



SKI TRACKS

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

March, 2002



BOB BROPHY CARRIES OLYMPIC TORCH

By Bob Schumacher

In blowing snow and mild temperatures (20's), family, friends, and fellow ski patrollers gathered at 7,000 feet in West Yellowstone, Montana on Sunday, 27 January to cheer-on (and photograph A LOT) **Bob Brophy** as he carried the Olympic Torch down Yellowstone Street. For additional photos of the event, visit the Club's website: <http://www.bitterrootxcskiclub.net>.

Bob received the Torch at about 2:20 p.m. at the Yellowstone Park entrance from a dog sled team that had brought it from Old Faithful Geyser.

Each Torch bearer was accompanied by a flotilla of camera trucks and other support vehicles and personnel. An official uniform was given to each Torch bearer, and, for a not-so-small fee, each bearer could also keep the Torch that was carried.

It is not known who nominated Bob for the honor of carrying the Torch, but any one of us would have, and could have, nominated Bob for such a well deserved honor.

Well done, Bob.

Chief Joe Extravaganza Report

The lucky winner of the extravaganza raffle this year was Bill McCrum. For those who don't know what this is – it is a raffle we hold every year and the winner gets a gourmet dinner and night's accommodation at the Chief Joe hut. Bill and his guests, John and Fara were treated to an outstanding gourmet meal and evening at the hut. They nibbled on roasted garlic, baked brie, baguette, and apple slices to build up their appetites. Next, it was on to the beautiful spinach salad with goat cheese, spiced walnuts, and dried cranberries. The main course was pesto & olive stuffed chicken breasts over a bed of brown rice pilaf. The red wine was from southern Australia which

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MARCH MEETING

Thursday, March 14, 2002 - 7:00 p.m.

Corvallis High School Lunchroom

Program: Chet Morris - Sea Kayaking in Norway

FEBRUARY 14, 2002 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Vice President **Mel Mooers** opened the meeting with 32 people present. New members were acknowledged. Mel read a letter from Club member **Mary Nousanen**, sharing how she had cross country skied 26 years ago, how things had changed and how much she appreciates the Club's involvement and improvement of the Chief Joseph area. She enclosed a \$1,000 donation to the Club.

Leo Joron announced there are currently 430 members. **Joetta Lawrence** is the 400th member.

Pat Patterson announced that the Club now had a website: <http://www.bitterrootxcskiclub.net>. Pat gave a brief history of the website development. The process was started about two months ago with the goal of having the web page accomplished by this meeting! He worked with Cybernet One, which had charged \$50 for set-up, and was hosting the page free. The Club pays \$25 annually to the organization that registers domain names. The web page presently includes: home page, Club officers, meetings, conditions at Chief Joseph, tours, events, membership/how to join and photos. The newsletter is not yet included, but that is the next step. Pat would welcome comments. **Toddy Perryman** announced that the newsletter is now available by e-mail.

Mel Mooers passed around a sign-up sheet for those interested in snow shoeing Chief Joseph trails ahead of the groomers to assist them when snow is deep and for those interested in snow shoeing outings. He also announced that **Cy Lawrence** has a pair of Tubbs snow shoes for sale at good price. A Club member mentioned perhaps the web page could include articles of sale/consignment ski items.

Gordon Reese mentioned that there had been a confusion of skis at the Warming Hut, one person inadvertently taking another persons skis. He recommended that users watch their own skis and be aware of possible mix ups.

Mel Mooers noted receiving a newsletter from the Rocky Mountaineers regarding possible joint outings. If interested in participating contact Mel. He also stated that there have been skiers coming down the wrong way on Middle Fork trail; this could be dangerous and there could be collisions. Keep your eyes open, and inform skiers of correct use of trails. He recommended **Nancy Torrey** and her catalogue from Boulder Creek Packs, also displaying a few of her well done items: back pack, gaiters, belts for sleds, mentioning she has also done work for the Forest Service.

