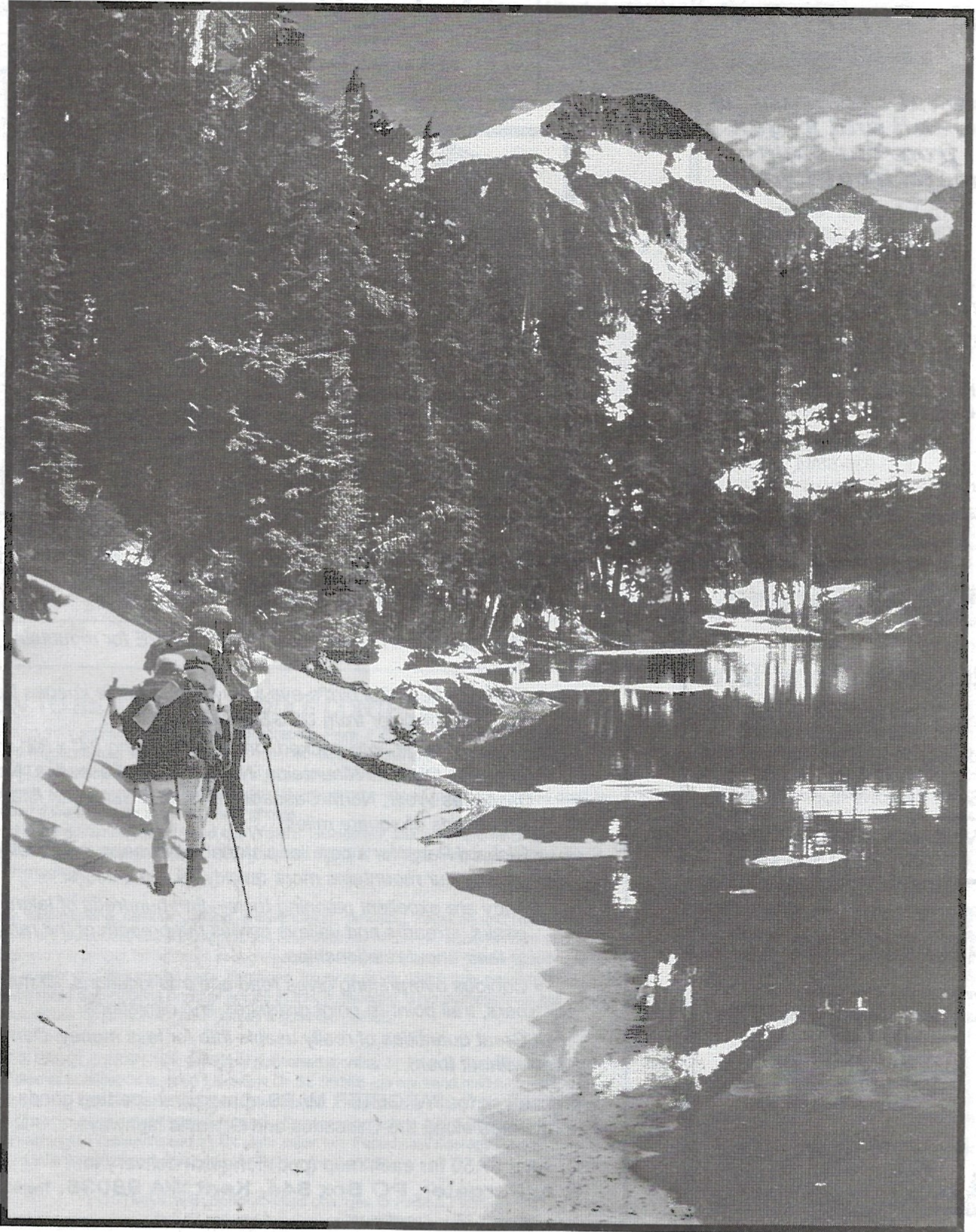



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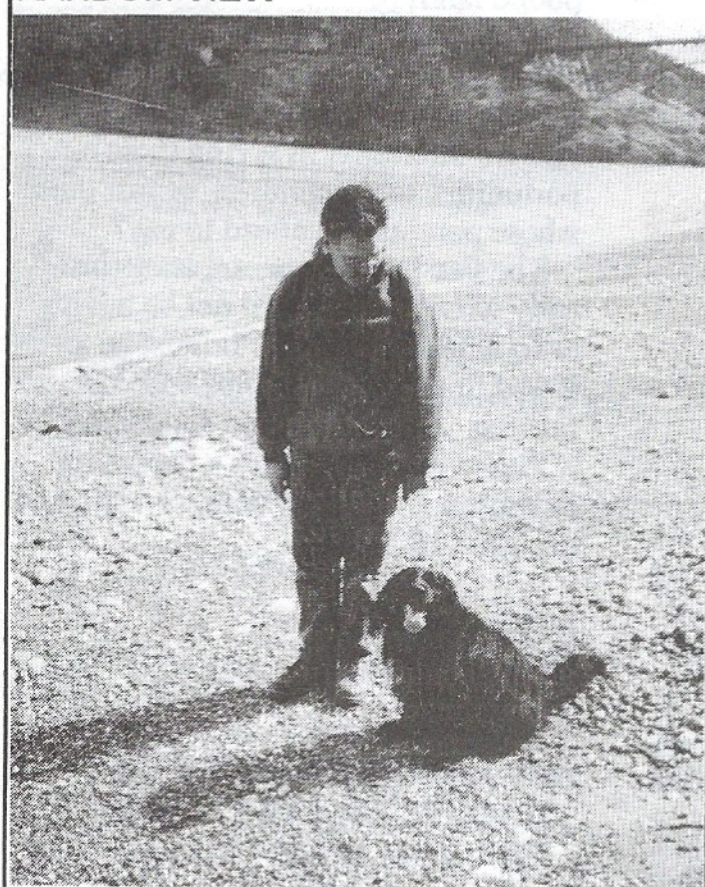
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RANDOM VIEW—



David Laws

Lucky Dog (right) hikes with his friend Al Smith at Deception Pass State Park.

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COVER PHOTO:

An early-season trip into Necklace Valley, on the East Fork Foss River, requires some careful stepping along the edge of Jade Lake. Alpine Lakes Wilderness, Washington. Photo by Ann Marshall.

HOW TO BE A PACK & PADDLE CONTRIBUTOR:

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

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

A LETTER TO CONGRESS: NO FEES, PLEASE!

Congressman Joe Skeen
House Interior Appropriations
Subcommittee
B308 Rayburn
Washington DC 20515
Sir,

I wish to state my opposition to the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program. My reasons are not primarily that I, personally, would have to pay this fee, but the fact that the basic principle is flawed.

It seems to me that it is clearly unfair and un-American to charge any citizen to take a walk in the woods; where he or she would be taking nothing, only leaving footprints; whereas many

people who extract valuable products from the forest pay little or nothing.

Why should a monetary fee be charged when nothing of monetary value is removed from the forest? It is simply wrong that the free citizens of this country (and their posterity) should be subjected to this cheap shakedown by their own government. We have already bought these forest lands with our taxes. In Oregon the ocean beaches have been declared open to the public for all time. So should the national forests of this country be forever free.

If I were in Congress I would introduce a bill to this effect; and future citizens would bless me if it passed.

The Fee Demo program is not only onerous to hikers, but many other low-

impact users: tourists, canoeists, fishermen, photographers, picnickers and people who simply need to use the restroom. Imagine yourself urgently needing to use a USFS restroom. Should you have to worry that when you emerge you may have to pay a fine because no tag is on your windshield? And simply because you parked on public land?

What about the families that cannot afford these fees? Everyone is entitled to healthy recreational opportunities. Are we interested in giving these opportunities to all children, or just those whose parents can afford to pay?

The Fee Demo program is intrinsically wrong. We should not be having to fight this unjust tax. It must be allowed to die when its time runs out. For fairness. And for all free Americans.

Please make my letter a part of the record for the Public Witness testimony on April 16, 2001.

James A. Miller
Portland, Oregon

Ode to Yellow Cat

A cat's place on earth is usually found
mucking in alleys, just poking around.
But you rose above and made claim to your future,
As office assistant and rodent reducer.

Yellow Cat, Yellow Cat, queen of the space
Where Ann and Lee edit our garbled mistakes;
Sorting out letters and doing your part,
Licking the stamps and working with heart.

Oh Yellow Cat, Yellow Cat, we know the truth,
Even though we have no tangible proof:
Ann and Lee left you behind for the hills,
They were mere frontmen, while you paid the bills.

But you, Yellow Cat, stayed loyal and true,
Testing those tents, both ragged and new.
Working on projects, answering the phone,
You didn't mind being left all alone.

Yellow Cat, Yellow Cat, long live your name!
You were the one who brought P and P fame.
Those hours you spent working on this and on that,
Kept things afloat and the magazine fat.

Gone from this place, but not from our minds,
A cat's place on earth you have redefined.
Yellow Cat, Yellow Cat. Paw prints now gone.
Yellow Cat, Yellow Cat. Memories live on.

—Mark, Jill and Sarah Owen

PUT FEE DEMO ON CONGRESS' RADAR SCREEN

Having just returned from a week in the Nation's Capitol, I've much to share about the status of the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program.

Unfortunately, little of that news will be "good." In fact, the President's newly-released budget includes a four (possibly five?) year extension of Fee-Demo and authorizes the test to continue until, at least, September 2006.

What this means is that unless Fee-Demo opponents can find sufficient congressional support to remove the President's Fee-Demo language from his budget, there will not even be a vote in Congress to consider further extending (or ending) the program. The extension will be virtually automatic.

And, as I was told by several DC staffers, if recreation user fees are allowed to remain in place for that long, there will be almost no chance of ever killing it. After 10 years of paying fees, few Americans will even remember what it was like when people were free to walk on their public lands without having to first purchase a pass.

To be perfectly blunt, opponents of fee-demo have, to this point, failed to

to page 5

BACKCOUNTRY NEWS





REPORTS AND CONDITIONS

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.

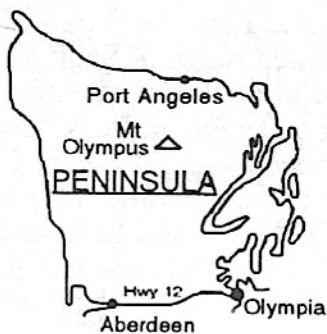
Space is limited; we may have to cut your report to fit available space. Typing is not necessary; we can read just about anyone's handwriting. We're interested in ALL trips, easy and hard, ordinary and exotic.


We use the following symbols to help you plan your trips.

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



PENINSULA




 **NORTH FORK SKOKOMISH** (CC *Enchanted Valley-Skokomish*)—Lew and I met at the Hoodspout Ranger Station and continued in his car to park at Staircase. We hiked the North Fork Skokomish trail almost 5 miles to a bridge over Donahue Creek. There we dangled our feet from the bridge in the sun and enjoyed our lunches. Beautiful spot!

The trail was completely clear and mostly wide as most of the part we did had once been a road years ago. One log bridge was a bit slippery and one creek required rock hopping to cross but otherwise the minimal and fairly consistent 600 foot elevation gain and

good tread makes this a pretty good hike for many who would find other trails difficult.

Our lunch spot was at only 1600 feet so we saw only a few small patches of snow along the trail. Views were few, but nice, of surrounding mountains, several with snow. Round trip time with lunch was about four hours.—Tom Karasek, Mossyrock, 3/22.

 **NORTH FORK SKOKOMISH** (CC *Enchanted Valley-Skokomish*)—Mike and I headed up the North Fork Skokomish trail for a day hike, hopefully to reach Nine Stream and then return. After passing the side path to the downed Rapids Bridge, Mike noticed a lot of fur at the base of a large root on the hillside next to the trail. I climbed around the roots, following a trail of fur, and found a totally picked cleaned spine and head of a small elk (the ranger later told me that the cougar kill was a month old).

At the junction with Flapjack Lakes trail, a light snowfall started, melting as it hit the ground. Just past Big Log Camp, we climbed over three windfalls.

Two of the trees were several feet in diameter. We crossed the North Fork and were punching down on 4" to 6" of old snow in the open spaces.

We stopped at Camp Pleasant for a snack, appreciating the winter setting. The snow was beginning to stick, covering the ground and the trees. We then headed up the trail again. Parts of the trail have plank walkways; these had 8 inches of snow on them and were difficult to walk on. The snow was falling fast and thick. We stopped to take some pictures of the river cutting through snow covered glades. We decided to turn back just past Eight Stream.

The return hike had several inches of fresh wet snow all the way back except for the last mile. What had started out as a spring hike had quickly changed into a winter hike.—Bill Simpson, Mike Dziak, 3/26.

BACKCOUNTRY NEWS DEADLINE: May 15

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

LETTERS *continued*

put the Fee-Demo issue on Congress' radar screen. Far too few elected officials know anything about fee-demo except what they hear from the American Recreation Coalition and from the agencies that are collecting those fees. The public's outcry of opposition is being lost amid ARC's chaff. And in

those states where there are few USFS Fee-Demo sites, there simply is no public comment being heard because *no one* is commenting. We now have but a few months remaining in which to change that situation and to raise awareness for this issue in all 50 States.

Now is the time to write your Senators and Representative and tell them

how you feel. And now is a great time to write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper so that others in your community can learn your thoughts on this issue.

Scott Silver, Wild Wilderness
Bend, Oregon
www.wildwilderness.org

BACKCOUNTRY NEWS

REPORTS AND CONDITIONS



HURRICANE RIDGE (CC Hurricane Ridge)

—For ten Scouts/Venture Crew members (this included one Venture Crew girl) of Troop 1477, Port Townsend, this was their first snow camping trip. With their two adult leaders, the group headed out Saturday to snowshoe along Obstruction Point road.

We were surprised to see how little snow really exists up in the mountains, even though we were all aware of the drought. Nonetheless, we were off and happily snowshoeing along the road by 11:30am. Because all Scouts were relatively inexperienced in snow camping techniques, we planned to just go a short way where we thought we might find enough snow to build snow caves and still be close enough to the ridge in case a problem developed.

We found just the spot about a mile in that promised fun in making and sleeping in snow caves, and it was still quite warm and sunny. After several hours of cave digging, including some successes and some failures, the sunny weather changed quickly and drastically to dark clouds and soon after a heavy, drenching rain that continued all afternoon and most of the night.

