

Mountaineer

E X P L O R E • L E A R N • C O N S E R V E



in this issue:

The Hidden History of the PCT
Moving Through the Mountains at 67
A Family Affair
From Student to Teacher
Trophy Mountain Meadow

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The Mountaineers enriches lives and communities by helping people explore, conserve, learn about, and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond.



On the cover: Craig Romano heading up Old Snowy Mountain in the Goat Rocks Wilderness. Photo by Suzanne Gerber.

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Discover The Mountaineers

If you are thinking of joining, or have joined and aren’t sure where to start, why not set a date to Meet The Mountaineers? Check the Branching Out section of the magazine for times and locations of informational meetings at each of our seven branches.



Photo by Rick Meade.

the world around him in ways that will eclipse his days as a professional alpinist.

I can only dream about what it’s like to climb at an elite level like Conrad Anker, and being a similar age, the article caused me to think about my own stage in life. Like Conrad, my “kids” are all now in their 20s and are each, in their own unique ways, incredible human beings. Some of my fondest memories of helping to raise three boys have been the times we’ve shared together in the outdoors hiking, climbing, and skiing in different corners of the Pacific Northwest.

When my kids were in their early teens and still developing their strength and skills as backcountry travelers, we took a backpacking trip between Hart’s Pass and Rainy Pass in the North Cascades. About halfway through the trip we faced a number of steep traverses across runout snow slopes. Not everyone in our group was carrying an ice axe or felt comfortable traveling in this type of terrain, and we made the difficult decision to turn back. Our choice was prudent, yet disappointing.

Fast forward to today and all three of my kids are more fit and, in many ways, more competent than I am in the outdoors. I’m proud of the fact that they’ve developed a love of the outdoors, and have honed the strength and skills to go farther and faster than their old man. I’m also proud of the fact that they have developed a passion for sharing outdoor experiences with others. They have become teachers and mentors in mountain craft, and I’m immensely grateful that my efforts to cultivate this value in them took root.

My experience raising kids from eager learners to outdoor enthusiasts and mentors is analogous to the process that happens all the time in many corners of The Mountaineers. We share our passion for the outdoors and protecting wild places with others – others who are eager to learn how to be safe and responsible outdoor enthusiasts. Oftentimes this process of teaching and mentoring is intergenerational, a process of passing down knowledge and decision-making skills to those who otherwise might not have access to these types of outdoor experiences.

When we talk about “engaging future Mountaineers” (one of the three imperatives in our Vision 2022 strategic plan), this is what we mean. We strive to engage the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts to make wild places more accessible to all people, and ensure everyone has the skills and confidence to find a sense of self and belonging in the outdoors, particularly those individuals who have been historically and systematically excluded. This is one of the most inspiring aspects of our mission, and it’s a critical part of how we create legacy through our work. I’m grateful for the thousands of members of our community who value and help sustain this virtuous cycle.

Tom Vogl

Tom Vogl, Mountaineers CEO



The Mountaineers is a nonprofit organization, founded in 1906 and dedicated to the responsible enjoyment and protection of natural areas.

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Huntoon Point, offering views of Mt. Baker. Photo by Gabe Purpur.



Hailey Oppelt
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Photo by Paige Madden.

Bodies are funny things – they age whether our minds feel like they have or not. I’ve often heard people say “I still feel like I’m 17,” and as I take a sharp turn into my late 20s, I see what they mean. My knees were the first to go at 24. It was a surprise, but shouldn’t have been (with a family history of it and a penchant for steep hikes, I was a ticking orthopedic time bomb). It told me something I always knew and never believed: I’m going to get old.

With the folly of youth trailing behind me, I’m beginning to look around and consider what type of aging I want to experience. More importantly, I’m wondering how to achieve it. Being part of The Mountaineers community has been an eye-opening experience in this regard. I meet people in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and beyond taking on physical feats that would make most people in their 20s balk. Of course, their abilities aren’t due solely to physical strength. You can go further if you have a well-managed pack. You can paddle faster if your technique has been honed. You move faster through the mountains when your feet know how to carry you. Our endurance abilities also seem to be cumulative, defying traditional notions about athleticism – many in their 50s can run hard for far longer than they ever could in their 20s. Age has its benefits.

With a theme of “active ageing” this edition, our community had plenty to say on the subject. Piolet d’Or winner Steve Swenson and UpHill Athlete founder Scott Johnston share their development as climbers in *Moving Through the Mountains at 67*, offering recommendations to aging mountain athletes on how they can maintain (or build) their fitness to continue enjoying the outdoors for many years to come. In *A Family Affair* we meet Billee and Jack Brown, a couple in their late 80s whose lives have been spent surrounded by family in the outdoors, and who continue to get out and hike to this day. Mountaineers Books author and famed PCT trail angel Barney Scout Mann dives into the past with us in *The Hidden History of the PCT*, sharing an illuminating discovery he made in our archives about where the inception of the trail truly began. In *The Meadow*, Michael Shurgot shares an alarming wildlife encounter he experienced on a solo hike in the Canadian wilderness, and in *Peak Performance* we get tips on improving our knee health by increasing hip and ankle mobility (I’ve taken note!).

Trail Talk is an especially salient piece this edition as well, as Mountaineers Books guidebook author Craig Romano shares what it was like being diagnosed with an inflammatory disorder and turning 60 – and what this has meant for his outdoor exploits and outlook on life.

If ever I needed inspiration or guidance on how to age actively, all I need to do is take a look at our membership at large. Age is not the determining factor in getting outdoors. Prioritizing time outside, doing what you love, and building on what you’ve done before seem to be the secret sauce. A secret sauce I’m glad to have the opportunity to sample as part of this multi-generational community.

Hailey Oppelt



In *Safety Stories: Unable to Arrest Above a 30-Foot Cliff*, we hear the story of a scrambling student, Earle Oda, who took a 30-foot fall on a scrambling trip after slipping on snow and being unable to self-arrest. Earle sustained injuries but lived, and our community came out in droves to express their support:

“I’m glad you’re okay, Earle! And thanks for sharing your story!”
-Erik Swanson, 14-year member

“So happy you’re ok, and thanks for sharing! What a traumatic experience. Helmets can, indeed, be lifesavers!”
-Liana Robertshaw, 10-year member

“Wow Earle! What a crazy misadventure... I’m so glad you are okay. Thanks for sharing your words of caution, wisdom, and silver-lining blessings.”
-Julie Dillon, 3-year member

“First and foremost, Earle, I am so glad you made it through such an experience -- the helmet says it all. Second, I want to thank you for putting yourself in a vulnerable place and sharing your lessons learned for the benefit of others. When we tell rather than hide the stories of our mishaps, they become valuable teachable moments and remind us all to keep risk management top of mind. Heal strong!”
-Anita Wilkins, 15-year member

“Thank you all so very much for your wonderful comments and more importantly for reading my story! Please share it as much as you can. Helping others will make it that much more meaningful. I think my road to recovery is complete. I summited Mt. Baker this weekend, with my helmet on, clutching my ice axe tightly, and being careful about each step in the snow!”
-Earle Oda, 3-year member and scrambling student featured in this piece

In *Remembering Patti Polinsky*, we honored the life of Super Volunteer, Leader, and Meany Lodge legend Patti Polinsky. Our community shared their memories of her, and offered love and support to those closest to Patti:



“I was fortunate enough to be guided by Patti on two hiking trips: Northern Maine (including Mt. Katahdin), and New Hampshire’s Presidential Traverse. Both were extremely well-planned and are memories I will cherish. Dave, my thoughts are with you. She definitely was a bright light.”
-Barbara Vane, 16-year member

“Patti was such a warm and generous person! Her contributions to The Mountaineers were monumental, she was a really excellent leader, and I feel so fortunate to have known her.”
-Cindy Hoover, 36-year member

“We’ve never known anyone like Patti, full of energy and passion for everything she touched. She was always curious to learn more. She had incredible woodworking skills, was a fabulous cook, an excellent gardener, a rescuer of lonesome bunnies, generous, intelligent, gifted at leading diverse groups and teaching all levels of skiers... Dave, we know you gave her a wonderful life and will miss her the most. We loved Patti, too.”
-Betsy and Dave Schultz, 31-year and 36-year members

“We love you and miss you terribly, Patti.”
-Juliane Gust, 22-year member

In *Leader Spotlight*, we celebrate our volunteer leaders and the time, talent, and dedication they give to The Mountaineers. Fellow members reached out to share their appreciation:



“Way to go James... what an accomplishment. Such fond memories of you and the Mutineers as students, back in the day!”
-Barbie Cox, 16-year member, responding to “Leader Spotlight: James Pierson”

“Woot, woot - James Pierson - you’re a rock star (and ice star, and water star). Way to be awesome.”
-Adrienne Doman Calkins, 9-year member, responding to “Leader Spotlight: James Pierson”

“Gretchen, you’re living the ethic that makes our club special – stated so clearly (Navy style) – ‘watch one, do one, teach one.’”
-Peter Hendrickson, 16-year member, responding to “Leader Spotlight: Gretchen Ta”



“Awesome, Gretchen! It has been a wonderful ride with you in the Kitsap Branch. I look forward to you teaching me in the future.”
-Tina Fox, 5-year member, responding to “Leader Spotlight: Gretchen Ta”



Name Twyla Sampaco
Hometown The Greater Seattle area. Ok fine, Bellevue
Member Since September 2015
Occupation Artist Adventuress! I write and do analog film photography.
Favorite Activities Backpacking and moderate trad

Lightning round

Sunrise or sunset? Sunset
Smile or game face? Smile
What's your 11th Essential? My Minolta XD, Xena.
What's your happy place? Sleeping in the back of my Subaru! Clearly something iconic is happening in the morning!
Post-adventure meal of choice? Of choice, Laphroiaig. In practicality, eating too much at München Haus and asking if anyone wants to go across the street for gelato.
If you could be a rockstar at any outdoor activity overnight, what would it be? Aid and big wall climbing. It sounds time consuming and expensive, so if I could get it out of the way in one night, I'd like that.

How did you get involved with The Mountaineers?
I took the navigation course in preparation for a long, off-trail scrambling trip. It was like drinking from a firehose, the field trip was a rainy sufferfest, and the other students were loving it. Obviously, I was hooked. I signed up for the Basic Alpine Climbing Course and have suffered outside with you sickos ever since.
What motivates you to get outside with us?
Mountains, please. I'm bipolar, so I never know when my joy and contentment will be pulled out from under me by a depressive episode. Going outdoors and taking photos helps by keeping me active and full of endorphins, and by providing undeniably gorgeous things to take photos of. Even depressed Twyla can't argue with photographic evidence of delicious splitters and good company at Indian Creek.
I also like that for the most part, I can trust the people I meet through The Mountaineers to have a basic technical understanding of safety and systems.

What's your favorite Mountaineers memory?
Climbing the DC route on Rainier. At the time, Rainier felt like an easy, though time-intensive, conga line compared to some of the wilder adventures that year that required more navigation. Now that I don't really do glaciers anymore, I can recognize the achievement of climbing so hard that season that Rainier felt like a walk in the park.

Who/what inspires you?
I focus on building a more inclusive outdoor environment for QTBIPOC [Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color] and WOC [Women of Color]. I also like to reassure new mountaineers that you don't have to be sending the gnar to be a valid climber. Climbing culture was built on colonialist and patriarchal attitudes of "conquering" and "claiming." It feels like resistance to exist happily and unapologetically as a little, queer, brown, Asian lady who wants to climb moderate trad. I'm not trying to tame or conquer a thing, because none of this belongs to me – we're recreating on stolen land. I'm not unique in this perspective, but when I was new to climbing, I found the dominant culture pretty stressful and antithetical to who I am.

As a donor and volunteer-supported organization, The Mountaineers is based on community support. How have you paid it forward, or how have you benefited from someone else paying it forward?
I've volunteered as an instructor for rock courses, and coordinated Beta & Brews. From those experiences, I've decided to spend this winter developing a new event series focused on centering QTBIPOC outdoor perspectives and adventures.

What does adventure mean to you?
Going into the world and enriching my experience and my art with an element of chaos. Sometimes that means fighting my depression and doing Tiger Mountain. Other times, that means the Sierra High Route. ▲▲

Better Knees through Ankle and Hip Mobility

By Courtenay Schurman, MS, CSCS, PN2



Brooke Schurman performing an ATG split squat on a 17" box. Photo by Courtenay Schurman

Knee pain is a common complaint among outdoor athletes of all ages. Knees function best when the hip and ankle joints move well throughout their entire range of motion. In other words, by improving mobility and strength at the joints above and below the knee, you will be less likely to experience knee discomfort as you age. To get started, try incorporating the following six movements into your strength routine.

Backwards walking: Spend five minutes warming up by walking backwards on a flat surface, gentle uphill slope, or treadmill that is off. Work your feet through their entire range of motion. For added resistance, drag a sled or tire.

Anterior Tibialis raise: To train the muscles in the front of the lower legs that raise the toes, position your butt against a wall with both feet a foot or more in front of you. Pull your toes back towards your shins as far as possible, then return them to the floor. Build up to 25 repetitions. For an added challenge, pull your toes against a band or resistance ball.

Wall calf raise: To strengthen the gastrocnemius (chief muscle of the calf of the leg, which flexes the knee and foot) in the back of the lower leg, face the wall at arms-length. Walk your feet back as far from the wall as possible while touching the wall with both hands. Start with your heels flat on the ground. For 25 repetitions, raise your heels as high as possible, then return both heels to the floor. For more challenge, build up to doing 25 single-legged calf raises.

Soleus calf raise: The soleus is responsible for raising your heels in a bent-knee position. To train this muscle, lower into a semi-squat position, hands pressed against the wall. Maintain this position as you raise and lower your heels for 25 repetitions. For a greater challenge, squat lower or add a pack.

Patrick step: Stand on one foot, keeping your torso vertical. Pull your toes back and press the opposite heel toward the ground as far forward as possible. The working knee will track forward of your toes and you'll feel a strong stretch through the ankle and knee. Complete five repetitions before switching sides. To add resistance, elevate your working leg up to six inches, hold weight, or keep your working heel elevated. Perform three sets of 5-10 repetitions per side.

ATG split squat: To stretch the psoas (hip flexors) and add functional strength throughout the entire leg, place one foot flat on a high bench (17-20 inches) and lunge forward as far as your current flexibility allows, hamstring lowering toward your calf. Keep your front foot flat on the bench. Maintain a vertical torso and straight back leg. Your back knee should not touch the ground. Pause for a second or two, then push back to standing with good posture. Repeat this movement five times. Once you're able to reach full compression with the back of your leg touching the ankle with your torso vertical and back leg straight, lower the step several inches at a time until you can perform these on the floor. To add resistance, hold a weight or use a pack. Perform three sets of 5-10 repetitions per side.

Include these exercises in your exercise program two to three times per week to increase your ankle mobility, hip mobility, and knee strength. May your fall adventures be free of knee pain. ▲▲

Sequencing and progression of these exercises courtesy of Ben Patrick, @KneesOverToesGuy. For more alpine training tips and exercises visit BodyResults.com. For motivational strategies on getting unstuck and moving forward, subscribe to Courtenay Schurman's new free weekly blog at CourtSchurmanGo.com.

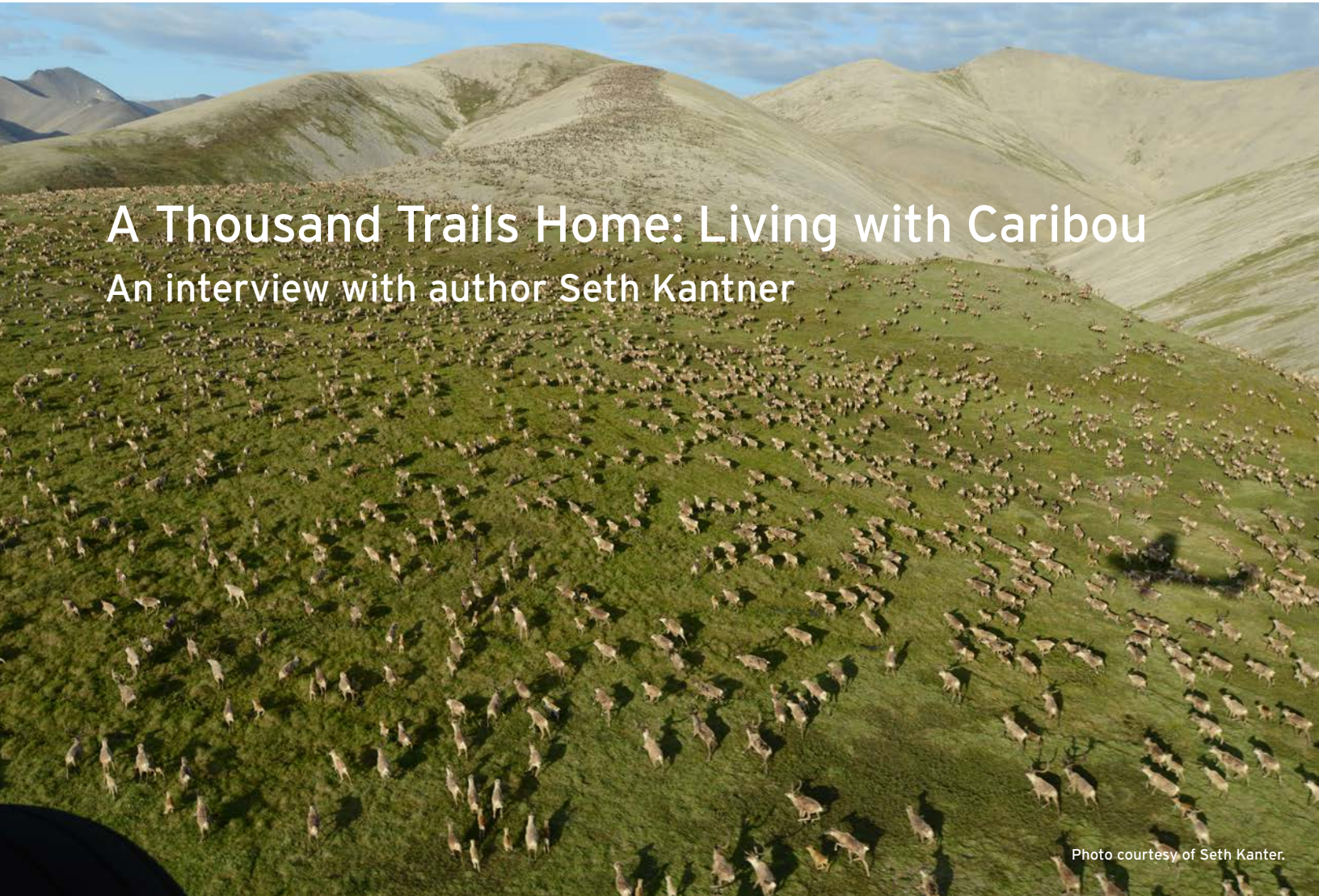


Photo courtesy of Seth Kanter.

A Thousand Trails Home: Living with Caribou

An interview with author Seth Kantner

Seth Kantner is a commercial fisherman, writer, and wildlife photographer. His newest book, *A Thousand Trails Home: Living with Caribou* (Mountaineers Books; September 2021), is a stunning firsthand account of a life spent hunting, studying, and living alongside caribou. He lives in the Northwest Arctic.

