nuntaineer

EXPLORE • LEARN • CONSERVE

in this issue:

Different & Able

Adjusting for Conditions

An Indirect Path to Flexibility

Avalanche Safety

Watercolor in Winter

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Winter 2021 | Volume 115 | Number 1

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: Kimber Cross on lead, ice climbing in Provo, Utah. Photo by Muddy Shutter Media.

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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.



COVID-19 has driven remarkable change around the world and into our daily lives. From our jobs to our daily routines, our kids' schools to the way we interact with friends or communities like The Mountaineers, almost nothing is as it was in 2019.

While external forces like this are not of our choosing, sometimes they can be the push we need to stretch, lead, and adapt in ways previously beyond reach. Take working from home (WFH) or remote office work for example. At many employers, WFH was often not culturally accepted or

explicitly regulated. Yet, when state lockdowns drove a quick shift to 100% remote work, many of those employers and employees found silver linings through things like massive time and cost savings. I took advantage of the reduced commute and shifted from higher-risk activities like climbing to early morning runs around Seattle. By focusing only on running now that races were cancelled, I set several unofficial personal bests - a personal silver lining.

At The Mountaineers, we took aggressive actions to help keep our communities safe and manage our finances. When we could not gather in person, we leaned on previous efforts to enable remote participation in meetings via Zoom to transition to 100% remote engagement for everyone. To keep the stoke for outdoor adventure alive, we reimagined in-person events like our popular Beta & Brews series to be virtual. We all missed the one-on-one conversations before and after these events, yet the online format enabled more people to attend from all over the world. And, because of the online format, events were recorded and shared on The Mountaineers YouTube channel to reach further audiences. These initial actions were small but important.

Today, many efforts to stretch are led by our incredible volunteers. Larger courses are shifting lectures online and redesigning their structure, offering small, hands-on learning sessions to compliment online learning while complying with state safety guidelines. Students in our smaller "course pods" have strong learning outcomes, and are reporting very high satisfaction levels. Collective efforts like these will ultimately lead to a stronger organization in 2021 and beyond.

The creativity and commitment of our volunteers was matched by the generosity of our donors. More than 3,000 people offered gifts of all sizes, contributing \$1.48M to help protect our core operations. Participants from around the world showed up in full force in July for our rescheduled gala, donating and bidding to raise \$471,000, nearly a third of the year's entire philanthropic contributions.

Another high point of recent months was the exceptional performance of our publishing division, Mountaineers Books. After a near-total shutdown in March and April, we restarted operations. The combination of our new titles and more people getting outdoors resulted in strong sales, and we ended up beating our original summer sales projections, finishing the fiscal year just shy of our original budget. Our books play an essential role in how we connect people with the natural world, and our publishing division has contributed significantly to our financial sustainability during the pandemic.

I share these positive stories of adaptation to highlight our resiliency. As we navigate the pandemic and ponder when and how the "new normal" will emerge, I have faith that - regardless of what the future holds - people will continue to find solace in outdoor adventures and will continue to seek outdoor education. So while I long for the days where we can gather in crowds to watch the Banff Film Festival or host our annual gala, in some ways, our adaptation has highlighted even greater opportunities to serve members and meet demand through new engagement and delivery models. The year to come is sure to be full of challenges, but we're well-positioned to weather this storm by continuing to work together as a Mountaineers community.

Vik Sahney, Mountaineers Board President

Vite Sal



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

EDITOR Hailey Oppelt

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR Kristina Ciari

DESIGNER

Sarah Kulfan, Beans n' Rice

PROOFREADERS Trevor Dickie, Evy Dudey, Kate Regan

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Tom Voal

EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER Tom Helleberg

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR Amber Carrigan

PUBLICIST Tess Day

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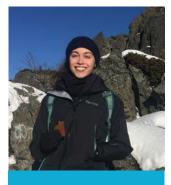
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Hailey Oppelt haileyo@mountaineers.org Photo by Paige Madden.

At the risk of sounding flippant, I'll say what seems to be on everyone's minds: what a weird year. A world-wide pandemic, polarizing politics, and civil unrest have swept through the country and altered many parts of our lives. Even going to the grocery store has become a tight-rope walk, an errant sneeze sparking anxiety in the shampoo aisle.

With so many daily tasks erased or transformed, many of us are finding ourselves with a surplus of free time.

This can be seen in the global shortages of bicycles, roller skates, and baker's yeast. It can also be found on our busy trails and city parks. In a time when reality has ground to a halt and we find ourselves suspended, suddenly new doors begin to crack open and let in some light. Who will you be? What will you explore? I myself have taken up meditation and doubled down on my climbing days. In another six months I may find myself in the back of a Winnebago doing magic tricks. At least, a gal can hope.

The creative ways that many of you are approaching these unusual circumstances inspired us to choose the theme of "leveling up" for this edition. From our contributors we have a story reflecting on the challenges found in taking a forced step back from outdoor pursuits and an informational piece on stretching for climbers from *Peak Nutrition* co-author Mercedes Pollmeier. A quick one-pager provides thoughtful tips for rainy-day hikers, and we explore avalanche awareness

in the Northwest through conversations with local experts. We're also excited to share a piece on how to watercolor in winter, and why water might not be your best bet for mixing paint. Our cover story features Kimber Cross, an adaptive climber who started climbing by taking Basic in Tacoma in 2017. She is now a Climb Leader, an avid ice climber, and a sponsored athlete; an impressive resume for any climber, much less one three years in the sport.

Our regular features are exciting as well, shedding light into how COVID-19 has sparked creative solutions in our organization. We hear about re-imagined summer camps, see new tips for leaders on optimizing learning environments, and read stories from dedicated donors about why they choose to give. Retro Rewind explores the story of Marge Mueller, an avid outdoorswomen, lifetime member, and illustrator of classic Mountaineers Books guidebooks. In Conservation Currents we hear about how the increase in outdoor recreation has impacted public lands across the Northwest, and what tips you can employ to ensure you recreate responsibly.

To quote a tired platitude, change is the only constant in life, and we seem to have an abundance of it these days. Our work, home, and social lives have been altered for the foreseeable future, and it's easy to lose steam when faced with new hills to climb each day. I like to think that times like these are when it's most important to ferret out the joyous and the interesting. When life has taken you out of the driver's seat, what else is there to do? Whether you accept change with open arms or have it foisted upon you, either way you can be sure - something is shifting. So you might as well make it something good.

Hailey Oppelt



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In Safety Stories: A Fall on Cutthroat Peak, volunteer Sherrie Trecker shared a near-miss experience in the mountains that had wide-reaching impacts. The notes of support flowed in:

"Thanks for bringing forward this experience, Sherrie. Seeking help is its own display of courage. It triggered the memory of a failed dagger belay on Cotopaxi many years ago. With global warming, I'm guessing the crevasse bridge that held (really, its descendants) is now simply volcanic rock. The mountains still call but my response is more measured."

-Peter Hendrickson, 15-year member

"Sharing stories of our experiences and lessons learned is one of the greatest gifts we can give to other climbers and adventurers. I admire your vulnerability and ability to tell this story and lessons learned so effectively, Sherrie!"

-Steve Smith, 3-year member



Leaders are the lifeblood of our organization, and we love to shine the spotlight on those who make an impact! Former students wrote in to help recognize these incredible volunteers:

"I was lucky to be on Bruce's Harstine and Marrowstone Island paddles, as well as many

others. Bruce has an infectious enthusiasm that makes his trips fun while staying safe and within the advertised goals of each trip. Bruce is mentoring me on my own leader paddle in the near future. I aspire to meet his expectations and provide at least a fraction of the leadership skills he brings to every one of his paddles."

-Kevin Bulley, 3-year member, commenting on "Leader Spotlight: Bruce Durham"

"Oh, Tom, you're a wonderful teacher... so humble, joyful, and knowing, all wrapped together. Our club is better for you finding us and lunging into leadership. You've turned me from a lifelong feeder birder to a slightly better namer and ever-more eager naturalist. Your words about naming recall Paulo Freire's treatise on turning

objects (persons without agency or legitimacy as the oppressed) into subjects regaining their humanity - those with a name, not just 'boy,' or 'you'. Thanks."

-Peter Hendrickson, 15-year member, commenting on "Leader Spotlight: Thomas Bancroft"



In Finding Family in the Passenger Seat: A Car-Free Journey to Community, we heard the story of Super Volunteer and climber Ananth Maniam, who has bagged over 300 peaks without the use of a personal vehicle. Fellow members shared their enthusiasm and support:

"This an excellent, low carbon approach to getting to the hills." -Charlie Michel, 9-year member

-Charne Michel, 9-year member

"Such a fun and inspiring read! Ananth you rock, I hope you come back and help out with AIARE."

-Skye Stoury, 5-year member

"This was one of my favorite articles from the recent magazine! Such a cool story."

-Amber Carrigan, 3-year member



Preserving and protecting the environment is one of our core values, and we were excited to share a blog reinforcing our commitment to our wild places: Introducing The Mountaineers Statement on Climate Change. One member wrote in with an impassioned comment:

"As we experience the record-breaking wildfires and hurricanes that climate scientists predicted would happen, it seems mindnumbing to me that anyone can dispute what's happening and man's impact on it. We have a responsibility to the earth and its creatures. We are wrecking things when we assume all is as it should be and we are in control. Even if climate change were not occurring, we have an obligation to live sustainably so that others may simply live. I hope Americans will see that science is not political, it is based on years of cumulative knowledge and research. We should be led by what science tells us. I applaud the efforts of The Mountaineers to participate and help in making our world a better place for future generations."

-Virginia Haver, 35-year member

member highlight



Name Douglas Gillan

Hometown Garden City, Kansas

Member Since December 1995

Occupation Media Consultant

Favorite Activities Hiking, running, climbing, kayaking, biking



Lightning round

Sunrise or sunset? Other: I like sunsets but nothing beats moon rise over your wilderness camp!

Smile or game face? Game face

What's your 11th Essential? Chocolate chip cookies! A summit tradition.

What's your happy place? Anywhere outside without noise pollution

Post-adventure meal of choice? Cheeseburger or pizza

If you could be a rockstar at any outdoor activity overnight, what would it be? Big wall climbing

How did you get involved with The Mountaineers?

I moved to Seattle in 1992 and joined The Mountaineers in 1995 to take a cross-country skiing course. Soon after that, I was on a private climb of Mt. Rainier with some friends on a four-person rope team. The other three experienced climbers on my team really knew what they were doing and we summited. At some point on that climb I realized I should take The Mountaineers Basic Climbing Course and learn this mountaineering stuff.

What motivates you to get outside with us?

But of course, the people! Some of the nicest, most caring folks I've ever met were in The Mountaineers. And hats off to our course instructors! To say what they teach has saved countless lives would be an understatement.

What's your favorite Mountaineers memory?

It was during my Basic Climbing Course crevasse rescue training on Mt. Rainier. Before I was lowered into a huge crevasse, I asked one of the instructor assistants if he could snap a photo of me in it. He seemed thrilled to do it, and I handed him my disposable film camera. When I was deep in the crevasse he yelled my name. I looked up to see that he had swung out over the crevasse (he was roped and secure) and started snapping photos of me as I prusiked to the top.

When I got to the top he gave me the camera with a big grin and said, "I hope those turn out for you." Needless to say, they turned out great! One of my all-time favorite photos is of me hanging in that crevasse on Mt. Rainier, with nothing but the deep blue ice of the glacier below me.

That crevasse rescue training was put to real-life use just a few weeks later on Mt. Baker. A member of our Mountaineers rope team punched through a snow bridge and fell into a massive crevasse. Just as we had trained, he was saved by the self-arrest of the other rope team members. When he got out of the crevasse he was bruised but otherwise unhurt. Note to others: pay attention in your training classes!

Who/what inspires you?

Anyone who works to overcome obstacles in life or has been told "you can't do that." To me it's not essential that you necessarily overcome the obstacle, it's the effort of trying that inspires me. A wise person once asked me, "So when does your book come out, I'd like to read it?" When I said there was no book, her answer was, "Well, there should be. Everyone has a great story to tell."

What does adventure mean to you?

For me the adventure begins with pre-trip planning. Studying the route and maps, checking on weather conditions, selecting gear, packing, travel, etc. Of course, nothing beats that first step when you're actually there and it's "on!"



Bag Rows for Upper Body Strength

By Courtenay Schurman, MS, CSCS, PN2

hen training your upper body at home, it's easy to train your pushing muscles (chest, shoulders, triceps) with pushups, and your core (abdominals, lower back, obliques) with various ab exercises such as planks. For your pulling muscles, however, more creativity is required. If you have a simple pull-up bar and you have the strength for pull-ups, great. If not, here are great pulling exercises you can do with items at home.

Before You Start

Prepare your area. Load a small backpack or sturdy book bag (like what you carry groceries in) with suitable weighty objects. These can be heavy books, canned goods, rice, kitty litter, rocks, or bottles of water. A liter of liquid weighs 2.2 pounds, so if you have eight full one-liter bottles, you can set up a pair of bags ranging from 2-10 pounds. Gallon jugs weigh 8.3 pounds; two of them in a sturdy bag will give you the equivalent of a 16-pound dumbbell.

Set Up

Place your bag on the floor in front of you, and stagger your stance with most of your weight on your front (right) leg. Lean forward until your torso is at 45 degrees. Place your right palm on your right thigh for torso stability and support.

Movement

With your left hand grip the bag handle, and as you exhale, draw your hand along a slight diagonal until it reaches the ribcage (think of starting an old-fashioned lawn mower). Inhale and lower to the floor. Complete anywhere from one to three sets of 8-12 repetitions for each arm, with a minute rest between sets.