Fortunately, several tents had been set up and a pot of hot water was available for cocoa. Most Scouts were well prepared and had brought no cotton clothing and the right foot gear, but a few learned the lesson through practical experience. They were quite happy that others were well prepared and had extra items to share.

We all had turned in to bed by 7pm with continuing hard rain, with 8 in the 3 tents and 4 in their snow caves. All slept quite comfortably. The next morning we awoke to cold and snow. We got up to hot cereal and cocoa, packed, and took several exciting sled runs through the trees before we headed back to the road. We were on our way back to Port Townsend by 1 pm.

We planned this first experience to be in a safe location close to the road and shelter. This group now has a good appreciation for what happens if you are wet and tired and then it turns cold. Everybody said they would do this trip again, and maybe next time we have learned enough to do a little bit more of an adventure.—Bob Wheeler, Port Townsend, 3/24-25.

GRAVES CREEK—The trailhead bridge is now posted at a 5-person/1000-pound load limit, and is closed to stock. According to the most recent engineer's report, this is the last year this bridge will be open. Next year it

will be closed to all traffic unless it is replaced before then. If the bridge has not be replaced by next year, the Park will reroute all foot traffic to the stock ford.—Ranger, 4/6.

ELWHA RIVER—The trail is clear of downed trees and snow to within 1 mile of Chicago Camp (2300 feet). Continuous snow covers the trail from here to Low Divide.

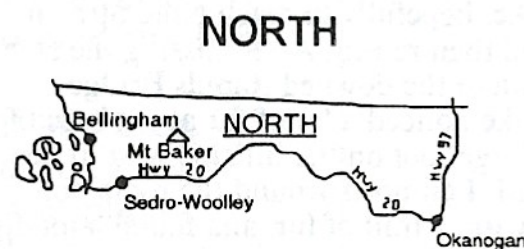
Camping restrictions are in effect between Lillian and Elkhorn. Check with the Wilderness Information Center, 360-565-3100, for details.—Trail Crew, 4/17.

LILLIAN RIVER—The Lillian River trail has been cleared to the end and is in good condition. It is snow free. Some tread work was done to make it passable to horses.—from Backcountry Horsemen, 4/14.

QUINAULT TRAILS—North Fork Quinault is clear to Elip Creek. Irely Lake trail clear to the lake. North Fork trail clear 6 miles in.—Trail Crew, 4/3.

DUNGENESS ROAD—The section of road 2860 that was damaged has been permanently closed, but you can drive around the closed area by taking road 2880, which meets 2860 again to access upper trailheads.—Ranger, 4/16.

DOSEWALLIPS ROAD—The gate will be open May 4. The High Dose bridge on the West Fork is out and will be closed all season. Repairs are scheduled.—Ranger, 4/16.



LOST LAKE (USGS Bellingham South)

—In the Chuckanuts near Larrabee State Park. Take Chuckanut Drive and park at the south parking area just inside the state park. The hike starts on the Fragrance Lake road just behind the restroom. About 2 miles brings you to the Lost Lake trailhead. When we did this hike some years ago you could drive up the road to the trailhead but now you have to hike the road.

The trail is well marked and turns left just short of the road end. The trail climbs up the ridge with broken views west to the San Juan Islands. At about 1 mile is a junction, well marked, where the trail turns left and descends into the

lake basin. There are some interesting cliffs and rock formations on the left and the lake soon comes into view on the right. In another mile is another junction with another trail coming in from a trailhead near Fairhaven. A turn to the right leads to the lake.

Just a little way along the shore is a large rock which is a good lunch spot with good views of the lake. We met a group of Mountaineers lunching when we arrived.

The way is mostly through woods with lots of alder, which had not leafed out yet, thus affording us some views. Two drawbacks are the fact that there is almost as much elevation gain going out as coming in, plus it was extremely muddy. Our boots needed a good cleaning when we returned.

This is about 9 to 10 miles round trip. It did not rain but there were high clouds.—Leigh Champlin, Seattle, 3/25.



PATENT-PENDING TRAVERSE (USGS Sauk Mtn, GT Lk Shannon)

—Patent Peak (5038 feet) and Pending Peak (4801 feet) are located north of Sauk Mountain and are quite unknown summits. I have called 5038 Patent Peak because it is at the headwaters of Patent Creek, and Pending was a natural after Mitch and I e-mailed back and forth as to whether 4801 had the required 400 feet of prominence necessary to be counted as a legitimate mountain.

It actually was pending until Mitch and I embarked on a trip to explore this area and pulled out the map to verify its prominence; it has a "clean" 401 feet. We drove Highway 20 east of Concrete to Jackman Creek road, which we drove a little over a half-mile to a right turn (road 520). We parked 50 yards up this road, about halfway to a gate, and unloaded our bikes at 650 feet. This road is a bypass around a major washout on the Jackman Creek road, and after going up and through a minor saddle, returns to the main road in about a mile.

We pushed and road our bikes for 5½ miles or so to just past a creek, which drains the north side of Sauk Mountain and just before the crossing of Jackman Creek, to an overgrown and bermed spur where we ditched the bikes.

At the first switchback on this road we continued straight on an older road, which soon became very brushy. We decided to head up through an old clearcut to reach a switchback about 600 feet higher. This went well and we put on snowshoes at 2900 feet as the snow deepened. We came upon the



Point 4751, east of Baker Lake, Mount Baker in back. Sam Houston, John Wells, Grant Myers and Chris Peterson.

Bud Hardwick

hour 20 minutes to bike in took 45 minutes to bike out, and was an exhilarating ending to a great day of mountain adventuring, and we didn't get rained on! Approximate totals: 7½ miles of hiking and 11 miles of biking, with 5500 feet of gain.—Grant Myers, Bellingham, 3/24.

NORTH CASCADES HIGHWAY—Highway 20 opened on March 22, two days earlier than the previous earliest opening, which occurred in 1993.

road at 3000 feet and followed it around the north ridge of Pending to its end at 3300 feet near a creek.

After crossing the creek on a snow-covered log and entering old-growth woods, we angled southeast toward Patent Peak, and reached a timberline saddle at 4600+ feet just to its west. The day was warm with a hazy-sun overcast as we made our way up the final open slopes of peak 5038 and we were surprised to have 360-degree summit views at this low elevation. This is a marvelous viewpoint with over 950 feet of prominence, and we spent over an hour on top identifying summits near and far. 5½ hours to here with about 4800 feet gain.

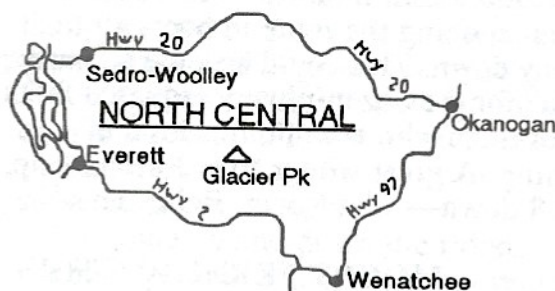
After leaving the top we began the (perhaps first ever) Patent-Pending traverse, which took about 45 minutes and was up and down an open-wooded ridge with numerous viewpoints and with excellent snowshoeing conditions.

The summit of 4801 was partially treed, but had nice views to the east. Rain was threatening and the hour was late, so we spent only a couple of minutes before dashing down Pending's north ridge.

We had to pull out a compass near the start of our descent to locate the ridge, and then did a short backtrack at 4200 feet, where the ridge developed a rocky fin, avoiding it to its east. After reaching the road we followed it only a short distance, then cut directly down the northwest flank of the ridge to reach our route up at the 3000-foot road. This shortcut involved several sitting glissades with snowshoes on; tricky but fast.

We followed the road to 2800 feet where we cut directly down-slope through some really messy old clear-cuts to reach the intersection where we had left the bikes. What had taken 1

NORTH CENTRAL



OLD MILK CREEK TRAIL (USGS Lime Mt)

I hiked up the Suiattle River trail for less than a mile, then turned right on the Milk Creek trail. After crossing the Suiattle River, the trail continues straight away from the river. But I noticed a fisherman's path next to the river, going upstream. For some time I've suspected the Milk Creek trail was moved. Old maps and guidebooks just didn't match the current trail locations. So I wandered up along the river. Sure enough, I ran into a remnant of an old bridge across a mucky area. And obvious tread but much overgrown.

I continued upstream, hoping to stay on the old route. But numerous large trees — very large trees — prevent easy passage. There is also some devils club and other vegetation blocking the way. I ran into several remnants of the venerable tread, and a few rotten bridges. Every once in a while I found a sawed log indicating I was still on route. It was very slow progress.

After over 2 hours of this, I stumbled onto the easier followed route near the mouth of Milk Creek. Just before this is an area of supreme moss, beautifully carpeting the old trail. The trail forks here, with the uphill segment heading toward the 2300-foot level of the Milk Creek new trail. The level segment heads to the Milk Creek junction with the Suiattle River. At the junction, the

old trail crossed Milk Creek and continued up a ways toward Grassy Point. [Ed. Note: See *P&P* January 1995, page 16; and *March* 1995, page 22 for Grassy Point epics.]

On this day, fording Milk Creek would not have been too difficult. But I backtracked up to the junction, and climbed up the trail until it fizzles out at the 2300-foot level. A relatively easy crosscountry brush bash got me to the new Milk Creek trail (at least 35 years old). I followed the new trail back to the Suiattle River bridge and back to the trailhead.

Both the old, overgrown trail and new trail have lots of glorious old growth timber, and are great places to travel in early season.—Steve Fox, Everett, 4/4.



ECHO LAKE (USGS Lk Chaplain)—This is a beautiful hike for very early spring or late fall. It is well described in *Footsore 2*, except the trailhead has been moved a mile back down the road to a gate. But even the road walk was very pleasant on this sunny first day of spring. We saw skunk cabbage and coltsfoot, ferns and moss-draped trees, and heard frog songs.

There are two creek crossings that were easy enough to rock-hop, and only a few downed trees. The trail is being well maintained by the Boy Scouts. The first section switchbacks steeply up to the top of the falls, but after that is very well graded. Several superb old railroad grades make up most of the upper section.

However, you may want to go there soon. We heard rumors of impending logging activity, and saw plenty of timber-cut boundary signs. Near the end, the trail is intersected by a new major logging road. After that, we never did find the last ¼-mile of trail leading down to Echo Lake, though we could glimpse the lake through the trees. We basically ran out of time for further searching.

This hike is still worth the effort, though. After the first ridge is attained, the trail switchbacks along the rim of an impressive cliff-edge. And there are remains of very large cedar stumps, old beaver ponds, and beautiful second-growth forest. Total distance is about 10 miles, with 1100 feet elevation gain.—C. Berner, Renton, 3/20.



GREIDER, STATIC PEAKS (USGS Mt Stickney)—The trail to Greider lakes in the Sultan Basin was snow free until just before the lakes. I left the trail between the two

BACKCOUNTRY NEWS

REPORTS AND CONDITIONS

lakes and headed up an open gully to a 4000-foot saddle on a minor ridge northeast of Greider, then continued west up steepening slopes weaving through cliffs to the main northeast ridge at 4600 feet. I tried to follow the ridge directly to the summit, but it was too rocky and narrow and twice I had to drop a hundred feet or so to the northwest to bypass pinnacles. I reached the summit at 3 o'clock on this beautiful sunny day.

I had a good view of Static Peak from Greider and the last bit looked intimidating. But I figured I'd go the base of the final snow slope and check it out. Things frequently look worse from a distance than they turn out to be. So I followed the easy ridge between the two peaks, losing about 600 feet before climbing back up through trees to the base of the Static pyramid. It still looked intimidating. But the snow was good for kicking steps, so leaving my pack and taking only a rope and two ice axes, I traversed out onto the northwest face until under the summit and then went straight up. I reached the final rocky point at 4:30.

I backed down the face pitch, then followed the ridge back toward Greider about 200 feet above the low point to where I could begin an easy traverse back to the saddle above the lakes. I was back at the lakes at 6:45 and, descending the trail by headlamp, the car at 7:50. 10 miles, 4400 feet and 9 hours.—Fay Pullen, Kent, 3/22.

▲▲ PEAK 5055 (USGS Evergreen Mtn)—This is a northwest summit of Beckler Peak (whose high point is 5062 feet, only 7 feet higher), located northeast of Skykomish town, approached up the Beckler River. Peak 5055 has a nice 415 feet of Prominence with Beckler Peak (named for a Great Northern RR engineer in 1892).

Ian and I tried to sneak a route from the 2600-foot end of road 6524 that goes high on 5055's north ridge from the Johnson Creek road. It was too early in the year to do that, and snow stopped us. We retreated to Harlan Creek 1240+ feet, 4.6 miles up Beckler River and parked at a tiny south side spur.

It's been long enough after logging activity to make the climb from here to 1900 feet decent, with only a few small downed trees to contend with. Then there is a steep open salal section to 2300 feet. After that the route is as pleasant and brushfree old growth as you're going to find in the North Cascades with a mossy carpet to the ridge crest at 3900 feet.

We put on snowshoes at 4000 feet

and wore them over an undulating levelish section and on up to 4600 feet, then took them off for the last steepish 450 feet vertical. As good luck would have it, the top turns totally open, giving great views in all directions to a bunch of peaks. Eagle Rock is closest, and most impressive.

What to call this? Nothing we came up with seemed just right, though we considered names like Fred Peak (Beckler), after the guidebook writer; or Harlequin Peak, which sounds a little like Harlan, the creek that drains the east and north slopes; or Raptor Peak, in keeping with Eagle Rock, and newly named Hawk Hill just across the valley; or even Peak Fifty-55 (5055), after those middle-aged climbers in this span, like Ian.

We soaked up the sun and views from the top for 45 minutes, then headed home, doing the route in boots all the way down. This could become a "must do" for the dozen-plus or -squared folks out there who are into this kind of thing. A great winter trip. 3.8 hours up, 1.8 down—John Roper, Bellevue, 4/4.

❄ MOUNT FERNOW (USGS Skykomish, Captain Point, Scenic)—I was able to drive road 6066, off Highway 2, to the third switchback, a little over 4 miles and 2600 feet. It was snowing hard when I started. Then the sun came out. It alternated between heavy snow and sun the rest of the day.

Although stopped by snow at the switchback, around the corner was a bare patch. These bare patches continued for the next 2½ miles. I had hoped to ski most of this road but even with some new snow there wasn't enough snow to ski until the junction with road 6067. Here, finally, I was able to put on the skis.

