



Gray Wolf Ski Club

Serving the senior skiers of the San Juans



January 2013
Volume 29 Issue 5



Happy New Year

From The President

I hope that every Gray Wolf had a Merry Christmas, a Happy Chanukah, or a very pleasant Holiday. I also wish all Gray Wolves a Happy New Year!!

The Gray Wolf Holiday Party was a great success. The food was great and Mike Hayward's DJ'ing allowed many Gray Wolves to dance the night away. What a great way to end a very successful 2012 Gray Wolf year on and off the ski slopes. I would like to thank Simon Fuger for getting us Gray Wolf discounts at the Pagosa Springs Center for the Performing Arts. We have had the opportunity to see two great plays. We have the opportunity to see another play, "Office Space" on 26 January. Details for this play are coming. I recommend you get your tickets early.

Ski Season is now on full swing. It was nice to see so many Gray Wolves on opening day and I am gratified to see so many Gray Wolves enjoying the great skiing conditions that we are blessed with at Wolf Creek Ski Area.

Your Gray Wolf Board is busy planning events at the Ski Hill this season. We have scheduled our Gray Wolf Luncheon events at the Main Lodge for 22 January and 05 March. On 22 January, we will have our 2nd annual Red Solo Cup Party. Last year's event was fun and I expect this event to follow suit. The 05 March event at The Main Lodge is the 2nd annual Pajama Party. I can't wait for that one!! We plan on having a Mardi Gras party at the Base Camp on 12 February. I wonder what kind of Mardi Gras attire we will be seeing this year? We are also having the End of Season Pot Luck on 02 April. Details for these events will be in the Gray Wolf Newsletter and on our web site. Please read the newsletter and check out our web site so that you don't miss any Gray Wolf events and the discounts that South Fork and Pagosa Springs retailers are offering to all Gray Wolves.

On behalf of the Gray Wolf Board and all Gray Wolves, we send our thoughts and prayers to Josie and the family of Jack Hummel who passed away earlier this month while enjoying the sport he loved. We will miss him on and off the slopes.

I look forward to seeing all of you on the ski hill and at our social events. Have a great ski season!!

Think Snow, Lots of Snow!!

David Lopez

In Remembrance: Jack Hummel



Josie and Jack Hummel

The Gray Wolf Ski Club has lost one of our longtime members. Jack Hummel, died in a skiing accident at Wolf Creek Ski Area, on January 9, 2013. We extend our deepest condolences to his wife, Josie, family members, and his many skiing buddies.

Friends Remembrances

Jack, a French Socialist, and I, a Republican Conservative talked many times about our different ideological principles. Always the gentleman, Jack listened quietly while I expounded my philosophy and many times rebutted in a way that gave me pause. I will miss our meetings, our discussions and above all I will miss a good friend. *John Bozek*

Jack was my next door neighbor and the best there could ever be. It's like losing a member of my immediate family. We made each other laugh and I definitely loved to make and hear Jack laugh. I talked to him just a couple of hours before his passing on the Base Camp deck and made some arrangements regarding a project he was so willing to help me out with. Our world will be lonelier and less joyful without him. *Brian Bachtal*

From the moment we met Jack, we were impressed with his wonderful outlook on life. He always had a smile on his face. Lovely man who will be missed. *Bob and Robin Brobst*

May the joys and pleasures of skiing be remembered in the life of Jack Hummel. *Charles Elliott*

Jack was a warm and wonderful man with a deep love of people -- especially Josie and his many friends. We will miss his humor and his humanity. *Carole and Bob Howard*

Ciao Jack and thanks for your help with Italian! I'll remember your "Phantom Foot lesson. We are aching for you Josie. *Helen and Will*

I am greatly saddened by your loss, Josie. You and Jack made a wonderful couple. Condolences to you and your family. He will be missed. *John Chrzanowski (aka Tree Dawg)*

Such a tragedy for Josie & all of us who love to ski, especially at beautiful Wolf Creek! One of Jack's most wonderful qualities was his ability to disagree with you with an endearing & impish smile on his face. Always a man of good will & generosity. *Peace, Windsor and Ron*

We are shocked with many of our friends. Just a few words and thoughts to you and your family. For now 'til some later time. We are with you, *Your friends, Hedy and Klaus*

Gray Wolf Officers - 2012/13

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The 2012/2013 membership directory is available online.

