



SKI TRACKS

Newsletter of the Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club

Box 431 • Corvallis, Montana 59828 March, 2003



FEBRUARY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

By Kay Fulton

President Sonny LaSalle called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. There were approximately 59 people in attendance. **The Treasurer's Report** for the month was \$2750.65 Income, \$1342.60 Expenses, \$1412.05 Net Income, \$3279.97 in Checking and \$4527.98 in Savings.

Trails Report: Gordon Reese reported that there were 55 students for the ski lessons in January. Thanks to all the volunteer instructors. 950 people signed in this last month, up 5% from last year.

Hosting Information: Avoid creating tunnels when shoveling to the outhouse. The groomers have leveled one side so please keep it open. When mopping the floor be sure to get all the excess water up. If you cannot host on the day you are scheduled, PLEASE, try to find a replacement. Call a friend and/or spread the word. **Do not call the Ranger Station** since they can't do anything about it. **If Skiers arrive at the cabin and discover no overnight host, please start the fire and put on water.**

Upcoming Events: March 15th starting at 6:30 p.m. there will be a cooperative Moonlight Program with the Bitterroot National Forest, entitled "Moonbeams and Snowflakes." The public will be invited to come up to Chief Joe for a moonlight ski or snowshoe with an educational program. The Club will have speakers as well as the Forest Service. The Club will provide hot chocolate and treats.

Items of Interest: **There was a recent meeting with representatives of the Club, Forest Service and the Bitterroot Ridge Runners (snowmobile club) to discuss recent concerns about snowmobiler/cross country skier problems.** The problems have not been at Chief Joe but were primarily involving Anderson Mountain, Trail Creek and Hogan's Cabin areas. As a result the Forest Service posted a sign on Wednesday at Anderson for no snowmobiling. Trail Creek is private and they will try to stop its use. Hogan's is open to the public so they will try to work on some kind of trail to move the activity away from the cabin. Currently there is just an agreement that there will

In Memoriam

By Patti Eldredge

We were deeply saddened to learn that on November 15, 2002, long-time ski club member Marge Thornburgh was killed in a private plane accident in Baja California. She is survived by her husband, Dick Thornburgh, who was at their home in Hamilton at the time. Marge loved to ski, both cross-country and downhill, and loved to hike and identify wildflowers. She participated in many of the club's hiking outings over the years, and liked to go to the potlucks at Lake Como. We will miss her quiet elegance and warm friendship.

MARCH MEETING Thursday, March 13, 2003, 7:00 p.m. First Presbyterian Church 1220 West Main St. Hamilton

Program: An exciting slide presentation by Francesca Marucco on "Skiing and Wolves in the Italian Alps". Francesca has spent most of her life in the valleys and rugged mountains of northwestern Italy, and will talk about her skiing adventures in the Italian Alps and the challenges of studying Italy's shy mountain wolves.

be no snowmobiling at Chief Joe. If problems develop there may be a need for something more formal.

The Ski Patrol reported that there continues to be some problems with people skiing the wrong way on the trails. It was suggested that we might need more obvious signage. Gordon suggested that education is the key and we should all assist by informing people.

Sonny reported that there is some discussion of having a \$5.00 charge for hosting the cabin in order to defray some of the expenses for the Forest Service. There was no decision at this time.

Program: Toddy Perryman and Pat Leonard presented a fascinating program on sea kayaking around the Broughton Islands off the northeast coast of Vancouver Island. They had great slides of their 40-day journey including pictures of the fjords, wildlife, campsites, seascapes, and "their boat!" Thanks!

WALK BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON

By Sonny LaSalle

There will be an exciting opportunity in March at Chief Joe for all us hardy skiers. We have entered into a partnership with the Forest Service to participate in their successful Walk By The Light Of The Moon environmental education series. We will have a Moonbeams and Snowflakes Moon walk / ski on March 15th at the Chief Joe Ski Area. The presentations will start around 6:30 PM at the top of Picnic Meadow along the trail into the Warming Hut. There will be a full moon so it will be a great opportunity to see the area at night. In case of bad weather the three programs will be done in the Hut. The talks will be: Role of Fire in Lodgepole Ecosystems, Relationship of Lynx & Snowshoe Hare in Lodgepole Ecosystems and Winter Snow Safety by our own Diane Glass. There will be hot chocolate and a warm fire in the Hut so plan to have fun and gain some knowledge about the ecosystem surrounding our Hut and how to be safe in winter recreation activities. Please plan on using skis or snowshoes to travel along the trails.