I stayed on road 6066 to the next switchback where I went straight on a very overgrown old logging road. I struggled through thick alder for three more switchbacks, not great skiing, then went straight ahead on a less overgrown spur. After crossing a deep washed-out ravine, this spur ended on a steep hillside at 4000 feet.

I left my skis here and headed up a steep brushy old clearcut. Above the clearcut I entered a lovely forest of open trees that would have been very skiable. Too bad. But no way could I have wrestled my skis through that clearcut. The forest led to the southwest ridge which I followed to the gentle wooded summit of Alpine Baldy at 4 o'clock.

I could see Mount Fernow through the trees, not too far away (I thought)

and decided to go for it even though I knew it would make for a long day. First I had to drop off the north ridge of Alpine Baldy in a descending traverse, eventually losing 600 feet.

This was a steep traverse mostly in trees with 4 to 5 inches of fresh snow over crust. It was too crusty for my snowshoes (they just slipped off), yet too soft for boots so I ended up postholing knee deep in this section. More delays. Things were just not going well this trip. But I pigheadedly pushed on, eventually working my way to the ridge above Jakes Lake.

I traversed around the lake, then up open slopes to a gully that wound up between two rock pinnacles. The upper part of the gully steepened and became somewhat crusty so that kicking steps was an effort. The summit of Mount Fernow was at the top of the gully. It was 7pm.

I started down almost immediately. It was harder getting back down the upper gully than I thought it would be. Of course by now I was getting tired. So I went slowly and very carefully. Then it was fast plunge stepping down to the start of the traverse back up to Alpine Baldy. I considered bypassing Alpine Baldy by traversing below it and picking up my tracks lower on the ridge. But I felt it wasn't worth the risk of losing my way. Besides I would have to break a new trail.

So I followed my tracks back and climbed the 600 feet back up to the summit. This section went very slowly. It was now dark but the almost full



Candy Berner photographs skunk cabbage on the Old Robe trail.

moon came and went through the passing clouds occasionally giving off a bright light.

Eventually I made it back to Alpine Baldy. A fast trip down the ridge and clearcut got me back to my skis at 10:30. I was able to ski the spur but had to snowshoe down the overgrown logging road. Another short ski down to the junction with 6067 then a long walk by moonlight down the road to the welcome sight of my car at 1:30am.

It shouldn't normally take so long, but bad snow conditions and equipment choices conspired to make this trip extra challenging. 14 miles, 5400 feet and 14 hours.—Fay Pullen, Kent, 4/6.



SPROMBERG RIDGE (GT Leavenworth)

The ridge name does not appear on maps, but is a name we've given to the ridge northeast of Spromberg Canyon. The trail is shown on a July 1964 Martin and Pargeter map of the North Central Cascades. For the connoisseur of old trails, the July 1951 Wenatchee National Forest map shows several trails in the area bounded by Highways 2 and 209, the Wenatchee River, and Leavenworth which are fun to try to find.

This ridge opens early, sometime in March. Many varieties of flowers were already blooming on this sunny day in mid-April. We saw bunches of glacier lilies and spring beauty, plus waterleaf, mertensia, and more. The balsamroot was just beginning to bloom, so the peak of the spring flowers should be around the first part of May. We found several ticks, plus one lizard, and one grouse. Views start almost from the beginning and continue all the way. Snow on surrounding ridges made the scenery especially beautiful.

From the east end of Leavenworth, turn north on Chumstick Highway and drive toward Plain. At 4 miles turn left at a sign to Spromberg Canyon. Go over the railroad tracks, and park on the right edge of the road by the speed limit sign.

We spoke with the man who owns the land at the beginning of the trail (later it becomes National Forest land in alternating sections), and he doesn't mind if people walk there. He had a friendly big dog (smelling faintly of skunk) who decided to follow us.

There was no water on our route, so at lunch we fed him some of our water, which he seemed to greatly appreciate. We fashioned a doggie bowl out of a shallow hole dug into the dirt and lined with a plastic bag. After that he took a nap while waiting for us to finish lunch, then escorted us all the

way back.

At the trailhead, follow the dirt track very steeply up. It soon becomes a 2-track old road built before switchbacks were invented, staying steep for at least a half mile before it levels off a little. However, there are more steep stretches ahead. There may be motorbikes at the beginning, but after a certain point they appear to continue no farther.

After a very slow hour, we came to a National Forest Boundary sign. Shortly after is where the motorbikes turn around. An old road continues down to the right at this point. Find the trail on the left, which descends a little, and becomes somewhat overgrown and brushy. However, the ridgeline is obvious and easy enough to follow. The trail seems to get very little use.

Eventually the ridge goes down straight ahead and ends. Just before this point is a double pine tree with a view across to a ridge on the right. Find the obvious trail to the right of the double tree and follow it down across a saddle, then back up the ridgeline, sometimes very steeply.

Continue up and down the ridge, eventually coming to a rocky summit at point 2751 shown on the map. The trail here follows faintly around to the right at the base of the rock, coming to an easy route up. This is where we enjoyed lunch and then turned around.

However, the trail continues, eventually following roads and devious routes, leading to Highway 2 by the bridge over the Wenatchee River in Tumwater Canyon. A one-way through hike is about 8 miles and 3000 feet gain. Carl led this route for the Mountaineers twice in the 1980s. Today we went a total distance of about 5 miles and felt like we'd had a pretty good workout.—C. Berner, Renton, 4/14

CASCADE RIVER ROAD—Open to the gate at MP 21, about 2 miles before trailhead.—Ranger, 4/12.

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SUIATTLE RIVER—Trail snowfree for 10 miles.—Ranger, 4/13.

MOUNTAIN LOOP HIGHWAY—Gated at Barlow Pass.—Ranger, 4/5.

GOTHIC BASIN—Patchy snow on first portion of trail then snow free for about 1 mile. You then encounter snow again about 1.5 miles before reaching the basin. Snowshoes are helpful the last mile.—Ranger, 4/13.

MOUNT DICKERMAN—No significant snow for first mile or so.—Ranger, 4/13.

MOUNT PILCHUCK—Hard packed snow the first 1.5 miles (in the timber). Instep crampons are a good idea. Snow on the open upper portion can get soft; be prepared for postholing.—Ranger, 4/13.

MAD RIVER—For an early spring hike, try the Lower Mad River trail. It meanders along the beautiful Mad River; wildflowers should start showing up soon. There might be some lingering snow patches.

To access the Lower Mad River, drive up the Entiat road to Ardenvoir, and turn left on road 5700 to Pine Flats campground. Park at the campground gate.

The Mad River trails are closed to machines until later in the summer and a Northwest Forest Pass is *not required* for this trailhead.—Ranger, 4/10.

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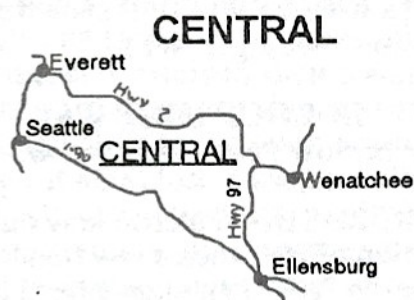
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MOUNT CLEVELAND

(USGS Grotto)—Leaving the

Money Creek road just before the bridge, I drove up the logging road on the north side of Mount Cleveland to the first switchback at 1.1 miles and 1400 feet. The road has a rough but passable section at .3-mile.

I left the car in a light drizzle carrying skis and snowshoes. I soon ran into fresh snow on the road and was able to put on skis at the fourth switchback even though there were many annoying little creek crossings to begin with. However, the road was not very overgrown and eventually the snow became good for skiing. The road ended on the side of a hill after the 14th switchback at about 3800 feet. The drizzle had changed to light snow.

From the end of the road I entered the woods and traversed left to a broad ridge. Once above an initial steep section, this ridge was pleasant open woods and made for surprisingly good skiing.

I followed this ridge to a high point above Cleveland Lake then dropped slightly to a saddle and traversed left around a rocky section of the ridge. Gaining the ridge again past the cliffs, very pleasant terrain led south past a pond and open meadows to the base of a wide gully. I was able to stay on skis to just below the notch at the head of the gully. From here it was an easy task to kick steps up the remaining short distance to the summit.

I didn't stay long on the summit as it was getting late. Besides I couldn't see anything anyway and it was snowing and blowing. Skiing down was good. I just followed my tracks back. The first part of the road was also a good ski, until I hit those annoying creek crossings. By that time it was dark anyway, so I snowshoed and walked the rest of the way back to the car. 13 miles, 4200 feet and 9½ hrs.—Fay Pullen, Kent, 3/28.

WEST RED MOUNTAIN

(GT 174 Mt Si)—Drive Highway 2 and turn up toward the Money

Creek campground, then take road 6420 as far as is drivable toward Lake Elizabeth (about 1900 feet).

I had been planning to do some peaks off Highway 2 for some time and my

mom told me that the forecast looked "pretty good" for Monday. I got a bit of a late start, arriving at the 3.5-mile marker on road 6420 around 12:30.

Parking here I could begin my attempt on the named peak of Red Mountain (point 5447 or West Red to some). So with my GT map in hand off I went under quickly darkening skies. By the time I got to Lake Elizabeth there was zero visibility. I was going to have to rely completely on my compass and altimeter to get me to the top.

At the lake it began sleet/snowing/raining quite hard and the snow was wet and heavy, thus I made very slow progress northwest up to a broad basin at about 4400 feet, west of Red Mountain proper. Visibility continued to be nil as I began a westward trek to a the West Red-Middle Red col. I dropped my pack and continued upward in the fog and snow up West Red's east ridge. More than once on the ridge I thought that I would turn around, but onward I continued.

Due to the high pressure my altimeter was over 300 feet off, so just when I thought that I was near the summit I'd see more trees and steep terrain above me, ugh! I finally ran out of upward ground as I summited around 5:30pm. It was very windy at the top and my clothes and hair were frozen into stiff shells.

There were no views anywhere but ground fell away from me in every direction. I was content with a hard-earned summit. So I "enjoyed" the fog for a few minutes before deciding to get the heck out of there! I arrived back at the lake around 7:45 and back at my car around 8:30.

This was a very difficult day with not a whole lot of redeeming value other than the fact that I did get to the summit and it is fun to test your route finding skills in horrific conditions. So despite everything, I did have a good time and was glad that Mom told me it was going to be a good day! The entire day was at least 9 miles with 4000 feet of gain, and of course it felt like twice that!—Pilar, Monroe, 4/9.



BARNYARD TRAVERSE

(USGS Snoqualmie Lk, Lk

Philippa)—Drive to the very end of the North Fork Snoqualmie road, taking the Lennox Creek fork (road 57) as far as it is drivable (we got within 1 mile of the Bare Mountain trailhead).

Our original party of just Mitch and me expanded to include Mark, Ian, Don and Alton. The "Barnyard Traverse" now had a full-on team with which to make this an easy day. We began at

about 1900 feet with an easy flat jaunt up to the end of the road (the road itself is washed out just past the Bare Mountain trailhead, where it crosses Bear Creek).

In no time at all we found ourselves at the Dog Mountain trailhead. From here, snowshoes would be necessary for the rest of the trip (up to two feet of new powder, on a fairly consolidated base). Everyone took turns in the lead and we made slow but steady progress up the gentle north ridge of Dog Mountain. We reached the summit sometime around 1pm. We stayed here for about half an hour before saying good-bye to Mark (who had already done Goat) and descending southwest down toward Cougar Lake.

While descending Don's snowshoe broke but he was able to fix it using an ice axe strap that he had buckled to his pack. At the lake the sun broke through for some amazing lighting while we traipsed across the frozen expanse of Cougar Lake.

From here we traversed up to a minor saddle and on to the base of the southeast ridge of Goat. The last bit up Goat was relatively steep with one minor rock outcropping at about 4900 feet that we by-passed on the left. Above the rock step the heavily treed slopes provided easy access to the summit plateau.

After spending some time on the top we headed down. We arrived at Lennox Creek just as it got dark and were greeted by Mark in Mitch's truck (a mile farther up the road than we'd started earlier in the morning). After we waded across the creek in mid-thigh water Mark gave us all a ride back to Ian's car. Mark had been waiting patiently for our return and driving up and down the Lennox Creek road looking for us.—Pilar, Monroe, 4/7.



MIDDLE FORK SNOQUALMIE (GT Mt Si, Skyko-

mish)—The trailhead is located off the Lake Dorothy road/Middle Fork Snoqualmie road near the intersection with the Taylor River Road. The parking lot is huge, but was almost empty today.

This trail was engineered as part of the effort to improve the Middle Fork recreation area. Other plans are afoot to add trailheads to the CCC Road and other trails and abandoned roads in the area. The Middle Fork Trail follows an ancient route that climbs over the Pacific Crest at Dutch Miller Gap.

Charlene and I started across the grand bridge over the fluid green waters of the Middle Fork. This trail is great for families and beginning hikers, or those just wanting to get out and enjoy

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a pretty area. We saw only five people on the trail all day, surprising in such good weather.

Just across the bridge, the trail was blasted into the side of the mountain until about even with the confluence with Taylor River; it wanders away from the river and into lush, mossy, fern-filled second growth woods. The trail follows an old road and benches above the river, winding up and down through marshy areas and across small creeks until it drops to touch the river. We had lunch on a large gravel bar, exposed by the low water this year.

We hiked on past Cripple Creek Bridge before turning around. The creek was roaring down through its cascades, a pretty sight. The air was mild and spring flowers were making an appearance. Charlene spotted our first trillium of 2001, marking the arrival of spring in the mountains. There was also lots of skunk cabbage, coltsfoot and some salmonberry starting to bloom. The red alder blooms gave Charlene some problems with allergies. Along the route are some grand old trees, survivors of early cutting efforts in the area. I also saw some native lilies beginning to unfurl in a sunny spot.

We had great views of Garfield Mountain and some of the other rugged peaks in the area. The slopes above the trail to the south were burnished granite cliffs, an indication of ancient glacier activity in the valley. We also enjoyed the songs of numerous, busy birds, noted the flight of a hawk, had a close encounter with a garter snake and conversation with a Douglas squirrel.

There were four trees down over the trail, one very large that needed climbing over. Go ready to play in the mud; there are plenty of gooey clay mud holes in this damp mossy valley. Some portions of the trail are newer than others and the tread is still soft and easily damaged by traffic, bike and foot. I saw several survey markers along the trail, perhaps indicating some future plans for trail work. Mountain bikes are allowed on this trail, but no horses or motorcycles. The approach road is full of huge potholes after the bridge over the river. Drive carefully.—Liz Escher, University Place, 3/24.