The subtitle of your book is “Living with Caribou.” Describe these creatures to those who may not be familiar, and why they’re important.

In Arctic Alaska massive herds of caribou still migrate across the landscape, much like herds of the African Serengeti or the nearly-extirpated buffalo of the American West. The presence of these huge herds and their contribution to the intact



ecosystem of the entire northern half of Alaska is more than a distant symbol of what is left of wilderness on earth - they define our remaining relationship with nature itself. In this way, caribou are us.

Briefly describe your childhood and how you came to revere these animals.

I was born in a sod igloo in the Arctic and raised in many of the traditional ways of the local Inupiaq. This meant living off the land, hunting and fishing for food and furs, and for meat to feed our dog team. Caribou were the most important animal in that life, for our survival, for sleeping skins, mukluks, parkas, dried meat, fat, and countless meals and other daily uses.

Tell us about the work you do to conserve the caribou population?

I photograph and write about caribou and other animals in an attempt to understand and explore my own close connection to the land, and in the process to hopefully reveal to those who live more removed from the natural world its equally vital importance to them, too.

Why is the Alaskan Arctic considered ‘ground zero’ for climate change in the US? What are simple things we can do to help stop it?

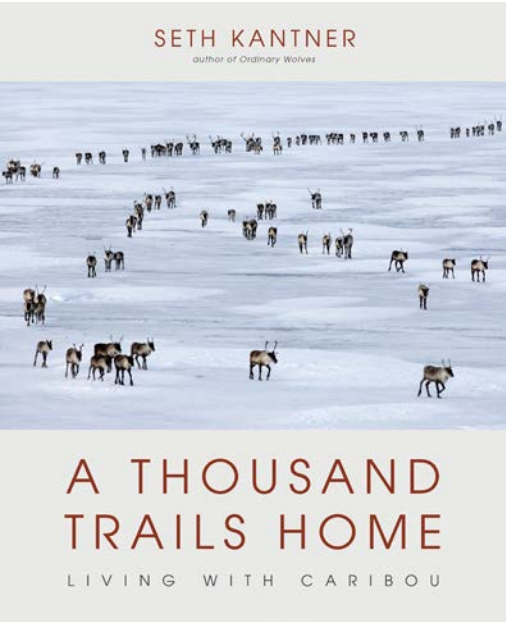
The Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the United States. Because the ocean surface has been ice covered and the land frozen (permafrost) for eons, this rapid warming/thawing is causing very visible, shocking, and catastrophic changes here in my homeland.

I don’t think there are simple answers in this complex world. Obviously, staying home would be a start! Live as close to your food as you can. Slow down, travel shorter distances, and examine how your desires affect the lives of the creatures around you.

What is the one takeaway you’d like readers to have from your book?

I would like readers to love and respect caribou by the time they turn the last page - to want to see the vast herds, to help protect them, maybe even to eat some meat or wear a hide, and to truly feel they know this wild animal in the countless intertwined ways that make up life lived on the land. I hope to also teach readers about the personal, biological, historical and cultural importance of caribou, and in that way show them how much these animals matter to not just me but all of us. ▲▲

A Thousand Trails Home is available for purchase at our Seattle Program Center bookstore, online at www.mountaineersbooks.org, and everywhere books are sold.



Classic Cascade Climbs: Select Routes in Washington State

By Jim Nelson, Tom Sjolseth, and David Whitelaw

An essential guide to all the best Washington has to offer, *Classic Cascade Climbs* features more than 100 climbing routes across 70-plus peaks: From the ice-clad summit of Mount Rainier to the hot granite of Tumwater Canyon, discover legendary climbing of every type, for every season, and at every grade. To determine if it was a “classic,” each route was judged on the following criteria: overall quality, popularity, accessibility, style, and historical importance. Authoritative and inspirational, this seminal guide also features stunning mountain photography by famed photographer John Scurlock and others.

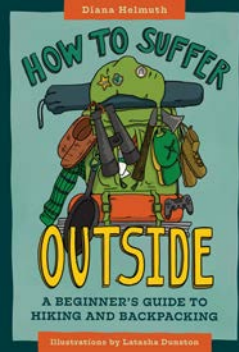


Trail Running Illustrated: The Art of Running Free

By Doug Mayer and Brian Metzler

Trail Running Illustrated is the perfect partner for runners interested in turning off the tarmac and experiencing the solitude and adventure that comes with running on trails. Richly illustrated and highly accessible, *Trail Running Illustrated* covers everything a new trail runner will need to know: how to gear up, learning to run on

different trail surfaces, fueling on your run, how to stay safe, common injuries, training tips, and how to tackle your first trail race. Experienced trail runners will pick up new tips and advice, too! Created by two longtime trail runners with a passion for the sport, this book is the key to unlocking a lifetime of exploration and challenges, whether running in the local park or through some of the world’s most remote regions.

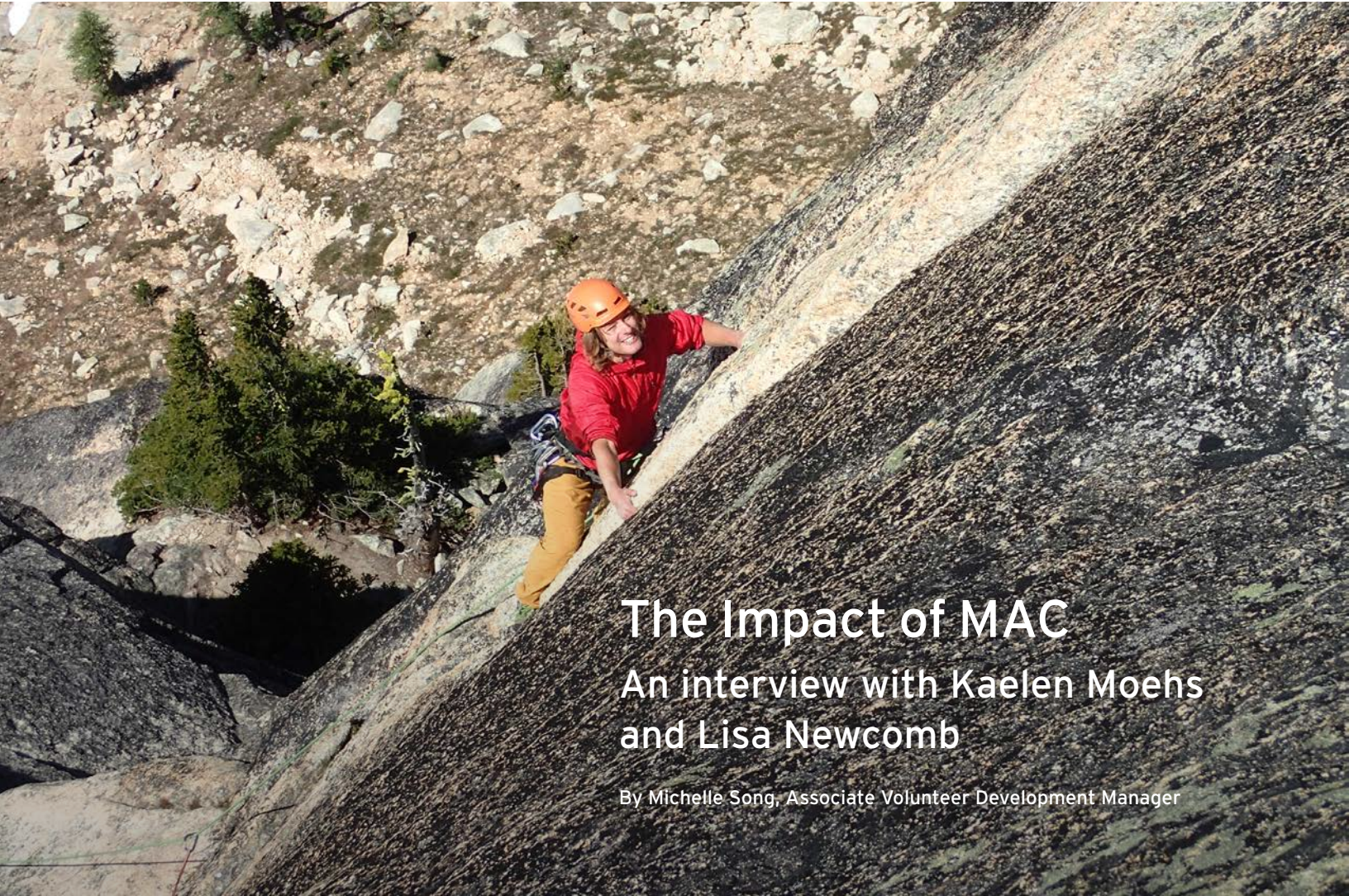


How to Suffer Outside: A Beginner's Guide to Hiking and Backpacking

By Diana Helmuth

Funny, relatable, and helpful, *How to Suffer Outside* shows walkers, hikers, and campers of all stripes how to get outdoors with confidence. Part critique of modern hiking culture and part how-to guide, *How to Suffer Outside* is for anyone who wants to hit the trail without breaking the bank. The author wins hearts and

trust through a blend of self-deprecating humor, good-natured heckling of both seasoned backpackers and urbanites who romanticize being outdoorsy, plus the advice a novice needs to get started. Her approach is hopeful: “If I can do it, you can, too. Here’s how.”



The Impact of MAC

An interview with Kaelen Moehs and Lisa Newcomb

By Michelle Song, Associate Volunteer Development Manager

Kaelen Moehs on the Southwest Rib of South Early Winters Spire, North Cascades National Park. Photo by Carl Marrs.

From climbing Mount Baker to cragging weekends at Smith Rock, members of our teen club, The Mountaineers Adventure Club (MAC), have been busy this past year! Backpacking, cross-country skiing, and alpine climbing are just a few activities these active outdoorspeople have ticked off. Although the program is staff-led, MAC members plan their own outings and work together as they learn, grow, and explore throughout their time in MAC (many stay on for several years throughout high school). To celebrate this accomplished group of young people, we sat down with retiring MAC member Kaelen Moehs, as well as his mother and volunteer leader, Lisa Newcomb.

Kaelen Moehs is a 4-year member of MAC and its current President. As current President and past Vice President of Trips and Skills, he facilitated and wrote much of the skills curriculum for the club. The curriculum gives members the opportunity to learn skills equivalent to that of our Basic Alpine Climbing Course and beyond. Kaelen also planned and helped lead a number of ambitious trips, including several grade IV alpine climbs and a Rainier summit in 2018. Since joining MAC in 2017, he has become more involved in The Mountaineers,

attending two of our Leadership Conferences, working with our Mountain Workshops program, and earning the status of Super Volunteer in 2019. In the fall of 2021, he is attending Wesleyan University in Connecticut.

His mother, Lisa Newcomb, climbed extensively as a young adult, but after marrying and having a family she found herself distanced from the sport. When she and her husband Max initially exposed Kaelen and his older brother Tristan to climbing, the boys weren't interested. Fortunately, that wasn't the last time they gave it a shot. On a family trip to the Sierras several years later, Kaelen (then 12) found himself enamored by climbing, and by the end of the week his dad and a family friend took him on his first multi-pitch climb - West Country on Stately Pleasure Dome in Yosemite National Park's Tuolumne Meadows.

In 2017 Kaelen joined MAC at age 14, and the next fall Lisa chaperoned her first trip to Vantage. The kids were welcoming and encouraging, inspiring Lisa to begin a joyful journey back into climbing. She enjoys spending time with MAC members and volunteers on as many rock climbing and cross-country ski trips as possible, while also trying to give Kaelen space to make his own way in the club.



Kaelen and his mother Lisa on Liberty Bell, North Cascades National Park. Photo by Brian Kelleher.

A Member's Perspective

Kaelen, what has MAC meant to you?

What MAC has meant to me is an open door. When I joined, it felt like there was the possibility of doing everything I'd dreamed of achieving in the outdoors. But I think more than just climbing, MAC has been an opportunity to grow as a person. Looking back four years ago, I was an incredibly different person. Definitely less confident, and a lot less comfortable both climbing and being part of this community. I think MAC has really been a space where I feel that I'm welcome and contributing something important.

What is a lesson you would like to share with future MAC participants?

You should be appreciative of the people around you. Try to connect with them in a deeper way. MAC is a place where everyone comes from a whole different set of backgrounds. You discover that not only can you get along despite those different backgrounds, but you discover a lot of things that bring you together. What I've learned is to take an open approach to meeting people and knowing people, and also just working with people. Put yourself out there as a person and be your authentic self, and you'll find success and acceptance.

And keep in mind that you always get back as much as you give in. MAC is a place of endless possibilities; you can climb any mountain here. There's no guarantee that you'll be handed a spot in every activity you want due to the high number of prerequisite skills. But if you have self-responsibility for your own learning, you'll be able to do some incredible things.

What's one of your favorite moments?

I guess it's rather cliché for a Mountaineer, but watching the sunrise from the summit of Rainier. As we were crossing the crater, we caught a glimpse of crimson so far underneath what would normally be the horizon. So, we were caught staring directly at it, entranced by its color and visible shape that could appear before us without hurting our eyes. A 180-degree turn in the opposite direction yielded an equally impressive view - the shadow of the mountain in a cone shape, stretching for a hundred miles. But looking back at the sunrise, we felt

a visceral sense of wholeness and completion. That muted and glowing sun was like a mirror of all the challenges we faced, granting a retrospective showing we were capable of the challenge of the climb.

What achievement are you most proud of?

Being recognized as a Super Volunteer at the Volunteer Dinner at the start of 2020. I've done so much miscellaneous volunteering (too much to list here), and it was nice to know that it was all appreciated.

A Parent's Perspective

Lisa, what has being a parent of a club participant meant to you?

Community. I was thrilled that Kaelen found a community where he really felt at home and which was a good fit for him. And it's also a community for me. I've formed some of my best friendships with other parents.

Is there an activity, or even a moment, that stands out to you?

I think what stands out the most to me is when I climbed the Beckey route on Liberty Bell with Kaelen. Kaelen and I swapped leads and it was the first alpine climb that I had done in 14 years. It was really special to be climbing with Kaelen. It was monumental to me because I realized that I still had a head for leading, and I just loved being out there.

What motivated you to volunteer with The Mountaineers and MAC?

There're really two things. The first and foremost is the MAC students themselves. They're a lot of fun to be around, and very inspirational. The other thing that motivated me to volunteer is being able to do the things that I love to do, while still helping out other people.

Now that Kaelen has completed his time in MAC, what will you do?

Continue volunteering with MAC. It's a lot of fun and very rewarding. I would also like to thank Kaelen for sharing MAC with me. ▲▲

JOIN MAC OR VOLUNTEER WITH YOUTH

A new enrollment window for MAC at the Seattle and Tacoma branches is kicking off in September for youth ages 14-18! Youth must be 14 years old by January of the school year in which they join to be eligible. We also offer Junior MAC at our Seattle branch for youth ages 12-13. For more information about MAC, Junior MAC, and volunteering in Seattle, please reach out to Associate Program Manager Carl Marrs at carlm@mountaineers.org. For more information about joining MAC and volunteering in Tacoma, please reach out to Tacoma Program Manager Sarah Holt at sarahh@mountaineers.org.

Expanding Our Conservation and Advocacy Program

By Brianne Vanderlinden, Associate Director of Development

Five years ago I made my first donation to The Mountaineers. At the time, I was seeking organizations that elevated our region's quality of life and were committed to improving our collective environmental impact. Initially drawn in through the conservation and advocacy program, I was inspired to join the members and donors who give back to fully fund the department. Charitable giving supports 75% of The Mountaineers Conservation and Advocacy program, and the remainder is funded through membership renewals.

Conservation and advocacy has been an enduring priority throughout The Mountaineers 115-year history. From our early days, Mountaineers Books titles have influenced national policies, and 16 years ago, our conservation imprint Braided River was established to further leverage the impact that our books hold on a national scale. In 2011, our members enthusiastically voted to transition our organization into a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, allowing us to integrate fundraising capabilities to fuel our mission-driven efforts. Now celebrating 10 years as a 501(c)(3), we are excited to share how today's conservation and advocacy program is expanding.

Mountaineers impacts

We've been advocating on behalf of wild places for over a century and have influenced significant outcomes in our region, from the formation of Olympic National Park in 1938 to the more recent expansion of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. In 2019, with over 5,000 of your voices, The Mountaineers joined other partners to help protect the Methow Valley from industrial-scale mining, designate the Mountains to

Sound Greenway a National Heritage Area, and permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This year we contributed to the passing of the Great American Outdoors Act, one of the most significant conservation funding bills in decades, with an overwhelming bipartisan vote.

On a more individual level, we offer free low-impact recreation training programs, a Public Lands Conservation 101 eLearning course, a monthly Conservation Currents e-newsletter, and countless Mountaineers Books titles. Our volunteers organize and participate in trail maintenance and other stewardship activities as a hands-on way to give back to our natural world and develop deeper connections to the places we love.

Punching above our weight

One of the inherent advantages of The Mountaineers is that we approach our work at the intersection of outdoor recreation and conservation. We also have a reputation for being bipartisan, moderate, and pragmatic. Because of this, we are well-equipped to bring together diverse voices and receive an audience with a wide variety of decision makers.

In November of 2020, Outdoor Alliance Executive Director Adam Cramer spoke to our Board of Directors about the incredible advocacy abilities of The Mountaineers. As Adam shared in that presentation, The Mountaineers has demonstrated an outsized ability to effect change to protect public lands compared to similarly-sized organizations across the country. Our location in Washington State holds a significant advantage as one of the most important states in the country for outdoor advocacy. Washington has an astonishingly high number of outdoor enthusiasts, and

Washingtonians are willing to speak up to conserve and protect public lands and waters.

The passion of our membership, pragmatic reputation, and leadership within the Pacific Northwest are some of the many reasons The Mountaineers carries a unique responsibility to guide public action on behalf of our wild places. We have made great strides over the last decade to increase member engagement, cultivate strong partnerships, and deepen our policy expertise, but we know there's more work to be done. Thanks to the support of our community of passionate donors, our Board of Directors, and our Conservation and Advocacy Committee, we're excited to expand our staff capacity to further elevate the program and the outcomes it makes possible.

Expanding program staff capacity

Through our 2019 Evening of Advocacy fall fundraising events, we launched a focused campaign to expand our team and position us to take full advantage of our outsized conservation influence. As I write this, we are in the final stages of hiring an Advocacy and Engagement Manager. Our newest team member will support a more comprehensive advocacy and engagement effort by educating our 40,000 member conservation community on emerging outdoor recreation issues involving state and federal public lands, maintaining a steady drumbeat of action alerts on current conservation policy priorities, and developing well-researched comment letters to our legislative leaders and land managers. Additionally, added staff capacity will enable us to deepen community education, further leverage engagement through Braided River, help to center our advocacy efforts through the lens of equity and inclusion, and enhance our focus on the climate crisis.

Deepen community education and engagement. Through partnerships with organizations like Outdoor Alliance, we will work to recruit a diverse cohort of emerging grassroots leaders from the greater outdoor community. Building from current Mountaineers resources, our vision is to create an advocacy education and training program available on a national scale. With expanded support, we can increase opportunities to engage through action alerts, as well as collaborate with adult and youth program teams to better integrate conservation and advocacy work into Mountaineers trips and courses.

