

# Mountaineer

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

in this issue:

Mountaineers of Instagram

Top 5 Beginner Ski Tours

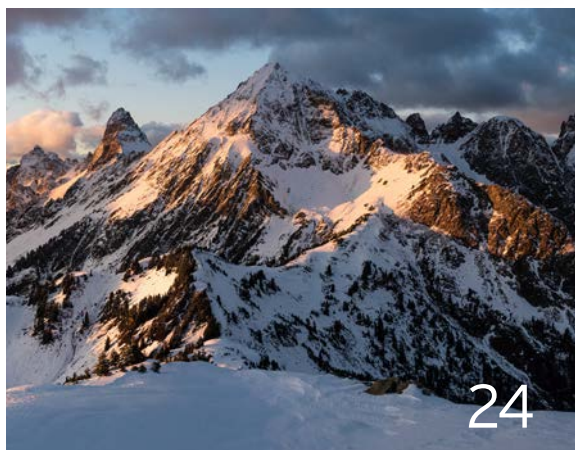
Discover the Joys of Winter Camping

A Mule, a Klutz, and a Pair of Skis



## Winter 2023 | Volume 117 | Number 1

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



On the cover: Memorable sunsets are one of the many joys of winter camping. Photo by Mountaineers of Instagram featured member Sarina Pizzala.

Mountaineer uses:



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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.





Winter happened fast this year, shifting from 80 degrees and sunny to 42 degrees and raining in the matter of a week. In years past I used the fall months to shift my mindset from sunny days in the Cascades to scheming up winter activities. I rely on shoulder season to help me reset.

Like myself, The Mountaineers is going through a reset as well. Over the past six months, we have gone through a process

involving significant input from The Mountaineers community to update our strategic plan. Doing so creates a roadmap to chart priorities, actions, and investments that will enable us to advance our mission in the coming years. The plan will act as a critical north star for our organization, and in developing the plan, our board, staff, and organization leaders are thinking through how resources can be best allocated to grow our vibrant outdoor community, of which our volunteers are the cornerstone.

As I write this, I am reminded of a unique trip that led to a strong friendship with a fellow volunteer. I was lucky to be invited on the first Alpine Ambassadors trip up to Canmore hosted by The Mountaineers. Alpine Ambassadors was a new pilot program at the time, designed as part of our Vision 2022 strategic plan to support ongoing education and development for top climb leaders looking to learn more and mentor others. On day one, I ran into Kyle Breakey as he was carrying a box of burrito fixings into the hut. I love burritos, and instantly knew we would be fast friends.

Since that trip, I have spent many days out with Kyle, on both winter and summer adventures. A dedicated climb leader for the Bellingham branch, Kyle also volunteers with ski patrol at Mt. Baker. I'm constantly inspired by his dedication to helping people gain skills and experiences to help them move confidently in the Cascades and beyond. I know his commitment to helping others brings him joy, and that it impacts his available time to climb and ski. Like all of our volunteers, he chooses to make this personal sacrifice for the betterment of the greater community.

With the new 10-year strategic plan, we hope to honor the commitment of our volunteers to provide life-changing programming and build a supportive community where everyone feels belonging - particularly for our community members who have been historically excluded from outdoor recreation. Providing opportunities for our volunteers to continue growing their outdoor skills and experience is a powerful motivator for continued community leadership. We want to make being a volunteer as easy as possible through tech solutions and more volunteer support, so that we may better serve the growing and diverse community of outdoor enthusiasts.

Over the next few months, our strategic plan will be finalized and we will share details with the community. We hope to find a balance between inspiration and tangible actions, and we look forward to working with volunteers and staff to lead innovation in the outdoors, engage a vibrant community of outdoor enthusiasts, and advocate on behalf of the natural world.

Gabe Aeschliman  
Board President



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

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Mt. Rainier Sunrise. Photo by Nate Derrick.



Hailey Oppelt  
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Photo by Paige Madden.

As a kid in the Puget Sound lowlands, I practically vibrated with excitement when my parents began to complain about ice on the roads. The chances of snowfall were gradually increasing. And thanks to our regional ineptitude, a snow day was often in order if more than a dusting was seen.

Nothing was more thrilling than an entire day off school spending hours bundled up with the neighbor kids, creating poorly-formed

snowmen and throwing snowballs that hit no one. Exhausted, we would creep back to our respective homes to peel off layers of wet polyester and recuperate. I would spend the evening in a pile on the floor with the dogs watching cartoons. Like many kids in the area, I had a scarcity mindset with snow; there was never enough, and when winter hit, I was always jonesing for that first flake to fall. What I really wanted was access all season long.

Many years later, I was 24 and found myself in a circle with a few skiers. I decided to take advantage and finally have my season in the snow - I would learn to ski. It was time to shred some gnar. Hit the pow. Huck my meat. Oh, how true that final prediction would turn out to be.

With skiing, you're expected to be terrible when you begin. And I exceeded expectations. I decided that the best way to learn quickly would be to throw myself into the sport, very literally. I fell constantly, but I was *skiing* - this is what I'd come here for. Not to look good. Not be to stylish. To have fun (and I was succeeding). I'm not immune to being embarrassed - hardly - but for some reason being an absolutely rotten skier was not something that bothered me in the least. Yes, I looked ridiculous and my ski pants were packed with snow. But I learned how to

turn! Buy me a cocoa and you can call me Jerry. I was having a great time.

Experiences like these inspired our "Winter Frivolities" theme for this edition. In outdoor terms, we're talking about your classic Type 1 Fun: skiing, sledding, snowball fights, the activities that make kids red in the face with excitement and give adults nostalgia. Our features include "A Mule, A Klutz, and a Pair of Skis," a story not unrelated to my own by leader Heidi Walker on her journey to becoming a skier as an adult. "Mountaineers of Instagram" makes its annual return to inspire your adventures in 2023, and our staff compiled "Top 5 Ski Tours for Beginners" for those looking to earn their turns. Thirty-year member Courtenay Schurman reflects on her life outdoors with The Mountaineers in "Seasons of Change," and we have a fun visual piece for you to help identify your next favorite "sledding apparatus." And leader Mike Kretzler offers insight and inspiration in "Discover the Joys of Winter Camping" to help you get outdoors all winter long.

As always, our regular columns bring their own unique perspectives. Mountaineers Books Guidebook Author Craig Romano shares the many ways he loves winter in the lowlands in "Trail Talk: Embracing Winter," and "Peak Performance: Shoulder Rolls" teaches you how to practice rolling into a fall to avoid injury. "Outside Insight" and "Impact Giving" are paired this edition, exploring how our leaders adapt their activities to winter and why these shared experiences anchor us as a community.

