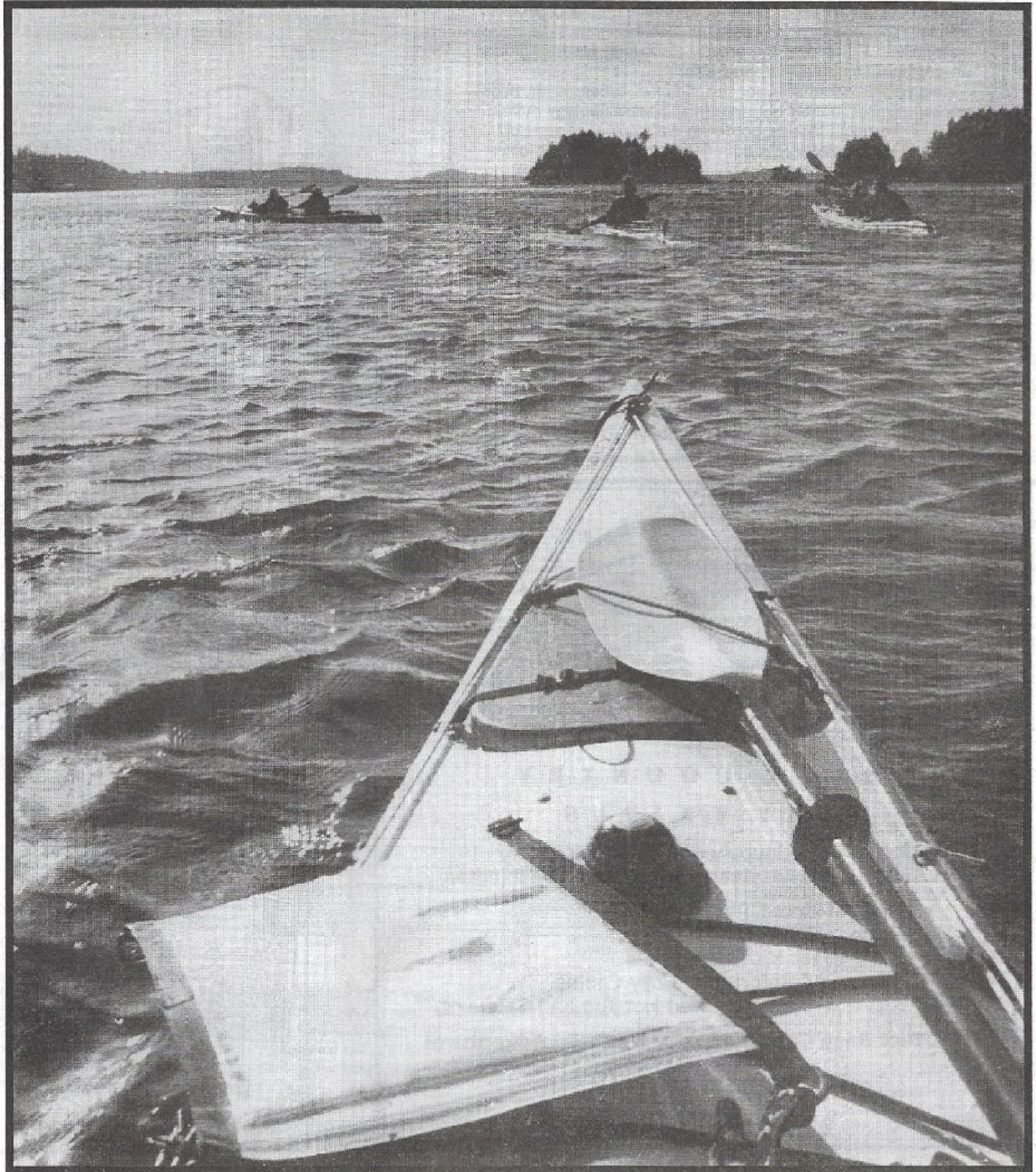


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VOLUME 8, NUMBER 3

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RANDOM VIEW—



Robert Hulet with grandson Jacob, on Jacob's second hike with the Olympians, at Kloshe Nanitch Lookout.

Edythe Hulet

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### COVER PHOTO:

Kayakers paddle up Lemmens Inlet on Meares Island, off the West Coast of Vancouver Island near Tofino, British Columbia. Photo by Lee McKee.

### HOW TO BE A PACK & PADDLE CONTRIBUTOR:

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### DANGEROUS GOODS REGULATIONS

I work for a major airline at SEA-TAC and was for some years responsible for my company's local Dangerous Goods training. I think I can answer Jay Mueller's questions arising from his experience with Hawaiian Airlines (*February, page 4*).

The Hawaiian Airlines agents correctly followed the federal regulations. The supervisor, on the other hand, can only hope that no one from FAA Security reads *Pack & Paddle*. To be safe and legal for carriage by air the fuel bottle would have to be purged and flushed with a neutralizing agent.

These regulations are not new. They were in place when I began my career forty-odd years ago and the US Department of Transportation requires airline agents to be trained, and retrained annually, to be alert for "Hidden Dangerous Goods" in items described as "CAMPING EQUIPMENT" among other things. Also there is a warning sign on every ticket counter requiring travelers to declare any dangerous goods they are carrying.

Regulations aside, even a tiny quantity of gasoline can create a strong odor in a cargo hold on a warm day—meaning that airplane isn't going anywhere until the source of the odor is found and removed.

The difference between a bottle of vodka and an uncleaned fuel bottle is that vodka is not a flammable liquid while gasoline is. Alcoholic beverages are not restricted unless the beverage is more than 70 0/0 (140-proof) alcohol.

Alcohol fuel, however, along with kerosene, is in the same hazard class as gasoline.

Other items hikers and campers commonly carry but which are forbidden on airplanes are "strike anywhere" and "lifeboat" matches, propane and butane.

And, for long distance hikers, these items are also forbidden in mail.

Dan Reider  
Issaquah, Washington

### MORE ON TRAVELING WITH A STOVE

Several years ago I began biennial trips to Utah and Arizona for backpacking. After the first two or three

trips with an empty Svea stove (fuel tank is part of the stove), I switched to a Whisperlite stove to avoid the problems others had been having with a stove tank and wick that smelled of fuel (*February, page 4*).

On my last trip, homeward bound, in Las Vegas I was asked, for the first time, the same questions Jay Mueller was asked. I gave the same answers with the same results.

The bottle and stove parts were bone dry but had a slight scent of fuel. Finally, after the counter clerk's superior spent several minutes flushing the fuel bottle with water, they (Alaska Airlines) let me check my pack with the stove and bottle.

On this year's trip I plan to fill my fuel bottle with water and pack it with my lunch in my carry-on bag.

Joe Weigel  
Port Orchard, Washington

### WHAT HAPPENED TO MOUNT STUART?

Where's Mount Stuart in "The High Points of the 39 Counties of Washington" (*February, page 24*)?

She's been my favorite all these years and now ... gone?

A. Nonymous  
Seattle, Washington

**Ed. Note:** By the luck of the draw, 9415-foot Mount Stuart is not in Kittitas County, but is just over the line in Chelan County. By only a smidge, it loses the rank of County High Point to Bonanza Peak, 9511 feet.

### MORE ON MOSEYING

I enjoy reading in *Pack & Paddle* about places I've been. A long lifetime of outdoor activities in Washington has made me acquainted with it all.

When you first offered Backcountry Notes I ordered a set and framed them in a wall arrangement that hangs over my desk.

Since my doctor and physical therapist gave a no-no to faster walking and climbing, I discovered a really wonderful world to explore slowly (see January, page 4). To save my knees and a possible fall in my advanced years, I

had to learn to take shorter strides.

I usually go solo because most think me too slow, but this gives me the chance to take better advantage of weather conditions or to stay overnight someplace. I keep my car as well as my camper ready.

I now seek what the smaller cities offer and find it rewarding. Hoquiam's new walk by the river has a small farmers' market. Lots of good buys in different foods and produce. Be prepared to stand in line when the hot breads and huge sticky buns are ready! After a walk and a visit to the museum, I come back for a big bowl of chowder at the little restaurant at the market.

Marian Mae Robison  
Wapato, Washington

### 1952 PLANE CRASH

Ed Agius has confused the 1941 Mount Constance crash with the Tull City 1952 crash (*February, page 12*).

Regarding Olympic Mountains lore, this is the most commonly confused trivia fact. On the one hand, nearby Mount Constance is festooned with airplane wrecks. But more importantly, confusion between the 1941 and 1952 crashes got incorporated into Robert Wood's first edition *Olympic Mountains Trail Guide* (1984).

... If you compare both editions of Mr. Wood's guidebooks, you'll see that the appropriate correction was made to the second edition (1991).

The 1941 wreck involved a twin-engine plane. The 1952 Tull City wreck involved a four-engine B-17, not yet invented or constructed in 1941. The Tull City B-17 carried eight passengers, five of whom survived, three of whom died. The five survivors were rescued the next morning.

According to surviving co-pilot Captain Kenneth Sentner, the man flying the plane at the time, the B-17 struck the Tull City ridgetop in the winter, in the dark, in a snowstorm. Looking at a map, you can see that the ridge there is broken and irregular, but includes at least one flat and relatively level spot.

Flying at 170mph, Captain Sentner says the plane nosed and bellied into the flat spot, deeply buried in snow at the time, and just kept on going. The plane skidded off the ridge, went over the cliff, fell for 1500 feet, and appar-



# LETTERS to the EDITOR

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

ently struck the 45-degree talus slope of debris from the main mineshaft before coming to rest.

When dawn came the next morning, the five survivors beheld the weird spectacle of log dwellings, the lost city of Tull City—and their plane was now parked right in the middle. ...

At the end of last summer I was hiking the Dungeness River area, and I looked back to the vicinity of the Charlia Lakes waytrail. I saw an airplane fuselage lying on the waytrail.

There was a visible impact crater, a track of down-mountain skidmarks, and then a big hunk of airplane. Does anyone know what that is? Here we go again ...

DL  
Mountlake Terrace, Washington

## MAILBOX AVALANCHE

My first response to the headline to the article ("Avalanche on Mailbox

Peak," *February, page 18*) was something like, "On little Mailbox? It's only a bump! It's not even in the mountains!" I think this experience is an excellent example of why people need to be trained, alert, and have the proper attitude during winter travel in our mountains.

Steve Fox said they were only 30 to 50 feet from the trees. I know I would not have felt particularly exposed. But it just goes to show how deceptive the risk is. Somewhere I read that the average avalanche involving people only runs 50 to 100 feet. Well, if you are where it all piles up, and were only carried five feet, buried is buried!

Steve is right, having people spaced out is very important! Had Carla turned back 5 or 10 minutes sooner, just enough that she wasn't aware of the slide, the outcome could have been far, far different.

Alice was on the surface, but was still helpless, locked into the quickly consolidated snow. Steve was in part on the

surface; he may or may not have cleared his airway without help; but he was otherwise immobilized. Even though not "buried" per se, these two could have succumbed due to hypothermia, if there were only three on the trip.

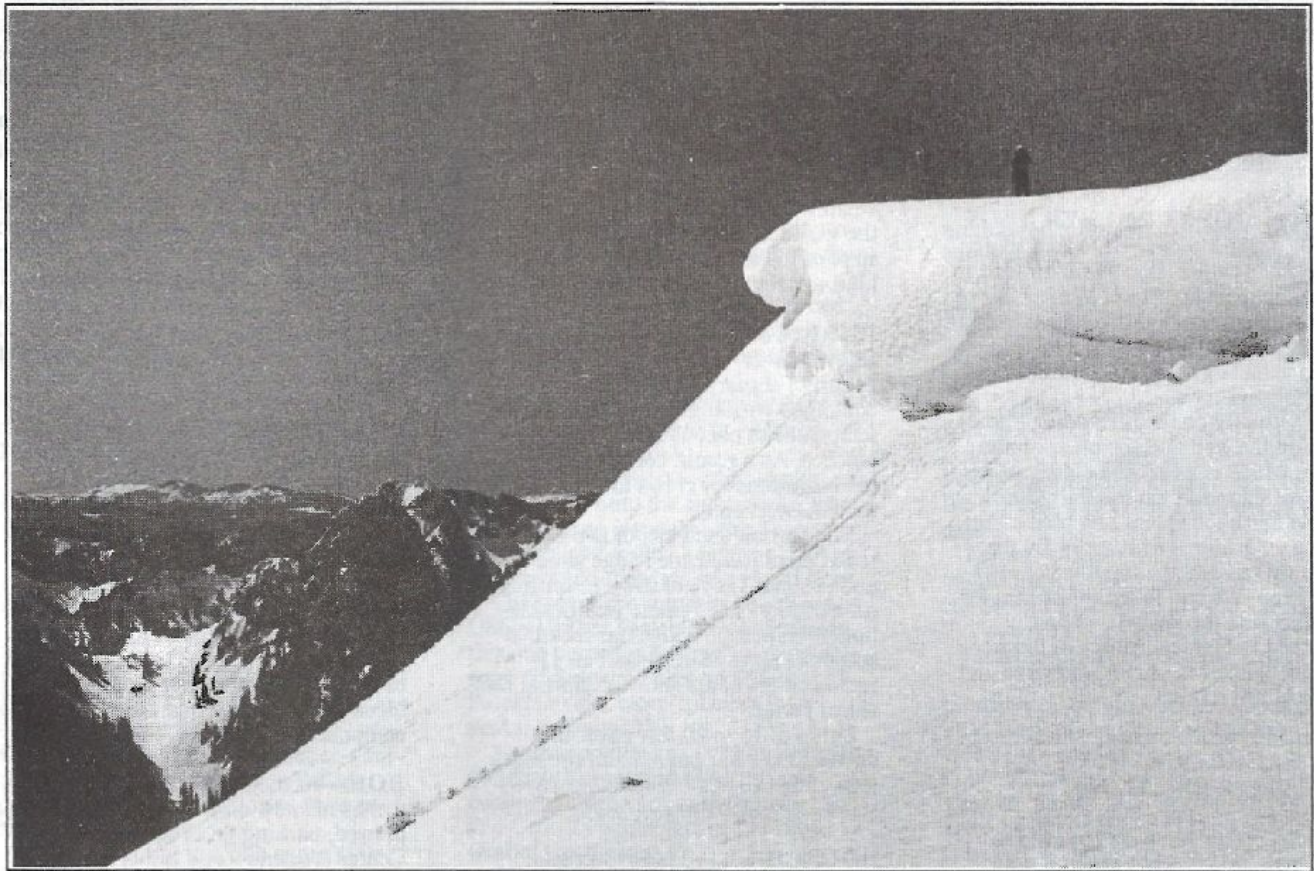
As described, Bob was a guaranteed fatality.

There was only one shovel in the party. How would this have turned out if the shovel was on Bob's pack? He was the most deeply buried.

Remember, this was a *warm* day. They were just above the rain line. They were only a few miles from a gas station, bathrooms, hot chocolate. Change only one or two elements of this story, and the outcome could have been far sadder.

We can all learn from this. I hope we do.

Michael Leake  
Issaquah, Washington



A skier on a corniced ridge at Panorama Point, Mount Rainier National Park.