Left: Backpack Row with heavy weighted bag. Right: 1-arm Bag Row. Both demonstrated by Courtenay Schurman. Photos by Doug Schurman.

Watch For

Keep your core engaged to avoid twisting or sagging through your torso. Your trunk should remain still and strong throughout the movement. Start with your weaker arm first, and only perform as many reps on your stronger side as you can complete on your weaker side.

Backpack Row Variation

When you master the one-arm row and both arms are doing equal work (i.e. there is no difference in sets and repetitions between arms), try adding more weight (twenty or more pounds) in a backpack.

Execution

Hold onto your large pack vertically using both shoulder straps, or horizontally using the storage loop and an axe loop or buckled hip strap. To allow full range of motion, consider standing on a stair or box if the pack reaches the floor before your arms are straight. Lean forward and position yourself with slightly bent, stiff knees, torso leaning at 45 degrees, and core braced to support the lower back. Keep your weight in your heels. As you exhale, draw your hands to your waist, inhale to lower. Repeat for three sets of 8-12 repetitions with a minute rest in between.

Working out at home may be challenging, but with some outof-the-box thinking, you can be ready for the trails next spring. Good luck and remember, we're all in this together.

Courtenay Schurman is an NSCA-CSCS certified personal trainer, Precision Nutrition Level 2 Certified Nutrition Supercoach, and coowner of Body Results. She specializes in training outdoor athletes. For more how-to exercises or health and wellness tips, visit her website at bodyresults.com or send a question to court@bodyresults.com.



Anders Morley.

This Land of Snow

By Anders Morley

A passionate skier since he was a child, Anders Morley dreamed of going on a significant adventure, something bold and of his own design. And so one year in his early thirties, he decided to strap on cross-country skis to travel across Canada in the winter alone. This Land of Snow is about that journey and a man who must come to terms with what he has left behind, as well as how he wants to continue living after his trip is over. You can purchase This Land of Snow at our bookstore, on mountaineersbooks.com, or wherever books are sold. Please enjoy the following excerpt from this recently-released Mountaineers Books title:

he peaks of the Howson Range, jutting skyward to the south, were daunting. Sometimes they were horrifying. They were massive, steep rocks. I had climbed higher mountains, but under much different circumstances. Mountains, when they are big enough, make their own weather,

which here was a ravaging din of wind and flying snow. I skied first past Preterition Peak, then past Redemption Peak. I wondered what had gone through the head of the trembling Calvinist who named them.

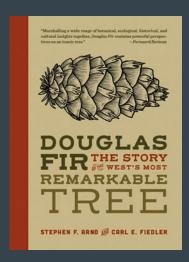
Once I entered Telkwa Pass, which is laced across with a chain of small lakes, I had to traverse a row of talus slopes that angled like buttresses where the mountains met the high, narrow valley floor. I had to cross one slope up high, because alders had smothered the trail below. I proceeded nervously across what I knew might be a twitchy snowfield: alone, and with an anchor tied to my waist, my chances against an avalanche were hopeless.

Suddenly the white side of Redemption Peak peeled away in front of me, and a boom hit my ears. Powder billowed out from the steep slope of the 8500-foot (2591-meter) mountain. It exploded hundreds of feet into the sky, as if a buried charge had been set off. I stopped in my tracks, knowing I would have to cross the path of the avalanche in minutes. Turning around, my only other option, would mean going back across a slope that hadn't let go - that for all I knew could spring, like a trap, the moment my ski grazed it. As least the one ahead had already discharged. The sun was going down, and this was certainly no place to sleep. I snaked my way cautiously but with all the confidence I could muster over the tortured drifts that drowned the summertime trail to the pass. Sometimes the drifts had sharp sides that dropped five feet, suddenly, like an ocean wave stacking. But my sled tracked beautifully and would swoop down them behind me in a graceful collapse, like a duck landing on water. The sense that every facet of my environment was working together gave me enough peace of mind to move along with calm focus. Still, I made a mad dash when I reached the densely piled snow of the avalanche path, and came to the other side safely.

When darkness fell – before four o'clock in early December – there was no suitable place to camp. I realized now, too, that whatever trail lay ahead was obliterated by the avalanche fallout. I suspected it lay across a small river that was still running, but I had no strength to test my theory so late in the day. When snow moved in from the west, I decided to stop where I was. It was a fraught place, only feet from the base of a steep slope that held back the weight of a snowfield 1000 yards (914 meters) long – another avalanche in the making. Above, white storms shrieked around the peaks, like a baleful

orchestra warming up to score the nightmares stalking my enfeebled consciousness. For the first time I was afraid, but I had little strength left to counter the fear, and I knew it would be a pointless waste of energy anyways. I know I ate, only because I always do, and then I crawled into my tent, resigned to the possibility that I might never wake up, except for a split-second flash of blunt trauma, or maybe suffocation. I was serene.

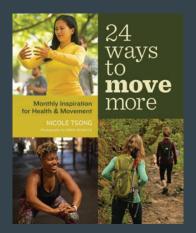




Douglas Fir: The Story of the West's Most Remarkable Tree

By Stephen F. Arno and Carl E. Fiedler

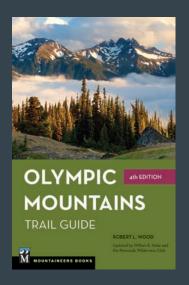
How well do you really know the Douglas-fir? An iconic Western tree, the Douglas-fir is found from central British Columbia to southern Mexico, and from the Pacific Coast to the Great Plains. When left to their own devices, coastal Douglas-firs can commonly reach 7 feet in diameter and 230 feet tall, and the inland variety ranges from large, 120-foot tall trees on favorable sites to wind-sculpted dwarfs clinging to high mountain slopes. Incredibly hardy, this tree adopts a fascinating range of strategies to occupy more kinds of habitats than any other tree native to North America, even becoming an uncontrollable invader in some regions. And the utility of this noble species is impressive: Douglas-firs yield more high-quality construction lumber than any other tree in the world. From its complex relationship with fire to its leading role in regional development, forestry experts Stephen Arno and Carl Fiedler bring to life Douglas-firs' rich history with the West's people, culture, and commerce in this engaging natural history.



24 Ways to Move More: Monthly Inspiration for Health and Movement

By Nicole Tsong

Your body is made to move and is designed to adapt to a range of activity, yet today we move less than ever before. Yoga instructor and fitness expert Nicole Tsong wants to change that. She has tried hundreds of different types of movement and in this new guide, she shares those which are the most fun, accessible, and body-beneficial. Detailing two new activities for each month of the year, she describes her own experiences trying each movement, then lays out a road map for readers to embark on a similar adventure, starting at a beginner level and moving up through "Reach" and "Adventure" goals. Tsong also offers quick tips for getting started, basic gear needs and costs, and a "Discovery" section with questions, prompts, and journal space so readers can explore their own movement journeys.



Olympic Mountains Trail Guide, 4th Edition

By Robert L. Wood and William E. Hoke

This classic guidebook is one of the most treasured and comprehensive guides to one of the region's top hiking destinations. Reading Bob Wood's text is like having an old friend describe last weekend's hike to you. Wood passed away in 2003, but Bill Hoke, Doug Savage, and volunteers from the Peninsula Wilderness Club picked up the reins to do a thorough update. Every trail has been re-hiked and fact checked, every new trailhead or rerouted path is documented, and 30 all-new trails have been added, bringing the total number of hikes to 206 within Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest. But Wood's voice and even his original overview maps have been retained, lending this edition a classic tone while the information is decidedly current.

youthoutside



L-R clockwise: Adventure camper on-trail at Ozette Triangle. Photo by Nola Peshkin. Adventure campers exploring Independence Lake. Photo by Nola Peshkin. Kimiyo Climenson with Billy the Goat at the South Plaza. Photo by Tailor Dolgin.

Reimagining Camp Magic

By Tailor Dolgin, Associate Youth Programs Manager

espite summer 2020 being the tenth year of summer camp, it was a year of firsts in more ways than one. With the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in March, by June safety was a primary concern for both campers and staff. It led us to wonder - can we still provide summer camp? And if so, what can be done to preserve that classic camp feeling? Sitting shoulder-to-shoulder eating s'mores was off the table, but there had to be a way to reclaim the spark that only camp can bring.

Back to the drawing board

It was in this environment that I took the reins and began my first season directing summer camp at The Mountaineers. As I joined the decision-making team, we had to make the difficult choice to cancel the first three weeks of camp as we learned how to offer a safe and effective program. Our team monitored the state's reopening plan and began adjusting our rules and regulations.

The hardest part of this process, by far, was managing group sizes. Cutting down the number of campers we could see each

week felt like whittling the joy of summer camp away, despite being a necessity for running safe programs. However, we were still committed to finding new ways to engage with our campers, regardless of how untraditional it might be.

We introduced a hybrid camp model, which would mix half-day virtual programs with up to two days of in-person camp experiences for ages 6-12. The plan was to provide 2.5 hour virtual lessons four days a week, with one full day at the Seattle Program Center where campers would have the opportunity to learn about Leave No Trace and the Ten Essentials, practice first aid on stuffed animal friends, and climb, swim, run, and play with appropriate personal protection and social distancing.

True, this summer felt different than those in the past, but the joy was the same. The Program Center was not the traditional buzzing hive of campers and counselors, and the climbing wall on the South Plaza was still fenced off, but the laughter and excitement our kids brought each day was ever-present. For both campers and staff, the chance to embrace something beyond "the new normal" and be a part of a beloved community was vital. We still spent the summer getting dirty, learning new things, and laughing together. And, of course, we spent plenty of time searching for the elusive Billy the Goat.

Reimagining trips

This summer was also the first year we expanded our overnight camp options to include adventure-based backpacking and car camping trips. Just like day camp, we had to adjust our planned programs to accommodate new safety rules and regulations. For five weeks, we took small groups of campers ages 10-14 backpacking to Independence Lake and the Ozette Triangle, and car camping at Coho Campground on the Olympic Peninsula. And, just like day camp, campers brought laughter, games, and joy to the adjusted processes.

Adventure Camp Coordinator Nola Peshkin reflected on what this looked like:

"Because we had so much continuous time with campers in our Adventure Camps, we got to really see them open up and be themselves. Giving them a space to play outside, hang out with other kids, be silly, and learn backcountry skills was a real privilege. They stepped up to new challenges and developed important group skills that are valuable both in and out of the backcountry. With such different learning and entertainment resources available than what we have at the Program Center, it was easier to give them more choice and control over what the days would look like. We got to explore and learn about the parts of backpacking and being outdoors that they were most excited about, all in some really beautiful corners of Washington State."

The days ahead

One thing we learned from this past summer is that there are many different ways to offer Mountaineers Youth programming. As of now we are planning on opening registration for in-person day camp and overnight adventure camps on February 1, 2021. We're also excited to announce an addition to our programs

coming this year: Summer Camp Alumni Adventures! For campers who have aged out of day camp but would still like to get outside with us, we'll be offering backpacking trips for small groups. Join us to reminisce about your favorite camp moments and continue developing your outdoor skills.

So what will this upcoming summer look like? The short answer is, like many parts of our lives, we're not sure. We would love to return to in-person day camps and fill the Seattle Program Center once again with counselors, campers, and counselors-in-training. It would be exciting to expand on the success of our Adventure Camps by sending campers backpacking, climbing, and adventuring in some stunning places. While our main goal for 2021 is to get back to programming that echoes our pre-COVID normal, this summer has taught us that getting campers outside is one of the best ways to combat the pandemic blues.

We're honored to have had the opportunity to get your kids outside exploring the outdoors, and we look forward to seeing you next summer, whatever that may look like. I'm looking forward to summer 2021 with heaps of cautious optimism.

CAN'T WAIT FOR SUMMER CAMP?

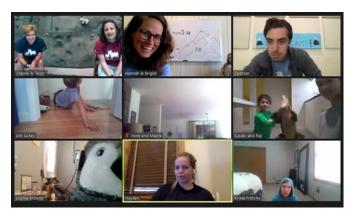
We hope to offer break camps in February and April 2021! This will include small in-person groups, operated out of our Seattle branch, with outdoor field trips:

February 15-19: Mid-Winter Break Camp Registration opens Dec 2 Visit mountaineers.org/mid-winter-break-2021

April 12-16: Spring Break Camp Registration opens Jan 15 Visit mountaineers.org/spring-break-2021

For more information about summer camp, please reach out to our Camp Managers:

- Olympia: Becky Nielsen, beckyn@mountaineers.org
- · Seattle: Tailor Dolgin, tailord@mountaineers.org
- Tacoma: Sarah Holt, sarahh@mountaineers.org



Zoom screenshot from summer camp, week three. Photo by Hannah Tennent.

impactgiving

Ending the Year on a High Note

By Brianne Vanderlinden, Assistant Director of Development



very winter I warm a kettle of cinnamon and cloves and sit down to write holiday cards to friends and family who supported me throughout the year. This personal ritual is something we practice as an organization as well. As I write this, our board members are signing nearly 800 holiday cards to donors who contributed \$100 or more in the last year, and I'm pleased to share this is 200 cards more than last year. This kind of increased support speaks to the values of our community members who care so deeply about each other and our wild places. Even from a distance, donors are helping us create ways to stay connected.

This year has been hard. The last-mile-of-the-longest-distance-you've-ever-hiked-carrying-extra-weight sort of hard. But as we close the book on this challenging chapter, the team at The Mountaineers is giving thanks to our incredible community. In fiscal year 2020, donors, foundations, and corporate partners contributed \$1.48 million in philanthropic support, only \$140,000 shy of our pre-COVID goal! We're not through the woods yet, but we are successfully weathering this storm, and it's a direct result of having members and supporters like you.

