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# SUMMIT HUTS ASSOCIATION HUTMASTERS' JOURNAL

A NEWSLETTER AND UPDATE FOR FRIENDS OF SUMMIT HUTS

## VIKINGS CONQUER 4TH ANNUAL BACKCOUNTRY BALL

The Maggie Restaurant in Breckenridge was the scene of this year's pillaging and plundering of auction tables, esoteric food offerings and liquid libations that is known by some as the Backcountry Ball. The Maggie was taken by storm by various bands of Vikings and hordes of Norwegian sweater wearing marauders and conquerors large and small, a raucous good time was had by all and the evening was deemed a success.

And what a success it was, the aforementioned plundering of auction items yielded over \$8500 for SHA's Youth Education Fund. This fund, which began and has been sustained with grants from The Summit Foundation, allows SHA to offer the huts to nonprofit, educational groups at discounted rates for their own programs and also subsidizes programs run for local groups by the Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center, the Keystone Science School and others. The Youth Education Fund now has more than \$10,000 in it, so if you are involved with a nonprofit or educational group and are

feeling brave enough to take your group to a hut, give us a call and we'll work with you to make that happen.

In keeping with the tradition begun last year, SHA honored Summit County Ski Pioneers with Lifetime Memberships. This year's recipients of the Honorary Lifetime Memberships were Max and Edna Dercum, who were instrumental in the founding of both Arapahoe Basin and Keystone Ski Areas.

Special thanks go out to the Breckenridge Ski Area for being the presenting sponsor of the event for the fourth year in a row, donating both the venue and the food. Many thanks also to Jay Bauer for emceeing, to Slipstream for setting the tone of the evening, to event sponsor Alpine Bank and to all of the many auction donors who came through in a big way and made ours the best silent auction around for the second year in a row. If you missed all the fun this year, we hope that you'll join us next year!



L-R: Bill & Lisa Souba Stylishly Attired for the Scandinavian Evening; The Younger Set Enjoys the Live Auction; Volunteers Caren Mapes & Leslie Ross Working Hard  
(Photos by Maryann Rowley/Mike Zolbe/MZ)



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# NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings Friends of Summit Huts Association,

Seven years ago I finished my last Summit Huts Association newsletter column with the line "I'll be back". Well, I'm happy to write that "I'm back" on the SHA Board of Directors.

I would like to thank Past Presidents Rich Rowley and Cindy Gray for their excellent work these past seven years. Summit Huts truly sits on the solid ground that these two leaders created.

Additionally, I would like to thank Leigh Girvin, Mike Zobbe, Dan Munyon, Scott Toepfer, and Hannah Taylor for their terrific hands-on work. The cabins are in great shape, bookings look excellent for the coming year, budget objectives have been met, and this years Backcountry Ball was another great success.

What more could an incoming President ask for? Well, I ask you all to help us with a variety of tasks.

1. SHA is definitely in the development mode. We would like to identify and develop at least one more cabin site in Summit County.
2. We would like to reach out to the Summit School District, Eagle County School District and some selected Front Range educational entities and provide children and educational backcountry cabin experience.
3. We want to continue to embrace and enhance our role as stewards of the backcountry. We will be involved in the Travel Management Plans for both the Golden Horseshoe and the White River National Forest.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Advisory Board and the Executive Board for their enthusiasm and hard work.

It's good to be back!

John Warner, DDS  
President, SHA

## BSA FORMS SUMMIT COUNTY CHAPTER

*By Ellen Hollinshead*

We are excited to tell you that there is a new group representing the needs of the winter non-motorized traveler - from snowshoes to split boards - the Summit County Chapter of Backcountry Snowsports Alliance.

Backcountry Snowsports Alliance began in 1996 out of Boulder and has covered many varied topics with non-motorized winter travel within our state. They helped form an equitable management plan for Vail Pass winter recreation; BSA has also worked with the Forest Service and winter user groups on Wolf Creek Pass, leaving one side of the pass for motorized and the other for non-motorized. BSA worked hard to form a successful Steamboat chapter. Currently, BSA is trying to focus more on participating with Forest Plan Revisions.

With the Travel Management Plan for the White River National Forest coming out this spring, it seemed imperative that a group like this be established so we Nordic skiers, 'shoers and boarders can offer a strong voice while participating in this planning process. Throughout this winter, we will meet with the Forest

Service and begin dialogue regarding our concerns.