Ann Marshall







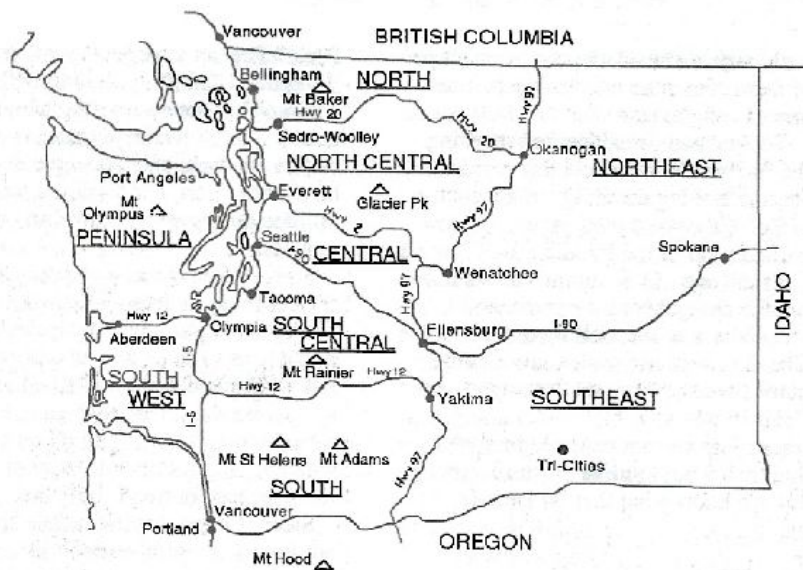
## INTRODUCTION

See "How to be a *Pack & Paddle* contributor" 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.

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-  —Hiking, backpacking on trails.
-  —Canoeing, kayaking and water trips.
-  —Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.



### PENINSULA



**MOUNT WALKER (USGS Mt Walker)**—It looked like a nice day weather wise so we decided to take a gamble on Mount Walker. Since it is a long drive and involves ferries, it is best done on a nice day. The trailhead is on Highway 101, 5 miles south of Quilcene.

We usually do the hike going one way on the trail and the other on the road, which is gated and closed in winter. We started up on the trail (2 miles) to the north viewpoint and picnic area. At about 1 mile we hit snow. By the time we reached the top it was over 2 feet deep. We had failed to account for the fact that the snow level had dropped to 500 feet earlier in the week. Mount Walker is usually snowfree, or at most just a trace.

### BACKCOUNTRY NEWS DEADLINE: March 20

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

The views were splendid to the north and east. The major peaks of the Olympics were hiding in the clouds, however.

We trudged over to the south viewpoint for the views south and east. We decided to return via the road (4 miles), thinking that we might have problems in the snow on the steep parts of the trail. We had to deal with snow for 3 miles, however, instead of just 1 if we had taken the trail. We were really glad when we reached the cars. Even though the weather was not perfect, and in spite of the snow, we had a great hike.—Leigh Champlin, Seattle, 2/14.

**HURRICANE RIDGE**—The ridge received over 7 feet of snow in 6 days in early February. The heavy snow combined with high winds and warm temperatures contributed to many avalanches. As a result, conditions were too hazardous for crews to open the road on weekends.

The current snow depth is the most recorded at Hurricane Ridge since 1972 and is about 150% of average for this time of year. The remote weather station at Hurricane Ridge has recorded speeds of up to 85 mph and an 11-inches-in-24-hours snowfall during this storm period.

Drifts of 15 to 20 feet cover the downhill ski equipment, and the south side of the Visitor Center is nearly obscured by drifted snow.—Ranger, 2/2.

**BOGACHIEL**—Trail is wet and muddy. Six alders and one hemlock less than ten inches through are down

on the trail; easily stepped over. One large maple with several alders is down in a tangled mess near park boundary. Streams need be forded or crossed on logs.—Ranger, 1/19.

**EAST FORK QUINULT**—Graves Creek to Enchanted Valley: Patchy snow starting at the Graves Creek trailhead, with snow depth gradually increasing to 4 to 5 feet at No Name Creek (8 miles, elevation 1300 feet). No recent report above No Name Creek. Numerous windfall trees blocking the trail.

The Chalet in Enchanted Valley is a ranger station only and is not available for visitor use except in an emergency. Poor weather is not considered an emergency.—Ranger, 2/3.

**NORTH FORK QUINULT**—The North Fork road is closed to all traffic to allow park road crew employees to complete resurfacing work. Barring severe weather, the road is scheduled to reopen on March 12.

The North Fork and Big Creek trailheads will be accessible by foot only from the Upper Quinault River bridge, adding an additional 3 miles of hiking each way. Hikers should park to not block the road gate, and watch for heavy equipment on the road.—Ranger, 2/3.

**HOH**—At the present there is fifteen inches of snow on the ground. Road is plowed, parking lot is cleared, Visitor Center is open.

Rain/snowfall precipitation to date in 1999 has been 38.39 inches.



Campground is closed because of damage from prior windstorm. A number of limbs and trees have been reported down on the trail to Olympus Guard Station along with generally wet and muddy conditions, besides the current snow cover.

Entrance fees are collected at the visitor center on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.—Ranger, 2/16.

**BEACHES**—There are two small trees down between Goodman and Falls Creeks. Goodman Creek has almost undercut the trail but it is okay at this time. Goodman Creek is very difficult or impossible to cross. Falls Creek is very difficult also.

There are three moderate-sized trees between Goodman and the beach south of Toleak Point. All are easy to get over. At the ladder on the vertical rock above the beach the first rung is nearly six feet off the ground with nothing to hang on to but the rope and ladder. The trail will continue to sluff down the rock with more rain.

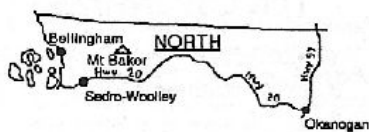
The creek at the beach is continuing to erode the trail. Hikers need to know that many campsites have been washed out by the surf. The big, popular campsite at Toleak just north of Jackson Creek is completely gone.

Beach fires remain banned from Wedding Rocks to Yellow Banks.—Ranger, 2/13.

**STAIRCASE RAPIDS**—The bridge on the Rapids Loop is structurally compromised due to excessive snow load. The center of the bridge has dropped 3 to 4 feet. Visitors are not to cross until the snow melts and a safety inspection has been done.

There is still 3 feet of snow at the Staircase Ranger Station. The road is closed at the park boundary.—Ranger, 2/16.

NORTH

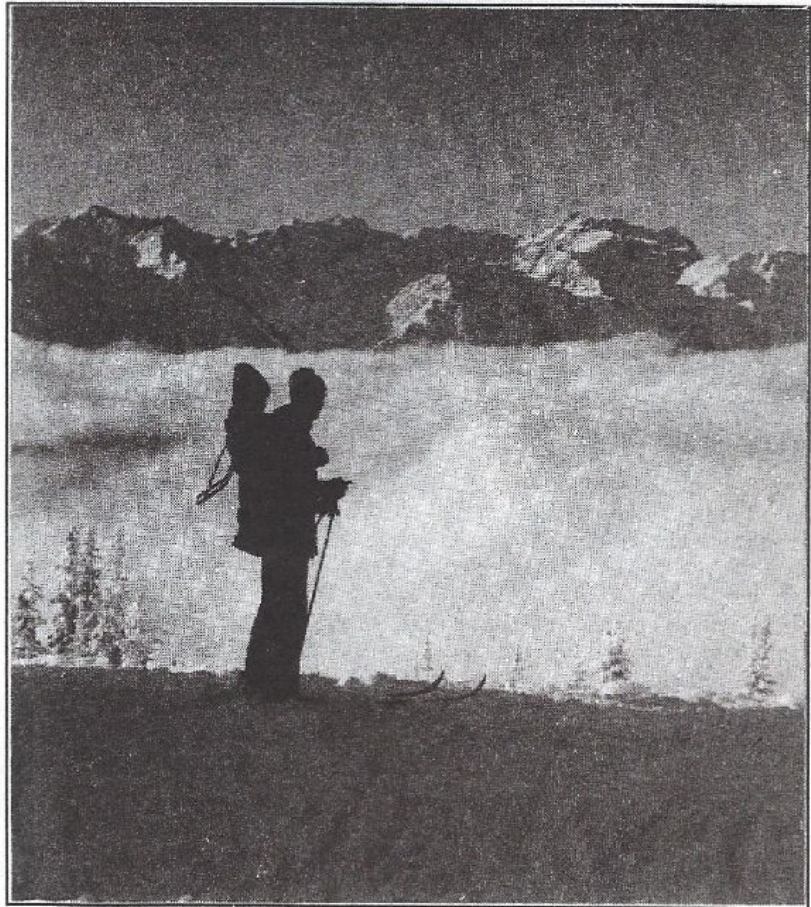


### LAKE SHANNON ALPS

(USGS Welker Pk, Grandy Lk)

—Arcing around the upper end of Lake Shannon, north of my alma mater, Concrete High School, are five 400-foot prominence “peaks” that may have escaped your attention.

If you are going to climb every 400-foot rule summit in the Skagit River Drainage, you’ve got to do these.



Ann Marshall

Skier on Hurricane Ridge, Olympic National Park.

Howard Putter and I set off on yet another one of those horrific January days to go Blob bobbing.

1. The first was Peak 1567 (termed “Vulgar Mountain,” north of Vogler Lake, in keeping with the times) on the Grandy Lake quad.

The term “peak” throughout here is used loosely, like the term “Alps” is used around Issaquah.

We hit snow shortly after turning off Highway 20 onto the Baker Lake road. Park at a gate just past Lake Tye at 1089 feet and follow a logging road to the treed and viewless top, if you must.

The rest of the summits below are on USGS Welker Peak which sports only this one named mountain on the whole quad (if Sulphur Point and the end of Forest Divide, more “places” than peaks, are ignored).

2. “Shannon Spire” (1720+ feet with 600 feet (P)rominence) is the most peaky looking point in the group. Park at a Crown Pacific gate at 1125 feet, west of the summit.

We could have walked a snowed-in road which circles counter-clockwise

around the hill to an end about 100 feet below the top, but instead we chose to go straight up the west ridge, skirting a big cliff to the left. The route and top provide stunning views of Mount Baker and Mount Shuksan (presumably).

3. “Glover Mountain” (1214 feet with 464 feet P), just north of Upper Baker Dam is named on a big Puget Power sign and has a viewpoint near the top that looks straight down on the dam.

For some unknown reason the USGS cut off the top of this landform, reducing its elevation to 1080+ feet on the 7½-minute map. Green Trails and the 15-minute USGS maps have it right.

4. Peak 1160+ (fudged up to 400 feet prominence by “dirty methods”) is .7-mile south of the dam and has been “view enhanced.”

We walked a snowy road and a little slash to the top. The vista down on Lake Shannon and the hills south of Concrete is the reward. Pretty nice, surprisingly. We enjoyed pulling a macho 4x4 truck out of a ditch where we





Lee McKee

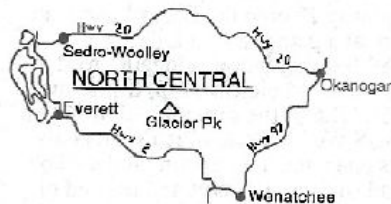
Skunk cabbage—one of the early signs of spring on lowland trails.

had parked.

5. Peak 1920+ (with 440 feet P) is the highest of the group, .6-mile southwest of the Komo Kulshan Guard Station. It can be climbed through second growth from a logging road that takes off just a smidge up road 12 to Schreibers Meadow.

A goofy day, but good exercise with some pretty darn good views. Not a bad winter trip.—John Roper, Bellevue, 1/29.

#### NORTH CENTRAL



#### TUMWATER MOUNTAIN (USGS Leavenworth)

Tumwater Mountain is a big bread loaf of a landform just northwest of Leavenworth. It forms the towering rock wall on your left as you drive into town from Stevens Pass and is notable as one

of the 2000-foot prominence peaks in the state.

Jeff and I did this on Valentine's Day, one of the only nice days this winter so far, following the map to the start of a logging road that accesses the east side of the mountain. Jeff rammed his car into the snow to park at the start of this road (signed "Tumwater Mtn") at 1360 feet.

We snowshoed up the road, cutting a switchback here and there, enjoying nice views out the Wenatchee River valley across to the Mission Ridge mountains, and along the whole length of the Chiwawa-Entiat divide from Burch Mountain to Chumstick, Sugarloaf, Maverick, up to Klone and Kelly, *et. al.*

We left the road at 3600 feet and gained the crest north of the 4480+-foot summit. The very top has a peculiar 20 to 25 foot granite boulder problem, which the deep snow made doable.

From the top we could look west up to the twin summits of Big Jim and Big Lou and down to Josephine Crag and Drury Falls. 4.5 hours up, 1.75 down.—John Roper, Bellevue, 2/14.

**LAKE WENATCHEE DIST—509-763-3103.** We continue to get new snowfalls about every ten days. Call the Ranger Station for the latest conditions.

The seasonal grooming sticker is required in conjunction with the \$20 season pass for skiing at Lake Wenatchee State Park, Kahler Glen and Chiwawa Sno-Parks.

All campgrounds, with the exception of Nason Creek, are available for winter camping. Access is limited to over-the-snow travel (ski, snowshoe, snowmobile or dogsled). Please bring your own drinking water and toilet paper and pack out your garbage.—Ranger, 2/5.

#### ALWAYS CARRY THE TEN ESSENTIALS

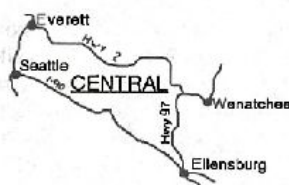
1. extra food
2. extra clothing
3. map
4. compass
5. knife
6. matches
7. fire starter
8. first aid kit
9. sun protection
10. flashlight



# BACKCOUNTRY NEWS

REPORTS AND CONDITIONS

## CENTRAL



**PEAK 5040+** (Sopwith Camel Mountain) and **PEAK 5650** (Tunnel Creek Peak) (USGS Stevens Pass)—As the Cascade Crest snakes its way south from Stevens Pass, there are no map-named summits for many miles until a minor bump (Thunder Mountain) gets tagged.

Jeff Howbert has been teasing out possible destinations in this area, and has discovered that the map makers ignored five 400-foot-plus prominence peaks in this stretch. A pair of these make a good winter loop trip, worthy of inclusion in Dallas Klocke's *Winter Climbs* book.

Twelve strong snowshoers parked at the big bend in Highway 2 (2700 feet) before the final rise to Stevens Pass and were immediately confronted with the most dangerous part of the trip: dodging the morning rush hour skiing traffic to get across the road.

We clomped up the Tunnel Creek logging road to its crossing of the creek and made the decision to do a counter-clockwise loop, breaking fresh trail up the south fork of Tunnel Creek (toward Hope Lake).

We were fortunate to have a ton of powerful young climbers to serially sacrifice as trail breakers in the deep fresh snow.

At about 3800 feet we veered left, straight up the hillside until we ran into a flat at 4300 feet, southwest of Peak 5040+, then followed the south slopes to the top. 3 hours up. This summit, with 520 feet of prominence, just north of Mig Lake, was dubbed "Sopwith Canel Mountain."

We were disappointed that the clouds seemed to hang up on the crest in our vicinity on this first sunny day in weeks. The local views of heavily flocked evergreens everywhere were impressive though. After a brief lunch, we shuffled generally east to a 4500-foot saddle, then climbed a moderately steep, wooded slope to Peak 5650 (450 feet prominence) at the very head of Tunnel Creek and just southwest of Swimming Deer Lake.

Mike "rewarded" us all with month-old homemade cookies which tasted

surprisingly good on this frosty perch. We considered for a nanosecond following the ridge north to Peak 5651 (651 feet prominence) but the steep corniced divide made this idea easy to reject.

Instead we headed home down the delightful valley of the main fork of Tunnel Creek to complete the loop. Just before finding the 3300-foot end of a road up this valley we spotted ski tracks descending from the ski area and out the road ahead of us. 8.25 hours round trip.—John Roper, Bellevue, 1/24.

