

## **To Surprises – A Perfect Winter Day in January 2009**

It's nearing the end of this year's six week University of Montana Christmas break. One week from today (Jan. 26) classes begin again in earnest. I'm ready, though I've got a research result that I could easily spend a week writing up.

Anyway, last Thursday, Jen made me take a day off of work for a mid-week, mid-day date, while the kids were in school. We headed up to Lolo Pass for some cross-country skiing, and then down into Idaho, along the Lochsa River, to Jerry Johnson Hot Springs, which is a 1.5 mile hike from the highway into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. The day ended up being one of those perfect ones that you can't seem to plan, hence the title of this brief journal entry, "To Surprises".



**Jen in the creek-side pool (our favorite) at Jerry Johnson natural hot springs.**

So far, the winter has been a good one. The snow came late, but strong, and we had a very white Christmas. But we've seen little moisture over the past two-to-three weeks, and yesterday at Discovery Ski Area felt like spring. I'm looking forward to the snow's return, as I'm not yet ready for winter cold and snow to end.

After telemark skiing four days up until the weekend following Christmas, I've been strictly cross country skiing due to problems with my left knee—a not-so-welcome surprise of this past year. Nonetheless, I'm hoping to participate in the 50K at the Yellowstone Rendezvous in early March ([www.rendezvousrace.com](http://www.rendezvousrace.com)). It's been good to get back to regular outings on Nordic skis. I have missed the discipline very much since our year in Finland and my participation in the Rajalta-Rajalle. As my skill improves, the joy increases. Thank God for skiing! Still, it's unnerving be having knee problems. I have been feeling my age lately.



**Skiing at Lolo Pass**