Further leverage the impact of Braided River. The Mountaineers conservation work and the work of Braided River have complementary areas of focus and target audiences. Through breathtaking photography and passionate storytelling, Braided River has the reach to engage international audiences to learn more about protecting our last remaining wild landscapes. With both focus areas of the organization already doing great work, our expanded capacity will allow us to collaborate in a more intentional way.

Center conservation and advocacy through a lens of equity and inclusion. With support from our Equity and Inclusion Committee, we seek to more overtly view our climate

advocacy through the lens of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. We will work to identify ways our conservation and advocacy priorities can incorporate diverse perspectives and use our privilege to advocate for policies that promote more equitable access to the outdoors.

Focus efforts to address the climate crisis. As part of our Vision 2022 strategic plan, we focused our approach to climate change by first reducing our organization's own carbon footprint. This led to the formation of the Carbon Footprint Reduction Committee (CFRC) and The Mountaineers official statement on climate change. The work of the CFRC provides strategic input on how we can actively engage on climate issues, and organizes events and education opportunities for members to think critically about their individual impact. The urgency of the climate crisis demands an acceleration of our efforts. With our expanded program capacity, our goal is to implement new and innovative ways to educate and advocate for climate solutions.

Looking ahead

The work ahead of us is vast, and our ability to maintain our expanded team will rely on the continued investment from our community. We are grateful to have received grant funding to support this initial program expansion and will seek major gift opportunities to maintain momentum and stay on the leading edge of conservation and advocacy. It's inspiring to think about how much has been achieved through our collective voices and philanthropy, yet there is still much to be done. I'm grateful for The Mountaineers conservation and advocacy program for providing a way for me to be part of an incredible community influencing positive change for our people and planet. ▲

HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION

Opt in to our monthly Conservation Currents newsletter through your Mountaineers profile.

Join us on Sept. 22 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the REI Seattle Flagship store. 100% of ticket sale proceeds will directly benefit our Conservation and Advocacy program. Visit the donation link below to find more details and register to attend.

Volunteer for a day of stewardship or organize one of your own.

Make a gift today to directly support our conservation and advocacy efforts by visiting mountaineers.org/donate/conservationfund.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, gifts made to The Mountaineers are 100% tax-deductible. For questions about making a gift or getting more involved, contact development@mountaineers.org



Steve kayaking Admiralty Inlet. Photo by Steve Smith.

Learning from Near-Misses

An interview with Steve Smith

By Michelle Song, Associate Volunteer Development Manager

We’ve all been there: a near-miss during a trip. They’re a possibility even with the best safety planning. But rather than categorizing them as bad luck, paying close attention to near-misses will offer insight into why they happen, and how you can prevent them.

To dive deeper into near-misses and their implications, we met with Steve Smith, founder and lead consultant of the risk management firm Experiential Consulting, LLC, and speaker for our Leadership Development Series presentation, “Near-Misses are Telling You Something – Are you Listening?”

Steve has worked in the outdoor industry for over 30 years across a variety of roles, including with The Mountaineers. His career has included leadership roles at Outward Bound and The Student Conservation Association, and serving as the Chair of the Wilderness Risk Management Conference. Steve currently sits on the Northwest Outward Bound School's Board of Directors Safety Committee. Due to his breadth of experience across the outdoor industry, Steve is able to consider all levels within an organization and build a strong risk management culture.

Why are near-misses important as a risk management consideration?

It’s easy for people or an outdoor program to focus on big events – things like broken legs or fatalities. But, those events are actually pretty rare. So if that’s all that we are focusing on, then we’re getting a tiny bit of information about what’s really happening on our adventures. Near-misses are actually happening all the time, and they give us useful information we can use to improve our practices. They’re really a cheap lesson. No one got hurt, there’s no trip to the hospital, no lawsuit. It’s like a winning lottery ticket you’ve already paid for - you can either cash in that lottery ticket, or you can throw it away.

What is a near-miss, and what is it not?

That’s important, because “near-miss” is a term that’s commonly misused. I often hear people say, “I fell into that crevasse, broke my leg, but I was rescued. I feel fortunate to survive this near-miss!” To me that’s not a near-miss just because you survived. That was an accident! You were actually injured. A near-miss would be almost falling into that crevasse.

I’ve heard people use terms like “close call” or “good catch” when describing near-misses. A more official-sounding definition of a near-miss (from OSHA) is “an occurrence that would have been an injury or an incident with a slight difference in either timing or location.” Something that might feel like a near-miss to you and me might be normal for someone in the military, a firefighter, etc. I think it’s important for every organization to define what a near-miss is in their program versus what is just “normal.”

Why are near-misses so under-reported?

It’s pretty common when a trip ends for people to get back to the parking lot and be tired. They don’t want to reflect on the trip too much, or fill out any paperwork. They don’t want to talk about things that almost happened. They don’t want to take the time to ask “were we good today, or were we lucky?” There are a lot of barriers that exist which make it harder for people to report the near-misses. If someone shares a near-miss that they had and is immediately attacked, why would they ever do that again? Why would they ever be vulnerable like that in a community that’s not receptive? I think it’s super important that we, as a community of outdoor adventure folks, get better at creating safer spaces for people to share their lessons learned, to share their near-misses.

What role does blame play as we analyze near-misses?

A source of inspiration in the risk management work that I do is a professor and author by the name of Dr. Sidney Dekker, who teaches safety science. Dekker likes to say that when an incident occurs you can either blame or learn, but you can’t do both. Meaning that if all we do is look back to blame someone, we’re probably arriving at a very simple story instead of challenging ourselves to understand the more complex story. We often blame an individual for something that may have started days or weeks earlier in the systems, planning, route selection, and group dynamics, which may be unrelated to that individual. It’s easy to blame human error when there’s a much larger, complex system that may be at play leading up to that event. A better question might be, “what do we need to do to keep that from happening again?”



The Beckey Route on Liberty Bell, North Cascades National Park. Photo by Tamara Walker.

What do near-misses tell us that a perfect safety record does not?

Think about the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. The BP-operated Macondo Prospect blew up after seven years of perfect safety records leading up to that explosion. That tells us two things. First, they’re obviously not reporting things that are happening. How can you possibly have hundreds of people working on this oil rig out in the middle of the ocean for seven years and not have a single reportable incident? Second, and I think more importantly, they were trying to look good rather than be good. They won a national safety award in the weeks preceding an explosion that killed 11 people and injured 17, and caused an environmental catastrophe. When you suppress incident reporting, you build in a blind spot for your organization and become less safe, despite looking safer.

What is the most important question to ask when faced with a near-miss?

Ask yourself: What’s going to keep this near-miss from happening again? That’s the most important piece. It’s not who, but what - what is going to keep this from happening again? What we’ve described here is not a policy that exists in some manual. It’s really about organizational culture. How we treat each other and how we talk about our adventures and our risk tolerance. How we talk about and with each other after an incident or near-miss. I think a lot of this stuff is not in the reporting system or in the policy manual, or in the waiver people sign. It just comes down to organizational culture and how we care about and take care of each other.▲▲

Learn more about Steve and his work at outdoorrisk.com. To delve deeper into why near-misses matter and the importance of reporting them, listen to Steve’s interview Institutional Near Misses on the Sharp End Podcast: thesharpendpodcast.com/episode-62. Steve is also the author of Beneficial Risks: The Evolution of Risk Management for Outdoor and Experiential Education Programs.



Photo by Rafael Godoi.

Bring Leave No Trace Home

Tips to lower your carbon footprint off the trail

By Betsy Robblee, Conservation & Advocacy Director

I had a light bulb moment this summer when I got back from a backpacking trip. I arrived home and immediately turned on the air conditioning, took a long shower, and ordered a bunch of Thai food. Earlier that day, I'd been perfectly content tolerating the heat by dunking in a stream to cool off, throwing on a hat to hide unwashed hair, and eating the last bits of trail mix to avoid wasting food. I began to wonder why I'm perfectly happy living out of a backpack on the trail, but my resource consumption spikes once I get back in my car and drive home? How could I incorporate some of my backcountry practices into my frontcountry life and lessen my carbon footprint?

Reducing our impact on the environment has been a core part of The Mountaineers since our inception. In our current strategic plan, Vision 2022, The Mountaineers committed to do our part to exemplify sustainable practices and address climate change by reducing our organization's carbon footprint and educating our community. The term "carbon footprint" refers

to the amount of greenhouse gas emissions associated with the activities of a person or organization, such as purchasing goods, transportation, heating and cooling buildings, etc. Over the last three years, thanks to generous donor support and passionate volunteers, we've made progress towards this goal by installing solar panels on the roof of the Seattle Program Center, replacing hundreds of old light fixtures with more efficient LEDs, publishing our books on recycled paper, and hosting virtual educational events.

We can all take many small and large actions to reduce our individual carbon footprint. Fortunately, as seasoned practitioners of Leave No Trace principles and recreationists who are accustomed to carrying everything we need on our backs, Mountaineers are already well-prepared to bring these low-impact skills into our daily lives. By becoming more aware of our impact on the environment both in the backcountry and in our neighborhoods, we can all live a little lighter on the earth.

Think like a backpacker at home

Consider transferring some of your resource awareness to your life off-trail. I know that I think twice about throwing an extra shirt or bulky food items in my pack, and I definitely have a much lower bar for personal cleanliness in the backcountry than I do at home. Here are a few ways you can incorporate low-impact practices from the backcountry into your frontcountry life:

Embrace the weather. Just like you do in the mountains, if it gets chilly at home throw on a sweater or snuggle under a blanket instead of turning up the thermostat. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, heating and cooling accounts for about half of home energy consumption. A couple degrees can make a big difference in your overall carbon footprint.

Tolerate a little dirt. While bathing at home isn't nearly as scenic as a dip in an alpine lake, think about how you might bring some of your backcountry hygiene practices home. Skip a shower from time to time, take shorter showers, wear your jeans again before washing them, and conserve toilet paper. But for the sake of your family and friends, maybe don't take this one too far!

Reduce single-use plastic. In the backcountry, we often replace single-serving bars, trail mix, and instant coffee with bulk options. If you use freeze-dried meals, save the bags (you're packing them out anyway, right?) and recycle them using services like TerraCycle and Ridwell. At home, reuse food containers, buy in bulk or direct from local farms, and drink tap water instead of bottled.

Don't be a gear junkie. It can be tempting to buy the latest, lightest, most advanced outdoor gear, but all that consumption comes at a cost. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, 42% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions are caused by making, transporting, and disposing of materials. Instead, buy used gear (REI garage sales and local gear shops are good sources) and borrow items from friends. The same idea applies to other consumer items: check Goodwill, Craigslist, or OfferUp before you go out and buy something brand new.

Big changes, big impacts

According to a 2017 study in the Environmental Research Letters journal, the five highest-impact ways to reduce your carbon footprint are having one less child, living car-free, avoiding one transatlantic flight, buying into green energy, buying a more efficient car, and eating a plant-based diet. While some of those actions depend on your personal values and financial situation, outdoor enthusiasts can consider the following:

Carpool and bike more. Transportation is necessary to get ourselves to the mountains and shorelines we love to explore, but it's one of the biggest sources of carbon emissions. Carpooling, biking to work, taking public transportation, and purchasing an electric vehicle can all go a long way toward decreasing your transportation footprint. In Seattle, the Trailhead Direct bus service can take you directly to hiking trails in the summer. Make it an adventure: how far can you get under your own power?

Travel local. Traveling by plane contributes significantly to your carbon footprint, so vacationing local can be better for the environment. For many of us, this might be an easy way to cut our emissions - the natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest can make it hard to leave! Tackle the Bulger List or go for the Snoqualmie Peak Pin instead of vacationing abroad.

Eat less meat. Despite how tasty a burger can be after a long weekend outdoors, animal products are responsible for 75% of greenhouse gas emissions in the average U.S. diet. You don't have to give up every post-hike burger, but reducing your meat consumption can have a big impact on your carbon footprint - and your health.

Go solar. In just one year, our solar panel system on the roof of the Seattle Program Center saved 65 metric tons of CO2 emissions, or the equivalent of 14 passenger vehicles driven for an entire year. If you have the financial ability, investing in solar panels, installing a heat pump, or purchasing energy efficient appliances can significantly reduce your emissions.

Advocate for change

There's no shortage of ways to lessen your impact in the backcountry and at home, which can make it easy to get stymied over what actions would make the most difference, or obsess about every car trip or energy bar wrapper. It's best to do a little bit of everything, try things out, and make it fun. Don't let "perfect" be the enemy of progress.

Finally, some of the most important actions Mountaineers can take to address the climate crisis don't cost a dime. Contact your legislators and ask them to pass legislation to tackle climate change. Subscribe to our Conservation Currents e-newsletter for opportunities to help protect our natural spaces. Vote for candidates that prioritize climate solutions. Talk to your friends and family about climate change. Go to a protest or a letter writing party. The climate crisis is a global problem that requires national and international policy change, and your voice matters.

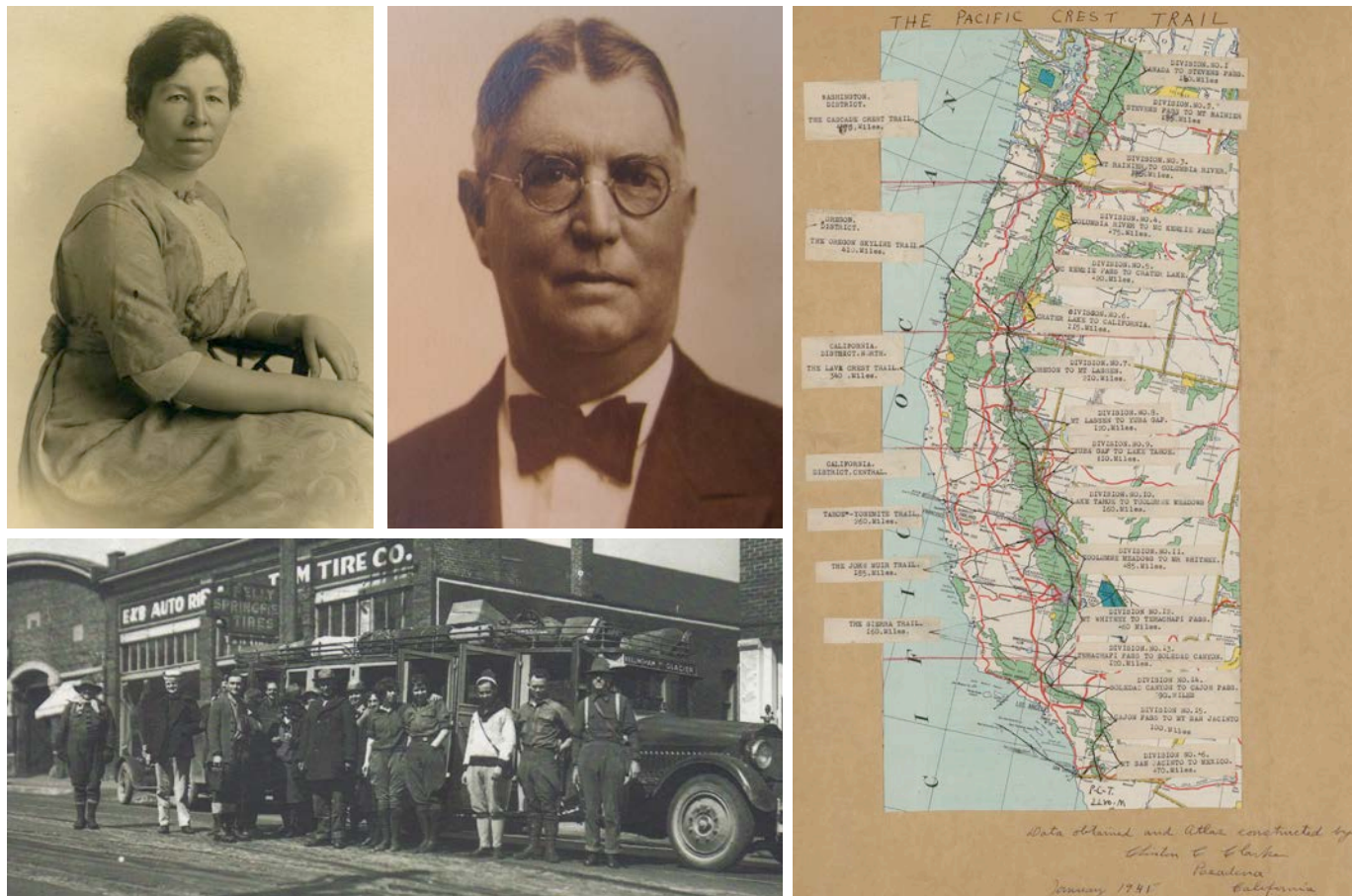
Whether it's carpooling to the trailhead a little bit more often, buying a used backpack, or calling your senator, we can all be part of the solution and protect the places we love. ▲▲

Learn more about what The Mountaineers is doing to decrease our carbon footprint, and find resources to help lower your own, at mountaineers.org/carbon-footprint-reduction-committee.

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF THE PACIFIC CREST TRAIL

How one Northwest outdoorswoman made all the difference

By Barney Scout Mann, Mountaineers Books Author, Thru-Hiker, and PCT Trail Angel



Clockwise from top left: Catherine Montgomery circa 1910. Courtesy of Washington State Parks; Clinton C. Clarke passport photo. Courtesy of Don Rogers; Early Clarke map of the Pacific Crest Trail. Courtesy of Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; Joseph Hazard (far left) in 1925, off to climb Mt. Baker. Courtesy of Whatcom Museum, Washington.

Sometimes when we take a close look at a particular page in history, we find that the most commonly believed story is not necessarily the most accurate. Omitted facts, hidden characters, and forgotten conversations linger in an archival twilight zone, waiting to be unearthed to reshape the past. Their discovery can be thrilling.

The stories we tell as we explore the outdoors are no different. As we move through the mountains and across the waters of the West, the origins of some of our most beloved parks and trails pique our interest and make us wonder – how did this come to be, really? Several years ago, I realized that the origin of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) might be a page in our history books that needed dusting.

The story we knew

“The Pacific Crest Trail originated in the 1930s from the mind of Clinton C. Clarke,” stated the *Pacific Crest Trail Guidebook* in 1973. The June 1971 issue of *National Geographic* pronounced Clarke “the father of the Pacific Crest Trail.” But was the Pacific Crest Trail actually conceived by Clarke?

Tall and robust, with slicked-down hair and a penchant for bow ties and tuxedo-collared shirts, Clinton C. Clarke was the picture of wealth in the early 20th century. Born into money, he once called himself an “investor.” He didn’t work for a living, but he knew how to work a good cause. He founded the Pasadena Playhouse and was a prominent early Boy Scout Leader. When

Clarke married in 1906, he and his bride took a ten-month, 20,700-mile around-the-world cruise.

Still married and well into his fifties, Clarke began working a new cause – a hiking trail from Mexico to Canada to showcase the glory of the western US. He began promoting the concept of the PCT in early 1932, sending torrents of letters from his home, a well-to-do hotel in Pasadena, California. Bent over in his comfortable armchair, Clarke pieced together over 2,000 miles of existing trails, dirt roads, and segments that were, at best, wishes. He was living in the time of the Great Depression, and unemployment was peaking at a staggering 24.9 percent. Though there was government encouragement, there was no government aid to promote the PCT; Clarke self-financed over 12,000 copies of pamphlets, books and trail maps.

