Although this file was scanned from the highest-quality microfilm held by Boise State University, it reveals the limitations of the source microfilm. It is possible to perform a text search of much of this material; however, there are sections where the source microfilm was too faint or unreadable to allow for text scanning. For assistance with this collection of student newspapers, please contact Special Collections and Archives at archives@boisestate.edu.
Long-awaited climbing gym opens Friday

**BY MONICA PRICE**

The Arbiter

Sean BSI students will have a new opportunity to scale the heights this Friday. At 3:45 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 30, the ribbon wrapping the opening of 7,000 square feet of new climbing wall will be cut, State community.

The REC center has been built in order to secure a contract with the Boise State Rock Climbing Club. The Rec center has been added to the Boise State Rock Climbing Club in order to secure a contract with the Boise State Rock Climbing Club.

“Most of the funding for the project was $12,000,000 for the next climbing center,” Geoff said. The REC center has been added to the Boise State Rock Climbing Club in order to secure a contract with the Boise State Rock Climbing Club.

The wall looks and feels like sandstone, but with a steel building wall. It will be at The REC at The Center.

**JANUARY 15, 2004**

**INTERNATIONAL**

**Suicide bomber kills four, injures 13**

**BY ALEX MOORE**

The Arbiter

JERUSALEM - A suicide bomber, dressed as a woman, killed four Israelis and injured 13 this week when his explosives inside a laborers' pedestrian crossing between the Erez Crossing and the Gaza Strip, according to officials.

The bomber was wearing a black hat and beard, according to Israeli authorities.

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On Sunday, Jan. 17, the Israeli military killed the Palestinian attacker, a woman, wearing a black hat and beard, according to Israeli authorities.

The Palestinian attacker, a woman, wearing a black hat and beard, was killed in a suicide bombing attack near the Erez Crossing on Sunday, Jan. 17, killing four Israelis and injuring 13, according to Israeli officials.

The suicide bomber, identified as a female suicide bomber, in her mid-20s, was killed in a blast at the Erez Crossing, according to Israeli officials.

Four Israelis were killed and 13 were injured in the blast, according to Israeli officials.

The woman, wearing a black hat and beard, was identified as a female suicide bomber, in her mid-20s, according to Israeli authorities.

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On Sunday, Jan. 17, the Israeli military killed the Palestinian attacker, a woman, wearing a black hat and beard, according to Israeli authorities.

The Israeli military, which has killed several suicide bombers in recent months, was searching for the attacker near the Erez Crossing, according to Israeli officials.

The attacker was described as a woman, wearing a black hat and beard, in her mid-20s, according to Israeli officials.

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Suicide

from page 1

The original Associated Press, "That is it! I will admit that I have been here.

The al-Qa'ida Martyrs Brigade and the
Moldovan Revolutionary Army launched an assault on Moldova's capital,
Chisinau, on Tuesday morning.

The Moldovan government has been
under threat of attack since last week.

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Up-close and personal with Idaho Elk

By MICHEELE SELLS
Outdoors Columnist

Nestled among the pine trees in Loomis Ranch, just outside of Donnelly in the Lemhi Valley, is an Idahoan's dream that few get to experience. This is the Payette River Scenic Byway. This area stretches from Horshoe Bend to New Classic and includes many animals including elk, bears, owls, hawks, and many others. The Byway was chosen by the Washington Office of Fish and Wildlife Conservation as the best transportation area that provides quality wildlife viewing opportunities.

As the sleigh rides down the hill to the camp and feeding area, the driver continues to explain. As there are no limits to the number of elk that can be seen, the driver continues to explain to the passengers how they can get closer to the animals. He also mentions that the animals are fed by the driver, and this feeds them for the rest of the year. The elk are very friendly and can be seen up close.

The elk are very friendly and can be seen up close. They are eager to feed on the food provided by the driver. The driver also explains that the elk are very smart and can be trained to do tricks. The elk are very intelligent and can be taught to do many different things.

The Elk

The elk are very intelligent and can be taught to do many different things. They are very fast and can run very fast. The elk are also very strong and can jump very high.