We thought it would be fun to connect with a handful of our donors to hear why they feel good about supporting The Mountaineers, especially during times like these. Their responses brought a smile to our faces and tears to our eyes. Especially in 2020, it's empowering to remember why our collective work matters.

I believe it is important to give back to The Mountaineers because young members represent our future.

-Joan Burton, Peak Society, 70-Year Member

Ed Monrad and Amelie Mabbutt

Ed Monrad and Amelie Mabbutt both grew up in Washington, albeit on different sides of the state. Ed's memories of hiking and backpacking with his grandfather are dotted with Mountaineers Books 100 Classic Hikes guidebooks, and he smiles as he remembers the originals still sitting on the shelves at his mom's house. As kids, both Ed and Amelie spent countless hours in the hills and mountains of the Pacific Northwest. Today they live in The Netherlands, where they apply the knowledge and skills they learned through Mountaineers Books to their adventures in the Swiss Alps.

"The mountains of Washington State hold special places in our hearts, and we both miss them dearly! The work that The Mountaineers does to protect those mountains, and most importantly, teach people the skills they need to make those mountains accessible, is a powerful combination that we feel strongly about supporting in any way we can.

"The Mountaineers has influenced our lives in three significant ways. First, Mountaineers Books helped to get us outside with inspiration for family hiking and backpacking adventures. Second, in The Netherlands, we are following a multi-year study to become accredited International Mountain Leaders - a professional certification to lead treks that don't involve ropes. The study includes a lot of course materials through books written in German, which we don't speak! Luckily, we can supplement our learning with Mountaineers Books titles, and there's been at least one for every subject! Finally, we feel fortunate enough to have jobs that allow us to make philanthropic contributions to an organization that holds great meaning for us, even half a world away. Being a part of Peak Society has opened up conversations we otherwise would not have had - and we expect it's just beginning."

-Ed Monrad and Amelie Mabbutt, Peak Society, 19-Year Members





Greg and Bronsa Swint

Greg and Bronsa Swint joined The Mountaineers because they strongly believe in the importance of respecting and preserving our wild places. Even as new members they could see these values woven throughout the fabric of our organization. Though COVID-19 has impacted our ability to host activities, they've enjoyed hiking, snowshoeing, and conducting stewardship activities with us in the time they've been members.

"It didn't take us long to conclude that the core principles of The Mountaineers align with our own values regarding stewardship, conservation, advocacy, and education. We were also drawn to how the organization conducts its business - with focus, discipline, and compassion. Beyond this, we strongly believe that climate change poses an immediate and existential threat to the planet. However, because the challenge is so enormous it is easy for any individual to feel overwhelmed, and even defeated. By giving to The Mountaineers we believe we can make a positive contribution to an organization that is actively working, both directly and indirectly, to make a meaningful impact today and into the future."

-Greg and Bronsa Swint, Peak Society, 2-Year Members

Joan Burton

Lifetime member Joan Burton joined The Mountaineers almost 70 years ago to take our Basic Climbing Course to see and experience our local mountains in a safe way. Applying what she learned, Joan and her sister, Carol Strong, climbed together every single weekend for many years. In 1986, Joan collaborated with Mountaineers Books to author our very first title in the *Best Hikes with Kids* series, which has been so popular that these guidebooks now cover regions from San Francisco to St. Louis and beyond.

"I give to The Mountaineers because of the impact they have had on my life and community. I believe they have earned my loyal support. I am grateful to have had the chance to write *Best Hikes with Kids*. They took a chance on me as an unknown writer and English teacher, and Ira Spring helped by taking photos and checking my directions. It was a life-changing gift.

"I believe it is important to give back to The Mountaineers because young members represent our future. Our natural environment needs the love and care of the next generations, and it is because of our ongoing support that they will give it. Only if young folks love the natural world will they want to explore and protect it."

-Joan Burton, Peak Society, 70-Year Member

In the midst of the holiday and giving season, we are immensely grateful for the many ways you, our readers, members, volunteers, and donors, support us and each other. The ripple effect of our courses, publications, youth programming, and conservation and advocacy efforts cultivate deep connections with our wild places and create future volunteers, community leaders, and environmental stewards. Thank you for the many ways you make a difference for our people and planet.

As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, The Mountaineers can receive gifts of all types, including securities, donor advised funds, and IRA distributions. To notify us of a check or for help with your donation, please reach out to development@ mountaineers.org or call 206-521-6006. If you are inspired to make a gift online in support of our year-end efforts please visit mountaineers.org/donate/yearendgiving. The Mountaineers, tax ID:27-3009280, is located at 7700 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115.

outsideinsights



Taking Care of the Basics Setting your students up for successful learning

By Becca Polglase, Director of Programs & Operations

olunteer-led outdoor education is the heart and soul of The Mountaineers. Our instructors are passionate about sharing their love of the outdoors with others, and many of our students choose to play an important role in our community as volunteer instructors after graduation. While content, expertise, and a spirit of generosity go a long way towards providing a great experience for both students and instructors, we have the opportunity to address some foundational principles to set everyone up for success:

A difference in approach

When I signed up for the Basic Climbing Course nearly a decade ago, I wasn't sure what to expect. I was new to the Pacific Northwest and generally overwhelmed. Fortunately, my misgivings were quickly put at ease. A couple of weeks before the course started, I received a welcome email with directions and a general idea of what to expect. When I arrived, I followed signs to the correct room where I was greeted by a volunteer who had me create a name tag and told me which table I was assigned to. There, I found a seat with a handbook and a practice rope waiting for me, and on the table were a few icebreaker questions that helped start conversation with the folks next to me. My anxiety dissipated, and I felt like I belonged. I was excited to start learning.

Many years prior, I had a much different experience at a ropes course facilitator training hosted by a military academy in Vermont. My colleague and I drove up for the training from Connecticut, and being unfamiliar with the area we got lost on campus and had to ask for directions. When we finally found the gymnasium, we walked in to find 10 students dressed in uniform. We were clearly the two "outsiders" and I was the only woman. As the majority of the students knew each other and their way around, there were no nametags, and my colleague and I had to ask for simple information. I also had no idea what the plan was for the day. I found myself focusing on whether I was prepared rather than on the course itself.

Some basic psychology

Anyone who's taken an introductory psychology class may remember learning about a psychologist by the name of Abraham Maslow. In the 1950s he proposed a hierarchy of human needs, which is usually depicted as a pyramid.

The basic premise is that each level of need must be met before the next level can receive focus. So if people have unmet physiological needs – perhaps they're hungry – they can't focus on security or on making friends. Think about a potential situation in the outdoors: you've found yourself in an argument with a friend while out on a hike, a stressor on your social needs. You'll likely focus on that until a grizzly bear crosses your

path. Suddenly, you and the friend will abandon your argument and focus on getting out of there unscathed by the bear. Your safety needs will immediately surpass your social needs.

Let's think about this in the context of outdoor education. Students enroll in outdoor courses to learn skills, find community, and access beautiful places. All of these are high-level objectives in comparison to basic needs like food, water, shelter, and safety. Some have suggested that the bottom four tiers - physical needs, safety needs, social needs, and esteem needs - are "deficit needs," meaning that they hold our focus until they are sufficiently met. On the other hand, all of the needs that fall within "self-actualization" - knowledge, understanding, beauty, spirituality - are "growth needs." This means that the more these needs are met, the more we seek them out. It's in this zone that our students can do their best learning. They've fulfilled their deficit needs and can put their full attention towards learning, growing, and being an asset to a team.

The leaders of my Basic Climbing Course had taken very intentional steps to make sure my basic needs were met so that I could focus on learning. Signs gave me a sense of security. The greeter, assigned seating, and icebreaker questions helped me feel like I was in the right place – like I belonged in this community. And the handbook answered logistical questions I had and got me excited to learn. On the other hand, the ropes course facilitator training lacked most of those key components. Rather than focusing on learning, my mind was filled with anxiety about some of my basic needs and how they would be met.

Implications for educators and fostering future volunteers

It's interesting to think about where we are as instructors and where our students are at any given point in time. For example, if we're teaching a course for the fourth time, we know the routine. We've got our clothing and food systems dialed, we know at least half of the other instructors, and we're confident in our abilities. We're ready to show up and teach in pursuit of our own personal growth needs as volunteers.

It's very easy to take those things for granted. When we don't communicate with students about what to expect or how to prepare, or when we

SELF-ACTUALIZATION
knowledge,
understanding, beauty, art,
spirituality

ESTEEM NEEDS
feeling valued, capable

SOCIAL NEEDS
intimate relationships, friends

SAFETY NEEDS
security, safety

PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS
food, water, shelter, biological needs

don't facilitate introductions to start to build community, we are forcing our students into the lower levels of deficit needs. This isn't their fault - it's not that they just "haven't gotten there yet" - we've put them into that position. They signed up because they were motivated to fill some higher-level needs with our course, but when we fail to provide the right structure, we force their attention away from learning.

As a volunteer-led organization, we rely on those students who are driven to come back and donate their time and energy. Individuals who return time and time again are often the ones who had fulfilling experiences as students; whose growth needs were met - and continue to be met - by our organization. The small details we put into our programming have a substantial cumulative impact that should be taken into careful consideration. They piece together what it means to be an effective outdoor leader, and what it means to be a part of The Mountaineers. By doing everything we can to support both our students' and instructors' focus on higher-level needs, we not only support student learning and course objectives, we cultivate a vibrant and inspired community of volunteers.

QUICK TIPS TO SET YOUR STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESS

Here's an easy checklist of steps to help facilitate a positive learning environment:

- ☐ Communicate information in advance about food, supplies, clothing, and location
- ☐ Be prepared to change the location or reschedule if the weather will make it difficult for students to manage their basic needs
- ☐ Provide snacks and coffee
- ☐ Incorporate scheduled breaks, and communicate when they will be in advance
- ☐ Help students understand their safety equipment
- \square Take the time to set out supplies in advance
- ☐ Provide name tags (or name tents if students will be mostly sitting at tables)
- ☐ Facilitate introductions
- ☐ Pre-assign groups
- ☐ Find out what concerns your students have and address them in real time
- ☐ Let students know that they add value to the class



Recreationists in Mt. Rainier National Park. Photo by Ida Vincent.

ike many aspects of our lives, 2020 has been a roller coaster of a year for public lands. During the initial weeks of the coronavirus pandemic, public lands in Washington State closed as a result of Governor Inslee's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order. When places began to open up in early May, hordes of cooped-up Washingtonians flocked to trails and parks - and they haven't stopped. With guidance from public health officials encouraging outdoor activities over indoor ones due to relative safety, public lands have experienced higher visitation than ever before.

Setting records

Participation in outdoor recreation has been steadily increasing for years, but land managers reported unprecedented challenges in 2020. Campgrounds were at capacity all summer, trailhead parking spilled over onto roadsides, and excessive amounts of trash and human waste were rampant. Visitation was so high in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest that "weekdays looked like weekends, and every weekend looked like the Fourth of July," said Mike Schlafmann, Public Services Staff Officer. Land managers faced this increased use with limited resources as most agencies were short-staffed

due to pandemic restrictions. Sometimes agencies were forced to close public lands due to overcrowding, including popular areas like Lake Cushman on the Olympic Peninsula.

Even with strategies like getting out mid-week and avoiding popular areas, Mountaineers felt the impact of busy trails, crags, and parking lots this summer. Members Steve Smith and Tamara Walker went for a mid-week hike up Sahale Arm and found "the parking as full as we'd ever seen it, with cars backed up down the road." Volunteer Jerry Logan and his climbing partners descended from a climb of Mount Baker on a Thursday in late August and encountered 75 to 100 people on the trail, far more than a normal year. Member Jen Louie reported that "unfortunately, it's hard to avoid the increasing amounts of garbage I've seen on the trails and at campsites." She and her partner found a fire ring, trash, and human waste at the bivy site at the base of Cutthroat Peak this past August - which they ended up cleaning up.

Not surprisingly, search and rescue teams saw a surge of calls over the summer. By the end of Labor Day weekend, the Snohomish County Sheriff's office reported that the volunteer search and rescue team had been on 330 missions in 2020,



compared to 200-280 in previous years. On top of record breaking calls, "we're spread incredibly thin with multiple incidents running at a time, increasing complexity due to PPE, sanitation, and contact tracing requirements, and a reduction in the volunteer workforce," reports Jen Brenes of King County Search & Rescue.

Recreate Responsibly Coalition

When public lands opened back up in May, The Mountaineers partnered with others in the outdoor community to form the Recreate Responsibly Coalition. We saw a clear need to develop and share best practices for how to get outside safely and responsibly during the coronavirus pandemic. The coalition developed several tips for recreating responsibly, including "Know Before You Go," "Practice Physical Distancing," "Leave No Trace," and more. These tips offered practical guidelines for how to protect each other and public lands during the pandemic, from when to wear a mask outdoors to encouraging people to choose lower-risk activities. The Mountaineers shared these guidelines widely with our community and incorporated them into our reopening guidance for Mountaineers programs. Nationwide, the Recreate Responsibly guidelines have reached more than 188 million people with over 50,000 posts on social media.

Land managers reported that the Recreate Responsibly messaging has made a difference. "We have felt and seen it in the Park in terms of broad public support, compliance, and the way people are behaving," said Chip Jenkins, Superintendent of Mount Rainier National Park. Anecdotal evidence points to widespread adoption of the recommendation to wear a mask when passing people on the trail. While Steve and Tamara were dreading the crowds on Sahale Arm after seeing the busy parking lot, "we were delighted to encounter well over a hundred people on the trail, almost every single one wearing a mask, stepping aside for others, and maintaining COVID etiquette."