Click on the link below.

WWW.GRAYWOLFSKICLUB.COM



Welcome to Our Newest Members



Maurice & Bedelia Dykes South Fork, CO	Joseph & Beverly King Pagosa Springs, CO	Douglas Knudson South Fork, CO
Mike Haynes Pagosa Springs, CO		Geno Prida Ignacio, CO

Mark Your Calendars for "Ski Season Socials"

Our first club lunch of the season will be held on **Tuesday, January 22**, in the Upper Lodge, at Wolf Creek Ski Area.

Meet from 11:30 - 12:00 in the Lodge. Please join us, even if you are not a skier.

The Club will cover \$5.00 of the lunch "special" **or** anything else on the menu for each member. The "special" for each of the Tuesday lunches is Cheese Enchiladas. You are responsible for the balance of the bill, including your drink.

Last year's lunches were enjoyed by many Gray Wolf members, so come on up and join your friends for food, fellowship, and fun. Please wear your name tag. **RSVP by January 18, 2013**. The theme for this luncheon is **"The 2nd Annual Red Solo Cup Day"**. Let's see who can out do last year's clever creations.

On **Tuesday, February 12**, we will celebrate Mardi Gras at Base Camp. The club will provide lunch. Costumes are highly encouraged for this fun occasion. **RSVP by February 7, 2013**.

Be sure to save the date of **Tuesday, March 5**, for our second lunch at the Lodge. The same procedure, described above, will apply to this lunch. **RSVP by February 29, 2013**. This will be our **"2nd Annual Pajama Day"**. You have plenty of time to shop the thrift stores for this one.

On the last **Tuesday** of the ski season, **April 2**, the club will host a pot luck luncheon at Base Camp. Please plan to bring your favorite dish to share with your buddies, as we bid farewell to our beloved mountain for the 2012/2013 season. The pot luck will begin at 11:30. The theme is **"A Wolf Creek Beach Party"**.

There will be a sign up sheet in Base Camp prior to each event.

You may email your RSVP to buckmarygamache@aol.com or you may call Mary Gamache at 970-731-8389.

For the two lunches at the Lodge, we need to know if you want to order the Cheese Enchiladas or if you will order from the regular menu.



Gray Wolf Goings-On



“Pagosa Springs Center for The Performing Arts”

Gray Wolves Theater Night: This will be Saturday January 26. The play is “Office Space: the Musical” It documents the humdrum daily life of the office environment and what can happen when the employees try to spice it up by putting on a musical. Even if you have never worked in an office you will find this play/musical highly entertaining. As usual we receive a discounted price (\$18.00) and reserved seating for the Gray Wolves. This play is recommended for mature audiences mainly for some bawdy language. Tickets can be bought by visiting www.pagosacenter.org and using promo code “Grey Wolves” spelled Grey for the 26th January. Tickets can also be purchased by calling 731 7469 and asking for the Gray Wolves rate for the 26th. If you need additional information please contact Simon Fuger at 970 264 1003.

“EXPLORE THE MOUNTAIN”

Have you always wanted to explore more of what Wolf Creek Ski Area has to offer?

“Explore the Mountain” Tuesday February 5th 8.30 AM at Base Camp

Ron Chacey, Simon Fuger and others will provide an overview of some of their favorite, off the beaten path runs and when to ski them. This highly controversial presentation will shed light on some of the long held mountain secrets that have been closely guarded by various members of the club. As usual, in the event of fresh powder in excess of 8 inches on the morning of the 5th, the meeting will be rescheduled for a later time.

Gray Wolf Ski Club Discounts

The following retailers have offered to provide discounts to members of the Club.

Ski and Bow Rack: (Pagosa Springs)

10% off any ski tuning, ski repair and clothing.

Also ask for locals discount on demo rental skis

Pagosa Ski Rental: (Pagosa Springs)

15% off any ski tuning.

8200 Mountain Sports: (South Fork)

10% off any retail sales and 50% off any demos during the week.

They have a very wide range of powder skis.

Alpine Bike and Ski: (South Fork)

25% off any demo rental skis and 15% off any retail items.

Hot Springs: (Pagosa Springs)

\$8.00 entrance fee on Tuesday's.

\$8.00 for any Gray Wolf group of 14 people or more at any time except holidays.