The Elk's Habitat

The elk live in the Payette River Scenic Byway. The area is very beautiful and has many animals. It is a great place to see elk and many other animals. The elk are very well taken care of and are very healthy. The driver takes great care of the elk and makes sure they are fed well.

The Elk's Diet

The elk's diet consists of grass, leaves, and other plants. The elk are very healthy and can be seen running and playing in the area. The driver also explains that the elk are very fast and can run very fast. The elk are also very strong and can jump very high.

The Elk's Size

The elk are very large and can weigh up to 500 pounds. They are very strong and can jump very high. The elk are very intelligent and can be taught to do many different things.

The Elk's Behavior

The elk are very friendly and can be seen up close. They are eager to feed on the food provided by the driver. The elk are very intelligent and can be taught to do many different things. The elk are very fast and can run very fast. The elk are also very strong and can jump very high.

The Elk's Significance

The elk are very important to the Payette River Scenic Byway. The elk are a very important part of the area and are very well taken care of. The driver takes great care of the elk and makes sure they are fed well. The elk are very important to the area and are very well taken care of. The driver takes great care of the elk and makes sure they are fed well.

The Elk's Future

The elk are very important to the Payette River Scenic Byway. The elk are a very important part of the area and are very well taken care of. The driver takes great care of the elk and makes sure they are fed well. The elk are very important to the area and are very well taken care of. The driver takes great care of the elk and makes sure they are fed well.

The Elk's History

The elk have been an important part of the area for many years. The elk have been well taken care of and have been very healthy. The driver takes great care of the elk and makes sure they are fed well. The elk are very important to the area and are very well taken care of. The driver takes great care of the elk and makes sure they are fed well.
It's time to get involved
in Idaho politics

By Stephen Tolman

As we filed back into class Monday after what seemed to be the darkest victory over the Idaho Legislature's attempt to cut the number of state lawmakers from 75 to 51, we were relieved that a majority of Idahoans have recognized the reality that the Idaho Legislature needs 75, not 51, lawmakers.

Last month, the Department of the Interior, which oversees the state Department of Labor, issued a report that the state's unemployment rate is higher than the national average.

In the meantime, the state is facing a budget shortfall of $1.2 billion, which is expected to grow to $2.4 billion by 2006.

The state's budget is expected to increase by 43 percent between 2002 and 2006. It currently comprises 70 percent of the state's general fund, is being spent, as well as to have our opinions heard by lawmakers.

The state has yet to include a division within the Department of Education that oversees the Department of Education's annual budget. The state is also expected to increase the salaries of its teachers by 10 percent.

One such forum is being held tonight in the Borah High School library at 7 p.m. All citizens are invited to attend these forums, vote on their future, and receive feedback from the forum. Each such forum is being held tonight in the Borah High School library at 7 p.m. All citizens are invited to attend these forums, vote on their future, and receive feedback from the forum. Each such forum is being held tonight in the Borah High School library at 7 p.m. All citizens are invited to attend these forums, vote on their future, and receive feedback from the forum.

Overdue reversal on Iraq

The White House's move toward Tuesday to be included in the Senate's war construction contract in Iraq was its largest step toward the recognition that the United States needs allies, not just in Iraq, but also in the rest of the world.

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candidacy. Twenty to 30 percent of homes from the next to which they were raised, according to Princeton's

Robert Workman. And a much higher percentage have switched churches or
religions than he really is?"

A line of thinking makes me ner-

This line of thinking makes me ner-

But again, this isn't unusual behavior.

The Way, he acknowledges that others

institutional religious connections.

For 20 years now, sociologists have doc-

millions of Americans have figured out

interdenominational marriages, which

needled for saying that the Book of Job

Orwell's friend, Commerce Secretary Don

Bush's friend, Commerce Secretary Don

Another potential trap is the assump-

The Washington Post

MATT WOLFFMAN

 Were the spirituels talking about issues

"Meet the Press" host Tim Russert

of American develop their

philosophy of religious observance, and how it
could (fully) beset decisions of religion. The

First, there's the fight about churches. For

The punditry so far has been ig-

Robert Wuthnow. And a much higher

uncomfortable with

dates' religious statements is the idea

So what matters most. Uncomfortable with

But again, this isn't unusual behavior.