He wrote the head of the National Park Service, Horace Albright, an early PCT backer: *I’ve completed a 65-foot-long map set of the entire proposed trail.* Clarke’s two PCT books contained packing lists, knapsacking advice (“put a raisin under your tongue”), and onion-skin maps of the proposed trail. In each book Clarke recounted: *In 1932 I wrote to the heads of the Forest Service and National Park Service proposing a trail from Mexico to Canada, running along the mountain crests of California, Oregon, and Washington, and those august gentlemen wrote back appointing me in charge.*

Shrinking violets don’t advance great ideas. Author Dan White described Clarke in his book *Cactus Eaters* as: “One part John Muir, five parts George Patton.”

In 1935, Clarke convinced the Sierra Club to sponsor the first Pacific Crest Trails System conference. Ansel Adams sent out the invitations. At the conference in Yosemite Valley, the YMCA adopted an audacious plan for a PCT Relay. Forty teams of Depression-era boys would each hike a 50-mile segment of the trail, passing off a gold-leaf-embossed leather logbook from one team to the next. The relay took four summers to complete, spanning from 1935-38, sometimes pushing north on sheer faith. Thirty-one YMCAs participated. When the last team finished and crossed back into the U.S. from Canada, they were met by Governor Clarence Martin in Blaine, Washington. The relay generated a cascade of publicity, dozens of newspaper articles, and a nationwide, two-page splash in the popular *Sunset* magazine.

Like a well-launched rocket, the PCT had begun a trajectory that would carry it far. In 1968 President Johnson signed the National Trails System Act, designating the PCT as one of the first “National Scenic Trails.” From the 1970s onward, successive waves of backpackers heightened interest in the trail. The 21st century brought a bestselling book and an Oscar-nominated movie. To get a permit to hike the trail in its entirety today, you compete with over 10,000 other eager hikers in an annual lottery.

The other Hazard

Far afield from glamorous Pasadena sits Camp Muir, perched among the heavy glaciers of Mount Rainier, a well-used staging point to reach the summit. But less-used Camp Hazard sits at 11,188 feet, just below the Kautz Ice Fall. Few today know the

source of its name, though many assume it’s called “Hazard” because the camp is dangerous. Some believe it’s named after Hazard Stephens, the first to summit Mount Rainier. In truth, Camp Hazard is named for a Mountaineers member once so well-known that, when he drove to Bellingham on January 13, 1926, to give a talk at the city’s Mount Baker Club, his arrival made front page headlines. “Hazard Toots his Horn: Fog Forces Mountaineer to Creep into City.”

Joseph Hazard was a big barrel-chested man who was fond of announcing, “I weigh one-tenth of a long ton.” His proclamation turned out to be accurate. *The Bellingham Herald* called Hazard a “celebrated” climber, “accustomed to finding his way up the most hazardous slopes.” The article also included his weight: 225 pounds.

Whether his size, personality, or talent as a climber were the cause, *Mount Rainier National Park Place Names* states: “Camp Hazard... was named for Joseph Hazard by The Mountaineers in 1924.” Hazard wrote five books, and in one he set the record straight. Camp Hazard, he wrote, was named “to honor both [my wife] Margaret and me.”

Margaret Hazard may not have weighed 225 pounds, but she was imposing in her own right. Margaret served as the editor of *The Mountaineers Bulletin* and *The Mountaineers Annual*, served on *The Mountaineers Board* for more than a decade during the 1920s and 1930s, and was a well-regarded climber.

That day in 1926, Joseph Hazard traveled to Bellingham alone. He was set to regale the Mount Baker Club with tales of his and Margaret’s recent ascent of Mt. Fuji. But prior to his evening engagement, the famed climber had one other task to attend to.

Miss Montgomery

The era of the early 1900s was one where newspapers often identified a woman by their husband’s name: “Mrs. David Brown” or “Mrs. Robert Curtis.” Well into her fifties, “Miss Catherine Montgomery” was a founding faculty member of a teacher training school in Bellingham – a school today we know as Western Washington University. When she wasn’t guiding future elementary school teachers, Montgomery could be found tramping, her one true love.

The word hiking wasn’t yet in vogue, and the word backpacking wouldn’t come into use until a decade later. But Montgomery, a “tall tree” as one student described her, was a fearless outdoorswoman. We’d call what she did hiking and backpacking, and we’d be aghast that the day’s morals required her to wear full-length bloomers and a high-neck shirt into the wilderness.

In 1926, Montgomery was the “Supervising Teacher of Primary Grades” and one of her roles was to review and purchase textbooks. That Wednesday morning she had a one-hour appointment with a textbook salesman from Benj. H. Sanborn & Co. – none other than Joseph Hazard. He might have been a famed climber, but his day job was selling Sanborn textbooks.

The meeting took place in a basement office of the college’s original building, Old Main. Hazard had to duck his head to get into the room. Near where she sat, Montgomery had a two-year-old issue of *American Forestry* magazine. The issue had one of the first articles about the Appalachian Trail.



The Chehalis training institute staff with Catherine Montgomery in 1898, bottom row, second from left. Courtesy of G.W. Kirk, Lewis County Museum, Washington.

A tramper's suggestion

In Montgomery's office, the fearless climber gave an anxious presentation. Two decades later, he recounted what she said to him at the meeting's end:

"Do you know what I have been thinking about, Mr. Hazard, for the last twenty minutes?"

"I had hoped you were considering the merits of my presentation of certain English texts for adoption!"

"Oh that! Before your call I had considered them the best—I still do! But why do not you Mountaineers do something big for Western America?"

"Just what did you have in mind, Miss Montgomery?"

"A high winding trail down the heights of our western mountains with mile markers and shelter huts—like these pictures I'll show you of the 'Long Trail of the Appalachians'—from the Canadian border to the Mexican Boundary Line!"

The conversation was recounted twenty years later in 1946, in a book written by Hazard that had a small print run. The publisher of the PCT Guidebooks came into possession of one of the few available copies and included Hazard's story in their 1977 second edition. But for this serendipitous event, none of us would know about Montgomery's role in the origins of the PCT.

Hazard's book added that he carried Montgomery's idea to the Mount Baker Club the night of his 1926 presentation. Hazard reported that the idea spread amongst fellow climbers and to other local outdoor clubs from there.

Digging through history

This story was the extent of our knowledge about Montgomery's involvement in 2008 when I set out to discover if she was truly the origin point for the concept of the PCT. Surely, some record must exist. I sought out 1920s records from northwest outdoor organizations. The Mount Baker Club proved a dry well. Though founded in 1911, all of its pre-1928 records had been lost, and no club records corroborated Hazard's long-after-the-fact story. The Mazamas, a climbing club in Portland (and The Mountaineers sister organization), had extensive records dating back to its founding in 1894. But even working with their archivists, we found no hint of Montgomery's and Hazard's 1926 PCT conversation. The same held true for the Trails Club of Oregon.

In 2009, I found myself deep in The Mountaineers archives at their Seattle Program Center. I'd been given access to a locked glass case with the club's original board minutes books. Starting in 1926, I immediately perked up when I saw Margaret Hazard was a board member. The minutes showed that Joseph Hazard attended a board meeting late in 1926. "This has to be it," I thought. But there was no mention. I read on through the minutes for 1927, and then into 1928. It was getting late, nearing 8pm. Discouraged, I kept turning pages. It felt like hiking well past dark. I was ready to turn in. Just a few pages more...

Sept. 6, 1928: "Motion passed that the Trails Committee be revived and that the matter of a trail all up and down the Pacific Coast be referred to the Trails Committee."

Oct. 4, 1928: "The President reported [about] the committee..."

for the trail from the Canadian Border to the Mexican Border."

Pay dirt! A contemporary record did exist, pointing to the Hazard and Montgomery conversation. The minutes confirmed Hazard's claim that the idea had been passed from the Mount Baker Club to others. Not only that, but The Mountaineers minutes also noted multiple trips by its members to trail events in Los Angeles. Pasadena was close by. They were in Clinton C. Clarke's backyard.

A chapter closes

A few months after meeting with Hazard, Montgomery ended her 40-year teaching career. It's unlikely the two ever met again. Montgomery remained in Bellingham until 1957 when she passed away at age 89. That same year in Pasadena, Clinton C. Clarke died.

For the Pacific Crest Trail, World War II and its aftermath was a quiet time with little public interest. Montgomery's 1957 obituary lauded her teaching career, but made no mention of the PCT. Sadly, she probably never knew that she'd given birth to the trail.

On September 27, 2009, not long after my visit to The Mountaineers archives, I submitted a nomination form. One year later, I stood in a large hall in Bellingham and saw Montgomery inducted into the Northwest Women's Hall of Fame. Speakers lauded Montgomery's life – a teacher, ardent suffragette, founder of a major college, and founder of two still-existing women's clubs.

Here is the last paragraph of her induction citation:

"Of her many legacies, perhaps the most enduring is her vision of a hiking trail along the ridges of the Pacific Coast that she began to champion starting in 1926. Others took up the cause and, today, that 2,650 mile-long trail that runs from Canada to Mexico attracts thousands of hikers. She is justly called "The mother of the Pacific Crest Trail."

Though she never had the chance to set foot on the 2,650-mile trail, Catherine Montgomery's idea ignited the minds of outdoorspeople up and down the west coast. Her PCT role had been buried like a pebble under the duff on the forest floor, dwarfed by Clarke and the rest who followed, but we now know the origins of this world-famous trail lie with one ardent woman tramper.

Sometimes all it takes is one tall tree. ▲▲

Barney Scout Mann is a thru-hiker and the author of Journeys North: The Pacific Crest Trail, published by Mountaineers Books. Journeys North tells the story of 6 PCT hikers – including Barney and his wife Sandy – as they face a once-in-a-generation drought and severe winter storms that test their will in this gripping adventure. Journeys North is a story of grit, compassion, and the relationships people forge when they strive toward a common goal. Get your copy at mountaineers.org/journeys-north.

Board & Branch Elections October 1-21, 2021

Each fall we host elections for our Board of Directors and participating branch leadership. Your vote is important, and we value your participation in the election process for these volunteer leaders! Our fall 2021 elections will begin on October 1. To learn about the 2021 candidates, our branch elections, and how to vote, please visit: mountaineers.org/blog/board-branch-elections-2021

This year, voters will weigh in on:

- Five Directors At Large positions on the Board (Brynne Koscianski for re-election, all other candidates as new nominees)
- Branch elections for Foothills

At the Mountaineers Virtual Annual Meeting on Tuesday, September 14 from 6-7pm, we will present the board-endorsed candidates for Directors at Large positions. Our bylaws also allow members to make At-Large Director nominations from the floor.

This year's candidates were selected by the Governance Committee from 20 people who submitted a detailed self-nomination. This rigorous process, new in 2021, was designed to deepen the diversity of perspectives and lived experiences represented on our Board. We are confident this excellent slate of candidates will help inform better policies and strengthen relationships between board members, Mountaineers members, and the wider outdoor community.



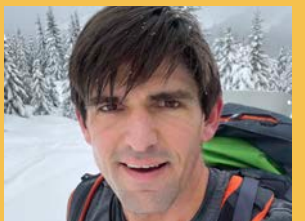
Serene Chen
1-year member



Brynne Koscianski
5-year member



Takeo Kuraishi
22-year member



Alex Pratt
3-year member



Anita Wilkins
15-year member



By Steve Swenson and Scott Johnston

Steve Swenson climbing Latok 1 in 2007. Photo courtesy of Steve Swenson.

Steve Swenson and Scott Johnston, both 67, have a combined 103 years of climbing between them. Steve is still making first ascents in the Karakoram, and Scott is an active climber and co-founder of Uphill Athlete, a service that offers educational resources, training plans, and coaching to amateur and professional mountain sports athletes. The two have accomplished incredible things in the mountains, and continue to climb long past the age when many people hang up their harnesses. We asked Steve and Scott to share their stories as lifelong climbers, and tell us their secrets for maintaining mountain fitness as they age.

Steve Swenson

Although modern climbing originated in Britain's upper classes in the mid-19th century, by the 1960s and 70s, many of the young elite climbers venturing into the Great Ranges came from working class backgrounds. They enjoyed poking fun at the stodginess of older practitioners, and it was around that time when I first started climbing. Several of my heroes claimed that alcohol induced hangovers were a good simulation for living at high altitude - at that time it was still a fringe sport, and a coaching and training infrastructure hadn't yet emerged.

In 9th grade, I started climbing with the Boy Scouts and joined my high school cross country team. Initially my interest in the two sports was separate. Later I realized the coaching and training I received for an endurance sport like distance running

helped me build a fitness foundation that also increased my capabilities as an alpine climber. Daily practice in high school with my running teammates taught me the benefits of consistency. Interval workouts showed me that short, maximal efforts improved speed and power. Overdoing it without the necessary training volume taught me that overworking is a good way to get injured.

Later, as an engineering student, I forged a handful of partnerships with more experienced people through the University of Washington's Climbing Club. I still had a lot to learn about climbing, but the strength I built from endurance training enabled me to perform well enough to be invited on trips to Canada and Alaska. These opportunities would lead to



Photo by Tim Nair.



future expeditions in the Great Ranges of South Asia.

Instead of living in a van and travelling around North America to climb full time, I chose to pursue my career in engineering and climb part-time. This inhibited my development as a technical climber on rock and ice, which takes thousands of hours to perfect. But soon the

Vertical Club (later changed to Vertical World), the world's first indoor rock-climbing gym, opened in Seattle in 1984. Having access to this facility allowed me to practice and train for climbing in a way that traditional gyms couldn't provide. Indoor work, ongoing distance running, and outdoor climbing as much as I could allowed me to achieve many of my climbing goals.

Climbing gyms have driven a huge growth in participants, which in turn has created a growing market for science-based training and coaching for mountain sports. As this information has become more available, I continued to adapt my earlier training programs to be more consistent with this new body of knowledge.

Aging inherently reduces recovery time between workouts, and this decreases the volume of training that I can do. Sarcopenia is the inevitable process of losing muscle mass as we age, and it accelerates over time. By building and maintaining fitness over a long period before sarcopenia becomes as significant, strength can be maintained for a longer period because this degradation impacts a greater muscle mass to begin with. I continue to benefit from the foundational training work that I began many years ago and the dedication it has taken to maintain it. Regardless of age, training is important because it will slow this process of muscle loss.

Scott Johnston

Like Steve, I started climbing in my youth in the early 1970s. One of the most attractive aspects of climbing to me at that time was the romantic and rebellious nature of the same heroes that Steve looked up to. Many of the super stars of climbing in those days prided themselves as not being paragons of healthy living; smoking, boozing and doing all manner of illegal drugs.

My views shifted when I read Reinhold Messner's The Seventh Grade. In it I saw a picture of the greatest alpinist in the world running up a steep trail. The caption said that Messner could ascend 1,000 meters in an hour. I was a mountain runner from an early age, but these simple few words lit a fire in me to start training for climbing. I ran a lot when I wasn't climbing. Something that became very apparent very quickly was that I was leaving my climbing partners in the dust on long days in the mountains. The more I trained, the faster I got in the mountains.

My parents' idea of being in the outdoors was a beer and a cigarette on the back porch. Needless to say, not having an adult to direct me in my climbing pursuits left me to my own adolescent devices. My high school buddy and I pooled our summer lifeguard money and bought a used rope. We had no idea how to belay or rappel, and only knew knots we'd learned in the Boy Scouts. To say we were game would be a dramatic understatement. We tied the rope around our waists and, using the modern term for it, we simul-climbed routes up to 5.7 in and around our home in Boulder, CO.

By dint of not killing ourselves we gained the notice of some of





Cebe Wallace. Photo by Mike Warren.

the seasoned climbers in Boulder, who took us under their wing and steered our climbing development. Within a few years I was climbing big walls in Yosemite, serious alpine routes in the Canadian Rockies, Denali by the Muldrow Glacier route (where I had a chance meeting with Steve), as well as making the third legal ascent of Ama Dablam in alpine style.

Throughout this period I was experimenting with my training. I used bouldering for climbing strength, running, cross country skiing, and ski touring for endurance training, and devoured books on training and exercise physiology. When I met alpine climbing legend Steve House, we formed a climbing partnership. Shortly thereafter I began to advise Steve on his training. I ended up coaching Steve through the peak of his professional alpine climbing career from about 2001 to 2010, when he had a near death climbing accident. While on a book tour to promote his memoir *Beyond the Mountain*, Steve found himself regularly asked how he trained to do all these amazing climbs. He developed a one liner: “I could tell you, but it would take a whole book.” It was then that he suggested we write down what he had done to train, in case some other alpinists might be interested. What we thought might be a 100-page Kinkos project morphed into a 450-page book, *Training for the New Alpinism*. We expected that we would write this book and go back to our lives afterwards, because almost no mountaineers or alpinists trained the way athletes do. How wrong we were. We were inundated by requests for training advice and coaching. We scrambled to put together our current business, Uphill Athlete, and our website UphillAthlete.com. A following book, *Training for the*

Uphill Athlete, co-authored with mountain running legend Kilian Jornet, was rolled out three years later to reach a broader audience with these same fundamental principles that underlie proper training for endurance.

Scott’s fitness tips for older athletes

It’s never too late to improve

Just because you came to the mountains later in life, or have never engaged in training for your mountain pursuits, does not relegate you to the “hopeless” category. It is never too late to take up the challenge of improving your fitness. One thing I can assure you is that increasing your fitness will allow you to enjoy the mountains more: more often, more safely, and for more years to come. One mountaineer coached by Uphill Athlete just became the third oldest person to climb Mt. Everest, at the age of 75. He came to mountaineering and training for it late in life. He accepted Everest as a long-range objective, and worked for three years to prepare for this success. If you train intelligently and consistently, you can see improvement in your performance at any age.

Consistency is key and helps avoid injury

Despite what you may read in the popular press, there are no short cuts to fitness. It take patience and consistency. The older you are, the more patience and consistency you will need to see sustained gains.

Your body at any age will adapt to training if, and only if, you give it small frequent nudges in the right direction. Occasionally bludgeoning it with the sledge-hammer approach will not be successful and greatly increases the risk of injury. This is the single biggest training mistake I see: doing little or no exercise for days and sometimes weeks at a time, then overdoing it either in a fit of enthusiasm or on some mountain adventure. A very important but overlooked concept of training is: you don’t get fitter during the training session, you get fitter during the recovery between training sessions. Remember that enforced breaks due to injuries tend to be the biggest setback for the aging mountain athlete, so make sure and stop when you begin to feel some niggling pain.

Go slow and steady

Do you hit it hard on weekends and then need the whole week to recover? That’s a sure sign that you’re missing the boat with your approach to training. The multitude of adaptations that your body makes as it becomes fitter take time to occur. Imposing a higher training load than you are capable of absorbing will decrease your ability to train consistently, resulting in the opposite of the ideal training effect we seek.

We recover from a bout of exercise more slowly as we age, and it becomes noticeable after about 45 years old. Recovery becomes slower and slower in the decades after that. For this reason it’s key to adopt a consistent training program of an appropriate difficulty, so that you can train multiple times a week without needing long recoveries.