**LEAVENWORTH DIST—509-548-6977.** Icicle Road is plowed all the way to the entrance of Bridge Creek campground. There is limited parking.

Eightmile Campground is gated, but you may park at the entrance and ski in to camp.—Ranger, 2/5.

**ENCHANTMENTS**—To obtain an overnight permit application, call the Ranger Station at 509-548-6977. Processing will begin on 3/1. Permits are required from 6/15 through 10/15.—Ranger, 2/5.

**CLE ELUM DIST—509-674-4411** There is a new marked cross-country-skier-only route at Salmon la Sac campground. The 3-mile loop starts at the Salmon la Sac Sno-Park and follows a trail through the woods, then meanders through the campground.

It is designed to provide a wonderful, quiet and scenic family skiing opportunity as the route passes two river paths

mixed with open areas and timber.

Swauk Campground Sno-Park is not available this winter season. The State Parks Winter Recreation Program did not fund snow plowing at this location.

You can pick up a Swauk/Blewett non-motorized cross-country ski area brochure at the Cle Elum Ranger Station, the Cle Elum Chamber of Commerce or the Ellensburg Chamber of Commerce.—Ranger, 2/5.

## SOUTH CENTRAL



**POO POO POINT PARAGLIDERS' TRAIL** (USGS Issaquah)—On one of the few recent sunny days I determined to find the trail to Poo Poo from the hang-glider field south of Issaquah. Someone had said it existed, and sure enough, it's directly across the field from the middle of the parking lot, which is 1½ miles south of Issaquah on the Issaquah-Hobart Road.

It was constructed by 30 or 40 para- and hang-gliders who got tired of the trace straight up. They did a great job on a tread that rises relentlessly for 1500 feet to the lower parasail pad.

One sailor caught up with us just at

## Pack & Paddle's 1998 Index is ready!

The Index lists all trips and trails for the past year, and also lists titles of feature articles and items of interest by subject. The index is FREE, but stamps and self-addressed long envelopes are always appreciated.

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Shirley Haley

Twenty-two Creek, just east of Verlot.

the point where the original trace took off upward, which he did. Even as Old Fogies, we covered the 2¼ miles of new trail in a little under an hour and ten minutes.

Went only to the lower launch field, and not to Poo Poo Point, about 250 feet higher and a third of a mile farther. There were about eight gliders waiting for the thermals, among them the fellow who'd passed us below. Even packing the parasail and chute, he'd made it up in a little less than

two-thirds the time we'd taken. Great to be young and fit.—Uncle Al, Mercer Island, 1/24.



#### BLACKWATER TRAIL

(USGS Issaquah; Cougar Mtn RWP) — I had a cloudy but rainless day for exploring a few lesser-used trails on Cougar Mountain. The Issaquah Alps Trails Club guide (Manning/Owen), as usual, provided wonderful inspiration for creating a unique loop. Warning: this one isn't for the mud-

averse.

I arrived at the West Tibbetts Creek trailhead on Highway 900 at 11am. Traffic whizzed unnervingly by while I walked the shoulder south to the Newcastle Queen road. This old mine access climbs quickly to the 1000-foot level; here is a blocking, thorny thicket which must be pushed through to regain a narrower track.

The way gentles and contours northwest through quiet alder forest to the base of the Clay Pit, where it is thor-



oughly plugged with debris and some uphill jungle-beating is required to gain the lower rim of the Pit.

I proceeded around to the higher north rim, and detoured to Jerry's Duck Pond for a lunch stop. The still reflection of bare trees and sky in the black water reminded me of fine B&W photographs a la Ansel Adams.

I then continued on the rim east to Claypit Peak and the start of the Blackwater Trail, marked with fluorescent pink ribbons. This south-trending path follows a series of 'dozer scours dating from the days of fires and prospecting; the deeper gouges have metamorphosed into permanent ponds. The way can be indistinct, but is never in doubt.

After crossing a small creek, it switchbacks up a fir slope to Penultimate Plateau, which it sketchily crosses west-southwest to a T intersection with a second faint trail.

Going left (south) 150 meters brought me to an unmarked junction with Wilderness Cliffs Trail, a stone's throw north of the Wilderness Peak spur. I returned to the T and followed orange-and-black-striped flagging north. In 1/2-km, this path descended to Blackwater Saddle, increasing in distinctness; and in a final 1/2-northwesterly-km dropped to an unmarked junction with the East Fork Trail near a pond. Two pictorial "no horses" signs are near this terminus.

I followed signed trails north to the Clay Pit Road and on to Tibbetts Marsh; descended upper West Tibbetts Creek trail to Bear Ridge Trail; and headed south to the Fantastic Erratic.

From here I diverted onto a segment of the old Precipice Trail continuing south, contouring with faint tread through two gullies to a ridge above Claypit Creek gurgling in its canyon.

The route climbs this ridge gaining 200 feet to a blowdown-clogged crossing. (A step-to log with nailed-in cleats tempts daredevils, but did not lead to a meaningful bypass of the blowdowns.)

Once through the mess, the way descends gradually and increasingly faint but with consistent flagging (red and white squares). The route peters out altogether just before striking a spur off the Newcastle Queen road at 900 feet. I returned to the truck feeling "rode hard and put away wet"—but happy.—Andy Carr, Bellevue, 1/15.



### TIGER THREE PEAK (Tiger Mountain State Forest)—

Heather and I spent another overcast and windy day enjoying the great outdoors. Our destination this time was nearby Tiger Mountain. I usually avoid

this place because of its popularity—too bad: the trail system is grand, and on a day like today the crowds just weren't there.

We had a great time doing a 9-mile loop hike that took us over Tiger 3, the Railroad Grade trail to Poo Poo Point and back by way of the Tradition Lake Plateau. The trails are well marked and maintained.

The Railroad grade is a little grown over but hey, that's the price to pay for remoteness. Just shy of the trail junction with the Poo Poo Point trail is a pleasant surprise—a small grove of old growth!

On our way out we met Ken and Sean who were putting together an Issaquah Chamber of Commerce Brochure and a segment included Tiger Mountain. Heather and I got to "model" for it in our outdoor attire! We had lots of fun today!—Craig Romano, Seattle, 1/15.



### WILDERNESS PEAK

(USGS Issaquah; Cougar Mtn RWP)—In the midst of a fortnight of foul weather, the rain relented (but not the wind) for a half-day outing. From Wilderness Creek trailhead I trod the pleasant switchbacks of the Wilderness Cliffs trail. Big View Cliff revealed only the fringes of Rainier's skirts, under a heavy sky.

The Wolf Tree trail diverges at an unmarked junction 100 meters beyond Wild View Cliff. While a "direct route," it isn't rude or vertical, and has

good tread and no blowdowns.

I paused frequently amid the salal fields to watch the fir crowns swirling kaleidoscopically in the gale. The 1/2-km trail abuts the official Peak Spur trail atop the wooded summit, marked by a cairn. An elfin hutch protects two hikers' registers from drips.

The IATC guide describes a cross-country route down the east ridge of the peak. The terrain is relatively easy for this part of the mountain, but I descended slowly due to blowdowns (especially at the edge of the summit plateau) and thorn bushes; I'd recommend work gloves for this trip. The ridge line can be indistinct, but stays easterly by the compass. Few if any game trails.

After passing the Park boundary (250 meters) I emerged onto lawn near a future homesite. The Brookridge development road (SE 95th St) returns to SR 900, where it is posted. A 1-km trudge along the narrow highway shoulder back to the parking lot (and, quickly, reality).—Andy Carr, Bellevue, 1/29.



### INDIAN TRAIL (USGS Issaquah; Cougar Mtn RWP)—

Here are current driving directions to the south (Licorice Fern) trailhead, which was recently re-routed around development:

From SE May Valley Road, take SE 112th Street, which in .4-mile becomes 169th Ave S and at 1.2 miles turns into SE Licorice Way. At 1.5 miles from May Valley Road turn left onto 171st



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Ave SE.

Go .3-mile to the end of this cul-de-sac. A new (IATC?) sign marks the trailhead on the west side of the turn-around circle.—Andy Carr, Bellevue, 1/29.



### MOUNT CATHERINE LOOP

(USGS Snoqualmie Pass)—We found a new angle on this old familiar route. We started off from the cross-country center and took the lift up, heading to "Grand Junction" and then down into Rockdale Canyon.

It always amazes me to find so few people up there when the parking lot is overflowing! From Rockdale Canyon, we climbed back up into the Olallie Meadows, and had lunch in the very warm Warming Hut.

The upper trails weren't groomed and the snow was deep and heavy, so we decided to stick to the already groomed routes. The snow was nice and fairly fast, so we went on down toward Lake Keechelus from Windy Pass, a long, slow, free ride, with lots of opportunity to enjoy the scenery!

This road can be very slow and even tedious when the snow is slow, especially down by the lake where it's flat for a mile or two. As we came out at

### AVALANCHE HAZARD TERMS

**Low**—most human-caused or naturally occurring avalanches are not likely and travel is generally safe.

**Moderate**—natural avalanches are unlikely, and human-caused avalanches are possible; caution is advised.

**Moderate to high**—naturally occurring avalanches are possible and human-caused avalanches are probable.

**High**—natural and human-caused avalanches are likely to occur.

**Extreme**—widespread avalanches are certain, both natural and human-caused.

Hyak, we spotted the shuttle pulling away and realized we could probably ski back faster than we could get back waiting for the next shuttle.

We headed up a road toward some houses, passing by the lifts, and wondered if we could ride those lifts up and somehow get back to the cross-country center at Ski Acres. Scott asked the lift operators, and they were very helpful; said yes!

So we hopped on and got a second free ride uphill. At the top we got off and headed right—not down under the lift—on an intermediate (blue square) downhill run. Very quickly we saw a cross-country sign off to the left, pointing our way.

We wound up back on the "Serpentine" route that takes you, very quickly, back to the cross-country center.

Serpentine is a fun, fast twisting route for confident intermediate skiers, but I think it would be intimidating to some people. Beginners shouldn't try it. But that second ridge up more than made up for the slog along the lake, and made the famous "Loop" much more fun!

PS: I used the old names—Hyak and Ski Acres—because I forget what they are called now!—Peg Ferm, Monroe, 1/30.



### MOWICH LAKE ROAD

(USGS Golden Lks)—We met Jenni and Chuck and their kids Sarah and Cole and Chuck's sister Kathy in

Enumclaw for a New Years Day ski excursion. We originally intended to ski the Buck Creek route but there wasn't enough snow. Instead we headed off to the Mowich Lake Road.

We were a little concerned when we didn't see any snow until several miles before the road is blocked at the Paul Peak trailhead.

We walked up the road a bit and strapped on our skis where the road was blocked. Bill had strapped on his snow shoes at the car. Cole (age 7) was in the lead the entire way up. He did a really great job! Sarah chose to hang back with the older and not as fast adult crowd.

We skied for several miles before stopping for a snack/lunch break. Back down we came. Cole fell too many times to count on our way down. He was awarded the RMA (right mental attitude) Award for his patience and always keeping smile on his face in spite of the falling!

P.S. I returned to Mowich Lake with Coby and his mom Janice on the 16th. There was lots of new snow and better skiing conditions. Encountered Park Rangers both trips.—Jane Habegger, Olympia, 1/1.



### MOUNT TAHOMA TRAILS, COPPER CREEK HUT

(USGS Mt Wow)—I skied and Bill snowshoed to the Copper Creek Hut from Road 92. There was a lot of new light snow—great conditions! We

*Call before you go!*



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# BACKCOUNTRY NEWS

REPORTS AND CONDITIONS

picked up a Sno-park permit at the convenience store in Ashford.

We looked for the Mount Tahoma Trails office in Lou Whitaker's Bunkhouse but we learned it had moved up the road several miles (toward Rainier) to the Rainier Overland complex on the left hand side of the highway. The office is in a small cabin up the road and to the left from the parking lot.

We learned that the Road 59 Sno-park (on the Copper Creek Road immediately before the Copper Creek Restaurant) is closed this year. This means that there is no snow plowing done on the road though you could still ski on it.

Coby and I returned and skied up to the hut on January 2 from Road 92 again. We encountered very icy conditions after a week of warm weather and rain in the mountains. When we reached the hut it was warm enough to sit outside on the deck and eat our lunch—a nice treat for the 2nd of January!

Going down the snow left a lot to be desired. Even though both of us had metal edges on our skis, our legs were really tired at the end of the day after having to grip tightly to hold a snow plow in steep places on our way down. —Jane Habegger, Olympia 12/25 and 1/2.



## WEST SIDE ROAD (USGS Sawtooth Ridge, Mt Wow)

Rather than watch 1.6-million-dollar commercials on Super Bowl Sunday, elected to watch 3.2 million snowflakes fall on Mount Wow.

Arrive at winter road block on West Side road about 10am. Very thin layer of snow here; depth increases rapidly as we proceed up the road.

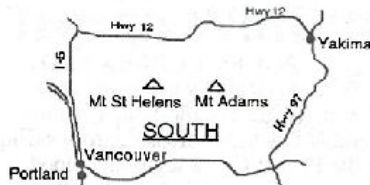
Sticky snow. My little sliver of glide wax ultimately serves all 7 in the party. Lunch in trees just below the summer road closure. Snow depth here about 18 inches. Flurries on and off all day.

Check slopes above road. Avalanche danger here can be extreme. All seems stable; appears that the slopes have been cleared of major accumulations. Proceed to Fish Creek.

Attempt to ski beyond but that portion of Tahoma Creek that has made the West Side road its bed has cut several braided channels and crossing them becomes a hassle so turn back.

The road grade is gentle but adequate to sustain long glides with little or no poling. Back at the vehicles at 3pm. A leisurely trip, frequent stops to wax and to admire the snow-laden trees. —Paul G. Schauffer, Olympia, 1/31.

## SOUTH



**GIFFORD PINCHOT NATL FOREST—360-891-5000.** Heavy snows at higher elevations have added a lot to the snow depth. Backcountry skiing is tough now because of the need to break trail. Conditions are excellent for snowshoeing.

**Marble Mountain Sno-Park** has 4½ feet of snow, with more expected. Recent snow has covered places that have been bare since the Christmas floods. If you are the first one out after fresh snowfall you will get a workout break-

ing trail, but you will be a hero to all those who follow.

**Atkisson Sno-Park** has about 3 feet of snow. There are no groomed ski trails from this Sno-Park, but there is a well-marked trail through the forest to Peterson Prairie Guard Station. Conditions for skiing are slow once you get off the snowmobile tracks.

**Smith Butte Sno-Park** has 5 feet of snow. No groomed trails here. Snow is deep, soft and wet and trailbreaking is difficult. Plan on waxing up or you will be lifting pounds of snow with each step.

New gravel on road 82 should make getting to Smith Butte a bit easier this year. Chains highly recommended and a shovel is a must. This is a narrow road; watch for oncoming traffic.

**Wind River Winter Sports Sno-Park** has about 4 feet of snow. Ski conditions are good on groomed trails. —Ranger, 2/2.



Jane Habegger

Bill Lynch heads down from Copper Creek hut to Road 92 Sno-Park. Mount Tahoma Trails system.



# BACKCOUNTRY NEWS

REPORTS AND CONDITIONS

## OREGON



### GHOST RIDGE (Mount Hood National Forest)

Heather, friend Jennifer, and I spent a wonderful afternoon snowshoeing this very accessible ridge just to the east of Mount Hood. The portal to Ghost Ridge is on the Pacific Crest Trail from the Barlow Pass Sno-Park. This is a very popular cross-country ski area so prepare to share the trail. However, there is plenty of room in the trail corridor—so we snowshoers can stay out of those ski tracks!