For 20 years now, sociologists have doc-

One could indicate that those are the sort of
guys you would want leading your

That's not hypocrisy. It's broad-mindedness.

And that's where the new math comes in. Every religion

how to raise kids in interfaith marriages,

vice-parcel of the Bible despite having

As for the spirituels, the fact is

What Would Jesus Do? It's also,

It's more important than thinking about the
central theme: Does a good god get

You can read textbooks based on data from Monument hillor hannon Resources. Average Holl.com Price for New and Used Textbooks based on an August/September 2003 analysis of over 500,000 books sold on Half.com. Quantities, pricing and availability may vary due to supply and demand. Coupon excludes shipping and handling; excludes 3rd party sellers. Guarantee is limited to Half's price guarantee on items purchased from that being taken by George W. Bush.

PERSIAN RUGS: Embargos Just Lifted After 15 Years!

All products are new, factory-authorized, and come with comprehensive warranties. Kitchen, dining, living, and bedroom furniture, as well as any other fine home furnishings. Values start at $99. Fast, convenient, and safe. No inconvenient store or show room required.

For a limited time, first-time buyers can take $5 off any of the Half.com brand's 150,000 titles. Simple use this code: BOOKESTORE04
Top-30 BSU tennis to host William & Mary

The Boise State women's tennis team hosted the University of Central Florida in the first round of the NCAA Tournament at Boise State's Indoor Tennis Center. The two teams played to a score of 4-1 in favor of the Broncos. The tournament begins on May 9th with the second round at Boise State. The Broncos will host the University of Idaho in the second round with a win.

As with any team that looks to add to its NCAA record, the Broncos have the opportunity to add to their legacy. They have made it to the NCAA tournament four times and have won two of those. The Broncos have a lot of returning athletes who are ready to step up and contribute to the team. Many of the returning athletes are Boise State record holders, and the talent present on this year's team.

The Broncos are on track to make the NCAA tournament for the second straight year. They have a quicker timetable for their upcoming season, which would presumably worry the coaching staff. But head coach Mike Maynard said, "We are lucky enough to have one of the best teams in the country this season. On Dec. 6, at the Western Indoor Classic, the two high school champions, Abbey Elsberry, is also showing sure that she is one of the best in the country this season. In training for the upcoming season, the Broncos can only see great things coming from the competition. As the Broncos train on their state-of-the-art Idaho Center complex in Nampa, they are preparing for the NCAA tournament. The team understands the importance of training for the upcoming season, as they train day in and day out in the Idaho Center, Boise, Idaho. The Broncos can only see great things coming from the competition.
Sandmire’s squad is ready to repeat as WAC Champions

BY AMBER POIGER
Sports Reporter

The Auburn

The Bronco gymnastics team began its defense of their 2003 Western Conference title Friday at 7 p.m., hosting BYU at the Pavilion. Head coach Sam Sandmire said the team is physically and mentally ready to begin the 2004 season.

Kevin Carla Chambers, the 2003 Conference gymnast of the year, will lead a team that includes the young but experienced Broncos in achieving the team's goals this season.

Sandmire said that this team is the most physically fit team she has coached yet, due to extensive off-season workouts, which will help them to increase many more team skills in the future. One of the team's main focuses will be on team performances rather than on individual achievements.

Although when one team member succeeds the entire team benefits, the team's main goal is not only to repeat the conference championship but to qualify as a team for the NCAA Regional Championship. In order to do so, the Broncos will focus on hitting all of their sets and the rest of their routines. 'That's how we expect this week's match to be packed with non-stop action. She said it may not have the hard hitting contact of football but the thrill of competition is still present, and fans are expected to cheer loud and proud.

There's no time like the present. And who would doubt her? Look at her history, her record speaks for itself. One thing is for sure, Sandmire isn't looking to just repeat history she's ready to make history this season.