Adopt a gradual progression

A good training program will have a gradual progression in training load. A plan like this will take you from your current level of fitness to a new level over the course of weeks, months, and even years of gently nudging your body to adapt to the added stress. Although this is rarely the case in real life, you will be far better off by underestimating your starting point. It is relatively easy to increase the training load if after 3-4 weeks it is feeling too easy. Starting too high is likely to end with the wheels coming off in 2-3 weeks, often with disastrous both physically and for your motivation. This can lead to a start/stop approach that ends in frustration, injury and/or overtraining.

A gradual progression in training load will mean adding no more than 10-15% to the training load, often best measured by time spent, over the course of 3 weeks. If you are training less than 4 hours a week you might be able to get away with 15-20% increases. To add much more than this will usually end badly in a few weeks. That plan will also have some modulation of training load built into it. Harder days are followed by lighter days, and harder weeks are followed by easier weeks. Rest before you need to.

Focus on strength training

Strength training should be a key component of every aging athlete’s program, as we lose strength at an alarming rate past 50 years old. Anyone with a limited recent history of strength training should engage in low-resistance, high-repetition (12-20 repetitions) exercises for several months to condition their muscles to higher loads. These can be simple body weight

exercises like pushups (can be done from the knees if needed), chair dips, stepping up onto a low stool (12”-16”), split squats, or pull-ups (using assistance if needed). There is nothing magic about this list - be creative. Do this little routine twice a week, gradually increasing the resistance of these exercises as you feel strength gains accumulate.

After this substantial conditioning period, begin the “try hard” work using the same exercises you’ve been using in the conditioning period but with more resistance, so that you can only complete 4-8 repetitions at a time.

Employ specificity and cross training

Try to have your training mimic your desired activities as much as you can. Mountain sports are foot-borne so foot-borne activities should be much of your training. However, varying your exercise modality can help prevent overuse injuries and alleviate the tedium of doing the same routine day in and day out. Having a group of like-minded folks to get out with is a great motivator.

We have seen amazing results from people who do not have regular access to mountains or even hills. Remember the 75 year old who climbed Everest? He lives in Chicago and did all of his endurance training on either a treadmill, a stair machine, or hiking stairs in tall buildings. These exercise modalities may be less than ideal, mainly due to boredom, but they do work if you use two of the principles outlined above: consistency and modulation. ▲▲

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There is not enough room in this brief article to cover all the aspects that go into making up good training practices. In addition to visiting UphillAthlete.com, we encourage you to explore the resources below to dive deeper into activity and age-specific training tips:

Training for the New Alpinism

This text will lead you through the physiology of endurance in a way that does not require a degree in biochemistry. It explains in detail the various training methods, as well as when and how to use them, so that you may create your own training plan. Sprinkled through the book are inspiring full-page color photos and stories.

Training for the Uphill Athlete

The follow-up text to *Training for the New Alpinism*, *Training for the Uphill Athlete* focuses mostly on the sports of mountain running and ski mountaineering. Its physiology section is more accessible to the average reader, while retaining the scientific underpinnings of the first book. Both books make clear that the principles discussed apply to any endurance athlete who goes into the mountains, from alpinists to backpackers. This second book spends more time helping the reader build his or her own training program.

**"When preparing to climb a mountain,
pack a light heart."**

-Dan May





A FAMILY AFFAIR

The story of Billee & Jack Brown

By Hailey Oppelt, Communications Manger

Billee and Jack's 50th wedding anniversary photo, 2001. The pool was designed by Jack to resemble a mountain pool. All photos courtesy of Billee and Jack Brown.

“And they said it wouldn't last.”

Both snappily dressed in robin's egg blue, two octogenarians sit perched in their warmly-decorated living room, eyes glittering. Their home is dotted with family photos, historic photographs, and art collected on far-away adventures. Over the decades, Billee and Jack Brown have raised six children and enjoyed 18 grandchildren and 28 great-grandchildren. They've climbed and scrambled dozens of mountains together, from the volcanoes of Washington to the peaks of Nepal. They are the second of five generations in their family to have explored the mountains of the Northwest, with roots going back to the early days of The Mountaineers. The love between them is palpable.

What kind of life has led to such a rich, enduring relationship? It all started in Chicago over 70 years ago.

Young love

Billee and Jack met in July of 1948. He had just turned 16, and she was 15 ♣ and new to town, having just moved from Tacoma following her parents' divorce. They both happened to be in a group down by the local drugstore, Billee standing on her head on the corner as a party trick. Immediately smitten, Jack offered to give her a ride home on his bicycle's handlebars. “He rode me home, swerving as he went down the street like he was going to hit the parked cars trying to see if I would scream... but I didn't,” Billee said.

“She wasn't like other girls I'd met in high school,” said Jack. “She was... controlled.”

They began spending more time together, and after a month and a half Jack mustered up enough courage to ask her to go steady. Always practical, Billee replied, “No. I don't believe in going steady unless it's a preliminary to getting engaged and married.”

Jack sat silently, tinkering on his bike. Finally he replied, “Ok, I understand that.”

The next few years were a whirlwind of overcoming parental disapproval, loss of college funds, Jack going off to college, and more than one attempt to break them apart - all culminating in a small wedding in 1951, in a little church just outside of Atlanta. They were married at 17 and 18.

In college at Georgia Tech, Jack studied architecture, worked part-time, and participated in ROTC to earn extra money. Billee took care of their growing family and babysat, watching children for military families who lived near them in campus housing. “When our second son was two weeks old, I took in a six-month old and a two-year old. We needed the money, and I was healthy and doing well. So that's what we did.”

When Jack graduated from Georgia Tech, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the army and became an army aviator. His architecture degree also caught the eye of a commanding officer. “I designed dormitories. I designed chairs. I designed test facilities for the jet engines because we didn't have jet helicopters at that time. And everything was done by hand.” After spending several years flying in the army he transitioned his career back to architecture, while Billee raised their now six children in a bustling household.



Jack and Billee on top of Third Mother Mountain in October 1971, celebrating the completion of the 24th peak to qualify for what is now known as the Irish Cabin Second Twelve pins.

Recalling those hard-working early years, Billee said, “I have a degree from Georgia Tech as well, also presented to me by the college: ‘Mistress of Patience in Husband Engineering.’ I was glad I was a stay-at-home mom. It was my choice, I didn't have to do it.”

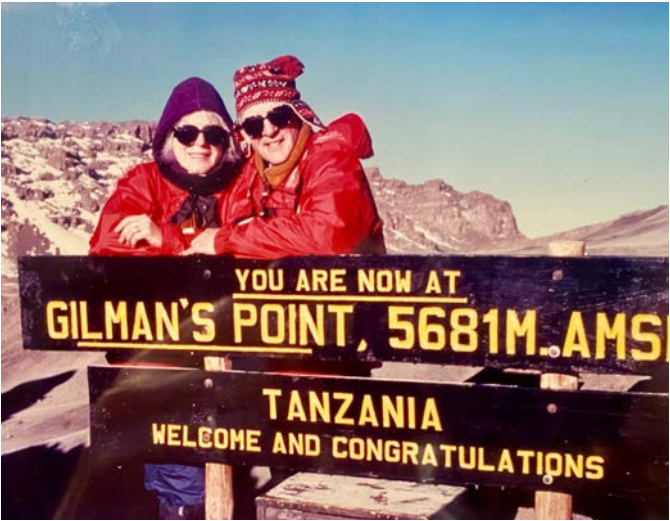
Growing up with The Mountaineers

After moving to Washington, Billee and Jack were introduced to The Mountaineers by Billee's father, Eugene Fauré. They found themselves going from house to house, meeting Mountaineers heavyweights like environmentalist Helen Engle and Mountaineers Books author Harvey Manning. The big draw for the young family was the Camp Crafters - a program designed to get kids outside to explore the natural world. It utilized our cabins and was full of summer camp-like activities, including hiking, campfires, and singing camp songs. They also spent a significant amount of their time in Mt. Rainier National Park. “It was our kids' playground,” said Jack.

Their social lives revolved around the Camp Crafters when their children were young, a blur of outdoor excursions, parties, and adventures. Everything from Thanksgiving dinners to Helen Engle's annual May Day parties were part of the young family's lives.

Their daughter Sandra warmly recalled days spent in the Irish Cabin, a fixture of their time in The Mountaineers:

“I loved going there in all seasons, though summers camping there were the best. I remember helping clean the cabin, getting out the mattresses, huddling around the wood stoves, looking at the books in the old bookcases, and exploring the trails. Preparing for the Thanksgiving feast, I watched the older women working the big stoves, in awe over their skill cooking pies and turkeys in those massive ovens. We took many hikes around the cabin, always led by experienced hikers who taught me that age doesn't matter.”



Billee and Jack on the crater rim of Mt. Kilimanjaro before Jack continued on to the summit, January 2000. They were 67 years old.

The children grew rapidly, and as they aged out of the song-and-dance days of the Camp Crafters they began to take on more daring excursions.

Four of their children took our Basic Climbing Course, their sons Mike and Steve diving headfirst into the sport from a young page. Their eldest, Mike, took Basic when he was 14 and began Intermediate at 15, leading climbs for Basic by the time he was 16. He was a member of the Tacoma Climbing Committee his junior and senior years of high school, while also organizing field trips for Intermediate and serving as chair of the Junior Mountaineers. “The amazing feature of my involvement with The Mountaineers was that my age had no bearing on the responsibilities and opportunities available to me. I was treated as an individual whose worth was measured and valued on the basis of my knowledge, skills, and maturity. I doubt that similar experiences would have been possible in any other organization,” said Mike.

Steve also had the opportunity to take our Basic and Intermediate climbing courses, volunteering as an instructor in late high school as Mike had done. When the brothers went off to college, they were heavily involved in the creation of Husky Rock - a 30-foot-tall man-made bouldering rock on the outskirts of campus, put up in the mid-1970s as a way to placate the college climbers scaling the walls of academic buildings. A local landmark and one of the first fabricated climbing walls in the U.S., Husky Rock is still utilized by climbers today.

Recalling the impact The Mountaineers had on their children, Billee shared what it was like to raise a family of six in the outdoors:

“All the years our kids were growing up, and for a little while after, The Mountaineers were very definitely the center of our activities. I think raising kids with an appreciation for the outdoors, and with knowledge and expertise of how to do things in the mountains, is very important. And I think it leads to a lot of life skills. We taught them from the very beginning to be responsible for their actions. It started with how we raised them, and it continued with their training in The Mountaineers.”



Clockwise, from top left: Billee and Jack skiing with all six children at Paradise, 1967; Billee carries little Eric in her backpack on a hike; Steve featured in The Seattle Times as he tests out the new climbing structure, Husky Rock; Gene sports a beret as he spends time with his grandchildren on Pinnacle Peak, 1960s.



The family on a backpacking trip in the late 1970s. From L-R: Steve's wife Teresa, Billee, Steve, Eric, and Jack.



A four generation hike above Paradise. Jack, Billee, their great-grandson Bennett, Rich's wife Davida, great-granddaughter Abigail, grandson Rich, Steve's wife Teresa, and son Steve.

Alpine parents

However, Billee and Jack weren't ones to be left behind. Both took our Basic Climbing Course, taking turns so that someone was always around to watch the children. Jack went on to take Intermediate, becoming an avid mountaineer. He climbed Mt. Rainier a total of seven times - twice with Billee, who once bivvied with him and their sons, Cliff and Eric, in the crater so that they might enjoy sunrise from 14,411 feet.

Both Jack and Billee have their Seattle Branch Six Majors pins, awarded to those members who have climbed the six tallest peaks in Washington - available only to those who climbed Mt. St. Helens before she blew her top in 1980. They also have the Tacoma Branch Irish Cabin Second Twelve pins, given to members who have scrambled a staggering 24 peaks near our Irish Cabin property and the Carbon River entrance to Mount Rainier National Park.

Jack in particular climbed extensively, achieving the first winter ascent of the Gibraltar Route on Mt. Rainier with Stan Engle in the late 1960s. He was known for carrying heavy camera equipment on most of his climbs, and was involved in Tacoma Mountain Rescue. He and Mike would go out on rescue missions, Billee manning the phones to call climbers in the middle of the night to let them know that they were needed.

As Jack was a pilot, he also played a special role in the construction of the mountain rescue hut perched on Mt. Rainier's Steamboat Prow.

"I flew a number of trips dropping building supplies down. Sand, concrete, and whatever else they needed. We would stuff it inside a truck tire, using wire to keep it all in. Then Larry Haggerness would signal when we needed to drop it. The last load we dropped (we had a parachute), was a case of beer. So we were really popular."

The old goat

It could be argued that one person is responsible for Billee, Jack, and their brood's heavy involvement in The Mountaineers: Eugene Fauré, Billee's father. Called Gene by most, he had a strong personality, and can be credited with more than one introduction to our organization.

"He ran into two young climbers one day, with a clothesline 'rope' tied around their waists. He walked up to them and said, 'why don't you go to The Mountaineers and learn how to do it right!' And they did. Their names were Jim and Lou Whittaker," recounted Jack.

"When Jim came back from his climb of Everest, he spoke at PLU. And the first thing he did in the introduction of his speech was to give my dad credit for getting them started the right way," said Billee.

Gene's involvement in The Mountaineers started in 1948. He dove head-first into the organization, quickly making friends with key members - Wolf Bauer, Omi Daiber, Shortie Williams, Larry Haggerness, Harvey Manning, and more. Having taken both our Basic and Intermediate courses, Gene soon began instructing and went on to help with the formation of Tacoma Mountain Rescue, one of the earliest U.S. mountain rescue teams. He even contributed to the first edition of The Freedom of the Hills, our seminal mountaineering text. Though not as well-known as his counterparts, Gene contributed years of his life to The Mountaineers and had a hand in pivotal developments.

However, he was not known for his gentle demeanor. "He could be rather brutal," joked Jack.

"He knew all the old guys - even though he was only in his 60s at the time he was already known as 'the old goat,'" said Billee.

Gene was a long-time smoker and spent his career as a chemist at the local smelter, and upon retiring at 65 had grand plans to climb across Europe. However, that year he received fatal news: cancer. He had months to live.

Always direct, Gene set to work alerting those he knew best of his diagnosis. Billee accompanied her father as he returned his newly-purchased climbing gear to REI and made his rounds, delivering the news in his usual style.

"He would arrive at someone's house with an old down sleeping bag, inside of which he'd rolled up a bottle of Old Grand-Dad [whiskey]. His way of greeting people was rolling out the bag and saying, 'let's have a drink. I got somethin' to tell ya - I'm dying,'" recounted Billee.

"He sure was a real character," laughed Jack.

A key figure in both The Mountaineers and his grandchildren's lives, "the old goat" was sorely missed from the mountains when he finally hung up his ice axe.

Later years

Though their lives raising children and working were brutally busy, Billee and Jack appeared to only speed up once their chicks flew the coop. Together they've rafted the Grand Canyon and the Upper Apurímac River in Peru, kayaked in Iceland, canoed the South Nahanni River in Canada's Northwest Territories, and trekked through New Zealand and through Nepal - twice. On a trip to Africa, they both summited Kilimanjaro.

Although their involvement in The Mountaineers faded once their children were grown, most of the trips they took were with friends made in our community - friends they still retain to this day.

"Friends that we met through The Mountaineers are our lifetime friends. Every Sunday morning, there's a group 10-13 of us that meet for breakfast. Almost all of them had been Mountaineers," said Jack.

Now at 88 and 89, they still value physical activity and get out for regular walks and hikes, utilizing their Nordic Track on rainy Tacoma days. Jack still runs, participating in races when he can.

They take great joy in their large family, down to the littlest great-grandchildren that are just exploring the outdoors. Recalling a hike with two of their great-grandkids, Billee was delighted by one's budding interest as a naturalist.

"The five-year-old, he talked the whole time we were going up the trails. 'Oh, that's a fir tree. It keeps its needles on all year long. And birds like to make their nests up there.' He'd just chatter, chatter, chatter, chatter... talked the whole time! He was just incredible."

Sitting in their living room, you get the impression that what you see in front of you is their lives' work. To exude joy at this age isn't something you stumble into. From their days as penniless 19-year-old parents to exploring Nepal in retirement, Billee and Jack seem to have carried two things with them always - love and respect. For their family, for their community, for the natural world, and for each other.

Here's hoping we all might be so lucky. ▲▲



FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER

Uplifting future Mountaineers leaders

By Kristina Ciari, Membership & Communications Director

Kiana Eshani rock climbing in Cañon City, Colorado. Photo by Khadije Sheikhan.

Meryl Lassen (she/they) is a 7-year member, Super Volunteer, and member of our Equity & Inclusion Working Group. She has written about her personal journey to find belonging in the outdoors, and she's an outspoken supporter of The Mountaineers efforts to create a community where all people feel belonging. Meryl met Kiana Ehsani (she/her) on an Intermediate Glacier Travel Field Trip to the Lower Nisqually in March 2021, and immediately started building community together. Kiana is an experienced climber from Iran, having reached the summit high mountains in the Alborz range, including of 18,406 ft. Damavand. Kiana moved to Seattle in 2016 to pursue her PhD in coder science and, despite her wealth of climbing experience, it took her a while to find her footing in The Mountaineers. For this article, we asked Meryl to sit down with Kiana to understand Kiana's journey and share lessons to uplift future leaders in our organization.

Meryl: How did you get started outdoors?

Kiana: Back in the college in Iran, I joined the student climbing club. I think at first I was joining more for the social connections, but after I went on a couple of trips, I realized that there were more aspects of the club that were attractive to me. I started having a love for nature and mountains.

The climbing club was community-based. We had trips with groups of 30-40 people. We had just one person in charge of deciding food for everyone - they would decide every single

snack and food that everybody's going to eat. We were having many new members in each of our trips, and it was better for someone who's more experienced to make sure the new people were getting enough nutrition. So that one person would decide what are the snacks and what are the main foods meals, and make a shopping list and then distribute the shopping among all the participants. On the day of the trip, another person was in charge of distributing the weight. Even though this is not the standard way, it brought this sense of community. You're experiencing the same thing altogether.



Clockwise from right: Kiana in the cold on Taftan peak (12930 ft), Iran. Photo courtesy of Kiana Ehsani; Kiana near the summit of Mt. Baker, WA. Photo by Hamed Mortazavi; Meryl Lassen on the summit of Valhalla Peak while leading a Mountaineers scramble. Photo by Kiana Eshani.

The trips were also cultural. We had one person in charge of the cultural events. We would have discussions every night at camp about different topics: economical topics, political topics, you know, everything. That's why it felt like those friends are friends for life. That resulted in very close relationships.

It's been six years since I graduated from college and moved to the U.S., and still the closest friends I have are either friends from back in that club or friends who I knew through friends in that group. When you meet someone in the mountains, it's different. You see them through their hardest days, and you might see them through critical, dangerous moments. It's something that you can't replace with any simple trip or just going to a bar and having fun. I'm not saying those things are bad. It's just a very different experience.

Is that what you were looking for when you came to The Mountaineers?

I wanted to have the same experience here. I wanted those close connections. That's why I tried to join The Mountaineers a few months after I had come to Seattle in 2016.

