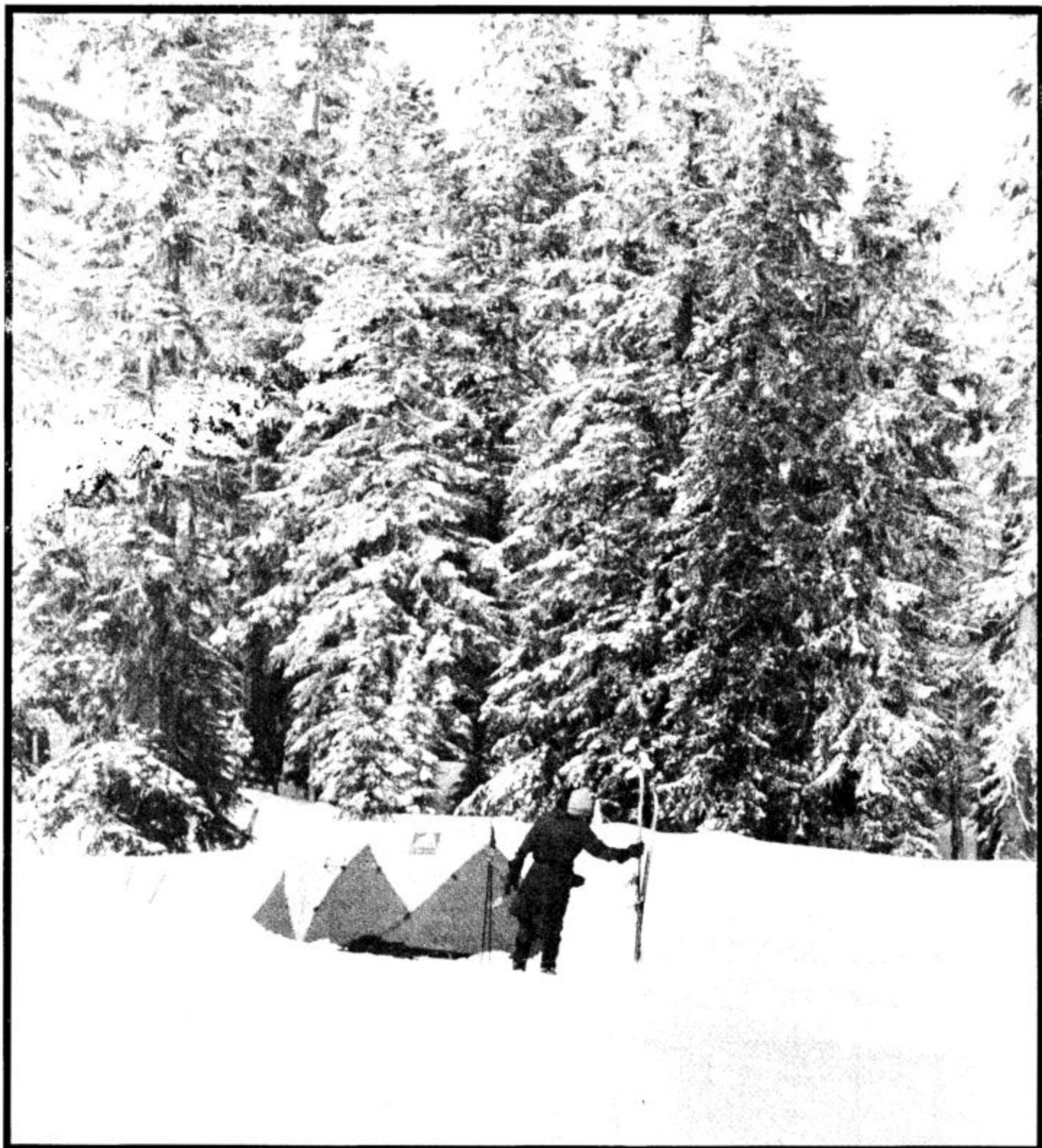


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Washington and the Pacific Northwest

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Tod Bloxham skis to the top of Hogback Mountain.

John Roper

SUBMISSIONS:

GENERAL: Readers are invited to submit material for publication; we accept these submissions as contributions-if payment is requested it will be a modest amount. Put your name on EVERYTHING. If you want your work returned, please include return postage. We cannot guarantee against damage to or loss of material submitted, but we take great care in handling all submissions. Please don't be offended if we can't use your stories or photos.

RANDOM VIEW: What catches your camera's eye? Send us a favorite backcountry snapshot-color print, transparency, or black-and-white.

BACKCOUNTRY NEWS: See information on page 5.

FEATURE ARTICLES: 400 to 1500 words. Typed-and-double-spaced is a nice touch, but not required. Space is limited; we reserve the right to cut. Want to write but need some guidance? We'll send our Writers' Guidelines; just ask.

PANORAMA: 100 to 300 words. We welcome all sorts of backcountry news. Send us newspaper clippings, club bulletins, or a paragraph about an important issue.

REST STOP: 100 to 300 words. Send us recipes, do-it-yourself projects for making or modifying gear, minimum impact techniques, safety tips, equipment reviews, etc.

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Snow camping near Sand Lake, in the William O. Douglas Wilderness, Washington. Photo by Ann Marshall.

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

This is an open forum and does not necessarily express the opinions of the publishers.

DANGEROUS SITUATION ON MOUNT PILCHUCK ROAD

This is a copy of a letter to the Darrington District Ranger:

Hikers, sledders, and cross-country skiers are at great risk on Forest Service road 42 (Mount Pilchuck road). Such non-motorized users are parking at the lower end of road 42 (at the intersection with road 4201).

They read the small sign posted on road 42, which reads: "closed to motorized vehicles." The sign provides a false sense of security, and the users proceed up the road to ski, sled and inter-tube down.

But motorized users, including four-wheel-drive vehicles, snowmobiles, and ATVs, drive past the sign without stopping. The motorized users cannot be faulted; the road is obviously driven, and the sign is so small that it is unnoticed except by people walking past.

During one half-hour in the afternoon of January 1, I saw at least six vehicles drive up the road. Each driver was oblivious to the small sign. One ATV ran over a cross-country ski. The ski was destroyed. If this situation persists, someone will likely be injured or worse.

Please take action. Alternatives include:

1. barricade the road;
 2. erect a larger sign;
 3. provide enforcement; or
 4. remove the existing sign.
- A speedy response is needed.

Steve Dean
Stanwood, Washington

Darrington District Ranger Fred Harnisch discussed the above letter with Pack & Paddle:

"The Mount Pilchuck road – in fact, the whole Verlot portion of the Mountain Loop – is an ongoing problem for us. In part, I think it's because the Verlot Ranger Station was closed several years ago, and the Forest Service no longer has a year-round presence in the area. We send a Snow Ranger to the Verlot side of the Mountain Loop for one day of the weekend and we hope he has a positive influence.

"We've taken steps to eliminate motorized use on the Pilchuck road by putting in a larger sign. In addition, all the new snow helps because it's made the road pretty tough to drive.

"Another solution might be to bring the existing gate down to the bottom

of the road if we can work out an agreement with the private landowner.

"We are well aware of the tremendous popularity of the Mountain Loop for the Puget Sound population – people just pour in, year around, from Everett, Seattle and other cities. We've been working with Snohomish County to provide turn-outs and parking on some of the side roads in the Forest.

"The County doesn't have the right equipment to do this very efficiently, so we're applying to the state Winter Recreation Program to get official Sno-Parks in both the Darrington and Verlot areas."

CONSULT PRIOR YEAR'S REPORTS

Yes, I'd love to have a copy of your 1992 Index – because hikes are so weather-dependent, with the lag between a hike and the published report about it, I often find it useful to consult the *prior* year's reports for current info about hiking conditions.

There's little Pack & Paddle can do about that unless you're prepared to publish weekly, and I wouldn't blame you if you said no.

Dave Knibb
Bellevue, Washington

We're not ready yet to try that yet at Pack & Paddle, but we're not saying "no," either. – AM

MOUNT ROSE

I agree strongly with Tom Weston (*January, page 4*) that Mount Rose definitely belongs on my list of lowest and/or easiest peaks to ~~climb~~ hike.

Having been up Mount Rose myself, I'm surprised I overlooked it! Tom's correct that the trail has been rebuilt and Wood's *Olympic Mountains Trail Guide*, 2nd edition, needs to be updated. I followed the old trail down until it joined the main trail, but it's practically non-existent.

Fred Beavon
Edmonds, Washington

ANOTHER LOWEST & EASIEST

Hugo Peak, in Pack Forest. 1740 feet elevation and 5 miles round trip from the road. Good trip any time of year.

This trail is maintained almost single-handedly by Ann Vischansky of Puyallup.

Dorothy Skovholt
Spanaway, Washington

BEAUTIFUL IN WINTER

The Peninsula's lowland valleys are never more beautiful than in the non-summer months.

I'm always amazed at the lack of enthusiasm for off-season hiking as evidenced in the trail reports and on the trails themselves. Most opt for the ocean beaches or snow-play.

I wonder if you and other Pack & Paddlers agree with this perception or do I have too much slug blood in my veins?

Janet Phipps
Port Angeles, Washington

Hikers don't vanish completely in winter. Just glancing through the latest Mountaineer Bulletin, I counted about 3 dozen hikes scheduled for January. Most other clubs schedule winter hikes, too. But I must admit that when it gets dark and cold, I enjoy sitting by the stove with a mug of tea and a stack of maps, planning next summer's trips! – AM

NEVER LESS THAN TWO CARRIES

In Jack Kendrick's report on the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (*November, page 13*), he says: "It seems no one ever makes two carries on a portage in the BWCA."

I've been going to the Boundary Waters since some time in the early 1950s. My family and friends and I have never crossed a portage in less than two carries! We often choose, for the first several days, to make the carry in three trips.

I prefer lighter packs and more opportunity to see what is along each of these trails, much more easily done when carrying a light pack. It is then you see grouse, or a flower or mushroom, or have lunch at one end or the other.

Yes, we use Duluth packs, too, and whatever else we have, and we don't carry a pack *and* the canoe on the same trip, which is what the once-

continued page 7





BACKCOUNTRY NEWS

INTRODUCTION

See General Comments under Submissions on page 3. All readers are encouraged to contribute to *Backcountry News*. Information that is particularly helpful includes: distance & elevation gain, condition of trail or route, hazards such as tidal currents, rockfall, avalanche danger, washouts, bees' nests, etc., and pleasant or fun things you encountered.

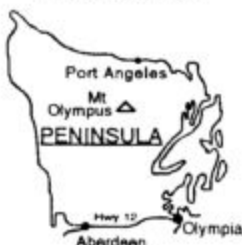
Space is limited; we may have to cut your report to fit available space. Typing is not necessary; we can read just about anyone's handwriting. We're interested in ALL trips, easy and hard, ordinary and exotic.


The following symbols will be used to categorize trips. Let us know if you find this helpful.

-  -Climbing, scrambling, mountaineering, off-trail and cross-country travel.
-  -Hiking, backpacking on trails.
-  -Canoeing, kayaking and water trips.
-  -Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.



PENINSULA



 **CAPE FLATTERY TRAIL** (*Makah Reservation; USGS Cape Flattery*) – Our New Year's Day plans were dashed when a call to the Hoodspout Ranger Station informed us we would have to negotiate 4 miles of unplowed road with a snow depth of 18 inches just to reach the trailhead at Staircase.

Instead, we headed north and spent the night in Sekiu. The next morning we set our sights for Cape Flattery. After driving through Neah Bay, we headed west to the former Air Force base where the road takes up a generally northwest direction.

The road had not been plowed beyond this point but the 6 inches of snow was not a problem. We continued several miles to a parking area and trailhead sign near the end of the road.

At this point we were about a 20-minute walk away from the most northwesterly point in the contermin-

ous United States. The trail is not in real good condition with lots of roots and mud holes. Our progress was further hampered with high salal that had been pushed down over the trail with the weight of the snow.

The trail ends abruptly atop high cliffs at the very end of the state, overlooking Tatoosh Island and the crashing surf far below. Just as we arrived it started to snow. The snow-covered trees and cliffs made an impressive sight in stark contrast to the dark caves and rocks being pounded by the surging green waves.

As we were contemplating the scene, a lone bald eagle soared silently over our heads toward the offshore rocks.

A long drive for a short hike, but something everyone should see at least once. – Joe Weigel, Port Orchard, 1/2.