Overlook Hot Springs: (Pagosa Springs)

Tuesdays - buy 1 get one free on beer and wine purchases.

Summit Ski and Sports: (Pagosa Springs)

Monday - Thursday - 50% off hot wax application for skis and snowboards.

Old Town Market catered the delicious food for our Christmas party.



OTMpagosa.com
(970) 264-5200
920 San Juan St.

Thank You!

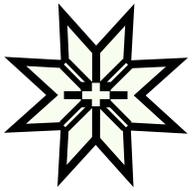
Old Town Market is grateful for the opportunity to serve the Gray Wolves. Everyone's kindness made our night extremely enjoyable. We wanted to show our appreciation by offering this 10% OFF coupon for your next purchase at Old Town Natural Market and Deli. We hope everyone has an awesome 2013!



Gray Wolves 10% OFF Coupon

10% OFF Your Entire Purchase

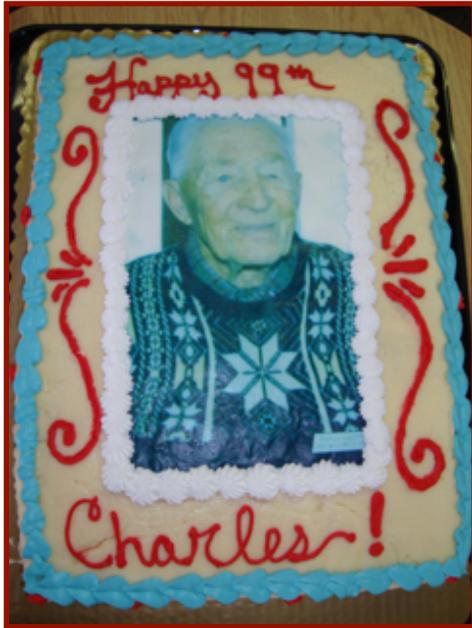
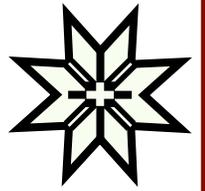
*Limit 1 Per Person



Charles Elliott's 99th Birthday - November 18, 2012

The Club celebrated, with a party at Base Camp, on Tuesday, Nov. 20, 2012.

Congratulations, Charles!



We're looking forward to a grand celebration in 2013 for Charles' 100th!



On the following 3 pages is an article about Charles, which was published in the San Luis Valley Rural Electric Co-Op publication, The Newsboy, in November, 2012.

News for Members & Friends of
San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative

The Newsboy

Member-owned for 75 years

The



November 2012
Volume 37
Issue 11

Charles Elliott

Charles Elliott worked for SLVREC from 1946 until the late 70s. He is a Valley native whose family history intertwines with Valley history. His great grandfather, Colonel Albert Pfeiffer, was friends with Kit Carson. His father provided horses for the first Monte Vista Stampede. Charles was born in 1913 and remembers the days long before electricity when families made the switch from candles to kerosene lanterns.

In recognition of SLVREC's 75th anniversary, this article introduces younger cooperative members—and that includes just about all of us—to this interesting and entertaining gentleman.

Charles Elliott lays claim to being one of the longest-standing purchasers of an elk hunting license in the state. "I bought my first elk license right after I graduated from high school in 1932 and I've bought a license every year since except for the five years during WWII when I served in the military," Elliott said. He jokes that he has probably paid the state's fish and game department more money for elk licenses than any other in-state hunter.

"Most years I've been successful," he said, "but I haven't seen an elk in the last three years. Last year I only saw one fresh track in nine days and we hunt hard."

Elliott, who will turn 99 this month, concedes that he doesn't hunt as hard as he used to when he was younger. "Back then," Elliott said, "I used to walk 10 to 12 miles every season every day. Now I only walk three or four miles a day."

His tenure as an elk hunter is almost equalled by his tenure as a skier. In 2011, after 72 years of skiing on Wolf Creek (he missed five seasons while he was in the service), this San Luis Valley native was inducted into the Colorado Ski and Snowboard Museum Hall of Fame. He was recognized as a pioneer who helped drive the growth and interest in skiing at Wolf Creek. Elliott recalled his first season on Wolf Creek's slopes.