While my skiing dreams have not materialized since that first season thanks to a torn meniscus, then COVID shutting down resorts, and a season of slush in early 2022, I'm looking forward to my fourth attempt at a second ski season this winter. I may be starting out at square one again, but I'm not terribly bothered. I don't need to be the best skier on the mountain. I plan to have a great time on the way down regardless. And this year will be different from my first in one key way: I purchased bibs.

H. O.





We recently re-shared **“Mount Stuart – Rockfall Hits Solo Climber on Descent,”** a safety story from 2017 that details a Mountaineers climbing team supporting a solo climber after she was injured by significant rockfall. Our community responded with notes of support and reminders to always be prepared for the unexpected:

“Great incident report. The lessons learned section with the takeaways is invaluable. Thank you for sharing this with us.”  
-Felipe Rocha, Facebook commenter

“I went down Cascadian Couloir and a rock tumbled down about 2-3 feet above my head and it was the size of a microwave oven. It was on a Mazama climb and we managed to avoid down climbing above each other which probably helped avoid anyone from getting hit.”  
-Doug Pratt, Mazamas member

“Now this is a memory that I don’t often think about anymore! In hindsight I’m thankful that this happened relatively early on in my climbing career. It taught me valuable lessons that are still ingrained in me today. Thanks for sharing, The Mountaineers!”  
-Sherrie Trecker, 12-year member and Mt. Stuart climb co-leader

“This is a favorite hike of mine as well! It’s a beast but the payoffs are worth it. I led a hike up there in late August and there were so many delicious berries!”  
-Kate Schonberg-Hamar, 4-year member



In **“New Route Update: South Early Winter Spires (SEWS),”** we shared updates to the popular route after it was damaged by significant rockfall, prompting North Cascade Mountain Guides to establish a new rappel route. Our community was thrilled with the changes:

“Kudos to Larry Goldie and his crew.”  
-Gregg Gagliardi, Facebook commenter

“Thanks to Larry Goldie and Joshua Cole at NCMG!”  
-Steve Smith, 5-year member

**Trip reports** are a favorite on our website, with comprehensive information on routes, weather, accessibility, and more. When an exceptional report is published, readers often offer kudos:

“This is a masterpiece of a trip report. For anyone looking to climb this seldom-climbed one.”  
-Ananth Maniam, 5-year member, responding to “Intermediate Alpine Climb - Chimney Rock/East Face Route”

“Great job leading this hike and writing this trip report Jerry!! A most excellent day indeed!! Thanks again.”  
-Diann Sheldon, 13-year member, responding to “Day Hike - Bearhead Mountain”

“One of the best reports I’ve seen.”  
-Brent Hoover, guest member, responding to “Backpack - White Pass, Blue Lake & Bald Eagle Loop”



In **“Trail Talk: Sourdough Mountain Magic,”** Mountaineers Books author Craig Romano recounted the hike that made him fall in love with the North Cascades many years ago. Our readers shared his enthusiasm for the mountain:

“Just hiked it for the first time three weeks ago!”  
-Dana Meis, Facebook commenter

We value feedback from our readers, and we’d like to hear from you! Share your thoughts about [Mountaineer magazine](mailto:magazine@mountaineers.org) at [magazine@mountaineers.org](mailto:magazine@mountaineers.org).

**Name** Nate Derrick

**Hometown** I grew up in Holland, MI. Not a place where climbing is a household subject of conversation. I didn't even know about the ice climbing opportunities along Lake Superior until well after I had settled in WA!

**Member Since** February 2016

**Occupation** Military officer

**Favorite Activities** Alpine climbing is far and away my favorite outdoor activity. I grew up car camping and was eventually exposed to backcountry canoe tripping. I still do family-friendly backpacking and car camping trips each year, but am hoping that my two sons will graduate to alpine climbing as soon as possible.



## How did you get involved with The Mountaineers?

I started out with a Basic Alpine Climbing equivalency in 2016. I had a good deal of formal training and experience teaching climbing and mountaineering skills from work and was looking for opportunities to continue doing that on my own.

## What motivates you to get outside with us?

I like introducing people to climbing. I think it's one of the most rewarding and meaningful activities a person could choose to do - but the financial, physical, and psychological barriers to entry are quite high. There are positive aspects to the physical and psychological barriers, though. If it wasn't difficult to meet the physical demands of climbing or it didn't require some level of commitment to risk when overcoming the psychological barriers, then the meaningfulness of climbing wouldn't be there. I also like the volunteer instructor/climb leader aspect of The Mountaineers mission, because I like having a vehicle to teach and lead climbing that eases the financial barrier a little bit. I'm currently working on building my experience and pre-requisites for progression through the AMGA Alpine Guide certification pathway and hope to bring some of that experience back as a volunteer.

## Who/what inspires you?

I'm inspired by the boldness and curiosity of first ascensionists, especially first ascensionists from the period after the nationalism-driven era of mountaineering up until the proliferation of highly-portable satellite communication and GPS tech. Major expedition climbs during the early nationalism-era of mountaineering and some of the cutting-edge modern firsts (like the Dawn Wall going free) are certainly inspiring, but what makes that period of 1970s-1980s alpinism so moving to me is how audacious those climbers needed to

be to go out into the unknown unsupported, highly self-reliant, and driven by internal motivation alone.

## What does adventure mean to you?

There is a quote in the movie *Free Solo* from Reinhold Messner. I forget the exact words, but in essence it goes: "If death was not a possibility it would not be an adventure. It would be kindergarten, but not an adventure, not an art." His use of the word "death" as the anchoring word for the quote makes it dramatic, but the core concept is very much how I see adventure. It is about having the will to pursue a goal that is masked behind the unknown, where failure is a real possibility. It requires you to manage real and immediate risks from start to finish. A good adventure should feel like you are a scientist testing a hypothesis about your own capability and self-reliance, and it should provide results that drive growth and learning. ▲▲

## Lightning round

**Sunrise or sunset?** Sunset

**Smile or game face?** Game face

**What's your 11th Essential?** Camera kit

**What's your happy place?** Above the tree line, at the moment the sun crests or sets on the horizon

**Post-adventure meal of choice?** Ideally pizza or BBQ, but in reality I end up at the first available 24/7 fast food drive-through that I cross paths with because I tend to finish my outings really late

**If you could be a rockstar at any outdoor activity overnight, what would it be?** Hard mixed climbing!



# Shoulder Rolls

By Courtenay Schurman, MS, CSCS, PN2



Photo by Nate Brown.