 **MOUNT SI, new trail** (GT 174 Mt Si)—While hiking the Miner's trail between Mount Teneriffe road and Mount Si's new trail, we discovered a brand new trail that is being professionally built. If you look on page 42 of *Secrets of Si*, on the right-hand side of the page find number 38. Northwest of 38 see a log on the right side of


the trail. At that log is a wide spot; notice a faint trail going east. Follow that trail a short distance to the top of the ridge, about 100 yards or less. At that point you will find a new trail that goes to the left. Follow that wonderful and serene trail to Alder Road as seen on page 52 of *SOS*.

By using this new trail, you can access both directions of Alder Road. By going right you'll find Washout Creek and Mount Teneriffe road. This will make a nice loop and a shortcut to Mount Teneriffe. The speculation by our group is that this trail may eventually go to Kaikaze Falls and to the top of Mount Teneriffe.

All the particulars for this new trail will be detailed in the revised edition of *SOS*. We are presently doing a GPS survey, placing all trails in their correct positions on the terrain.

PS: I have since learned that this trail is a loop starting at Rock Slide Vista. To get there take the right trail at the fork at Snag Flat. Follow it to the talus fall. The trail builders have made a great trail across the talus. Once across, follow it and you will travel Alder Road to the new trail. Several nice switchbacks on the steep stuff, but it is a great way to get away from the crowd.

The people building this fabulous trail are fast and good. In two weeks they have built this 2.38 mile long loop trail. I want to commend them with sincere thanks for a job well done.—Robert DeGraw, Kirkland, 3/24.

 **ARROWHEAD, JIM HILL** (GT 145 Wenatchee Lk, 176 Stevens Pass)—This weekend I was joined by Pilar, Alton, and Ian to do Arrowhead and a traverse to Jim Hill Mountain. Ian was giddy with excitement because he knew right from the start he would never have to lead. And I never had to lead to the top of Arrowhead as the two powerhouses were out in front.

It was sprinkling as we left the car sometime around 8am just beyond the railroad underpass on our way up to Arrowhead. We encountered extremely soft wet snow due to the rainy conditions and put on snowshoes around 2800 feet. We went through a clearcut to attain a higher logging road and went to the end of the logging road at 3600 feet where we proceeded through open trees. Around 4400 feet conditions changed to more fresh powdery snow (about 16 inches) on top of a hard crusted layer. The sprinkles changed to snow showers and the going became more pleasant.

Pilar asked if I wanted to lead at one

point and I said "No!" I think he was startled. I wanted to save my energy for the traverse to Jim Hill because he was not going to do the traverse.


Pilar led us to the top of Arrowhead at 10:30. We gave him car keys and a radio, and Alton and I took off for Jim Hill without waiting for Ian. Alton and I traversed over the easy ridge bypassing point 5909 just to the south. After point 5909 we dropped down into the north bowl below point 6131 to avoid the craggy ridge and sidehilled without snowshoes. This went very well. After the drop down we started traversing back up staying very close, but just below the ridge.

The higher we got the windier it became. Visibility was very poor and this is where I had to rely on Alton's previous experience because he had been to this area before, but he reached the top of the false summits to the east of Jim Hill. If it weren't for Alton I would not have known where the summit was. After a traverse seemed to last forever we took off our snowshoes and Alton pointed—that way to the summit.

I had intentionally left my goggles at home to save weight. I needed them. Snow was blowing everywhere. The snow on my face felt like I was at Long Beach on a windy day with sand hitting my face. The wind was probably about 25 miles per hour and surprisingly wasn't that cold. Several times I glimpsed the route before me and then just moved in that direction with my eyes shut.

We went up two short little steep sections and traversed to the summit. I have no idea how steep it was to the north as I could not see. At times I could see about 100 feet to the south where things did not look so bad. We found the summit register encased in ice and we did not attempt to extract it. I came down the summit block down-climbing two sections while closing my eyes for about 15 feet each time. This ascent has made me realize the value of ski goggles.

We got back to the packs, made a radio call, and made fast progress out the obvious ridge back to the cross country ski park at about 3:30 without incident.—Stefan Feller, Auburn, 3/31.

 **PEAK 5203** (USGS Kachess Lk)—This 5203 foot summit is cuddled by French Cabin, Thorp, and Knox Creeks, and is accessed from Roslyn off I-90, driving north past the upper end of Cle Elum Lake (looking very thirsty this year) to a west turn over the Cle Elum River bridge.

Mike, Jeff, and I parked at the bridge

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at a "no vehicles, except snowmobiles" sign, 2240 feet. We played with name possibilities, like Hard Knox, or Easy Knox borrowing from its association with Knox Creek, then decided on Fools Peak, since this was April Fools Day. Although it's a homely hill, being nibbled by loggers, it has a worthy 403 feet of Prominence.

We trudged up road 4306 (French Cabin Creek road) for just over 3 miles, gaining 1000 feet, half annoyed by the snowmobiles that passed us, and half happy that they packed the route so we didn't need snowshoes. We turned right up Thorp Creek road just a bit, then put on snowshoes and caught the east ridge of Fools which we followed to the top through pleasant open Eastern Washington old growth. Along this ridge were "Harvest Boundary" tapes, so the views will likely be enhanced here. The snow was consolidated enough to make an easy go of it, and we were treated to a fun combo of softly falling snow in the presence of blue sky.

The top has a nice opening that allows good views to the French Cabin Peak trio, Kachess, Thorp, Red, and the Louvre-Jolly-Sasse-Hex lineup. Jeff and Mike finished off the Kachess Lake Quad with this summit. Not a bad little winter destination. 3.3 hours up, 2.2 down.—John Roper, Bellevue, 4/1/01.

ENCHANTMENTS—Permit processing began 3/1. All dates in August are taken, and there are very few dates left in July and September.—Ranger, 4/5.

SOUTH CENTRAL



RATTLESNAKE LAKE, IRON HORSE TRAIL (GT)

205S Rattlesnake Mtn)—I decided to do a nice 10-mile flat, out-and-back hike to test out some new boots. The weather tested me on this April Fool's Day. Rain-snow-sun in rotation was the order of the day. Still, a handful of hikers and bikers were out enjoying this great trail.

The walk from Rattlesnake Lake to Twin Falls makes for a fine outing with great views of the Snoqualmie Valley. The Seattle Public Utilities' Cedar Lake Interpretation Center is nearing completion. I haven't been here in years, lots of changes, paved trail now embraces the lake. If you still need con-

vincing that we are facing a drought, check out Rattlesnake Lake—er, puddle: it has almost completely disappeared.—Craig Romano, Seattle, 4/1.



BOOK MOUNTAIN (USGS)

Manastash Cr)—Some call this Book Mountain; locals refer to it as the Westberg Memorial. The trail is called the Westberg trail.

On I-90 take the Thorp exit. Go right on Thorp Highway to Cove Road, turning right to the parking area marked Summit Trail Parking. This is just short of the gated end of the road. This is where the trail begins, crossing the irrigation canal and following up a canyon where it goes to the left and climbs the ridge. There are a few trees, but mostly sagebrush and low plants. We spotted some yellow buttercups and yellow lilies along the trail. In about 2 miles it reaches the summit where a memorial stands to the late wrestling coach at Ellensburg High School.

This is a good lunch spot. Mount Rainier is visible when it is clear, which it was not. This is a high point on Manastash Ridge and you can wander as far as you want in either direction. Returning, just a short way below the summit a trail branches to the left descending through a large grove of pine trees along a dry creek. It comes out on a farm road about a mile from the main trailhead. This makes a nice loop. The total hike is 4 to 5 miles, plus whatever wandering you do along the ridge.

Our group does this hike at least once a year. It is a good one for fall or spring when the high Cascades are not accessible. It is frequently dry and sunny.—Leigh Champlin, Seattle, 4/1.



MAZAMA RIDGE (USGS)

Mt Rainier East)—Snowshoed to the Stevens Van Trump Memorial on Mazama Ridge from Paradise on crusted snow. Could have done most of the trip without snowshoes but the crampons on the MSR shoes are a great help in getting up steep slopes. I went straight up the hill from the base of Sluiskin Falls without difficulty.

Sunny and too warm, surface becoming slushy at 3 pm.—Paul Schaufler, Olympia, 3/21.



EDITH BASIN (USGS Mt)

Rainier East)—Skied the loop from Paradise to the head of Deadhorse, then across to and down Edith basin on the best snow of the season, about 8 inches new.

Met the Sundstroms again. Did the trip in a hurry, weather was moving in

from the southwest and I do not want to get caught in the whiteouts that are so common there.

Park informs me that Highways 410 and 123, Cayuse to Ohanapecosh will be open about April 13.—Paul Schaufler, Olympia, 4/4.



POCH-BERRY TRAVERSE (USGS Golden Lks)

—This is a great trip when the weather isn't looking all that good.

I began under cloudy skies at the entrance to Mowich Lake. An old trail begins (easy to locate) at around 3600 feet. I followed the trail until about 4200 feet where I just started heading due north to the heavily treed summit of Martin Peak (4880+ feet with 320 feet of Prominence). The summits of all the surrounding peaks were totally socked in so I had no views all day long.

Virginia Peak (4880+ feet with 120 feet of P) was next, northeast of Martin Peak. From here I dropped to about 4400 feet heading due north to intersect the ridge below August Peak (4680+ feet with 120 feet of P). An easy jaunt to the west put me on top of (you guessed it!) another heavily treed summit.

It was now time to climb the "grand-daddy summit" for the day, Poch Peak (5080+ feet with 680 feet of P). This peak actually has a relatively open summit but again with no views.

To continue the ridge traverse I now had one more peak to go: West Poch (5000+ feet with 560 feet of P). After climbing to the top of West Poch, I descended back to the Poch-West Poch saddle and followed road 7930 eastward and back into the Park, dropping to about 4120 feet.

Now I had one peak left to go to get my sixth summit for the day, the mighty Berry Peak (5120+ feet with 120 feet of P). A thousand-foot gain brought me to the summit of Berry's West Peak (not included in the total) and then an easy eastward traverse to the top of Berry (one small rock outcrop to circumnavigate). I then descended almost due south (from just below Berry), back to the Mowich Lake

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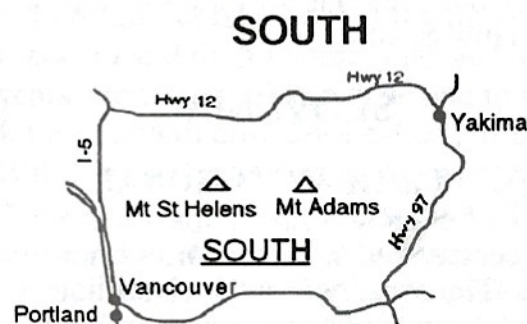
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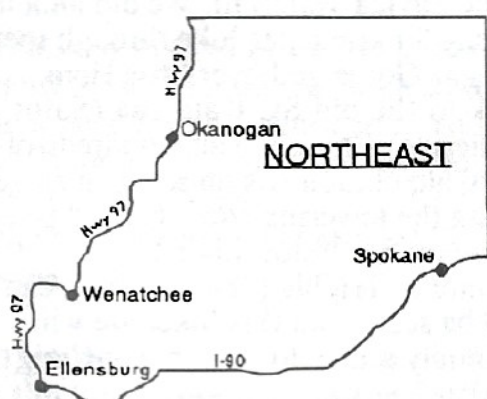
road and then an easy slog back to the car.

Stats: about 8 miles with 3500 feet of gain. This is the easiest 6 peaks you will ever get, so all you peak baggers, get out there and bag!—Pilar, Monroe, 3/29.



MT ADAMS DIST—With the mild winter, lack of snow, and warm spring days, people are going into the forest earlier this year. Most roads and trails, however are still covered with snow. There is not a lot of snow, but enough to make passage difficult.—Ranger, 4/3.

NORTHEAST



SQUAW SADDLE (USGS Wenatchee, Monitor)

—From downtown Wenatchee, drive south on Miller Avenue to its end at a T-intersection against the hills. Turn right and find a well used parking area just beyond the horse stables.

Squaw Saddle is about a mile by old road with an elevation gain of around 800 feet. Or you can follow steeper trails and get there quicker. The road swings around to the left, then up to the saddle from the back side. Views are plentiful of downtown Wenatchee, the Columbia River, and Mission Ridge. Lots of birds. Flowers were just beginning to bloom. There should be a fabulous flower show the first part of May.

Inspiration for this hike comes from Charlie Hickenbottom in the April 1996 issue, page 10, of *Pack & Paddle*. Squaw Saddle is a jagged vertical rock formation. Lots of locals seem to come here, most only going as far as the saddle. Horse riders venture farther. We continued beyond to the end of

the ridge.

The ridge is probably snowfree most years in March. A good trail goes to the end of the ridge, about 2 miles beyond the saddle, at 2930 feet, at a point which overlooks Number Two Canyon and Horse Lake Mountain. Just before the end, a trail takes off to the south heading in the direction of Pitcher, described in Charlie's '96 *P&P* report, maybe another 1.5 miles away and 1000 feet higher. It was very tempting, but we decided to save it for another trip.

About a mile beyond the saddle, at a small rock cairn, we ventured off on a trail well used by horses, cows, and deer. Rounding a shoulder and crossing a couple of gulches, we looped back up along a fenceline to the main ridge trail. In this area we saw about 30 deer, and cows grazing nearby. We spotted a couple of old fallen-down buildings, and a road leading to the next ridge over. Many places to explore here. There are almost no trees to block views and potential walking routes.

Without side trips, the entire return route along the ridge trail took us only two hours at a leisurely pace. This was a very enjoyable and scenic 7 mile hike.—C. Berner, Renton, 4/15.



NORTHERN DOUGLAS COUNTY (DeLorme Washington Atlas, pages 100, 101, 84, 85)

—This area is bounded by the Columbia River on the west and north, and Banks Lake/Grand Coulee on the east.

Jeff Howbert, son Aaron (now 7), and I entered this high flat scabland of glaciers gone, and floods past, not really knowing what we'd find. We drove from Bellevue to Wenatchee to Chelan to Brewster, then crossed the Columbia River, to drive into northern Douglas County on Highway 173 (page 100 in DeLorme's Atlas).