JANUARY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

January 9, 2003

By Kay Fulton

President Sonny LaSalle called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. There were approximately 90 people in attendance. The Treasurer's Report for the month was \$2291 Income, \$1837.03 Expenses, \$453.97 Net Income, \$1502.92 in Checking, \$4508.64 in Savings. Collections were \$704 from the Trail head and \$142 from the Hut. Mary Ellen Reese reported that another \$2000 will be coming from the maps and Annie Creighton reported that \$550 was raised by the race.

Items of Interest: Leo Joron reported a current membership of 378. Sonny LaSalle stills has the camera that was found at the Hut the day of the race. **Pat Hastings announced that the proposed Alice Creek trip is off for the time being due to lack of snow.** During the meeting Annie Creighton continued to sell tickets for the February 7th Extravaganza. (SEE BELOW FOR THE WINNER!) **Judy LaSalle was applauded for temporarily filling the secretary position.**

Trails Report: Gordon Reese reported that there is a 35" base with 5" new snow this past week. All trails are being groomed on Fridays starting around 8:30 by volunteer groomers who do a great job. They groom all but two trails going the same directions skiers "should" be skiing. The two exceptions are Joseph Creek and Middle Fork where they go the opposite direction. Skiers should move off the trail to let the groomers pass. They begin setting track about 1:00 pm. Skiing the track is probably best on Saturday morning. The parking lot has now been plowed.

Attention Skate Skiers: If skiing Fridays, Gordon "strongly" encouraged skate skiers to ski between 9:00 and 1:00 (before the track is set). He suggested bringing classic skis for the remainder of the day. Thanks for your cooperation.

Upcoming Events: The Annual Ski Lessons will be held January 18 & 19. Participants are to be there before 12:30. Lessons will begin at 1:00 pm. As reported last month, on March 15th the Club will host a Forest Service "Moonlight Event." It will be a partnership for education. Mel Mooers reported that the Rocky Mountaineers have invited the BXC Ski Club to join them on January 25th to snowshoe or ski with skins to the top of Mt. Fiji, which overlooks Lolo Pass.

**THE WINNER OF THE EXTRAVAGANZA IS
MEL MOOERS!!
Congratulations!**

Program: Gordon first introduced Brett Pence, manager of the Missoula REI, and spoke briefly about the REI Coop. Then Brett introduced **Danny Heineman of the Yellowstone Expeditions**, who mesmerized us with a slide show of the fantastic expeditions led by this 20 year old company. The slides showed the yurt camp, cross country skiing in awesome country, geysers, hot pots, wild animals, snow scenes, etc. The photography was outstanding. The company can be reached at (406) 646-9333 or (800) 728-9333. www.YellowstoneExpeditions.com. Great Program!

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING IN CENTRAL

IDAHO

By Sonny and Judy LaSalle

We thought we would share some information with you about opportunities for cross-country skiing in the McCall, Idaho area. We lived there for six years and it is truly a winter sports paradise. McCall is about a seven-hour drive from Hamilton and a 45-minute flight. There is one major ski resort, Brundage Mountain, that has lots of Nordic and alpine opportunities. They have a snow cat skiing program that provides access to some outstanding terrain and opportunities for powder. There are now four cross-country areas in the Valley and two of those are State Parks. Ponderosa State Park is adjacent to McCall and Payette Lake with outstanding views of the lake and mountains. The Little Ski Hill Nordic Area provides about 30 kilometers of groomed trails with lots of skate skiing opportunities and it is only two miles from McCall. There are two new areas in the Valley, one private area at Donnelly with 20 kilometers of trails and Little Cascade State Park on Lake Cascade. We had one normal snow year in six years, and there were five feet of snow as a peak depth on our back deck in late February, so there is lots of the white stuff to in which to play. Information about lodging and numbers to call follows.