But I couldn't find what I was looking for. I tried to join some trips, but then realized that, oh, there are a lot of badges that I need to get. I have had many experiences and I've taken many courses before, so it didn't make sense for me to take

the courses again. Trips were filling up so fast and I didn't have a car. And it was a bit expensive for a student. With all these complications, I stopped trying for a while.

I made other friends, but it wasn't right either. For most of my friends outside The Mountaineers, climbing is a side hobby. They're not passionate about it, and most of the time they want to do mountains just so that they can check it off their list. For me, I actually get upset when people think about mountains like that. I feel like it's just a matter of being in the mountains and enjoying the nature. Most of the people I've met through The Mountaineers have that mindset. They don't actually care that much about what climb they do, it's more about being outside in nature as much as possible every weekend and just appreciating it and being safe.

Tell me about your progression of feeling included and feeling integrated and becoming a part of this community, because I know it was a process for you and it took a couple of years.

My turning point was last year Intermediate Glacier Course. The environment of the trip helped me realize that oh, maybe The Mountaineers is offering what I was thinking. It was my when I realized that Jerry [Logan, the course leader] cared about me. And you too Meryl. Jerry asked you to split a snow cave with me before we even meet so that I don't feel left out.



The student climbing club on Mount Paraw (11120 ft), Iran. Photo by Nina Maziar.

I always felt like you guys are humble, but at the same time you don't look at me as if, 'I am from Middle East. I don't have that much experience.' I had experience, but it was really different from here. You both put effort on making sure that I feel comfortable and included. He asked people to get dinner together and they started boiling water for everyone. It was amazing. I felt like, 'oh, this is exactly what I wanted.'

I can't say I didn't feel welcome before, but it felt like The Mountaineers is a club that I had to try really, really hard to get into. I felt like I had to prove myself from the beginning and all from scratch.

It sounds like you're talking about imposter syndrome, and I've experienced that too. I think some imposter syndrome comes from us internally and I think some comes from the culture. I believe it's one of the biggest barriers to retention, to success, and to people feeling comfortable in The Mountaineers. What do you think we each could do to make that go away?

The things that have helped me is hearing people talk about when they were struggling or were unsure. If I had verbalized the fears that I had in my mind, people will have the opportunity to say, 'this is normal. This is not just you. It happens to everyone. It happens to all of us.'

I think that having my culture and my identity and my skin color and my accent is something that is always on my shoulder. I am always worried that if I do anything wrong, people will be like, "You know, they're right about Middle-Eastern people." As I was leaving Iran for the U.S. my mom told me, "Always show your

good self because the media is showing a wrong side of us. That's one of your goals to show that on the other side of the world, there are real people just like you, experiencing hardship."

That's a lot of pressure. It's a burden on your shoulders of having to represent your entire people. And I just don't think there's any one way to enjoy the outdoors. Culture does play a part in how we enjoy the outdoors and the outdoors can also be an extension of our culture and our families and the way we were brought up, and that needs to be honored too.

With that in mind, what are some myths you'd like to bust?

The main important one is that we do have mountains in Iran. Mountaineering is getting more and more popular every day.

Women do climb. I think the misconception about Middle Eastern girls and women in general is that our society, our culture expects you to not go out and stay home. But it's actually the opposite because we are warriors. We had to fight for our basic rights for things like education, and what to wear, or how to go into the mountains. In college our climbing club trips were gender separated. But even so women do not wear hijab all the time. We don't wear burkas. And we definitely do not wear that on the mountain.

Another one is that not all Iranians are Muslim, and especially these days, people are okay with eating pork and drinking alcohol. I'm vegetarian because I want to be vegetarian, not because I have to. It sometimes bothers me when people assume otherwise.

I think that I always feel that people have some judgements about me from the beginning and that's why I don't wait for people to ask me where I'm from. It's the first thing I say in all the introductions that I do in The Mountaineers. I say, "I'm originally from Iran, moved here six years ago." I say this so people know that I'm not ashamed and that I'm okay to talk about it. But I am a little bit insecure about how I'm perceived.

Do you get angry or upset when people assume that you were repressed?

Do I get angry? I don't, I know some people that do though, so I can only answer on behalf of myself. I actually love to talk about Iran and let people know how things work. If there is any misconception, I would love to resolve that, but I know that for some people they just want to be a normal person and leave that baggage at home and just enjoy the mountain. I think in general, if you do have questions first ask if it's okay to ask them, and be okay if someone says no. And try not to make assumptions.

I love that. The idea that we should be meeting people and meeting moments with openness and curiosity versus implicit bias. This is true for brown people and women in particular. It's important for all of us to keep this in mind. Don't assume that the person is going to be slow because they're old, or that the person's going to be fast because they're young or because you perceive them to be fit. The biases that we have show up everyday.

It's the same at my work in tech industry, but I think that people can change. Even though the process might look slow, it's going to happen. Meryl you played an important role by trying to get me involved in the conversations on that [Intermediate] trip. You just started asking about my background and embracing it for the first time. You made me feel like, 'oh, I have done some things.' You made me feel like it's not that I haven't done anything and these guys are perfect and there's no way for me to get inside the group. I think that was a big change for me.

Where do you hope to see The Mountaineers go from here?

I emailed Krishna "KD" Dase [Super Volunteer] a couple of months ago saying I want to join his Shuksan trip. And he said, "Sure, but I just looked at your profile and I saw you are an intermediate student. I'm teaching a course and I have a female participant, but it's only her. I would love to have a female leader on the course. Can you help with that?" And I had other plans for that weekend, but I canceled it. And I was like, yes, I am in! This is amazing that you actually care about this.

I think this was something that I'm sure not only affected that participant on that trip, but also me as the person who saw that he cares. So now whenever he asks me to do something or help out, I'll be in. I feel more positive about the community overall. Now I don't think of myself as someone that is an outsider anymore. I'm invested enough that I want to fight for it and put effort into it. I'm willing to do that. Cause if there's anything I can do to help this club, I'll do it. It's mine now. ▲▲

Want to make your trips more welcoming and our community more accessible to all people?

Set clear expectations before a trip.

Disappointment and feelings of exclusion can often come from mismanaged expectations. Be as clear as possible with participants about things like pace, equipment, turnaround time, etc. Then, make decisions based on those criteria while you're on the trip, doing your best to hold true to the expectations you set.

Host introductions. Introductions are a great way to build community and belonging. Share your name, pronouns, and ask a question that will invite buy-in for the trip you have planned. Maybe ask folks what they hope to take away from the experience, or to describe their personal weather for the day (helpful in understanding group dynamics). Avoid questions like, "What's your favorite hike?" that can exclude people who are new to hiking or new to the area.

Be mindful of your assumptions about people.

Ask questions. Be curious. Assume everyone has the best intentions and model the behavior you hope to see.

Check in frequently. Encourage conversations about personal well-being. Make sure your participants are fed and hydrated, and that they're feeling confident in their skills. Invite people to share questions or concerns. On longer trips, you can ask experienced participants to serve as "social leaders" to support conversations and help everyone feel belonging in the group.

Pose feedback as a question rather than a judgement. When possible, ask questions rather than taking immediate corrective action. People learn better when they have an opportunity to problem-solve for themselves, and feel more included when they're part of a solution.

Send individual follow up emails after the trip.

Invite past participants to join you on upcoming trips. Encourage individuals to step into leadership roles or ask them to help you with a small detail on an upcoming trip. Invite feedback and use it as a gift to continue to hone your own leadership skills.



TROPHY MOUNTAIN MEADOW

By Michael W. Shurgot, 38-year member

Trophy Mountain Meadow being enjoyed by hikers. Photo by Jason Hollinger.



The Trophy Mountains. Photo by Jason Hollinger.

The meadow

exactly where I meant and handed me a finely-detailed map.

“The Alpine Meadows road is an old logging road that is not maintained year-round. The recent rains have probably rutted the higher portions of it, and it rises steeply past the first right-hand turn. Do you have a four-wheel drive vehicle? High clearance?”

“I have a small, front-wheel drive Honda, and while it’s pretty good on steep trails, it’s not what my Seattle friends call a ‘mountain car.’ And low clearance, I am afraid. More of a city car.”

“Well, your choice. Just be careful is all. Definitely don’t want to get stuck up there. It’s 7.5 kilometers to the parking lot at the trailhead, and this time of year you’re not likely to find anyone else up there. And there is no cell phone service either, so you would not be able to call a ranger if you got in any trouble. Days are really short this far north now, and we are having an unusually cold October. The sun today feels really warm, but once it sets behind Buck Hill up there, it will get much colder very fast.”

“I understand. I’ve got an early start, so I should be all right. Any wildlife up there this time of year?”

“Not much. Most deer and elk are feeding in the lower portions of the park now. No reports of cats or bears, but then as far as I know no one has been up there for quite a while. So, I can’t really say for sure.”

“OK, thanks for your help. I’ll try to stop back here later today.”

“Sure thing. Enjoy your hike. Like I said, just be careful.”

The road up to the parking lot was indeed severely rutted and seemed steeper than I remembered from my previous visit. I passed a clear cut I did not recall, a depressing sign that logging had resumed on the perimeter of the park.

The parking lot was indeed deserted and sprinkled with snow. As I stepped out of my car I realized that despite the brilliant autumn sun, the mountain air was much colder than in the lowlands. Frozen puddles dotted the sandy lot; the temperature was below freezing. But after a difficult drive in my “city car,” I was now exactly where I wanted to be: about to hike to a high meadow that had long lingered in my memory. I paused for a moment to reflect on how absolutely alone I suddenly was. While I had hoped that I would have this day to myself, I was also acutely aware of my vulnerability amid the vast wilderness surrounding me. And, of course, the cold.

The initial two kilometers of the trail rise gradually through a lush pine and fir forest. Red-yellow leaves from scattered oak and cottonwood trees twirled and tumbled in the gentle breeze. Such an immaculate autumn day, I thought. Crisp, cool, bright; I rattled off in my mind all the adjectives I could muster for this day. Though I was walking a well-traveled trail cut deeply into the frozen ground, because I was alone, I fancied myself an intrepid explorer climbing toward an unknown vista.

Beyond the forest, the meadow explodes in all directions. To the northeast, 2,577-meter Trophy Mountain lords over its domain. Table Mountain looms farther to the northeast. Beneath these majestic mounds lay my remembered destination, Trophy

“This was his country, clearly enough. To be there was to be incorporated, in however small a measure, into its substance - his country, and if you wanted to visit, you had better knock.”

-John McPhee, *Coming into the Country*

Wells Gray Provincial Park is one of Canada’s most impressive natural areas, spectacularly wild country couched beneath towering mountains, snow-capped even in August. I had the joy of experiencing it on a 6-day backpacking trip in 2014 with a group of Seattle Mountaineers, and in October 2019, I persuaded my wife, Gail, to return with me for an autumn adventure.

I rhapsodized at length on the beauty of the park, explaining that she would find many lovely areas to paint autumn’s multi-colored splendor while I hiked some of the trails I remembered from my previous adventure. I admit to a strange compulsion, borne of a combination of “getting on in years” (now 78), and a constant fear of imminent destruction of the wild places I

treasure. I like to return to as many of such lands as I can if only to know that, for now at least, they are still intact. No bulldozers allowed!

Wells Gray Provincial Park

Our first day there delivered a spectacularly beautiful morning, the sun blazing high above the crystal waters of Clearwater River and a light breeze orchestrating a dazzling dance of gold and red along the river’s edge. With Gail safely settled at a lovely viewing spot near our cabin, I stopped by the Wells Gray Information Centre. I explained to the attendant that I wanted to hike back, alone, to a meadow that I remembered from my backpacking trip near Trophy Mountain. She knew



A grizzly bear in Denali National Park. Photo by Ken Conger.

Alpine Meadows, more demure now in the fall than in its resplendent summer glory, but inviting nonetheless. The trail continues to rise due north, creating the sensation of walking off directly into the horizon and falling into the sky.

The encounter

After hiking another thirty minutes I decided to stop for lunch. I crossed a narrow, frozen stream and sat on a large rock with my back to the sun. The amazing warmth, combined with the brilliant clarity of the high mountain air, transformed the meadow into a stunning autumnal paradise. This incredible natural beauty had captured my imagination five years earlier. Seeing it again, now snow-dusted, I sensed a deep joy in confirming its unchanged wildness. As I munched on the first of my two peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, I felt utterly content.

Several minutes into my lunch, I noticed a huge brown rock forty yards ahead. Moments later I resumed walking. I stepped on a frozen puddle in front of me and looked up. At the crackling sound, the head of the rock moved. Staring at me was a huge grizzly bear, its distinctive hump clearly visible even at this distance. I froze.

Grizzlies have excellent hearing and smell, but poor eyesight, so I could not know if it possibly considered me as prey. To run would certainly entice the bear to chase me. And at my age (then 76), with three knee operations, I could never outrun the beast. I stood absolutely still, my heart racing, my mind flitting between possible strategies. Suddenly, the vast, open expanse of the meadow was potentially lethal. The nearest source of shelter, a clump of trees, was a quarter of a mile behind me.

Although the bear did not move, it continued to stare directly

at me. I began creeping slowly backwards, never taking my eyes off this denizen of the wilderness. After ten paces, I stopped. The bear held its ground. Ten more paces, stop; then twenty, stop; thirty, stop. Still the grizzly did not move, though its glare never wavered. I stood still for another twenty seconds, amazed that the bear, eyes still fixated, had not begun running towards me. With the bear stationary, I decided to risk turning around and walking more quickly. If I could get beyond that clump of trees, I would at least be out of its line of sight.

I turned around and, my knees wobbling in near-paralyzing fear, began walking quickly toward the trees. For several terrifying minutes I did not know if the bear was following me. I suddenly remembered reading in John McPhee’s *Coming into the Country* that grizzlies can track hikers for miles. I was almost too terrified to look back. Near the trees, around a bend in the trail, I stopped. I knew that if the bear had followed me, my only strategy for survival would be to stand my ground, wave my hiking poles wildly above my head, and make a hell of a lot of noise. Whether such a defiant pose would save my skin was, as McPhee recorded, “up to the bear.”

Gripping my poles, utterly terrified of what I might see, I turned around. No grizzly.

Relief

Fairly certain now that the bear was not going to pursue me, I gathered what was left of my wits and exhaled deeply. I walked backwards, very slowly, to the grove of trees where I knew I could not be seen. I waited several minutes. Before I turned my back again, I wanted some assurance that I would be hiking out as I had hiked in: alone. After a few minutes I stepped cautiously back onto the trail and looked around the bend. I saw that the bear still had not moved, so I resumed walking slowly south towards the forest, glancing behind me every twenty paces in pure terror.

When I reached the forest I walked faster, though I still dared not run. I pondered a famous remark by Satchel Paige, the legendary baseball pitcher: “Never look back. Somethin’ might be gaining on you.” Right. Like a four-hundred-pound grizzly. Death in a beautiful meadow. Frightened as I was, I had to keep checking, even within the forest.

Nearly an hour later, with its heater roaring, I drove my city car hurriedly down that rutted logging road, leaving the meadow to the bear.

I had foolishly thought that I was alone in that meadow. I was not, of course. The bear was always there, waiting. Trophy Mountain Meadow is bear country; always has been, always will be. And that is as it should be. Our task, as visitors, is to leave these meadows and mountains alone. And should we care to visit, to do as the attendant at the Park’s Information Centre advised - be careful. ▲▲

Michael Shurgot has been a member of The Mountaineers since 1983, and he completed the Winter Travel and Basic Climbing Classes with the Olympia branch. His latest publication is Green River Saga, a Western novel he co-wrote with Rick O'Shea, a former student. For more information, visit Michael's website at www.michaelshurgot.com.

Cross-Country Ski Routes of Norway

By Cindy Hoover and Cheri Solien, Global Adventures Leaders

Photo by Shari Hogshead.

As the birthplace of Nordic skiing, it’s safe to say that the Norwegians have fine-tuned the art of cross-country skiing. From skis, Swix Wax, and Rottefella bindings to the Birkebeinerrennet and eating waffles on the trail, cross-country skiing is deeply embedded in Norwegian history and culture.

Long ago, during the Norwegian civil war of 1206, two Norwegian loyalists completed a legendary cross-country ski trip. With their legs wrapped in birch bark, the men traveled over 22 miles on skis to rescue the king’s son and bring him back to safety. The prince was later crowned king, marking the end of the civil war.

The Birkebeinerrennet Race

Today nearly 10,000 local and international skiers participate in the Birkebeinerrennet, an iconic 54 km (33 mi) race from Rena to Lillehammer that honors the brave loyalists’ successful expedition. Just like in medieval times, the challenging route crosses two mountains and travels through breathtaking scenery, and racers even carry a 3.5 kg pack - the same weight as the fabled infant heir to the throne.

Leaving Lillehammer behind, one can travel further north by train to visit numerous other trail systems. Skiers can stay in mountain hotels as a base for day trips, or travel along the long ski route and complete a point-to-point ski. Two ski trails in this network are the Peer Gynt and the Troll Trail Systems.

Peer Gynt Trail System

The Peer Gynt Trail System, located northwest of Lillehammer in the Gudbrandsdalen Valley, is set between three national parks and provides a stunning winter backdrop for the cross-country skier. Peer Gynt is an 80 km trail that connects over 600 km of well-groomed ski trails in this rural countryside region. Intermediate skiers on track skis are best suited for the seemingly endless choices of interconnected ski trails. Whether you choose to ski point-to-point starting in Espedalen and stay at mountain hotels along the route, or just sample a few hotels and explore the surrounding areas in a leisurely fashion, you’re sure to have a wonderful time.

Troll Trail System

For a more challenging ski, try the Troll Trail System. Starting north at Høvringen near Rondane National Park and ending south in Lillehammer, this 155 km ski trail is perfect for more experienced cross-country skiers. As a few sections are ungroomed, partial metal-edged skis are recommended. Here as well you have the option to ski from one mountain hotel to the next, passing through varied northern terrain characterized by stunted, frost-covered trees.