One big goal was to ask our members to be watchdogs of our National Forest trails. In mid-December we will distribute a form to volunteers which will ask questions like: how many cars parked at the trailhead, signs needed, trail conditions, safety concerns, etc. etc. Hopefully this will give Dillon Ranger District a better idea of how our forest is being used.

We have already began discussion with the Forest Service on posting signs on certain trails that we know to be non-motorized but have never been adequately posted as such, (Peaks Trail, Bemrose to name a few).

Hopefully we will have a social ski tour, a few entertaining newsletters, and although we were going to keep our readers updated on the latest snow conditions, it now seems like a moot point, since the skiing, everywhere, is UNREAL!

For more information on BSA: [www.backcountryalliance.org](http://www.backcountryalliance.org)  
or e-mail the Summit County Chapter:  
[summit@backcountryalliance.org](mailto:summit@backcountryalliance.org)

# WHAT'S GOING ON AT SUMMIT HUTS?

## *Janet's Cabin*

*Opening Date  
November 23*



*Midwinter Clean  
Volunteer Work Day  
February 24*

*Volunteer Appreciation  
Hut Trip  
March 22*



*Closing Date  
May 20*

*Janet's Cabin in the Summer?*  
Stay tuned for the final word, but SHA has begun working with the Forest Service on the possibility of opening Janet's Cabin for a short summer season. The plan has been put out for public comment and we are currently in the review stage.

## *Francie's Cabin*

*Opening Date  
November 23*

*Level 1  
Avalanche Course  
December 17-19*



*Level 1  
Avalanche Course  
January 14-16*

*Midwinter Clean  
Volunteer Work Day  
February 16*

*Closing Date  
May 20*



## *Section House & Ken's Cabin*

*Opening Date  
November 23*



*Closing Date  
May 6*



Space is limited on all volunteer work days, appreciation overnights and workshops. You must reserve your space by contacting SHA. Anyone who has volunteered in the past year is eligible to go on the hut appreciation trip.

For more info or to sign up:  
970-453-8583,  
summithuts@colorado.net or  
www.summithuts.org.

SHA is a volunteer based organization, we couldn't do it without you, thanks!

# FRANCIE'S CABIN LOWER LEVEL REMODELED JUST IN TIME FOR 2005/2006 SEASON

*by Mike Zobbe*

When Francie's Cabin was in the planning stages, the Forest Service thought there might be a need to include a room on the lower level specifically for day use. At the time, this was a thought that deserved real consideration. The Crystal Creek area where the hut is located, sees a significant amount of day use. The idea was to give day skiers and hikers a place that they could go in to warm up so they would not be tempted to make the main overnight area of the hut their destination.

So a day use room was designed into the hut. The family of the late Al Chaffee, long time President of the Bank of Breckenridge, contributed to help in the construction and furnishing of the room. Al was a serious nature photographer and many of his photos adorned the walls of his namesake room. The only problem was that for a variety of reasons, use of the room never took off. Al's photos and story went largely unappreciated. The space that the room took up in the lower level of the hut also limited the area that could be devoted to indoor wood storage, tool storage, and the hutmasters quarters.

Ever since Francie's Cabin was completed in 1995, Operations Manager Mike Zobbe has long desired more indoor wood storage for Francie's. There needs to be at least eight cords of wood on hand at the hut, and only about four fit in the wood room. The remainder was stored outside. In the winter, it was quickly buried by snow and in the summer was a fire hazard and a place for mice and other chewing rodents to nest. This led to the necessity of digging the four cords out of the snow in late February and hauling it into the wood room. This almost always took place during one of the coldest, windiest, snowiest days of the year. It might not snow at all in February, but

you could almost guarantee a blizzard the day you wanted to dig the wood out at Francie's. Needless to say, any of the great volunteers who participated in moving the wood will tell you that it was cold, wet, backbreaking work.

So, in the summer of 2005, Zobbe asked the SHA Board of Directors to approve spending the money to completely remodel the lower level and was given the green light to move forward. The first step was to decide what kind of layout we wanted. Zobbe gave some ideas to SHA advisory board member and Equinox Designs owner and architect Robbie Dickson who did some drawing on napkins and toilet paper before a SHA board meeting to come up with a rough layout. Since Robbie was in the midst of a large project and the county needed real architectural plans to issue a building permit, Zobbe took the rough drawings to architect John Gunson who was the original architect for Francie's and he supplied a detailed set of plans that could be submitted to the County Building Department.

