



SKI TRACKS

Newsletter of the Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club
Box 431 • Corvallis, Montana 59828 April, 2005



EDITOR'S NOTE

Art Seifert, who preceded me as editor, has amiably agreed to substitute for me in putting out the next (May) Newsletter. Besides my being very relieved and appreciative, this excuses me from the unpleasant task of subjecting an unwilling substitute to either the KGVB persuasion ordeal (very unpleasant) or a timely Butte Irish St. Patrick's day conversion procedure, which would have been great fun for me but rather a harsh indoctrination, especially for a mild-mannered, reluctant subject.

Anyway, anyone wishing to get a message included in the bulletin next month should either call Art at 961-4411 or (preferably) e-mail him at: ajseifert@earthlink.net

MARCH, 2005 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH 10, 2005

BY KAY FULTON

Mel Mooers, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. There were approximately 38 in attendance. **Leo Joron reported a membership count of 347.**

Treasurer's Report by Jean Lippert: Income, \$5,945; Expenses, \$613.75; Net Income, \$5,331.25; Checking, \$10,104; Savings, \$1,878 (Donations for the Truck total \$3555 to the Club and \$1765 to RC & D)

Old Business:

Substitute for Dan Driscoll to do newsletter in April prompted "threats" from Dan but in fact **Art Seifert has graciously volunteered** to do the newsletter in April for May distribution. Send articles to him at ajseifert@earthlink.net. Thanks, Art.

New System for Filling Cabin Vacancies: Earl Phillips reported that there have been 7 vacancies reported ahead of time and he filled 6. He has 6 people on his list. Let him know if you want to be added to the list.

Trail Report: Trails are in great condition right now with new snow on Sunday & Monday, more predicted for the weekend. Gordon reported that the groomers will bring all of the equipment back tomorrow and will smooth out the trails if it will help. Just plan on crusty/icy snow in the mornings and soft snow into the afternoons. He suggested that if

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APRIL PROGRAM

Thursday, April 14, 2005

First Presbyterian Church

1220 West Main Street in Hamilton • 7:00 p.m.

The program will feature Ted Davidson, local author and expert on the Donner Party tragedy of 1846, talking about his extensive research and reasons for writing his historical novel "Donner-Reed Tragedy". Those attending are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items for Haven House.

Once again, Haven House extends its thanks and appreciation to the ski club and individuals who have contributed items for distribution to those who are less fortunate.

MESSAGE FROM SONNY

Dear Ski Club Members

Some recent activities and communications have prompted your leadership to take a look at the concept of "customer service". Businesses should do this on a regular basis as their economic well being depends on customer satisfaction, but government agencies and clubs like ours should also be concerned about meeting customer expectations.

The basic question is, are we meeting your expectations in the product we provide? That product is the experience at Chief Joe Ski Area, primarily the groomed trails.

Our primary customers are you, the Ski Club members, and there are about 400+ of you. We learned this year that there are many more users of Chief Joe that are not Club members and they are also customers, but direct communication with them is more difficult.

In April 1996 a customer satisfaction survey was distributed to 157 Club members and 42 surveys were completed representing 57 members. I have read the summary and the results are interesting. It has been 9 years and Club membership has changed and doubled, so is it time for another survey?

We need to discuss the survey question and the concept of meeting customer expectations after the program at the April 14 meeting.

Discussion topics, along with the survey will include:

The Club objective of providing a quality skiing experience at no cost with an emphasis on families;

The cost of grooming includes the direct cost of equipment, gas, oil and the impact to our volunteer groomers;

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Message from President - continued from page 1

Our agreement with the Forest Service, especially our commitment to maintain the groomed trail width on the upper trails where trees were felled last fall for safety reasons. We will not widen the width of the groomed trails in these areas!

I encourage you to attend the meeting and let us know if we are meeting your expectations and your views on the discussion topics. If you can't attend please communicate with me via email or phone calls. Our organization is no different from many others where less than 10% of the membership run the organization, and you don't hear from the others unless they are unhappy about something. It would be really nice to change that behavior every now and then.