About a mile up the PCT where the trail veers away from the ridge line is the spot to leave the trail and continue following the height of the land. You will eventually come to the open high points of Ghost Ridge.

This is an easy off-trail trek with no avalanche concerns. The view is spectacular—especially of nearby Mount Hood. On this particular day the winds were strong so we kept our summit stay to a minimum. We ventured back to the

PCT via the steeper north side to close our loop of 5 miles.—Craig Romano, Seattle, 1/9.



### POCKET CREEK SNO-PARK (Mount Hood Natl Forest)

Heather and I spent an incredible day today cross-country skiing in the Pocket Creek area near Hood River. A couple of feet of new snow made the conditions optimal—the sun even came out today. Only a few people were out. For many of us it meant breaking tracks, and the snow was deep.

We followed the Pocket Creek trail up to a nice high point with views out to Mount Hood. We then skied the ridge toward Highway 35 on the East Fork Hood River trail for a little way.

We then retraced our tracks to the junction and skied out on the very scenic Meadow Creek trail. The whole loop was only about 8 miles but we took our time just enjoying this most wonderful day in this most gray and wet winter.—Craig Romano, Seattle, 1/23.



### BANKS VERNONIA LIN- EAR STATE PARK (Wash-

ington County)—Heather and I spent a wet and gray day exploring this wonderful Rail Trail State Park. We started at milepost 15.5 just outside of the hamlet of Buxton.

We hiked north on the trail for 7.25 miles to just beyond the Horseshoe Trestle. The first 1.5 miles of the section that we hiked are perhaps the most scenic. The trail is paved and crosses some beautiful countryside of farm and forest. It also passes a beautiful wooden trestle that is in excellent condition. This is a nice spot for picnicking or resting.

The next section which is dirt passes some small ravines, some small clearcuts and lots of historic relics from this railroad era. In our 14.5 mile hike we encountered only 4 other people, yet this trail is only 30 miles west of Portland. Talk about a best-kept secret! It's worth checking out.—Craig Romano, Seattle, 1/30.

## BULLETIN BOARD

Notices on this Bulletin Board are free to subscribers and may be "posted" for up to three months. You may list your used equipment for sale, post lost-and-found announcements, locate partners for trips, or other non-commercial items. Commercial advertisers are welcome to contact the Pack & Paddle office for ad rates.

**WANTED**—Does anyone have some of the old style self-arresting ski poles that have the two-prong piece that fits into the top of the handles? They were new in around 1993, but aren't made any more. I believe Black Diamond use to make them. Or if anyone has a good idea about what would be a good self-arresting pole please let me know.

David MacFarlane, 360-659-7252, or 13800 Getchell Rd NE, Lake Stevens WA 98258.

**FOUND**—pair of gloves on old TMT. Call to identify 425-881-5443 (Bellevue).

**FREE**—I have a virtually complete set of Signposts dating back to 1975. If anyone is interested they may have them if they wish to pick them up at my house, 309 N Poplar in Ellensburg, or pay transportation. Call 509-925-1265 to make arrangements.

**SEPTEMBER BURRO TREK**—Just after Labor Day a small group will take off

for Whistler Basin and 10 days of hiking in the Pasayten. Inquiries welcome. Remember, no packs! Contact Mary Watson, mwatson@harbornet.com

**FOR SALE**—Sea kayak: Mariner Max, very good condition. Includes carbon/graphite paddle, spare paddle, spray skirt, all dry/float bags, safety gear, VHF, etc etc. \$2000 OBO. Mark, 360-794-9475 (Snohomish)

**FOR SALE**—Rustic, riverfront cabin, 16 miles east of Granite Falls on the Mountain Loop Highway. Wired for generator or battery, summer/winter activity area. \$72,500. Call John Bingham, 360-658-8778.

**FOR SALE**—New pair of Columbia hiking boots size 9 men, or could fit a size 10 women. Worn once. Value \$100. Make an offer. Call 360-373-8676 (Bremerton).

**FOR SALE**—Elan downhill skis, 195cm, Geze bindings, like new \$225. Lange downhill skis, 190cm, Tyrolia 480 bindings, \$45. Fisher cross-country skis, 200cm, waxless, full metal edge, good condition, \$45.

Alpine cross-country ski boots, men's

size 44. Vibram soles, \$25.

Nordic track 530Pro, XR 210 pulse-meter, good condition, \$325.

Phone 425-746-3877 (Bellevue).

**FOR SALE**—A limited number of copies are available as of November 9 for the guidebook One Day Winter Climbs: Canadian Border to Snoqualmie Pass (Western Cascades).

The price is \$13 which includes mailing. Dallas Kioke, 4012 M Ave, Anacortes WA 98221. 360-293-2904.

**OSAT**—A clean and sober climbing and mountaineering club. 253-236-9674.

**INTERESTED IN HIGH LAKE FISHING?** Washington State Hi-Lakers club meets third Wednesday of each month at Mercerview Community Center, 7:30pm. For information, call George Bucher, 425-821-5752 (Kirkland).

**WASHINGTON SKI TOURING CLUB**—Meets first Thursdays at 7pm at the Seattle REI. Club info line: 206-525-4451, or www.wstc.org



PAUL G. SCHAUFLE

## A Trip to Winthrop

—FIRST-CLASS SKIING—

After checking conditions with the Methow Valley Sport Trails Association (800-682-5787), Carol and I decide the prospects are good for skiable snow so we drive to Winthrop and lodgings at the Winthrop Inn on January 19. Carol is a long-time skiing companion who displays remarkable skill at steep downhill snowplows.

At 8:30 the next morning we leave the parking lot at Chickadee (formerly Snoasis) and head up Thompson Ridge road. Ours is the only car in the parking lot.

The trail has been freshly groomed. We take the cutover to Meadowlark trail—it's a winter wonderland. We make frequent stops for pictures despite an overcast sky. At 11:30 we meet one skier doing the loop in the opposite direction. Ten minutes later we stop for lunch at the junction of Meadowlark and Thompson Ridge road.

We meet three classics and two freestylers (formerly called skaters) between lunch and the top of Inside Passage. There's about three inches of new snow and it's not groomed so we elect to take that route.

If it's hard snow and groomed it's beyond my ability. Even with fresh snow and ungroomed, a couple of the upper pitches ought to be belayed or rappelled.

We leave the top of Inside Passage at 12:20, reach bottom at 12:45. I should note that all times here are for an aging skier on his first ski since February of 1998.

Then we drop down on lower Inside Passage to the intersection at 1:20 with the Thompson Ridge road. That included a short side trip to check out the Maggie snowshoe trail.

From there we ski on Little Wolf trail to the Hough Ranch, arriving at 1:55 (two people there) and return to Chickadee at 2:25 by way of Yellow-jacket. Quit for the day.

Grooming was first rate and being the first on the trail was a delight, as

was the scenery. All the trees and even dead bushes were frosted with white, as if someone had gone ape with a can of Redy-Whip. Only nicer.

On Thursday at 8:45am we parked near Goat Creek Road Sno-Park. Fortunately we did not park at the official park or we would have been ticketed.

We chugged up to the 3500-foot level and lunched at Fawn Hut, 11:15. Three inches of new snow on weekend grooming. Looked down at the valley. It was completely fogged in, with blue sky above us. Left at 12:05 and arrived back at the Goat Creek Road at 1pm.

We snowplowed often to avoid reaching terminal velocity. A good skier could probably do it in half an hour. Glide waxed at the road—had picked up some snow claws on the flats.

At 1:30 we crossed the road and took the Community Trail to Mazama. Met two freestylers on the way, the first encounter with other skiers for the day. Had intended to take a cross-over trail back to the trails on the north side of Goat Creek Road but that mapped trail no longer exists: a reminder that one should always check on trail status.

We arrive at Mazama at 2:25 where a gentleman land use planner named John Hayes graciously provided us with a ride back to our car.

The next day, Friday the 22nd, we park at road end at 8:30. A skiff of new snow had fallen overnight and freshly coated everything.

Up ungroomed Doe Canyon Spur we go, with foggy Sandy Butte barely visible across the way. We reach the loop at the end of the spur about 9:45 after frequent photo stops.

Very icy under the trees. Some sun the previous day had melted the snow off the upper branches; it fell onto the trail and froze overnight. Made for a fast and not entirely controlled descent.

At 10:40, we hit the newly groomed

Jacks Trail. Lunch at 11:35 on bench on the west end of that trail. The fog persists: Goat Wall is only partly and intermittently visible. Two freestylers pass and two classics stop to chat. That's four people, twice as many as yesterday—the place is getting crowded.

Back down the valley to Jacks Hut at 2pm. Ms. Davidson at the hut is a most gracious hostess. We goof off there until a group of freestylers takes over the place.

Available at Jacks Hut are some of the neatest notecards you have ever seen, created by grade schoolers to raise money for the school.

We leave there and cruise down the valley to the tunnel (culvert) under Highway 20, then turn around and ski back to the parking lot at 3:40. Stop for many pictures of the snow bridges across Early Winters Creek.

Sadly, Sam's Place and its great baked potato is temporarily and possibly permanently closed. As an alternate, try the 12x17 pizza with roasted garlic at Three Fingered Jack's.

An inch or so of new snow overnight refurbished the coating on trees and fences from Winthrop to Wenatchee and across Blewett (Swauk) Pass on the drive home Saturday. Compact snow and ice on most of Highway 153 and across Blewett to about Liberty. Bare and wet the rest of the day. A little new snow on trees near the summit of Snoqualmie but otherwise pretty dismal from there to Olympia.

△

*Paul G. Schaufler, of Olympia, is a frequent contributor to P&P. His interest in photographing mountain scenes, particularly of Mount Rainier, allows him no time to rest in retirement.*



CHUCK GUSTAFSON

## The Wonderful Wonderland Trail

... A WONDER THAT WE FINISHED!

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I have summited Mount Rainier twice, in four attempts. My last successful climb was a loop up the Winthrop Glacier, across the crater and down the Emmons Glacier. It was a great climb with excellent weather and snow, and a strong party. It would be hard to ever top that experience, and I lost my summit-itis.

In its stead I developed Wonder-itis. Here are highlights and true tales from our Wonderland trips. (NOTE: Mileages, elevations and times include rest stops, exploring and scrambles.)

### PHASE 1: 1995

On September 20, after months of training and planning, we started the circumnavigation of Mount Rainier on the Wonderland Trail.

Our group of Mountaineers included Dick Barden, Joyce Hoikka, Kevin O'Donnell, John Pennington and Diane Penttila. The goal was to start at Mowich Lake and hike the 92 miles and 23,000 feet of elevation clockwise in twelve days.



At the beginning ... left to right: Dick, Diane, Chuck, Joyce, Kevin

**Mowich Lake to Cataract Camp** (7.5 miles, 5.5 hours, +2120 feet and -2100 feet).

Starting up the trail to Spray Park, Diane groaned under the weight of her pack. She was carrying 6 stuffed peppers, 2 or 3 quarts of cooked rice, at least 5 pounds of Dilettante chocolate, pounds of Oberto jerky and sausages, 8 Cokes and lots more.

Cataract Camp, 4700 feet, was idyllic. Pulling up my 18 pound food sack, I broke the last branch on the tree. Then I tried Dick's tree and pulled down his food bag. I'm now very popular. We vow to hang our food before dark.

**Cataract Camp to Mystic Lake Camp** (9.9 miles, 7.5 hours, +3000 feet and -2000 feet).

We awoke to discover that the chipmunks had nibbled John's pack and Dick's food. Dick claimed they had eaten holes in his 30-year-old pack, but we couldn't tell the new holes from the old ones.

The Moraine Park Trail was hot and dusty, but compensated by close-up views of the Carbon Glacier. Arriving

at Mystic Lake Camp, we had a secluded site in thick woods.

**Mystic Lake Camp to Sunrise Camp** (11.2 miles, 7.75 hours, +2900 feet and -2300 feet).

Crossing the West Fork White River, the Trail went through the high water stream bed. This could be wet and dangerous in high water.

Crossing the terminus of the Winthrop Glacier was spectacular and we could see evidence of a recent large rockfall from Curtis Ridge.

Dropping our big packs at Skyscraper Pass, 6720 feet, we scrambled Skyscraper Mountain. From the summit we had views of Berkeley Park, Grand Park, Fremont Lookout, Burroughs Mountain, Mystic Lake, and even Echo, Observation and Mineral. Sunrise Camp was disappointing—dirty and overused.

**Sunrise to Summerland** (12.2 miles, 7.5 hours, +2400 feet and -2750 feet).

A volunteer seasonal ranger stationed at Panhandle Gap stopped by our Summerland camp. Except for a maintenance crew, he was the only ranger we ever saw on the Trail.

**Scramble of Banshee** (5 miles, 5 hours, +1800 feet and -1800 feet).

Dick, Joyce, Diane and I left camp for Banshee. At Panhandle Gap we spotted two mountain goats. We were very excited, especially when they stood on their hind legs and put on backpacks.

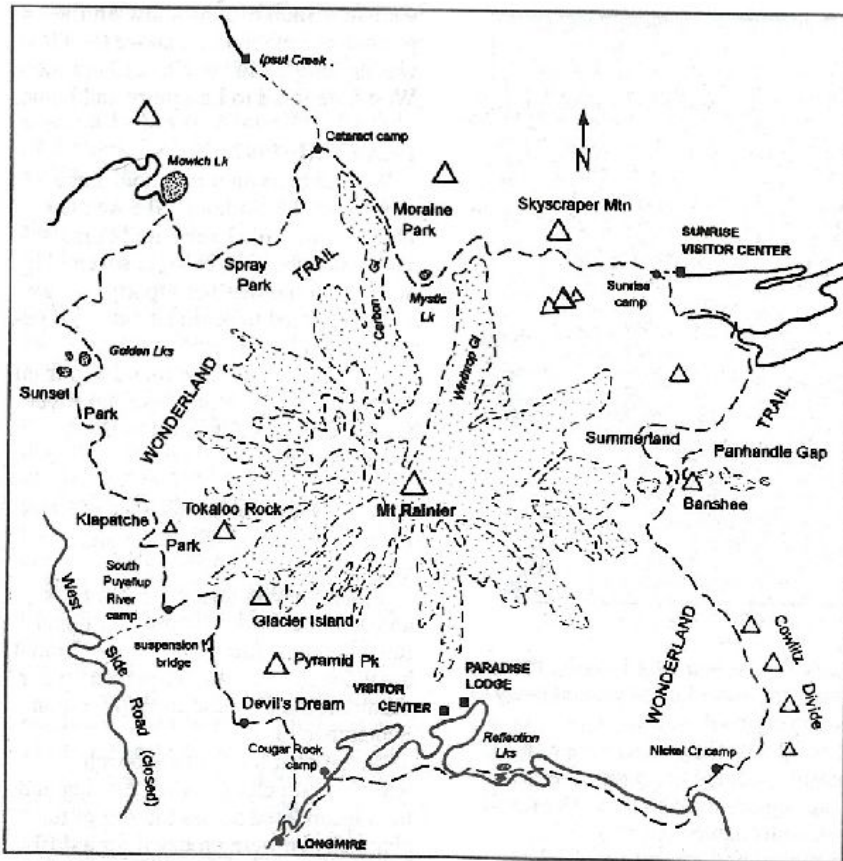
A herd of 30-plus goats grazed in the meadows below us as we scrambled up. These goats did not have packs. Reaching the summit, we had views of Rainier, Adams, Saint Helens, Hood, Stuart, Baker and Glacier.