WILDERNESS BEACHES (*Olympic Natl Park; USGS La Push, Allens Bay, Ozette*) – Because relatively few severe storms have come in this winter, coastal trails are in pretty good shape for this time of year.

The Department of Health has issued an advisory against eating razor clams and other shellfish because of some episodes of PSP (paralytic shellfish poisoning) this fall.

Work on the Cape Alava boardwalk trail will continue this winter; money for this project comes from state NOVA funds and is not affected by Park Service budget cuts.

Shi Shi Beach and Point of Arches remain **CLOSED** to all public access from the north (Neah Bay) side. Please don't try hiking in from this end until negotiations for a new right-of-way are complete. Point of Arches



Here's how Fred & Wilma spend the winter in Sequim: reading *Pack & Paddle!*

can be reached from the south (Ozette) side by fording the Ozette River, but

BACKCOUNTRY NEWS DEADLINE: March 22

Submit your trail reports by this date for the next issue. (Deadline for other departments is earlier; check with us for details.)

BACKCOUNTRY NEWS

this can be hazardous, especially in winter. The logging roads that go north from Ozette are now gated and locked. - Wilderness Beach Rangers, 1/17.

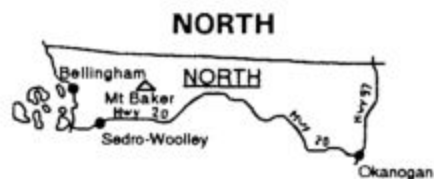
HOOD CANAL DISTRICT - Trails are snowcovered, and many trailheads cannot be reached due to snow on the roads.

Upper South Fork Skokomish trail 873.1 is a beautiful old-growth hike with lots of wildlife, but gate on road 2361 closes road 4 miles before trailhead. Will open again 4/30.

Mount Jupiter trail is 2.5 miles longer because of new gate on access road. - Ranger, 1/11.

HOODSPORT DISTRICT - With the snow level so low (500 feet), the Hamma Hamma road 25 is good for cross-country skiing. Snow starts under the powerlines, 2 miles from Highway 101. You can see bald eagles on the Hamma Hamma from Highway 101.

The road to Staircase is not plowed. Road 24 is clear to end of pavement, then wheel tracks lead through more than a foot of snow to Staircase. You've got a good chance of getting stuck in the snow here. - Ranger, 1/11.



MOUNT BAKER DISTRICT - Snow measures 114" at the top of the Mount Baker Ski Area.

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing only (no snowmobiles) on these roads: Anderson Creek, Bacon Creek, Blue Lake, Boulder Ridge, Deadhorse, Dillard Ridge, East Shannon Creek, East Church and West Church, Found-Kindy, Grouse Butte, Hannegan, Hidden Lake, Morovitz Creek, Nooksack & Middle Fork Nooksack, Razorhorne, Saddle Point, Irene Creek, Marten Lake, Sandy Creek, Sauk Mountain, Shuksan Creek, Sutter Mountain, Thompson Creek, Twin Lakes, Wells Creek, Welcome Pass and White Salmon.

Call the Ranger Station for information on these snow-touring destinations: 206-856-5700.

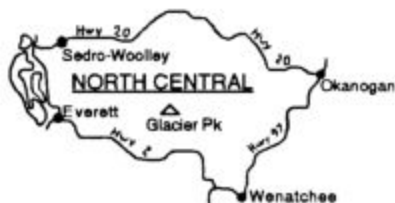
Cascade River road 15 is plowed 5 miles.

To participate in the bald eagle survey, call Lisa Egtvedt at the Ranger Station, Monday through Friday: 206-856-5700. - Ranger, 1/7.

METHOW VALLEY - Cross-country skiing conditions are excellent.

All trails are groomed and in top condition. North Cascades Highway will re-open in mid-April. - Ranger, 1/13.

NORTH CENTRAL



KELCEMA LAKE (Boulder River Wilderness; USGS Silverton) - A harrowing drive made this moderately easy snowshoe trip more of a challenge than it usually is. We drove on glare ice from Granite Falls to Deer Creek on the Mountain Loop Highway. Deer Creek is as far as the road is plowed.

Though this area is intended for skiers, sledgers, and snowshoers only (no vehicles allowed), the first part of the road was churned up by snowmobiles and 4WD vehicles. As a result, the first section is a nightmare for anyone wishing to ski. For us, carrying snowshoes, it was tolerable.

Kelcema Lake is mostly a pleasant road-walk (stay left at the junction at the first mile). I'd snowshoed or skied the road several times over the years and was surprised how quickly the trees are growing up alongside the road.

At about 2 miles the snow was deep enough to put on snowshoes. We had to break trail all the way to the lake. The Kelcema Lake sign is either buried under the heavy drifts or gone, but the route is relatively easy to find. Just before the end of the road look



for a creek going off on your left. Stay on the right side of the creek and follow it to the lake. Easy. And with all the fresh snow it was beautiful. We agreed that the trees looked like white dinosaurs grazing in the snow.

This is about 8½ miles round-trip with an elevation gain of about 2000 feet. - Karen Sykes, Seattle, 12/31.

MOUNT HIGH-G (USGS Deception Pass) - In search of insignificant summits and a nice drive, Karen and I set off for the Deception Pass quad.

Talk about a gold mine, this is it! There are 7 named mainland summits on this map (Sugarloaf, Mount Erie - almost, Ginnett Hill, Rodger Hill, Bowman Hill, Goose Rock, and Mount High-G), not to mention the summits of a number of islands, one of which you can even drive to: Pass Island.

Follow Highway 20 west from Burlington onto this map, going just beyond Pass Lake to a right on Rosario Road. We followed this another ½-mile to Cougar Gap and parked, then headed north-northeast through snow, second growth forest, amazingly deep salal, a maze of frozen mud roads (no doubt heralding some future logging or housing development), and mossy open rock and more woods to the 713-foot summit.

Here were glimpses of the Olympics, Whidbey Island, Rosario Strait, and from a little way down the east side, nice views to Baker, and way up the Skagit River, and down to the islands of Skagit Bay.

Nice stuff on a crisp winter day. A 1907 brass US Coast and Geodetic Survey marker atop was the oldest benchmark I'd ever seen. - John Roper, Bellevue, 1/10.

DARRINGTON DISTRICT - Call the Darrington District on their new toll-free number for current snow conditions: 800-488-4498. The recording is updated Thursdays and Sundays.

The Mountain Loop Highway is plowed to Deer Creek (1 mile east of Silverton) on the Verlot side, and to 1 mile south of Whitechuck road 23 on the Darrington side. Compact snow and ice on the Mountain Loop. - Ranger, 1/11.

CHELAN DISTRICT - A new trail system has opened at Echo Ridge. The 18 miles of trails are designed to take advantage of the beautiful scenery. The snow is terrific.

While you're skiing the trails, be thinking of good names for them: a contest will be held at the end of the season to name some of the trails.

Call the Ranger Station for directions and more information on Echo Ridge: 509-682-2576. - Ranger, 1/5.

BACKCOUNTRY NEWS

LAKE WENATCHEE DISTRICT – The Coulter Creek road 6930 (the route to the Scottish Lakes) is being plowed for logging. – Ranger, 1/5.



MOUNT SI (DNR; USGS Mount Si) – Less than 1 inch of snow at the trailhead (650 feet). At 2300 feet I ran into very slick ice that stayed bad until 3000 feet. I fell eight times even though I used an ice axe! Above 3000 feet, enough snow covered the ice so it wasn't a problem.

I turned around at 3500 feet due to fading daylight. Views were beautiful, especially of McClellan's Butte to the southeast.

I recommend that you carry an ice axe or two ski poles and allow more time as long as the ice lasts. – Kevin Acheson, Seattle, 12/30.

MOUNT SI (DNR; USGS Mount Si) – Mount Si again? Why bother to mention it? Because it is never the same twice and it is a great way to start off the new year.

I met with some members of the OSAT group at 8:30 at the trailhead and was not surprised to see other vehicles there already. Some things never change on Mount Si: the "trailhead dogs" milling about, the many people putting on their boots, and always, always you run into someone you know.

But today was different. It was bad. It was solid ice from the trailhead to the Haystack. Where there wasn't snow and ice the ground was frozen solid. Nobody laughed at the people coming down wearing crampons – we envied them.

LETTERS *continued from page 4*

across-people *must* do to make it in one trip. I'm for leisurely, there-to-enjoy experiences which last from 10 to 15 days.

One more comment: campsites have never been marked, but portages used to be. In some places you'll still find markers. Still, it pays to have a good up-to-date map. Boundary Waters is one of our favorite wildernesses.

Paula Hyatt
Salem, Oregon

Though it was a sunny day there was little warmth in the sun. We sat on the rocks only long enough to eat and put on dry polypro. A few of the OSAT people headed over to climb the Haystack but I was ready to head down. Three of us hiked down together for moral support and to provide first aid should it become necessary (the possibility of injury was real and this was no joke).

Much of the trail down was impossible to walk. A couple of times I scooted down on my rear, as did my companions. We lurched and skidded slowly, holding onto trees between steps, looking like arctic Tarzans. As careful as we were, we all managed to fall more than once. No injuries, thankfully.

Sometimes we tend to underestimate an old friend like Mount Si. Even though it is close to civilization and we have climbed it many times in many seasons, at times it can be a dangerous mountain. I just heard about someone who broke a leg on Christmas Day while coming down Mount Si.

This descent of Mount Si is one of the more hazardous things I've done in the past year. From now on when conditions are icy, I'm taking crampons. – Karen Sykes, Seattle, 1/1.

KENDALL RIDGE ROAD (Wenatchee Natl Forest; USGS Snoqualmie Pass) – Dick was the only one I could talk into getting out on Sunday (the Troop 70 boys and the other adults were more interested in playing cards or inner tubing). It was very cold – only 12 degrees.

Dick and I drove over to the Gold Creek Sno-Park, put on skis and started up the road. It was such a pretty morning that even the cursed clearcuts looked tolerable.

Dick is a better skier than I, but we stayed together until we reached the knoll where lunch is customarily eaten. There were a couple of other people at the top. After a quick lunch we started down. I'm a cautious skier so Dick skied circles around me but he swears he didn't mind waiting for me because the views were so good.

We met several parties coming up – this is a good destination for novice and intermediate skiers. More advanced skiers can telemark near the knoll when avalanche conditions are safe.

Even at my moderate speed the trip went too fast. It's 7 miles round-trip with an elevation gain of 1700 feet. When we returned to the lodge, the "lodge lizards" were still playing cards and eating probably their third or

GREEN TRAILS
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BACKCOUNTRY NEWS

fourth lunch.

We all had a good time - skiers, snowshoers, inner-tubers, and card players. - Karen Sykes, Seattle, 1/10.

FLYING LOOP (*Wenatchee National Forest; USGS Plain*) - While staying in Leavenworth, Bill and I ski-shoed (I ski, Bill snowshoes) this loop. It begins at a Sno-Park near Lake Wenatchee.

In the first 1/2-mile we crossed two snowmobile routes. After the first mile snowmobiles are not allowed. Even though this is well posted, I encountered three snowmobiles on the ridge on a portion of the loop and saw numerous places where their tracks traveled along the loop.

I hope Forest Service employees in this area read these reports to be aware of the violations.

On the return portion of the loop, the trail zigzags through the trees, marked by blue diamonds. Although the diamonds are fairly well placed, it was snowing hard with a lot of new, deep snow, and I had some difficulty following the diamonds because I had to concentrate on skiing.

I found the snowmobile tracks aggravating. They followed the path, then would go off it periodically, and I got off the route at one point following their false trail. Aside from the noise disturbing the peace and calm of the wilderness, this made the trip less enjoyable.

The loop trip is 5 miles with an elevation gain of 680 feet and a high point of 2590 feet. - Jane Habegger, Olympia, 12/27.

LEAVENWORTH GOLF COURSE (*USGS Leavenworth*) - We ski-shoed the groomed trails on the golf course the day after a big storm dumped more than a foot of snow here.

We had powder in town at 1200 feet - pretty hard to beat! The ski trail is in a pretty spot, traveling along the Wenatchee River. If it isn't strenuous enough for you, just pick up the speed in your kick-and-glide, or do the loop several times. - Jane Habegger, Olympia, 12/28.

WENATCHEE RIDGE (*Wenatchee Natl Forest; USGS Liberty*) - Bill and I ski-shoed Wenatchee Ridge on our return from Leavenworth over Blewett Pass.