"Wolf Creek used to be closed all winter because of snow. In 1934, a friend

of mine who worked as a carpenter during the day and as a night clerk at the Monte Vista Hotel told me that salesmen from Durango were coming over the pass. I said to him that if they were coming over from Durango, that means we can get up to the top. I borrowed some homemade skis and we drove up the next day to try our hand at skiing."

Their car was the only car. The skis Elliott wore were a simple affair with one strap over the toe. Charles said he and his friend would walk up the slope, ski down, fall over and do it again. "We didn't miss a Sunday after that," Elliott said.

The friend he had borrowed the skis from wanted them back the next year. Elliott tried his hand at making his own. He said, "The first one took four days. I tried several different ways to get the tip to turn up and finally, figured out I wasn't keeping the wood hot enough. After I figured that out, making the second ski went pretty fast."

The bindings were a single leather strap about an inch and a half wide that went over the toe of his shoe. That was it.

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Charles Elliott married Virginia on November 3, 1951. The couple had seven boys and 1 daughter. "After they grew up, all my boys were better skiers than I was," Elliott claims. This photo was taken at the house he has lived in for over 50 years. In the yard stands one of the biggest willow trees in Monte Vista. Like Elliott, this tree has lived through many seasons!

Charles Elliott: Continued from page 1

"Back then," he said, "everyone had pine skis. I remember my first pair of hickory skis with bear trap bindings."

During their second ski season, they saw another car and another fellow skier. "We asked him to come down and have lunch with us," Elliott said. "We got to talking and he told us he was ski touring. Looked like walking to me. But then he said something about turning and my buddy and I glanced at each other and I said, 'What? You can turn on skis?' The other gentleman told us, 'I can't, but I've got a book at home that says you can.' Well, this opened a whole new world for us."

It was during this second season that Elliott had his worst ski accident ever. He recalled, "It started snowing about 4:30 that morning and when we got up to the pass, we were in chest-deep powder. It was great. The fastest we had ever skied."

Then, he took a fall and landed head first in the snow. He said, "I went in so deep only the bottom half inch of the soles of my shoes showed. I landed with my hand just an inch from my mouth. My mouth was filled with snow and I was so surrounded by snow I couldn't even move my fingers close enough to wipe the snow out. Then, I started to black out and I realized I was

upside down, so I started to try moving my legs."

First he could only move his legs back and forth from the knees and then, he was able to scissor his entire leg. This shifted his body enough to allow him to get some air. With the help of his friend, he finally got out.

By the end of 1935, the sport was catching on and ski clubs formed in Alamosa, Monte Vista, Sargent, Center and Del Norte. Then, the Valley Courier editor put an article in the paper. He suggested all the clubs get together and maybe as a big group, they could get the Forest Service to do something for the skiers.

The idea took root and the San Luis Valley Ski Association formed. Later, the group changed their name to the Wolf Creek Ski Club to include members from Pagosa Springs. It worked. The Forest Service had the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) build a shelter.

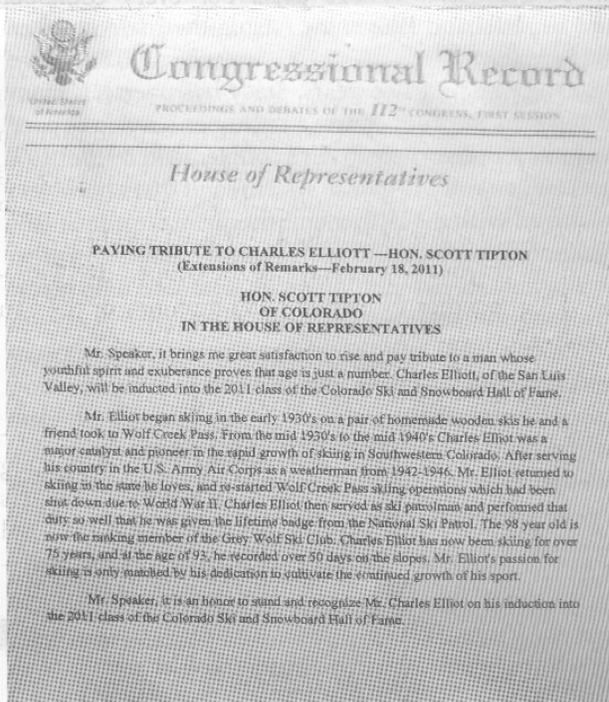
"I remember the day they agreed to do that," Elliott said. "There were about 20 of us standing at the base of the slope where we skied. The meeting was supposed to start at 9 but the Forest Supervisor didn't show up until 9:30. He arrived, got out of his car, pointed at a spot on the north side of the road and said, 'We're going to put it there,' got back in his car and left. I will say, the CCC built a very nice big shelter house."