**Summerland to Nickel Creek Camp** (11.3 miles, 8 hours, +2360 and -4335 feet).

On steep snow just north of Panhandle Gap we used Diane's 70 feet of webbing to rig a hand line. We reached the Gap in drizzle and fog. Later, tak-

Chuck Gustafson





ing a rest stop, a b-i-i-g furry marmot watched us. The thickness of his coat should have forewarned us of the weather to come. Cowlitz Ridge was eerie in the mist and fog. On a clear day this would be a spectacular place. The rain increased and a cold southwest wind forced us to put on rain gear.

At Nickel Creek Camp, burbling Nickel Creek soon put us to sleep. This was Diane's last night as she was heading off to Yosemite.

#### Nickel Creek Camp to Cougar Campground (12.1 miles, 8.5 hours, +2400 feet and -2600 feet).

Arriving at Reflection Lakes in a heavy cold rain, our depressed spirits rose when we noticed "Are we having fun yet?" scratched in the trail. We continued past our planned camp at Paradise River to Cougar Campground.

#### Cougar Campground to Longmire (1.3 miles, 1 hour and -300 feet).

It poured all night—now I wish I had a vestibule. We picked up our caches at Longmire. Yesterday's weather report was for a series of storms with the freezing level dropping to 4500 feet.

This called for a breakfast meeting

at the Longmire Inn. John had a second breakfast of hotcakes, eggs and ham. Maybe if we cut back his breakfast, we could keep up with him. Checking back at the Hiking Center, the new weather report was worse. We unanimously voted to try again the next year.

#### PHASE II: 1996

The plan this year was to leave Longmire on September 20 and do a six-day one-way trip to Mowich Lake, returning via van shuttle.

The weather was marginal and our party had shrunk to Dick, John, Diane and me.

#### Longmire to Devil's Dream (5.9 miles, 5 hours, +2900 feet and -200 feet).

The hike to Devil's Dream was in and out of mist and clouds. Then a light rain began, forcing us to put on rain gear. We arrived at Devil's Dream Camp, 5000 feet, cold and damp.

#### Scramble of Pyramid Peak (7 miles, 6 hours, +2400 feet and -2400 feet).

We awoke to 35 degrees. Everything was green and gray in a soft filtered light. We hiked to Indian Henry's Hunting Ground and checked out the patrol cabin. Lots of fresh bear scat on the trail and some coyote scat, with a few last blueberries and huckleberries lingering.

The wind was cold and damp as we worked our way up Pyramid Peak. The summit at 6931 feet was soaked in and freezing. We quickly headed down and had lunch in the boulders at 6100 feet. It seemed warmer, but then a light snow started falling.

We debated scrambling Cooper and Iron, but decided it was too late and wet and the weather too uncertain. As we passed the patrol cabin it started snowing again. It was snowing hard on



Diane, Dick and Joyce on the summit of Banshee.





Joyce gets to use her umbrella at Panhandle Gap.

#### Cooper and Iron.

It snowed on and off as we cooked, filtered water and tried to raise our spirits. By 1900 it was snowing hard and we had to get into our tents to warm up.

#### Devil's Dream Camp to South Puyallup River Camp (6.6 miles, 5 hours, +2000 feet and -2700 feet).

The next morning we voted to continue, buoyed by our first sun. Cooper and Iron were frosted with snow and ice and the bridges and trail were icy as we climbed to the high point of Indian Henry's. We met another Wonderland hiker bailing out. He reported 5 inches of new snow at Klapatche Park.

We arrived at the suspension bridge over Tahoma Creek, 4200 feet, at noon. The bridge and the gorge were impressive. The trail up Emerald Ridge was warm with filtered sun. We had views of Glacier Island, Tokaloo Rock and Tahoma Glacier. Several marmots sat mere feet from the trail, fat and unafraid. I had never been that close to a marmot. A bald eagle circled over Glacier Island.

We reached the top of the moraine at 1315, 5600 feet. Heavy clouds from both sides of the ridge were boiling up toward us. As we ate lunch, I noticed Dick putting on his rain gear. Then Diane and John put on theirs. It was snowing lightly.

We headed down the moraine trail, narrow with drop-offs. Oddly, the cloud below us looked like a snow storm. At 1400 we walked into wet, blowing snow. Klapatche Park was no longer in

the plan. It was snowing heavily, the temperature was 33 degrees, and everyone was very cold.

At South Puyallup River Camp, I stubbornly decided to set up camp before putting on more clothes. The result was uncontrollable shivering. With more clothes and several hot drinks I finally started to rewarm. This was my closest brush with hypothermia. I slept fitfully, but was warm as toast.

#### South Puyallup River Camp to Longmire (11.2 miles, 5.25 hours, +400 feet and -2400 feet).

It snowed all night. In the morning



Dick views the route to Tokaloo Rock.

we had 1 inch of new snow on the ground and much more above us. This was no longer fun. We headed out the West Side Road to Longmire and home.

#### PHASE III: 1997

We had been on a rain hold since September 11. Although the weather had been unsettled since mid-August and September had brought several big storms, all the weather reports said we were supposed to begin an extended period of good weather.

Our plan was to hike round-trip from Mowich Lake to South Puyallup River Camp. Our group is down to Dick, John and me.

#### Mowich Lake to Golden Lakes (10 miles, 6.75 hours, -2400 feet and +2520 feet).

Yesterday was miserable and Dick and John doubt my judgment. I doubt my judgment. After our now traditional breakfast at Charlies, we picked up our permit at the Caboose in Wilkeson on September 19.

We crossed the South Mowich River's main channel on a foot log and then meandered across the rest of the channel. We were prepared for a difficult ford with wading shoes, but there was little water.

Crossing over Colonnade Ridge, we walked into huckleberry/blueberry heaven. They were everywhere, at the ideal picking height and perfectly ripe. It was hard to hike more than a few seconds without stopping for a handful.

At Golden Lakes, 4915 feet, we took

Chuck Gustafson

Chuck Gustafson



a site on the edge of a cliff with views of Puget Sound and the Olympics. The sunset was gorgeous as the clouds cleared.

**Golden Lakes to Klapatche Park**  
(9.2 miles, 7.25 hours, -1930 feet and +2500 feet).

As we packed up, John's stuffed sleeping bag rolled off the cliff. Luckily, he didn't run after it.

Getting down to the base of the cliff was a difficult scramble in rugged terrain. The talus below the cliff was steep and slick with lichens and wet moss. The final obstacles at the cliff's base included thorn bushes. We found a sandal, water bottle, pack cover and food can lid, but no sleeping bag. It was probably lodged part way down in a cleft or behind a bush. A search of the cliff would require a rappel.

We arrived back in camp at noon tired, but determined to continue. On the positive side, our party now had 3 pounds less gear.

We were exhausted when we finally reached Klapatche Park, 5500 feet at 1710. After dinner, we sat beside Aurora Lake and watched Mount Rainier and the satellites and shooting stars.

**Klapatche Park to S. Puyallup River, Aurora Peak** (8.2 miles, 7 hours, +2950 feet+ and -2950 feet).

Today we finally completed the loop, our last section of the Wonderland Trail. We visited our campsite from the "blizzard of '96" and celebrated with chocolate-covered coffee beans.

On the return, Dick and I scrambled Aurora Peak. This little peak, at 6094 feet, has views of St. Andrew's Rock, Tahoma and Puyallup Glaciers, the Puyallup Cleaver and the route up Tokaloo Rock.

**Scramble of Tokaloo Rock** (6 miles, 7.5 hours, +2800 feet and -2800 feet).

We stopped just below the summit, about 7650 feet. The summit itself was a short, exposed Class 3 pitch on very nasty rock.



Chuck Gustafson

Dick, Chuck and John celebrate their completion of the Wonderland Trail.

We could see Pyramid, Iron, Copper, Indian Henry's (even the Ranger's cabin), and our route up Emerald Ridge from the previous year. We had views of Saint Helens, Adams, Hood and the whole west side of Mount Rainier, including the Sunset Amphitheater.

**Klapatche Park to Golden Lakes, Sunset Park** (9.7 miles, 7.25 hours, +2180 feet and -2750 feet).

We left the Wonderland and took an abandoned trail to the old fire lookout site in Sunset Park. The blueberry bushes were a radiant combination of rust and scarlet and the berries were still at their peak.

The views were extraordinary from the old lookout site. To the east was a ridge which could be explored to about 7900 feet, with no technical difficulties. We could see our campsite at Golden Lakes, the North Mowich River, Mowich Lake, Spray Falls and Spray Park, our route at the start of our Wonderland adventure.

We selected campsite 4 again and hauled a log to the cliff edge to help

keep us, and our gear, from rolling out of camp.

**Golden Lakes to Mowich Lake** (10 miles, 6.75 hours, +2400 feet and -2520 feet).

Heading up to Mowich Lake my thermometer read 84 degrees. That must be close to a record. Dick lost a cotter pin from his pack and I finally got to use my BIG repair kit. When we caught up to John, he was immersed in Crater Creek. To the south we could see the clouds of the next front.

**MAPS AND GUIDES**

- *50 Hikes in Mt. Rainier Nat. Park*, #50, The Wonderland Trail
- *Discovering the Wonders of the Wonderland Trail* by Bette Filley
- Mount Rainier National Park, USGS 1:50,000
- Chinook Pass, USGS 7.5
- Golden Lakes, USGS 7.5
- Mount Wow, USGS 7.5
- Mowich Lake, USGS 7.5
- Mt. Rainier East, USGS 7.5
- Mt. Rainier West, USGS 7.5
- Sunrise, USGS 7.5
- White River, USGS 7.5

△

*Chuck Gustafson, of Seattle, is an avid hiker, climber, skier, cyclist and sailor. He has a new goal: to bicycle around Mount Rainier.*

**SUMMARY OF WONDERLAND TRAIL EPIC, 1995—1997**  
Includes scrambles, exploring and rest stops.

DAYS	MILES	HOURS	+ELEV	-ELEV
18	153.8	115.16	+40,030'	-41,235'
Per Day:	8.54	6.4	+ 2,224'	
Per Hour:		1.34 mph		



LEE MCKEE

## A Ride through The Narrows

—TITLOW BEACH TO POINT DEFIANCE—

The plan our trip leader, David, had for this paddle was to launch at Titlow Beach Park (see *South Puget Sound Afoot & Afloat*) on the southeast entrance to The Narrows, ride the ebb through The Narrows and around Point Defiance to lunch at Owen Beach, one of the shoreline access spots in Tacoma's Point Defiance Park. After lunch we would catch the flood and return to Titlow Beach.

A good float plan takes into account contingencies and bail-out points, and for this trip which involved the potential for strong winds and opposing current, David's plan was to leave one car at Owen Beach should conditions be such that we would not want to make the return trip.

After setting up car arrangements and unloading boats, five of us in single sea kayaks set out from Titlow Beach shortly after 10am on the last day of January. There was some wind blowing from the south and the current midstream was just past the max ebb of 3 knots. The combination of wind at our backs and current moved us right along.

Passing under The Narrows Bridge, David paddled close to the nearest

bridge pylon to check out the eddy that forms on the downstream side. Depending on current flow there can be significant eddy lines and upwellings. Today, with the current somewhere around 2.5 kts there were only moderate eddy lines and no upwellings.

A little over 1/2-mile north of the bridge, power lines span the width of The Narrows. Here David had us turn our kayaks into the current and wind so we could get some practice with ferry angles.

The goal was to establish the correct angle to the opposing current and wind so we could make a direct crossing from one side of The Narrows to the other. The overhead power line gave us an ideal reference so that we could tell if we had too much or too little angle.

The just-right angle was the one where we were remaining under the power line—neither going upstream nor downstream—but instead going essentially sideways toward the opposite shoreline.

After going about half-way across, we turned around to continue our trip. We sent an angle to take us toward the community of Salmon Beach which is a string of houses on the east shore of

The Narrows. The houses are built on pilings and the only land access to them is by steep (private) trails.

Wind waves on our stern kept us alert to the possibility of broaching and helped speed us along. In short order we were past the community and approaching Point Defiance.

Depending on current strength there can be a significant eddy off the point. Today, though, we were fast approaching slack and there was no eddy.

Past the point, the cliffs of Point Defiance Park blocked the wind and the water turned perfectly calm. Here David and Vicki took time to practice towing before we headed to Owen Beach and lunch.

After some discussion we decided to use the contingency plan and make this a one-way trip instead of paddling back. Although the waters were calm here, we knew that wind was being funneled through The Narrows, blowing opposite to the now flooding current. That condition could make it a rough return trip which several of us preferred not to do.

On my return to Port Orchard from this paddle I had to drive across The Narrows Bridge. The view from the bridge gave me a good opportunity to see what the conditions would have been like had we decided to paddle back. As we had thought, lots of breaking waves covered most of the width of The Narrows—it would have been a rough and wet return paddle!

△

*Lee McKee, of Port Orchard, is a member of The Mountaineers Sea Kayak Committee.*



Lee McKee

Approaching the tiny community of Salmon Beach, built on pilings.



JOAN BURTON

## Edgar Rock

—SPRING HIKE FOR CHILDREN—

Here is a trail description from the new edition of *Best Hikes with Children in Western Washington and the Cascades, Volume 2*, by Joan Burton (The Mountaineers). Edgar Rock has not appeared in a guidebook before, and is an excellent place for a family hike after the snow melts.



**Type:** Dayhike  
**Difficulty:** Moderate  
**Hikable:** March-November  
**One Way:** 2 miles  
**Elevation gain:** 1300 feet  
**High Point:** 3400 feet  
**Map:** Green Trails Old Scab 272

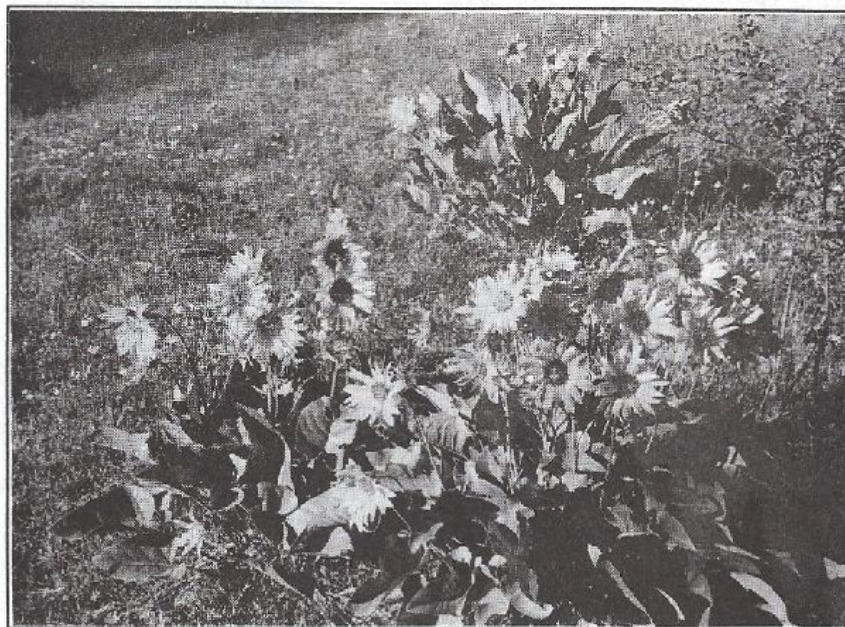
Hike past a balancing rock to the edge of a cliff with a dramatic view some 1300 feet above the Naches River and over a cluster of farms and summer homes.