McCall Area Chamber of Commerce: 1-800-260-5130;
www.inidaho.com for information and central reservations.
Ponderosa State Park, McCall: 1-208-634-2164.
Tamarack Resort, Donnelly, south of McCall: 1-208-325-8409. Little Ski Hill, McCall: 1-208-634-5691. Lake Cascade State Park, Cascade, south of McCall: 1-208-382-4258

Membership Renewals / DUES

Annual Memberships EXPIRE November 1!

Renew your membership now!

INDIVIDUAL - \$10 • FAMILY - \$20

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL - \$25

SUPPORTING FAMILY - \$35

LIFE MEMBER - \$100

Membership Dues

Nov. 1, 2002 - Oct. 31, 2003

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 _____

AN ARCHEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY AT CHIEF JOE?

By Art Seifert

In the coastal desert of southern Peru, near the present-day town of Nazca, about 1500 to 2000 years ago, someone created a huge network of lines or paths on the surface of the earth. These geoglyphs or Nazca Lines, as they are known, extend over an area of many square kilometers, and form patterns or images that are clearly recognizable when viewed from the air. The origin and purpose of the Nazca Lines has baffled archeologists ever since their discovery in 1927.

Some people apparently believe that a similar phenomenon occurs each year in the Bitterroot. Every winter, when the snow gets a couple of feet deep, there suddenly appears at Chief Joe a network of paired, parallel lines or tracks in the snow. These believers haven't a clue as to the origin or purpose of these lines, and in their ignorance sometimes trample and destroy them with footprints, snowshoe tracks and sled runners. A few, however, acknowledge that they are handy to have, because one's skis fit nicely into the tracks and they enhance the Nordic skiing experience. Who, or what - creates them? What could be the purpose? Are

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Website	http://www.bitterrootxcskiclub.net	
Warming Hut Reservations (USFS Wisdom)		689-3371

they some kind of solstice celebration - (they appear in December, after all) or do they have a pagan religious or fertility significance?

Your Newsletter investigative team will look into this matter further, and have a report in the next Newsletter. Meantime, please refrain from disturbing or obliterating these lines / tracks so as not to interfere with the investigation. If you have any information or ideas as to the origin or purpose of the "Chief Joe Lines" please drop a line to us at the Club's POB. To stimulate your thinking on this matter, we offer some hypotheses for your consideration: Perhaps the Chief Joe Lines are created by:

1. The Montana Department of Highways
2. Belgians in Black Helicopters
3. The Forest Service
4. The Christian Right
5. The Islamist Left
6. Ted Turner

MARCH SKI TOURS By Darel Seibert

Saturday March 8; **Darel Seibert** will lead a tour of Anderson Mountain road to Cabinet Creek. Meet at Northwest Energy Parking Lot at 9:00 AM to car pool or CJP at 10:00 AM. This is an intermediate/advanced, about 7 miles, bring lunch, ten essentials, shuttle will be arranged from Cabinet Creek parking lot back to CJP. 375-1999 to confirm.

Saturday March 15, 10:00AM; **Katya Merrell** will lead an easy ski up Gash Creek. Meet at Liquor Store in Victor. Confirm with Katya @ 642-3073. Lunch at Hamilton House after?

Saturday March 15, 6:30-7:00 PM; **"Moonbeam & Snowflakes Ski"** with Forest Service representative(s). Public information seminar on: (1) Role of Fire in Lodgepole Systems; (2) Predator / Prey with Lynx & Snowshoe Hare; (3) Winter Safety & Avalanche Awareness. Meet at CJP. Hot drinks available at Hut with Mel Mooers afterwards; 961-3163.

Saturday March 22, 7:00PM; Moonlight ski at Chief Joe trails with **Janis Cooper**. Confirm @ 363-0019.