Over the next 20 years, skiers came up to the top of the pass to ski each winter. Elliott helped build six different rope tows in that era. "The first was 200 feet and the last was 1,200 feet," he said. "I spent more time working on the rope tows than I did skiing. I would go out early in the morning to clear the snow off the rope. If there was a foot of snow or less, it was easier. You could pull the rope up through the snow. If there was over a foot of snow we had to dig the rope out."

Just after the war, bear track ski bindings became popular. On the plus side, they held the skier into their skis. On the negative side, being held to the skis increased the risk of getting hurt. That led to another chore: smoothing the moguls to help prevent injuries.

"Bear trap bindings increased the number of sprained ankles from occasionally up to about 10 or 12 a day. We found that if we got a scoop shovel and smoothed out the moguls we could reduce the injuries down to two or three a day," Elliott said.

Elliott also helped form the first ski patrol—or as he describes it—more of a first aid patrol. Elliott said his friends told him, "You would be a lot better skier if you spent more time skiing." As it was, Elliott was a good skier. He said, "After WWII, I used to go over to Aspen each year to spend two weeks skiing." There, many,



Mr. Elliott was inducted into the Colorado Ski and Snowboard Museum Hall of Fame in 2011. As an inductee, he receives free ski passes to every ski area in Colorado. He has skied at all but one ski area already. He was invited to the 2012 inductee banquet but won't be attending. "I'll be elk hunting instead," he said.

although not all, of his fellow skiers had been in the ski troops in the war. He skied with the best.

After WWII Charles Elliott took a job with San Luis Valley REC—or REA as it was then known. "I came back from the war and within six months I began to work for the REA," he said. "We had 300 miles of power line to build. They gave me the job of getting easements for the 300 miles." Later on, Elliott served as the cooperative's purchasing agent. In this role, he was responsible for obtaining all the material needed for line construction and he was in charge of the warehouse. On the weekends, he would go out with crews as a groundsman.

He recalled, "When I worked for REA, a lot of the places we brought power to only had one light right in the middle of the kitchen."

While electricity was a big change, it certainly isn't the only change Charles Elliott has seen in his lifetime. His parents, Lena Pfeiffer and Thadius Elliott married in about 1904 and lived at a property they owned located about a mile above what is now the 4UR Ranch. In about 1918, they moved near Seven Mile Plaza to be closer to school for the children. "When I was a kid," Elliott said, "the only transportation was bicycles and horses. All farming was done with horses. Nobody had a tractor. The big farmers had a four-horse team."

His father and an older brother died from typhoid fever and Elliott and three siblings became seriously ill from the disease. "In those days, even the doctors only had home remedies," Elliott said. He survived on whipped egg whites and oatmeal gruel. After his father's death, his mother moved to Monte Vista with her four children and never remarried. Later the family moved out of town and lived with his grandparents.

Charles went into the Air Force in 1942 and served in both meteorology and cryptology units.

Yes, times have changed since then. But, the biggest change according to Elliott? Cars. "First we had open touring cars, Model T's," he said. "And then they began to get better and better every year. Now you look at one of these new Dodge or Ford trucks, any of them, and they are almost scientific."

He continued, "When I was in the Air Force, they said you could get out of the service and buy a Ford car for \$600. But of course, no one had \$600."

Well, maybe some things haven't changed that much!

If you are a skier, keep an eye out for Charles Elliott. He'll be the one who knows the slopes at Wolf Creek better than anyone else!

Bringing power to the Valley since 1937





Gray Wolf Ski Club Christmas Party "A Winter Wonderland"



Over 100 Gray Wolves gathered to celebrate the season, enjoy good food and beverages, and dance to the music provided by Club member, Mike Hayward, (aka D.J. Dude), (aka Santa Claus). Thank you, Mike, for helping to make the evening special. Your Santa costume, your bag of goodies, and your music added such a delightful touch to our party.

