

## The Huts, Today

**The Pfiffner Hut** In 1986, Boulder Group members dismantled the hut, which had become badly damaged from years of snowdrifts creeping down the hillside, crushing its sides.

**The Arestua** The Arestua is unlocked, as it has been from its beginning. There is a wooden box for donations and an honor system for paying (and leaving the hut at least as clean as it was found). Every fall, a CMC work party scrubs the place, makes repairs and cuts firewood.

**The Brainard Cabin** From Thanksgiving to April, volunteers host the cabin on weekends. (Occasionally they have to cancel.) Approximately 1,000 skiers and snowshoers use it every year, glad to have a toasty, friendly place in the woods where they can eat lunch or stay the night. Through the years, the cabin has saved several lives and undoubtedly prevented serious injuries due to cold.

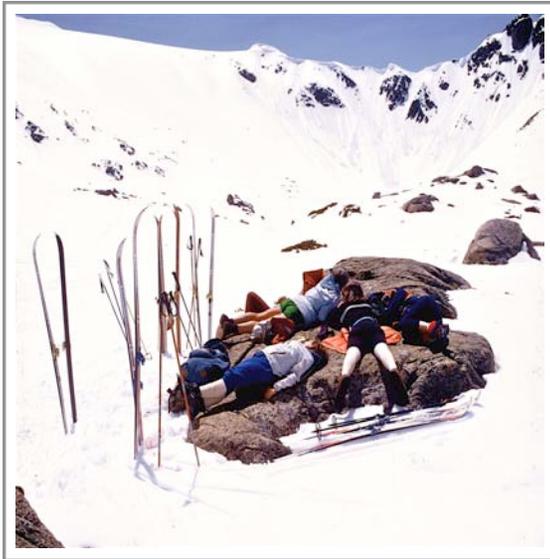
Donations for day-use are voluntary, but most welcome, as the Boulder Group pays an annual use fee to the Forest Service and needs money for repairs and improvements to the cabin.

Unlike the Arestua, the Brainard Cabin is locked. It, too, has an annual work party in the fall as well as host-training sessions. Both CMC-members and non-members may use the cabin, subject to certain rules. To make reservations, which must be paid ahead of time, go to the Brainard cabin website at: [www/cabins@cmcboulder.org](http://www/cabins@cmcboulder.org)

## The Colorado Mountain Club

The CMC offers many trips, winter and summer, several schools, and a welcoming group of people. The club as a whole has around 7,000 members in several groups around the state. The Boulder Group has about 1,200 members. The Boulder clubhouse is at 633 South Broadway, in the Table Mesa shopping center. The phone is (303) 544-7688. or go to the CMC website at [www/cmc.org](http://www/cmc.org)

The State Organization of the CMC is located in the American Mountaineering Center, 710 Tenth St., Golden CO 80401. (303) 279-3080. Also in the American Mountaineering Center is the recently opened Bradford Washburn American Mountaineering Museum. The museum website is [www/bwamm.org](http://www/bwamm.org).



*Skiing isn't all work!*

**Join the club and become active in the many activities and meet a lot of friendly people.**

Jan and Dave Robertson Copyright Boulder Group CMC 2008

## The CMC Boulder Group's Skiing Heritage

### The Forest Service

Without the support, dedication and just plain hard work of the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest staff, none of the projects and events described here would have happened. The Boulder Group of the Colorado Mountain Club is grateful to have partnered with the Forest Service for more than 80 years.

### The Brainard Cabin



*CMC members (Gayle Waldrop on the left) in front of the newly-built Brainard Cabin.*

However, in the 1960's, a Norwegian engineer, Ingvar Sodal, changed all that. He started the Boulder Group's cross-country ski school in 1969, giving lectures on technique and waxing, enlisting Norwegian students as instructors on weekends. He ordered cross-country skis from Norway, for friends. Eventually the number of requests burgeoned, so he started a small business, Norsk, Ltd. He was instrumental in changing the entryway to the Brainard Cabin to maintain heat. He inspired CMC members to construct trails into the Brainard Lake area so they'd have alternatives to the now-paved road, often windswept and bare.



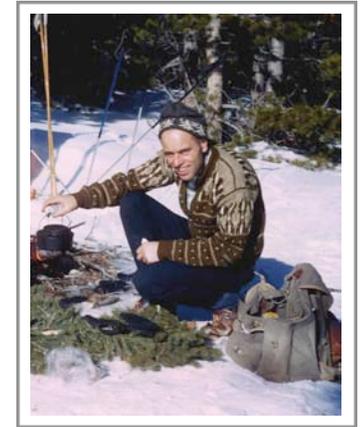
*Felix Marti helping clear the North (Waldrop) Trail in 1971.*



*Harry Waldrop skiing near Brainard Lake in 1972.*

Members of the Boulder Group, mostly C.U. professors, scraped together enough money to pay Joe Stapp to construct a mosquito-free cabin above Brainard Lake, in 1928. Members used their "new clubhouse," accessed by a dirt road, every month of the year. In March, 1929, it was reported that a stag party skied near the lake, stark naked, "save for boots and skis."

World War II and the increasing popularity of downhill skiing contributed to the decline in cross-country skiing and in use of the Brainard Cabin.