Gordon Reese commended the Warming Hut hosts on the

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Extravaganza— continued

leads us to the grand finale – the famous industrial strength chocolate cheesecake!

This event was put on by a handful of cheery club members who deserve a big thanks. Jayne Brindle provided the table settings, menu card, wine, and salad. Linda Stoudt created the cheesecake and helped plan the menu. Annie Creighton made the main course and set up the appetizers. Mary Ellen Reese lent her candles and big cooking pot. Thanks also to Pat Patterson for taking pictures. We will be doing this again next year, so make sure to purchase your raffle tickets.

A LETTER OF NOTE

“January 22, 2002

Greetings!

Yesterday, (MLK day) a group of us braved the perils of 2 feet of new snow on the Chief Joseph trails and eventually landed at the warming hut. What fun and conviviality! Gordon Reese is the perfect host and after speaking with him (and looking through the photo albums of building the hut) we left full of admiration. What a collaborative project. What an amazing result. Good for all of you! You should be very proud of yourselves. I've worked on volunteer projects and have a good idea of what it takes for the work to bear fruit.

I look forward to coming back (and enjoying groomed trails :-)) and want to donate to your efforts. I'm not interested in being a member, but do want to support the concept and the actuality of what you are up to.

Thanks for presenting such an inspirational example of what it means to pull off a big idea.

- Cate Campbell.”

Editor's note: This letter and a donation was recently mailed to the BRXC Ski Club.



BITTERROOT NORDIC SKI PATROL TRAINING By Bob Schumacher

On Sunday, 17 February the Bitterroot Nordic Ski Patrol practiced evacuating an injured skier from the lower junction of Joseph Creek and Banshee trails out the emergency exit route to Highway 43. Those participating were **Diane Glass, Gordon Reese, Mike Schackte, and Bob Schumaker**. The photo shows Mike, Diane, and Gordon restoring the lower emergency cache. For additional photos of this exercise visit the Club's website: <http://www.bitterrootxcskiclub.net>.

February Meeting Notes— continued

great job they had done in maintaining the facility and enabling folks to enjoy themselves. He also mentioned that some users had brought in sleds for overnight supplies, and asked them to keep the sleds off of the groomed tracks. Gordon asked members to be aware of 'walkers' on groomed and tracked trails, and to request walkers to keep off the tracks. Gordon mentioned that the Forest Service had not yet acted on announcing rules and arrangements for summer rental of the Warming Hut and noted that he was hopeful that **Deb Gale** of the USFS Wisdom office would be at the April Club meeting and would have some information at that time. **Leo Joron** asked about insurance on the Warming Hut against fire and Gordon said that the Forest Service had said that they would rebuild in such an event.

Mel Mooers introduced **Tony Neaves** who gave a fascinating slide-illustrated presentation on his participation in the 1998 Winter Paralympics at Nagano, Japan. The Paralympics (for disabled athletes) were held immediately following the Winter Games, and while other countries had teams of 70 - 80 athletes, the U.S. team numbered ten. One of the ten was **Nancy Stevens**, a blind nordic skier for whom Tony acted as guide on the trails during the competitive events. She competed in the 5K Skate, the 11K Skate and the 15K Classic races. Tony showed a collection of paraphernalia related to the Games (ID badges, skiers bibs, origami keepsakes) described the conditions and atmosphere at the Games, the sightseeing they did while in Japan, and the celebration the team was treated to at the White House following their return to the U.S.