We've skied this route before with our friends Jenni and Chuck when they lived in Wenatchee. The ridge affords beautiful views of surrounding Cascade peaks. Although they were not visible this day, the new-fallen powder snow was fantastic.

No snowmobiles were present, but evidence of their recent passing was apparent. For a change, I actually was

ALWAYS CARRY THE TEN ESSENTIALS

1. extra food
2. extra clothing
3. map
4. compass
5. knife
6. matches
7. fire starter
8. first aid kit
9. sun protection
10. flashlight

glad they'd been there. They had packed the snow beneath and with 4 to 5 inches of new powder on top, we had ideal skiing and snowshoeing conditions. - Jane Habegger, Olympia, 12/29.

JOLLY MOUNTAIN (*Wenatchee Natl Forest; USGS Cle Elum Lk*) - We seem always to do this trip near the shortest day of the year, I guess as a challenge to see if we can get out before dark.

I tried to maximize our daylight hours by setting the meeting time before first light, but as usual it was after eight before the group gathered and everyone was ready. This was the first time on snowshoes for a couple of people.

Wearing snowshoes from the car we started up the Jolly Mountain road. You stay on the road until you come around the first bend, then just head straight up.

Staying on approximately a 90-degree bearing, we gained 2500 feet through clearcuts and across spur roads until we attained the ridge. The wind was blasting away and it was good to be back in the cover of the trees on the ridge.

Running the ridge was mostly enjoyable. The trees and the drifts of snow were sculptured in picturesque shapes. I regretted leaving my camera at home because of the weather forecast.

We were able to make the summit twenty minutes before our turn-around time of 2 o'clock. No views, and the wind was howling. We beat a hasty retreat to a sheltered spot below for a quick lunch before heading back. In many places our tracks were completely blown away. Going down the steep open clearcut was a lot of hard work as we hurried to beat the dark.

We reached the road at dusk and got out our headlamps, but never turned them on. - Sara Matoi, Kent, 12/26.

NORTH BEND DISTRICT - For current mountain pass road conditions, call the Washington Department of Transportation, 900-407-PASS (a toll call).

The Middle Fork road 56 is closed at milepost 9 (1 mile beyond the Forest boundary) due to a slump in the road. No motorized vehicles of any kind are permitted beyond the closure. Should be repaired in late winter or early spring.

Most trails are snow-covered and many are in areas of high avalanche potential. For information on the groomed cross-country trails at Snoqualmie Pass, call 206-434-6646. For the I-90 Sno-Park report, call 509-656-2230. For general information in the Snoqualmie Pass area, call the Visitors' Center at the pass: 206-434-6111. - Ranger, 1/11.

LEAVENWORTH DISTRICT - The Icicle road is open to the Snow Lakes parking lot; a Sno-Park permit is required to park there. You can use the Icicle campgrounds on a self-service basis (no water; no firewood; pack out your trash). - Ranger, 1/5.

ENCHANTMENTS - We will begin processing applications that are not postmarked prior to 2/25 at 3:11. Applications postmarked prior to 2/25 will be returned unopened.

After 3/15, walking applications will be taken. Permits will not be issued to any party larger than 8 people. Limit 1 permit per year. Call 509-548-4067 for information. - Ranger, 1/5.

SOUTH CENTRAL



WINDY PASS (*Wenatchee Natl Forest; USGS Snoqualmie Pass*) - The Cold Creek route to Windy Pass has recently been re-opened to backcountry skiers (see *Panorama*, this issue).

Lee and I headed up Cold Creek from the Lake Keechelus Sno-Park just before noon. We saw only a couple of other people. It was a pleasant trip up, with new snow coating the trees and a few inches of unpacked snow covering the tracks set by the commercial ski operation.

At Windy Pass we found a sheltered spot in the trees nearby and set up camp. By the time we were settled and had a "kitchen" excavated, it was dark, so dinner was cooked by headlamp and eaten by candle lantern. A

BACKCOUNTRY NEWS

misty moon tried, but failed, to break through the clouds.

In the morning we woke to several inches of new snow. Skiing out into the Olallie Clearcuts, we were hit with blasting wind. Even though we expected the wind, it was still uncomfortable when we faced into it.

After packing, we headed out, anticipating a fast run on the steep switchbacks. But the new snow was too heavy and the trip out was *not* fast. We met many skiers on the Cold Creek road and got lots of comments about our big winter packs. — Ann Marshall, 12/29-30.

❄️ **LODGE LAKE** (*Baker-Snoqualmie Natl Forest; USGS Snoqualmie Pass*) — We stayed at The Mountaineers' Snoqualmie Lodge for this outing with Troop 70, but most of the kids were more interested in inner-tubing or downhill skiing than cross-country skiing or snowshoeing.

It was a gorgeous but cold weekend with a fresh layer of snow over a layer of ice (potential avalanche conditions). Three of us donned snowshoes and Dick used cross-country skis for our trip to Lodge Lake, a short and easy outing from the Mountaineers' Lodge.

We left the lodge and ascended near the trees next to the rope tow. When we came to the cross-over road that connects the downhill ski areas, we crossed it and descended through old-growth forest to the lake. There's really no other way to go — if you stay on the ridge you'll run into the ski areas and lots of brightly-clad people zipping by on downhill skis.

Once we dropped behind the ridge we were in virtual solitude. We followed the very faint indent of the Pacific Crest Trail which contours above the lake. Old growth, huge dollops of snow on boulders, blue skies — and total silence except for our footfalls through the forest.

When we reached the lake we walked across it to have lunch in the sun on the other side. With the cold temperatures the lake seemed very solid and safe to cross.

This lake was once the site of the Mountaineers' Lodge; after the building burned it was rebuilt on its present site. The peak that rises above the lake is Denny Peak. We took a different route back, going directly up to the high point of the ridge. This was tough going for Dick on skis, but we made long switchbacks for him to follow.

We finally popped over the ridge from solitude to civilization and hundreds of skiers. We descended to the Lodge, stopping at one point to watch an unusually gifted skier.

The mileage was about 3 miles round-trip with an elevation gain of about 700 feet total. By the time we

returned several of the boys had acquired black eyes during their numerous mishaps with the inner tubes. — Karen Sykes, Seattle, 1/9.

❄️ **BUCK CREEK ROAD** (*Baker-Snoqualmie Natl Forest; USGS Suntop*) — Our cross-country ski book says this area is an elk wintering ground and closed to motorized vehicles.

As Bill and I were headed down the road on our return from a day of skiing and snowshoeing, we encountered a small, loud army of people on 4-wheelers going up the road. Not long after that we saw two snowmobiles headed down. Soon after we saw a Pierce County Sheriff's deputy. Although this was Forest Service land outside his jurisdiction, I asked him about the snowmobiles. He told me (in error) that they are allowed.

This week I called Mary Williamson at the White River Ranger Station. She told me there is a winter game closure on the Buck Creek road beyond where the road is blocked, and that snowmobiles and ORVs *ARE* prohibited. She was unaware of any violations.

The only posting we saw is a "no snowmobiling" notice on the Church Camp sign about a mile off Highway 410. I'm hoping my phone call might prompt some signs and enforcement to prevent motorized use of this area. — Jane Habegger, Olympia, 1/2/93.

❄️ **SUNTOP LOOKOUT** (*Baker-Snoqualmie Natl Forest; USGS Suntop*) — It was a beautiful, clear, sunny day. Lori Patton and I decided to try to get up to the spectacular views on Suntop.

We made it to somewhere between ½ and 1 mile of the top, according to some passing skiers. It was 3pm (we started at 12:30) so we stopped for lunch. With temperatures in the single digits we both got very cold. This, combined with the late hour, made us decide to turn around rather than continue to the top.

Boy, was it a *cold* trip down! My toes were too frozen for me to enjoy the downhill run. Next time I'd like to get a little earlier start and make it to the bench with the fabulous views. — Jane Habegger, Olympia, 1/9.

❄️ **HUCKLEBERRY RIDGE** (*Baker-Snoqualmie Natl Forest; USGS Greenwater*) — It took me an hour and a half to get to the top and a half-hour to ski down from the logging platform at 3520 feet on Huckleberry Ridge.

The snow was really fast due to a lot of snowmobile use in the area and consequently well-packed snow. It had been several years since we had skied this route. The book says there is a view of Mount Rainier from the top. I

AVALANCHE HOTLINE

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Olympics and
Washington Cascades

503-326-2400

Oregon Cascades

couldn't remember and went in search of that view. All that can actually be seen of Rainier from the old logging platform is about the top 2000 feet of the mountain.

From Highway 410, turn right on Road 74, 3.6 miles from Greenwater. At .4-mile go left on Road 75. Almost immediately turn right on Road 7503 (marked with a Weyerhaeuser sign); ski up the road. — Jane Habegger, Olympia, 1/18.

❄️ **MILDRED POINT** (*Mt Rainier Natl Park; USGS Mount Rainier West*) — With winter storm warnings, high avalanche danger and it already snowing, we altered our plans and decided to do Mildred Point instead of Camp Muir.

Mildred Point is a good destination on a bad weather day. You have the protection of the trees from the wind and you are mostly on a ridge free from avalanche hazards. The only views come at the end but there were no views this day.

We left Longmire about 8:30am and headed up the east end of the Rampart Ridge trail. We found it well packed and didn't have to put on snowshoes until the junction with the Mildred Point trail.

Soon we lost all signs of a trail and just ran the ridge. By staying on the crest of the ridge all the way to Van Trump Park we avoided any possible avalanche hazard, but we hit one really steep section that was a lot of work to get up in deep, soft snow.

The open meadows of Van Trump were lovely. The only thing missing was some sunshine. We crossed the meadow, leaving wands, found the ridge again and headed up to the summit. Here we really got blasted. My ski goggles and face mask were handy for tolerating the wind. We sure didn't hang around on top long, and went back down to the meadow for lunch.

On our way down we were surprised to see a group of skiers heading up. Hope they are better skiers than I — it would take me longer to get *down* than up.

We returned to Longmire just be-

BACKCOUNTRY NEWS

OREGON

fore 3pm to find 4 inches of snow on the cars. The drive home was slick; lots of cars in the ditches. — Sara Matoi, Kent, 1/3.

NACHES DISTRICT — Cross-country skiing is available at the Goose Egg trail off Highway 12, elevation about 2600 feet. The trail is about 4.2 miles round-trip, with level terrain. The route follows the Tieton River for 2 miles, and is great for beginning skiers.

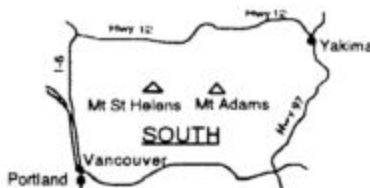
The North Fork Tieton trails consist of two loops, and access to the Round Mountain road. From the end of the Round Mountain road, backcountry skiers can take the Round Mountain summit tour.

Call the Ranger Station for information on these routes: 509-653-2205. — Ranger, 1/5.

MOUNT RAINIER NP, North Side — The Carbon River road is temporarily closed at the Carbon Entrance. This road will reopen as soon as two-wheel drive vehicles can easily drive to the Ipsut Creek campground. Camping is permitted at Ipsut on a self-service basis. The Carbon Glacier trail has 2 to 3 feet of snow at the trail-head.

The Mowich Lake road is closed at the Paul Peak gate, 4.5 miles from Mowich Lake, until 7/93 — but driving conditions are such that 4WD is required for about 9 miles before the gate. In early January, no one had gone within 1½ miles of the Park boundary. Skiing is excellent, with 3 feet of snow at the Paul Peak trail-head, and 6 to 7 feet of snow at Mowich Lake. — Ranger, 1/15.

SOUTH



WIND RIVER DISTRICT — With a single exception, Sno-Parks will be closed to overnight camping for the remainder of the season. The closure is necessary to permit snowplows to work safely. The exception is Lone Butte Sno-Park. The closure does *NOT* apply to those who are skiing or snowmobiling to campsites in the backcountry. For more information, call the Ranger Station: 509-427-5645. — Ranger, 1/5.

❄️ SNOWSHOE SUMMIT

(Malheur Natl Forest; USGS Logdell) — One of our favorite places to ski is near "Snowshoe Summit" on the Izee Road. You won't find it on any map of Oregon, but it's where the Izee Road exits Bear Valley to the west. One day last year, our neighbor Georg told us he was thinning timber in a place that looked great for skiing, so we all went out there with our skis to try it out.