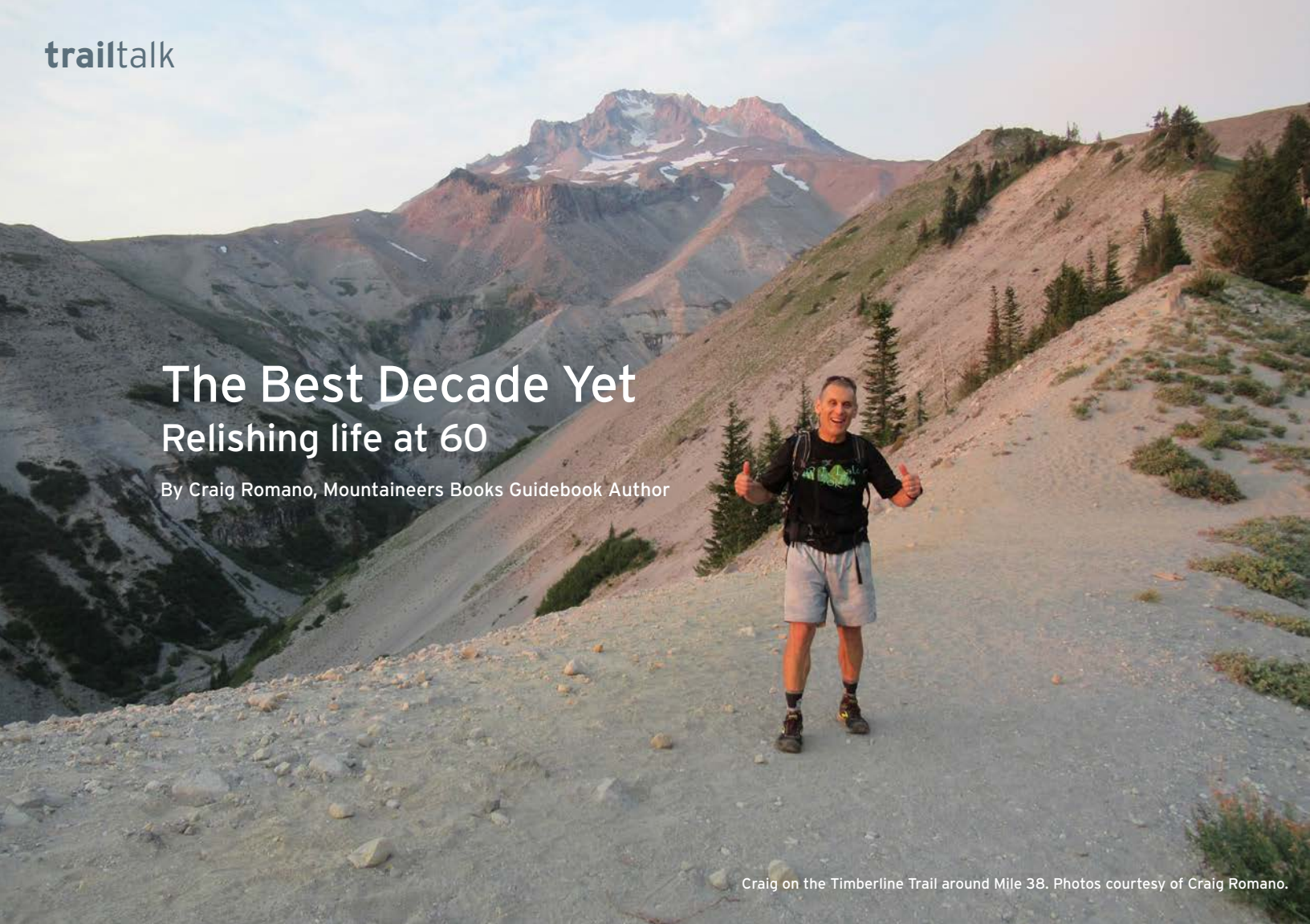
Accommodations

Hotel hot wax stations, luggage transport from one hotel to the next, and well-marked, groomed trails can be found on all three of these major trails. Due to winter storms and whiteouts, skiers must come prepared (at least the Ten Essentials, if not more!), know and use Norway’s Mountain Code of Safety, and be able to navigate with a map and compass when trail signage and way-markings have disappeared in a whiteout.

Gorgeous winter views of mountains, plateaus, forests, old Nordic farms, frozen lakes, and more await the adventurous cross-country skier. Enjoy Nordic hospitality at its best and ski to your heart’s content in a country that prides itself on its national pastime - skiing! ▲▲

JOIN GLOBAL ADVENTURES IN NORWAY - MARCH 2022

Are you an intermediate cross-country skier? Join our upcoming cross-country skiing Global Adventure in Norway in March 2022! This will be a two week lodge-based trip, in which we will cross-country ski between mountain hotels on a large network of beautifully groomed, intermediate trails. Visit Mountaineers.org/global-adventures-norway-2022 for more information.



The Best Decade Yet Relishing life at 60

By Craig Romano, Mountaineers Books Guidebook Author

Craig on the Timberline Trail around Mile 38. Photos courtesy of Craig Romano.

No one ever thinks they’re going to get old. As Kenny Chesney reminds us - “don’t blink, because life goes by faster than you think.” And fast it goes. I’m still in disbelief that I turned 60 this past spring - it seems like 30 was just yesterday. And while every decade-marking birthday presents its awakenings, this one hit me harder than past milestones. Between the pandemic and my recent Polymyalgia Rheumatica diagnosis (an auto-immune inflammatory disorder), it really hit home that my remaining time on planet earth is getting much shorter.

I love life, but I’ve always had the niggling feeling that there’s not quite enough time to do everything I want. I’ve done my best to treat my days as blessings not to be squandered. Sure, I haven’t used them all wisely. But I have tried my darnedest to seize as many moments as I can to get the most out of life before witnessing that last sunset.

Throughout my life I’ve relished physically challenging myself to really feel alive, experiencing the world in a more intimate way than passive travel and recreation could provide. By the time I turned 21 I had bicycled across North America three times, pedaling through 49 states and all 10 Canadian provinces. I started running marathons at 29, and qualified and

ran the Boston Marathon a month before turning 30. I started hiking in South America, Europe, and Asia, finding myself more interested in national parks than sprawling metropolises. At 49 I took up ultra-running and successfully ran the White River 50 Mile Run to celebrate my 50th birthday.

An unwelcome guest

I was going to run my first 100 kilometer (62 mile) race to celebrate my 60th birthday until life threw me a curve ball this past winter in the form of an auto-immune disorder. While I’ve been physically healthy and active my entire life, I have long suffered from anxiety, depression, and stress - a trio of toxic enemies to the body. My physical performance suffered this winter and I grappled with the idea that my best days could possibly be behind me.

I was put on medication that almost immediately took away my pain and inflammation, and within days I was running up mountain sides again. My condition is lifelong, but there’s a good chance that I may be able to put it into remission and continue to live somewhat normally. But my diagnosis, turning 60, and living through the terrible COVID-19 pandemic forced me to deeply reassess my life and priorities, and to think about the time I have left.



On the Presidential Traverse, with Great Gulf in background.



Craig crossing the Coe Branch on the Timberline Trail.

If I treated my days like special blessings in the past, since my diagnosis I now treat them like manna from Heaven. In my six months since beginning medication, I have been able to once again complete 50K trail runs and hike long and hard into the wilderness. I cherish a long and challenging run like never before, for I simply do not know how many more of these days I have left.

Being present

This has all led to me finally focus on the present. Throughout my life I have spent far too much wasted energy lamenting the past and being anxious about the future. I am now working hard to accept my past and see that it was all meant to be part of my journey to get me where I am today. And for the future, I can only make sound and wise decisions each day and pray that the outcomes will be for the best

To help aid my recovery I have made changes to my diet, routines, outlooks, and work habits. These changes have already led to positive outcomes, including healthy weight loss and an emotional and mental liberation from self-stopping and negative thoughts. For my 60th birthday celebration I completed a one-day traverse of New Hampshire’s Presidential Range - 19.5 miles, 8,700 feet of elevation gain, and seven peaks. It was something I could not have done in my 20s. Being able to do it at 60 with an inflammatory condition only made it so much more special to me. In fact, everything came together to make it one of my best birthdays ever!

The best decade yet

I am now excited about my 60s and have every intention to make this my best decade yet. The first step is being thankful for what I have and what I can do, not obsessing over what I don’t have and can’t do. While I’m still challenging myself, I have come to accept my limitations. I will never run a 3-hour

marathon again, but I have only begun to push my limits when it comes to endurance running. Having decades of conditioning under my belt has its long-term rewards. On August 2 I completed Oregon’s Timberline Trail around Mount Hood in one day, covering 41 miles and 10,000 feet of elevation gain. I’m going to go for that 100K and other challenges that have not yet come onto my radar.

And even if I can’t do everything I enjoyed in the past (beating my 13,000-mile, 8-month bike ride would be tough to top at any stage in my life!) I can always set new challenges. One of my goals is to continue to ultra-run as much as I can until my body finally says it’s time to slow down. But whether that means one year, ten years, or more, quality supersedes quantity. I am hoping to live as long as I can, but I want my days and my adventuring to be about quality - not checking things off in a frenzy.

Aside from eating well and exercising daily, I plan on continuing to have deep and meaningful relationships with my family, friends, community, and other souls I meet and bond with along my life’s path. Isolation is an enemy to healthy living.

I also will continue to try to stay positive, see the good in people and in life, and make a positive difference whenever I can. I will continue to reflect upon and examine my spiritual self, constantly seeking guidance and meaning. Life truly is a journey. My trajectory will inevitably include slowing down, but that just might give me more time to see and appreciate things I missed in the past because I was going too fast. Turning 60 never looked so good. ▲▲

Craig Romano is an award-winning guidebook author who has written more than 25 books, including Backpacking Washington 2nd edition, Urban Trails Vancouver WA, and 100 Classic Hikes Washington (Mountaineers Books). Purchase his titles in our Seattle Program Center bookstore, online at mountaineersbooks.org, and everywhere books are sold.

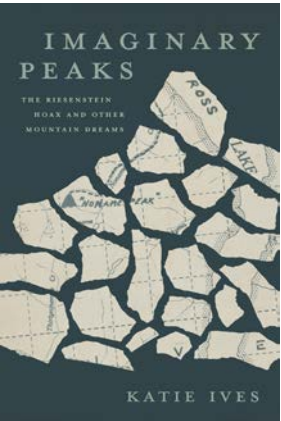


Harvey Manning on Mount Persis in 1951. A prolific author and dedicated conservationist, Manning in his early days with the club was just another rag-tag peak bagger. Photo by Chuck Allyn.

Harvey and His Hoaxes

By Katie Ives, Mountaineers Books author

The following is excerpted from *Imaginary Peaks: The Riesenstein Hoax and Other Mountain Dreams*, new from *Mountaineers Books*. In 1962 the editors of *Summit* magazine received a submission about an expedition to an unknown range of mountains, the *Riesenstein* peaks of British Columbia. The main summit, the mysterious author claimed, remained tantalizingly unclimbed. The editors printed the article - as if missing the clues that its creators had planted to hint that the story was a hoax (one of whom was later revealed to be Harvey Manning, editorial committee chair for the first edition of *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*). In *Imaginary Peaks*, author Katie Ives uses this literary deception about a fake mountain range as a jumping-off point to explore our shared fascination with wild places and the lure of blank spaces on the map. Read on as Ives shares her investigation into another of Harvey's pranks, this time featuring a suspiciously high-tech sleeping bag.



To understand Harvey and his hoaxes, Dale Cole told me, people needed to understand the burgeoning outdoors industry at the cusp of the 1960s:

We saw the climbing culture itself change. New manufacturers moved into the scene and they were selling their materials for prices that we thought were cruel and high. There was another breed of climber [who] took climbing far more seriously. Not that we didn't do serious climbing. But it wasn't a question of bragging about it in an arrogant way.

Well, Harvey was particularly put out by this kind of climber. Especially their accounts of accomplishments in climbing journals and magazines . . . depictions that made [an ascent] more of an ego trip than a climbing trip. As you well know, climbing dates and climbing facts and bragging rights and exaggerations come up in articles submitted to climbing magazines and misrepresent what's really there. Harvey himself said, facts and fiction read the very same way in print.

On August 1, 1959, Harvey wrote to his friend Ted Beck, detailing plans for his first (known) prank on the gear industry:

Incidentally, I'll be calling on you shortly to take a proper part in the Great Hoax. While down at the [REI] Coop in June I picked up a copy of Summit Magazine, and the thing irritated me—especially all the pseudo-scholarly crap about sleeping bag research. So I wrote a long, circumstantial letter to the editor describing a research project being carried on by the Cougar Mountaineers, of which I, H. Hawthorne Manning, am president. . . . Dale Cole is going to follow-up with some correct and further research, as Chairman of the Sleeping System Committee.

Ideally we hope dullards from all over the country are taken in, and start criticizing the "System." We can then answer them - having the tremendous advantage that we can invent all the necessary research and statistics while they will be dependent on fact...

*Yours for mutual self-destruction,
Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde*

While drinking homebrew, Dale and Harvey sketched out fake designs for a high-tech sleeping bag as a parody of modern gear: a tube inserted into an army surplus mask would conduct a sleeping person's breath into a container and through a calcium-oxide filter. This chamber would, in theory, convert the moist air into heat, which another tube would then carry to "what had been determined (by Cougar Mountaineers in their research laboratories) to be the body's temperature-control centers: the hands, the feet, and the small of the back," Harvey explained. Layers of tightly woven wool would further insulate those vulnerable areas. Climbers and hikers could assemble the system at home at little expense, apart from the calcium oxide, which, the Cougar Mountaineers lamented, was generally produced only for "missile research." But, they assured their readers, they were seeking a more accessible substitute for the chemical compound.

"The next day, when we'd sobered up a bit, Harvey decided we should submit this," Dale said. Dick Brooks, a chemical engineer, added just enough of an aura of scientific research to make the hoax appear legitimate to lay readers. *Summit* printed it. One of the main targets of the hoax, Gerry Cunningham, had founded a Colorado-based climbing equipment company in 1946, which he'd named after himself. "Gerry Cunningham was as energetic and ingenious a builder of backpacking gear as there was," Harvey later recounted, "and he frequently and generously shared his frontiering with readers of *Summit*."

Gerry Cunningham seemed to fall for the prank immediately. For the following issue of *Summit*, he composed a lengthy letter to the editor attempting to debunk the "Sleeping System," with detailed analyses of various forms of heat loss. Given a chance to respond by the *Summit* editors, Harvey hinted that the gear manufacturer might be wasting his energy: "The Gerry reputation speaks for itself. . . . It was highly flattering for you to devote so much time to considering our work. But, I scarcely think we have progressed to the point where we can merit your attention." As a cautionary note, Harvey claimed that he'd seared his own lungs by accidentally breathing in calcium oxide during one test. [....]

In a private note to Harvey, Ted (another chemical engineer) quipped about the science behind their hoax: "You would have a nuclear explosion if you were able to grind [calcium oxide] to that size. That would destroy Cougar MT and part of Seattle, which might be a good idea." Dale's subsequent *Summit* article blamed the hazardous dimensions of the calcium-oxide particles and the alleged lung-burning incident on the "gross errors" of the Cougar Mountaineers president. Dale also took issue with Cunningham's reliance on convective heat loss numbers that, Dale claimed, must have been "derived from studies of a naked man. In the Northwest we find clothing a necessity. (By law if not by weather alone.)"

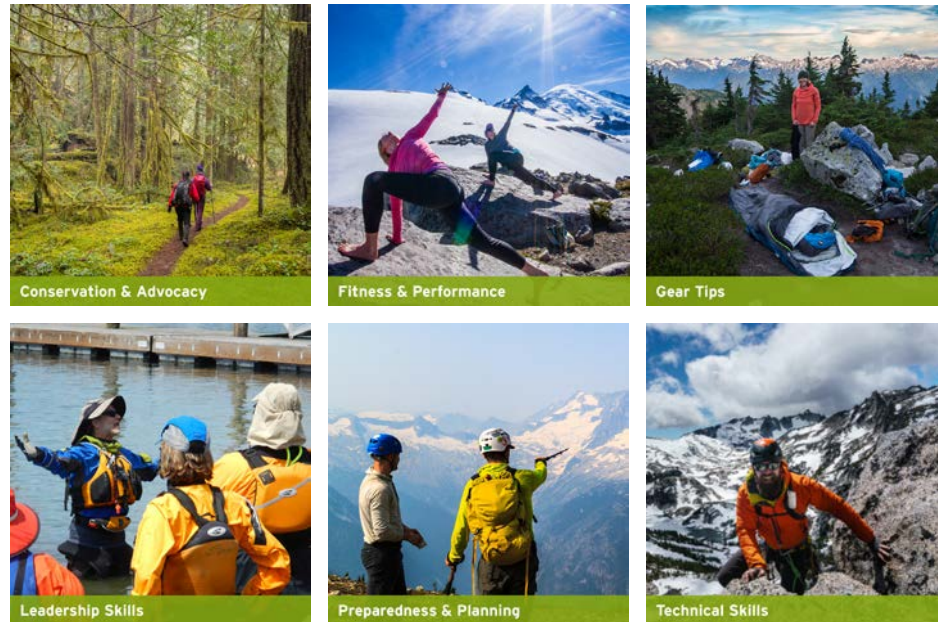
Heidi Brooks recalled that her father, Dick, "convulsed in laughter" when he noticed one of his colleagues had tried to work out the math of the system to the "subatomic level." The tactics of Harvey and his friends worked, she realized, "setting people up so that their own egos would take them down." The fabricated letters gave rise to earnest missives from backpackers unaware of the conspiracy. The hoax was becoming part of real history. And for some people, it might have stayed that way, even after Harvey described the Sleeping System as a "joke" by the "Cougar Mountaineers" in his 1972 manual, *Backpacking One Step at a Time*. Few climbers beyond their circle of acquaintances may have realized the identity of the chief prankster until Dale recounted the story in Harvey's obituary. "We certainly never let on," Dale told me decades later, still delighted at their creation.

After a few months, however, the *Summit* editors had decided enough was enough and stopped publishing letters about the Sleeping System. "Damn!" Harvey complained to Ted. "Well, next trip... Up the Revolution."▲▲

Imaginary Peaks is available for pre-order or purchase at our Seattle Program Center bookstore, online at mountaineersbooks.org, and everywhere books are sold.

Virtual Education Center and Calendar

We're excited to invite you to check out our new Virtual Education Center and Calendar, your home base for accessing all of our great virtual learning tools! Find activities, events, and classes held online and browse our educational resources for skills and more.



How to Get Involved

Step 1: Visit mountaineers.org/courses/virtual-education-center

This is your first stop to find everything you need for outdoor education and exploration.

Step 2: Choose what you want to learn

There's so much to explore! With a wide range of topics - from leadership tips to how to coil a rope - there's something for everyone. We also have a special 'Just for Fun' section if you need a laugh.

Step 3: Decide what kind of learning experience you want to have

Would you prefer to read a blog or complete an online course? What about attending a live webinar with an open discussion? We offer multiple educational formats to choose from so that everyone can find what works for them.

14

Online Courses

What You'll Find

100+

Educational Blogs

29

Virtual Events & Activities

How to Sign Up for Activities

Step 1

Visit our website

www.mountaineers.org
Click on the big green 'Find Activities' button, or hover over the 'Activities' tab and choose 'Find Activities'.

Step 2

Filter your activity search

Define your search using the filter options in the green column on the left. To view activities by location, choose 'Map' in the upper right.

Step 3

Select an activity & register

Click on the activity of your interest to learn more. If you like what you see, select the orange 'Register' button. You'll be added to the trip roster and receive a confirmation email.

*Note: Activities **require registration** unless otherwise noted. You will also need a current waiver on file with The Mountaineers to participate.*

How to Sign Up for Events

Step 1

Visit our website

www.mountaineers.org
Click on the 'Upcoming Events' button on the left of the main page, or click 'More' and choose the 'Events' tab.

Step 2

Browse for local events

Scroll down to view our most popular events, or choose a branch or program center calendar for more events in your area. Browse through your options, and click on an event to learn more.

Step 3

Select an event & register

Many events are free but require you to RSVP via the orange RSVP button. Events that require tickets will have a link for online ticket purchases.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I'm not a member? Many of our activities - especially day hikes and urban adventures - are open to the general public. You simply need to sign up for a guest membership at www.mountaineers.org/join. Guests can participate in two activities for free before joining.