The Recreate Responsibly Coalition holds regular calls with a wide variety of outdoor recreation-focused groups and land

managers to share information and respond to changing needs, including priorities like publicizing wildfire closures or sharing trash reduction tips. Looking towards the colder months, the group is developing Recreate Responsibly tips for winter recreation. With more people expected to get outside to snowshoe, ski, and snowboard than in past years, it's paramount that recreationists are well prepared and informed.

Fostering future stewards

More people outdoors presents a number of challenges, but it also provides opportunities to educate new users and create more stewards of public lands. "From our perspective this is great news," said Chip Jenkins of Mount Rainier National Park. "The value of public lands is clearly being demonstrated by a broader range of people visiting and recreating in record numbers. This is an opportunity to build broader and deeper stewardship of public lands."

Immersive outdoor experiences make our community powerful advocates for public lands, and they have the potential to do the same for everyone seeking solace in nature during the pandemic. When people are deeply connected to the outdoors, they are more motivated to speak up to defend it. That means more voices uniting to protect public lands, invest in parks and trails, and advocate for climate solutions. The Mountaineers has always believed that getting people outdoors creates strong connections to the natural world. Welcoming people of all backgrounds to outdoor spaces, while educating them to be good stewards, is key to building the next generation of conservationists.

The changes we've seen on public lands this year underscore the relevance of the mission of The Mountaineers, and bring new urgency to our work to protect the outdoor places and experiences we love. Together, we can ensure that wild places can be enjoyed for generations to come.

To learn more about how to recreate responsibly during the coronavirus pandemic, visit recreateresponsibly.org.



Rope team training on Tahoma in April 2016. Photo by Teresa Hagerty.

his year was a hard one. I hit rock bottom mid-May when I unexpectedly found myself crying alone in a tent in the middle of my living room floor. The chasm between the person I had planned to be when I set goals for 2020 and the person I actually was felt insurmountable. My carefully made plans, proudly anticipated fitness milestones, and dreams of adventure were slipping through my fingers.

Like many in The Mountaineers, my personal goals, social circle, and a primary source of my self-worth are centered around the outdoors. I am a backpacker. I am a skier. I am a climber. I am a trip leader. I am an outdoor mentor. This is who I am. These identities anchor my place in the outdoor community and provide the foundation of my identity.

The reality and vulnerability of this singular focus began crashing down in March. First came the statewide "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order. Next was the closure of our public lands. These events were followed by the cancellation or deferral of countless outdoor goals, mentorship commitments, and dreams of mountaintop summits with the people I love.

I resolved to keep training throughout the lockdown and focus on doing what I could within the boundaries of quarantine. A hit-and-run accident in mid-May ended this dream. In the blink of an eye, I could no longer carry a backpack. Whiplash and a lower back injury stole the limited outdoor activities I was still able to enjoy.

I was no longer the self-sufficient and physically capable person I prided myself on being. This realization unleashed a tidal wave of grief, self-doubt, shame, and depression. Who was I if I no longer practiced those activities that had become the core of my identity? What would I become if I could no longer function in the capacity in which I had invested so much value? Who was I if I could not - quite truly - carry my own weight? Were these the right values to focus on in the first place?

Students of AIARE (American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education) will recognize the importance of always creating a primary route plan and multiple alternate trip options. This practice provides the well-prepared backcountry group with the freedom to assess real-time conditions, make alternate choices, and minimize the single objective focus that can lead to big trouble. I now realize that my life had fallen into this heuristic trap.

These thoughts have taken center stage as I struggle through a slow and steady recovery process. Patience is not my primary virtue. I am currently four months along an estimated twelvemonth rehabilitation. I am blessed with a capable health team by my side and a prognosis for a full recovery. I understand how different things could be.

During this process I was invited to join a climbing partner, mentor, and friend on a five-day Pickets expedition in August. The pre-trip communication was different than any I had experienced before. I was forced to openly discuss my current limitations and make adjustments to the trip plan to accommodate. One of these accommodations was hiring a professional porter to carry a large portion of my gear. I am blessed to still have the financial means to offer this opportunity to another outdoor professional, but I will admit, I was crushed to have to request it.

However, something profound shifted in me during that August expedition. I learned how to ask for help. I became comfortable openly admitting that I was the weakest link on the team. And, somewhere along the way, I began to understand that this didn't have to be a source of shame. I was watching the sunrise over Luna Peak when the realization hit me that we all experience the outdoors in the ways in which we are able. A flood of gratitude washed over me for the place I was in, the people I was with, and the experiences I could still have. My current abilities were not less than - they just were.

This year has caused a tectonic shift in my approach to life

goals. It's still important to make audacious, ambitious plans. It's great to push myself further, set intentions towards becoming stronger, and continue to dream big. It's also vitally important to accept the realities outside of my control and meet myself where I am. I've discovered that it's risky to invest too much in the way things "should be." It is far better to embrace the reality of how things are right now and commit to savoring the joy around me. There is always something beautiful to celebrate. It is enough. And so am I. And so are you.

As a wise man once said, attachment is the root of all suffering. I had attached myself too deeply to the year that should have been, the goals that I should have achieved, and the person I was supposed to be. All of these dreams were subject to change by factors outside of my control.

I don't know what the future holds. A part of me - and perhaps a part of you too - still mourns for the year we wanted 2020 to be. This feeling may continue for some time, but I am committing myself to the practice of gratitude, giving myself permission to stop and smell the flowers, and allowing space to celebrate every moment outdoors. I resolve to be as joyful on short paved strolls as I will be again on big mountain summits. Anything less is cheating myself out of the extraordinary experiences I am still blessed to have. Thank you 2020 for this big and beautiful lesson.





Merecedes Pollmeier climbing Mt. Moran in Red Rocks (above). Photo by Nathan Hadley. Playing tennis as a teenager (right). Courtesy of Mercedes Pollmeier.

y the time Mercedes Pollmeier arrived at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), she'd lived in Australia, China, Mauritius, and had spent considerable time in Germany with her grandma. The daughter of a German father and an Indian South African mum, Mercedes had seen a lot of the world already when a full-ride tennis scholarship brought her to the U.S. at 17. A multilingual world citizen, the starry-eyed teen had her eyes keenly set on one thing: the Olympics. Little did she know that she'd soon meet a strength coach who would forever change the course of her life.

Growing up, Mercedes's older brother was a great tennis player. She was inspired to play after watching him, and it turns out she also had a natural talent and insatiable determination. After two years at UNI, her talents caught the eyes of the Metropolitan State University of Denver and she moved west. There she met Dave Wahl, a strength coach based out of a climbing gym. While training for the Olympic Trials in tennis, Dave's approach to movement changed her entire outlook. It ultimately inspired Mercedes to get a second degree in exercise science, then pursue a Master's in Human Movement. Through that program she met her wife, Brenda, and together they

moved even further west where Mercedes ultimately became a strength coach herself.

Today, Mercedes is a published author and successful online training coach specializing in training climbers to be strong, flexible, and versatile. She's also an 8-year member of The Mountaineers. She signed up after a friend recommended our nutrition course, and continued as a volunteer for our youth programs.

Through her online coaching business, Modus Athletica, Mercedes helps people develop strength and flexibility for their outdoor pursuits. "I wanted to help people realize their potential," she says. "My primary objective as a coach is to make sure you get strong, and stay strong, for life."

Mercedes's commitment to pushing herself extends to all parts of her life. "It's always been my pursuit to push my performance as far as I can in the things I love, like bouldering. But this tends to spill over into other areas of my life as well: my overall health, entrepreneurship, and being a better human."

Mercedes met Maria Hines, a James Beard Award-winning chef

and co-owner of Tilth, through Modus Athlethica. Less well known is Maria's impressive climbing resume, which includes notable ascents like the Nose in Yosemite. When Maria hired Mercedes to help train for a few of these big objectives, the two became fast friends, and earlier this year released *Peak Nutrition: Smart Fuel for Outdoor Adventure*, published fittingly by Mountaineers Books. The project came about on a road trip to Smith Rock after Maria peppered Mercedes with questions about nutrition specific to climbers. Maria decided a book needed to be written on the topic and they were just the two to do it, giving Mercedes yet another meaty project to showcase her determination and grit. The book launched in March to rave reviews.

Mercedes's passions for recreation inevitably means she spends a lot of time outdoors. She's grateful for this teaching ground. "The outdoors have taught me to be patient and adaptable. You can't always have the perfect conditions; sometimes you need to stick it out in whatever environment is present. Nature never stays the same – it's always changing. Because the landscape is shifting, you need to be adaptable too. This is the greatest lesson I learned from the outdoors: change is inevitable, and how you adapt will depend on how you see the change."

To help all of us be more flexible regardless of our surroundings, Mercedes busted a few myths and put together her favorite exercises that you can do almost anywhere:

Flexibility Myths

"Flexibility isn't important"

You can only develop strength in the ranges you have. We know that the more range you have, the more strength you can develop. Strength is built on a base of flexibility. It also allows you to be anti-fragile, this means resiliency on steroids. If you get injured, you will bounce back quicker. If you get yourself into a bad situation, such as an awkward fall, your body has more range to adapt to the fall. More flexibility means more options as a mountain athlete.

"You shouldn't static stretch during your warm-up"

This is not really true at all. This information was based on some poor isolated research. You can be totally safe doing 15-30 second static holds in your warm-up, and it may benefit your performance. The best way to warm up is to increase blood flow first, then go from general to more specific movements. If your climb/outdoor pursuit requires you to have super flexy hips, then you should absolutely do static and dynamic stretching in your warm-up. Also, we mostly perform at sub-max intensities, which is not affected by the decrease in mechanoreceptor activity (often a side effect of long-held relaxed static stretches).

You can use flexibility training before, during, and after workouts. For faster flexibility gains, do sessions dedicated to flexibility. For those interested, I have a flexibility course called Stretch Mechanic which I run several times a year.

"Stretching makes you weak"

Stretching actually increases hypertrophy (growth) of the muscle. By increasing time under tension (holding an endrange position for a length of time), this starts the process of

muscle growth. Stretching is essentially a continuous eccentric contraction. And eccentrics are typically what we use to help people overcome a strength plateau. In essence, flexibility training is strength training, but we focus on end ranges and how we use these end ranges.

"Strength training increases range of motion"

If the load is too heavy, the nervous system will inhibit the end range as a protective mechanism. Stretching will increase stretch tolerance, so when it's time to progressively load the stretch, it can increase strength in those ranges. However, don't add too much weight in the beginning if flexibility is your goal. You can use other protocols to increase strength instead.



"Passive stretching and flexibility aren't useful"

Many folks think passive end ranges when they think about flexibility. That a limb can only be passively moved into a certain position, and that this would be inherently useless. But passive flexibility doesn't really exist. There are only varying degrees of contraction. Going back to the above information, when we are in a stretch, the muscle slowly lengthens (eccentric). The more flexible you are, the less contraction you need to get into certain positions, making you more efficient and more able to use the strength that you have. The fitness industry unfortunately is decades behind the current research when it comes to flexibility.

Exercises For Flexibility



J Curl

This exercise is marvelous for longevity of the spine and aging in general. The more your spine can move, the better you can move in your sport and life. This exercise can be used as a warm-up, a strength exercise, a flexibility exercise, or as a cool down.

3-5 sets of 5 second holds.



Horse Stance

This one is for all the climbers out there. You often need to make big leg moves on big ascents. If you can stem well, we can relax more and recover on the route. If you can move your legs wider to reach foot holds, you become more efficient in our movement.

3-5 sets of 20 second holds, working up to 60 seconds.

Lock-off

If you want to get better at pull ups, make sure to do this. It uses the isometric method to gain strength at specific angles. The goal here is to make this as hard as you can.

3-5 sets of 10 second holds, intensity should be very close to failure on each set.





Pike Stretch

This is actually an active stretch. If you want to touch your toes, pair this one with the J curl and see the results!

1-3 sets of 60 second holds.



Bench Pullovers

This one is great for lat strength and flexibility. It will help you pull down harder without having to do more pull ups.

3-5 sets of 8-10 reps.



Lat Stretch

Pair this one with the pullover for increased overhead ability. If you have trouble reaching up over head, this stretch will help you!

1-3 sets of 30-60 second holds.

Mercedes Pollmeier has coached thousands of clients of all abilities, from recreational to pro-level competition climbers. To learn more, visit her website modusathletica.com, or pick up a copy of Peak Nutrition at mountaineersbooks.org. To see videos of the exercises in this article, and more, visit youtube.com/mercedespollmeier.



AVALANCHE SAFETY

Making safe decisions in the backcountry

By Kristina Ciari, Membership & Communications Director

Theresa Sippel enjoys a bountiful backcountry powder day. Photo by Kristina Ciari.

he snow rushes past in a swift river of movement. The slough was kicked off by my turns above, and the loose powder is now flowing through a natural gully in the snow, no more than six inches wide. That's not so bad. I think. It looks like a little creek; totally manageable. Without further hesitation, I turn my skis to cross the stream.

I am swept immediately into its raging current. Knocked from my feet, I fall headfirst down the mountain, limbs flailing. One ski is ripped from my boot, but stays attached via its leash, and now I'm dragging a five and a half foot weapon down with me. It takes less than three seconds to realize the gravity of my poor choice.

Fighting the wave, I manage to right myself so that my boots are downhill. Using the ski that's still attached, I lean hard to cut into the slope and traverse out of the river of moving snow. I come to rest a few yards from my friend Cori, who has been watching me and is already pulling out her shovel and probe. She's the type of friend you want with you on a day like today.