**R**emember how wonderful it felt to tumble or sled down a steep slope laughing so hard you fell off your saucer? As an adult, there is no better way to recapture those moments than by practicing rolling safely. Different than somersaults, shoulder rolls are the practice of going head-over-heels from shoulder to opposite hip, safely tucking the head. A wonderful way to improve your vestibular system - the sensory system in our bodies that gives us our balance and spatial awareness - they are fun as well as practical. With winter fast approaching, you may find yourself spending some time in the snow on your belly, side, or back. Learn how to roll safely and have fun doing it.

## Benefits of shoulder rolls

By practicing new skills in a safe and protected environment, like on a cushioned mat or rug, then progressing to realistic settings like soft snow, you can prepare your body for exercises that require balance and coordination. Start slowly; the first time I tried a few rolls, I discovered I felt a bit dizzy. But with a bit of practice, the body quickly adapts.

In addition to safer outdoor falls, practicing shoulder rolls can better prepare your body for exercises that require balance and coordination (take note, climbers, scramblers, and slackliners!). Vestibular system rehab can also help improve motion sensitivity, vertigo, dizziness, and balance issues.

## Proper execution

Practice rolling from right shoulder to left hip and left shoulder to right hip. It is quite likely you will find it more comfortable to roll to one side than to the other. Find the awkward side and plan to spend additional time rolling to that side.

To practice falling forward over your right shoulder, kneel on a cushioned surface with your hands in front of you and aim one shoulder forward to set your intention. If your right shoulder is forward, you should end up on your left hip and vice versa.

Tuck your chin to help you stay in a tight ball as you push off your toes to roll forward.

Start by completing several sets of 3-5 rolls in each direction as part of your warm-up. You might roll on one shoulder across the mat, pause, then roll on the other shoulder on the way back.

Once you master the double kneeling roll, progress to one knee, low crouch, half squat, and standing positions.

## Tips for practicing safe shoulder rolls

**Find a controlled environment.** Start developing any new skill in a safe environment. For rolls, that means practice on a padded surface or soft snow. Mountaineers practice glissading and self-arrests; hikers, skiers, and snowshoers would benefit by practicing rolling. Start from a kneeling or crouched position indoors on soft carpet or a mat, and work up to standing. Eventually practice rolling in soft snow.

**Tuck and twist.** If you have any concerns about your neck and lower back, remember that these are not somersaults. Done properly, you should roll smoothly across your back from one shoulder toward the opposite hip. Tuck your chin and use your abdominal muscles to remain in a tight ball, twisting so that you land on your shoulder blade.

**Stay relaxed.** If you fall backwards or sideways, keep your joints soft and stay loose and protect your head and neck. Locking out your joints may result in an injury.

**Soft landings.** Try to land on larger, meatier parts of your body (avoiding your wrists, ankles, or elbows) and keep your momentum going. Tuck into a roll rather than impacting your body at one small point. Be safe, have fun, and roll on! ▲▲

*Courtenay Schurman is an NSCA-CSCS certified personal trainer, Precision Nutrition Level 2 Certified Nutrition Supercoach, and co-owner of Body Results. She specializes in training outdoor athletes. For more how-to exercises or health and wellness tips, visit her website at [www.bodyresults.com](http://www.bodyresults.com) or send a question to [court@bodyresults.com](mailto:court@bodyresults.com).*

# The Art of Shralpinism

By Jeremy Jones



Jeremy Jones. Photo by Ming Ping.

**W**idely regarded as one of the world's most legendary alpinists, National Geographic Adventurer of the Year Jeremy Jones is an award-winning snowboarder, environmentalist, and entrepreneur. The founder of climate nonprofit Protect Our Winters (POW) and owner of Jones Snowboards, Jones has starred in dozens of snowboard films, including his highly acclaimed trilogy *Deeper, Further, and Higher*, and received 11 "Big Mountain Rider of the Year" awards from *Snowboarder Magazine*. His first book *The Art of Shralpinism: Lessons from the Mountains* (Mountaineers Books, 2022) explores the life-changing power of time in the mountains, the value of stoke, and how beauty and openness underscore all outdoor adventure. Please enjoy the following excerpt.

Two years into backcountry filming, Ryland and I are poised to drop into the biggest spine wall of our lives. We had climbed and bivied at the top of the face, waiting for morning to come. Picking up speed, I find my flow. Even though I'm in total control, there is no way I can stop. The slope is too steep and each turn creates small sluffs that build into small avalanches. These are predictable slides, and depending on my appetite, I mix it up and play with them like a surfer plays with a wave. We call this "sluff management." But my internal Spidey sense knows that I have monster sluff building above me and to my

left. Moving at the same speed as the sluff, I feel the weight starting to grab the tail of my snowboard. An essential rule in sluff management is to never sluff your exit - or at least get to your exit before your sluff does or find a safe spot to pull up on an "island of safety" while the sluff cascades through your line. This is poor sluff management, something I try to avoid at all costs.

My exit is to my right, off the smallest part of the cliff. I purposefully do not ride above it until the end of my line in order to leave it clean. This means that the majority of my line is over the biggest part of the cliff. Cut over too early and I sluff my exit, too late and I'm dragged off a huge cliff and get seriously hurt or worse. As much as I wrestled with this in the days leading up to my line, my mind is totally free of any such thought. I bounce down the spines and dabble with a rare "white moment." Everything is quiet, despite the rush of my sluff and the wind. Hundreds of micro-decisions and adjustments are being made, but I give them no thought. My mind and body are one. I perfectly position myself over my exit air just as my sluff reaches it. Together we fly through the air like I am jumping a snow waterfall. The landing is soft and steep, and although it is now partially hidden from the explosion of my sluff off the cliff, I stomp the landing. Coming out of the smoke, I wait a few seconds and then lean into a few celebratory powder turns before straight running

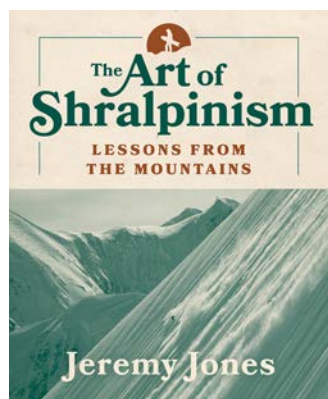


toward the glacier valley below. My body shakes. Uncontrollable screams are followed by sobs and tears.

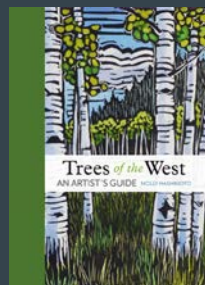
Ryland and I have just ridden one of the best lines of our lives, all under our own power. A huge achievement for the time. That line will stay with me forever, but all I can really think about is that I will see my infant daughter and wife again. That I will live to ride another day. The sad truth is that too many of my friends, heroes, and mentors have not lived to ride another day.