We will also vote on a motion to apply for a State Recreation Trails grant to pay for new trail junction maps (\$2,000.00) and a new piece of grooming equipment (\$3,300.00).

Patty and Arlee will be there to tell us about the new Forest Service reservation system and how it may affect us.

Remember, we have a much better chance of meeting your expectations when we know what they are!

Sonny

ANNUAL MONTANA WILDERNESS HIKE

Cheryl Kikkert will lead the annual Montana Wilderness Hike on Father's Day, June 19, to Castle Rock. Anyone interested can reach Cheryl by calling 825-6955.

Membership Renewals / DUES

Annual Memberships EXPIRE November 1!

Renew your membership now!

INDIVIDUAL - \$15 • FAMILY - \$25

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL - \$30

SUPPORTING FAMILY - \$40

LIFE MEMBER - \$500

Membership Dues

Nov. 1, 2004 - Oct. 31, 2005

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: _____

(Listed above)

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Newsletter preference: (Check all that apply)

Send by USPS _____; Send by e-mail _____

SNOW SHOE ALERT

I recently snow shod up into the Sahara from a parking area off Highway 43. Things were going well until I took a step and noticed that the binding was still attached to my boot, but the snow shoe wasn't. The bindings had been "pop" riveted on and both rivets had broken. I was glad that the snow wasn't any deeper and the rivets on both shoes have been replaced with stainless steel bolts. How are your bindings attached? It might pay to look.

Mel Mooers

RAFFLE TICKETS FOR TRUCK FUND

By Pat Hastings

I'm still selling raffle tickets to benefit the Truck Fund: a dinner-for-two at the Big Hole Crossing Restaurant in Wisdom. Tickets are \$5.00 each. The drawing will be at the May meeting (May 12th). This raffle is helping to build a great nest egg for our truck project. The Big Hole Restaurant dinner is a popular premium and tickets are selling well - but your chances of winning are still a lot better than the Power Ball!

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you are looking for good skiing go to Shoofly and Cabinet Creek and ski on the crust.

Truck Fund: Pat Hastings reported that she has allocated \$5.00 from each donation to the raffle tickets for the Big Hole dinner. So far that adds up to \$1340 generated by the raffle. **Earl Phillips** reported that the committee is working on another grant application for a Ravalli Resource Advisory grant worth \$3000. **Gordon reported that there will be a Grant Writing Workshop by Bob Walker on March 25th from 1 to 3.** He encouraged people to contact Sonny and to go to the workshop. Gordon said that people need to be involved but they need to know that it can take more than 45 hours to write a grant plus time to gather materials and make contacts. Even then it takes a long time to find out if a proposal has been accepted. Patty Johnson from the Forest Service in Wisdom wrote a grant for new junction maps for \$2500 and had to wait 6 or 7 months to find out that it wasn't funded. The Forest Service gets about \$750,000 per year for trails projects. Recently the Bitterroot Ridge Runners applied for a grant and were not funded. It's hard to know what rationale the grant committees are using.

Program: Steve Slocomb, a local videographer, presented the wonderful video he made about the history, botany and cultural aspects of The Bitterroot Plant. Steve explained the process he went through to research and make the film. The program had just been aired on PBS but many people who had seen it the night before thoroughly enjoyed seeing it again, as did the rest of us. Steve was able to borrow a very good projector from the Ravalli County Bank, which made the video extremely clear and vibrant.

EXTRAVAGANZA 2005

By Toddy Perryman and Patrick Leonard

Well, the Extravaganza was truly extravagant. The only thing in short supply was fluffy snow. But there was enough snow to ski on under sunny skies.

After the afternoon skiing on Friday the 4th of March, we got to the cabin about 5:30 to find our friends Doug Soehren and Joetta Lawrence who had gotten there a little bit earlier. The table was already set with china and stemware, candles and flowers. It was an attractive table setting, and it made it feel even more like a chalet than a cabin.