The trail is fairly steep, climbing 700 feet a mile. It is best to get an early start on this trail in the heat of summer. Have the kids look for rock formations on the horizon with such names as the Haystack and Sugarbowl Rock and down on the community of Cliffdell.

In spring families can expect to find wild roses, balsam root, lupine, mushrooms, and Indian paintbrush along the trail, bluebird boxes, trees drilled by various woodpeckers, and the sounds of the drumming of the ruffed grouse.

Edgar Rock was named after pioneer John Edgar who reportedly guided wagon trains across the Cascades by way of Naches Pass. The rock has served as a prominent landmark over the years.

Drive State Highway 410 east from Chinook Pass or west from the town of Naches to between Milepost 98 and 99 and turn on Old River Road. (There are three accesses to the Old River Road. The one closest to Naches is the correct one.) Follow the Old River Road crossing the Naches River. Drive to the end of the pavement at 1.1 miles. Turn left



Expect to find spring flowers on this path.

on the narrow Forest Road 704-311, signed "Lost Creek Village." In .8-mile at the Lost Creek crossing, find the Lost Creek Trail 964 on the right, elevation 2350 feet. There is limited parking.

Begin upward on a trail cleared in 1997 by Boy Scout Troop 268 of Yakima. The open forest, partially logged 40 to 50 years ago, has some old pink-barked ponderosa pines and firs saved to provide habitat for birds, and shade. Switchbacks bring widening views. Look down to the gleaming Naches River and up to towering pinnacles of basalt.

As you ascend, children can begin to see rock pinnacles on the skyline to the left. You can explain that the rock they see is all basalt formed underground, but that the rock bubble shapes they see are the way the lava-like rock hardened as it cooled above ground.

In an opening along the trail, a huge balancing rock sits at a crazy angle on top of a small one. Next to it is a Douglas-fir tree that will make children

wonder if the tree is holding the rock or the rock holding up the tree. This is a good place to rest and have everyone give their theories on how the rock got there.

Near the top of the ridge at about 1½ miles are meadows, and according to the footprints, a good place to see elk and deer.

At 1¾ miles is a junction. Find a sign indicating a continuation of the trail to the Nile River and a branch leading to Edgar Rock in ¼ mile more. Take the right branch trail. At the rocky summit, 3600 feet, find larch trees and anchored metal bolts, remnants of an old lookout cabin in operation from 1934 to 1951. Look southwest to Timberwolf and west to the snowy ridges of Old Scab.



*Joan Burton, of Edmonds, is retired from the UW. She has hiked and climbed throughout Washington, both as a child and as a parent with her own three children.*



DAVID LAWS

## A Night on Mount Defiance

—FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 24 HOURS I BELIEVED I WAS GOING TO LIVE—

Heaven goes by favour. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in.

—Mark Twain

Lucky was with me and that's why I'm here. Lucky and I take a hike every Saturday. He is a foundling, a mutt, an overgrown cocker spaniel-ish sweetheart of a dog.

We go on hikes close to home. I don't like to drive when I could be hiking, and Lucky doesn't react well to riding a long distance. We'd rather be on the trail.

Within an hour of our Renton home is the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, a place of unparalleled beauty and deceptive danger. I found out what happens when a hiker pushes too far, has not quite enough equipment and food, doesn't prepare quite enough, is a little arrogant.

### IN THE HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING

Experience is a wonderful thing. It enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again.

—Anonymous

October 17, 1998. A few weeks earlier I had discovered an old trail, a gem fallen into disrepair. On the north side of I-90, it parallels the freeway (which parallels the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River) for about 4 miles from the westernmost parking area for the Alpine Lakes Wilderness to the summit of a clearcut ridge known as Dirty Harry's Peak.

Research into every hiking book and map I could find turned up no trace of the existence of this trail, which only made it more fascinating to me.

On my way to Dirty Harry's Peak I had noticed a trail sign, pointing north up-slope, reading "Ridge Trail." This side trail seemed pretty steep but looked well-established, almost as good as the trail to Dirty Harry's Peak. The idea went right into my head that this trail must connect over the ridge to the Mason Lake-Mount Defiance trail, a very nice, well-maintained trail used by hun-

dreds of hikers each week in summer.

Accordingly, seeking a challenging six-hour hike, I set out about 10am. I figured my distance at 6 to 8 miles, with 3000 feet elevation to be climbed. I had, two weeks earlier, covered 22 miles with 3200 feet elevation gain in 9 hours, so I didn't anticipate the Ridge Trail giving me too much difficulty.

I had a date with my wife Judith to meet for dinner at the 12th Avenue Cafe in Issaquah that night and I didn't want to be late. I estimated I could coast and still be back at the car by 4pm. So confident was I that, as a possible side trip, I figured I might have time to visit Granite Lakes, two small ponds north of Dirty Harry's Peak.

I had left the following note at home with Judith:

Mason & Granite Lakes

I-90 to Exit 45, under freeway to road 9030, to road 9031, to end. Hike west to signed split ("Ridge") & up ridge trail to intersect with Mason Lk trail. West to Granite Lakes, then return same route.

5-6-7

Love you!

The numbers "5-6-7" are the code we have worked out for my return time: I'll be home at 5, you are not allowed to worry until 6, and you must not call for help before 7.

Prudence (now confirmed by hindsight) should have prodded me to leave the same message at the trailhead on the pass required to hike in the Alpine Lakes Management Unit. By then I had also decided to make a loop: up the ridge trail, connect with the Mason Lake trail, and thus back to the car. However, a light rain was starting, and I had a schedule to keep. On the trail pass I wrote only "Mason Lake—0 nights," and dropped it in the box.

Lucky was not in a mood to dawdle, either. We practically ran down the old CCC trail to the Ridge Trail split, hitting it earlier than we anticipated. The main footpath begins to descend at this point, dropping to one of Harry's old logging roads, but the Ridge trail be-

gins switchbacking up the slope immediately.

Another hour found us slowing to watch for ribbons. The trail had degenerated into nothing discernible underfoot, detectable only by the pink plastic ribbon tied to branches by those who had gone before. Such markers probably look like neon lights to those with normal color vision, but to the color-blind they are as subtle as a cougar track in loose dirt.

I can with great difficulty see them but must generally rely on seeing the *shape* of the ribbon. This is just as difficult as it sounds, and extremely frustrating. I had slowed to a crawl.

Suddenly there were no more ribbons. The markers had led me out onto a long finger of forest projecting into a huge boulder field on a 45-degree slope.

I looked for cairns marking the trail's passage across the boulder field to the forest a quarter-mile beyond, but there were none. I backtracked, looking for the possibility of an errant ribbon, but the markers clearly led to the end of the finger of forest.

Finally, straining my eyes upward, I perceived a band of ribbon around a lone, stunted tree clinging to the boulder field, a hundred or more yards directly above me. Not without misgivings I began to climb to this point.

The apprehension came from several sources. It had begun to rain hard. I was wearing my good raincoat, good hiking boots, and shorts. I was a little chilly, but because I have an electrolyte imbalance, I must keep my temperature down, and thus only wear long pants in snow. I had a good stocking cap and wool gloves, and felt I was well prepared for the weather.

The climb was another matter. The slope was dangerously steep, with loose rocks balanced and waiting for a boot to dislodge them. Indeed, even before we had left the forest, Lucky had run one switchback ahead of me and dislodged a boulder, larger than a grapefruit, which passed me at a rate of per-



haps thirty miles per hour. I kept him close after that.

Climbing was difficult and dangerous, but what kept me going was the concept of how much more difficult descent would be. I knew I wouldn't have to descend at all if I could simply go over the ridge and connect with the Mason Lake trail. I worked my way up the slope to the ribbon.

### ASCENT

The trouble with the world is that the stupid are cocksure and the intelligent are full of doubt.

—Bertrand Russell

I was now about 4300 feet above sea level, 2000 feet above the parking lot, and perhaps a mile west and a mile north. No matter where I looked, I could not spot any vestige of the trail. There were no ribbons, cairns, or boot-treads. And I could barely distinguish where I had just come from.

Looking up, I could see the top of the ridge. It was several hundred yards above me. I decided to go for it. I felt that once at the top I could cross over and have only a short downhill segment to cover. This would have been a good decision except for two factors I had not considered.

The first factor was that I wasn't looking at the top of the ridge. I probably could have figured that out from the time: it was not yet noon. Given the difficulty I'd had keeping on the trail, I could not possibly have been near enough to the ridge crest to see it through the clouds. But I think the frustration of this trail played into my cockiness at my own hiking abilities, convincing me I was near the summit.

The second factor was the weather. It had turned winter-storm cold. October is not a month to ignore the cold, but I did. I pushed on, convinced I would hit the summit within minutes.

An hour later I was still thinking I could see the summit. I had climbed an increasingly steep slope, all the time thinking I should retreat, yet unwilling to do so due to the difficulty of descent. I rounded a promontory on its east side to block the wind, which had become savage. A moment later, when I topped it, I realized it was no longer raining—it was snowing. Little pieces of frozen glass bit into my left cheek as I struggled upward. At last I could see what really was the summit.

At about 12:45 I attained the 5300-foot west summit of Mount Defiance. I

was in a state of exhaustion and experiencing the effects of hypothermia. I could tell my body core temperature was too low—I couldn't stop shaking. The wind was gusting to perhaps 30 to 40 miles per hour. Snow was falling so thickly that visibility was maybe 50 feet maximum. Gaining the absolute summit was tricky because of the wind—it threatened to blow me off my feet at every moment. As I finally crawled to the top, my guts sank into my feet. I was looking over the summit down a 50- to 75-foot cliff. Descent at this point would be impossible. Suddenly I realized I might not make it off the mountain alive.

Because of the swirling snow I couldn't see east or west well enough to tell which way to go to find where the trail might connect to the ridge top. With the gusting wind, I knew it was folly to walk along the ridge looking for a means of descent. Staying put was out of the question: I was already too cold, and only going to get colder if I stayed put. There was only one option left which would preserve my life: go down, and as fast as possible. Just before 1pm, I began to descend a 50-degree slope covered by loose boulders and gravel, during a blizzard.

### FALLING INTO DARKNESS

Those who welcome death have only tried it from the ears up.

—Wilson Mizner

I did not have the luxury of taking my time in descent—it was imperative to get to the old CCC trail before dark. Even a short fall was potentially lethal, so I opted to sit and slide.

Over the next hour I tore the bottom out of my shorts, turning them into a thong. It wasn't long after that my underwear was shredded into rags. Then it was my poor bare bottom on the rocks and gravel. As painful as this was, it was my only means of descent, and I persisted. As I lost altitude the snow changed back to rain.

I had no idea which way I should go, other than down. This led me to follow the demand of gravity and descend the shortest possible route. By default I was drawn into a gully, often sitting in the



Lucky and David on one of their regular hikes.

stream formed by melting snow above me. Soon the sides of the gully became so steep I could not exit to either side, a condition which persisted to the end. I was locked into one direction: down.

Several times I came within a hairbreadth of disaster. Three times Lucky let me know I was going somewhere he would not or could not follow. Twice I managed to find alternate routes but the third time I had no option. I went over a precipice and slid perhaps 30 feet down a steep smooth rock, scrambling and bouncing in my attempt to slow myself.

I hit the bottom hard, feet first, and smashed my elbow into a large rock so hard that my shoulder slammed into the base of my skull. My teeth hurt for three days from that.

I looked up for Lucky, wondering if he would come down the same way or find a way around, but he was already at my side. I don't know if he flung himself after me in the same manner, or was more clever, but there he was.

I came to the limit of my resources several times. Each time I would think, "I can't do any more. I'm injured and freezing. I can't go on." At these times I would look at Lucky and be forced to continue. I had brought him into this situation, and I knew he would not leave me, even in death. I could not condemn him with the same stupidity and arrogance which had brought this grim fate upon me.



For his part, Lucky kept giving me a look which said, "I think this is awful. I think we should just go home." I would resolve once again to give my ultimate effort to do precisely that.

Around 6pm the rain began to let up. By 6:30 the rain had stopped. I was so intent on making time I never thought to gather water.

At 7pm it began to get dark. Just as the sun set, the clouds began to dissipate. Although I was thrilled the rain had stopped, I didn't look forward to the clearing clouds, as clear nights are usually much colder than cloudy nights.

It became more difficult to see. I realized I would have to spend the night on the side of Mount Defiance, with minimal gear, a cup of water, a handful of food, and no firewood. I began to look for a spot to hole up.

### ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT

Life is something to do when you can't get to sleep

—Fran Lebowitz

I found a spot level enough to secure my pack flat out. I had a trail book and a natural history guide book in my pack and I arranged them so I could put my damaged backside on them. These two books are doubtless the reason I experienced only minor frostbite on my injured rear.

I changed into dry clothes: underwear, wool shirt, cotton pants, dry socks. I'm sure I would have died had I not had a change of clothing. I also had two "space blankets," a mylar film which bears resemblance to a blanket in name only. I wrapped one around my torso and put my raincoat over it, and sat on the pack with the other blanket wrapped around me.

Lucky and I shared a bagel with cream cheese. I tried to get him onto my lap, but there simply wasn't enough level ground to permit it. At the start of the evening I was very worried about him as he was shivering and whining. He soon found a rock overhanging a dry spot of earth, dug himself a little den, and spent most of the night curled up under it.

I put my watch in my inner raincoat pocket to keep from looking at it. I didn't want to think an hour had passed only to look and discover it had been a mere ten minutes.

I began to watch the stars and decided when a particular bright star set it would probably be about 1am. When it set I looked at the watch and it was

three o'clock. I then set my sights on Sirius, the dog star, to pass the time. But of course there were larger issues to confront.

We are all here to die. None of us will leave here alive. I can't imagine how I will die, and neither can anyone else, which is at least a part of what makes it all so interesting. I have faced death before and always find its sudden intrusive presence so surprising, given the fact that I already know I have to die. But once the initial surprise and panic departs I feel I am mostly ready to go anytime. I spent the first half-hour making my peace with death.

This is the easy part. Thinking about the devastation my poor decision-making and arrogance had caused others consumed my thoughts the rest of the night. The emotional turmoil this experience was perpetrating on Judith caused me to ache with guilt and remorse. I resolved not to give up on living without every possible effort.

I went over and over my mistakes on the trail, trying to find some better answers to what I should have done.

A number of events occurred during the night. I stretched out several times to sleep. I would lie curled up and begin to shake worse, then suddenly become very warm. This is the end-game of hypothermia: a state which feels warm but is actually colder than viable. I would jump up and hop around to get warm when this happened. After two or three tries I gave up any thought of slumber.

The fog began to roll up the valley at about 9pm. I watched it snake along the river bottom from west to east. Then it began to climb.

I thought it would keep rising and that caused me some worry; I was mostly dry and getting wet wasn't what I wanted. But around two or three it began to sink again into the river bottom. By first light it was only in the lowest valleys.

Three times Lucky got up and came to me, growling low and mean in his throat. Something, I suppose, was smelling fresh blood and coming in hopes of a meal. I would jump up, shout, and throw rocks in all directions.

Lucky would bark, then, after a time, begin to quiet down. I have no idea what was coming and am only glad I never found out.

At 7am the dog star began to fade in the rising light.

### TENDING THE HOME FIRES

It is a fearsome thing to love that which may be touched by death.

—Engraving on headstone of a married couple

Judith had gone to the movies on Saturday afternoon. She walked home and arrived about 5pm, the time I was to arrive from my hike. She had a moment of panic, but then remembered other times I had returned late. She went about her business, getting ready for the dinner we'd planned in Issaquah. Our daughter Pamela called about 6:30 and Judith mentioned that I was not home yet. Pamela didn't register much at this news, in the manner children have of not worrying about parents.