Just south of the burg of Rocky Butte, we stopped to climb Rattlesnake Point (1040+), our lowest summit of the weekend, then continued by Subaru to the high point of Castle Rock and on to Dyer Hill (2953) for lunch, the highest point of our trip, where the UW has a seismograph station powered by a solar panel. What did they just learn from here, we wondered? These latter two were the only drive-ups of our weekend outing.

Proceeding south onto page 84 in DeLorme, we picked off Landingham Hill, then went east to Carter Hill (not shown in DeLorme, but it's on Topozone, just east of Foster Creek Wildlife Area). Jeff had done his usual meticulous research on this area, calculating

out all the Prominences of these various named landforms, and running off a detailed map of each summit from the Washington State TOPO! CDs.

Now we traveled south to pick up Lone Butte and Burke Hill and went into Mansfield for supplies. The clerk here told us that the town's population was about 500, and that her high school graduating class had six students.

We were feeling pretty cocky now, after seven "peaks," and talked of breaking Jeff's personal best day of 12 summits as we headed east to Yeager Rock. Whoa, Nellie! This glacial erratic chunk of basalt lies in a field just off the road, and is maybe 25feet wide and 25feet high. Its walls are nearly vertical, but it has an Aaron-sized crack all the way through it, wide enough for adults from the north. I tried stemming the rift, but lost confidence as the split widened at the top. Take your rock climbing buddy and a rope.

We continued north to do Piersol Hills, but then ran into some "No Trespassing for Any Reason" signs that made us skip Wheeler Hills and Hook Hill. The sky was darkening with clouds as we did Bell Butte, and the silliest of all, Mary Jane Hill. Next was Chalk Hills, Aaron's favorite, crumbly and white, just north across Highway 17 (not in DeLorme).

As we headed east to Grand Coulee, we stopped at Crown Point overview, then it was time to find a campsite. The wind, cold, and light sprinkle made it easy to choose a motel over the tent, and we treated ourselves to a room that looked right at the largest concrete structure on earth, Grand Coulee Dam.

On April 8, we got up and trudged to the top of the huge Sand Hill, left over from the dam construction and right in Coulee Dam town. Aaron delighted in the fun run back down. We headed back west to pick up some summits we'd missed on pages 101 and 85 in DeLorme. First we hiked up Wilson Butte which proved to be our longest jaunt in Douglas County—17 minutes up, 13 minutes down.

Wilson has a respectable Prominence of 610 feet. We then took a look at Balloon Rock (not in DeLorme, but just north of Osborne Corner). It appeared from the road to be a 50-foot high erratic that looked like a hot air balloon, and unclimbable by us. This led Jeff to make the observation that anything in this area named "Rock" would probably turn out to be a technical climb.

So this made us doubtful of our chances for success on Twin Rocks (again not in DeLorme, but essentially at the top of Long Ridge). Luckily, the

BACKCOUNTRY NEWS

REPORTS AND CONDITIONS

higher of these Rocks proved to be just doable with care by our gang.

Though the land is generally flat, there are many shallow valleys, and small ponds are tucked about, most always with ducks. The roads usually run along section lines and vary from paved to two tracks in the sage where high clearance is nice. There's hardly a tree in sight, and glacial erratics dot the landscape and delight the eye. These basalt chunks were bulldozed up off the surface of the plateau by an advancing glacier. The land is covered in sage, low vegetation, and some bunch grass, though many a farmer is trying to eke out a living growing wheat, all mowed this time of year. Aaron came home with three ticks in his hair.

We finished the morning on Ragged Butte, Reaves Butte, and Spiva Butte, then drove past another impossible looking form, Tower Rock, and had lunch on the west bank of Banks Lake down Barker Canyon before climbing Cache Butte. There are nice undeveloped camps here.

The frosting on the cake of our climbing bonanza weekend ended atop Steamboat Rock in Banks Lake (Grant County) which is the premier landform of this entire region. There is a trail to this broad mesa from a very pleasant State Park campground. From the summit, you really get a feeling for "the greatest flood in history." 15,000 years ago, a glacier blocked a tributary of the Columbia River in Idaho and created an enormous "Lake Missoula" in Montana. When times warmed up and this

ice dam broke, that lake rushed down into Washington, enlarging the Grand Coulee and overflowing high to rip off the top layers of lots of Washington east of the present Columbia River, creating what the geologists call a channeled scabland. The water rushed down the Grand Coulee in a volume that scientists estimate equaled the flow of every river in the world today. Times 10! Yowie!

Not counting our failure on Yeager Rock, and the road-signed, but not map-named Crown Point, we finished the weekend with 20 new named summits in Washington to add to our lists.—John Roper, Bellevue, 4/7-8.

ITALY



VIOTE CROSS-COUNTRY SKI CENTER, Trentino—

Heather and I spent most of the month of March in the Alps. Our intention was to ski; however, this part of Europe, like the Pacific Northwest, was not receiving its usual share of snow. But we did get in a great day of ski touring at the Viote center just outside Trento in the Dolomites.

At a base elevation of 1550 meters there was plenty of snow. A series of well-groomed and tracked trails head out all over the valley ringed by the four summits of Monte Bondone (2180 meters). American ski centers take note—our rentals here cost 12,000 lira (less than \$6) and our ski pass was only 5,000 lira (less than \$2.50). Yesterday we downhill at Monte Bondone—all-

day lift ticket for 31,000 lira (about \$15). It is kind of crazy when we can afford to ski in Europe but not at home!

Most of the center is in open country with extensive views of the Adige Valley and the wall of peaks that form the impressive Brenta Dolomites. In summer this area is a hiking center. Bus ride from Trento is only \$2.—Craig Romano, Seattle, 3/15.

SLOVENIA



TRIGLAV NATIONAL PARK, Julien Alps—Slovenia

has become one of our favorite countries. The country is small (2 million people), green, has thousands of kilometers of trails; the people are friendly and active; and the country is a bargain. We based out of Bled, a famous lakeside town where former Yugo's Tito vacationed. In Bled trails lead everywhere: around lakes, to meadows, up ridges, to waterfalls, through gorges and up snow-covered peaks.

We did a 21 kilometer hike around beautiful undeveloped Lake Bohinj and to the Savica Waterfall. We did another all-day 20 kilometer hike through the Vintgar Gorge and over little Hom Peak to the old Sv. Katarina (Saint Catherine) Church. This hundreds-of-years-old church sits on an open ridge facing the towering snow-capped peaks of Mount Stol. Slovenia's highest mountain, Triglav (2864 meters), can also be seen from this hike. We will definitely return to this area.—Craig Romano, Seattle, 3/20-24.

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.

FOUND—Car keys on the top of Doe Canyon Loop, near Early Winters above the Methow Valley. Toyota and Subaru on 4 rings and a belt clip. They're above the work bench in Jack's Hut ski shop by the Freestone Inn.

WANTED—Looking for a few women to start a weekly hiking group, but only during the week. I am a 64-year-old woman who has hiked extensively in Washington for 30-35 years, except for the last two. I want to start up again. Bellevue, near I-90. Marita, 425-746-3877.

WANTED—Hiking/climbing partner for Old Goat. Intermediate skills. If you're over 50 and still got it, give me a call. 253-838-8621; ask for Pat.

FREE—Woman's XC ski boots. Size 7½, Merrell backcountry model, leather with Vibram sole, near new condition. Free to whomever can put them to good use. 509-943-6940 (Richland).

TRAVEL—Wanted: Adventurous people to join a Hike-n-Bike tour of Austria, September 9-19. Hike and bike with a certified Austrian Guide to Austria's lovely Karwendel Nature Park, cross the Achensee, Maryhofen, much more. Group size limited to 20 members. For information e-mail <jack.melill@juno.com> or call 425-313-4632.

FOR SALE—I have Tyvek! Use for lightweight groundcloths and tarps. Had

to buy a long 9-foot-wide roll, now seeking to apportion remainder out in 5'x9' pieces. \$10 for one, \$15 for two, \$20 for three. "While supplies last." Other lengths may be possible, prorated. <dhzooms@hotmail.com>

FOR SALE—Werner Camano paddle, fiberglass, blue/white, 230 cm (7½ feet) non-take-apart, unfeathered, \$100; and Beran, beautiful wooden paddle, 7 feet, 3" long, non-take-apart, feathered, \$75. 425-823-2118 (Bothell).

OSAT—A clean and sober climbing and mountaineering club. 253-236-9674 or on the web: www.osat.org

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).

MARK LAHERTY

the Birthday Trip

—AN ARCTIC ADVENTURE IN THE BROOKS RANGE—

I'd been talking about going on an arctic adventure for some time. A few years ago my wife Nora gave one to me for my fortieth birthday. I called a friend, Bill, who was all set to go anywhere in Alaska. Then we convinced Nora and Bill's wife Teri to go along, even though they are not big on camping.

We contacted guide Jerald Stansel who told us of a fairly easy, unguided hike/float trip in the Brooks Range.

We would fly to Fairbanks, hop a feeder to a place called Bettles Field, take a float plane north to the Continental Divide, hike 20 miles down the North Fork Koyukuk River, jump in a raft that would be left for us and float the 80 or so miles back to Bettles. Simple.

When we arrived in Bettles in mid-August we met Jerald. He has a smile that at once inspires confidence. After discussing our trip, we set a time to meet in the morning.

Next morning we met at Jerald's Cessna 185 float plane tied to a tree in the Koyukuk River. We sat on our packs and leaned forward as Jerald pushed the throttle. It took a while to lift off but we made it and headed north.

North Alaska is beautiful and this day has almost perfect weather: upper 50s, unlimited visibility and bright sunshine. We flew up the Koyukuk valley toward the Gates of the Arctic. Flying between Frigid Crags and Boreal Mountain was truly spectacular.

Up ahead, the valley floor rose abruptly over one thousand feet and the trees disappeared. We could see Summit Lake, 3520 feet, our destination not too far off. We flew over the divide and banked hard left for a smooth, beautiful landing on the lake, about ¼-mile from the Continental Divide.

We unloaded, waved goodbye to Jerald and took photos as he lifted off. Then it struck us how alone in the world we were. I mean, this was it. We were out there about as isolated as you can get. It was a great feeling. We are not in Kansas anymore, Toto.

We donned our packs about noon and set off, southward, parallel to the North

Fork Koyukuk which starts right about where we were. We immediately walked into a bog. This green vegetation we saw from the air is called tundra.

Tundra is no fun. Tundra is a very uneven, wet, nasty, sponge-like carpet made of plants. Most annoying were the sedge tussocks that would not allow us to stand on them. If we tried, our feet slid off into the muck below. Our feet were soaked immediately.

Hiking required a lot of exertion. It was very slow going and we strung out in a line after an hour or so. Bill led with Teri not too far behind and then Nora a few minutes behind Teri. Then there was me, a good five minutes behind Nora, stumbling, cursing, and sweating. Man, we're havin' fun.

At about 5 o'clock we found better walking on rocky outcroppings and were approaching the place where the valley floor dropped over a thousand feet.

The descent was dicey: lousy footing on a steep slope and no trail. When we finally got down to the riverbed it was around 7pm and we cooked our first dinner. Even though I felt ill I knew I had to eat and it wasn't that bad. We had brought a lot of freeze-dried stuff and it seemed to be adequate.

After dinner we continued, walking

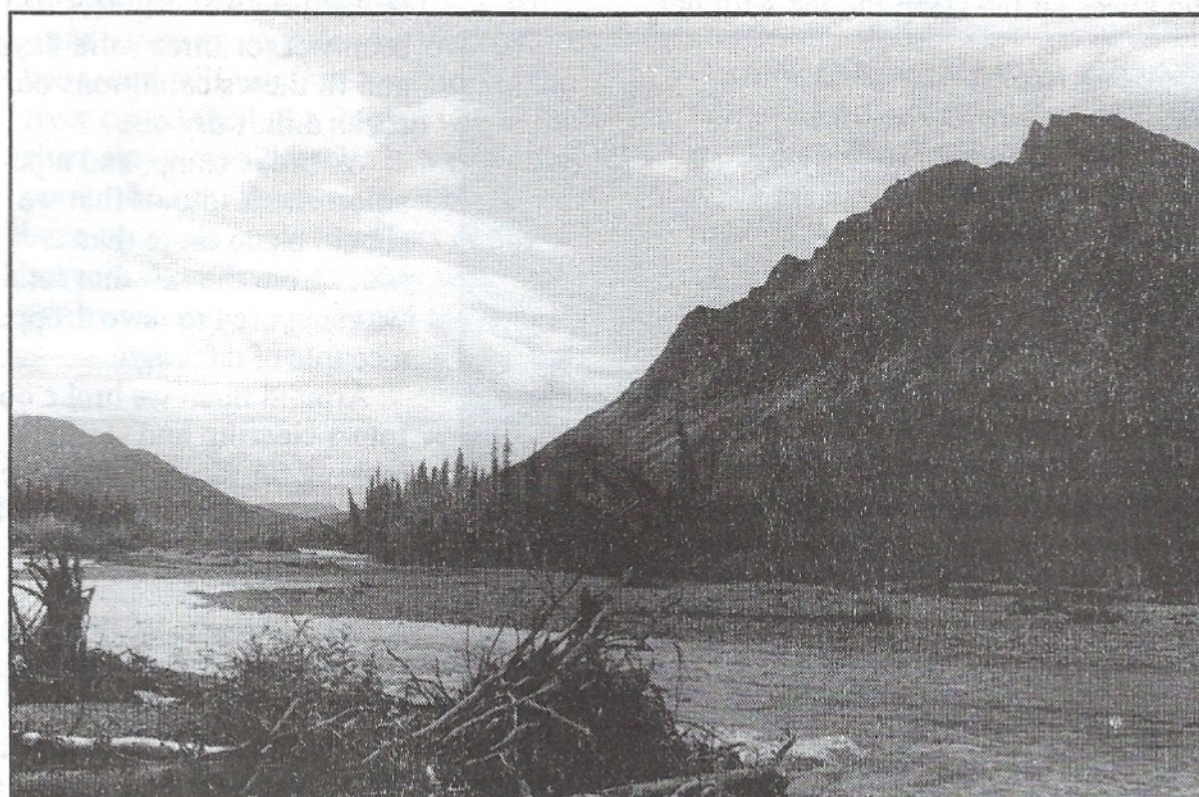
in the riverbed now and grateful to be in gravel. We made good time for another couple of hours until we came to our first campsite just before a stream called Alinement Creek. We had made all of 5 miles.