Cori asks if I'm okay, to which I nod in the affirmative, but in truth I'm terrified. I'm not so much afraid of the experience I've just had in this very minor avalanche – which happened in-bounds at a local ski resort on a particularly bountiful powder day in December 2018 - but of my own hubris. I saw the moving snow, assessed it against my own skill as a skier, and judged it to be safe to cross. I fell victim to the classic heuristic traps of "familiarity" and "scarcity." I know better. I can't even look Cori in the eye.

Increase in users

Much like how we're all navigating daily risk assessment during the COVID pandemic, making safe, conservative decisions in avalanche terrain is a matter of life or death. Backcountry travelers take precautions to mitigate risk to reduce the chance of being caught in an avalanche, but unfortunately with both COVID and avalanches, unless you choose to stay locked up in your house alone, your safety is never guaranteed.

Largely because of COVID, experts are predicting a significant increase in backcountry travelers this winter. "Similar to the amount of crowding that we saw this summer, we anticipate a spike in travelers concentrated to even fewer areas," said Liz Riggs Meder, the Director of Rec Programs at American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education (AIARE) who also serves on the Board of Directors for the Northwest Avalanche Center (NWAC).

"All the resorts in Washington are catering to pass holders and requiring reservations at limited capacity," said Ryan Kitchen, a Mountaineers Super Volunteer and AIARE instructor. "There's going to be fewer opportunities for people to ski at the controlled resorts, which is going to put more pressure on the backcountry."

If early sales are any indication, these predictions will be frighteningly accurate. As of this writing, one retailer in Saskatoon, Canada, has already sold through a season's worth of cross country skis, and then some. ProSki Seattle is experiencing similar traffic, grossing the highest September



and October sales ever according to co-owner Mike Tracy. Liz reported that most of the AIARE-led avalanche courses are full through January, and our Mountaineers courses are nearly maxed out as well, in part due to the pandemic limiting capacity.

Avoid heuristic traps

When humans are involved in an avalanche, it's estimated that ninety percent of them are human-triggered. The statistics resoundingly indicate that nature isn't the problem; people are. That's why many backcountry travelers - whether you're a skier, splitboarder, snowshoer, winter hiker, or snowmobiler - take an AIARE Level 1 class as an early step in risk management.

In the past, physical factors like snowpack, terrain features, slope angle, and aspect were the main focus of avalanche education. Today, the social/human parameters of decision making get equal, if not more, attention. AIARE 1 teaches a framework for repeatable decision making in backcountry terrain that, when applied correctly, helps travelers avoid the heuristic traps (mental shortcuts or rules of thumb) which can lead to avalanche accidents. These shortcuts shouldn't be trusted in backcountry situations, and we must actively fight against them. Classic traps include assumptions like:

- Expert Halo: That woman's an expert she must know what she's talking about.
- Social Facilitation: There's a bunch of tracks that way I'm sure it's safe.
- Familiarity: I did this last time and it went okay.

In talking about human factors, educators rely on an intentional communication process where everyone in the group states the decision and agrees to it. "Whether you're the least experienced or the most experienced in a group, you

need to have an opinion based on your personal observations," said Ryan, the Mountaineeers AIARE instructor. "It's your responsibility to add data to the discussion and have the group make a decision based on that."

This decision making framework is meant to overcome the idea of social capital, which assigns different "value" to people based on any number of factors: perceived skill, education, race, age, size, physical ability, etc. In avalanche discussions, the goal is to break down these perceptions and make everyone equal – an idea that's easier in concept than practice. For example, statistics show that all-women groups make safer decisions and have fewer accidents than all-men or mixed groups. Women are socialized to be deferential to men, who are socialized to communicate less and show less fear, and those factors play out in the backcountry just like in our everyday lives. Luckily, in the backcountry, every individual has veto power.

"If you see something that makes you uncomfortable and you don't say something about it, then it hurts the group," said Ryan, who takes particular care to stress these dynamics in his teaching. "Regardless of any other factors or your education or identity, if you saw a shooting crack or noted the temperature rise or a change in the wind, you should be able to add that data to the group discussion and it should be accepted."

If you're someone to whom others defer in a group (i.e. you have high social capital), Ryan suggests you use that influence to facilitate discussion and consensus, both during the day and after the outing. You should always debrief even the best trip to discuss what could be improved. Identifying even small things like the desire for a longer snack break or the need for more layers will have down-stream benefits. Bottom line: people who engage in intentional communication make safer decisions in avalanche terrain.



Mountaineers practicing beacon search. Photo courtesy of The Mountaineers.

Prioritize safety

With COVID, it's especially important that we be considerate to fellow winter travelers, both by taking proper health precautions and by being welcoming to everyone we meet. Recreation benefits our collective health, and experienced travelers should see it as our duty to be ambassadors to new enthusiasts. There's no doubt that this influx of people will have a huge impact on the safety of everyone traveling in off-piste terrain. AIARE and The Mountaineers are preparing for another season of uncertainty by underlining that the best thing any of us can do is be very conservative.

"Everything this year is heightened," said Liz, who works as a mountain guide in addition to her role at AIARE. "You take an already uncertain backcountry environment then overlay an uncertain global catastrophe, which leaves a lot more opportunity for the 'butterfly effect' where one thing causes a cascade of reactions."

With so much potential for things to break down, Liz recommends that you look at your plans and anticipate where things can go wrong. "You are a risk manager in the winter, and all summer you've been a risk manager with COVID, giving us the added ability to apply what we've learned over the summer to our winter recreational activities." This means you should constantly analyze the worst-case scenario and have a plan for it. "You can no longer just have Plan A and Plan B. You also need to have plans C-F, all of which need to realistically be something you would do." As we saw this summer, sometimes the only tool you'll have left is to go home.

"The simplest way to mitigate avalanche hazard is to avoid avalanche terrain altogether," the AIARE 1 course manual advises. Of course, most of us won't follow that advice, just like most of us haven't remained completely locked away during the pandemic. But we can, and should, employ regular processes to check in with ourselves and others when it comes to making safe decisions. My choice to ski into the slough would have been different had I taken a second to slow down and apply a safety checklist. It's always worth the extra time to keep yourself and others out of harm's way.

For more information on how to enjoy the new season responsibly, check out the Top 5 Tips for Winter Recreation in the GoGuide on page 40.

HEURISTIC TRAPS IN BACKCOUNTRY TRAVEL

Adapted from a report by Ian McCammon

Heuristics, or rules of thumb, guide most of our everyday decisions. While heuristics serve us well for routine risks such as driving, avalanches are a unique hazard rendering some heuristics irrelevant or even dangerously misleading. When a rule of thumb gives us a grossly inaccurate perception of a hazard, we fall into what is known as a heuristic trap.

Familiarity: The familiarity heuristic relies on past actions to guide behavior in familiar settings. Been here before? You'll probably do what you did last time. Most of the time, the familiarity heuristic is reliable, but when the hazard changes and the setting remains familiar, this rule of thumb can become a trap.

Consistency: Once we have made an initial decision about something, subsequent decisions are easier if we simply maintain consistency with that first decision. This strategy saves us time, but becomes a trap when our desire to be consistent overrules critical new information.

Acceptance: People have the tendency to engage in activities we think will get us noticed or accepted. We are socialized to this heuristic from a very young age, and because we are so vulnerable to it, it figures prominently among the heuristic traps.

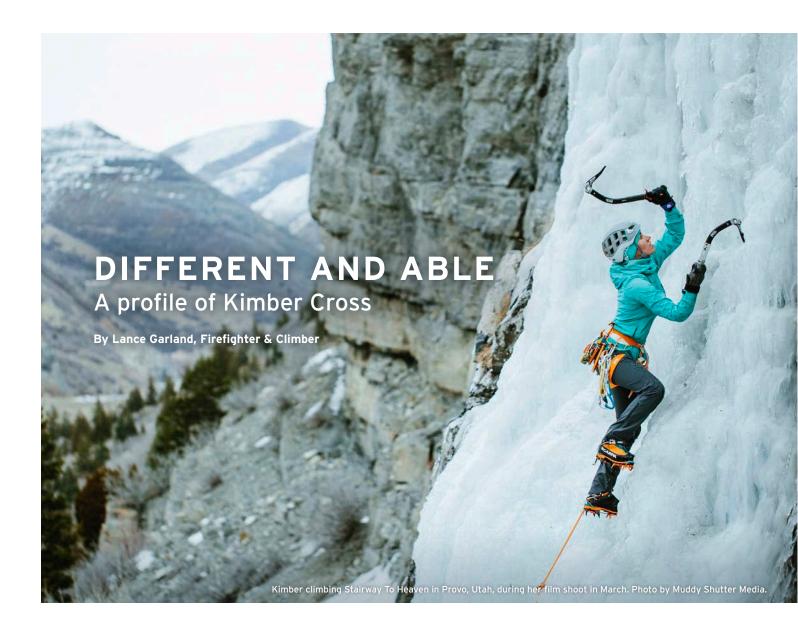
The Expert Halo: An informal leader who ends up making critical decisions for the party often emerges in recreational groups. Sometimes their leadership is based on knowledge and experience, sometimes on being older, a better rider, or more assertive. The overall positive impression of the leader leads others to ascribe avalanche skills to that person that they may not have.

Social Facilitation: When a person or group is confident in their skills, they tend to take more risks using those skills when others are present. A practical example is the tendency for the best moguls to form directly under ski lifts; good skiers ski better when they think other people are watching.

Scarcity: The scarcity heuristic is the tendency to value things in proportion to the chance that you may lose them. Those familiar with "powder fever" have seen this heuristic in action, as individuals take seemingly disproportionate risks to be the first to access untracked snow.







t's a chilly March morning in Provo, Utah, 2020. Kimber Cross has been flown here by the outdoor meal brand Peak Refuel to shoot a short film about her journey into ice climbing. As the team walks down the snow-packed trail to a frozen waterfall, Kimber feels the eyes of passersby, and they're staring. Maybe it's because of the big, red cameras that stand in contrast to the stark landscape, but an old fear starts to creep into her psyche, a fear that tells her to hide. All eyes focus on the tool strapped to her pack.

In the outdoor industry, excess gear is often a catalyst for mockery. Extra equipment of any kind is unnecessary and could contribute to the team not fulfilling their mission. Most athletes adhere to the adage that lighter is better. And the tool attached to Kimber's pack is not only bulky - weighing in at 2.7 pounds - but exposes her vulnerabilities.

Different?

Kimber has a limb difference - instead of a right hand, she has no fingers and a partial palm on her wrist. She was born

this way, and when Kimber was a child, she didn't see herself as different. Slowly, moments began to reveal her future and the way that society would look at her. One summer day at a McDonald's playground, in brightly colored plastic tubes, Kimber caught the eye of a boy. Excited, her first response was to wave at him, and she instinctively raised her right hand. The boy, who had just moments before been so smitten, changed. His face aghast, he turned and ran away from her. At first Kimber didn't understand. Then, her eyes rose to her arm still suspended in the air. There it was, in full view; what made her different, the reason he ran.

After that day she took more notice of small interactions like these, but didn't really see herself as different until junior high, where she had to adapt in order to play sports. Kimber found herself daydreaming that her hand would grow back, like a frog when it loses a limb. She questioned her difference: was it a superpower or was it a curse?

Her parents gave her a book about Jim Abbott, a pitcher for the California Angels baseball team. He had one hand as well, and he

was the first person that Kimber ever saw who was like her. He was the only representation in popular culture of someone with a limb difference. She used his inspiration to adapt and learn to play fast pitch and rugby, but with such little representation, she now understood how different she really was.

So encompassing was this new understanding of her difference that she started to hide. Camouflaging her arm became a regular habit. "You can't find a picture of me from junior high to my late 20s where I'm not hiding my hand," Kimber said. Pockets became a vital piece of her clothing, mandatory for any outfit, including formal gowns and other articles that typically didn't have them.

Kimber went to great lengths to make sure she had pockets and would always have her right hand in one when out in public. A walk down the street or through a grocery store, a picture with her friends, or meeting new people, all had the same physical posture: Kimber with her hand hidden. She got so good at it that in high school when she started dating a fellow student, he called her after their fourth date and said, "My sister says you don't have a right hand. Is that true?"

This habit carried her through the tumultuous years of high school and early adulthood, but it haunted her as a negative and unfair experience in society. She hid her difference because she feared the judgment of people, and this judgment was reinforced in unspoken ways every time she revealed her true self to the public. "Why are we so quick to not like the unfamiliar?" she said.

Adaptive athlete

In early 2017, Kimber signed up for the Basic Climbing course with the Tacoma Mountaineers. She wasn't sure what to expect, but she knew that she wasn't going to be able to hide her limb difference. From day one she had to keep up with the rest of the students and learn how to accomplish the skills in different ways. She persevered and embraced the new title of "adaptive athlete." Dedicated to her climbing goals, she successfully graduated from Basic and moved on the following year to Intermediate; she has since become a Climb Leader.

By July 2020, Kimber challenged herself to a goal that she never could have imagined in her youth: the Kautz Route of Mt. Rainier. By this point she'd climbed waterfall ice in Hyalite Canyon, Montana; Ouray, Colorado; and Provo, Utah. But a Grade II ice climb to the summit of Washington's highest volcano is a much greater challenge. With two long pitches between 40 and 50-degree slopes, the climb requires a high level of expertise.

For this trip, she carries the same tool she had on her pack with the film crew in Provo: a prosthetic that she could not ice climb without. When her climbing group gets to the base of the first ice pitch, Kimber feels a wave of anxiety. In order to accomplish today's goal, she must not only face the adrenaline-soaked challenge of climbing a wall of frozen water, but she must also overcome decades of self-denial and insecurity to accept herself in a realm where, for the first time, she feels disabled.