Once the permit was issued in mid September, demolition could begin. With the help of general contractor George Gruber, the original builder of Francie's, Scott Toepfer was hired as the carpenter to do the majority of the work with the help and support of Zobbe. Scott, who is a CAIC avalanche forecaster in the winter and a carpenter in the summer and has been a long time SHA hutmaster, has actually lived in the hutmasters quarters at Francie's for several past summer seasons, so he knows the cabin well. In addition, he lives less than a half mile from the trailhead, so he was able to ride his bike to the hut almost every day during construction

As anyone who has remodeled their

home knows, remodels always turn out to be more work and more expensive than planned and Francie's was no exception. While we tried to save and recycle as much material as possible, Zobbe was still making almost daily trips to the Breckenridge Building Center and driving them up the rocky road to the hut in Frank, SHA's Ford F350.

Still the work went as smoothly as could be expected, except for the early October blizzard that left 30" of snow on the road to the hut. You could call it luck, or you could call it good karma, but it just so happened that the Forest Service had been working on the roads in the area and a bulldozer was parked about half way up the road between Francie's and the trailhead. With the help of Dillon Ranger District Shelly Grail, Zobbe was able to track down the person at the Forest Service who was directing the road crew and much to Zobbe's relief, the bulldozer operator plowed out the road from the trailhead to the hut.

Even with the road being plowed, access to the hut became very challenging and there was still plenty of work to be done. Plumber Tim Barlow had to get up to the hut and there where still many trips that needed to be made to the BBC. Zobbe became well acquainted with Frank's tire chains and there were several exciting moments as Frank came a little too close to the edge of the road.

Despite all the challenges, by early November, Toepfer was pretty much done with the carpentry work, Barlow had finished the plumbing and electrician Bob Salazar, husband of SHA board member Katie Royce-Salazar, had done most of the electric work. It wasn't until 10:30 PM just a few days before

*Continued on p. 6*

# SUMMIT HUTS THANKS YOU!

## CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

December 1, 2004 - December 1, 2005

The generosity of all our contributors is key to the success of our organization. We apologize if we missed anyone. Please notify us of any errors or omissions.

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# Summit Huts Association Winter 2005/2006 Newsletter

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Contact Summit Huts to  
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## Hut Reservation Information

**Availability: [www.summithuts.org](http://www.summithuts.org) Hut Reservations: 970-925-5775**

Check out the web page for hut availability, volunteer opportunities, photo albums, and other good information. Hut rates for the 2005/2006 season will not change at Summit Huts. Rates are \$28/person/night at Janet's & Francie's cabins, \$26/person/night at the Section House, and \$69/night (up to 3 people) for Ken's Cabin. Rates at the 10th Mountain Division Huts are now \$28/person/night. Rates at other hut systems range from \$26-\$36/person/night.

### FRANCIE'S REMODEL *Continued from p. 4*

the scheduled opening of the hut that Zobbe and Salazar finished re-wiring the smoke alarm system. Zobbe and Salazar skied out under an almost full moon on a beautiful night and the hut was ready for final inspection by the County Building Dept. The following day, Zobbe and an inspector skied up to the hut for the final inspection two days before the hut was scheduled to open (the inspector was glad to have the opportunity to do something different) and the final CO was issued.

And the end result of the story? The entire years supply of wood now fits in the wood room, which is a beautiful

thing! A small access door has been added to the wood room so wood can be chucked directly into the room from outside the building; no more hauling wood through the basement door, the Al (now the HMQ) Room and hallway to the wood room, which is also a beautiful thing. The tool room is slightly larger, which makes it less confining. The real winner is the hutmasters quarters. It is now larger and more inviting. It has a small bedroom and much more room to move around in. As anyone who had used to HMQ before knows, there was only one window in it. Now, the area has much more light and far less of a cave feel to it. Al's photos and story will go

into the sitting room in the top floor of the hut where many more people will be able to enjoy his images and be inspired by his story.

Despite all the work, all the headaches, frozen fingers putting on and taking off tire chains, all the trips to the building center and the dump, we have made improvements to Francie's that I hope will be enjoyed by many people to come. If that is the case, then it will all be worth it.



Summit Huts Association operates Janet's Cabin, Francie's Cabin, The Section House & Ken's Cabin under special use permit with the Forest Service, USDA. SHA is an equal opportunity provider.

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