We set out the hors d'oeuvres, consisting of a beautiful plate of vegetables with a nice yogurt dip, a selection of olives, tortilla chips and a delicious mango/papaya/lime juice dip. Then we set about eating up all the goodies and visiting with our friends whom we hadn't seen for quite a while.

While the hors d'oeuvres were being consumed, the dinner was baking. It turned out perfectly. We had 'no-fry catfish,' a recipe from the 'Sundays at Moosewood' cookbook. It was very easy and very yummy. The catfish, a bit of lemon juice, and some spices were coated with crumbled cornbread that had been sautéed with garlic. It was a big hit with everybody. We had some great rice pilaf with it and Linda Oeters had surprised us by providing some of her broccoli salad. We first had this salad at the last ski club potluck meeting, and we now call it 'Pat's favorite broccoli salad.'

Well, you can imagine that after feasting on this dinner, we would have to take a bit of a break before eating dessert. So we got out Doug and Joetta's dominoes and learned how to play Mexican Railroad.

After playing for a while we decided that we could now tackle the dessert. So we got out the ice cream, which Annie had so carefully packed in a small cooler with dry ice. It was frozen so hard that we could not spoon it up! We had to work at it with a sharp knife for a while to serve it up with the fabulous huckleberry pie. Thanks so much to Earl and Karen Philips for supplying the berries for the pie. That was really generous of you! And thanks to Kay's Pies for baking the pie. What a treat it was.

In the morning we awoke to another sunny day. We skied for a while, then came back to the cabin to eat up the leftovers from the night before. We finished up everything except a few of the hors d'oeuvres. What luxurious feasting!

Thanks Annie and Tony for creating this opportunity for the ski club members. We recommend that you all get tickets for next year's extravagant feast. It will surely be worth it. (And remember- we bought \$20 in tickets this year. It was worth it!)

RELATIONSHIPS

By Art Seifert

We hear a lot about relationships and their attributes, all the way from Mars / Venus issues between the sexes to "The Special Relationship" that has kept Americans and Brits together through some pretty difficult times. Of course, quality can differ substantially. You can have a (lower-case "r") relationship with the guy who fixes your car far too often, and you can have a (capital "R") Relationship with your dog, who brightens your dullest days. Can a voluntary association, like the BRXC Ski Club, that is not even a de jure legal entity, have relationships? Apparently, yes, but in keeping with the general rule, the quality will depend on the individuals on both sides.

The BRXC Ski Club has come a long way since its inception, due largely to the efforts and devotion of its officers. They have invested a good deal of personal time, finan-

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cial resources, energy and frustration in achieving the Club's mission. In particular, they have ably and conscientiously developed and managed what is surely the Club's most important institutional relationship - that with the U. S. Forest Service.

Talk about a Mars / Venus dichotomy! Yet, on the Forest Service side, Dennis Havig, in working with the Club on Chief Joseph matters, has similarly managed his USFS powers, duties and responsibilities ably and conscientiously, and the Chief Joseph cross-country ski facility, and the public, have benefitted.

Yet, it is clear that to go from a (lower-case "r") relationship to a (capital "R") Relationship, something more than transactions is required. Both parties need to have a certain commonality - of purpose, vision, attitude, and a sense of commitment, partnership and participation. Hispanics

come pretty close with the concept "simpático" which implies the ability to sense in the "other" distress or dissonance, and to respond in a way that brings the "other" closer and builds goodwill.

The Club has certainly had some distress and dissonance recently in our relationship with the Forest Service, wherein technical, contractual and legal liability issues have arisen that have upset well established task sharing and work practices. Although the issues were local, not global, I think it is not too strong to say that Mr. Havig's handling of the contractual and work practices issues was statesmanlike. Further, his personal contribution to the Club's "Truck Fund" and his wife Diane's donation of the Big Hole Crossing Restaurant dinner-for-two premium were both, I thought, simpático.

I, and I'm sure, many other rank and file members of the Club, appreciate Dennis' and Diane's attitude and actions, and on behalf of many I say to them, *mil gracias* for a (capital "R") Relationship.