What are some easy ways to get started? Sign up for an activity without prerequisites. These include day hikes, backpacking trips, stewardship activities, photography outings, and occasional sailing opportunities! Also, consider taking a basic or introductory course like Basic Snowshoeing, Introduction to Rock Climbing, Navigation, and much, much more! Visit www.mountaineers.org/courses to see what's currently available.

How are events and activities different? Activities are primarily daylong outings that require participants to use skills in an outdoor setting. Examples include hikes, naturalist walks, or snowshoeing - in short, you are outside doing something. Events are open to the community, and are primarily opportunities to see presentations and socialize. Examples include summer picnics, branch banquets, and our BeWild speaker series.

What if I don't meet the prerequisites for an activity? Some of our technical activities, like climbing and kayaking, have prerequisite skill requirements. If you want to learn the prerequisite skills, we encourage you to take one of our courses. If you already have the prerequisite skills, you might qualify for equivalency. Email info@mountaineers.org and we will help you apply for equivalency so you can participate at the appropriate skill level.

Why do some activities say 'Leader Permission Required'? All of our Mountaineers activities are led by volunteers. To assure everyone on a trip has a set of specific skills, some volunteers require you to contact them in advance to participate. Before signing up for a trip that requires leader permission, please contact the leader by clicking on their name in the course/activity listing and sending them an email. You can always email our member services team with questions at info@mountaineers.org.

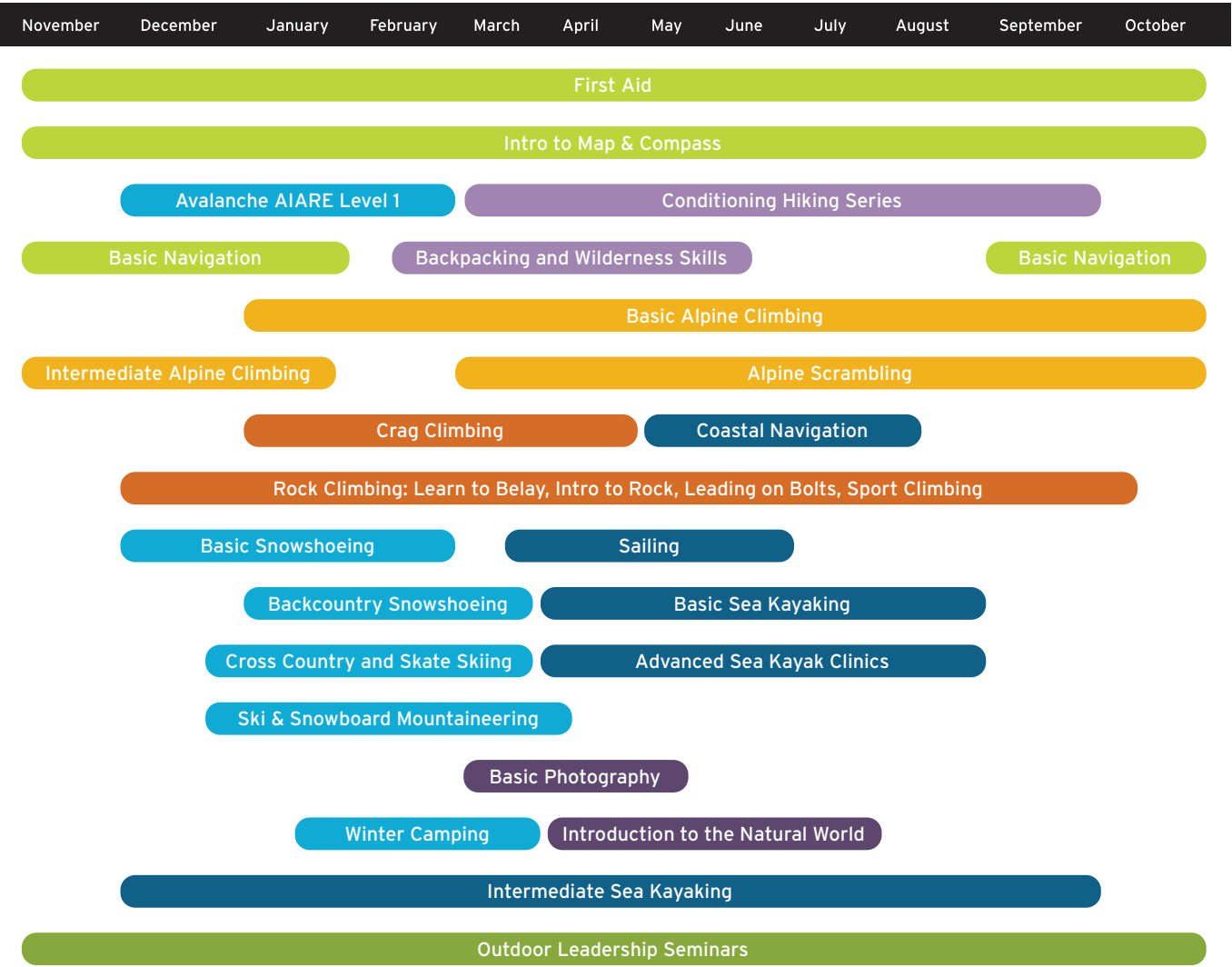
What if the activity is full? Sign up for the waitlist! Yes, it works. We have roughly a 10-20% drop-out rate in courses and activities, so spots often become available.



The Mountaineers Course Overview

The Mountaineers is a volunteer-led community built around sharing knowledge and skills to safely recreate outdoors. We offer courses every season and some all year round. The same course may be offered by multiple branches, and you can take a course with any branch. Exploring our clinics and seminars is also a great way to refine or expand your existing skills. Practice skills taught in our courses, learn about new techniques or gear, and explore new possibilities within our organization, like becoming an activity leader. Our clinics and seminars are often open to both our membership and the general public.

To learn when our courses are coming, take a look at our course calendar:



You can access all of our offerings online, with up-to-date information on subject matter, materials, and rosters. If you already have the skills covered by one of our introductory courses and want to participate in that type of activity, contact member services at info@mountaineers.org to find out how to qualify for equivalency. To see our courses, visit www.mountaineers.org. We hope to see you outside!

Due to COVID-19 risks, access to our lodges is extremely limited. Please visit our lodge webpages and mountaineers.org/covid19 for more details.

Open to Mountaineers members and the general public, our lodges provide visitors with unparalleled access to skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, and more. The Mountaineers is also home to the Kitsap Forest Theater, a historic outdoor theater showcasing two musical productions a year which are open to the public and are a family favorite.



Baker Lodge
mountaineers.org/bakerlodge

Our rustic Mt. Baker Lodge is nestled in the spectacular North Cascades and is a beautiful getaway all year round. The lodge is located within walking distance of the Mt. Baker ski area and numerous summer and fall hiking trails. We are closed to general booking during COVID-19 measures, but may be available for single-purpose groups. Please direct inquiries to mtbakerlodge@gmail.com or lodge chairs.

LODGE WEBPAGES Information about schedules, availability, meals, group rentals, and special events can all be found on the lodge webpages. You can also book your stay online. To access our lodge webpages, visit the direct links listed below or go to mountaineers.org, click on 'More' in the top menu, and then click on 'Locations & Lodges' in the dropdown menu.

VOLUNTEER Our lodges and the Kitsap Forest Theater are run by dedicated volunteers, and they can use your help! Visit their webpages to learn how you can contribute to the teams that keep our outdoor centers running.



Meany Lodge
mountaineers.org/meanylodge

Meany Lodge operates a rope-tow on our ski hill for ski lessons, cross-country skiing, and snowshoe excursions. This year Meany Lodge will be most enjoyed by those happy to spend the day outside, with bathroom access only and no overnight stays. Visit our webpage to sign up for an upcoming work party.



Stevens Lodge
mountaineers.org/stevenslodge

Nestled near the Stevens Pass ski area, this rustic ski-in/ski-out lodge is open to PCT thru-hikers and mountain bikers in the fall, and skiers in the winter. Tired of the hustle and bustle of the big city? Come for a quiet respite to a cabin in the woods, with bunks for the whole family. Several trails are a short walk or drive from the lodge.

Kitsap Forest Theater
foresttheater.com



Theater inspired by a magical place! Stroll down the forested trail to our breathtaking theater and create a treasured family tradition. Our 2022 shows are uplifting musicals that appeal to everyone - treat yourself to a day away in the forest. Tickets available online: save on our two-show package.

Disney's Beauty and the Beast (May-Jun 2022, 2pm) Step into the enchanted world of this "tale as old as time" and "be our guest" for this heartwarming tale of true love and transformation, perfect for the entire family.

Bend in the Road, The Anne of Green Gables Musical (Late Jul-Aug 2022, 2pm) This Northwest premier show is a high-energy, family musical based on the beloved classic, Anne of Green Gables. This warm, funny musical retains the heart of the original story, and is perfect for all ages.

HELP WANTED
We are looking for cooks for weekend rehearsals and performances. We also need help with set building and costume sewing, prop collecting, ushering, and parking for shows.

Due to COVID-19 risks activities, courses, and events may be canceled or postponed. Please visit mountaineers.org/covid19 for more details.

The Mountaineers is home to seven branches, each offering a number of courses and seminars. Our branches also host a variety of events like picnics, film screenings, and guest speakers. Regardless of which branch you join, you can sign up for offerings with any branch. Learn more at mountaineers.org/locations-lodges.



BELLINGHAM

Chair: Jack Duffy, jackduffy12@gmail.com
Website: mountaineers.org/bellingham
COURSES & ACTIVITIES: Climbing, first aid, hiking & backpacking, scrambling, and stewardship.

You'll find the Bellingham Branch tucked alongside the craggy expanse of the North Cascades. Our close-knit community offers climbing courses, hiking trips, and more. We're also home to one of the most popular Mountaineers getaway destinations, Mt. Baker Lodge.

BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS are on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Visit our branch calendar for details.

EVERETT

Chair: Elaina Jorgensen, elaina.jorgensen@gmail.com
Website: mountaineers.org/everett
COURSES & ACTIVITIES: Avalanche safety, backcountry skiing, climbing, cross-country skiing, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, scrambling, sea kayaking, snowshoeing, and stewardship.

Founded in 1911, the Everett Branch offers over a dozen programs. As a smaller branch, we value companionship and regularly host events including monthly open houses and annual gatherings like our Salmon Bake, Gear Grab & Potluck, Annual Awards Banquet, and more. Check our branch calendar for details. Our branch is also known for our unique Lookout and Trail Maintenance Committee, which restored and continues to maintain the historic Mt. Pilchuck lookout.

KITSAP

Chair: Bill Bandrowski, bill.bandrowski@gmail.com
Secretary: Christine Grenier, highroadhiker@wavecable.com
Website: mountaineers.org/kitsap
COURSES & ACTIVITIES: Climbing, exploring nature, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, outdoor leadership, scrambling, sea kayaking, snowshoeing, and youth & family.

The Kitsap Branch draws members from throughout western Puget Sound, from Gig Harbor to the Olympic Peninsula, including Pierce, Kitsap, Jefferson, and Clallam counties. Join us at our program center, conveniently located in Bremerton.

BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS are held in February, May, August, and November. Our annual branch celebration is in October; please join us! Visit our branch calendar for details.

SEATTLE

Chair: Jared Pearce, jared.pearce@gmail.com
Website: mountaineers.org/seattle

COURSES & ACTIVITIES: Avalanche safety, canyoning, climbing, cross-country skiing, exploring nature, first aid, folk dancing, hiking & backpacking, navigation, outdoor leadership, photography, retired rovers, sailing, scrambling, sea kayaking, snowshoeing, and stewardship.

The Seattle Branch began as the sole club location in 1906 when The Mountaineers was founded. Our Meet The Mountaineers open houses are held about once a month and are a great way for new and prospective members to learn about our many offerings. Our branch is also home to the Seattle Program Center, which features a book store, indoor and outdoor climbing walls, event spaces, and more.

BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS are held every other month to discuss new and ongoing initiatives. Our branch is growing rapidly, and we are actively seeking people to support our community - no prior experience required. Visit our branch calendar for details.

FOOTHILLS
(I-90/I-405 CORRIDORS)

Chair: Cheryl Talbert, cascadehiker@earthlink.net
Website: mountaineers.org/foothills

COURSES & ACTIVITIES: AIARE avalanche safety, backcountry and downhill skiing, conservation and stewardship, cross-country skiing, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, scrambling, snowshoeing, and trail running - and a brand new climbing program!

The Foothills Branch is the club's newest branch, founded in 2004 and encompassing the eastside communities along the I-90 and I-405 corridors. In addition to our educational and activity programs, we host stewardship events with the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, film screenings, guest speakers, and other community events. We are also excited to be a close partner with Meany Lodge!

Our branch is growing rapidly, and we are actively seeking people to support our community - no

prior experience required. We invite you to get involved in branch leadership and committees to get our communities outside. Contact the branch chair if you might be interested.

BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS are held every other month (except summer) to discuss new and ongoing initiatives. All branch members are welcome! Visit our branch calendar for details.

TACOMA

Chair: Curtis Stock, cstock34@msn.com
Website: mountaineers.org/tacoma

COURSES & ACTIVITIES: Avalanche safety, climbing, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, outdoor leadership, photography, sailing, scrambling, sea kayaking, snowshoeing, and youth & family.

The second largest of all seven branches, the Tacoma Branch maintains its own program center in the Old Town neighborhood of Tacoma as well as the Irish Cabin property located near Mt. Rainier. A great way get involved is our Meet the Tacoma Mountaineers event, consisting of a meet-and-greet and a 90-minute interactive presentation giving you opportunities to learn about our history, our website, and how you can get involved.

BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS are held every six weeks to discuss new and ongoing initiatives and general branch business. Visit our branch calendar for details.

OLYMPIA

Chair: Neal Kirby, neal.kirby@hotmail.com
Website: mountaineers.org/olympia

COURSES & ACTIVITIES: Avalanche safety, backcountry skiing, climbing, cross-country skiing, exploring nature, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, outdoor leadership, scrambling, sea kayaking, stewardship, snowshoeing, wilderness skills, and youth & family. Our branch is known for its robust stewardship program.

EVENTS: Our monthly speaker series and potluck will return soon. Watch our branch page on the website for an announcement.

BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS are held on Zoom the second Wednesday of the month. Members are encouraged to attend. Contact Neal Kirby for the link.

Get Involved With Your Branch

Visit Your Branch Page Go to mountaineers.org and click on 'More' in the top menu; then click 'Locations & Lodges' and select your branch from the dropdown options. On your branch home page, you'll find branch news, upcoming events, contact info, and more. You can also access your branch page using the direct links listed in the branch summaries.

Browse Branch Courses & Activities To see what's available, visit mountaineers.org and click the big green 'Find Courses' button or 'Find Activities' button. You can then narrow your search by branch using the filter options in the green column on the left. Remember, you can sign up for courses and activities offered by any branch.

Branch Events With picnics, open houses, banquets, guest speakers, and more, our branches host an array of events for you to get involved. To check out what's next, visit mountaineers.org/events. From this page, you can select your branch calendar.

Branch eNewsletters Branch eNewsletters are a great way to stay up to date. To opt into these emails, visit mountaineers.org/profile. Login, then scroll down and make sure the box next to 'Branch Communications' is checked.*

**The Seattle Branch doesn't have a branch-wide eNewsletter, but several activity committees publish eNewsletters, including climbing, navigation, photography, and naturalists, and many activities have a Facebook presence. To learn more, contact the committee chairperson. To find a committee, input the committee name into our search bar at the top of our website.*

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with member benefits

As a Mountaineers member, you have access to:

Courses, clinics, and seminars to gain lifelong skills

Activities to get outside and find community

Gear Library access to help outfit your trips

Lodge access at our Baker, Meany, and Stevens lodges

20% off Mountaineers Books publications, USGS maps, and Green Trails maps

10-70% off gear and experiences from our partners

And more!

To learn more, visit mountaineers.org/membership/benefits

Pacific Banana Slugs

By Issy Steckel, Communications Associate



Pacific banana slug eating a mushroom at Mount Seymour Provincial Park. Photo by troughnott.

The Pacific Northwest is home to many unique and beautiful animals, but there is one strange, slimy creature that is often overlooked: the Pacific banana slug. Oft-forgotten until they're underfoot, banana slugs are critically important members of the forest community from southeast Alaska to central California, and they play a big role in our ecosystems each autumn.

Slug snapshot

For those of you who have yet to encounter one, Pacific banana slugs are the second-largest slug in the world, growing up to 9 inches long. They are also one of the slowest species on the planet, with an average speed of 6.5 inches per minute. A vibrant yellow or brownish-green color, they can resemble an overripe banana with their black spots.

Banana slugs rely on moisture to stay alive, so during warm or dry periods they produce extra slime, bury themselves in leaves, and enter a dormant "summer sleep" known as aestivation. But with the return of rainy weather, these creatures are once again moving safely across the forest floor.

By contracting and relaxing a muscular "foot," slugs generate a wave that propels them smoothly forward. Two sets of tentacles allow them to sense their environment. The upper pair of tentacles has tiny black "eyes" that detect light and movement. Their eyestems can stretch up and move in all directions, enabling slugs to peer over woodland obstacles. Often called "feeler stalks," the shorter pair of tentacles below is for feeling and smelling. Luckily, if a tentacle gets injured or bitten off, it can grow back!

Role in the ecosystem

Pacific banana slugs are the forest floor clean-up crew. By chewing on dead organic matter, including fallen leaves, moss, and animal droppings, these native detritivores recycle nutrients. Slug excretions not only provide a nitrogen-rich fertilizer for plant growth, but also disperse spores and seeds required for forest regeneration. Banana slugs help to break

down fallen leaves each autumn, making way for new growth in the understory in spring.

Banana slugs devour just about everything they find with their radula (a tongue of microscopic teeth) - with one important exception. No matter how hungry they are, Pacific banana slugs won't eat redwood tree seedlings. This adaptation has a clear evolutionary advantage; by avoiding these distasteful seeds, banana slugs protect the very trees that form the damp habitat they need to survive.

What's with all the slime?

Slime is the slug's superpower. In addition to locomotion and hydration, slime is essential for defense. When threatened, banana slugs produce extra slime to ward off predators, or at the very least, make it an unpleasant dining experience. The slug's mucus also contains an anesthetic that causes the predator's mouth to go numb. While most animals pass on this nasty mouthful of slime, clever raccoons roll slugs in dirt to coat them before eating. Chocolate-covered banana, anyone?

Human uses for slime

What if I told you that some pretty cool inventions were inspired by slug slime? By studying the versatile properties of this goo, scientists have created new surgical glues for medical procedures. Another group of engineers have built slug-inspired greenhouses that use slime insulation to store and release water, much like the banana slug's mucus-coated body.

How to see banana slugs for yourself

In the wettest parts of Washington, such as the Hoh or Quinault Rainforest, keep your eyes peeled for mushrooms with dime-sized nibbles and glistening trails of clear slime on decaying plants or spider webs. You'll likely spot a slug or two - just be careful to watch your step. ▲▲

These slimy forest friends can sometimes be perilous! Read the story of a member who slipped on a slug and broke her hip on a backpacking trip: mountaineers.org/blog/safety-stories-beware-of-slugs

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Photo by Ida Vincent.