What follows in the pages of this book are the people and experiences that define me. I'm not proud of every decision I've made in the mountains, but often we learn the most from our mistakes. The trick is not dying in the process. I'm not better than those who've fallen to the mountains. I've tried to be honest about the risks, stack the deck as much as possible, pick the right time to walk on the moon and with the right plan and the right people. I've tried to be present enough to know when the mountains lie down and welcome you, or when the danger scale tilts too far in the wrong direction and it is time to back off.

At the heart of this passion is the ability to push through significant mental and physical barriers when the struggle is grand but also to have the wherewithal and awareness to recognize nature's subtle signs that turn a green light to red in an instant, requiring you to abandon one of your life's greatest goals. This mix of gusto and humility, fearlessness and fear, grit and sensitivity, requires a deep understanding of who you are as a person at your innermost core, as well as an intimate connection with nature and your partners, plus a deep understanding of the behaviors, characteristics, and subtleties of all things snow. This is the Art of Shralpinism.



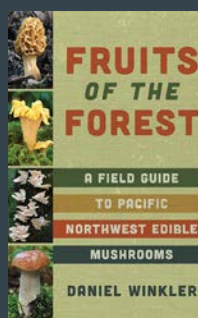
*The Art of Shralpinism: Lessons from the Mountains* is available for purchase at our Seattle Program Center Bookstore, online at [mountaineersbooks.org](http://mountaineersbooks.org), and everywhere books are sold. ▲▲



## Trees of the West: An Artist's Guide

By Molly Hashimoto

Art and natural history combine to create the perfect read for tree and nature lovers of all stripes. Artist and author Molly Hashimoto has appreciated trees all her life - they have shaped her as a hiker, outdoors enthusiast, gardener, traveler, and of course artist. In her new book *Trees of the West*, she pays homage to 46 of the West's iconic species through many different media, each revealing different aspects of these stalwart companions: crisp lines, imposing silhouettes, the varied hues of foliage. Each featured species also includes a rich natural history and brief ethnobotanical notes alongside sidebars offering art tips and techniques, poems, and quotes from well-known writers celebrating our connection to trees. Much like her other popular books *Colors of the West* and *Birds of the West*, Hashimoto emphasizes her personal experiences with nature, telling stories about her encounters with trees from her Seattle backyard to national parks and forests throughout the West.



## Fruits of the Forest: A Field Guide to Pacific Northwest Edible Mushrooms

By Daniel Winkler

From the ever-popular golden chanterelles to the red-cracked bolete, *Fruits of the Forest* has something for the novice and avid mushroom hunter alike. As a lifelong mushroom researcher and educator with extensive experience foraging in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere, author Daniel Winkler presents more than 170 edible wild mushrooms commonly found across the region. Comprehensive yet accessible and full of personality, this full-color field guide features clear identification guidance for each species, look-alike species to watch for, habitat and seasonality, permits and land management information, preparation and storage guidance, recipe suggestions to please every palate, and more. High quality photos for clarity and ease of identification and a recognized and respected regional expert author make this comprehensive and up-to-date guide the clear choice for mushroom aficionados.



## Unraveled: A Climber's Journey through Darkness and Back

By Katie Brown

As a teenager in the 1990s, Katie Brown redefined the image of a strong and successful climber as she won World Cups, X Games, Rock Masters, and more. Yet even as she reigned on the podium, her life was coming apart. Struggling with an unstable and abusive household, young fame, and an eating disorder, the Katie portrayed by the media was not the full reality. Since her departure from the public arena, she has faced her past and built a new life for herself. *Unraveled* is her chance to paint the whole picture. In a moment when the mental and physical health of young female athletes is in the national spotlight, *Unraveled* takes aim at the adults who turn a blind eye to the challenges these athletes face and celebrates the power of reclaiming your story.



## Exploring the Magic of Winter with the Mini Mountaineers

By Devon Schoos, After-School & Summer Camp Coordinator

Mini Mountaineers exploring the beach. All photos by Mountaineers staff.

Growing up, my family had an off-grid cabin in the woods off Mountain Loop Highway. When my folks bought it, a faded wooden sign hung above the door that read “Scotty’s Castle.” The name stuck. Scotty’s Castle was an unassuming wood-frame cabin with no electricity or running water, but despite its lack of amenities, winter was my favorite time of year to visit the cabin. When the door creaked open to let us in, it would be so cold inside we could see our breath. We’d start a fire, light the gas lamps, and sweep out a few dead mice before unpacking.

While Scotty’s Castle slowly warmed up and came to life, I would slip out to the forest to play. I talked to trees and made up stories about their tree lives and tree families. I would gingerly place a foot on the partially-frozen creek, slowly increasing pressure to test when it would crack (quickly learning just how cold an icy creek is). I looked for animal tracks in the snow and touched plants that looked fuzzy, curious if they would feel as soft as they looked. My parents also took us on walks - lots and lots of walks. We observed the unique prints our boots made and tried to dust each other with snow from overhanging branches. There were no rules to the game of “playing outside.” These woods taught me the beauty of unstructured play in nature. It was wild and free, and I loved it.

Looking back, it’s no wonder that running the Mini Mountaineers program is one of the greatest joys of my job. Mini Mountaineers is a nature-based program for 2-5 year-olds and an accompanying adult that aims to foster a sense of joy

and connectedness between little ones and the natural world. Every month from November to May, we explore a different natural space in the greater Seattle area with an emphasis on a chosen topic. We’ve looked for salmon in Carkeek Park’s Pipers Creek during their annual spawning run, turned over rocks at Golden Gardens’ north beach during low tide, and made art with items found on our nature walks.

Drawing from my memories at Scotty’s Castle, I designed Mini Mountaineers to be experience-based. On one of the first Minis outings I led, I was worried if my approach was the right one. It was December and there was a chill in the air reminding us that winter was upon us. Our theme was “salmon,” and we had just made some very fun salmon hats to help us “swim upriver.” In case you’ve never seen a kid in a salmon hat - it’s pretty cute. Walking along Pipers Creek on our salmon hunt, I stepped across a small puddle on the trail. A few seconds later, I turned around to see a 2-year-old boy jumping in the same puddle I’d mindlessly stepped through, shrieking with joy. Not wanting to miss out on the fun, the 5-year-old next to him joined in, their giggles bouncing off the trees around us. I let out a laugh and shook my head in wonder and appreciation. *This is what it’s all about.*

Rather than ushering kids past something transfixing to complete a predetermined activity, I want Minis to be a space for kids to freely explore and engage. Believe it or not, jumping in a puddle is a way of learning about and connecting with the natural world. And tying it back to salmon for a learning





Top: Mini Mountaineers sketching out their salmon hats. Bottom: A Mini Mountaineer enjoying his salmon hat.

outcome isn't all that difficult either. *If you were a mommy salmon do you think you'd want to lay your eggs in this puddle? No! They might get stepped on, and you can't walk on land. You'd want to lay them in the river and protect them.* As long as we are respecting the environment and each other, there's no wrong way to learn outside.