We made a 5-mile loop starting gently, then more steeply, upward through a grove of lovely old "punkin" pines. Over a ridge (take a short trip to the right for a spectacular view of the South Fork John Day and the Ochocos) and down a long cruiser into a lovely little stream valley full of huge old larch trees. Then cross the tiny Silvies River on a bridge and ski along it in a narrow little gorge lined with lodgepole and ledge rock.

To finish, the trail crosses the Silvies on another bridge, and turns up Snowshoe Creek through lodgepole thickets to the beginning, only 100 yards from where the cars are parked. The loop is all on logging road (the Malheur reportedly has 7 miles of road for every square mile of forest, excluding Wilderness), but off-trail opportunities abound for telemarking on the ridge and exploring along the creeks.

The Malheur National Forest is looking for good places to designate ski trails, so the ski club suggested our "Snowshoe" area, among others. We took the District Ranger skiing around it, and he liked it!

The next step is for the Forest Service to give us the blue diamonds so we can blaze the trails — *after* the public comment period. — Jennifer Stein Barker, Canyon City, 12/92.

❄️ CHEMEKETAN CABIN

(Willamette Natl Forest) — We went to the Cabin over New Years (see *January, page 20*); lots of snow, great cross-country skiing right from the highway and up the Whitewater road beyond the Cabin. Light snowfall off and on made for excellent ski conditions.

One family dropped by for a few minutes just to see if the Cabin was as he remembered it from when he came here years ago as a Boy Scout. Mainly, the 20- to 30-foot-tall trees in front weren't there at that time. That was not too long after the '64 flood.

The number of people staying varied from 3 to 11. All in all, it was a great weekend in a winter wonderland. — Paula Hyatt, Salem, 12/30-1/3.

BEND DISTRICT — The five cross-country Sno-Parks have snow depths ranging from 32 inches at Edison to 100 inches at Dutchman Flat.

All higher elevation roads are closed due to snow. Road 370 from Todd Lake to the junction with 4601 is closed until summer. The road beyond Three Creek Lake Sno-Park on Road 16 just south of Sisters is closed for the winter season. Highway 46 beyond Mount Bachelor is closed for the winter. For more information, call the Ranger Station: 503-388-5664. — Ranger, 1/8.

IDAHO

SAWTOOTH NRA — Isn't 1993 starting out great?

For avalanche update call 208-622-8027. For cross-country skiing information, call SNRA Visitors' Center, 208-726-7672.

North Fork trail has been groomed with a designated dog trail on the left. The Piston Bully groomer was a bit heavy for the bridge along the trail. There will be detour warning flags.

Murphy Bridge trail is 10km round-trip at an elevation of 6300 feet. A very good trail for beginners, also a good dog trail.

Alturas Lake trail is a 10km loop through lodgepole pines along Alturas Lake Creek and through open meadows. No restrooms at this trail. The trail is groomed by the Forest Service and the Sawtooth Ski Club volunteers.

You'll need a trail pass; call the Visitors' Center, above, for details.

The Idaho Rocky Mountain Ranch in the Sawtooth Valley is open for winter lodging. Call 208-774-3544 for info. — Roma Nelson, SNRA, 1/11.

PAYETTE NATL FOREST — Snow level in McCall is 38 inches. The snow is deep and fluffy, so skiing off-trail is tough going. On groomed trails, the skiing is excellent. For skiing information, call the Ranger Station in McCall: 208-634-0700.

For Hell's Canyon campground and water level information, call 800-422-3143 in Idaho, or 800-521-9102 outside Idaho. — Ranger, 1/11.

JOHN ROPER

MOUNT WOW

— GET THE WOW VIEW —

The "wow" of Mount Wow is not the mountain, Wow. The "wow" is THE mountain, Rainier.

By that definition, there are dozens of "wows" surrounding Rainier. This Wow is a 6040+-foot peak in the southwest corner of the National Park.

It was 1.6 hours and 83 miles from Bellevue to the Nisqually entrance of Mount Rainier National Park, by way of Kent (Highway 167), Puyallup, and Eatonville (Highway 161), avoiding the longer I-5/Highway 7 option.

Last April, we parked at the Sunshine Point campground and walked about .3-mile back to the entrance station to find the unsigned west "Boundary Trail" right behind the Ranger's house (at "xBM 2002" on the USGS Sawtooth Ridge quad).

The Ranger we talked to at Sunshine Point had never heard of anyone using this trail except Park people, and shortly after it starts it does sport a warning that it is "not maintained." Not to worry: it's a fine trail with a rare blowdown, easy to follow, and is the route The Mountaineers often use.

It's a peculiar trail, though, since it follows the straight line of the boundary and not the natural land contours. So it's a steep shot out of the valley floor, then a frustrating drop into Tenas (Chinook for "little") Creek. (The Big Creek is just across the Nisqually River, and the two streams share the same valley floor for several miles in an interesting fashion.)

Beyond Tenas Creek, a serious series of air-sucking switchbacks shoots to a ridge crest at 4200 feet before the trail drops into Goat Creek. We left the trail here and headed east up the ridge past "Oooh Notch" at 4700 feet, and over a 4800-foot knob, where we sidehilled left (north) through trees and openings, finally on snow, avoiding the cliffs of "Mount Whoa" (5614 feet), aiming for Point 5722. Just beyond this knoll we gained the unimpressive-looking summit, 3½ moving hours from the car.

We got the "Wow!" view just as we took our last steps to the summit. By itself, Wow is not much to write home or Pack & Paddle about. It's almost

more of a ridge than a mountain, and except for its name, and the fact that a whole quad is named after it, it might be overlooked.

But Wow has this additional distinction: it is one of the 100 Highest Peaks in Washington that rises 2000 feet above all surrounding territory (Round Pass, the low point between Wow and Rainier, is 3880+ feet.)

Summit observations looking clockwise from Rainier: The mudflow that wiped out miles of trees in the upper Tahoma Creek valley is sobering. Other Top 100, 2000-foot-rule peaks, Unicorn and High Rock, are quickly identified across the Nisqually. "Mount Whoa," which we'd just walked under, looks quite peaky from the top of Wow.

Across Goat Creek, the triple-summitted Mount Beljica appears as the crowning glory, such as it is, of the newish Glacier View Wilderness, abutting the west boundary of Mount Rainier National Park.

An incoming front made us hide in the trees to eat lunch out of the wind. Bruce comforted us with the Bulgerism that "It's not the front of the front that you have to worry about, it's the back of the front."

Our exit was by way of a wonderful carnival-ride sitting glissade on a winding route down to Lake Allen,

which at 4577 feet was already starting to unfreeze after our wimpy 1992 winter.

We finished our loop trip by loping cross-country straight down the next 2100 feet through an amazingly brush-free forest, staying south of "Mom Creek" (Wow spelled upside down) to the traffic-free (gated; see page 23 this issue) Westside Road up Tahoma Creek, totally missing the supposed trail to Lake Allen. Two miles on the road, and we were back at the car.

A Word on Names

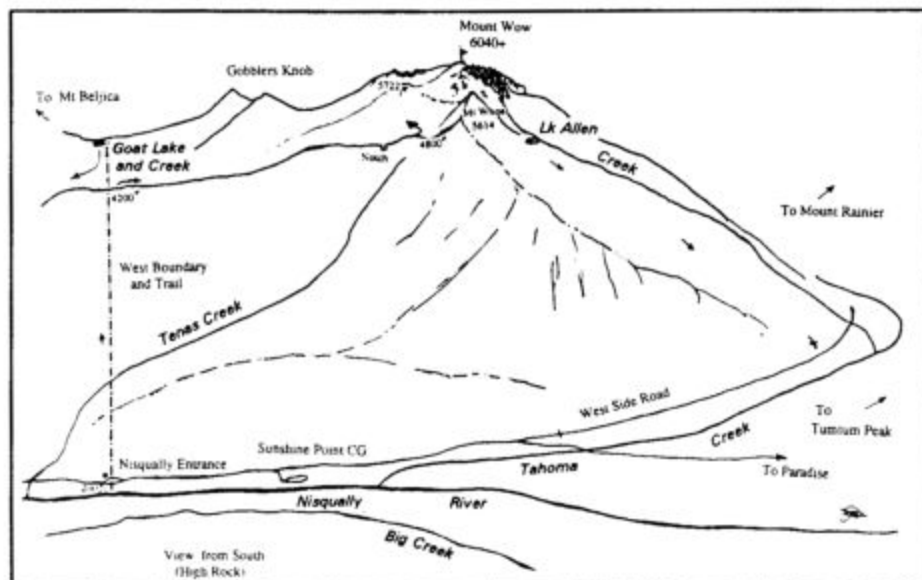
Robert Hitchman says Wow means "goat" in an Indian dialect (it's not a Chinook word, however). Allen was a botanist who taught at Yale before settling outside the Park about 1913.

A Tennessean turkey hunter hung the moniker on Gobblers Knob. Beljica is the letter salad resulting from initials of an early ascent party (or parts of the names of two daughters of an early settler).

Nisqually may be from the French *nez quarrées* [sic], "square nose," per Hitchman. And Tumtum Peak, a soft hump southeast of Wow, is from the Chinook name for "heart." Perfect.

△

John Roper is a physician who lives in Bellevue.



JENNIFER STEIN BARKER

STRAWBERRY IN THE SNOW

— A SKI TRIP IN EASTERN OREGON —

Sunday, January 12th of last year, six of us set out to climb to the top of Strawberry Mountain (9038 feet) in the Strawberry Wilderness near John Day, Oregon.

The trip was Bob Hilliard's swan song, because he had taken a leave of absence from his job as a silviculturist for the Malheur National Forest to join the Peace Corps. For the next two years he would be working in the warm forests of Ecuador and have no use for skis.

We started before sunrise but as we turned up Strawberry Creek Road, the sun peered over the hill, bringing an illusion of warmth. Near the entrance to the canyon, snow appeared on the ground. We slithered and sailed over the ruts into the parking place at the Onion Creek trailhead (5200 feet).

Everyone piled out of the vehicles and started pulling skis out of the back of the pickup. The air here in the deep north-facing canyon was frigid and gray. I doubted if the sun ever shone here before February first.

Nobody wasted any time getting into their gear, and before I was really ready I looked up to see a line of backs as the first four disappeared up

the start of the trail. Only Jerry Barrow was left behind me as I scrambled to join them.

The trail started right in climbing steeply, and within minutes I was taking deep gulps of the frigid air in an attempt to force my burning legs to keep up with the others.

After the first steep climb out of the canyon bottom, the pitch of the trail eased somewhat and we climbed up into the sun. We had passed the Wilderness boundary as soon as we left the road, and the trees had never been cut here.

Fir branches draped greenly close to the ground. Bare-branched larches raised to the sky. Ponderosa pines stood massive and orange-barked, stretching up to 200 feet into the sky. The loggers call these "punkins" because as they reach great age the bark turns from brownish-gray to that golden-orange. Some ponderosas had died many years ago and were still standing, the bark stripped off by weather and age. These are called "buckskins," the wood so soft in the sunlight it would feel just like velvet if you reached out and touched it.

As we climbed my body adjusted to the pace and began to bask in the warmth of the sunlight. We crossed an ancient ditch, dug by hand by Chinese laborers in the days when the valley was first settled.

My ease in the climb ended abruptly when Jim, ahead of me, looked up and said, "Now the climbing starts!" What had we been *doing*? I wondered.

I looked up to see a wall of rock ahead of us, with the woods clinging closely on both sides and a thin clothing of snow and ice over the trail. Some of us took our skis off and put them into the ski straps on our packs or over our shoulders as we struggled upward in our boots, using our poles to aid in the balance and pull of each step.