It was about ten o'clock when we stopped and it was still pretty light so we set up our bear warning devices—bells hanging on fishing line strung over sticks around the tents.

Next morning was lovely, if cold. We broke camp and crossed Alinement Creek which is pretty good sized at this point and very cold.

After an hour or so of small stream crossings and tundra walking, we thought about heading toward the river and walking in gravel. But to do so we have to go through a grove of dense, young alder. Just the kind of grizzly habitat Jerald had told us to avoid. No choice, we plunged into the thicket.

This was the thickest thicket I've ever seen and it pulled at the packs and everything else, making progress difficult. Visibility was no more than 10 feet at best. If a bear was in there, he could have us anytime. We came to a small clearing that looks like a large animal has been reclining in the grass. We moved a little faster after that and



Frigid Crags from our put-in on the North Fork Koyukuk.

Mark Laherty

reached the gravel of the riverbank.

Just then Bill spotted a grizzly. How he saw it I'll never know. It was at least half a mile away on the hillside and I saw it only through binoculars. It looked as if it was sitting on its rear end and playing with its feet.

We cooked dinner about five. I was still feeling like garbage and barely choked the food down. Meanwhile, Nora, who has never touched meat to my knowledge, wolfed down her portion of the stroganoff and wanted more.

We marched on until about 10 again and camped on a river gravel bar.

Day three broke clear, sunny, and almost warm. It was a little breezy, though, and we found out the hard way that you don't leave a stand-alone tent standing alone with nothing in it. A sudden gust came up and took Bill and Teri's tent tumbling over ours.

We thought it was funny for a second and then Bill started to run after the tent because it was tumbling toward the river. The tent was faster than Bill and into the river it went. The current swept it away quickly and we watched helplessly as it went downstream. I had a sudden thought that it was going to be mighty cozy tonight with four people in a tent made for two.

The river was still coursing close to the bank we were walking on but we managed a couple of fairly long stretches of hiking on gravel. After a couple of hours we were forced to go up a very steep hillside as the only place to walk was in the tundra, about a hundred feet above the river.

Nora did not like climbing on hands and knees up the steep incline with her



Jerald and the Super Cub, dropping off the raft.

pack and let me know it. The tundra was a thick mossy carpet but was not as wet in this section. We were making our customary half-mile per hour.

This truly was a beautiful place to be and we were wished that we could just enjoy the scenery instead of having to force-march to the raft drop. After all we had a plane to catch.

We finally reached the confluence of the Koyukuk and Ernie Creek where we could descend to the river and walk on gravel. The riverbed was much wider at this point and the place was a scenic wonder. We observed bear tracks everywhere as well as those of moose and wolves, though we did not see the animals themselves. We did see the first porcupine I have ever observed. I was feeling well enough now to enjoy dinner and could have eaten several times what I did.

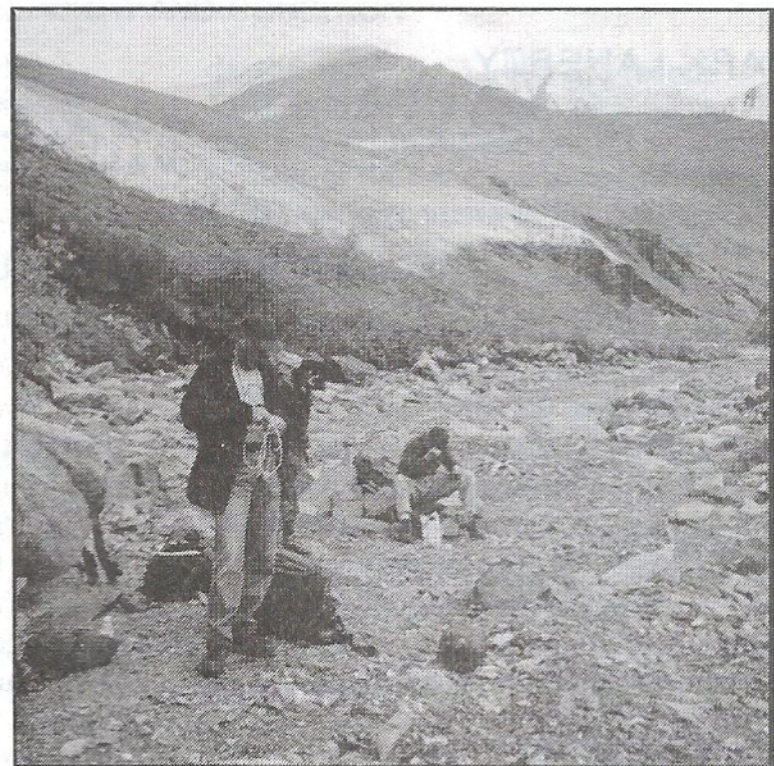
We camped after an hour's hike farther on when the wind had whipped up pretty good. Four people in a two person tent—not recommended for comfort, but it was too darned cold outside for anyone.

We woke to day four of our journey and it was even more spectacular than before, maybe because I was feeling much better. The only bad thing is I didn't have dry socks to wear. We were on our fourth day and all my socks were wet. My feet had been wet for three solid days and in these conditions our socks didn't dry out.

We broke camp, and a position check told us that we should be no more than 2 miles from the raft that Jerald was supposed to have dropped a couple of days ago.

Around noon we broke out into a clearing and started looking for the raft when we heard a small plane approaching up the valley. It was Jerald in a Super Cub at about 200 feet—he flew right past us and up the valley, out of sight.

After a while he came back and then saw us, waving frantically. We were standing in



Bill, Nora and I prepare dinner by the North Fork Koyukuk River.

front of a gravel bar maybe 250 feet long. Jerald started to circle and descended as if he wanted to land on this little strip of gravel. I thought he was nuts but he landed right in front of us. Jerald got out and blurted, "You guys been jogging or something?"

He didn't expect us anywhere near this far and told us that he doesn't like to meet the hikers when he drops the raft. He said that some of them either want to punch him or get in the plane because they have had it with the "arctic thing."

Jerald took off, again amazing. We pump up the raft and headed on downriver. The current was pretty swift this far up the river and we were grateful for the ability to move without Herculean exertions. The only thing we have to watch out for are sweepers. Just a few minutes of rafting and we were going through the Gates of the Arctic. Breathtaking.

We continued down river until about 11pm when it was too dark to see the hazards. We set up camp and built a fire because it had become very cold. Bill said he was going to stay up all night just in case a bear wanted to eat our raft. Teri slept outside to keep Bill company and when I woke up, about five, she and her sleeping bag were covered in frost.

'Long about noon we were off with beautiful weather, warm, and sunny. We could have been on any isolated river in Northern California in the late spring. Our pace slowed a bit as the river widened and the terrain flattened.

The going was pretty relaxing and

we tried our hand at fishing. We had heard that you could catch a fish every minute. We never caught a thing. Never. Nothing. Not one lousy fish. Not one lousy bite. I'm not bitter.

Sometimes it was a little exciting when we choose a branch of the river that forced us into some nasty sweepers. But other than that it was just a gorgeous ride.

We stopped for lunch. Bill and I tried a little swimming but the water was too cold for anything but the getting out of it. We washed some clothes, the girls took a shower with one of those solar showers, we ate and shoved off again.

The river was getting very slow for some long stretches and Bill and I tried to paddle to make up the difference but paddling a raft doesn't get you speed it just gets you tired.

We continued again until it was too dark for safety and then camped on a very wide gravel bar. This time it was Mark and Nora's turn to stay up all night but after Nora plied me with some brandy that Jerald brought with the raft, I conked out about 2 in the morning. That left poor little Nora alone to guard against the bears. No need to worry though because she was so mad at me she would have ripped the poor bear's leg off just for something with which to hit me. I looked like a real gem next to Bill.

Next morning we were off early. We ran aground frequently in small rapids and we were constantly getting out into the shallows to pull or push until the water ran into our knee-high rubber boots. That was how we could tell when it was deep enough to get back in the raft. Kept our feeties really cool.

Later, about 10 o'clock, we started to scout for a campsite when we passed a young German couple camped on shore. They were traveling by canoe and were very friendly. We asked if they had seen any bears and the guy said that he had walked up to one who



Mark Laherty

Nora, Teri and Bill prepare to ford Alinement Creek.

was drinking from the river but it ran away from him. Nice bear, here boy.

We camped on an island for the night and nobody stayed up. All this stuff about bears was probably a lot of hooey anyway.

Up the next morning and supposedly we were to make it to Bettles Field by tonight. But the previous day's progress was uncertain and it seemed as if we were traveling very slowly. We had been, and still were, in a section of the river called the Lake Region where the river slows considerably. It was at this point, though, that we saw a black bear, two bald eagles and lots of angry beavers—you could tell they were angry by the way they slapped the water

with their tails.

We also started hearing a persistent hissing noise and wondered what kind of critter was making it. Suddenly Teri shrieked, "We're sinking!" Somehow the entire front section of raft, where the girls were, had become a wading pool. Our raft had sprung a leak. Teri got very quiet and Nora started mumbling something about "ditching this stupid raft" and walking back. Bill and I just pulled for shore, fixed the leak and smiled.

About ten minutes later we embarked once again. We came to the confluence of a larger river. There could be no mistaking, we were now on the main Koyukuk and only about 10 miles from Bettles. Since we knew we'd make it before dark we could stop paddling and even nap for a while. We soon started seeing float planes taking off and landing just up ahead.

We were back. And Bettles Lodge never looked so good. We ate, washed clothes, showered and felt like we had just done something few other city folk had done.

I can't wait to do it again. I'm just going to bring more socks and more food.

...

For guide and bush flight info, contact:

Jerald Stansel
Alaska Fish and Trails
1177 Shypoke Dr
Fairbanks AK 99709
toll-free 888-409-7630
www.alaskafishandtrails.com

△

Mark Laherty, of Ross, California, is owned by two Shih-Tzus, has been a police officer far too long and derives great enjoyment from the workings of nature.

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LAURA ZIMMERMAN

High Thunder Traverse

—LIKE ANY GREAT ADVENTURE, IT TOOK TWISTS AND TURNS NONE OF US IMAGINED—

Kim, the caretaker at Trinity, held my camera up to his face. Jim, Kevin and I stood at the trailhead, grinning from ear to ear. Four days of incredible adventure lay ahead this August, 1999, and like any great adventure, it would take twists and turns that none of us could have imagined right then. After a few more rounds of pictures, we cinched our packs tighter on our hips and shoulders, then headed up the Buck Creek trail

The High Thunder Traverse, linking High Pass with Thunder Basin in the Central Cascades, was the concoction of my partner, Jim, who enjoys coming up with new and exciting alpine traverses, high routes, and long "superhikes."

We began by following the Buck Creek trail over Buck Creek Pass to High Pass. From there we would descend a relic shepherd's path to the Napeequa Valley, then take Crowder and Tabor's Tenpeak High Route over "Neyah Saddle" and down the other side to Thunder Basin.

At the head of Thunder Basin sits the craggy and remote Tenpeak Mountain, which we hoped to climb along the way.

From Thunder Basin, we would descend to the White River trail but not by the notoriously brushy Thunder Creek route. Instead, our plan was to

avoid all brush by traversing over to "Chalangan Basin" (the grassy cirque southeast of Thunder Basin), and then follow another relic shepherd's path down "Chalangan Creek," across Thunder Creek, and down the western side of Lower Thunder Creek.

Finding the "Chalangan Creek" path was a key element of our trek; without it, we would face unsavory brush. Although the path is incorrectly shown on Crowder and Tabor's map as terminating on the spur between "Luahna Basin" and "Clark Basin" (the two grassy cirques lying farther east), Jim had stumbled onto this surprisingly wellgraded path while bushwhacking up the eastern side of Lower Thunder Creek twenty years ago.

Jim, Kevin and I reached Buck Creek Pass as the sun was beginning to creep lower in the sky. The grass on neighboring Flower Dome and Helmet Butte glowed a vivid green in the long rays of the setting sun. We watched the

sun set behind the big peaks, and got our first glimpse of Tenpeak's summit fang, looking awfully far away. It was hard to imagine summitting that toothy crag in just two days.

Day Two was an "easy" day, as we only had about 6 miles to go to our next camp in the Napeequa Valley. We woke just before dawn to watch the sun



Kevin, Jim, and Laura at the Trinity trailhead with Buck Mountain in the background.

Kim The Caretaker



Kevin and Laura enjoying a sun break on Liberty Cap. Tenpeak Mountain can be seen in the distance above Laura's head.

Jim Brisbane

come up on Glacier Peak. She wore a fresh blanket of snow from the recent storm cycle, and looked resplendent in the pink and gold of the early morning light. Jim and Kevin wandered the meadow, in search of the perfect photo spot. I chose to lie in my bivi bag, enjoying the view in the solitude of the high meadow.

We lazily packed up camp and headed toward High Pass. Along the way, we hiked up Liberty Cap and savored the view from the top. The wildflowers were nearing their peaks of color. We reached High Pass around lunch, and enjoyed some hang-out time in the sun.

The shepherd's path along High Creek was hidden among snow patches, but we were able to generally determine where it went. We crossed some snowfields, glissading when we could, descending to a series of terraces holding broad, alpine meadows of grass, wildflowers, and heather.

Near the end of the hanging valley, Jim decided that the shepherd's path must be close. He scouted ahead, entering a wall of brush on the west side of the meadow and quickly found the path. It was a very "efficient" path, not wasting mileage to lose altitude as it plunged down to the Napeequa Valley.

We reached the Napeequa River in no time. At this point, the trail became very sketchy, but travel was generally

easy in the tall grass. We decided to push as far up valley as we could, since Day Three would be the "big" day—our attempt of Tenpeak Mountain—and we wanted to shorten up the mileage as much as possible.

We continued traveling up the valley above the moraine and found another perfect campsite near the Napeequa's headwaters. The river, under higher water conditions, managed to deposit a perfectly flat bed of sand large enough to accommodate our three bivi sacks. We accepted this gift from the River Gods and quickly made camp. Despite this looking like an easy day on the map, we were all thoroughly cold, tired, and hungry.

It amazes me how readily I can find humor in the simplest things when I am dog tired. Jim and I had settled into our bivi sacks, but Kevin still had to change into his sleeping clothes.

I happened to glance over just as he was standing there, shivering and chattering away about the day's events, in nothing but his blue and green striped lycra boxers. I busted out laughing until tears streamed down my cheeks.