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Publicity	Diane Williford	363-6290
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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A HUT HOST

By Len and Judy Owings

Judy and I would like to share a little of our recent experience at the Gordon Reese Warming Hut. Our weekend outing began on Saturday morning when we arrived at the Chief Joseph parking lot. To our surprise it had not been plowed out yet and had a good six inches of new snow. While gearing up, the plows arrived and in short order had the lot cleaned. Now this may seem a moot point, but will be of interest later on. We proceeded to the Hut with what seemed a normal load of provisions, pulling them in on our toboggan with little effort. Being excited to begin our stay, Judy set up housekeeping while I shoveled about six inches of new snow off the path and decks. Not knowing what to expect in attendance, we were surprised to see our first guests arrive around 10:00 a.m. The weather was blustery and I thought we would have a slow day, so with our chores done, we set off for a short ski. Upon our return, we were surprised to see standing room only in the Hut. Thank goodness for Gordon and Mary Ellen, who had everything under control, with a good supply of hot water for cocoa and tea. The Hut was buzzing with good conversation and laughter. One group from Triple Creek commented on the good trails and overall gave the Chief Joseph area a thumbs up. This should be a good compliment to all who helped make it this way, and coming from people from out of state is a plus for us and Montana.

One guest from San Francisco had a life saving experience at the Hut. Halfway from the parking lot to the Hut she became very cold and weary and found it difficult to continue. Thank God she had a native Montanan with her because she was ready to lie down and quit. Her friend prodded her on to the Hut. Being from a warm climate and from sea level, she had no way of knowing what was happening to her. I noticed her sitting with a pale look and not entering into the conversation. I asked her where she was from, thinking she was just shy, and she began telling us what she had just experienced. I knew immediately that she was in the beginning stages of Hypothermia. This had happened only halfway in from the parking lot, so we all should take a lesson from this. Thanks to the Hut, she and her friend could warm up and complete their day of skiing on a good note. They came by later to say thanks.

Approximately 3:00 p.m. our guests, Ed and Winona Smart, arrived so we all decided to do another run. Upon our return we were greeted by yet another surprise. A young couple from Yellow Bay on Flathead Lake had come, mistakenly thinking that there was lodging available for the public, and they had planned on staying the night. Running into Gordon on the trail, they found out overnight accommodations were only for the Hosts and their guests, so they decided to pitch a tent nearby. We couldn't believe they were staying in a tent in the snow and told them if it got too tough to come into the Hut. We all had a great evening together playing dominos until late into the evening, then off they went into the snowy night. Being concerned, we had them in for a breakfast of pancakes, eggs and bacon. They had put in a real cold night but youth can ever prevail, and after breakfast, were off skiing. If not for the Hut, their weekend of skiing would not have happened.

What a delightful stay! The Hut was so nice and cozy and at night, with the light radiating from its windows, reminded us of a Thomas Kincade painting against the new snow.

How time flies, for now it's Monday morning and time to load up for the trip back to the parking lot. Much to our surprise, we awoke to a good eighteen inches of new snow. While Judy prepared breakfast I shoveled snow. The wind had blown our skis off the rack and they were buried, but I soon found them while shoveling. We loaded the toboggan and soon found that I couldn't pull it with my skis on. With Judy breaking trail and I pulling the toboggan, it was slow going until we met up with Gordon and his party. He was glad to see us, as we him, but he requested a better packed trail next time. With the trail broken, I could now don my skis and with Judy pushing, we made good time to the parking lot. What a surprise to see our truck! It was buried under two feet of snow. After taking pictures of it, we proceeded to shovel it out.

We had a great weekend, full of new friends and adventure, with the biggest snowfall of the year! And we would do it again in a heartbeat. Our only advice to future Hosts: PACK LIGHT!

Tony's Tips-Care of the waxless ski

Even though you thought that a waxless ski was one that didn't need any wax, you still need to take care of it. At least you don't have to put on kick wax, but you do need to apply a glide wax to keep them running smoothly. Using a glide wax also prevents the dreaded ice build-up so common this time of year. What happens is that there are larger temperature swings between the sunny meadows and the shady woods! These conditions are tricky, and it can be really cold and snowy one day and really sunny and warm the next. Fresh snow that has warmed up quickly is really sticky stuff and can change to hard and icy stuff the next day. It is hard not to blame the skis when they won't glide very well or you can't get a good grip. Unfortunately, this is just part of skiing in the late winter/early spring.