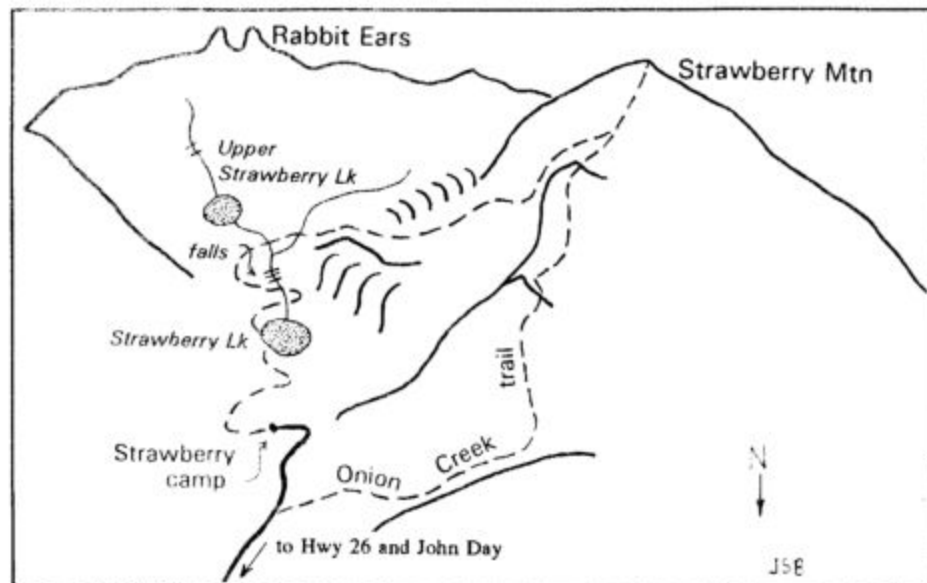
As we reached the top of the pitch, we took the skis off the packs and put them on, only to be faced with another wall a few hundred yards farther along.

We stopped only once on the way up for a rest, five minutes on a sunny knoll in the middle of the ridge climb, an unexpected break in the relentless upsurge of the mountain. I pulled my camera out for a quick photo of the happy group in the sunshine, backed by the dramatic drop of the lake basin and the cliffs of the Rabbit Ears, ready for the final assault on the ridge. Jerry confidently predicted that it would take only another hour of climbing before we reached the saddle below the summit cone.

The leaders rapidly disappeared into the woods and the ridge steepened so that we were in shadow even in late morning. The increasing elevation could be felt in the dropping temperature.

We approached the bottom of another rock wall. In the middle of it, Gerrish clung to balance as he struggled painfully upward.

"Why are you going *that way*?" I



asked.

He said, "I'm following Bob."

I could only say, "Why?" I saw that two skiers – Jim and Lance, I supposed – had tracked around to the right to work their way up around the face, and I decided to follow them. As I followed their zigzagging climb, I saw the flash of Gerrish's green gaiters up above me. He had successfully made it over, and was still ahead.

At this high altitude on the exposed ridge, the forest was composed entirely of whitebark pine. The trees, a mere 15 or 20 feet high with branching trunks, were shortened and misshaped by the swirling winds of hundreds of years.

Ghosts of old trees stood pale and bare in the forest, standing many years after death. The sun slanted across the ridge into the treetops, tantalizingly just above our heads. At last I stood with my face in it, and a few yards later with my whole body in its warmth. The air was cold up here. My feet were painfully aware of it. But my body basked in the illusion of warmth created by the sunshine.

We gained the crest of the ridge, where the rimed snow and crystal-coated trees spoke of cold clouds streaming past in remembered storms. Today they gleamed against the deep blue sky.

Up ahead, I could see the saddle we would cross, and the four leaders already out of reach on the summit cone. At 12:30, they stood on the summit looking off into the hazy distances, and Jerry and I eased ourselves gratefully into a resting position in the snow where they could see us, and waited for them to come down.

The snow above us on the summit cone was scraped off the ice and formed by the wind into clawlike waves, called *sastrugi*. The four who had gone to the summit had taken their skis off halfway up, where the wind had left nothing at all to ski on, and gone on in their boots over the rocks. They stayed on top about a half-hour, then descended rapidly to where we waited.

Bob pointed to a hanging valley a thousand feet below us and said, "That's where we need to go. We need to stay in the trees on this side of the bowl up here, to stay off the wind-blown ice, but we need to cross over there before we drop too low."

My skiing was a little tentative at first – one or two turns, stop, another



Four skiers look like dots as they approach the summit cone of Strawberry Mountain.

turn, stop. I got the feel of the snow and was soon dipping and gliding through wind-drifted gullies and between well-spaced little trees. I could look right over the tops of the trees and keep track of where the others were.

Below the trees was a little bowl of perfect sun-catching powder. Bob had set a track of beautifully symmetric half-circle turns in the powder, and I allowed myself the vanity of turning them into figure-eights by crossing them with my own track. I concentrated on making each turn perfectly round and the same radius as the ones I was crossing.

We crossed an icy slope above an obvious avalanche chute and entered the hanging valley. The winter sun just barely cleared the crags to the south, but in that sheltered basin we felt blessed by its surrounding warmth.

We crossed the open floor of the valley with lifting spirits and an easier glide in our skis. Ringing the meadow were evergreens perhaps not as tall as at lower elevations, but showing their great age in their massive trunks. They had been rooted into the soil of this mountain for centuries.

Gerrish pointed to a spot in the woods where some early miner or trapper had had his cabin. The roof had collapsed, but the outline showed in the shape of the snow that covered it deeply.

A short climb out of the hanging valley brought us to the top of the cliffs that ringed the large cirque below. The only way to descend from here was to follow the diagonal top of the cliffs around the mountain to the

head of the cirque, where a way traversed around the waterfalls between the upper and lower valleys.

There were slopes below us that would have tempted us had we not been so tired. We finally came to the break in the cliffs that led to the waterfall and the lower valley. We were given one last open slope before we entered the heavy timber where each turn would have to be gauged and measured in advance to avoid the trees.

I could make only a few turns at a time before my energy gave out and I stood leaning on my poles, legs burning, lungs gasping. I made a last effort and floated through the slide alder at the bottom of the open slope, a dozen sweet and gliding curves.

We reached the trail and glided down the narrow slot through the trees, around two switchbacks to the base of the waterfall. For a hundred feet along the wall of rock and moss above us, gleaming cascades of ice draped from tree roots and overhanging boulders and in the chute where the main mass of water came down in the summer. Golden icicles hung from the rocks where the forest floor of needles and lichens had given them their color.

Turquoise columns anchored the rocks overhead to the snow at our feet. Hummocks of spray ice at the base showed where the living water had once misted off the overhang. A faint sound of gurgling, falling water proved that behind the icy curtain the living water waited for spring.

After several minutes of gazing, we moved down the trail to Strawberry

Lake, only a few hundred vertical feet below. One by one we filed out of the woods to stand on the snowy surface of the frozen lake.

At the far side we could see ski tracks, but no sign of the friends we had hoped would still be there to meet us. We trudged across the surface of the lake to find only a smoldering campfire on the snowy shore. One of our friends had stamped in the snow "BYE" and "3PM." The time was 3:30 and the winter sun had sunk below the horizon even here in the open.

Jim pushed the smoking logs into the burned-out center of the fire and they soon caught again. We sat on a log above the warmth and had the most leisurely snack of the day. Jim passed out apples, and I pulled out sweet dried pears and peaches. But we couldn't stay long. We still had miles of trail to ski to reach the cars.

It was all downhill to the trailhead, and our friends had broken trail for us, so our skis flew down through the trees. I could see from the tracks ahead of us that Bob had taken advantage of every opening to cut a few turns through the woods. I just let my skis ride the well-broken main trail.

When we came to the end of the unplowed road at Strawberry Camp, we grouped together one more time and then off each at our own pace down the road to the waiting cars.



Jerry, Jim, Jennifer, Lance and Bob at Strawberry Falls.

As Bob took off his skis he wistfully commented that it wasn't even dark yet (his after-dark returns from trips fondly known as "Hilliard's death marches" were famous!).

He opened the door of his pickup and shouted when he found four cans of beer on the seat, left by our departing friends.

As the last of the group straggled in, we toasted a successful climb and Bob's future in the Peace Corps,

raising our beers in mittened hands to the rapidly fading evening sky.

△

Jennifer Stein Barker lives on a solar-powered homestead in Bear Valley, above Canyon City, Oregon. She and Lance maintain a nearly self-sufficient lifestyle.

Joy Behind the Mountain

— Lisa Bliss Darling
Seattle, Washington

The first side of the mountain,
after we step out of the truck at the trailhead,
is clean hiking boots, a fresh pack,
and cold predawn air.

We climb in thinning darkness,
a grey that slowly diminishes
like a migraine or sadness.
There are no streetlights to comfort,
no radio rocking, no car heat,
only boots crunching on a trail we barely see.
The wind brushes through frozen grass and oak leaves;

then in brilliant gold the sun rises
from behind the mountain.
The pines take color from the light;
underfoot are white avalanche lilies.

We know the time is holy and say nothing.
My mind feels smooth and empty;
my heart is clean and clear.

ANNE DOWD

the Purcell Lodge

– visiting a remote lodge in British Columbia –

Last summer my husband Merle and I spent a glorious five days at Purcell Lodge near Golden, British Columbia. The lodge was built three years ago at a spectacular and remote location – in the middle of a vast meadow several miles long on top of 7200-foot Bald Mountain on the border of Canada's Glacier National Park.

Preceding construction of the lodge, Russ Younger and Paul Leeson, the two operating partners, had housed cross-country skiers in Mongolian yurts (large circular tents).

Access to the lodge is either by a 15-minute helicopter flight from Golden, a breathtaking experience over jagged peaks and valleys, or by hiking a trail for 8 miles. On our trip out the pilot flew level with a ridge to see two mountain goats and swooped into a valley to provide us with a view of several elk he had spotted on his trip in.

Only twenty-four guests can enjoy this first-class lodge with hot showers and flush toilets. The lodge is a soli-



The lodge sits at timberline in a beautiful meadow.

Anne Dowd

tary blue-roofed wood structure that stands three stories tall in a pristine wilderness at timberline. The meals are delicious – including make-your-own sandwiches with homemade bread baked fresh every morning for your trail lunch.

Everything is flown in by helicopter, including 500-gallon tanks of propane fuel. And every bit of trash is flown out. A steam-driven hydroelectric generator supplies power for lights and some space heating.

Hiking is king during the short summer; cross-country skiing is king during the winter. As much as 55 feet of snow may fall during a typical winter.

You have a choice every day of a moderate guided hike or a strenuous one. The moderate hike was fine for me – about 5 to 9 miles round-trip, huff-and-puff hiking at that altitude.

Strenuous hikes ranged up to 15 miles round-trip down to the valley and up to the top of a neighboring mountain, returning in a loop. From one spot on a mountain ridge, we looked down on Rogers Pass and viewed surrounding glaciers in a 360-degree panorama. No trails cross this wilderness, so a guide is really necessary unless you hike near the lodge. Wildflowers grew in profusion everywhere when we were there in late July.

For information contact:
ABC Wilderness Adventures Ltd
PO Box 811
Golden BC V0A 1H0
Canada
phone: 604-344-2639.

△



Lunch with a view of the Selkirk Mountains above Rogers Pass.

Anne Dowd

Anne Dowd is a hiker and backpacker who lives on Mercer Island.

JEAN KUSS

NIGHT of the BULLS

— MIDNIGHT ENCOUNTER ON THE YAMPA RIVER —

The huge, placid-looking bulls stood watching us across the scrub brush as we pitched our tents in the grassy field. There were twenty-four in our canoeing party and the routine for setting up camp always entailed a search for the most level, rock-free patch of ground to put your tent — hopefully on grass or soft dirt, with space for a bit of privacy, but not too far away from the main campfire and cooking area. This ideal spot, with cottonwood trees growing next to a small stream, would be our campsite for tonight.

On this hot June afternoon, the shade offered by the trees was particularly appealing, and the prize spots were quickly claimed. Shortly our tent city rose in the grass and shrubs of the field.

As we worked, we noticed an occasional low, rumbling sound, which we could not identify at first; then only casually recognized that it was coming from the range bulls we had seen. Not to worry: they were far enough away.

Satisfied that our "homes away from home" were in order, the adventurous spirits in the group opted for a dip in the enticing water of the Yampa River. Hot, dirty and sunburned as we were, the frigid water quickly turned back the faint-hearted!

Shivering and shrieking, those who

persevered (or just turned numb) were rewarded with clean, invigorated bodies and an exhilarating Rocky Mountain high.

Happy hour was next. An overturned canoe served well as a side table. Amid the chatter and preparations for dinner, we noticed a fierce-looking, lone black bull wandering around in the area of the makeshift latrine.

Occasionally he let out a bellow and tossed his mammoth head, as if to let us know that we were on his stomping ground. Jokes began to fly, with different scenarios of the bull, the port-a-potty, and the life jacket which was hung on a bush to signal occupancy. We laughed nervously about the possibility of an encounter with the bull on the way to a "date with nature."