Although the chill and darkness of winter often drives us indoors, the winter months can be an especially mesmerizing time for little ones. The salmon return to spawn in December, January's early dark nights are great for stargazing, and Seattle often sees snowfall in February. Kids find wonder everywhere, and experiencing nature through their eyes is truly inspiring. The mini inside me has learned to stop on a ski tour and look at neat patterns in the snow, practice using my other senses on a winter night walk, and find magic in a February day that's oscillating between rainy and sunny and hailing (Oh, Washington!). May we all be a little more "mini" this winter. ▲▲

## MINIS-APPROVED WINTER ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG KIDS

### With snow

**Snow beach.** Turns out beach toys work just as well in the snow as they do in the sand! Get out those shovels, buckets, and molds and let your little one's imagination take the reins.

**Snow kitchen.** Provide your mini with some kitchen supplies like bowls, spatulas, cookie sheets, baking dishes, and measuring cups and see their inner chef come to life! Snow is the main ingredient for their pretend culinary creations, but leaves, rocks, and other natural items add even more flavor. Enjoy all the fun of experimenting in the kitchen with none of the cleanup.

**Maple snow candy.** It's a treat, activity, and science experiment all in one. Bring pure maple syrup to a boil, stirring constantly, then remove from heat. Pack a thick layer of snow tightly on a baking sheet. Carefully spoon the hot maple syrup onto the snow and watch it harden. Peel the candy off the snow for a hard candy treat. Alternatively, lay wooden popsicle sticks in the snow and spoon the syrup onto one end of the stick to make a maple syrup sucker.

### Without snow

**"Night" walks.** One benefit of the sun going down early in the winter is that you and your mini can enjoy an exciting night walk well before bedtime. What can you hear? Do you know any animals that are awake during the night? Is the moon out or are there any stars? Do you know how stars are made? Take a moment to turn off your flashlights or headlamps and experience the world with your other senses.

**Nature crafts.** Skip a trip to the craft store and let the rocks, sticks, and leaves in your yard or a nearby park provide the supplies. Ask your mini to collect leaves of different sizes and shapes. Lay a piece of paper over the leaves and hold it in place while they use crayons to color over the leaf and watch as the pattern of the leaf transfers onto the paper. Or, go on a pinecone gathering mission together and use paint to decorate the pinecones. Tie a string through the top of the pinecone for homemade holiday ornaments.

## GET YOUR KIDS INVOLVED WITH MINI MOUNTAINEERS

To learn more, contact the Program Manager in your area:

Seattle: Devon Schoos, [devons@mountaineers.org](mailto:devons@mountaineers.org)  
Tacoma: RyAnn Peverly, [ryannp@mountaineers.org](mailto:ryannp@mountaineers.org)  
Olympia: Becky Nielsen, [beckyn@mountaineers.org](mailto:beckyn@mountaineers.org)





# Snow-Free Activities to Keep You Outdoors All Winter Long

By Michelle Song, Associate Volunteer Development Manager

Tom Bancroft on Tiger Mountain. Photo by Danielle Graham.

**A**lthough snow-capped mountains and freshly-groomed trails dominate the public imagination this time of year, not all winter activities are snow-centered. This is especially true in the Pacific Northwest, where we have an abundance of activities to enjoy year-round with just a few modifications. In celebration of The Mountaineers diverse offerings throughout all four seasons, we connected with a few of our volunteers to learn how they continue to stay active throughout the chilliest months.

## Peter Hendrickson & Nancy Temkin

### Urban Walking, 17-year members

For many walkers and hikers, the wet, gray days of Northwest winters invites (really, compels) us to get outside and feel good about the money spent on parkas, rain pants, trail shoes, and rain hats. Yes, you can be comfortable in the light rain - look at the kids outside at recess on a damp day! Urban Walks are the newest version of Mountaineers hikes, always two miles or longer in urban and suburban settings where there's reliable cell service and good access to emergency services. Both Foothills and Seattle have Urban Walking sub-committees.

We're lucky in the greater Seattle area as options abound in winter. *Seattle Stairway Walks* and *Seattle Walks* are favorite books, both great for clever routes and information on local history, architecture, and the natural world. Craig Romano's

Urban Walks series extends the reach to many more urban areas beyond Seattle.

A favorite with our grandchildren (11 to date!) is an urban walk two or so hours up and around Queen Anne, followed by two hours (plus lunch) at the MOHAI, Seattle Center, National Nordic Museum, or Seattle Art Museum. The shift from "out and damp" to "in and dry" reliably delights, especially in winter. And it works just as well with Tacoma grandkids on those hilly streets and in museums. Sometimes we stay in city limits and stitch together a string of parks or expand a *Seattle Times* suggested route. The coffee, pastries, and popsicles found along the way fuel our long treks.

## Jim French

### Stewardship, 24-year member

Winter is an excellent time to improve the health and enjoyment of local parks, forests, trails, preserves, and refuges. Most land managers need help, and this is the time to get the larger or more troublesome projects done. There are fewer visitors and the associated distractions in winter, which gives them more time and attention for projects. The land seldom freezes or catches on fire, and there's plenty of rain to help habitat plantings get a healthy start.

The trails we have adopted in the Olympic National Forest are snow-bound fall through spring, so we move down to lowland





Jim French and Ginger Sarver at a stewardship party in Tolmie State Park. Photo courtesy of Jim French.

projects for the winter. Staying close to home means we have to do less driving, and some projects are half days, so we can take a short hike or socialize at a local venue afterward. Within the Olympia Branch our stewardship crew is known as enthusiastic and hard-working. As such, other branch members periodically report trail problems they observe on local hikes or share news about local stewardship projects with us.

Last winter we received reports that trees were down on local trails at Tolmie State Park and in DNR's Woodard Bay Natural Resources Conservation Area. We have a history of volunteering at both locations, so after contacting the area managers we arranged work parties. In the following months we made eight trips to Tolmie and six trips to Woodard Bay clearing the trail of downed trees, repairing boardwalks (puncheon), improving drainage, and learning new skills and trail techniques. We enjoy being involved in local work projects because we can take family and friends to enjoy the fruits of our labors. When we are out volunteering on local trails we often see people we know, which gives us an opportunity to invite them to join in.



