



# MOUNTAIN EAR

Monthly Newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers

The Rocky Mountaineers is organized as a nonprofit Club for the mutual benefit of its members to promote all phases of recreational use of mountainous areas.

\*\*\*January 2004\*\*\*



## Upcoming Event

**WHAT:** Grizzly Bear  
Slideshow

**WHEN:** Wednesday,  
January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004  
7:00 P.M.

**WHERE:** Second Floor  
Conference Room #201  
Court House Annex  
201 West Pine St.  
Missoula, MT

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Call Julie Warner at (406) 543-6508  
or Steve Schombel at (406) 721-4686

### Explore the world of Grizzly Bears

Join us for an informative and educational slideshow with great pictures and interesting facts about wild grizzly bears in Montana. The 30-45 minute show encompasses everything from general bear biology to discussing the issues that currently threaten this great American symbol of wilderness and its habitat. Children are welcome. Free and open to all.

This show is produced by the Sierra Club, and will be narrated by Bob Clark, Director of the Western Montana Office

## Trip Reports

**December 6<sup>th</sup>:** The moonlight ski trip was a blast as usual, I only wish more people would join us. It was raining in Missoula, but Karen, my husband Joe, and a young fellow named Mark Matule joined me for brauts, chile and hot chocolate and Schnapps at the parking lot at Lolo Pass. The roads were well sanded (actually gravel would be the best description) and although the moon was obscure we used our headlamps and skied the small Xcountry loop. It was fantastically quiet and the snow was a dream. Lesson to be learned!!!! You can't judge what is going on at the pass from Missoula. The last 2 miles to the pass tells the tale. Remember the pass is in a snow belt and usually gets dumped on when it is raining in town. - Lois Crepeau

**December 7<sup>th</sup> Lolo Pass Ski:** Three feet of snow at Lolo Pass greeted beginning skiers: Gharrett Warner (9), Mike Bowles (11), John Wolverton, Hari Ann, and Yong Kim of South Korea, on Sun. Dec. 7th. Experienced skiers Julie Warner, Steve Schombel, Cathy Burleson, Charles Tree and David Kahl were glad to escort the beginners around the Glade Creek Loop, and, after a pleasant lunch in the sun and snow, to have them try their luck on some small hills. First ski experiences don't get better than that. - Julie

**December 14<sup>th</sup> Ski Day:** Karen, Bridgett, Susan Waters, and Susan's friend Rebecca and I skied Lolo Pass for awhile. The conditions were great. Later Karen and I parted company with the gals and headed down the highway to ski/snow shoe to where Karen had tagged her Christmas tree the week before. I hadn't planned on cutting my tree, but found one I couldn't resist. Well..... let me tell you, once I had it cut and rolled down to the road it was much bigger than I expected. Thank goodness I didn't have to drag it very far, but I did have to take off my skis and walk because the damn thing kept trying to run me over. It is a beautiful tree and Joe only had to cut two feet of the butt of it to get it in the house. Brewski's and popcorn at Lolo Pass was the reward for a job well done. FUN DAY!!!!!! - Lois Crepeau

**December 21<sup>st</sup> Hole-in-the-Wall:** A diverse group of 8 met promptly at the Fish Creek exit for the 17 mile ride up a well plowed road to Clearwater Crossing, where many trails head into the Great Burn proposed wilderness area. There was good snow cover, on a generally flat trail, running along the West Fork of Fish Creek. The group's success in skiing was really predicated on micro-contours and microclimates, a fancy way of saying there were small bumps and ice patches that created several stumblings, but few grumblings, among the group. Shorter skis seemed better in negotiating through the relatively narrow troughs of the trail.

Some of the group had a quick drink at the Hole in the Wall Lodge just 1 mile below the trail. Though closed in winter, they do have a caretaker who was readily available to open the bar area for us. We also saw a bald eagle swooping for easy pickings in a small pond stocked with fish.

The good humored participants were Jim Goss, John Q. Murray, Brian Moore, Susan Walker, John Wolverton, Steve Schombel, Bret Doucette, and Julie Warner. - Jim

**December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2003 Lee Creek Snowshoe:** Fred Schwanemann, Steve Schombel, Cathy Burleson, Michael Bowles, Yong Kim, and Lois Crepeau did the Lee Creek Interpretive Trail counter clockwise on snow shoes. The snow showers went from heavy to light. We took a unique path across the clear-cut on top of the ridge but picked up the trail again for the way down. It was a pleasant day. - Fred

### CLUB CONTACTS

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### Help the club and the Grizzlies

Please take the front page meeting notice and paste it up or pass it around among your friends.

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### A Big Thank You

To Richard and Josh Hurd for a second annual contribution to the cabin fund. Way to go!

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND LIABILITY WAIVER

Family Yearly Membership: \$13.00  
Make checks payable to: "Rocky Mountaineers"  
and send to: Rocky Mountaineers  
P.O. Box 4262  
Missoula, MT. 59806

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read this release and indemnity agreement and have fully informed myself of its contents before I have signed it.