Like a contagion, the laughter spread

to Jim and finally to Kevin. Kevin was a good sport—but I don't think he saw the humor in his underwear. I continued to giggle to myself for at least 20 more minutes.

The next morning we woke just as the sky was beginning to lighten. We wanted to get an early start, as it was going to be a long day. In the pre-dawn twilight, I forced myself to eat some breakfast bars and salmon jerky, knowing that I would need the food energy in short order.

The dawn broke clear, and as we scrambled up the talus slopes to the snowfield between the Honeycomb and Butterfly glaciers, we watched the sun slowly melt the shadows in the valley. When we reached the snowfield, we donned our crampons and roped up.

Cresting "Neyah Saddle," I got my first close-up look at Tenpeak Mountain. Standing at the edge of the Thunder Basin



Jim Brisbine

Heading up toward Neyah Saddle from Camp 2 at the Napeequa River headwaters. High Pass is in the upper right corner.

20-year period, and he was anxious to stand on this elusive summit.

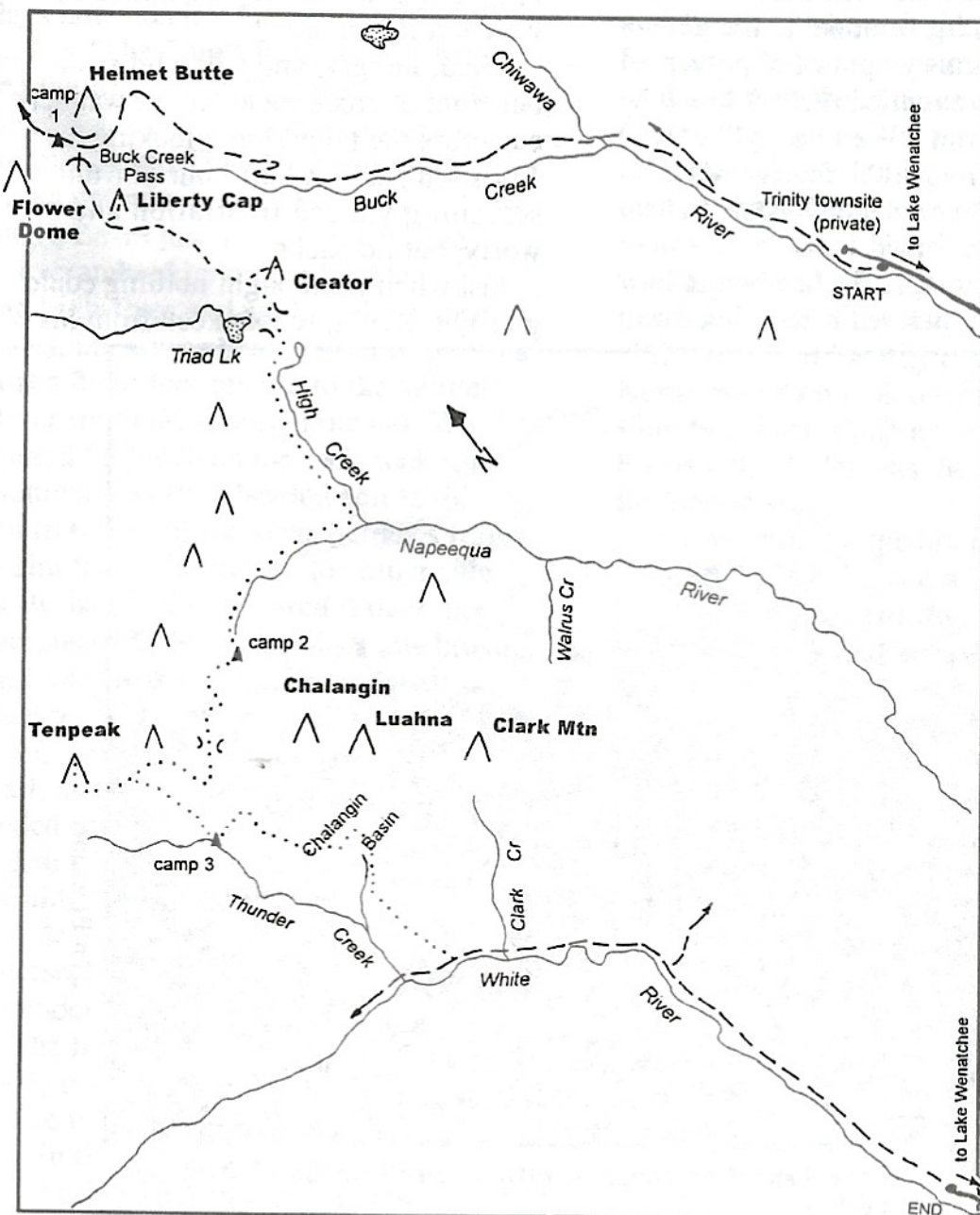
From the saddle, we descended heather slopes, working our way down grassy ledges until we saw the key ledge that traversed to the upper slopes of Thunder Basin. We traveled across talus and small snow patches to a point near the head of the basin, where we decided to stash our big packs and carry one small summit pack. Jim found a large boulder, and we stacked our packs on top of it. We put Jim's red Terraplane on top, figuring the red would stand out against the rock and snow. We figured wrong.

I led our eager team on a rising traverse across the upper snowfields, aiming for the snow finger and gully to the north of the summit fang. From our approach angle, the fang appeared sheer, dark, and ominous. The black lichen on the gray rock gave the mountain a dirty appearance, like the sooty inside of a fireplace.

We easily reached the gully, and scrambled over a vast collection of loose rock to a tiny notch. The backside of the notch dropped off hundreds of feet to the snowfield on the north side of the mountain.

Kevin and I graciously agreed to let Jim lead the final, technical portion of the ascent; we felt it would be a fitting end to his 20-year obsession with Tenpeak Mountain. A pitch and a half of splendid Class 4/low Class 5 rock brought us to the summit.

The view was spectacular! I could see almost our entire route, from the camp at Buck Creek Pass to Neyah Saddle and



like a guardian, the summit spire rises an impressive 3000 vertical feet from the basin below. I first gazed on Tenpeak's striking profile earlier that summer from Mount Saul. On that blue sky day in May, Jim described his three earlier attempts at climbing Tenpeak. I knew then that I had to climb it; I just didn't think I'd be climbing it so soon. This was Jim's fourth attempt in a



Kevin and Laura approach Tenpeak Mountain's summit tower, which is highest point on the left.

the path we took to descend into Thunder Basin. The wide, verdant Suiattle River valley stretched to the north. But Glacier Peak loomed the largest in front of us. Looking at the brown and gray ash layers split by 13,000 years of erosion by Chocolate Creek, I understood how the Chocolate Glacier got its name.

We wanted to linger on the summit and play "name that peak," but the shadows were getting long, and we had a 3000-foot descent into Thunder Basin. We signed the summit register, enjoying the comments that previous parties had written. Many of these parties spoke of unholy brush and torturous bushwhacking to get into Thunder Basin. I wondered to myself, "Didn't they know about the shepherd's trail into Chalangin Basin?"

From the summit, we downclimbed over the easier terrain to a rappel rock with an old fixed piton. We slung the large rock and backed it up through the piton. Jim rappelled first and stopped on a small perch just above the top of the gully. I rappelled next and joined Jim on the small but sheltered perch.

It was now Kevin's turn. He weighted the rappel rope and began to descend. Jim and I were trying to keep warm on the little perch, when all of a sudden we heard Kevin shout, "Rock! ROOOOOOCK!"

We ducked further into our perch, hugging the wall even tighter, knowing we had nowhere to go, nowhere to hide.

I heard the sickening sound of a large rock tumbling and bounding above me. The rock sailed well over our heads and exploded against the rock wall across the gully, sending shrapnel to the glacier below. A musty updraft of pulverized rock soon engulfed me.

We shouted out, "We're okay!" only to hear Kevin return the four words a climber never ever wants to hear: "The rope is cut!"

A thousand images flashed before me in an instant. I pictured Kevin tied into

a rope that was anchored to nothing. I looked in horror at the small coil of pink climbing rope below me, resting on a small hold. Jim and I looked at each other, both thinking the unthinkable.

It took a few volleys of conversation to understand that Kevin was okay and still attached to the rope, which was still firmly anchored to a solid belay. We took turns talking Kevin through the steps to re-adjust the rappel with the shortened rope. Our hearts sank when we saw that the rope ends dangled five feet above our heads.

We held our breath as Kevin began a tentative rappel, not knowing if there was enough stretch in what was left of the rope to land him safely on our perch. As he came closer, and more rope was being stretched under his weight, the rope ends slowly descended the extra five feet needed.

We completed one more short rappel and scrambled down the gully without further incident. While descending the snow, I looked back at the summit that had eluded Jim for two decades. All the hard work and adventure had made reaching the top that much sweeter. Any less of an effort just would not have felt the same.

Tired, hungry, and still a bit strung out from the rock incident, we wandered across the talus slopes looking for Jim's red pack. A half-hour of fruitless searching yielded frustration and worry, but no packs.

Just when we thought nothing could go right, Kevin, senses keen from his

Jim Brisbine



Laura and Kevin on the summit of Tenpeak, with Glacier Peak dominating the view to the northwest.

Jim Brisbine

brush with terror, spotted the packs several hundred feet above, and a hundred yards behind us. Now all we had to do was chase the setting sun down through the cliff bands into Thunder Basin. We didn't have much time, but Kevin was in "The Zone," picking his way down the Class 2 and 3 rock outcrops and heather benches until we finally reached the basin at dusk.

Jim found a lovely camp site on soft grass next to Thunder Creek. We quickly dispatched our freeze-dried dinners as the stars began to emerge. As we sipped hot apple cider, we each relayed our perception of the events that unfolded on the summit tower, and knew that we were very lucky to come out of this with only a shortened rope. I barely remember cinching my sleeping bag around my face before I was sound asleep.

On the last morning of our trip, we lingered in our bivi sacks and let the early morning sun melt the night's frost. I spent a few minutes over breakfast in a friendly argument with the guys about which gully and rock system we descended the previous evening.

I packed up my backpack one last time, noticing for the first time in four days how much lighter it was. Kevin, still in "The Zone" from the day before, led the way out of Thunder Basin. After three hours of tendon-stretching side-hilling around Thunder Basin, we finally broke out of a wooded ridge into Chalangin Basin just around lunch time.

I scrambled up onto a boulder, sharing high-fives and smiles with my comrades, knowing all we had in front of us was a 2500-foot plunge to the White River trail and an easy hike out. We paused for lunch on the rock, took some pictures, and then headed across the basin in search of the shepherd's trail.

Jim found the trail at the other side of the basin. We followed it over numerous blowdowns, through low brush, and into more tortuous blowdowns—then we lost it. We saw sketchy game paths that may have been part of the trail, and continued to follow those, but ended up losing the trail for good.

Jim felt that we had no hope of regaining the path and recommended we just drop down from there, hoping to intersect the White River trail east of Thunder Creek.

The first part of our descent was relatively easy in the deeply forested areas, where the brush was scarce. We tried to stay in the forest as we continued our plunge, but after descending only about



Jim Brisbine

Tenpeak Mountain stands guard over Thunder Basin. Our descent route followed the rocky rib seen right of center.

500 vertical feet, we found ourselves face-to-face with the infamous brush of Thunder Creek.

Covered with sweat and biting black flies, we all took turns on lead—thrashing out the path, losing our composure, and swearing like a drunken sailor before another one of us would take the lead and start the cycle over again. At one point when Kevin was in the lead, he stumbled and fell into a thick tangle of vine maple branches, unable to move in any direction. I heard an anguished wail from inside the mass of brown tangles: "That's it, I quit!"

Jim thrashed his way over to help Kevin, and then took over the lead. A short time later, slapping and cursing at his own brush demons, he relinquished the lead to me.

I swam through the brush, charging forward like I imagined a bear would, until I fell backward through the branches and found myself hovering over a side eddy of Thunder Creek!

I lay there, suspended nearly upside down by a tangle of vine maple, my head inching downward toward the creek with the slightest movement. Nearly in tears, frustrated by the mass of vegetation constantly in my face, and the black flies that continued to taunt me, I screamed foul words at the top of my lungs! Jim and Kevin thrashed over to pull me up out of my entanglement. Jim charged forward again, and soon the brush thinned and we entered a deep forest. Jim suddenly stopped, grinning like a school boy. He was standing

on the White River trail!

Kevin got on his hands and knees and kissed the trail. After what seemed like an eternity in the tortuous brush, now we were nearly home.

We took our packs off, and rummaged through our dirty clothing stuffsacks to find something that was at least cleaner than what we were wearing. Following a cool splash in Thunder Creek and the morale boost of cleaner, drier clothing, the 7 miles back to the trailhead flew by.

After changing into clean cotton clothing, we picked up my Jeep at Trinity, and then hustled to the 59er Diner on Highway 2. On that particular evening, serenaded by Elvis and Patsy Cline, our waitress Flo served me the best mocha milkshake I have ever had.

Our High Thunder Traverse was a success—we accomplished our goals and made it back to tell the tales. Our elevation gain was 11,700 feet, with an elevation loss of 12,300 feet. The total distance we covered was about 34 miles of good trails, fair trails, bad trails, vanishing trails, and nasty brush. We heard a rumor a few months later that hunting guides had recently brushed out a path into Thunder Basin, but we haven't personally confirmed it.

△

Laura Zimmerman is an environmental engineer working in Kirkland. She spends most of her free time exploring the Cascades and Olympics.

KEEPING PACE

EQUIPMENT, RECIPES, TIPS

WATERPROOF PAPER—After purchasing a box of 200 sheets, we discovered that “Rite in the Rain” waterproof paper cannot be used in inkjet printers. We can only use it in our laser printer, which is not color. Therefore, to get a map in color, first we must print it out on regular paper, then take it to the office store to photocopy it to “Rite in the Rain” paper. This is too much hassle for me.

We have recently discovered something that seems to be hassle-free—but much more expensive—and this is “Waterproof Inkjet Paper.” A packet of 15 sheets is priced at \$19.95; 25 sheets for \$26.95. Postage is another few dollars. This synthetic paper can be printed only on one side (a corner is clipped for easy identification). It is tear-resistant (but once torn, rips easily).

After a thorough soaking, crumpling, rubbing, and other abuse, the ink did start to smudge a tiny bit. But the piece of regular paper receiving the same

treatment was a soggy mass of pulp long before.