You can help make your skis glide more predictably by keeping them waxed for the different snow and weather conditions. There are a number of products on the market that are designed for waxless skis. The best way to wax the gliding zones of the ski (the tips and tails) is with the appropriate hot wax. If you are waxing in between hot waxes, there are wipe-on waxes that can be used on the kick zone (or fishscales) to keep you gliding better. An easier method that doesn't last quite as long (1-3 days average) is to use a wipe-on wax that is in a solvent base. After the solvent evaporates, it leaves the wax on the ski. The key to this type of wax is to let it dry after application, then polish it with a soft cloth or nylon brush to prevent a build-up of wax. This is especially important in the kick zone (fishscales) so that you continue to get good grip from your skis.

These waxes are made by either Swix or Toko, and are called Easy Glide or similar names. Lastly, there is a product called Maxi-Glide which is a really good springtime and wet snow condition wax. Unfortunately, it does wear off rather quickly, so it must be applied every time you use the skis.

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CABINET CREEK SKI TRIP

By Bob Schumacher

On Saturday, 16 February, under sunny skies and mid-30's temperatures six skiers from the Bitterroot and three from the Salmon area encountered excellent snow conditions to enjoy a delightful cross country ski trip from Chief Joseph Pass to Cabinet Creek. The 7-mile route goes 4 miles south on Anderson Mountain road for an altitude gain of 400 feet. It then turns east to go down the May Creek ridge for a mile and an altitude loss of 300 feet before turning north to continue 2 miles down Cabinet Creek to Highway 43 with a drop of 450 feet. (The sign says 3 miles, but it seemed more like 2 miles.)

The remains of a fairly recently killed snowshoe rabbit were observed on the trail in Cabinet Creek. It was not evident what kind of animal had made the kill, but whatever it was, it didn't leave much behind in the way of tracks or rabbit parts, which leads me to believe that the predator was some kind of bird.

As with the Scooter and May Creek one-way ski trips, this one requires a car shuttle back to Chief Joseph Pass.

The Bitterrooters on the trip were **Barbara Allen, Janis Cooper, Diane Glass, Si Lawrence, Bob Schumaker, and Darel Seibert**. Those from Salmon were current Forest Service employees **Tim Jones and Vickie Schmidt**, and retired forester and ski patroller **Cliff Keene**.

The women in the photograph are **Diane Glass** on the left and **Barbara Allen** on the right.

Tony's Tips - Continued

Maxi-Glide is not a very good wax to use in cold, dry snow conditions like we have in Jan. and Feb. If you use it during this time, your skis will be slow.

In addition to using the proper wax for the conditions, the condition of your ski can have a lot to do with glide. If your skis have had a rough life and have a lot of scratches in the base, they will be more prone to collecting ice compared to a smoother base. It's always a good idea to put a thick coat of wax on your skis when you are putting them up for the summer season. It keeps the bases protected and prevents the plastic from oxidizing (drying out) during the off-season.

I hope these tips will be helpful to you so that you may enjoy this warm and sunny (and variable) part of the ski season!

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

March 9, Saturday. Ski tour. Location to be determined. Call leader. Katya Merrell, 6423073.

March 15, Friday. Women's Ski Day. Learn new techniques or tune up some old ones. Meet 10:30 a.m. at the warming hut. Annie Creighton, 375-0852.

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.

March 29, Friday. 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.

Every Sunday ski the Chief Joseph Trails. Meet 10 am. 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.

SKI "EXCHANGE" By Mel Mooers

On a recent weekend, a lady discovered that the skis that she had rented were no longer in the rack at the Warming Hut. Someone had taken her skis despite the fact that they were a different make, length, came from a different rental shop and the bindings were different. Just how she managed to get her boots to accept the bindings, we don't know, but the lady missing her skis wasn't so lucky and had to walk back to the parking lot. Be careful that this doesn't happen to you.

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

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