Finally, at 8:30, Judith left this note: David & Lucky—

Of course, I'm panicked/panicked out—I'm going to try & walk it off—NE 7th and around RTC campus on sidewalk & back to house via NE 7th—then I'll call police it's now 8:37pm.

Love

J

She walked the route described, and upon returning home, called 911.

Within an hour a Renton police officer arrived and took her statement. He contacted King County Emergency Operations Division, who sent a driver to exit 45 on I-90, up roads 9030 and 9031, to the Mason Lake parking lot.

Upon confirmation of the location of the car, the considerable power of King County was brought to bear upon a hiker lost in the Cascade Mountains.

By 1am the searchers were assembled, and began to head for the Mason Lake area. Units included King County Emergency Operations Center staff members, King County Search Dog teams, Explorer Scouts, and a large community of volunteers. The team assembled at 2:30am in the parking lot.

The box containing the trail pass stub was opened and the stubs examined. The one listing "David Laws" revealed that the hiker in question was headed for Mason Lake. Accordingly, teams were immediately dispatched to the Mason Lake trail and, shouting and blowing whistles, they began to ascend toward the lake.

The description I left for Judith was read to the Renton police officer, and he duly read it to the head of the search and rescue effort. But the evidence at the scene was considered more relevant, and the true information about my location was set aside. This meant



that the searchers were looking for me about 3 miles east of my location—well out of earshot.

The police officer stayed with Judith until about 1am. After he left, Judith forced herself to breathe and stay calm. She limited herself to one call per hour. She began to shake, and could only sit and wait, huddled under a blanket, just like I was.

At 7:30am Judith called Pamela and Pamela immediately headed for Renton.

When she arrived, she said, "Mom, don't you have the note from David saying where he is?" When Judith showed it to her, Pamela, clad in hiking boots and wearing her knapsack, said, "Well, don't you think we should get us a map and go get him?"

For a moment Judith went into a tizzy, almost thinking they could and should try this. But fortunately, she convinced Pamela they should wait by the phone.

### WALKING OUT

It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop.

—Confucius

With the first appearance of the sun my shaking increased. For a time I thought I was going to freeze to death in the daylight, having survived the night.

I shared the last of the food, a few ounces of trail mix, with Lucky and started throwing things into the pack. I took one swig of water from the pint I had left in one water bottle, and cursed myself once again for stupidity. I considered giving the rest to Lucky and decided to wait.

The space blanket was thoroughly shredded. I tied a piece of it onto the hood of my raincoat in case a helicopter might fly over. I knew that the searchers were looking on the Mason Lake trail, but I thought that perhaps when they circled, I might get a glimmer into their eyesight. I stuffed the rest of it into the pack, with the thought of tying it to a stick and using it semaphore style.

The descent was beginning to level out, but that introduced its own problem. Now that vegetation was not automatically scoured each winter from the slope, it tended to grow in the most amazing profusion. I began to wish for a machete. There is no hurrying through this type of foliage even when uninjured; in my condition, I could only make a few feet per minute.

The temperature kept rising. When I



David Laws

Lucky spent two days sleeping and recovered fully.

was in the sunlight I would begin to sweat. But hypothermia is an overwhelming experience, not easily driven away. The instant I moved out of the sun, or stopped to long too catch my breath, I would begin to shake. This was a good means of keeping myself moving.

Water was a serious problem. I noticed Lucky licking leaves for the dew they carried, and I began to gather moisture myself in this manner. I managed to slake my thirst and was pleased I would not have to use any of my precious reserves. I ate a few fronds of bracken fern, about two mouthfuls, before deciding I wasn't that hungry.

Around noon I was playing tricks on myself to keep moving. "I'll pay you a dollar for every step you take" got me four hundred steps closer to my goal, before I reminded myself I didn't have four hundred dollars to pay off with. "I bet you the four hundred you can't get to that brush pile in twenty minutes" was how I paid that debt; it took twenty-five. I sang "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall" to its conclusion, forcing myself to take a step on each downbeat.

I realized I might have to spend another night on the mountain. I was beginning to think I might have passed the trail in my haste the evening before. I still had at least a thousand feet, maybe more, to the valley and the freeway—if I could cross the river. I decided I would stop at 2pm and begin cutting branches for a bed.

At 10 o'clock I was hanging spread-

eagled holding vines behind and above my head. I had spent the last 30 minutes tortuously fighting my way down one blind alley after another, going perhaps 20 to 30 feet down only to be forced to retrace my steps due to the thickness of the foliage. A small alarm bell was ringing in my head, but I was too out of breath and exhausted at first to pay attention.

As I slowly repaid my oxygen debt the ringing got more insistent. It was about Lucky—he was doing something unusual. What was it? Oh, I see, he's running from left to right, without obstruction, back and forth. It took my poor fuddled brain perhaps half a minute to make sense of this piece of information: Lucky had found the trail, four feet in front of me, and I could not see it because of the thickness of the undergrowth. I began to laugh.

For the first time in 24 hours I believed I was going to live.

### RESCUE

It is exhilarating to be shot at without result.

—Sir Winston Churchill

When I got out on the trail I realized that standing without having vines to hold onto was almost beyond my capabilities. I could see that I was probably going to be falling again soon. I resolved myself to that probability and figured out a way to move: another type of controlled fall. I would lean forward and to one side. As I started to totter forward I hitched the other side up and



that leg would be thrown ahead. Then I would hitch the other side and the other leg would swing up. In this way I began to totter down the trail.

An amazing thing happened when I stepped out onto the trail: the search helicopter flew over. I was in trees with little or no sunlight and they had no chance of seeing me, but it was ironic to see them for the first time after attaining the trail. I saw them two or three more times on the way to the parking lot.

I wasn't sure what trail I was on, but I knew that when the searchers didn't turn me up on the Mason Lake trail they would begin looking on every other trail around. They might even get more information from Judith, which would put them on me quick. So even if I wasn't on exactly the old CCC trail, eventually somebody was going to come on this trail and find me. This all became irrelevant after a hundred yards, when I recognized a part of the trail. I was about 600 yards from my car. Tears began to stream down my face.

I still didn't know if I could make it to the parking lot, but I knew I could blow my whistle and searchers coming down the Mason Lake trail would hear it. I continued to wobble down the foot-path.

At 1:30 I spotted the campers of the search and rescue units. A generator was running and my shouts were not heard at first. Then suddenly six or seven people came running. Lucky's tail began a frantic sweeping motion as he greeted the rescue team. I said, "I think you folks are looking for me." They helped me to the nearest trailer.

I was able to climb into the mobile home with minimal assistance. I sat down at the kitchen table. Two or three people were talking on cell phones at the same time, two or three more were talking on walkie-talkies, and two or three were talking to me, all over the roar of the generator.

Suddenly a man across the table from me said into his phone, "Mrs. Laws, there's someone here who wants to talk to you." Judith had called at the precise moment I sat down.

I could tell it was Judith's voice, and then Pamela's, but I couldn't really hear. They said they wanted to come up and get me but I told them to wait. I told them I'd call back in a few minutes.

A man came to me and said, "Hello, David, I'm Eric, an EMT, and I'm pleased to meet you."

"Not half as pleased as I am to meet

you!" I shouted over the generator.

While volunteers gave Lucky two big bowls of dog food, Eric took my vital signs, which were all excellent. He had a difficult time finding a pulse due to swelling in my wrists. After a few attempts he took a pulse at the carotid artery. He asked questions like what day is it, what is your wife's first name, things designed to reveal brain problems. They gave me hot chicken noodle soup and cocoa and warm grape juice. Everything seemed okay to Eric.

"You can go on home, I guess. You seem to be all right."

"Great! Can you do just one more favor for me? Can you put me in my car?"

Since I had changed my pants, the rescuers didn't realize I was injured. I'd been hobbling, but I'd gotten into the camper without much help. However, now I couldn't stand up, and I knew I couldn't descend the steps out of the camper without assistance.

The workers had a volunteer, Seth, drive me home. We pulled up about 2:45pm. Judith and Pamela helped me into the house. Judith had a huge bowl of food for Lucky and a pot of minestrone soup for me. We all laughed and cried, and then Pamela went home. I pulled off my clothes. I needed help, as my hands had swollen to the size of small grapefruits by this time.

Judith put me in the shower and proceeded to scrape a couple of pounds of mountain off the tattered remnants of my buttocks. After perhaps twenty minutes I was reasonably clean. I pulled on fresh undershorts and crawled into bed. Judith piled onto the bed, and Lucky jumped up between us. We were all ready to sleep. Judith and Lucky went out like lights but I began to shake. I shook for perhaps twenty minutes, then finally got warm.

When I awoke I could tell I had a fever, and my rear end was stuck to the bed. I was not in good shape. Judith and I concurred—it was time to go to the emergency room.

## HEALING

Whatever doesn't kill me, makes me stronger.

—Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

I was admitted quickly into Valley Medical Center. First I was made to soak my hands in water to arrest the effect of frostbite. When I was moved to a bed I was put on the fastest intravenous drip of fluids possible to avoid kidney failure. It seems when massive tissue

damage occurs the cleanup produces so much waste it can clog the kidneys. I also was given pain medication and antibiotics. I asked for something to eat and a sandwich and milk appeared almost instantly. Nurses came every hour or two and checked my vital signs.

The next day Dr. Kimberly Herner came to see me. She inspected my wounds and checked my limbs to be sure I had feeling in them. She thought I might have some fairly extensive damage to my right thumb due to frostbite, and she was concerned about the damage to my rear being exacerbated by frostbite. She told me she'd check on me later.

That afternoon a plastic surgeon, Dr. Blatner, came by. I told him I wanted the "Paul Newman Special" if he was going to do any work on my rear. He laughed and said that would definitely be a step up from the "W.C. Fields" model I was currently sporting. He put me on steroids and got me a high-tech computerized air bed which helped keep undue pressure off the wound.

I was experiencing an elation from the pain medication and the joy of being alive. Even when nurses would "peel the wound," a severely painful procedure, I would laugh at my ability to feel, to be alive. When the food came I would savor every bite. Every sprig of parsley would be compared favorably to the bracken ferns I'd eaten Sunday morning to fill my stomach. I didn't care about much of anything until Tuesday, when I thought I would be released and wasn't. My blood was still a little too full of dead tissue. I didn't sleep well that night. Suddenly I didn't want to be in the hospital any more.

Wednesday morning I was released from the hospital. I went home with steroid and antibacterial creams to apply twice daily to the wound, pain pills, and oral steroids. Lucky was elated to see me. He had spent two days sleeping, and was back to one hundred per cent.

## EPILOGUE

We learn from experience that men never learn anything from experience.  
—George Bernard Shaw

I have a new rear end now. It seemed for a while I would have to have a new one installed by plastic surgery, but I managed to grow my own. Unfortunately it's just as big as the one I left on the mountain.

I found several injuries have outlasted the problem on my backside: torn



ligaments in my right hand, bone spurs in my hips and elbows, a peculiar problem, possibly ligaments, in my left foot. These are things I didn't even notice for three weeks. I may need surgery on some or all of these.

Lucky fared better: he has not manifested any problems and he continues to be a joy in our lives.

Two weeks after the accident I returned to the trail. I took pictures and compass readings attempting to discover what happened to me. After I got a heading on the concrete abutment of the Iron Horse Trail at the foot of McClellan Butte, I crossed I-90, went

to that spot, and reversed my compass. With binoculars I was able to locate the gully. Using this piece of information I finally came to understand how I missed the trail in my descent.

I had approached the western summit with the snow on my right cheek. When I had the opportunity, I put a small ridge between me and the wind. But when I headed back down, I failed to cross back into the wind. That small ridge marks the difference between the western flank of the west summit and the southeastern flank.

In the spring I intend to go look for my checkbook, in my back pocket at

the summit, but not with me at the bottom. But I will approach the summit only if I can get there from the highest point of the Ridge Trail, assuming I can find it. Perhaps I can locate it from the Mason Lake trail.

△

*David M. Laws is the instructor of the Musical Instrument Repair Technician program at Renton Technical College. An Eagle Scout, he attributes his survival to skills he learned as a boy in Montana. He has lived in the Puget Sound area for over 30 years.*

## The Good Old Days



Steve Fry

Icebergs decorate Moraine Lake, which is fed mainly by the Forbidden and Inspiration Glaciers, North Cascades National Park. Scott Dobrowolski and Dave Sousa ascend the rockfield in this 1972 photo by Steve Fry.

("The Good Old Days" is any time before Gore-tex; readers are invited to send contributions for this feature.)



## The Red Barn: a brief history



The Red Barn, by Robert Mack

This is a photograph of an oil painting of the Red Barn, the building that once stood behind my parents' house in Lynnwood. The barn was the home of *Signpost* and Washington Trails Association for many years.

The painting was done by Robert Mack, from a photo taken during the winter of 1981-82 when Robert came to visit my housemate Debby. He had come for a visit the previous summer, too, and we promptly gave him a maul and wheelbarrow and he split a huge pile of wood, saving us all a ton of work. I had no idea then that he was an artist!

After he and Debby married, his work took him to the east coast, and they now live in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, with their two children and assorted pets.

Robert finished this painting several years ago but was reluctant to part with it, Debby told me. She finally convinced him to send it to me this year.

It is a wonderful reminder of those "good old days," especially since nothing in the picture remains—the forest behind is now a housing development, and the Red Barn was bulldozed along with my folks' 1917 house, carriage house, and orchard to become a City of Lynnwood park (which you can visit at

168th and 36th in Lynnwood).

The history: in 1966 my mother Louise began to publish a newsletter for backpackers that she called *Signpost*. Before moving to the Red Barn, *Signpost* first took over my parents' dining room, study, and living room. The Red Barn had been a chicken house when I was a child, but was being used for storage and meetings by the late '60s.

In the early '70s, my brother-in-law Larry Ferguson and some friends put up insulation and paneling, moved in the desks and file cabinets from the main house, and the Red Barn became the office.

My mother had formed the embryonic Washington Trails Association in the summer of 1981, during Robert's wood-splitting visit; it was known as "Signpost Trails Association" until February 1983, when it was changed to "Northwest Trails Association," and on January 8, 1985, it took the name it still holds: Washington Trails Association.

Through 1991 Louise was acknowledged on *Signpost*'s title page as "Founder of *Signpost* and Washington Trails Association" but her name was inexplicably removed in 1992.

In 1993, after my folks had sold their house and property and long after *Signpost* was moved to downtown Se-

attle, the City of Lynnwood constructed a neighborhood park on the site.

Robert's painting shows amazing detail. On the left is the pasture fence that kept the sheep and geese in. My father's peach tree is outlined in delicate snow. Two beehives are hibernating for the winter, and in front of them a tilting birdbath provided the bees' water in the summer.

On the corner of the barn is the *Signpost* logo, designed by Dave Bishop in 1972.

The building *really* was a barn, in spite of the paneling. It housed an amazing number of large, happy spiders, had bats and squirrels in the attic, occasional mice in the walls, and ants in the foundation. Local cats had their own door; dogs had to knock. A back door opened directly into the pasture, where a path led to the outhouse in the woods.

While the Red Barn no longer exists, I've followed in my mother's footsteps by bringing information to backcountry travellers by way of *Pack & Paddle*.

As my mother once did, I've converted a room of the house into the office for *Pack & Paddle*. It makes for a tight fit ... if only we had a Red Barn we could move into.

—Ann Marshall



# PANORAMA

NEWS FROM ALL OVER

**SNOQUALMIE PASS**—As usual, the notice for the public meetings for the Snoqualmie Pass ski area development came too late to include in the February issue of *P&P*.