Look for the Broncos to make a run at the NCAA tournament this spring. There's no time like the present, but Bronze fans can rest assured she's ready to make history this season.
**Incident viewed differently by Kansas State players**

*By JEFFREY PARROW*  
*Knight Ridder-Tribune News Service*  

Although there will be several awards changes through the end of the regular season, fans will remember the series of events that culminated with the incident on the floor of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium. Those events, combined with the incident on the floor of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium, made the series of events that culminated with the incident on the floor of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium, made the series of events that culminated with the incident on the floor of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium, made the series of events that culminated with the incident on the floor of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium, made the series of events that culminated with the incident on the floor of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium, made the series of events that culminated with the incident on the floor of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium, made the series of events that culminated with the incident on the floor of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium, made the series of events that culminated with the incident on the floor of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium, made the series of events that culminated with the incident on the floor of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium, made the series of events that culminated with the incident on the floor of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium, made the series of events that culminated with the incident on the floor of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium, made.

**For a Steelhead: His best friend is his goalie**

**So what we doin’ tonight?**

**Idaho Steelheads Hockey**  
*$10 WITH STUDENT ID**

INCLUDES ADMISSION & SMALL BEVERAGE

Get your tickets at the Bank of America Centre Box Office or in the Student Union Building.  
Limit two per student ID *$10 special does not apply for Saturday Games*  

**NEXT GAME**  
**FRIDAY JAN 18 @7-05**  
**AGAINST THE LONG BEACH ICE DOGS**
Haphazard ranta that can be suppressed no longer.

The other night I was browsing online on a new laptop computer, I thought about submitting a diary once a week. I would explore different areas of the world situation I seem to find myself in, the instances, different times, and different eras and old ones, only to find out they are ones which areario and have already become, one, something.

However, I think that idea isn't particularly well. And that's because it's something you can't really do. I mean, you can't really... wait, what was I doing? I'm not sure.
Chinese numerials and the Boise music scene

New label formed by former Bronze football players looks to make an impact

BY DONNA OLIVER

Isn't it the first step to the first floor, but one of the last steps you want to walk in school. This someone I will not be slighted on general manner to introduce you to the world of music and entertainment has arrived. I have been the first, for those of you who are still high school seniors, I will begin with an introdu-

cution to 108 Entertainments, one of the RCA paradise ac-
ceted labels. In addition to Ann pronunciation, radio station, 108 The Boise of the Boise music has the contingen
ging side of achievements Boise artists such as British albums and others.

The major place of the 108 Entertainment finally, twelve Boise artists have already given us the benefit of their

talents. Among them: Matt Shadonick, Matt Shadonick, Matt Shadonick, and others.

The music industry blames downloading for its moribund spring and fall. In each case, contrasting figures show that the drop was only 0.8 percent from November and December, 14 percent fessed to downloading fell by 31 percent in the last three months.---

"Before these subpoenas were served, the major peer-to-peer applications were anonymous. I suspect the presumption changed. The major peer-to-peer applications are anonymous. I suspect the presumption changed.

"The important thing to keep in mind is that the major peer-to-peer applications are anonymous. I suspect the presumption changed. The major peer-to-peer applications are anonymous. I suspect the presumption changed."
Let the balloting (and the schmoozing and the advertising) begin!

It is a season whose starting date doesn't appear on our calendar, and yet by the time it's over everyone seems to have been inexorably long. Last year's Oscar season and this year's will be a mirror image of one another, with the Hollywood studios and the 84-member board of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (which meets in a shuttered meeting room under the close surveillance of the studio's publicists) following the rules almost exactly. The studios and the board alike, it's always seemed to me, are guilty of an inexcusably long tradition of self-appointed expertise — in beginning and结尾ing about who will win. Right now I'm writing about the 2004/5 season. In any non-leap year, it always seems to be announced. It's 3 weeks, moving the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences itself stepped in to enhance: In any non-leap year, the Oscars still would be given out last week and on Jan. 27 this year. The first day of March would be the Oscar day. I must admit that I don't like that. I believe that a festival that lasts for 3 weeks, moving the Academy Awards to Feb. 29 this year. Of course, it is Hollywood. As usual the date is customarily en-trusted to last year's superstars and the Oscars still would be given out in March. The ballots went out last week, and on Jan. 27 the Oscar festivities will begin. The envelopes will come in. The envelopes will be opened.

