**

Annie Creighton supervised the raffle drawing for the February 9 overnight extravaganza at the Warming Hut. The winner drawn was **Bill McCrum.**

Sonny introduced **Pat Leonard** and **Toddy Perryman**, who presented a slide program of their 88 day, 900 mile canoe trip in the north part of Canada.

CUSHIONS FOR THE CABIN By Gordon Reese

In the past two months that the Warming Hut has been in use, I have encountered people who have offered to help with projects. Well... the opportunity now exists!

A Club member who wishes to remain anonymous has made arrangements to have a professional make cushions for our perimeter benches. The cost is going to be more than was anticipated, and so we are offering folks the opportunity to help. A foot of cushion will cost \$16.00. The first weekend in February some people who were visiting the cabin for the first time donated \$100, and if we can raise \$300 more we can assist a very generous Club member to complete a great project that numerous people have asked about. If you send a check to the Club, make sure you indicate it goes to the **Cushion Fund.** Thanks.

Membership Renewals

Annual memberships EXPIRED on **MAY 31, 2001.**

Renew your membership now!

INDIVIDUAL - \$10 • FAMILY - \$20

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL – \$25

SUPPORTING FAMILY – \$35

LIFE MEMBER – \$100

Membership Dues

June 1, 2001 - May 31, 2002

MAIL TO: Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club

P.O. Box 431, Corvallis, MT 59828

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Type of Membership: _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____ (Listed above)

E-MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE

By Toddy Perryman

Dear Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club Member,

Hi! I have volunteered to be the BODY to work on getting the Club newsletter sent out by e-mail. (See reference to BODY in the January newsletter.) I am hoping to have or be able to gain enough expertise to get the job done.

As you may have noted while reading the January newsletter, the Club could save money by sending the newsletter out by e-mail instead of hard copy USPS mail. This savings could be invested in the other Club projects, such as the trail-grooming program. I am sending out this questionnaire to see who is interested in getting the newsletter by e-mail, and in what format you would be interested or able to receive it. I can probably send the newsletter in several formats- attached text file, attached PDF file, or plain text, probably all in the same mailing.

I currently have a list of fewer than 70 e-mail addresses. More than 250 newsletters go out. The January newsletter indicated that the overwhelming majority of people at the meeting have access to e-mail. This means that many more e-mail addresses of members could be gathered. Please encourage other Club members to send their e-mail addresses to me at **toddy@qwest.net** if they would be interested in getting an e-mail newsletter.

Would you be interested in getting the newsletter by e-mail?

Do you have a different e-mail address at which you would prefer to receive the newsletter and other Club correspondence?

Would you prefer to receive the newsletter as an attached file?

Would you prefer to just receive an e-mail reminder that the new newsletter is available on our (as-yet-to-be-created) web site, with a link to the web site when that becomes a viable option?

Thanks so much for your help with this project.

(Editor's note: This questionnaire was sent by Toddy to those BRXC Club members whose e-mail addresses she was furnished, and is reprinted here to reach all other members.)

NEW THIS YEAR - WOMEN'S SKI DAYS AT CHIEF JOE (otherwise known as Babes in the Woods!)

By Annie Creighton

Are you ready to learn some new cross country techniques or tune-up some old ones? Perhaps, you 'd just like a few pointers. Whatever you need, this could be the perfect learning environment for you!

Come join me for one or more of these informal group sessions at the Chief Joe trails. Here are the dates:

Feb. 8 March 15

We will meet at the new warming hut at 10:30, ski for a couple hours, and then take a lunch break at the hut. In the afternoon, we can tour around and work on any number of techniques. Let's have fun!

For more information, contact Annie Creighton at 375-0852.

Tony's Tips - POLES

By Tony Neaves

Poles, or as the French call them, "batons" are one of those pieces of equipment that everyone has, but for the majority of the skiing public are never fully used. If you were to take a random sample of recreational skiers, probably 70% aren't taking advantage of their poles. Poles are meant to be used for more than just balancing with! When used properly, poles can provide up to 50% of your forward propulsion. Those of you who made it up to Chief Joe for the lessons learned a lot of this already, but bear with me!

Believe it or not, the straps do most of the work. You should put your hand through the strap from underneath it, then bring your hand down so the strap is between your thumb and forefinger. This way you can push on the pole without GRIPPING it! Which leads to the next part; that the pole is "lightly" held between thumb and forefinger, not gripped like a downhill pole. The other fingers just guide it, and at no time do you really grip the pole, that just leads to cold fingers and tired hands.

At the end of the pole push, your hand should be almost open and completely RELAXED! Another important point is the pole plant. You should be planting your baskets right at your toes or a tad in front of them. Any further forward and your ability to PUSH effectively is lost. In order to plant the pole in the correct position, you will need to have it at a 45 degree angle when it hits the snow. In addition, the baskets should be planted in as close to your skis as possible for maximum efficiency.

Let's move on now to the all important pole STROKE. As you push on your pole, it should continue back until your arm is extended behind you, forming a straight line from your shoulders to the end of the pole. This is known as the "follow through." Make sure you don't actually LIFT your arm to get a complete follow through, just let it swing. Remember, your arms should be swinging back and forth, comfortably, like pendulums. Most of the forward momentum gained comes from the leverage created from the correct follow through in your pole stroke. It is a very common mistake to stop the poling stroke at the hips. If you are doing this, the majority of your forward momentum will be lost.

Last but not least is the correct pole length, and the properly adjusted strap. Your poles should reach approximately to your armpit. Too short and you don't get enough push, too long and it will be very difficult to get an effective push. The straps should be tight enough to allow you to open your hand and the pole stays in place. There's more to efficient poling, but for now I think we've covered enough! This sport we do is a combination of so many little things, but when you put them all together, it makes the difference between just walking on skis or getting to GLIDE!

Enjoy the outdoors!

Ski Tours and Events Sponsored by the Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club

February 8, Friday. Women's Ski Days. Learn new techniques or tune up some old ones. Meet 10:30 a.m. at warming hut. Annie Creighton, 375-0852.

February 9, Saturday. Bear Creek Vista Point. 6 miles. Intermediate. Meet 9 a.m. at the Corvallis Grange. Katya Merrell, 642-3073 (Note leader change).

February 16, Saturday. Ski Anderson Mountain and out Cabinet Creek. 7 miles. Intermediate/Advanced. One-way tour with shuttle. Meet 9 a.m. MPC or 10 a.m. CJP. Bob Schumaker, 363-0634.

February 23, Saturday. Ski tour from the valley, snow permitting. If the snow doesn't cooperate, we'll head for higher ground. Call leader for details. Jayne Brindle, 363-4192.

February 27, Wednesday. Moonlight ski. 2-3 miles. Easy. Meet 7:30 p.m. MPC to carpool, or 9 p.m. at the warming hut. If you wish to spend the night at the warming hut, call leader in advance. Mel Mooers, 961-3163.

March 9, Saturday. Ski tour. Location to be determined. Call leader. Katya Merrell, 642-3073.

March 15, Friday. Same as February 8.

March 17, Sunday. Usher in spring and celebrate St. Patrick's Day with a potluck picnic at the warming hut. Meet to eat, at the warming hut, at 12 noon.

Every Sunday ski the Chief Joseph Trails. Meet 10 a.m. MPC or 11:30 a.m. CJP.

MPC - Montana Power Company
CJP - Chief Joseph Pass

Sign up with leaders of ski tours.
Drivers receive \$3 from each passenger for gas.

Don't forget your Ten Essentials.