Joel Guay on the north side of Bainbridge Island. Photo by Will Wade.

## Joel Guay

Sea Kayaking, 6-year member

Kayaking originated as a winter activity some 4,000 or so years ago, so it's ironic to me that it's now often seen as a summer activity. It began as a means of transportation and hunting for the indigenous peoples of the frozen far north, like the Inuit and Aleut. So you could call it one of the original

winter sports. While the peoples of the Salish Sea don't appear to have used the kayak, they did use the close cousin of the kayak - the canoe - and used it extensively for travel, hunting, and fishing. These waters have been a four-season source of food and marine highway for thousands of years.

I like the winter sea kayaking day trips because they make good use of the short daytime hours. The transit to the launch and return home is generally in the dark, reserving the light for paddling. And a dry suit is more comfortable on a cool day than a hot one, even if the water is still only around 50 degrees.

Arriving at a new location by sea is so different than walking or driving, if only because you need to cross the tide line to get there. That water-to-shore transition is itself sometimes an adventure as well, and always refocuses the mind on the environment.

## Tom Bancroft

Naturalist, 6-year member

Winter is spectacular for naturalists as it offers the opportunity to focus on mosses, lichens, birds, and geology. Our moss and lichen class happens in February, and it generally fills within hours of opening. Different species flourish in various conditions, so you'll find us inches from trunks, logs, the ground, and even stream rocks. A student remarked, "Wow, just slow down and look - this forest is alive."



Tom Bancroft at Cowiche Canyon. Photo courtesy of Tom Bancroft.

Someone once said, "Ah, naturalist hikes, they're just a summer thing!" I cringed, not knowing if they were serious. Dozens of bird species, ducks, geese, raptors, songbirds, and many more come to Washington just for the winter; we are their "beach." A trip to Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge might find a Peregrine Falcon chasing Cackling Geese or Dunlins, all species visiting from the north. Birding at Fir Island might see a Short-eared Owl quartering the marsh. A morning stroll at Edmond's waterfront could net Brants, Grebes, Loons, or even a Murrelet. Once on a weekend trip to the Okanogan, we located Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches, a species that nests high in the mountains.

Give me a pair of snowshoes, and I'll show you nature at its best. Hug a 700-year-old mountain hemlock to revitalize the soul. Follow the tracks of a Snowshoe Hare to see where it had breakfast. Watch Snow Buntings work the rubble for seeds. It might be winter, but life goes on. ▲▲



## We Go Beyond Fun

By McKenzie Campbell Davies, Annual Giving Manager

Top: Tom Bancroft (center) and two fellow naturalists on the Baker River Trail. Photo by Gary Brill. Bottom: Sea kayakers practice on Lake Washington. Photo by Will Wade. Right: Urban walkers at Seattle Chinese Garden. Photo by Peter Hendrickson.

In Outside Insight (page 12), some of our Super Volunteers shared how they spend their dark Washington winters. When the mountains fill with snow, they drop their gaze to the foothills, the sidewalks, the waterways, and their own backyards. And like all Mountaineers, they delight in small moments of frivolity. A cold beverage shared between a paddler and a powerboat. Playing lighthearted pranks during an Urban Walk. Watching the magnificent, performative hunt of a short-eared owl. Community-based fun is the heartbeat of The Mountaineers.

Peel back the layers of fun and you find something more profound. The outdoor community in the PNW is stronger because of the activities Mountaineers volunteers lead and the perspectives they foster. Volunteers share best practices in growing sports. They invite people into an inclusive outdoors. They steward our lands and waters. And they invest in a more connected, more compassionate community. This is all made possible by the generosity and passion of volunteers and donors.

### Joel Guay

Sea Kayaker, 6-year member

For people like Joel, sea kayaking is a year-round activity. For others, it rounds out a slower season and provides valuable cross training. And there always seem to be folks who are new to the activity. "Many paddlers start just hoping not to tip over," Joel shares, "but very quickly begin to relax and tap into the fluidity and artistry that makes kayaking increasingly fun." Joel loves when people discover joy in perfecting a good forward stroke, crossing an eddy line, or rolling back up. As the sport becomes more accessible and more popular, there



is a growing need for seasoned paddlers to lead the way. "Bad outcomes are increasing as less experienced folks get on the water. We do what we can to try to affect that trend. We do a good job of modeling a risk-reasonable approach to what can be a high-consequence activity."

Through volunteers like Joel, The Mountaineers creates a place for expertise to incubate. "As the popularity of kayaking explodes locally, I've noticed that the cross-pollination of technical and route knowledge is an opportunity to connect outside The Mountaineers. This can be to the larger community, or to professionals who work in this sport and can offer additional training. There is also a fair bit of cross-branch participation, so it's fun to see both familiar and less familiar faces. And every year there is a new group coming in through the Basic courses."



## Peter Hendrickson and Nancy Temkin

Urban Walkers, 17-year members

Many people face barriers to accessing the outdoors, but through urban walking, volunteers like Peter and Nancy create a gateway. "We're older, in general, than the Wilderness Navigation students I've instructed for many years," Peter says. "Many have decades of experience on and off trail, but may be travel or health-restricted and looking for accessible activities closer to home. Urban walkers show up at the 'trailhead' on foot, just off the bus, by bicycle, and by car. For some, urban walks are the first point of contact for newcomers. I'm fascinated by the diversity of nationalities, genders, ages, occupations, life experiences, and outdoor skills routinely encountered."

Peter and Nancy encourage curiosity about both the natural and built environment. People are sometimes surprised that their "curiosity about cityscapes is welcomed in the same spirit as, say, bird call identification," Peter relates. By offering accessible and unassuming activities, Peter and Nancy are helping people from all walks of life engage with a vibrant outdoor community.



## Jim French

Stewardship, 24-year member

As a stewardship leader Jim's work brings profound benefit to the greater community, but he also helps participants realize the unexpected personal benefits of volunteering.

"Our crew members are always interested in learning more. They want to learn more about leadership, trail maintenance, and techniques for restoring nature. One enduring benefit we all appreciate is getting to know more about each one of our crew members, old and new. Looking back at various projects, I can remember more about what I learned from the trail crew member next to me than I know about most of my neighbors."

Winter is a valuable season for building relationships with land managers and park staff. When Jim shares that he is from The Mountaineers, he typically gets an enthusiastic response. "Their reactions tell us that members of The Mountaineers have done a magnificent job of earning and maintaining a distinguished image. At the same time, it gives us a goal to live up to."