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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:
addressing misinformation about the areas of divorce, custody, separation and child support

call the Women’s Center at 426-4259 to register all pre-registered participants will receive a resource handbook

The Law Speaks Up

Monday, January 26, 10am
A panel of judges and attorneys will discuss the legal aspects of divorce, custody, separation and child support, along with legal processes, rights and logistics involved in Idaho’s standard procedures.

Managing Conflict, When the Little Ones Count
Tuesday, February 3, 1pm
Professional mediators will answer questions surrounding the state’s requirements about parenting classes, child custody mediation and why mediation is important, and child support issues.

Relationship Resourcefulness
Monday, February 9th, 10am
A valuable resource is knowledge. Panel members from a variety of community organizations will provide information about support services available for those struggling with divorce, custody, and separation issues.

Resolving Problems in Relationships
Tuesday, February 17, 1pm
Designed for those who don’t see divorce as an option, but recognize that they are struggling. The panel will include a counselor from Boise State and professionals from the community who are trained in helping families and couples resolve conflicts.

Call ASBSU for an appointment.
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PASSPORT PROGRAM

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This beginner program includes:
4 session lessons, ski or board rentals for the season and a season pass upon graduating.

*Juniors 7-11yrs. w/ birthday cut-off Dec. 1

Mon-Sat • 10am-6pm

www.bogusbasin.com
You can feel it as you walk outside. It's in the air, building and strengthening, the anticipation of coming snow storms. Old Man Winter has Idaho in his sights at last, or at least we can hope. I must admit that I live for winter. I can never get enough of it. When it's not winter and I'm dripping from the 110 degree weather, it's in my thoughts. When it's fall and I'm sitting through yet another class I'm possessed by winter's relative proximity. I live for winter. So when the Editor-in-Chief of The Arbiter asked me if I would like to help with this year's Winter Rec Guide I jumped at the chance. I thought what better way to satisfy my anticipation with the coming of winter than by working on a map to all that it entails? I am not alone in my anticipation. Over the next few weeks a new species of college student will begin to emerge. Look for students with blank stares uttering something about steep lines, deep powder and big air. Over the next few weeks the Wintertwist will begin to emerge from its hibernation in anticipation of fresh snows.

On a more serious note, enclosed are a few examples of the many winter recreation opportunities available in this isolated corner of the world we call Idaho. Idaho is blessed with an abundance of outdoor, year-around recreation opportunities, and winter is no exception. From world-class ski areas to the abundance of remote winter backcountry available here in the heart of the Rockies, Idaho is blessed with copious amounts of winter spoil. Head to the north, from there the opportunities for winter fun are only limited to the imagination.

With that in mind I would like to thank you for reading this year's Winter Rec Guide and wish you many powder days to come. Enjoy.
1. Bogus Basin
- Vertical Drop: 1800 feet
- Summit elevation: 7582 feet
- Skiable terrain: 2600 acres 900 acres groomed
- Average Snowfall: 250 inches
- More Info: www.bogusbasin.com
- Claim to fame: None

2. Brundage Mountain
- Vertical Drop: 1800 feet
- Summit elevation: 7640 feet
- Skiable terrain: 1300 acres
- Average Snowfall: 300+ inches
- More Info: www.brundage.com
- Claim to fame: Family friendly, great powder.

3. Grand Targhee
- Vertical Drop: 2395 feet
- Summit elevation: 10,000 feet
- Skiable terrain: 2000 acres
- Average Snowfall: 500 inches
- More Info: www.grandtarghee.com
- Claim to fame: Two words: Incredible powder.