The bull, from the looks of him, didn't share our jokes, and we began to have serious doubts about our choice of camping spots.

Nighttime came and we gathered around the campfire, enjoying the camaraderie and a special treat from one of the guides who brought his guitar and sang for us. Eventually we drifted off to our sleeping places. The bulls were forgotten.

For some time, the sounds of heavy breathing and strange, unidentifiable

noises had been wafting into our sleep consciousness until they could no longer be ignored.

"Lee! Lee! Did you hear that?" came a worried call in the night.

Lee was our brave leader and scout, who stood six feet tall and likely weighed in at no more than 145 pounds. He was the source of experience in all matters and we were sure he would have an explanation for the noises.

But Lee had turned off his hearing aid to ensure a restful night's sleep and was unaware of the stirrings in the ranks. His tentmate, however, heard the commotion and shook him awake. He joined the campers who were gathering, some in their long underwear, to discuss the situation.

The strange noises were made as the animals grazed, ripping off the range grass. They were moving in our direction.

"We're right in their path to the water. What do you think they'll do?"

"I don't know — it's hard to tell," was the wise reply.

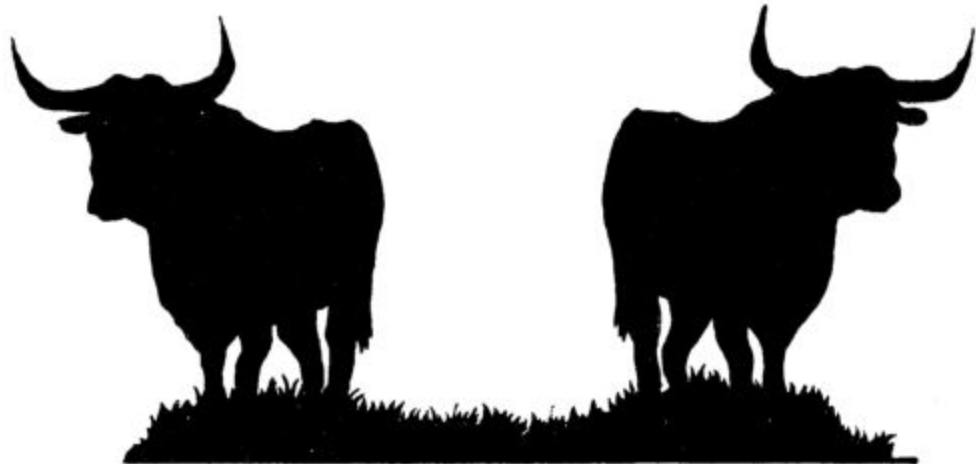
It was not at all clear if there was a real danger. Even though it was unlikely that the bulls would charge through our camp, the thought of a 2,000-pound beast stumbling into your tent was very unnerving.

"Lee! Do something! There's one right here! He's right outside!" called a frightened voice from Lee's tent.

Sure enough, turning the flashlight in that direction, we saw two shining eyes on a dark, furry head attached to a body nearly the size of a small car not more than ten feet from the tent. All around us we heard sounds of insistent protest from others in the herd.

We hurriedly decided to abandon the tents and move our sleeping bags near the fire. As we quickly gathered our bags, a feeling of impending disaster was in the air. To add to our dilemma, it started to rain.

Our sense of urgency grew; we would have to come up with a better plan. This time we picked up our tents



DEBORAH RIEHL

RESCUE EPICS

– Mexican Vacation –

Someone once said to me when a person you love dies, you adopt some of that person's interests and attributes for your own, and thereby they live on in you.

When my husband died one of the things I remembered he had said he'd done before we married was climb Popocateptl, the Mexican volcano. I found some of his slides of the trip and resolved to go climb it myself. I also wanted to climb its higher brother, Citlalteptl (Pico Orizaba).

We drove a van from Mexico City to Paseo Cortez, between Popo and Ixtaccihuatl, and thence to the base camp at Tlamacas, 13,000 feet. In the past I've had mild difficulties with altitudes above 13,500 feet.

Sure enough, I awoke that night with a splitting headache. I knocked over a metal locker stumbling in the dark to the bathroom, causing the trip thereafter to be called the "Locker Toss Expedition."

We took a "test drive" conditioning hike to 15,000 feet, during which I slightly frost-bit a toe. One of the guides bravely thawed it in his armpit.

The next day the climb of the Ventorillo Route began under brilliant clear skies graced with the Southern Cross constellation. The snow was

very hard but good cramponing. The high altitude sun was incredibly bright after a gorgeous dawn.

Near the summit, one 26-year-old man began to move more and more slowly. He refused proffered food and water. He eventually made the summit but immediately lay down, oblivious to the spectacular scenery, including the smoking crater at our feet, complete with steaming, turquoise, acid lake.

When it came time to go down, the young man stated he wanted to be left to come down "later."

The guide explained there was no "later" and he had to come down *now*.

He needed help standing and getting tied back into the rope. We set off down the crater rim at a leisurely pace but the man kept falling down.

The guide, who knew I was a member of Mountain Rescue, asked for suggestions on how best to proceed with the stricken man. We ended up tying him between us and more or less suspended him on the rope like a puppet on a string. Whenever he stumbled we snapped him back to his feet.

After traversing the crater rim we turned down the easier snowfield of the Los Cruces route. Here our tactics changed. We had him lie prone in the self-arrest position. The guide and I

then climbed below him to the length of the rope and set our axes.

He then released and we arrested him as he slid by. We repeated this over and over again, the length of the snowfield – a grueling process at 17,000 feet!

The snow petered out at about 15,500 feet. Fortunately, at this altitude the victim could again stand and walk. It was still a long way down the cinder slopes to Tlamacas and we were eternally grateful we didn't have to carry him.

On arrival at Base camp he went to bed and didn't stir until late the next day. Periodically I checked his breathing and roused him enough to drink some water.

Everyone has their own altitude "ceiling," some as low as 8500 feet, some higher than Everest. No one can survive indefinitely above about 16,500 feet.

This gentleman may have had a low ceiling. But I think it was more likely lack of conditioning, dehydration – and maybe his two-pack-a-day habit.

△

Deborah Riehl, AA7RW, is a member of Seattle Mountain Rescue's board of trustees. She lives in Bothell.

NIGHT of the BULLS

– poles, stakes, contents and all – and half-dragged, half-carried our only "protection" from the bulls, the weather, and other dangers of the night.

In the chaos of the darkness we circled our tents much like primitive people before us must have done. We nervously settled into our sleeping bags, taking comfort from the idea that if we were close enough together, we surely must be safe.

Meanwhile, our companions slept on, oblivious to the frantic activity taking place only yards away.

Morning light revealed a strange, hilarious scene. Tents of varying sizes and shapes were staked side-by-side around the cold campfire, as though some giant hand had shuffled them in a shell game. Animated conversation

and much laughter and joking accompanied our recounting of the night's events.

"You mean you didn't hear anything?!" from one survivor of the "standoff."

"Those bulls were breathing right on us!" from another.

"Are you sure you weren't dreaming?" was the skeptical response.

As the story was repeated it got better and better, and more incredulous to everyone who slept through it all.

There was not a single bull anywhere in sight.

Then, while we made breakfast, took down our tents and prepared to leave, we spotted one of the bulls watching us at the edge of the field. He seemed so much smaller! And even friendly-looking!

Not wanting to miss this chance, several of us rushed to get our cameras. Cautiously, we approached the magnificent beast, to capture the moment and the memory. He eyed us warily with those dark, shining eyes, but stood his royal ground. After all, this was his territory.

As we paddled away, we could see several groups of bulls standing under the trees along the bank, no doubt happy to see us go. They bellowed their farewell, and if bulls can laugh, they were having a good one!

△

Originally from Durango, Colorado, Jean Kuss now lives near Denver. She works for Gates Rubber company and is a member of the Colorado Mountain Club.

CHUCK GUSTAFSON

CRATER LAKE

- COMPLETING THE CIRCLE -

Circumnavigating Crater Lake is an excellent ski trip for anyone who enjoys snow camping and would like to absorb the many moods of the caldera without the hassle of the summer crowds.

Over seven years I have made three attempts to ski around the lake. On our first attempt we never left the parking lot. On our second attempt we made the mistake of leaving the parking lot. On the third and finally successful attempt, we came very close to aborting the trip.

THE FIRST TRY

In late March of 1985 my wife Alice and I, with friends Anne and Barney Voegtlen, made our first attempt on Crater Lake.

The weather had been frustratingly dry and sunny for the preceding six weeks and Crater Lake had not had any significant precipitation since the first of February.

Two days before we left Seattle, a gigantic low pressure system moved into and sat on the Pacific Northwest. We drove south in high winds and heavy rain. The next morning it was worse, and it snowed heavily all the way into the Park.

The Park Ranger's report was dismal: high avalanche warning, 2 feet of new snow in the last 2 days, high winds, soft and unconsolidated snow, and poor visibility. While we talked to the Ranger, it snowed an additional 2 inches on our truck. After much anguish, our mountain sense prevailed and we agreed that an attempt was not feasible.

Very discouraged, we drove to Bend and skied Mount Bachelor. While there, we called Crater Lake each day to check on conditions. It was still snowing 1 to 2 feet a day, just like at Mount Bachelor. In total, Crater Lake got 8 feet of new snow during that week.

One party, we heard, tried to ski



Chuck Gustafson

The second try - Tim is elated that we survived and that one stove is still partially functional.

around the lake despite the conditions and was caught in an avalanche, sustaining minor injuries and a broken ski, then was trapped for two days in a blizzard.

THE SECOND TRY

In mid-March of 1989 Tim McGuigan, Jayne Brindle, Karin Ferguson, Alice and I made a second attempt to ski around the lake. It had rained on and off for a week and the snow surface was a frozen crust with a new layer of sleet and wet snow.

We left the rim parking lot skiing clockwise. Stopping for lunch just south of the Watchman, we realized it was snowing harder. Now we had to make a difficult traverse of the west slopes of the Watchman. The roadbed was completely filled, leaving a steep, icy pitch with no runoff.

Fortunately, we found some frozen ski tracks under the new snow, and by shuttling our packs made a tense but successful passage. Conditions contin-

ued to deteriorate. At 5pm we made our planned first night's camp, 7.5 miles from the cars, northwest of Llaio Rock behind a protective grove of trees.

From my journal: "Everyone exhausted. Cooked dinner in the dark. Everyone getting cold. ... High winds and heavy snow all night. Tim got up about 4:30 and cleaned snow off everyone's tents."

The next morning the temperature was about 15 degrees, with about 16 inches of new snow. Karin and Jayne were upset that it was too cold to wear their shorts. After much debate and agony we decided to return to the cars.

As we broke camp, I somehow smashed my right hand with a snow shovel and it quickly swelled and became painful to use. As we began skiing it started snowing heavily again. Then the wind hit us with its full fury.

From my journal: "Wind roaring in from the northwest with gusts to an estimated 50+ mph. Alice and Karin

blown over and Karin lost her pack cover to the wind. Visibility extremely poor. Very concerned about getting separated. ... Faces icing up and eyelids freezing. Only our heavy packs held us down."

After going only a short distance, we knew we must make camp quickly to get out of the wind. We found minimal protection in a tree line about 1/2-mile below the road and at 2pm started preparing camp.

With the temperature 16 degrees and the chill factor well below zero, I dug a 5-foot-deep kitchen pit to get us and our stoves out of the wind. One stove wouldn't start, and Karin's stove was acting up.

From my journal: "Ate a hurried dinner in last of light ... and hurried to bed. Everyone getting cold, damp and wet. We have agreed this isn't fun anymore. Alice very cold ... During night she started shivering with all her clothes on. ... lit candle lantern and fed her brownies to get her warmed up."

We woke the third morning to light snow and better visibility. We agreed that we must get out while conditions were improving.

At 4:45 that afternoon we reached the rim parking lot, having taken two days to ski approximately 7.5 miles from our first night's camp. The Rangers told us that the Park had been closed for two days because of the storm.

THE THIRD TRY

In late March of 1992 I led a party of eight Mountaineers on my third attempt to ski around Crater Lake. By this time, friends thought I was either obsessed or just a dumb Norwegian. Alice decided she would rather bike around in the summer.