Enjoying the natural world and helping to conserve it go hand-in-hand at The Mountaineers. Like many members, Jim participates in advocacy by writing letters and emails to policymakers, but sometimes this feels inadequate. "I am naturally drawn to the causes of conservation," Jim shares, "and at the same time the relentless waves of earth's new calamities are just too vast, intertwined, and apparently undefeatable. Stewardship activities give me the opportunity for hands-on actions like habitat restoration, salmon enhancement, and outreach. I'm reassured in my understanding that even the care

and repair of our outdoor recreation facilities such as trails and campgrounds contributes to a healthy environment."

## Tom Bancroft

Naturalist, 6-year member

Admiring the athleticism of a flock of snow geese, brushing up on moss identification, seeing someone's eyes light up when they learn something unexpected: these are a few of the things that delight and rejuvenate Tom Bancroft. "When I accepted a job in Seattle and moved from the east coast, a close friend said, 'How are you going to take that rain, those overcast, dark days?' I didn't know then, but nature has been the mechanism. Survival is about slowing down, helping others take the time to look, finding beauty and wonder in new places."

After spending most of the pandemic with only the birds in his backyard for company, Tom remembers scheduling his first birding trip of the year in February 2021. "The activity filled within one minute of opening; others were hungry for nature and community." The naturalist community knows something that we can all learn from: sometimes our best connections with each other, with the natural world, and with ourselves, happen in the moments when we slow down and look closely.

"Our western society is so focused on 'me' and what is good for 'me, me, me.' Looking at nature can build an appreciation for the life of wild things, whether they are plant or animal," Tom shares. "It is so wonderful that The Mountaineers offer various classes and activities. It provides an opportunity for friendship, as well as building relationships with humans, animals, and plant life. Joint learning contributes to the resiliency we all need."

Not many regions can compete with the Pacific Northwest for our dark and depressive winter season. But not many regions are home to a community like The Mountaineers. We are a force of inspiration, self-realization, and connection. With the generosity of donors and volunteers, our community provides a hub for hard-earned expertise, a connection to each other and to the natural world, and a way to protect the future of outdoor recreation. We go beyond fun; we adventure with purpose. ▲▲

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*Donations strengthen our outdoors community through volunteer recognition, leadership development, need-based scholarships, conservation & advocacy work, and more. If you are inspired to make a gift, please visit [mountaineers.org/donate](https://mountaineers.org/donate).*



A snowshoer on Low Mountain, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Photo by Luke Helgeson.

## Year One of Outdoor Alliance Washington

### Conservation powered by outdoor recreation

By Conor Marshall, Advocacy & Engagement Manager

**W**hether you prefer backcountry skiing the North Cascades, climbing in Tieton, or day hiking along the Snoqualmie River, as Mountaineers you've likely experienced how policy and management decisions impact our public lands. Many of us have seen hazardous roads, decrepit facilities, and closed trailheads as funding falls shy year after year. But this frustration can - and has - produced change. The experiences of recreationists like you translate into compelling advocacy for conservation and recreation.

Washington is one of the most important states in the country for outdoor advocacy. Our congressional delegation is a powerful force for conservation and recreation initiatives, and the state legislature continues to set the curve on climate action. A big reason for the strong leadership on these issues is the fact that Washington's outdoor community is filled with people like you, who work, advocate, volunteer, and donate on behalf of our spectacular natural places. Your connection to the PNW's lands and waters allows us to tell authentic stories that compel elected officials to protect these places.

#### More powerful together

The Mountaineers works in partnership with like-minded organizations and coalitions in Washington to harness the collective power of Washington's recreationists. By leveraging partnerships and coordinating a more strategic approach to our advocacy, we can more effectively influence public lands policy and management decisions, secure critical funding, and move key conservation and recreation initiatives forward.

Six years ago, The Mountaineers joined Outdoor Alliance (OA), a national coalition of human-powered outdoor recreation organizations working to conserve America's public lands. We've deepened our involvement with OA over the last several years because The Mountaineers and Washington's human-powered recreation community are well positioned to impact conservation on a national scale.

Last fall we announced The Mountaineers leadership of Outdoor Alliance Washington (OA Washington), a state-based network of groups representing the voices of climbers, paddlers, hikers, mountain bikers, and backcountry skiers in the Evergreen State modeled after the national OA. While many of these groups have worked together for years, OA Washington came together more formally in the fall of 2021 thanks to philanthropic support.

OA Washington brings together policy experts from the regional chapters of OA member organizations, including Access Fund, American Whitewater, Surfrider Foundation, as well as non-member organizations like Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, and Washington Trails Association. Together, these organizations maintain thousands of miles of trails, contribute millions of dollars in recreation user fees, and teach outdoor skills to thousands of Washingtonians.

By working together to forge strong relationships with local lawmakers and land managers, we can more effectively advocate for shared conservation, recreation, and climate priorities in our state. Amplifying the voices of more than 75,000 recreationists across the state will help us achieve a more sustainable future for Washington's outdoors.





OA Washington partners with Rep. Pramila Jayapal (WA-07) at the August policy roundtable event at The Mountaineers Seattle Program Center. Photo by Jenna Behringer.

## Year one: introducing Outdoor Alliance Washington

To chart our initial course, OA Washington partners developed three shared policy priorities: investing in the outdoors by advocating for increased land manager funding, protecting our special outdoor places through landscape protection campaigns, and ensuring a sustainable future for outdoor recreation by helping shape recreation planning and management in Washington.

In order to best position our network to secure wins for public lands and the outdoor experience, we focused on introducing OA Washington and building strong relationships with lawmakers, land managers, and community partners. We held virtual meetings with 75 percent of the congressional delegation, as well as with staff at the Washington Department of Natural Resources, Region 6 (Oregon and Washington) of the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Park Service.

These meetings afforded elected officials and land managers the opportunity to connect with the state's human-powered recreation community in a streamlined way and hear about shared priorities like climate funding, stronger appropriations for land management agencies, and continued authorization and better implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act.

While many of these meetings occurred over Zoom, we know how valuable connecting in-person on public lands and in our communities can be. "I think we have great conversations about the work we need to do when we're out on public lands," said Rep. Suzan DelBene (WA-01) at our Summer Celebration event in August.

To that end, OA Washington held four in-person meetings and events in its first year:

- September 2021: Field tour with Representative Derek Kilmer (WA-06) and Forest Service staff in the Olympic National Forest to celebrate implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act.
- April 2022: Visit to Washington Trails Association's gear library in Puyallup to discuss the importance of equitable

access to the outdoors and federal funding for trails with Representative Marilyn Strickland (WA-10).

- August 2022: Policy meeting with Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (WA-07), representatives of the outdoor industry, and local advocates for equitable outdoor access and community development.
- August 2022: Summer Celebration event with Representatives Kim Schrier (WA-08), Adam Smith (WA-09), Suzan DelBene (WA-01), recreationists, and land managers held at The Mountaineers Seattle Program Center.

