**Kitsap Branch EXCOM Meeting Minutes for January 10, 2017**

Note: This was the meeting for the fourth quarter of the calendar year which was originally scheduled for December 8th, but was postponed due to snow.

Held at the Kitsap Cabin, 3153 Seabeck Highway NW, Bremerton Washington

Present: Jeff Schrepple, Dave Burton, Christine Grenier, Linda Anderson-Carnahan, and Sue Labrie.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

**Agenda**

Introduction of the new Treasurer – Krista Endres and new Kayak Committee Chair – Barney Bernhard

Unfortunately, neither Krista nor Barney were able to attend so they will be introduced at the next quarterly meeting. As a long time member, many people already know Barney.

Approval of October Minutes - minutes approved by unanimous vote.

Branch Fiscal Status (expenditure against budget) -

Branch fiscal status is fairly easy to determine as we are only tasked with keeping expenditures roughly in line with our budget. Currently we are technically within budget as we planned to spend $1,090 by the end of November and we have actually spent $863.90, or 79% of budget. We got some bargains on some things we planned to buy so bought some things we didn’t plan to buy. We have an outstanding purchase for ropes which will likely come in slightly above the budgeted costs, however, because the club was able to arrange for a bulk purchase, we will be getting 6 ropes instead of 4.

From the headquarters viewpoint, we have actually spent$1319.92 or 21% over budget because our avalanche beacons purchased last fiscal year were paid for in this fiscal year. Because our budget, like our branch, is so small, these late year purchases have a big impact on our planned versus actual costs but can easily be explained at budget time. That doesn’t, however, mean we should not buy things we need late in the fiscal year if that is when we need them and the price is right. So far we are doing much better on getting payments accomplished in the budget year as opposed to last year when two reimbursement requests were submitted 6 months after the bills were incurred.

That being said, everyone was reminded that the instructions on the reimbursement requests ask that they be submitted within 30 days of a purchase. Jeff also noted that the Mountaineers’ new accounting software (Acumatica) allows very good tracking of reimbursement requests against the expenditure budget if the description of the purchase is sufficiently detailed to easily identify what was purchased. On the flip side of detailing descriptions of purchases, Jeff cautioned not to use individual’s names in the description as that will be available for all to see in the accounting documents.

**Activity Reports**

Conservation (Rick Gillattt via email) – Six salmon safari events were held this fall.

Naturalist Committee – Sue reported that she did hold the mushroom walk at the cabin in November again this year although attendance was not as high as the turnout last year. Eight people participated in the event which consisted of an hour long class to identify mushrooms that Sue had already found followed by a walk to Big Tree scouring the ground along the trail for various types of mushrooms. A very unusual one was found right near Big Tree. Sue agreed to send Linda the results of their finds so that the Mountaineers Foundation can use them as part of their biosurvey of the Foundation property.

Sue also reported that she, Christine, and Carolyn Appleton will meet with some members of the Olympia branch on January 29th to jointly discuss plans for forming naturalists committees for their respective branches.

Kayaking (per phone conversation with Barney )Barney told both Linda and Jeff that he was willing to take on the Kayak Committee chairman duties but had not yet decided whether or not to conduct a class this year. He told Linda that he did not think he had enough instructors to help him with a course, but she provided him several names of branch members who would likely be willing to assist.

Intermediate Climbing – only two students have signed up for the intermediate course this year but John still intends to teach it.

Basic Climbing – Ralph now has 3 co-leaders for basic climbing – Lonnie, Chase, and Debbee. The basic class has filled its class and has two people on the waitlist. First class is on January 18th.

Scrambling - Suzy has 5 students enrolled in the class and had 3 graduate last year.

Navigation – Very successful class in October. Attendance in excess of 20 people with many from Seattle, Tacoma, and Olympia. We even had instructor support from Seattle. The class used the new eLearning module for the first time and reported good results.

Hiking – January and February are normally “rest” times for the hikers so very few hikes are expected during those months. Christine expects the activity to increase in the spring and summer. Additionally, she is thinking of conducting a backpacking “refresher” trip sometime this summer.

Snow Shoe/Winter Travel (Doug Terry via email) – Six people attended Doug’s snow travel class in November. Christine may pick up some snow travel trips while Doug is gone to New Zealand this winter. Trips would likely be at Hurricane Ridge.

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

Report on Board Retreat – Sue attended a Board Retreat on November 12th and 13th at Stevens Lodge along with about 25 other Board members and guests. There were briefings by the Governance Committee and the Branch Leadership Committee as well as a briefing from Mary Hsue on fundraising/development. A very worthwhile exercise was conducted to determine the “core values” of the club. Finally, the Board began to address the development of a new strategic plan to replace the one that ends this year with a report on what we did well during the 2012-2017 plan and where we could have done better.

Report on Progressive Climbing Education – After several months of gathering information from two surveys and two town halls plus four sessions of the Climbing Education Advisory Committee, the club is ready to move out with the most pressing investments. Highest on the list was establishing a Leadership Progression Design Group to help clearly define what activities and criteria must be accomplished to progress as a leader. To do this uniformly across the club a future leadership summit is planned and each branch has been asked to submit the name of an individual who is knowledgeable about leader development. Dave Burton agreed to serve as the branch’s leadership representative.