She detaches the prosthetic from her pack and slowly begins affixing it to her right arm. It takes time to properly and safely secure the tool, and this time sets her apart from the rest of the crew. Silently, she wonders if the crew is judging her, if they're frustrated that she requires additional time. But she breathes deeply and gives herself the grace and patience practiced as an instructor in The Mountaineers and in her career as a kindergarten teacher. These intentional breaths reinforce the knowledge that she has to take care of herself in order to teach, and in order to successfully accomplish today's climb.

When her ice tool and all of her gear are in order, she walks around and makes sure everyone else's gear is safe too. The team is ready, and they begin the climb.

Kimber doesn't have the ability to execute the wrist flick that most climbers would use to swing a tool with a hand, so she uses the muscles in her shoulder. This requires more work. But because she uses her shoulder joint - and not a muscle or hand - she can relax into the tool. It's a silver lining that Kimber's right arm doesn't get pumped; she's able to hang on it when the tool is placed in the ice for long periods of time with no fatigue. There is no pain, although the silicone liner conducts the cold and gives her arm a chill.

Climbing the ice wall, Kimber feels completely connected. With extreme focus, she swings the prosthetic to get a secure placement. She cleans the route with her left hand, quickly removing the quickdraws from the ice screws her partner placed. She's mastered these movements so that nothing is a hindrance while she climbs.

After completing the second pitch, the group navigates crevasses through the Upper Nisqually Glacier. Kimber has been on the summit of Mount Rainier a few times on Basic climbs, but today it feels much more profound. She's led an intermediate ice climb of a volcano, overcoming her own limitations and moving into a world where she doesn't have to live in the darkness of her past.

Able

Much has happened in her short climbing career. Not only is she a Climb Leader, but she's a sponsored athlete with a short film coming out next year. Climbing and forming friendships with athletes on the North Face team, she participated in the first adaptive climber clinic at the Bozeman Ice Festival. While there, she was encouraged by Conrad Anker, who is actively supporting the work Kimber is doing in the community.

But perhaps more profound than any sponsor or event is the personal transformation. These days Kimber walks through the world without her hand in her pocket.

"I feel free," Kimber says. "Mountain climbing was the catalyst for me to feel that freedom, of not feeling less than." As an accomplished mountaineer, Kimber wants to empower everyone with the knowledge that the mountains have room for everyone. She hopes to share the freedom she has found, freedom that has broken the chains of her insecurity and allowed her to accept herself as an equal.





Left: Kimber's ice tool consists of a silicone-based liner with a locking screw and carbon fiber prosthetic sleeve. The Petzl Nomics is attached with a titanium connector, which can be angle-adjusted and detached to use different ice tools or prosthetic attachments. Photo by Kimber Cross. Right: A self-portrait on the summit of Mount Baker after completing the North Ridge route, August 2020. Photo by Kimber Cross.

At work in her kindergarten classroom in Tacoma, Kimber sets books around the room purchased by her latest fundraising endeavor: selling tie-dyed sweatshirts to raise money for diversifying classroom libraries. When she looks back on her childhood, she sees an absence of people who looked like her in the world. If she had seen other people with limb differences doing amazing things, she wonders if her journey would have been a bit easier. Would the possibilities have seemed greater? "Representation is love," she says, and her fundraiser was intended to share that love with people from all walks of life. With the support of strangers, the children of her school now have books that show diverse people like themselves doing amazing things.

Due to COVID-19 much of the school year will be conducted online, but in these first few weeks Kimber is meeting children and their families face-to-face to get to know each other and each student's needs. Today's family is a single mother and son who just moved here from the East Coast. After their introductions, the young boy reaches out and touches Kimber's right hand. The black skin on his small hand wraps around the white stump on her right arm.

"What happened?" he asks.

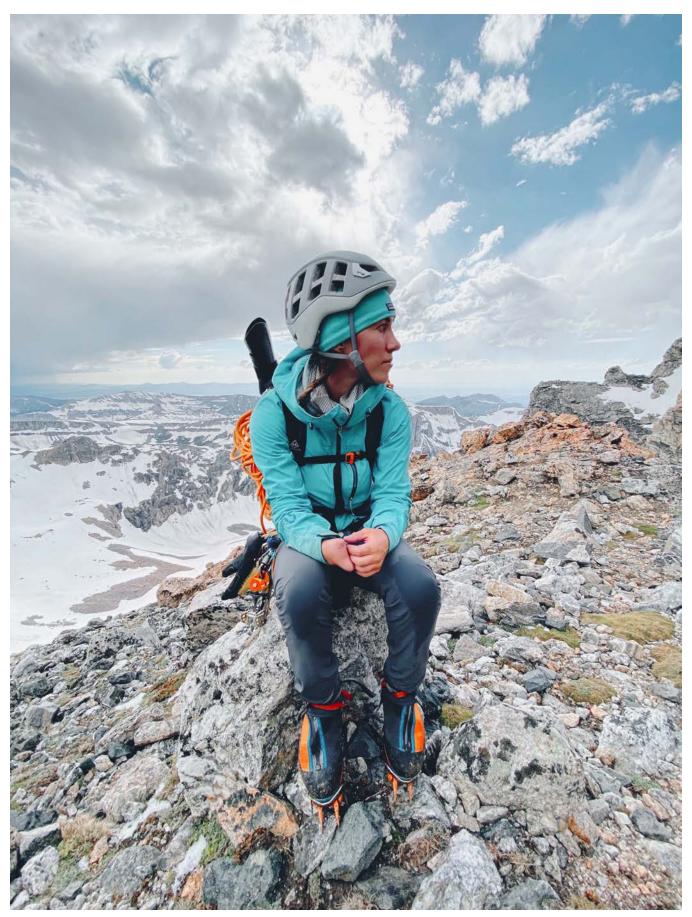
"I was born this way," Kimber says with ease. "It looks like a kitten's face, don't you think?"

The boy seems to be working it out in his head, so Kimber pulls out her phone to show him a picture of her climbing a wall of ice. His mother says, "You will not find me on a mountain top, but I've been climbing my own type of mountains recently." Their conversation meanders between race, representation, inclusion, and love. They discuss the power of community to make a change. The power of our stories to shift the paradigm of what representation looks like and what is possible. Tears flow as the two women realize they have so much in common, even if their lives look different.

As they leave, the mother sees book covers with kids that look like her son, and thanks Kimber for bringing the community together through the fundraiser. "If I had representation growing up, I would have felt more capable," Kimber said. "I want my students to see themselves at our read-alouds."

They say their goodbyes feeling more like friends than strangers. The little boy waves goodbye. Without reservation, Kimber raises her right hand and waves back.

Kimber Cross is a Mountaineer, photographer, and adaptive athlete changing the narrative around ability in the outdoors. To keep up with Kimber's adventures or reach out to her with questions, follow her on Instagram @kimberbelle. Lance Garland is a Mountaineer, author, and firefighter based in Seattle. In addition to two stories in Mountaineer, his writing has appeared in Outside, The Seattle Times, and The Stranger. Learn more at lancegarland.com.



Kimber happy to be alive after bailing off of Black Ice Couloir on the Grand Teton due to an intense thunder and lightning hail storm. Photo by Sam Sala.



t 5:30am the arctic sun illuminates icebergs with delicate bands of yellow light. My Zodiac ride to explore Disko Bay leaves in 30 minutes, and I need to find vodka, fast.

A cruise ship is like a miniature city, and even small ones feel large when you're waddling across the decks in too many winter layers. Upon finding an open coffee station, I sheepishly approach the barista. Does she, maybe, have a small bottle of vodka in the back for me? My paints will freeze without it.

Her face lights up in a huge smile, and she stifles a laugh. "Honey, you don't need an excuse to get vodka at 6am!" she states, as she hands me an expensive (and entirely too full) bottle from under the counter. "We call it Vitamin V, available all the time." Despite my insistence that I am, in fact, going to fill my brush with vodka to make a painting, the crew does not believe me.

Or, at least, they don't believe me until I return a few hours later with three small watercolor sketches smelling faintly of liquor. Within a few hours word has spread throughout the ship, and I become known as the "artist who paints with vodka" for the rest of the trip.

Painting with vodka is a tip I learned years earlier from expeditionary artist Maria Coryell-Martin, and it inspired my early morning paintings in the arctic. Maria traveled the world documenting places through art, and she specializes in painting outside in cold climates, like Antarctica. For Maria,

winter is actually one of the best times to get outside and paint. "The days are short, the weather is cold and often wet, and it's tempting to sit inside with a cup of tea instead of braving the elements with a sketchbook. But in spite of the challenges, I think there's so much value and fun in sketching winter plein air, and it can lead to wonderful inspiration inside your cozy studio later."

Winter presents a unique set of conditions, but with the right gear, attitude, and preparation, it can be just as fun as painting in fair weather. If you're thinking about getting outside this winter with a pen or paintbrush in hand, Maria and I have a few go-to tips and tricks to share with you to make the experience fun.

Prepare for the weather with the right equipment

Heading out in wintry weather can take a little extra preparation. As sketching is a stationary sport, we recommend bringing layers. If it's close to freezing outside, wear a base layer, fleece, insulated down jacket, and a waterproof shell. If you're hiking to your painting spot, bring a dry t-shirt and sports bra to change into because nothing will chill you faster than sitting still in damp layers. If needed, bundle up with extra scarves, jackets, and lightweight gloves. You will not regret bringing more layers than you think you'll need! We also recommend sitting on a small foam pad instead of on your pack. Bonus: this keeps snacks more easily accessible without having to get up.



Find painting materials you love

Maria and I both love the Art Toolkit Pocket Pallette, which she invented! We fill the light, compact, and portable palettes with our favorite watercolors from Daniel Smith. We carry either a Moleskine notebook or a variety of loose paper, plus our usual selection of pencils, pens, brushes, and a reusable paper towel. One of our favorite tools is a waterbrush, which has a hollow handle you can fill with water. We also bring a flask filled with vodka or gin if temperatures dip below freezing. The alcohol helps keep the paintbrushes from turning into popsicles, and the paintings might dry a little faster, too.

Find your outdoor inspiration

When time is limited or conditions are particularly challenging, we often start by making quick, small, gesture sketches (a technique Maria taught me over a decade ago on Mount Baker). Creating simple sketches with pen or pencil and a limited palette of colors saves time and helps you focus on the bigger picture of the landscape you're visiting. When making gestures, "It's helpful to think of your pen or pencil as a conductor's baton dancing lightly on your page," says Maria.

Have fun!

Painting outside any time of the year presents a unique set of challenges. Approaching variable conditions, bad weather, and unpredictable mishaps with a lens of experimentation and fun can make all the difference. In our experience, winter

Maria (left) works on a painting of Half Moon Island (above) in Antarctica. Maria's flask, palettes, and water brushes (right). Photos courtesy of Maria Coryell-Martin.

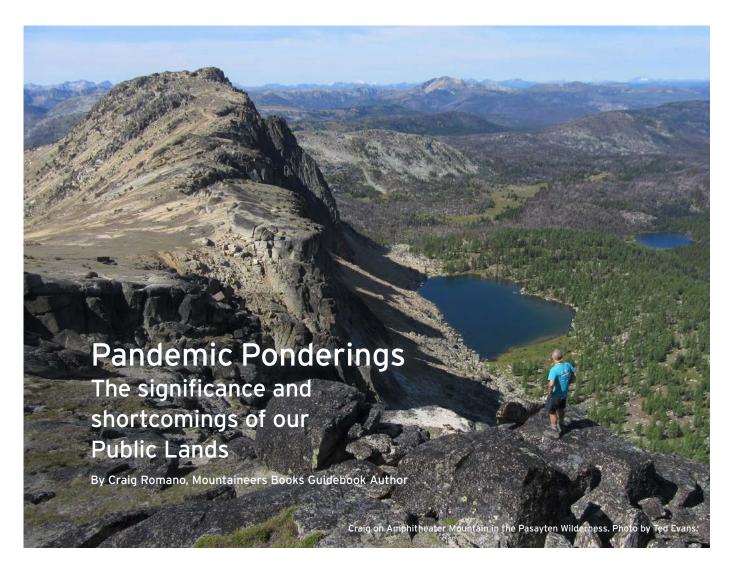
paintings rarely turn out as you want them to, but they will always carry many memories and opportunities to connect with the places you visit.

Bonus: Our favorite places to paint in the winter

Gold Creek pond is a great location to try painting in the winter for the first time. It's easily accessible, and if you get too cold the car isn't far away! If you live near Seattle, try painting in the woods on Tiger, Cougar, or Squak Mountains. We also love to visit the Methow Valley in the winter and find its beautiful landscape full of inspiration.

Not all winter painting has to be in the snow. Regardless of where you live, you can always head to a local park or nature preserve. We can learn so much about our surroundings by sitting quietly for ten minutes to sketch.

Claire Giordano is an environmental artist and writer following the interwoven patterns of people, place, and climate change. See more of her work at www.claireswanderings.com. Maria Coryell-Martin is an expeditionary artist in the tradition of traveling artists as naturalists and educators, and the founder of Art Toolkit, offering expedition-proven tools for sketching and painting, from urban to wilderness adventures. Learn more at expeditionaryart.com and art-toolkit.com.



he emptiness of Northeastern Washington's Salmo-Priest Wilderness has never felt more comforting. I stand alone on a ridge gazing out over waves of emerald ridges, shadowed by processions of white puffy clouds. Soft, warm breezes whistle through silver snags, prompting boughs of bear grass to delicately sway. I haven't encountered another human all day; out in all of that wildness before me, some of Washington's last grizzlies still roam. I finally feel safe and relieved from the ravages of the pandemic sweeping the world outside my wilderness.