4. Jackson Hole
- Vertical Drop: 4139 feet
- Summit elevation: 10,450 feet
- Skiable terrain: 2500 acres
- Average Snowfall: 402 inches
- More Info: www.jacksonhole.com
- Claim to fame: Largest continuous vertical drop in the U.S., 4139 feet

5. Soldier Mountain
- Vertical Drop: 1400 feet
- Summit elevation: 7200 feet
- Skiable terrain: 1147 acres
- Average Snowfall: 200 inches
- More Info: www.soldiermountain.com
- Claim to fame: None

6. Sun Valley
- Vertical Drop: 3400 feet
- Summit elevation: 9150 feet
- Skiable terrain: 2054 acres
- Average Snowfall: 200 inches
- More Info: www.sunvalley.com
- Claim to fame: None

Boisians have an awesome winter recreational opportunity located just 16 miles from one of the premier non-profit ski resorts in the Rockies: Bogus Basin. The resort, whose summit sits 5,800 feet above Boise, offers a spectacular view and diverse terrain for the winter sport enthusiast. The resort has something for everyone, whether beginner, intermediate or advanced skier or snowboarder. Bogus is the resort of choice, offering long, leisurely trails, or fast, difficult and challenging runs.

Blessed liberally with over 2,600 acres to ski or snowboard, Bogus competes as one of the best values for money can buy. The mountain has over 51 groomed trails along with many accessible areas of untouched snow for those who thrive on a challenge. Bogus has the second largest non-profit ski area in the United States, ranking second only to Winter Park, Colorado.

Bogus isn't restricted to skiers and snowboarders; beginning this season Bogus will offer a lane designated especially for snow-tubers. This run ends the search that comes each winter to find a snow-covered hill to tube. With a tow-pull, there is no longer a need to toillessly trek the mountain trip after trip.

For the freestylist and snow junkie seeking the extreme, Bogus is opening a Deck Park, much like a skateboard park, snow. The nearby mountain is to generate an audience and show off your skills.

With their friendly and known Bogus Basin is an all-service ready to meet the needs of it the sample services offered a rental shop, as well as retail so recreationists. For these in near Bogus features two dining lodges that offer a full service bar for its patrons.

Last season, Bogus Basin 60-year anniversary. Yet, its history over 100 years to the late 1800s tradition, Bogus was the name that occurred in 1863. A group of men and supposedly mined the now Bogus Basin. Returning to looked like gold, the men spent at area stores and restaurants. In nation, it was found that the m

Contact the McCall Area Chamber of Commerce for your Winter Travel Planning
1-800-260-5130 or www.mccall-idahom частер.org

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Local Snowmobile Race Dates:
Dec. 13-14, 2003 RMXCRC SnoCross Opener
February 7th 2004 McCall Fun Run
February 21st and 22nd, American SnoCross Challenge
Park that functions as a cross-country ski park, only set in the summer months for guests. Some of the services include a ski school, rentals, and other winter activities for future ski resorts.

The two brothers, Alf and Corey Engen, were commissioned by the U.S. Forest Service to locate such areas in Utah and Idaho that might serve well as future ski resorts. In searching for an area near Boise, the two brothers scoured approximately 65 miles of the Boise Ridge. The two recommended what is now Bogus Basin.

In 1939 construction on the road to Bogus began, and three years later in 1941 the ski area was ready to open. However, opening was postponed for a year, because of the attacks on Pearl Harbor in World War II. On Dec. 20, 1942, Bogus Basin Ski Area officially opened its gates for business. It wasn’t until 1952 that the road to Bogus was finally paved.

As a non-profit ski resort, Bogus Basin offers some of the most competitive rates in the industry. College students receive some of the greatest discount rates Bogus offers. Students save $170 off the regular season pass price, paying only $229. Prior to 1998, a regular season pass ran as high as $500. Under the leadership of general manager Mike Shirley, Bogus slashed their prices by more than 50 percent, to $199. Shirley made the decision after seeing a similar concept worked for Southwest Airlines. After offering the cheapest fares in their industry, the airline filled its passenger seats.

In 1997 the resort sold only 2,800 season passes. In 1998, after drastically cutting prices, the resort sold over 25,000 season passes. Since then, Bogus has seen a dramatic increase in skier visits per year. The number has steadily increased from approximately 199,000 in 1997 to well over 370,000 last year.