Our party consisted of Karin Ferguson (still hoping to ski around the lake in shorts), Sue Hays (optimistically remembered trips with me when it didn't blizzard), Brent Hostetler (too sick to make an informed judgment), Walt Viebrock (promised to hold our tent down in high winds), Ben (carried emergency supplies such as drip coffee maker, tape recorder and language tapes) and Susan (just ski crazy) Viles-Muzzey, and Mike Wessels (voted photographer most likely to fall into the crater).

This year, instead of too much snow, we barely had enough. Normally the snowpack is 14 feet in late March. We had 4 feet, the lowest snowpack on record. They had even started plowing the Rim Road, the earliest ever start of plowing.

Because of misinformation and communication foul-ups, we almost aborted the trip because of the low snow levels. Luckily, as we drove into the Park we met the snowplow driver and got an accurate report on snow and road conditions.

Although the route is normally skied

clockwise to take advantage of a net 600 feet of elevation loss, we decided to travel counterclockwise to get the plowed section out of the way on the first day.

After shuttling cars between the Rim Village and Park Headquarters, we hiked for approximately 7 miles on blacktop road before putting on our skis to traverse Dutton Ridge.

Our camp on Dutton Ridge with views of Mount Scott, the Klamath Wildlife Refuge, and eastern Oregon was spectacular. From my journal: "Stars out and a moon on the horizon in the early morning. Bright light from grass fires in the Klamath Refuge."

Our second day started with a whiteout, followed by a long glide under the Dutton Cliffs. In heavy snow conditions this would have been a terrible avalanche area.

We camped early just below Cloud Cap and finished the day with a spectacular storm. From my journal: "By 3:15 it was snowing heavily with strong winds. Much thunder in distance. Skied to rim overlook. View spectacular with lightning hitting Hillman Peak across the lake, row after row of snow squalls and fast-moving clouds."

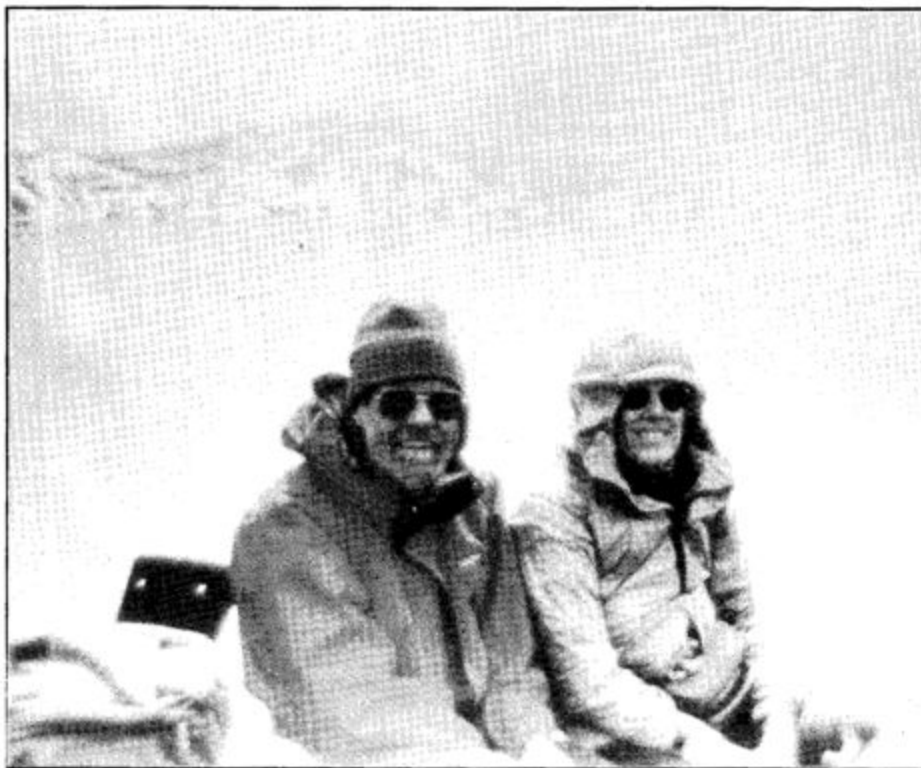
A high point of this day was meeting the Park biologist skiing in to monitor a falcon nest.

Our third morning started with another whiteout and a short slope of frozen breakable crust. Many falls later we regrouped with the walkers who had beaten most of the rest of us down.

Another long easy downhill ended in our first bare spot since leaving the plowed road. From Wineglass to past Cleetwood Cove, we walked five more bare spots, totalling about 1/2-mile. During winter storms this area gets very high winds, creating wave after wave of drifts. Just the melted remnants we encountered made difficult travelling.

Here we also found the remains of a bonfire in the middle of the road, set by snowmobilers illegally traversing the north rim. The Ranger later told us they don't have the staff to enforce restrictions on snowmobiles or on illegal hunting, another big problem in the Park.

Our camp northwest of Llao Rock continued our pattern of spectacular views. We could see almost to the top of Llao Rock and north to Mount Thielsen and Mount Bailey. Snow



Ben and Susan on the North Rim.

Chuck Gustafson



On the summit of Llao Rock.

Chuck Gustafson

squalls plagued us from mid-afternoon on, and they got really nasty as we pitched the tents.

The squalls cleared off as we started cooking and we enjoyed a windy but clear night.

On our fourth morning we awoke to clear skies and a strong northeast wind. After breakfast we left for the summit of Llao Rock with frozen crust under our skis.

The views from the top were incredible – Crater Lake, Wizard Island, Lassen Peak and Mount Shasta. This was the highlight of the entire trip. After many photos we telemarked back to the tents.

Reluctantly, we began the breakdown of camp. Then someone noticed that Brent had pitched his dome tent upside down. He claimed this was to "dry the floor," but Karin and I suspected that he is part Norwegian.

We continued to take many view stops, and we met our first recreational skier of the trip. The temperature was almost hot and the snow slushy. At 2:15 we made camp near the notch between Hillman and Watchman peaks to avoid crossing an avalanche slope and to enjoy this spectacular spot.

We awoke on our fifth and last

morning to another beautiful day. None of us wanted the trip to end and we sat at the overlook feasting on the incredible blue of the lake.

Everyone was nervous about the Watchman traverse, but it went easily with the roadbed flat and the snow soft. Looking over the road edge and not seeing the fall line made us all realize how steep this slope really was.

Soon we spotted our first tourists walking the road to Discovery Point. We reached the cars in hot sunshine.

PLANNING THE TRIP

Best time of year: March through early May in a normal year (if you believe we ever have a normal year).

Length of trip: 4 to 5 days minimum allows for a relaxed pace, side trips, telemarking and photography. The trip can be done in 2 or 3 days with a fast pace, good weather, and no side trips.

Map: USGS Crater Lake National Park & Vicinity

Elevation gain: approximately 5000 feet gross.

Distance/route: 30 miles plus side trips. Most skiers start at the Rim Village and follow the road clock-

wise to the Park Headquarters, 600 feet and 3 miles below the rim.

Weather: unpredictable. Crater Lake is on the Cascade Crest and receives the brunt of every storm. The worst weather is on the southwest, west, and north sides of the Rim.

Snow: usually lots of it, enough to make it difficult to follow the road.

Risks: high avalanche risk terrain on the west slopes of the Watchman, near Kerr Notch, Dutton Ridge and Applegate Peak. All of these can be bypassed, but the bypasses add time, distance and some difficult skiing. In icy conditions, the most difficult areas are the Watchman and the area between Cloud Cap and Dutton Ridge.

Skills/equipment: strong Nordic/cross-country skiing skills (telemark ability is not necessary); intermediate snow-camping and winter survival skills; good tested equipment, including metal-edged skis and avalanche beacons.

△

Chuck Gustafson, of Seattle, loves putting on frozen boots in the morning. He is a member of The Mountaineers, and is rumored to be Norwegian.

REST STOP

EQUIPMENT, RECIPES, TIPS, ETC

FITTING INTO A TENT – At 6'6" I have trouble fitting into a lot of things. When it comes to tents, however, I've been very pleased with the Sierra Designs "Lookout."

It is nearly eight feet long, so I can stretch out in comfort without pushing against both ends. And despite its size it weighs in at 6½ pounds, not bad for a four-season, free-standing tent. It sets up in a snap.

We've had ours two years now and couldn't be happier with it. – *Don Schaechtel, Seattle.*



UNSTUCK – For the second time this ski season I got stuck in deep snow on a logging road. Even my low 4-wheel-drive gear couldn't get me out of the rut. Both times my little ramps worked beautifully.

They are yellow ramps about a foot and a half long with traction bumps on them. Placed under the tires they provide great traction. Ours came from the L.L. Bean catalog. – *Jane Hubegger, Olympia.*



HOT DRINKS – In the winter, especially while snow camping, plenty of hot drinks are important. Here are a couple of recipes the Pack & Paddle Test Kitchen has collected.

Spiced Orange Gatorade

Make 1 small package orange Gatorade according to directions. Add 5 whole cloves and 1 cinnamon stick (or equivalent amount of ground spices) and heat to boiling. Steep five minutes.

Camp Cocoa

Before you leave home, open the packets of instant cocoa you'll take on your trip. Make a well in the cocoa and add to each packet several drops of almond extract, several drops of coconut flavor, a sprinkle of cinnamon and a teaspoon of instant coffee. Fold the packet over and seal closed with tape. Add to hot water in camp.

Plan to use opened cocoa packets within a week. Once they've been opened, the contents get lumpy.

Hot Jello

The old-time climbers' standby. Mix a package of your favorite Jello with hot water. If you can't drink it all, pour the remainder into a small ziplock bag to gel, then eat for dessert.



AVALANCHE SAFETY – If you get caught in an avalanche, try to escape

quickly to the side. Immediately discard your backpack, ski poles and any other equipment that may drag you under.

Stay on top of the snow by "swimming" with the slide. As you stop, make an air space in front of your face with your hands and stay calm.

If you witness someone else being buried, **DON'T** go for help. **YOU** are the victim's best chance for survival. Mark the point where the party was last seen and start searching directly downhill.

As you search, look for surface clues such as clothing and equipment. Pay particular attention to areas around trees, rocks and depressions in the snow.

Shovels, avalanche beacons and probe poles could help save a life in this situation, but only if you carry them and know how to use them.



KEEP FUEL WARM – Cold weather decreases the pressure in butane fuel cartridges. At sea level, butane will not vaporize at temperatures below 32 degrees.

Winter campers with butane stoves must sleep with your stove cartridges if you expect hot cocoa in the morning. At higher altitudes, where the atmospheric pressure is lower, stoves work somewhat better.



MURPHY'S LAWS OF THE OUTDOORS – When two or more contiguous maps are needed, it will be discovered that the adjacent map is (in descending order of frequency):

- not yet mapped
- mapped, but not yet printed
- out of print.
- on a different scale.
- on a different contour interval.

All prominent features visible from a given location will be found to be on

WIN FAME & ADMIRATION!

Send us your favorite recipes for hiking and paddling; a review of your newest (or oldest) piece of gear; a safety tip; or tell us about modifying or making your own gear.

PACK & PADDLE
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PORT ORCHARD WA 98366

the adjoining map. (Exception: sometimes they are two maps over).



COLD WATER – Immersion in cold water can disorient you, numb your arms and legs, make breathing difficult, and cloud rational thought. Without rescue and treatment, hypothermia can set in quickly, followed by unconsciousness and death.

Experts consider water below 70 degrees F to be cold. Some use the "100 Degree Rule:" if the air and water temperature combined add up to less than 100, a wet- or dry-suit is mandatory, and the river difficulty is considered one class more difficult than normal.



AVALANCHE BEACON CLINIC – This two-part class offers instruction in the use of avalanche transceivers for climbers and backcountry skiers. Part I is a lecture on transceiver operation, developing search patterns, and conducting searches. Part II is a practical field trip using the techniques taught in the classroom.

The lecture – Part I – is free and no advance registration is necessary. The field trip – Part II – has a fee of \$15 and space is limited to 8; advance registration is required.

Dates for the clinic are February 4 (7pm) and 6. It will be held at Swallows' Nest in Seattle, 2305 6th Avenue. Call 206-441-4100 for more information.



EDITOR'S JOURNAL



Fixing sticky skis on Hogback Ridge.

VARIED THRUSHES – When the weather gets really cold, a flock of varied thrushes comes out of the forest to our clearing. They scout around by the bird feeders for the bread crumbs I put out, stay a week or two, then disappear when the weather warms.