The irony doesn't escape me. Hiking in grizzly country usually has me slightly on edge. But here I am feeling totally at ease. For months, I have been wrestling with anxiety and bouts of depression, but on this bluebird August day - the first day in many - I once again feel carefree and at peace. I can't get sick here. No one can harm me here. And I am living in the moment, not agonizing over the past or fretting over the future.

Reality revealed

This has been a hell of a year for me and so many millions of my brothers and sisters. Life as we knew it has been completely ripped asunder by a novel contagion. The ineptitude of many of our elected officials in helping to contain it is just maddening. And if that wasn't enough to set many of us on edge - add a summer of civil unrest and a growing economic divide, leaving many folks teetering on the edge of poverty.

While this year has certainly taken its toll on my nerves, I count myself fortunate. I have a safety net, secure housing, and strong support from family and friends. I have had the freedom to spend many days and miles on the trails, and almost all of my trail time has been far removed from the crowding so prevalent on many of our trails. I have been able to roam the backcountry and reflect – a lot – on where we are today as a society.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought front and center to the American people many of the shortcomings seething in our society. It has clearly shown us how dangerously close we are to losing our middle class and having a two-tiered society where a small group of people controls huge amounts of wealth, while millions live in or on the edge of poverty. Tens of millions of us lack jobs or jobs paying living wages, adequate health care, childcare, access to mental healthcare, shelter, and retirement security.

Public Lands shortcomings

The pandemic has revealed many shortcoming in our public lands and trail systems as well. This year our public lands and trails have

seen record levels of use, owing mainly to a huge influx of new recreationists because so many other pursuits have been closed or severely limited. And while we should be celebrating that folks of all ages, abilities, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds are recreating in our public lands, this new influx is alarming in that we are not prepared to properly handle it.

Our parks, trails, and public lands have never been properly funded or staffed, and this became even more evident with this year's influx of new visitors. Many trails and parks were downright crowded this year – a threat to public health and safety, and to the sustainability of our natural resources. Infrastructure in our parks and forests has been crumbling and in need of updating and expansion even before this year's record number of users. If ever we questioned how significantly our parks, public lands, and trails rank in our lives, this summer soundly assured us that the answer is "extremely important." Americans truly value and need these places for their mental, physical, and spiritual health, and we need these places to ensure adequate habitat for the myriad species we share the planet with; for clean water and air, and to mitigate the effects of climate change.

We must properly invest in our public lands for all Americans today and for the millions yet to come. Our elected officials need to be leaders, properly funding and caring for our public lands. We the citizenry need to hold them accountable to this and pledge to be the best possible stewards of our lands.

Let's fight for change

I've had a lot of time this year to think while I have been on the trail, and this is what I have been thinking about: as we move forward, I want to see the following initiatives come from our elected officials, and I want to see my fellow Americans demand and commit to them. I want to see environmental education instituted at all levels, and not just in formal teaching settings – also through public service announcements and campaigns. I want to see our public lands adequately funded to properly maintain and expand our trails, access roads, campgrounds, picnic areas, visitor centers, ranger stations, and park housing. And I want to see these places fully staffed with rangers, trail crews, conservation officers, educators, and researchers.

I want to see our public lands expanded to include more urban parks and greenbelts connecting urban areas to backcountry areas. I want our public lands to be accessible to all. Underserved communities especially need parks, trails, and environmental education centers. We need to expand our public transportation systems, allowing urban dwellers to easily head to parks and preserves without being beholden to owning vehicles. We need more trails to help disperse crowding. We need more campgrounds too.

Now is the perfect time to institute a new Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) providing economic relief for many folks and allowing them to be part of building and expanding our natural heritage to leave a legacy. We can instill a new patriotism based on loving and caring for our land and having it accessible to all. In time, this program will do more than just provide economic relief - it will stimulate the economy as more folks choose to spend more time and money recreating outdoors.

The non-economic dividends will be great too, from leaving a smaller footprint on the planet by encouraging participation in non-consumptive outdoors activities to helping folks connect to the natural world for healthier and more meaningful lives. During these divisive times, the outdoors can act as a great unifier, bringing Americans of all persuasions together over our shared love for the outdoors.

The pandemic has revealed how the outdoors has become a saving grace for so many people suffering from economic and emotional turmoil. We clearly see how a pursuit as simple as taking a walk in nature is essential to our day-to-day functioning. As we prepare for the impending mental health crisis spawned by this pandemic, those walks will become more important than ever. We need to ensure that people have unfettered access to the outdoors.



Craig and son Giovanni at Barnum Point, Camano Island. Photo by Heather

This has been a difficult and trying year, yet COVID-19 gives us the opportunity to begin a new trajectory. We can come out of this with a new way of doing things and begin correcting the shortcomings and inequalities that have long reigned in our society. We have the opportunity now to instill real greatness through our public lands. I'm ready to welcome a new era in which our public lands are adamantly cherished and cared for by all. I hope you are too.

Craig Romano is an award winning author who has written more than 25 books including Day Hiking North Cascades 2nd edition, Urban Trails Vancouver WA, and 100 Classic Hikes Washington (Mountaineers Books).

retrorewind



Marge Mueller Pioneering illustrator and guidebook artist

By Christine Clifton-Thornton, Former Mountaineers Books Editor

Marge Mueller, author, co-author, book designer, mapmaker, illustrator, and lifetime member of The Mountaineers, passed away in September at the age of 84.

any think of Mountaineers Books as synonymous with outdoor legends like Fred Beckey, Harvey Manning, Ira Spring, and others whose guidebooks were published to much acclaim and who inspired a new generation of writers and photographers. There is, however, one womanan established Pacific Northwest author in her own right—who helped make so much of the success of their work possible.

Marge Mueller was an avid outdoorsperson who became interested in our region's mountains soon after moving to Washington in the 1950s. In the early 1960s, Marge joined Seattle Mountain Rescue, and there she met Ted Mueller. Soon after, their mutual friend Ira Spring invited them to be photography models on a climbing trip to Mount Baker. Matching male climbers stride for stride, she often dangled from belay while wearing attire fit for publication. Marge completed countless climbs and hikes with an unmistakable style, wit, and flair captured by Ira in many of his classic images.

Often the only woman in her climbing groups, it also fell to Marge to prepare meals at the end of the day. While everyone else relaxed around camp, Marge could be found whipping up a hot meal, with her patented handmade mountain ice cream for dessert.

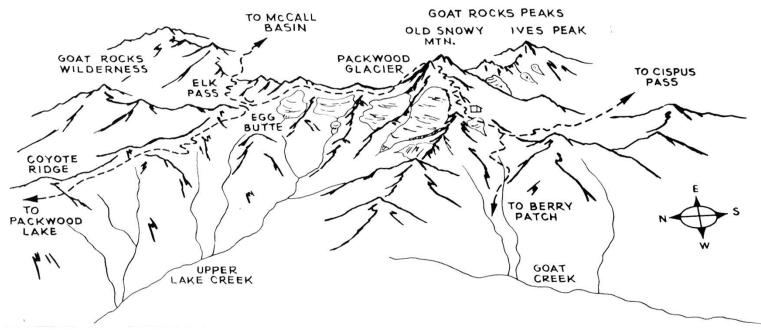
Marge credited her upbringing with two brothers on a commercial farm in lowa for her strong sense of self and determination. In the 1950s, her parents built a public swimming pool on their property, which strongly fed Marge's athletic interests. These lessons learned and skills developed at a young age contributed to her success in a field dominated by men.

A style all her own

Marge and Ted married in 1966, which turned into a landmark year for the newlywed couple. Marge graduated from the University of Washington with a BFA in Commercial Design and became a commercial illustrator for Boeing. Also in 1966, the original 100 Hikes in Western Washington, the granddaddy of all Pacific Northwest hiking guides, was published by Mountaineers Books. Written by Louise Marshall, with Ira and his twin brother Bob credited as photographers, Marge was the book's illustrator. 100 Hikes sold out the initial press run in only a few weeks, and spawned the series of 100 Hikes books published by Mountaineers Books that continues to this day. An avid cartographer, Marge used an artistic interpretation of contextual elevation and detail in the 100 Hikes series, a style that later became her trademark. Marge's signature style continues to have an influence on adventure writing, illustration, and art in the outdoor industry today.

Also in 1966, Harvey Manning, already renowned as the first editor of *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*, joined Ira and Marge on Mount Rainier to document what would later become the popular 50 Hikes in Mount Rainier National Park book. While Harvey and Ira became known as the grandfathers of outdoor guidebooks, it was Marge's innate outdoor knowledge, design expertise, and frank communication skills that drove the design, look, and feel of their books. She also heavily supported many other titles that created the early lexicon of today's outdoor and natural history of the Pacific Northwest.

Fred Beckey arrived on Mountaineers Books' publishing list in 1965 with a guide to Leavenworth climbing areas. The first of what later became a three-volume set known as Beckey's Bibles, Cascade Alpine Guide: Columbia River to Stevens Pass, was published in 1973. Marge took over designing Fred's books in 1977. Marge's ability to wrangle both Fred and Harvey's work into orderly submissions fit for publication was not only



A map of the Goat Rocks Wilderness in Marge Mueller's distinctive hand-drawn, oblique style. Photo courtesy of Mountaineers Books.

legendary, it was essential. Both men eventually refused to publish without her at the helm of production for their books.

From illustrator to author

Eventually, Marge and Ted began writing their own books. Their first was *Northwest Ski Trails*, published by Mountaineers Books in 1968, with the text written by Ted, photos by Ira, and maps by Marge. Astonishingly, Marge and Ted created and revised numerous editions of more than a dozen books while Marge continued to design, lay out, and create illustrations for other titles at the same time.

Later, with a growing family, Marge and Ted began to spend less time in the mountains and more time aboard their sailboat. They grew frustrated at the lack of information for boaters as they explored their favorite area: the San Juan Islands. As a solution, the couple wrote *The San Juan Islands: Afoot & Afloat*, published in 1979. It was their first book featuring their own photography and the first in what would become an extensive series.

"My wife, Jo, and I were guided and inspired by the Afoot & Afloat series, especially the volume on the San Juan Islands, which came out at a time when there was little cruising info available," said Art Freeman, lifelong skier, and past executive director of Mountaineers Books. "Her book included that, but it also included her characteristically artistic maps and a cando attitude. We still use the series. She led us, and so many people, in the right direction."

Of the books Marge and Ted published with Mountaineers Books, the best known are the *Afoot & Afloat* titles and *Washington State Parks: A Complete Recreation Guide*, although they also wrote about other topics.

"One of the very first outdoor books I bought at REI, probably around 1970, was *Northwest Ski Trails* by Marge and Ted, which was a big inspiration to me," said Art. "I still look at it

and think fondly of Marge and Ted, and of the early days of Northwest resort skiing, when it snowed feet, not inches, and never rained."

Donna DeShazo, former director of Mountaineers Books, reminisced about working with Marge for more than 30 years. "I first met Marge in her freelance mapmaking days, and we continued to work together as she added 'author' to her title and then as she joined the Books staff in 1985," said Donna, who remained friends with Marge beyond their time working together.

"Marge's maps alone set a new standard for guidebooks. At the time, it was common practice to use chunks of USGS topo maps, which—while definitely accurate—gave the average hiker little or no impression of the 'flavor' of the trip. Her unique 'oblique angle' style conveyed both terrain relief and relative distances in a way that was often copied (but never successfully!) by other publishers."

Donna also praised Marge's limitless creative nature. "Marge was art directing one edition of *Freedom of the Hills* when the editorial committee insisted on achieving absolute perfection of detail in drawings of such maneuvers as ice axe self-arrests on snow climbs. In typical Marge fashion, undeterred by it being a season of no snow anywhere, she solved the problem by covering an old hollow-core door with carpet. She then used it to create the necessary snow slopes and photographed committee-member-climbers cramponing on the door with all the proper moves. An artist then created the necessary drawings for the book, and everyone was happy."

Through Marge's creative influence, The Mountaineers and Mountaineers Books inspired generations of recreationists and adventure. Not limited to hiking, paddling, skiing, or any other outdoor disciplines, Marge's body of work stands out as truly special, even in Mountaineers Books' extraordinary catalogue.



RAINY SEASON TIPS FOR THE SUMMER HIKER

By Emily Walbridge, 1-year Olympia Branch member

grabbed my antique wooden snowshoes and headed for the door. Growing up in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, solo adventures every weekend were the norm as a kid. Winters were my favorite; a blanket of snow transformed the world into a black and white vintage photo from December through April. My brothers and I would skate on the lake and wander the empty woods surrounding our small cabin until dusk.

Upon arriving in the Pacific Northwest, I quickly learned that winter activities are a different beast than what I had in the tundra of Michigan's U.P. For my first trip in 2012, I grabbed my makeshift pack and met a couple of new friends from a Meetup group. I couldn't afford proper hiking shoes, so I pulled on my bulky Midwest boots, thinking they were waterproof and would work just fine. I didn't realize that a muddy slip-n-slide trail lay ahead.

Through trial and error I finally figured out what I needed for an enjoyable hike in the winter, but getting started was intimidating. As you look forward to a winter of hiking, here are a few tips to help you feel prepared. Keep in mind that these tips focus on low elevation hiking, and additional precautions are required for higher elevations when you'll encounter snow.

Winter can be an exciting time to experience your favorite trails in an entirely new way. Don't let the cold weather stop you from getting out on the trail and enjoying the outdoors by being smart, safe, and prepared.

PACK THE 11 ESSENTIALS: Pack the 10 Essentials and a face mask. These will help you in a variety of emergencies. The most crucial part is understanding how to use each tool; learn more at mountaineers.org/ten-essentials.