Anyone wanting to lead excursion(s) in upcoming Spring/Summer should call **Darel Seibert** @ 375-1999 so they can be published in upcoming newsletters. Because of questionable snow conditions ski tours won't be scheduled ahead of time after March. Call Darel to ask. Short notice trips are possible as conditions allow. Happy trails



TONY'S TIPS

By Tony Neaves

The Never Ending Learning Curve Of Skiing

Nordic skiing is a sport that you can do simply by “walking” around, but to go beyond that takes a lot of practice and time on skis. Most folks start by learning from their friends or relatives. The only problem with this is you only get as good as they are and if their technique involves a lot of bad habits, then you get to learn those too! Improper technique is easy to learn but very hard to “un-learn”. Just because someone has been doing it a certain way for years doesn’t mean that it is the right way. Also, changing from older or entry level equipment to more glide biased skis requires learning a more refined technique. This would include the correct body position, better timing, and a COMPLETE weight transfer.

When I first started as a nordic ski instructor, I had been skiing for 20 years. I thought that I knew it all and didn’t need any pointers! During the try-outs and training, my boss had just one thing to say - “Tony, you have one solid back-country shuffle, but you have a long way to go in your striding ability!” That was 12 years ago and I’m still working on improving my technique.

When we travel to races and events around the region, we try to take advantage of every clinic or class that is offered. There is no end to what you can improve on, and it is always helpful to have someone who is a better skier give you a pointer. A really great way to get some tips and instruction locally is to attend our club’s free lesson week-end, which happens every January. These lessons are fun, informative, and are NOT just for beginners! Sometimes, it takes the right person to point out one or two little things, that will create a major breakthrough in your technique.

Just remember that there is never an end to the learning process when it comes to nordic skiing. You can always work on and improve your technique. That simple fact is what makes the sport so interesting and fun. To make things even easier, there have been some tremendous improvements in equipment, waxes, and instruction techniques over the years. Take advantage of it. You might just find that skiing will become easier and more enjoyable for you. Happy trails!

Chief Joe Ski Area Etiquette

By Miss Manners

Trails:

- Obey the one way rule on the trails. The rule is for **YOUR** (and everyone else’s) **SAFETY**!
- Step out of the tracks and leave plenty of room for other skiers if you plan on stopping for a while.
- Don’t stop at the bottom of steep hills, trail run-outs or around blind corners, as other skiers will be coming along. Some of these skiers will be coming at a high rate of speed whether they planned on it or not.

- If you choose to ski on extremely fat skis (i.e., back-country telemark or AT gear), stay out of the tracks! These skis don’t fit the tracks and will virtually wipe them out for others.

- When pulling a sled into the cabin or hauling a child around, stay out of the tracks! See above

- Remember, tracks will ski back in after it snows. Don’t assume that since it snowed, it doesn’t matter what you do, like pull a sled over a snow covered track, for example.

- Be alert to other skiers overtaking you and be polite to skiers when you are passing them.

- Do not walk on the tracks. This wrecks the trails and makes it very difficult for whoever has to follow your path of destruction.

Warming Cabin:

- Leave all equipment outside. This would include skis, poles, snowshoes, and sleds. There is ample room on the porch if you want your stuff protected from the elements.

- Pack it in, Pack it out is the rule. Please don’t leave your lunch trash in the cabin. Our volunteers and hut hosts are not your mothers!

- Wipe up any mess you make in the kitchen area and / or tables. See above

- A word about children. They are great as long as they are supervised every second in and around the cabin! The hut is not a day care center. And please be aware of the dangers of the snow that can and will slide off the roof on either side of the cabin.

- Water and paper products are brought in by the **VOL-UNTEER** grooming crew once a week. Make their lives easier by conserving these items! If you are a regular cabin visitor, why not carry a small insulated mug in your day pack and use it in place of a paper cup?

- Keep track of your equipment as there are a lot of similar looking models. Make sure you grab the right skis and poles when you are at the cabin.

Parking Lot:

- A word about dogs. Please do not let your dog run loose in the parking lot. Not everyone is overjoyed to meet them. It is quite annoying when a dog pees on your ski bag, or worse, gets in a fight with another loose dog. How about using a leash until you get over onto the Anderson trail? And most importantly, pick up your dog’s poop pile before some unsuspecting person either steps in it or has the joy of cleaning it off their skis.

- Do not dump trash from your car or from your overnight cabin stay in the can by the outhouse. Again, the facilities are maintained by our wonderful grooming crew and we all need to make their job easier.

Enjoy the outdoors!