I know they live around here because I can hear their lovely, haunting song during the spring. But I only see them in winter.

OWLS – Also at this time of year I can hear an owl when I step onto the porch early in the morning, hours before dawn.

By its call I think it's a great horned or a great grey owl; I don't know how

to tell the difference by voice alone, and it's unlikely I'll ever see this mysterious hunter

INDEXES – The 1992 Index for Pack & Paddle is completed. I make an Index every year because I find it so handy to look up information, especially when planning hikes.

The Index has also become popular with readers, for the same reason. In this issue is an official order form, but a postcard or a phone call will get you an Index, too.

The Index (and the Special Indexes, below) is free – but we sure appreciate the postage stamps that some of you folks have sent along with your requests.

SPECIAL INDEXES – Lee came up with the idea of two separate Indexes: one that lists only paddle trips, and one for snow trips.

This information is included in the Main Index, so you won't be missing anything if you *don't* have them – but if you're interested in these activities, it sure is convenient to have separate listings for them.

SNOW CAT – Generally, Yellow Cat doesn't like snow. She would rather walk in our tracks than break her own trail, and would *much* rather nap by the stove until spring.

We were surprised, therefore, when I tossed a little snowball at her the

other day – and she leaped up and caught it! I tossed another, and she swung at it like a bear. Another – a mid-air catch.

She kept it up for many minutes (I froze my hands by the time she tired of the game), then she went in for a nap.

WINDSTORM – The temperature warmed. The snow melted. The wind came.

Unfortunately, the wind came just 24 hours before Pack & Paddle's press deadline. As usual, the Backcountry Reports and this very page were not yet finished when power went out in the office – and most of western Washington.

Yellow Cat and I had no choice but to turn from the pressure of the deadline to the spectacle of the storm. The wind roared, rain poured, limbs crashed and trees toppled.

The noise was too much for YC – with ears flattened, she scurried off to spend the day in the middle of a down comforter.

I spent the day nervously listening to limbs fall on the house and hearing trees go over in the forest. One fir took out several hundred feet of powerline when it went down – across the road, of course.

Even though we're less than a mile from a Puget Power substation, we didn't have power restored on our little country road for a couple of days.

THE PRESSES ROLL – We missed the deadline. But with diligent work by YC, we made it to the printer only a day late.

See you in the backcountry.

Ann Marshall

PACK & PADDLE'S 1992 INDEX NOW AVAILABLE

Get an Index – look up backcountry information, make trip planning easier, have the entire year at your fingertips and ... *it's free!*

In addition, we've prepared two Special Indexes for Snow Touring and Paddling – this information is included in the Main Index; we've just made it handier to use. Just check what you want below – mail it in:

-
- Main Index 92
 Snowtouring 92
 Paddling 92
 Please send info on ordering back issues.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

PANORAMA

NEWS FROM ALL OVER

APPALACHIANS – According to an item by Bill Dietrich in the Seattle Times, geologists speculate that the Appalachian Mountains, which now end abruptly in Georgia, actually end in South America.

The Appalachians formed when North and South America were one giant continent. Trilobite fossils found in South America near the Chile-Peru border are more like those of North America than nearby southern varieties, say the geologists. They also speculate that Antarctica's Shackleton Mountains may be part of the same chain.

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DENALI – 1992 was a deadly year for Denali climbers. Eleven out of 1070 climbers – or about 1 in every 100 – died in one of the worst seasons on the mountain.

Before 1970, Denali didn't have 100 climbers in a whole season. The growing popularity of Alaska's highest mountain made 1992 the second year that the climbing population went above 1000. The worst year ever was 1967, when the death rate was ten per cent (out of a total of 83 climbers).

In 1967, most of the deaths were storm-related. In 1992, the same was true. A week-long storm in early May was responsible for 7 of the 11 deaths, including top mountaineer Mugs Stump.

Seventeen other climbers were rescued, either by Rangers on foot, the special Park Service high altitude helicopter, or Alaska National Guard helicopters.

Denali has no permit system, but Rangers are pushing education and communication, especially with foreign climbers, as an alternative to increasingly expensive and dangerous rescue operations.

EARLY WINTERS' FUTURE –

The R. D. Merrill Company, Seattle, became the owner of 1200 acres at the base of Sandy Butte in the Methow Valley after foreclosing on the ailing Early Winters resort project, and then becoming the only serious bidder at the foreclosure sale. A major portion of the Methow Valley Sport Trail Association's Mazama trail system is on this property.

Merrill CEO Bill Pettit and advisor Andy Norris, of Lowe Enterprises, met with Methow Valley residents last fall to explain their current plans and to listen to local concerns.

Pettit said that if a resort were to be

built it would be on a smaller scale than the large development proposed by past developer Harry Hosey. Norris hopes to have a business plan ready by April 1. It appears that multi-season trails will be part of that plan.

The R. D. Merrill Company has a reputation for environmentally sound land stewardship. Local people, both those for and against a destination ski resort in the upper Methow Valley, view Merrill's ownership of this property as a good thing. – *from an article by Don Portman in "Trails," the publication of the Methow Valley Sport Trails Association.*

MOUNT CATHERINE LOOP –

Backcountry access has been restored to the portion of the Cold Creek road which leads from Lake Keechelus to Windy Pass, and beyond to Nordic Pass and Silver Peak.

For several years, the Cold Creek road was included in the extensive commercial cross-country skiing operation at Snoqualmie Pass. The commercial use will continue, but backcountry skiers will no longer be required to purchase a ski ticket to use the portion of the road between the Lake Keechelus Sno-Park and Windy Pass.

According to Larry Donovan, of Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, the change occurred because of the efforts of backcountry skiers who worked to maintain some of the public access that was lost as the large commercial ski areas expanded.

The previous public-access backcountry route, the Nordic Pass trail, has been impacted by the new crossover trail used by downhill skiers to go between Hyak and Ski Acres. Reopening the Cold Creek road is mitigation for that impact, explained Larry.

The Cold Creek road can be reached from the Lake Keechelus Sno-park by following the Iron Horse trail east for about ½-mile, says Gary Westerland, of The Mountaineers' Backcountry Skiing Committee.

Look for blue diamonds marking the connector trail up to the Cold Creek road (the diamonds were not in place at the end of December; the Forest Service says they are now). The connector trail is an intermediate-level route and is probably too challenging for beginning skiers.

When you reach the Cold Creek road, turn left and follow the road up

to Windy Pass. This section of road is a "common area," says Larry Donovan, open to both fee-paying cross-country skiers and public access backcountry skiers.

Once you reach Windy Pass and the Olallie Clearcut, you are on Plum Creek land. If you don't have a ski ticket, you must leave the groomed trail here, but because Plum Creek has an "open lands" policy, you can ski all through Section 19 off the set tracks. If you paid \$9 for a ski ticket at the Ski Acres Cross-Country Center, you can follow the groomed tracks through the clearcut.

From Windy Pass, backcountry skiers can also go north to Nordic Pass, or south to Silver Peak; these routes are for advanced skiers. – *AM*

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

HACKS BUDGET – As of January 5, all car campgrounds but two in Olympic National Park are closed to the public due to budget cuts. The two remaining open are Fairholm on Lake Crescent and Kalaloch on the coast.

Of all the budget cuts the Park Service has made recently, these campground closures are likely to have the most catastrophic impact on people who travel to the Olympics – particularly since the campgrounds are not scheduled to reopen until July 1!

The closed car campgrounds include such popular spots as Mora, Ozette, Staircase, Dosewallips, Sol Duc and, yes, even the Hoh. Mora Ranger Bob Lineback told Pack & Paddle the campgrounds are physically barricaded and not even walk-in camping is allowed. (These closures do not affect backcountry sites.)

Ozette Ranger Kevin McCartney said a sign will be posted at the beginning of the Hoko River road informing campers of the closure. He advises Pack & Paddle readers to "call your Congressman" and let elected officials know what you think of the closure and where you think funds should come from to provide public services.

For more information about reduced services and entrance fees, call the Park Visitor Center, 206-452-0330.

WESTSIDE ROAD CLOSED FOR 3

YEARS – After months of analysis and study, Mount Rainier National Park has decided to close the Westside Road for at least 3 years. Hikers, bicyclists, horse riders and skiers will

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still be able to travel the road. The Park Service will re-evaluate the closure every 3 years.

For the last 10 years, the road has been periodically washed out due to flooding from the South Tahoma Glacier.

SUMMIT LAKE PROBLEMS -

With its spectacular view and relatively easy access, Summit Lake in the Clearwater Wilderness attracts hundreds of visitors each summer.

Soil trail webs, soil erosion, cut or damaged trees and vegetation loss are some of the visible impacts to the Wilderness from high recreation use. Current conditions at Summit Lake exceed standards and guidelines specified in the Forest Plan.

Coplay and East Lakes are both accessible by logging roads. Camping, fishing and hunting have caused vegetation loss and soil erosion. Sanitation and health are a concern at these lakes due to limited toilet facilities. Littering and vandalism to signs are frequent.

Road 7810 is the only road access. The road is rough and eroded in many places and does not receive regular maintenance.

What to do, what to do? Here are some suggestions from the White River District:

1. Make the Summit Lake trail longer by moving the trailhead. A new trailhead could be near Coplay Lake or the 7810/319 road junction. New trail could be constructed, or the old roadbed could be used as a trail.
2. Close Summit Lake to overnight camping and rehabilitate overnight camp sites.
3. Require a permit for Summit Lake for day and/or overnight use. This could also include a trailhead quota limiting the maximum number of permits per day.
4. Improve parking at Coplay Lake.
5. Close campsites at Coplay Lake and

revegetate; develop dispersed sites, including a large group campsite.

6. Provide fully developed campsites at Coplay that include picnic tables and fire-rings and restrict camping to those sites only.
7. At East Lake, provide a footbridge across ditch for walk-in camping and provide toilet facility near parking area. Rehabilitate riparian damage near lakeshore.

These are only some possible options, says the White River District. They would very much like to hear your ideas. Please call Project Team Leader Dona Palmer at 206-825-6585, or write to her at:

White River Ranger Station
857 Roosevelt Avenue E
Enumclaw WA 98022.

NEWS FROM THE MIDDLE FORK SALMON RIVER -

The District's two Wilderness Rangers clocked 330 miles on foot last summer. With the help of the packers, over three tons of trash were hauled out. The packers and trail crew worked 352 miles of trail and cut out about 350 blowdowns.

Another low water year didn't slow river traffic much: 9627 people floated the Middle Fork Salmon in 1992.

The Joe Bump cabin received a facelift when a crew of 11 restoration specialists spent a week on the cabin. Several rotten logs were replaced and a new roof was put on.

An older female wolverine was captured and radio-collared. Interestingly, she has been radio tracked on 15- to 20-mile straight-line movements over 1 to 2 days for no apparent reason. - excerpted from "Frankly Speaking," the biannual report of the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, Idaho.

RIVER OTTERS - Evidence collected this past spring and summer shows

that at least 15 otters are thriving in Rocky Mountain National Park, according to a RMNP news release.

A total of 43 otters were relocated to the Kawuneeche Valley from 1978 to 1984 as part of the Park's final Master Plan.

Since then several sightings of a female with two pups have been reported, and tracks indicate several otters have moved to the Forest Canyon area. Some fortunate observers have seen them sliding in the mud and snow along the main channel of the Colorado River. - from "Trail and Timberline," the publication of the Colorado Mountain Club.

1200-MILE PADDLE RACE - The American Canoe Association has announced plans for the inaugural Finlandia Clean Water Challenge, the world's longest canoeing and kayaking endurance race.

The 1200-mile race, from Chicago to New York, will begin in mid-summer and is expected to take approximately 5 weeks to complete. Paddlers will travel portions of four of the Great Lakes, 8 rivers including the Hudson, and the Erie Canal.

The competition will be structured similar to the Tour de France with winners decided on the basis of elapsed time.

For registration details, contact Marty Grabijas, Director of Special Events & Programs, American Canoe Association, 7432 Alban Station Blvd, #B-226, Springfield VA 22150.

OLD GROWTH EXHIBIT - The Burke Museum's upcoming exhibition Old Growth Forests: Treasure in Transition, will be on view February 18 through June 13.

The Burke Museum is located at 17 Avenue NE and NE 45 Street on the UW campus in Seattle. Call 206-543-5590 for hours and admission fees.