OBSERVE WEATHER CONDITIONS:

Weather can change quickly. I continually check the weather the week leading up to a hike, and have spent time developing a basic understanding of what to watch for during changing weather to stay safe.

AVOID HYPOTHERMIA: Even when it isn't -10 degrees, hypothermia can sneak up on you. Take extra gloves, and have a dry set of clothes in the car to change into after the hike. I also keep a thermos of hot tea in the car. There's nothing better than dry socks and a hot drink when you get off the trail.

GPS DEVICE: I commonly rely on several apps to help me navigate the trail. Popular tools include AllTrails, Cairn, and Gaia GPS. If you're a member of The Mountaineers, take advantage of our Cairn and Gaia discounts. If you'll be out of cell range, consider an InReach.

BRING TRACTION DEVICES: A couple of years ago, I was on a hike shortly after a rain when the temperature quickly dropped. I was soon dealing with an unexpected ice rink. Fortunately I had my micro spikes packed, and was able to slip them on and continue unabated. Even if you think you may not need them, you should carry hiking poles and micro spikes to help in a slippery situation.

DRESS APPROPRIATELY: This might be the most important lesson I learned as a new rainy-season hiker. I had no idea that rain pants existed or what gaiters were, but I quickly learned that cotton is a big no-no. There are some great, inexpensive ways to invest in rain gear; check your local outdoor store or visit mountaineers. org/benefits for access to discounts.

TELL SOMEONE WHERE YOU'RE GOING:

Regardless of the season, always to tell someone where you're going, when you'll be back, and whom to call if you don't get back in time.



"Peak Refuel meals
sustain me in the alpine
and are absolutely quality
in taste, ingredients, and
energy to go hard."

Kimber Cross, @kimberbelle

KIMBER'S FAVORITES





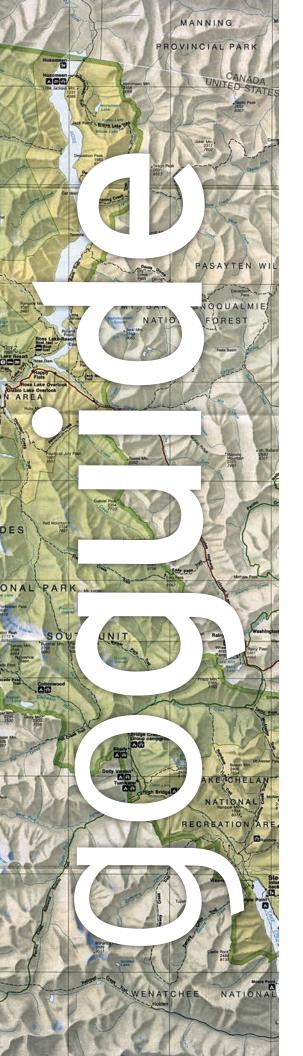




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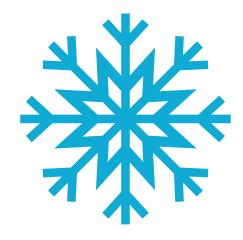












TOP 5 TIPS FOR WINTER RECREATION

Choose your destination wisely. Easy adventures in the summer can become dangerous in winter conditions. Do your research and check recent trip reports online. Have a back-up plan in case you arrive to find a crowded trailhead or encounter unsafe conditions.

Always check snow & weather conditions. Strong winds, surprise storms, and avalanches can strike even the most prepared. Before going out on a snowy trail, check conditions with NWAC online to determine local mountain weather.

Bring enough gear. Have the proper safety gear for snow adventures, which may include extra layers, a shovel, and a safety beacon depending on the nature of your trip. Consider your vehicle part of your winter emergency gear, and make sure it's properly prepped for conditions as well.

Practice winter wellness. Be respectful of fellow snow enthusiasts. Cover your nose and mouth when you can't maintain six feet from other groups. If you feel sick, always stay home.

Keep it clean. Snow is our region's water supply so let's keep it clean. Pack out all human waste and garbage. Don't trash our winter playground.

Want more educational resources and tools?

Check out the Virtual Education Center & Calendar, your home base for accessing all of our great virtual learning tools. Find activities, events, and classes held online and browse our education resources for skills and more. Visit mountaineers.org/virtual-education-center.

How to Sign Up for Activities

Step 1

Visit our website

Click on the big green 'Find over the 'Activities' tab and

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

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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

Click on the 'Upcoming Events' button on the left of 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 includes 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.



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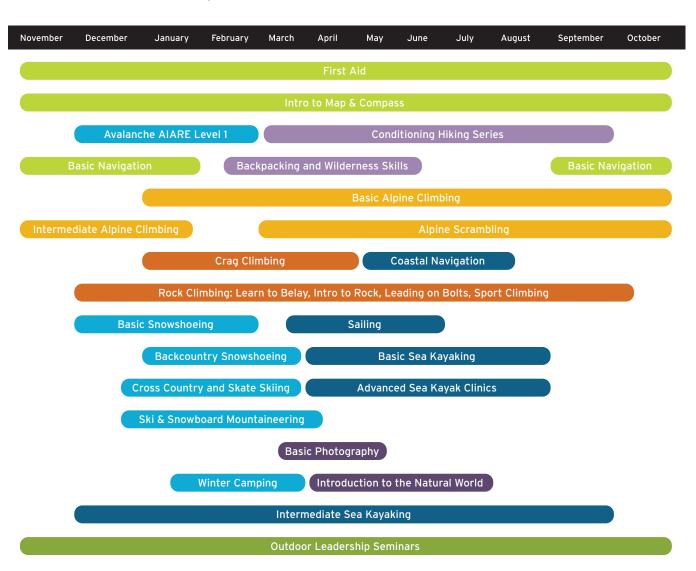




The Mountaineers Course Overview

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, activities, courses, and events may be canceled or postponed. Please visit 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 a family favorite.

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.



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.



Meany Lodge mountaineers.org/meanylodge

Meany will be open for day-use this winter! We operate a rope-tow on our ski hill for ski lessons, cross-country skiing, and snowshoe excursions. We are offering a simple hot lunch in open shelters; all participants must pre-register online. This year Meany will be most enjoyed by those happy to spend the day outside, with limited opportunities for rewarming. The lodge itself will be closed with bathroom access only.



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! Join us for a grand adventure as you stroll down the forested trail to our breathtaking theater and create a treasured family tradition. Due to COVID-19 concerns, both 2020 shows were postponed to 2021. Tickets are available online; save on our two-show package. Tickets already purchased are valid for spring's productions. Please see our website for show dates and more information.

Disney's Beauty and the Beast: Showing spring 2021, this "tale as old as time" is perfect for the entire family. Be our guest for this heartwarming tale of true love and transformation, filled with unforgettable songs and thrilling pageantry.

Bend in the Road - The Anne of Green Gables Musical: In summer 2021, join us for the Northwest premier of this high-energy, reimagined musical based on the beloved classic Anne of Green Gables. Retaining the heart of the original story, this warm, funny musical is perfect for all ages.

branchingout

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

Websites: 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: Bob Keranen, keranen@hcc.net **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 speaker series and potluck is postponed until further notice due to COVID-19 concerns. The Banff Mountain Film Festival and our Open House are being planned; watch for details.

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

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.

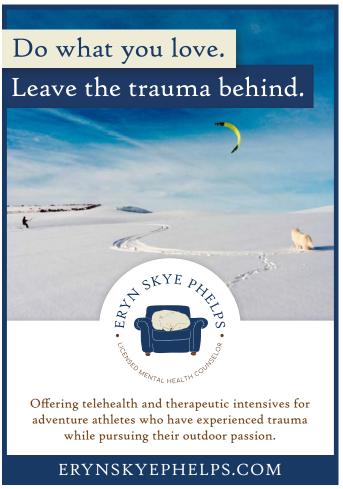
Branch Events With picnics, open houses, banquets, guest speakers, and more, our branches host an array of events for you to get involved. To check out what's next, visit mountaineers.org/events. From this page, you can select your branch calendar.

Volunteer Our branches draw on people with a range of skills and interests to power their programs. Instructors, event planners, admin help, and more are all needed. Volunteering is a great way to plug into our community. Reach out to your branch chair to get started.

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.







n the dark days of winter, one of the few reliefs we have from the gloomy weather is the promise of snow. Uncommon in the lowlands west of the Cascades, snow is a treat reserved for just a few days every year, blanketing the damp Northwest in a sheet of white. As a result, lowland snow days are a hectic delight. School is cancelled, roads are salted, snow plows deployed, and the Midwesterners shake their heads at our four inch dusting. Each year we act like it's a surprise - and it may just be that it's more fun that way.

Of course, the caravans leading to Snoqualmie and Stevens Passes, Mt. Baker, and Crystal Mountain every weekend show the appetite of many snow-starved urbanites. Powder hounds flock to ski resorts from November through April, and lines are full, even on days when we've been blessed with yet another layer of Cascade concrete. The atmosphere is permanently festive, and - unless you're vying for a spot by the fire - friendly.

Whether you see it twice a year or every winter weekend, most in the Pacific Northwest can agree that there are few things more charming than a snow day. In celebration of our love for snow, we wanted to share a few facts that might change how you see our winter wonderland:

Snow isn't white

Although snow may appear white when you look across the hilltop, it's actually translucent. Snow is made of ice crystals, and when light strikes each crystal it's reflected and bounced off rather than absorbed. As a result the entire light spectrum is reflected back at us, which we perceive as white.

...But it can turn pink

Known as watermelon snow, snow algae, pink snow, red snow, and blood snow, this curiously-colored snow is caused by the growth of the algae *Chlamydomonas nivalis*. This algae contains red pigment in addition to green chlorophyll, and grows in freezing water. It often makes its appearance in spring and summer in alpine environments, when the increase in light, water, and nutrients allows it to germinate. Although

watermelon snow has been present for quite some time (early accounts are attributed to Aristotle), it poses a threat to our already at-risk glaciers, as the dark color absorbs light and causes glacial melt to accelerate.

Snowflake shape depends on atmospheric conditions

Snowflakes form when a very cold drop of water freezes with a particle of dust or pollen in the air, creating an ice crystal. As this ice crystal falls, water vapor freezes onto the crystal causing it to grow. Although the ice crystal will always have six sides (and all sides are identical), its shape varies depending on the temperature and humidity of the air. As the snowflake moves down through the atmosphere, the changing conditions affect how the next layer of water molecules forms on each arm. The difference can be substantial. For instance, long needle-like ice crystals are seen at 23 degrees, and flat, circular crystals form at 5 degrees.

Snow is insulating

Falling in snow without proper protection can certainly result in a cold day on the ski hill, but snow itself is actually quite insulating. Because of its chemical structure, snow consists of 90-95% trapped air in between all of those water molecules. This is the reason why so many animals burrow into snow in winter to hibernate, and why igloos and snow caves are such effective shelters in cold, bitter environments. They block wind better than your four season tent can, too.

Yodeling won't cause an avalanche

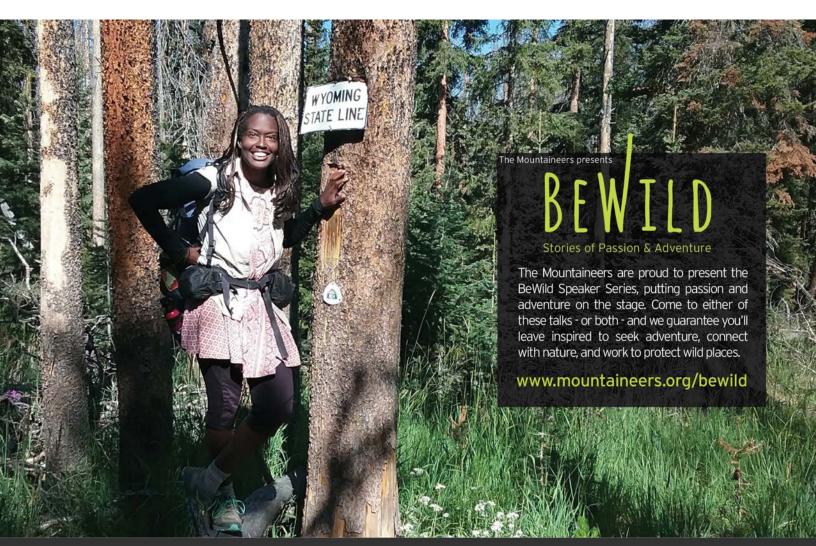
Despite what some '80s movies would have you believe, yodeling or yelling won't cause an avalanche. Scientists estimate that it takes around 200-500 pascals (Pa) of pressure to trigger an avalanche, even one that's close to springing on its own. In fact, the explosives used to trigger avalanches by ski resorts put out 1,000-1,500 Pa. Comparatively, the human voice can exert around 2 Pa – not nearly enough to displace snow.

You The outdoors **Your Hilleberg tent Endless possibilities NALLO GT** Light, strong, easy to pitch and easy to carry all-season tent with a single extended vestibule in our RED LABEL series. Available in 2, 3 & 4 person versions. Jana Erb/kontrapixel.de

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Bernadette McDonald | Jan 14

From Everest to Nanga Parbat, Bernadette McDonald will introduce the Ice Warriors of Winter 8000-high altitude climbers who prefer to climb 8000-meter peaks in winter instead of the much easier summer season. Their adventures on the highest mountains on earth in the coldest conditions imaginable are stories of bravery, loyalty, and suffering.







Elyse Walker | Feb 11

Chardonnay, known off-trail as Elsye Walker, completed the Triple Crown in 2018, the first African American woman to do so. Hiking into history at age 45 does not come without challenges, and sometimes being a trailblazer means being flexible with your plans and not following the crowd. Join Elyse as she shares how letting go of the familiar and taking a walk on the wild side can lead you to a new world of adventure.