“Waterproof Inkjet Paper” can be ordered from Latitude 26° Inc by calling 800-305-0036, or from their website: <www.lat26inc.com>.

COMPASS ROSE—Latitude 26° Inc, mentioned above, also sells double compass roses. The outer rose lines up with true north on your chart, and the inner rose can be placed to show magnetic north. They are made of clear vinyl with an adhesive backing, and come six of each to a package.

The price is \$5.95, with a \$3.95 charge for shipping. See phone and web site, above.

ORIENTEERING—May 5 is National Orienteering Day. Come out to Woodland Park in Seattle for a series of clinics and courses for novice and intermediate levels. See the Cascade Orienteering Club website for details:

<www.CascadeOC.org>, or call the hotline at 206-783-3866.

CANNISTER OPENER—If you search your pockets for a quarter every time you want to open your Garcia Machine bear cannister, just use the little wrench from your MSR stove kit (provided it isn’t inside the cannister).

TICKS—This is tick season. Ticks wintered over well this year and now are waiting for a warm-blooded creature to walk by. They sense the heat generated from a host’s body and drop undetected to the host.

From this point they search for a warm area to embed their head in the skin where they withdraw copious amounts of blood for their size. Once engorged with blood, they drop off to start a new generation of ticks.

After a day in the woods or fields, check your whole body and remove any ticks. Also check your dogs.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

NEWS FROM ALL OVER

PWS MOVES—Pacific Water Sports has moved to a new location. The address is 11011 Tukwila International Boulevard. From I-5, take exit 158.

The phone number remains the same: 206-246-9385. Call them for directions if you need help.

MAX ECKENBERG DIES—On April 6, one of the founders of Explorer Search and Rescue and Mountain Rescue passed away at his home on Camano Island.

Max Eckenberg was 84 years old. He died after a long bout with cancer. Max was a mentor to many young men and women who worked for him at Camp Sheppard near Crystal Mountain.

For some twenty years he was the ranger at Camp Sheppard, developing the High Adventure program that took scouts on week long hikes and climbs throughout the Cascades. He was a master at wilderness navigation and his strength and endurance on the trail are stuff of campfire stories.

STILLWELL BRIDGE—North Cascades National Park is accepting public comments on the environmental assessment for the proposed replacement of the Stillwell Bridge on Little Beaver Creek. The existing bridge is in poor condition and because of changes in the stream

course it no longer spans the creek.

The Environmental Assessment considers three alternatives:

- The “No Action” alternative would leave the existing, unusable bridge in place. Hikers and horses would continue to ford the creek as they do now, sloshing and tromping through the fragile riparian area.
- The second alternative considered is the replacement of the existing suspension bridge with a 65-foot-long footlog in the same location. Because floods are likely to wash out the footlog, it would be anchored at one end allowing it to be pulled back into place.
- The third alternative, and the one determined by the park staff to be the Environmentally Preferred Alternative, calls for building a replacement 60-foot long, 6-foot wide pedestrian and stock bridge with handrails at a new site downstream in the fall of 2001. The bridge components would be staged at Hozomeen and flown to the prepared site by helicopter in about five flights.

A copy of the Environmental Assessment for the Stillwell Bridge Replacement may be seen at <www.nps.gov/noca/stillwellea.htm/>.

Comments on the Environmental Assessment must be postmarked no later than April 30. Send to:

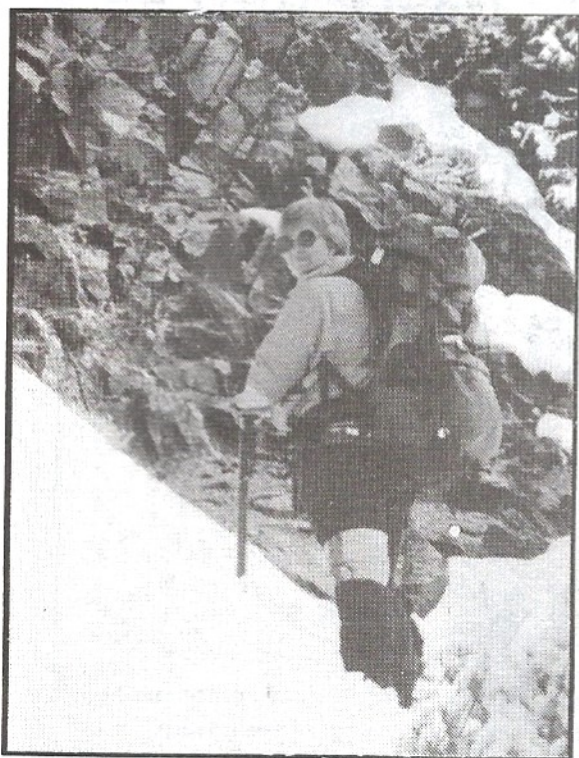
**Superintendent
North Cascades National Park
2105 Highway 20
Sedro-Woolley WA 98284**

FARIN HESS—The body of Farin Hess has been recovered from near the summit of Mount Baker. His body was located April 11 when family members spotted it from a chartered helicopter.

Hess and his companion John Roffler were reported missing on March 26. An extensive search in dangerous conditions was ended on March 30. Crews have resumed the search for Roffler in the same area Hess’ body was found.

IRON GOAT—The Iron Goat Trail has work parties scheduled for May 5, 16, 19, 23, and 30. Call May coordinator at 425-643-0395 for meeting times and other information.

LOGGING NEAR RAINIER—Plum Creek plans to start logging near the Carbon River entrance to Mount Rainier National Park. Plum Creek has a 5-year plan for logging in this area, which will dramatically affect the landscape and views near the Park. A request to the Forest Practices Appeals board, made by The Mountaineers, to stop the logging, was denied.



On Snoqualmie Mountain.

FROM THE MAILBOX—"Yellow Cat came to represent *Pack & Paddle* for us."—*Bothell*

"I will miss very much YC's expert guidance and warm touch in each *Pack & Paddle*."—*Olympia*

"I cried when I read your obituary for Yellow Cat. We share your sorrow and loss."—*Lake Stevens*

"Good workers and friends are hard to find and keep. We will all miss YC."—*Nine Mile Falls*

"I know Yellow Cat is new to this celestial navigation business. When she gets more comfortable, please let her know I have two dogs who reside on the Dog Star. They have invited her for catnip tea and salmon croquettes."—*Edmonds*

YC—Yes, we miss Yellow Cat. Spring was probably her favorite season and she would have been as delighted as we were this morning to observe a downy woodpecker on a stump near her favorite bird-watching spot.

We thank all of you who called, e-mailed, and wrote to let us know that you will miss her, too. A few of your kind comments are above, and we have reprinted the Owen family's "Ode to Yellow Cat" on page 4.

CONAN—Poor Conan, the dog who was abandoned on Granite Mountain (see *April, page 10*): several readers inquired about his fate, but we have no news.

Ken Hopping, who reported the incident, says he and friends checked at the trailhead for two days following their hike in hopes of spotting the dog, and a friend hiked up about two weeks later, but didn't see him.

Says Ken, "We will open the lookout sometime in May. I'll make a search at that time for any remains."

FEE DEMO—As it is approaching the start of the official hiking season, it may be time for many readers to make sure your hiking permit is current. This permit is called the "Northwest Forest Pass" and is required for parking at just about any National Forest trailhead, and some National Park trailheads, too (although most National Parks require a separate fee).

This all gets pretty confusing, so if you need help unraveling all the layers of regulations and taxes, stop at your local ranger station for assistance.

According to the new Fee Demo report recently issued to Congress, \$6 of every \$30 annual permit goes to pay the cost of collection. Wow.

Three "free days" are scheduled for this season. You don't need a parking permit on May 14, June 10, or August 9.

VOLUNTEERING—You can receive a complimentary "Northwest Forest Pass" if you are able to put in two days of hard labor on a trail crew.

A work party through an outdoor organization is the best way to do this. Check with The Mountaineers, Volunteers for Outdoor Washington, the Access Fund, BocAlps, Washington Trails Association, or other local clubs to join work parties.

If you are not able to do the physical work required on a trail crew, ask at your favorite ranger station if there is some other way you could earn your pass. The opportunities vary from district to district and you will have to work out your own arrangements.

PROTESTING—If you are opposed to the hiking tax, you can simply not purchase the pass. (Each time a pass is purchased, the Forest Service counts it as a "vote" for approval.) You might get a ticket for your "illegal" action, and you can take it to court.

Additionally, you can put an anti-pass bumper sticker on your car. (I have

one on my car.) And you can write lots of letters. For the bumper sticker, and help with the letters, see the Wild Wilderness web site at <www.wildwilderness.org>.

NO GINNY—It may seem as though Ginny Evans has disappeared from the face of the earth, but she has simply had knee surgery and is taking some time off.

She will be out hiking again with her sister Jacki—and sending us reports—before long.

In the meantime, maybe she would let us borrow her dog Shadow as a temporary office assistant.

EAGLE-CAM—Apparently the Olympia eagles have moved from their former nest, the one with the video cam installed (*April, page 22*). Gordon McDougall tells us that the Kent eagles, however, are at home and on camera.

You can find the eagle cam at <www.wa.gov/wdfw/viewing/wildcam>. If you would like more information about the Olympia eagles and their progress, you can e-mail Gordon directly, <grmcdog@earthlink.net>.

GADGETS—I very much enjoyed a couple of hours spent with the Shoreline Probus group, which meets monthly at the Shoreline Community Center. My friends Roxanne and Chuck Becker of Edmonds are members of the organization and arranged for me to be the speaker for their April meeting.

I talked about hiking, of course, and a lot about hiking gadgets. This was a lot of fun, as Lee and I have a bunch of gadgets. I hope the group was encouraged to go take a hike this spring!

See you in the backcountry,

Ann Marshall

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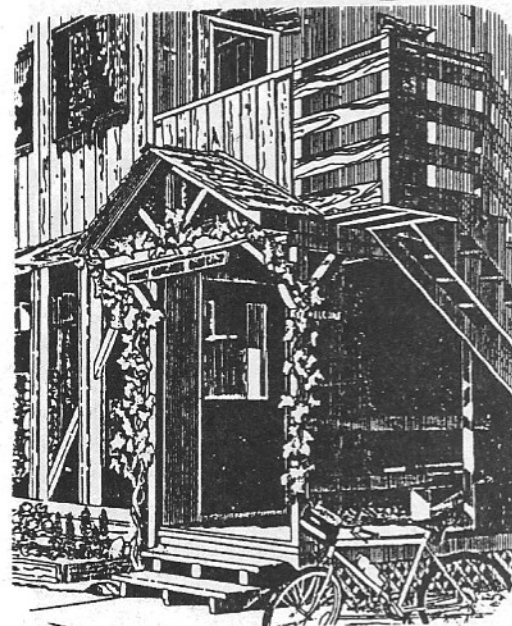
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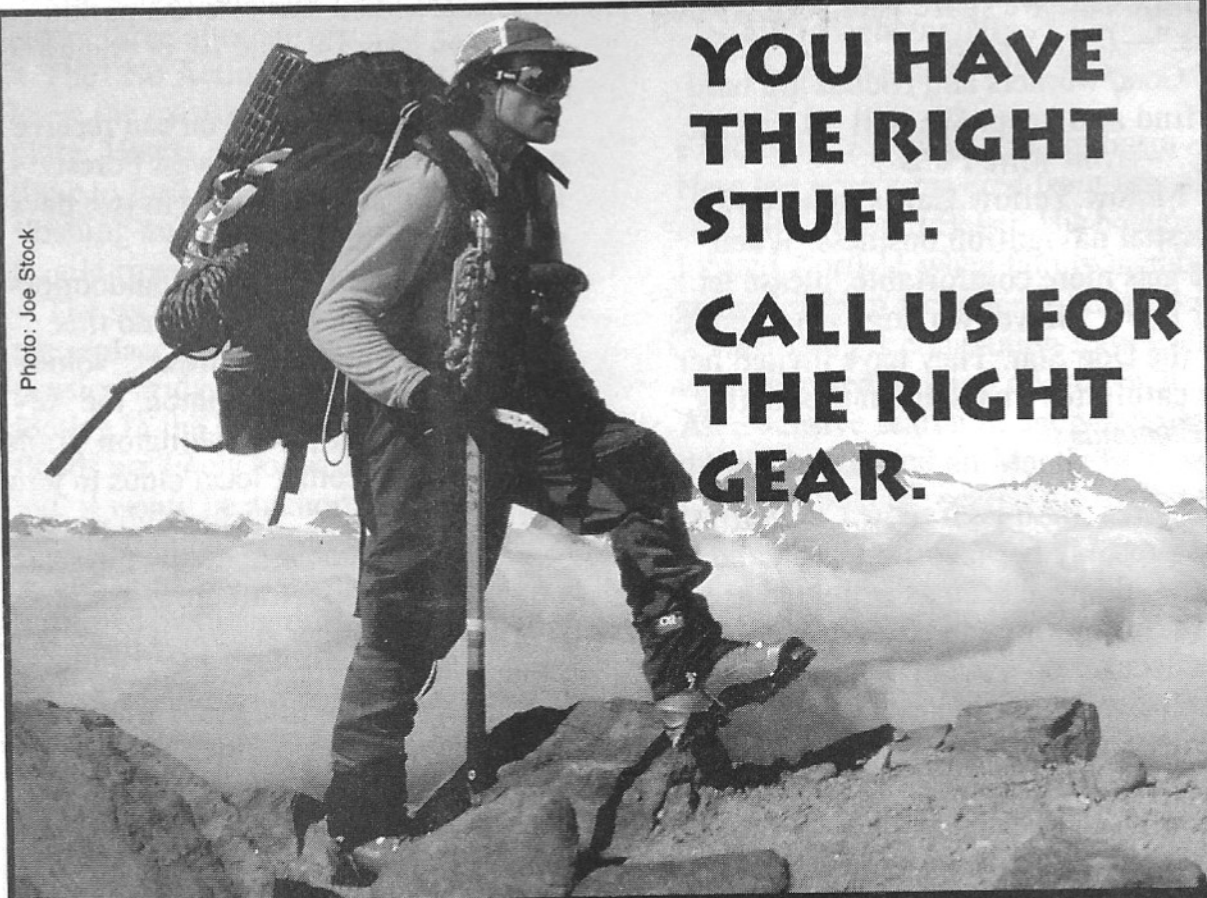
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