Meetings were held February 8 and 10 in Cle Elum and Bellevue to discuss the proposed plan to, among other things: build a year-round gondola and mountain-top restaurant at Alpental; replace and add lifts at all the Pass ski areas; expand parking lots; build cross-over trails (dependent on an agreement with The Mountaineers club); reforest slopes where vegetation has been over-cleared.

Lifts would be added to Section 16 near Hyak, which might have an impact on backcountry skiers.

Written comments on this proposal are due on March 5. That doesn't give you much time. Mail comments to:

**Supervisor, MBSNF  
Snoqualmie Pass Master Plan  
21905 64th Ave W**

**Mountlake Terrac WA 98043**

If you have questions, call Larry Donovan, 425-744-3403.

**FISH & WILDLIFE USE FEE**—This year you are *required* to have a Fish & Wildlife access decal on your car if you plan to use F&W facilities. These include many of the put-in points for paddles on rivers and along the Puget Sound shoreline.

The decal costs \$11 (\$10 plus \$1 dealer fee) for the first vehicle and \$6 (\$5 plus \$1 dealer fee) for each additional vehicle. If you buy a fishing license anyway, you'll get the decal with the license.

For more information on this fee program, call Fish & Wildlife in Mill Creek, 425-775-1311.

**MOUNT HOOD**—The Forest Service has released a draft plan that would severely reduce the numbers of hikers and climbers on Mount Hood if it is implemented.

Since much of Mount Hood is a Wilderness, Forest Service officials claim they must reduce use to meet standards of solitude.

The south-side summit route on Hood, a very popular and relatively easy ascent that accommodates over 200 climbers, skiers, and snowboarders a day during the spring season, would be restricted to 25 a day. Likewise, hiking trails in the

area would see similar cuts in use.

Information about the plan is available from the Mount Hood National Forest Headquarters, 503-668-1700.

Public meetings have already been held, but written comments will be accepted until April 1. Send to:

**Kathleen Walker  
Zigzag Ranger District  
70220 East Highway 26  
Zigzag OR 97049.**

**AVALANCHE**—At the end of January, an avalanche on Grouse Mountain, just outside Vancouver, killed one man and left three others injured.

The Grouse Grind trail is a popular route just 30 minutes from the city—it is to Vancouver as Mount Si is to Seattle. On Wednesday, January 27, at 12:45, several parties were on the trail. Two near the top were swept off their feet—one was carried into the trees and was unhurt. His friend, however, was buried by the slide and presumed dead.

Rescuers called to the scene found three survivors: one had a broken femur, the second had a broken shoulder blade, a compressed back fracture and "multiple traumas," the third had two broken femurs and severe bleeding.—*from stories in The Province.*

**TRAIL ECONOMY**—A study of the economic impact of the Methow Valley trail system shows that users of the trail system provided almost \$2 million to the valley economy, according to an article by John Hanron in the *Methow Valley News*.

The study was conducted last winter by a Wenatchee company and was based on responses by visitors to the valley and by local businesses.

The study turned up no surprises: most visitors come from the west side and most of the money is spent on lodging and food. These conclusions and others were included in a 48-page report that was presented to the Okanogan County Commissioners by MVSTA director Jay Lucas.

MVSTA has been keeping track of skiers days since 1983. The count that year was 6306. Skier days last winter had increased to 21,134.

**YOSEMITE BEARS**—Although Yosemite Rangers can't prove it, they suspect that bears in the park are deliberately selecting Honda and Toyota se-

dans for break-ins.

A January 13 article in the *Wall Street Journal* by John Fialka tells that last spring the bears "hit" 26 Hondas and 21 Toyotas, in contrast to only two Buicks and one Lexus.

The article describes how one bear, after peeling open a door on a Honda, carefully folded down the rear seat to reach the trunk, and then pushed the button on the cooler to open it.

The park hopes that a new committee will come up with ideas to un-teach the bears. In the meantime, they hope the bears don't figure out how to break into the Yosemite Valley grocery store.

**TRAILS FEST**—March 13 is the date for this year's Trails Fest, the trails exposition at the Seattle Center.

It will be held from 9am to 5pm at the Northwest Rooms and include seminars, clinics, and slide shows.

**WWTA ANNUAL MEETING**—The Washington Water Trails Association Annual Meeting will be held this year March 19-21 in Gig Harbor. This is a great place to paddle, so bring your boats and plan to attend the presentations and slide shows.

Events (except paddles, of course) will be held at the Best Western Wesley Inn. Organized paddles will be led by the Gig Harbor Paddle Club and are scheduled for Saturday at 10am and Sunday at 9am.

For more information contact:

**WWTA  
4649 Sunnyside Ave N Room 305  
Seattle WA 98103  
206-545-9161.**

**SURVIVAL**—One of the two people who were lost for 12 days north of Fish Lake was found alive on February 7. George Back survived by eating snow and huddling with his two little dogs. His wife Diane McManus died. The couple, from Kelso, were inexperienced in the backcountry and were travelling on rented snowmobiles off groomed trails.

**SNOWSHOERS**—On February 12, two snowshoers walked out from the Mount Defiance area after sitting out a storm. They were several days overdue. A large search party had failed to locate them. The two men were experienced and well equipped.



**UNSECURED LOAD**—We learned from Bob Cram's column in the Methow Valley News last month that a load of snow on top of your car constitutes an "unsecured load," and you could be pulled over for it. It's a good idea to remove all that snow before driving off, for your sake as well as the guy behind you.

**GASKETS**—If you don't want to replace your own drysuit gaskets, and don't want to wait for the manufacturer, Ken Rasmussen in Bow can do it. He has neck, ankle and wrist gaskets in stock, and also carries foam and adhesive for cockpit customizing.

Contact:

Rasmussen's Expert Bicycle Service  
6290 Ershig Road  
Bow WA 98232  
360-766-8720.

**LADY ROSE**—The *MV Lady Rose* and *MV Frances Barkley* ferry kayakers to Broken Islands and other sites. They

also rent kayaks (singles and doubles) and can provide lodging and meals at the Sechart Whaling Station. For more information call 250-723-8313 (toll-free line for reservations, April to September: 800-663-7192).

**PLANNING FOR SUMMER**—In case you have not heard, there is snow in the Olympics! In fact, it is something over 150% of normal for this time of year. The 16-foot-tall snow stake where the "official" measurements are made at Hurricane Ridge is now buried, and an attachment has been added to the top of the original pole.

There is no way to tell what all this snow will mean for this summer, but don't be surprised if it means considerably later openings of trails over mountain passes. It may mean that some passes will not be snowfree at all this summer. It may also mean that the usual hazards such as avalanches, route finding and snow bridges will still be there later in the summer.

The heavy snow can mean maintenance problems too, such as collapsed trail shelters, signs broken off, footlogs and other structures damaged, trees down, and other trail problems which cannot be assessed until the snow has at least started to melt.—*Larry Lang, Wilderness Information Center, ONP.*

**PLANNING FOR SUMMER IN THE SIERRA**—The quota period in the Sierra is 5/22 to 10/15. Permits are \$3.25 per person. Call Inyo National Forest Wilderness Reservation Service, 760-938-1136 or 800-374-3773. Reservations can be made up to 6 months before hike date.—*JP, Vestavia Hills, Alabama.*

**NORTH CASCADES INSTITUTE**—The new catalog for a year of outdoor seminars has been released by North Cascades Institute.

The catalog begins in April with such offerings as "Drawing with Pen & Pencil," on Orcas Island with Ramona Hammerly; and "Geology of the Columbia Basin," in coulee country with Brent Cunderla.

- Some others that looked interesting:
- "Summer Birds of the Methow Valley" in June;
  - "Teaway Nightlife: Bats" in July;
  - and a Kerouac-inspired trip to Desolation Peak in August.

These programs can fill up in a hurry. Request your catalog and send in your registration soon.

North Cascades Institute  
2105 Highway 20  
Sedro-Woolley WA 98284  
360-856-5700 x209

or [www.ncascades.org](http://www.ncascades.org)

**SAN JUAN ISLAND BY BUS**—The summer bus schedule is available for San Juan Island. Call San Juan Transit, 800-887-8387 for a schedule, map, and other info. Leave your car home and fly or ferry to the island. No hassle, no waiting.

## GEAR:

### Nomination for "Best Value"

I have tried many types and brands of raingear between the price ranges of \$20 and \$400 over the past forty years, and always seem to come back to coated nylon.

I like the complete waterproofness, and I have found over the years that I am usually either "sitting out" an extended storm, or I am hiking back to the trailhead to leave the storm. Of course, "sitting it out" does not cause any condensation problems.

Condensation isn't a huge issue with me, as I am usually hiking out with capilene (or equivalent) underwear and fleece outerwear in a light rain. I will put on the coated nylon if it is really storming during the walkout, and the fleece acts as a pretty efficient condensation barrier.

I have found that, in the long run, Gore-tex and the other new fabrics leave me just as moist on the inside as coated fabric.

I also like the complete wind barrier provided by coated nylon. Additionally, I can buy ten or more of these for the

same cost as only one pair of the most costly brands!

Therefore, I wish to nominate my Campmor Lightweight Backpacker II Rain Jacket (\$29.99) and Backpacker II Rain Pants (\$19.99) as best values for my money.

They both have features found on more expensive brands: completely sealed taped seams, great fitting hood with visor, efficient storm flap, hefty zippers, velcro cuffs, one-hand drawcord adjustments, expandable zip gussets on calves, and articulated knees and elbows. Workmanship is excellent, and the sewing is top-notch.

Total weight for the two items is 1 pound, 3 ounces. I have used these for bushwhacking, storm-watching, yard work and trail hiking with great success and durability. They pack into their own pockets and take up very little room in the pack.

And, the greatest part of all: you get to pick between two colors—blue and green!

—*Larry Smith, Port Orchard*

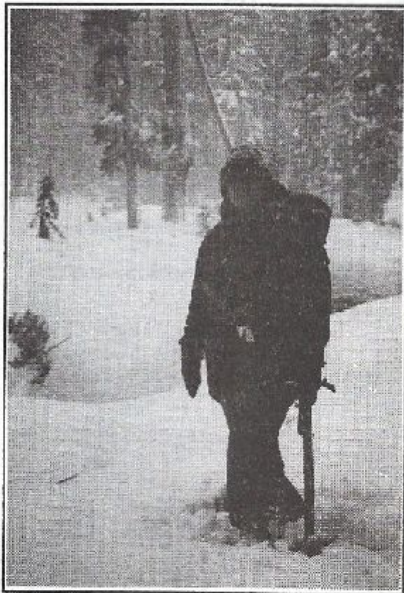
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PORT ORCHARD WA 98366



# EDITOR'S JOURNAL



A snowy day in Commonwealth Basin.

**FROM THE MAILBOX**—"It was good to see the several climbing trips reported in 'Backcountry News.' The more, the better, if any other folks are out there doing 'em."—*Wallingford.*

"This is a weird winter: fantastic snow but either can't get to it or avalanche danger is too high for prudent travel. I don't have a lot of years left so I'm being more careful with them."—*Olympia.*

"I subscribed for the trip reports but also like Panorama, Rest Stop and Letters-to-the-Editor (more is better) and, well, everything—but keep it local. Please encourage more reports about gear and clothing, good or bad. Above all, stay as you are and don't try to grow into something else."—*Bainbridge Island.*

"I read every word and like the backcountry reports best."—*Everett.*

"I bought Ira Spring's autobiography—really fascinating—both pictures and stories are unique. Since I am close to Ira's age, I can relate to some things that happened long ago. I enjoy *P&P* although I take shorter hikes now."—*Edmonds.*

**FISHING POLICY**—A reader sends us this note: "I understand your policy on not publicizing lakes for fishing. However, there are many lakes that ... should be fished. Call the Fish & Wildlife Department; they can recommend destinations. In other areas promote

catch and release. Fishing is a wonderful addition to a backpacking trip. Bah, humbug on anti-fishing zealots. They were dropped on their heads as children."

The state Department of Fish & Wildlife publishes a pamphlet called "Trout Fishing in Washington's High Lakes" in which specific lakes are recommended. It also has sound advice for leave-no-trace fishing.

For a copy of the pamphlet, write  
**Dept of Fish & Wildlife**  
**600 Capitol Way N**  
**Olympia WA 98501**

or contact your local F&W office.

Fishing can be a nice addition to a backcountry outing. Lee really enjoys high lake fishing.

**MOFA**—One of the problems with taking a MOFA (Mountaineering Oriented First Aid) class in winter is that the Camp Long final is usually done in the rain and mud.

The final consists of walking through the park, and "encountering" a mountaineering accident. Your party has to organize itself and respond to whatever emergency you find—broken legs, back injuries, hysteria, burns, all sorts of things in various settings, all rainy and muddy. When you finish with one accident, you go on to two more.

The MOFA final for the class Lee and I took occurred in mid-February on a black night. It had rained all day, and it continued to rain throughout the whole evening. Everyone was prepared and although we got muddy and our gear got wet, I don't think any of the "rescuers" was uncomfortable because of the weather. But I sure felt sorry for the "victims" who had to lie in the mud all evening with the rain coming down in their faces—they surely must have been cold.

We will find out for sure, because we get to be "victims" for the next class, right after this issue goes to press.

**MAILBOX AVALANCHE**—When I heard that a BOEALPS group was also at the MOFA session, I asked if Steve Fox was there, and was told he was.

Steve Fox, you may remember, is the person who wrote up the Mailbox Peak avalanche story that appeared in the February issue (page 18).

By the end of the MOFA evening, I had met not only Steve, but also "Carla,"

and even "Bob," who was the person who had been buried in the avalanche.

Steve said he hopes he never has the opportunity to write up another story like that from personal experience!

**PCTA**—The Pacific Crest Trail Association meeting was held in Seattle at the end of January. My mother and I attended some of the Saturday slide shows and presentations, which drew a crowd at the REI meeting rooms.

We also went to the Saturday evening annual banquet, where awards were presented to deserving volunteers and a welcome was given to the new PCTA president, David Foscoe of Montesano.

At the banquet we enjoyed meeting Elizabeth Lunney, WTA's new executive director.

**SEWING MACHINE**—A pastime becoming more frequent for Lee and me is modifying gear for both backpacking and sea kayaking. For a long time I have struggled to sew heavy fabrics on a lightweight sewing machine, or by hand with an awl and heavy thread.

A few years ago Jim Hamel wrote an article for *Pack & Paddle* on how he makes backpacks with an industrial sewing machine (*January 1996, page 14*). Ever since I read his story I thought that a heavy-duty sewing machine would be a big help, and finally we decided to buy one.

In his article, Jim referred to Sewing Machine Service at 315 Main Ave South in Renton (425-255-8673). Besides new machines (which are very expensive) they have hundreds of used machines. We found an old one we liked and brought it home. It will sew through Cordura, Gore-tex, webbing, and all kinds of outdoor fabrics, at a blazing speed.

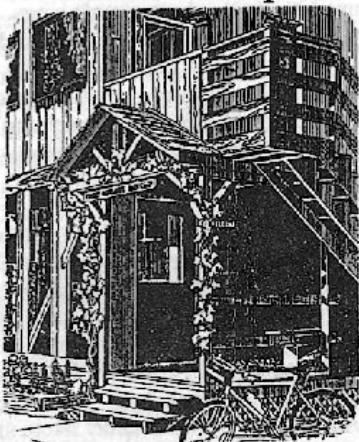
Now I just have to learn to control it.

See you in the backcountry

Ann Marshall



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