*Ingvar Sodal was instrumental in promoting skiing, huts and trail systems.*

The South Trail was constructed in 1970 and, a year later, the North Trail. The North Trail was renamed "The Waldrop Trail" to honor Harry Waldrop, a geologist who died kayaking on the Arkansas in 1975.

In December, 1980 the Little Raven Trail was opened and in 2002 the Snowshoe Trail was completed. Boulder Group members helped with both.

## The Pfiffner Hut

In 1967, the Boulder Group constructed a fiberglass Canadian Air Force hut to honor a devoted member (and head of the avalanche school), Karl Pfiffner, who, ironically, had been killed in an avalanche on La Plata Peak. Located high up the East Portal valley, near Rogers Pass Lake, its components were flown in by helicopter.

Pfiffner Hut work parties included games organized by Hugh McCaffrey, such as toss-the-caber, swim-the-ice-cold-tarn race, and, starting in 1971, classical music concerts.

That year marked the first time the Altissimo Chamber Orchestra performed in a meadow near the hut. Boulder Group member, Bob

Kamper, helped organize the event. Musicians, consisting of CMC members as well as C.U. music faculty, hauled their instruments up the steep 4-mile trail to play in sunshine, rain and even snow. The last concert took place in 1977, the victim of ever-increasing audiences (300 at the final count) whose numbers damaged the environment.

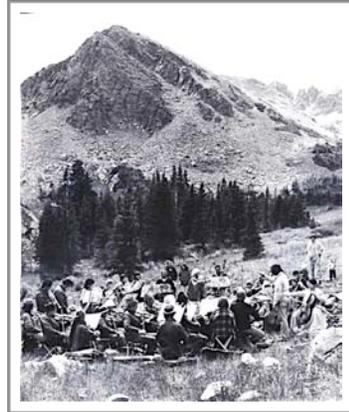
## The Arestua

Architect Jofrid Sodal designed the Arestua, also known as the "Guinn Mountain Hut." Materials were hauled up to the site on a road built for the construction of a new gas line. A classic Norwegian design, it was built in 1970 by Boulder Group members. Ingvar and others created a trail from Jenny Creek to the hut, incorporating an old wagon road. Later, after Lake Eldora opened a commercial cross-country center, CMC members constructed a new trail to access Jenny Creek that bypassed the fee area.

The hut offers overnight shelter for skiers on their way to/from Winter Park, or as a base for the excellent skiing nearby. Day-trippers use it as a lunch stop after their steep climb from the Lake Eldora ski area.



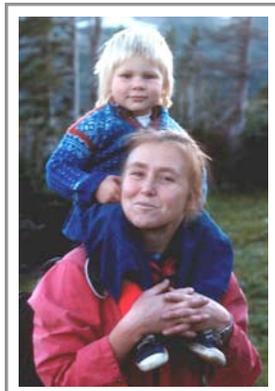
*The Pfiffner Hut, built in 1967, was well-used during its brief existence.*



*The Altissimo Chamber Orchestra performs in front of Haystack Mountain. Hauling the bass fiddle up four miles was a challenge.*



*The Arestua is a wonderful piece of Norway, in Colorado. Materials were brought up using the temporary road while a gas line was being laid.*



*Jofrid Sodal, shown with daughter Silje, designed the Arestua, built in 1970.*

## Ski Races

In 1968, a year after the Pfiffner Hut was built, a race to the hut and back took place. Starting in the big meadow on South Boulder Creek, a half-mile west of the Moffat Tunnel, the event began with a grueling 1,900-foot ascent. After a few gulps of Jofrid Sodal's hot porridge at the hut, skiers turned around. They then braved a hair-raising descent while attempting to make turns on their wooden skis, wearing soft, low ski boots clamped into free-heel Rottefella bindings.

To quote Ann Hayes: "The race was never repeated, not because it was thought to be too difficult or dangerous (which it certainly was), but because the route was also in use by unwary recreational skiers to whom the racers posed a hazard (and vice versa)."

In 1969, Ingvar laid out an alternate race course, which also started in the big meadow. However, rather than going west toward the Divide, it headed up from the big meadow generally north on an *ad hoc* flagged route. After achieving the old Rollins Pass Railroad bed, it careered down across two of the Forest Lakes, drainages, frozen semi-waterfalls, old telephone line cuts and, finally the long road on which skiers picked up speed before turning left to the finish line in the big meadow. John Whitbeck helped organize several of the subsequent Forest Lake races, which came to include a mile-long flat-track race for kids. The last event was held in 1977.

Ski races were also held in the Brainard Lake area, on the North Trail (before its name was changed to "the Waldrop" Trail), or on the South Trail, or around Long Lake. One trophy honored Boulder Group stalwart Gayle Waldrop and another, the incomparable Alice Holubar. The State CMC also staged what they called Gold Spittoon races in the area. However, all CMC races ended in 1984 because liability insurance costs became prohibitive.



*Kids' races were also popular. Some of the participants eventually raced for college teams.*



*Skiers take off for the grueling and thrilling Forest Lakes race. One person said "If I'd known how many people were going to come I would have sharpened my poles."*



*Ken Robertson broke first one ski and then the other. Picnickers loaned him two ski tips and he still came in third.*