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian if Participant is Under 18 Years of Age \_\_\_\_\_

I, (print name) \_\_\_\_\_ hereby state that I wish to participate in courses and/or activities offered by The Rocky Mountaineers, a non-profit organization. I recognize any outdoors activity may involve certain dangers, including but not limited to the hazards of traveling in mountainous terrain, accidents or illness in remote places, forces of nature, and the actions of participants and other persons. I further understand and agree that without some program providing protection of its assets and its leaders, the Rocky Mountaineers would not be able to offer its courses and activities. In consideration of and as part payment for the right to participate in the activities offered by The Rocky Mountaineers, I agree to RELEASE, HOLD HARMLESS, AND INDEMNIFY The Rocky Mountaineers and its members from any and all liability, claims and causes of action arising out of or in any way connected with my participation, or the participation of any minor that I am signing on behalf of, in any activities offered by The Rocky Mountaineers. I personally assume all risks in connection with these activities. If I am signing on behalf of a minor, I further agree to RELEASE, HOLD HARMLESS, AND INDEMNIFY The Rocky Mountaineers and its members from any liability, claims and cause of action, which the minor may have arising from the minor's participation in activities. The terms of this agreement shall serve as a release and indemnity agreement for my heirs, personal representative, and for all members of my family, including any minors. (Parents or Legal Guardians must sign for all persons under eighteen (18) years of age).

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### TONY'S TIPS by Tony Neaves

#### SNOW

It's that magic stuff that we love to slide on! If you've ever wondered why the Eskimo's have many different words for snow, all you have to do is notice how different it can be from one day to the next. One week your skis are running great, the next you get the dreaded 3" snow build up otherwise known as "high heels". Welcome to the world of changing snow conditions. Snow is affected by many factors - mainly by what the weather was like when it fell and what it's like now. It can go from one extreme to another - from cold and dry to wet and sticky. Different climates and regions will produce radically different types of snow such as Colorado's "champagne" powder vs. California's "Sierra cement!" Typically, coastal mountains have snow that carries a much higher moisture content than inland mountain ranges. As storms pass across the continent and over mountain ranges and desert plains, they lose much of their moisture so dryer snow falls in the inland mountains.

Our local ski trails seem to collect mostly wetter snow that can be tricky to wax for, but makes for a tremendous, high moisture snowpack. We do also get a fair amount of cold, dry snow that is very abrasive to ski on - it's almost like skiing on sand. It takes a very hard wax to make skis slide on it. Very wet snow can be slow to ski on also because of the water present and the suction it creates on the base of the ski. For many of the different snow conditions, there are as many waxing strategies that can help make your skis glide a little or a lot better! So if you have ever experienced the dreaded "high heel" snow build up, it may be time to have your skis waxed, or to look into getting a wipe-on liquid wax designed for waxless skis. If you would like to learn more about snow, snow crystals, and the fact that yes, every flake is different - check out this website: [snowcrystals.com](http://snowcrystals.com). Til next time, enjoy the snow!

*Reprinted from Ski Tracks, the newsletter of the Bitterroot X-C Ski Club.*

## Upcoming Trips

**January 10<sup>th</sup> Cookout and Moonlight Ski:** Come up to Lolo Pass for another tailgate type cookout. Bring your own eats and utensils and maybe a little to share. Then enjoy the abundance of snow and some of the gentle terrain and ski under the slightly past full moon. Call Lois Crepeau at 728-5321 for the meeting time and place and other details.

**January 17-18<sup>th</sup> West Glacier:** Spend a night or two in Hungry Horse or West Glacier and check out some of the ski touring along MacDonald Creek or nearby. Participants will probably need to make their own sleeping arrangements and have transportation. But call, there might be some room in someone's car. Steve Schombel is the coordinator at 721-4686.

**January 25<sup>th</sup> Pack Creek Trail:** This is an eight mile route along a groomed snowmobile track from Lolo Pass to the Brushy Fork in Idaho. Motorized traffic is usually light, especially past the Moose Pass Junction. The grade is gentle. When conditions are right it is a very pleasant downhill glide. Call Fred Schwanemann at 542-7372 for more information.

**February 1<sup>st</sup> Kid's Ski and Sled Day:** This will be another day for all ages at Lolo Pass. We hope to have enough participation to split into two groups. The younger kids can head to the sledding hill while the older can join a group skiing along one of the many trails in the area. Snowshoeing and snow boarding are other options. Call Julie Warner at 543-6508 for info.

**February 6 or 7<sup>th</sup>:** This is a full moon weekend, and someone will surely be leading a moonlight ski. One neat option is to meet after dinner and ski as far as one wants up the Blue Mountain Road. The lights of the city below are spectacular. Call one of the trip leaders on this page or check the Mountain High column in the *Independent* to see what's happening.

**February 18<sup>th</sup> Moose Pass Loop:** This 14 mile loop with its ups and downs takes some ski conditioning. It is usually groomed during the week, and motorized traffic is rare at mid week, or traffic of any kind. Since it is on a Wednesday we are giving advanced notice. Fred Schwanemann is the leader at 542-7372.



**Rocky Mountaineers**  
**P. O. Box 4262**  
**Missoula, MT 59806**

**FIRST CLASS POSTAGE**