Uniform equivalency processes are also being looked at under the larger banner of consistency of the Mountaineers course curriculum. As we approach such a uniform curriculum, more and more investments in elearning classes will be made. A pilot equivalency program in climbing for the Seattle branch may be rolled out in 2017 and evaluated. Staff support for these education programs will also be increased. All these efforts will be evaluated near the end of 2017 to plan for investments in 2018.

Of note, the early enthusiasm for modularization has ebbed. Especially hard to do in small branches, it also strains the large branch resources if extended to too many classes. Instead of looking at modularization as a way to teach our bigger courses, it is now looked at as a means of having students who pass parts of an equivalency course to become proficient in the parts of a course where they did not meet standards.

Tom Vogl, CEO of the Mountaineers, specifically praised Steve Anderson at the last Branch Leadership Committee meeting for his dedicated and valuable contributions to this project as a member of the Climbing Education Advisory Committee.

Safety Reports can no longer be sent to activity chairs – The safety committee has asked that I no longer send safety incident reports to the activity chairs when I receive them. The copy I get is a first report and has not been investigated by the safety committee. Accordingly, it may have errors in it. The branch safety officer, Tom Thrasher, is the only person who can send them out.

New Policy on changing activity standards between summits – This issue came to light immediately following a kayaking summit when the Seattle Kayaking Committee tried to offer an innovative course which did not exactly follow the newly agreed to minimum standards that the kayaking summit had just generated. Specifically, Seattle planned to do work which had been prescribed for a pool exercise in protected waters instead. This issue was raised to the Branch Leadership Committee for resolution and they voted to change one phrase from “in a pool” to “in a pool or protected waters.” However, when the revised minimum standards were returned to the branch kayaking committees, Tacoma objected – mostly on principle – that the BLC did not have sufficient expertise in this field to make such a judgment.

Since the BLC’s charter calls on it to develop and ensure that their branches follow the activity minimum standards, the BLC developed the following policy to avoid such an impasse in the future.

Specifically, if a minimum standard is agreed to by a summit and the BLC disagrees or is aware that some part of that “new” standard may cause a problem not uncovered in earlier decisions, the BLC shall either make a recommendation for change or explain their concern and send it back to the branches for another round of discussions. As the scope of this concern is expected to be specific and limited, the discussion may be resolved by emails among the branches and should not require a second summit. If the issue is resolved, the revised minimum standards will be sent to the BLC for a vote of approval. If the branches can not resolve the problem, the BLC shall listen to all sides and then make a decision themselves. In either case, the BLC shall vote on the final version of the minimum standards and that version shall be posted on the Mountaineers website.

Ironically, at the most recent meeting of the BLC, an update to the scrambling minimum standards was reviewed. It was noted that all scrambling chairs were in agreement that the standard should be adopted, however, one branch chair thought we should relook the need to teach the hasty harness, which Suzy calls the swami belt. Other branch chairs disagreed that we should question a unanimous decision by the scrambling chairs, but in the end, a motion was passed to spend an additional month reading the new standards and revisit the issue at January’s BLC meeting.

Volunteer Recognition Programs (standards) - We talked about this at a previous meeting but the club is now putting more emphasis on what standards we are using to decide who does and who does not receive recognition. Additionally, they will be asking, upon submission of next year’s budget if the recognition and awards have resulted in an increase in branch members, participants, students, leaders, and/or instructors. Jeff urged all committees to think about those questions and come up with a written policy so all members can understand how awardees are selected and the criteria for receiving such an award. Now that we are able to give out awards and recognition we must not be susceptible to charges of favoritism.

Service Award Winner for 2016 – In another close vote, this year’s service award winner is Christine Grenier, our hiking committee chair. The award will be presented at the Seattle Program Center on Saturday, January 28th at the Volunteer Award Dinner.

Need a Vice-Chair, one at Large Trustee, a Secretary, and a New Chair for next year – Our vice-chair, at large trustee, and secretary positions are available to fill immediately. For a brief time we thought we had a secretary, but she subsequently decided that she could not fill the position. Jeff noted that this is his fourth and last year as chair and that he will be privately touching base with some members to see if anyone is interested in taking the job next year. He noted that his time in that position has been very rewarding and he appreciates all the support he has received from the EXCOM members and the branch members, but it is time to pass the baton.    He is also concerned that this apparent lack of interest in the branch administrative positions could lead to the branch’s demise. Linda suggested he ask for people to fill these positions at the next climber’s meeting. Jeff agreed that he would help mentor anyone who was willing to take on one of those positions next year.

Disposition of bear cans and igloo owned by the branch – Jeff currently has in his basement 5 bear cans and an igloo that have never been used in his four years as chair. The igloo can be given to a homeless shelter but the bear cans are of no use for any purpose other than backpacking. Linda recommended that all the bear cans and the igloo be placed in the bunkhouse along with the rest of the climbing gear.

Selection of Month for Next Quarter’s Meeting – Members present decided that this meeting would satisfy the requirement for a meeting for the first quarter of the calendar year and agreed to hold next quarterly meeting on the first Thursday in May (May 4th). Subsequently, it was found that this date was also the planned date for a Mountaineers Board of Director’s meeting and, so that our branch representative could attend that board meeting, the EXCOM was rescheduled for May 2nd by an email consensus.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35.