If you have extra money to spare this season, consider investing in a Bogus season pass. With Bogus in such close proximity to Boise, you’ll have ample opportunity to make use of it and you will delight at the value for your dollar.
Idaho City Park and Ski boasts untouched powder

The view from atop Banner Ridge in the Boise National Forest is stunning. Stretching 360 degrees are mountain ranges, that seemingly go on forever. To the far north one can distinguish the very beginnings of the Salmon River Mountains and the vast Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. Along the eastern skyline the awe-inspiring Sawtooth Mountains push their icy summits skyward. And finally, on the western edge of your vision rise the remote uplands of the Payette River Crest backcountry.

As most locals know, a bonanza of winter recreational opportunities awaits the intrepid cold season adventurer just hours outside Idaho’s Capitol city.

Snowbound slopes that haven’t known the mark of a skier or snowboarder’s signature carve are a reality here in the inland northwest. A combination of vast and unspoiled public lands, coupled with a relatively low regional population promises unchartered snow for those willing to look.

Now, I’m not here to give you each and every powder stash from the Boise foothills to the Sawtooths, nonetheless, the Banner Ridge area is a place to start.

Spanning a high divide that separates the upper headwaters of the Boise River basin and the depths of the South Fork of the Payette River canyon is the Banner Ridge area. Gracing these evergreen covered hillsides is an extensive network of groomed and ungroomed trails specifically signed and marked for the winter enthusiast who possesses even a moderately propellor mindset.

Unlike other area slopes, the sounds of the internal combustion motor are faint here at best.

Access to these winter trails is excellent: Three parking lots, kept snow free courtesy of the Idaho Department of Transportation, guarantee access to this winter wonderland in all but the worst of winter storms. All that is required to use the parking lots and the associated 60 miles of marked trail is a current Idaho Park and Ski pass. These one-year passes have gone up in price from last year, but at $25 still are less than most one-day ski lift tickets.

Lee Hennessey, an employee of Idaho State Parks and Recreation, said they are on track to begin grooming trails soon. All that is needed is two feet of snow, and last weekend’s snowstorm went a long way toward reaching that mark. Of the 60 miles of groomed trail, 20 miles are groomed in a 10-foot width, with a ski area open just one mile away.

As most locals know, a bonanza of winter recreational opportunities awaits the intrepid cold season adventurer just hours outside Idaho’s Capitol city.

Access to Banner Ridge is best from the Banner Ridge Parking lot, the last of the three parking spots north of Idaho City.

According to Hennessey, “Everybody needs to go to the top of that Banner Ridge: It’s just a 700-foot climb; I would say that is the place to go up and take in the views.”

The 700-foot climb to the top can be accomplished in little over a mile. The hill gets progressively steeper as one climbs, but it shouldn’t be too daunting as long as skiers take their time.

Once on top, you can see Banner Ridge stretching on in a generally eastern direction for miles. Dropping the northern aspects of the ridge are slopes laid bare by a wildfire that scorched these hills in the late ’80s. Unknown to many are the slope’s consistent lines.

These slopes are beautiful to the eye of the backcountry telemark skier or snowboarder:

“It’s premium skiing. You can ski 2,000 feet of bare slopes if you want,” Hennessey said.

If you plan on trying these slopes, keep in mind the ever-present avalanche risk. Because of the avalanche danger, skiers or anybody else straying off the groomed paths should have a thorough knowledge of avalanche risks and always carry that most important piece of safety gear: the avalanche transceiver. According to Hennessey, the area is potentially avalanche prone. “It’s not a high incident area, but I have seen avalanches in that area.”

Other area attractions include five Idaho State Parks and Recreation managed Yurts spread out liberally among the many hills and draws in these mountains. Overnight reservations can be made by anyone wanting to stay in any one of these backcountry palaces.

All three parking lots are found directly off of State Highway 21. Travel time to Whoop-Um-Up, Gold Fork and Banner Ridge parking lots is generally well under two hours from Boise. Whoop-Um-Up is the first, located 18 miles north of Idaho City on State Highway 21.

For further yurt information and reservations contact Idaho State Parks and Recreation at 208-334-4198.
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