Through our events and meetings, we saw recreation concerns resonating with decision-makers and their staff because we had Washington's outdoor community behind us. In turn, we amplified the work of our partners: "OA Washington has allowed us to amplify our statewide work and increased our ability to engage in both federal and state recreation policy," said Yvonne Kraus, Executive Director of Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance.

OA Washington also took advantage of key opportunities to engage our supporters in advocacy, something we're looking to do more of moving forward. Grassroots support from recreationists helped secure landmark climate investments in Congress and the first-ever dedicated annual funding for maintenance and operations on state public lands in Washington.

## Year two: activating our community

In our second year, OA Washington is poised to pursue some of our more ambitious policy goals, continue to grow the recreation community as advocates for conservation, and build strong relationships with local partners, Native tribes, elected leaders, and land managers. The growing impact of the climate crisis, chronic underfunding of land management agencies, and skyrocketing visitation to parks and forests leave us at a critical juncture to protect public lands and waters. Speaking up for the places we love is more important than ever.

Regardless of your branch, activities, or interests, we believe that all Mountaineers have a role to play in this important work. In 2023 we'll look to create new ways for Mountaineers and other human-powered recreationists to engage in policy and advocacy work through Outdoor Alliance Washington. These might include town hall meetings with lawmakers, lobby days, and more opportunities to weigh in and share your thoughts on policy and land management planning.

On the policy front, we're closely monitoring opportunities to finally pass the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the Securing Outdoor Access for Recreation (SOAR) Act at the end of the current session of Congress.

Stay abreast of opportunities to engage and support Outdoor Alliance Washington by signing up for The Mountaineers conservation newsletter at [mountaineers.org/currents](https://mountaineers.org/currents)

You can also sign up to receive Washington State-related updates from Outdoor Alliance at [bit.ly/3DeeQeU](https://bit.ly/3DeeQeU) ▲▲



# A MULE, A KLUTZ, AND A PAIR OF SKIS

## Learning to ski as an adult

By Heidi Walker, 18-year member & backpacking leader

Rain on the windshield distorted the headlights of other cars waiting in the dark parking lot. My older sister was in the backseat next to me, leaning against our dad's headrest as she looked over his shoulder. He flipped on the windshield wipers just as a school bus pulled in. "Is that it?" my sister asked. Mom replied, her eyes intent on her husband. "Looks like it. They said the bus would be here at 6." We watched the bus park. A man dressed in a heavy raincoat with a clipboard stepped out and stood next to its open door. Other cars in the lot began to open, tweens and teens trailing their parents into the rainy dark. Dad glanced at my sister clinging to his shoulder. "Let's go."

Dressed in her new orange ski jacket with purple trim and matching ski pants, she opened the car door and walked across the wet parking lot with Dad. She was on her way to her first ski lesson. I asked my mother when I would be able to go skiing. Her reply was filled with loving concern - undoubtedly due to the several severe injuries I'd already encountered. "You don't want to go skiing. You'll break a leg. You wouldn't want that, would you?"

### A klutz

For years, I watched my sister climb into the ski bus in the early Saturday morning gloom. Later over dinner, I'd listen

to her excited stories of advancing from the bunny hill to the blue diamond slopes. I would watch her join her friends, and often mine, on the Friday night bus offered by our town's community center for teens. In class I would listen to my classmates' laughter and tales of mountain hi-jinks. They'd ask if I was going next time, but my reply was always the same: "I don't know how to ski." I went with my sister and our parents as they bought her more ski outfits, ski boots, and finally her own skis. I was jealous. I was afraid. I didn't want to break a leg. My mother's certainty that I would break a bone left me sitting at home, daydreaming of carving perfect turns with my sister.

After my high school graduation, I went to live with my sister in Europe. She had joined the Air Force and was stationed at Ramstein Air Force Base in southern Germany. My parents thought giving me a year to explore the world would be educational, and my sister thought it would help me get out of my shell.

She and I took weekend trips through the German countryside and neighboring countries, exploring little villages and getting lost in large cities. For Thanksgiving, we booked a trip to an Austrian ski resort. She even paid for beginner downhill ski lessons for me. I showed up to my first lesson excited and eager to learn - I was sure that by the end of our long weekend I would be skiing the big slopes with my sister. The instructor,



speaking in broken English, told me to ski down the baby bunny slope. I fell, but didn't know how to get up. He yelled at me - "Aufstehen!" "Stand up!" I frantically fumbled with the planks attached to my feet, then slipped and buried myself deeper into the snow. He stood over me gesticulating, "Aufstehen! Aufstehen!" Frustrated with my inability to rise, he grabbed me by my skis and pulled me off the slope. I took the skis off, and with tears rolling down my cheeks returned them to the ski school. My dreams of skiing with my sister disappeared as quickly as the hot chocolate I bought to console myself.

I did decide to try skiing again, this time attempting cross-country. I signed up for a cross-country ski course through an extension program at a local community college. The instructor was an acquaintance and his wife encouraged me to learn from him as he, as she described him, was the best ski and climbing instructor she knew. He taught her how to ski, and since learning from a romantic partner hardly ever works out I figured she had to be right.

During our first field trip he took us to a downhill trail through the trees at Snoqualmie Pass. I fell, struggled to rise, and fell again. Turning on skis was an enduring frustration. I tried to understand the mechanics of turning - shifting my weight and letting the skis do the work. But both the concept and the physical sensation remained foreign, and I never quite got it.

Frustrated with my lack of progress, the instructor left me with one of his assistants while he went to ski with the other students. "Point her at that tree. She'll figure out how to turn before she hits it." I hit the tree. Technically, I hit the snow berm in front of the tree, but I still didn't figure out how to turn. After that lesson, I was bruised head to toe. I never went back.

## Finding my balance

A lifetime later, I stood in a middle school library with 15 other adults trying to maintain my balance with one foot on the ground and the other in the air. Shifting weight, I lowered one foot and raised the other. At the encouragement of friends I had registered for the Everett Mountaineers cross-country ski course. All my hopes and fears drove my cursor to type my name and pay the course fee. I had read stories of skiing with bison in the frigid temperatures of Yellowstone National Park. I watched videos of arctic expeditions traversing far-away islands and ice fields. I wanted to learn to ski - to go on adventures in the backcountry and to discover a world that had been hidden from me for years except through the stories of others.

As we practiced shifting and balancing our weight, I thought back to when my sister got her first pair of skis. Knowing I wanted to learn, she set them on the rug in the living room and showed me how to step into the bindings. I placed one



Previous Page: Skis in powder. All photos by Heidi Walker. This page: Two ski instructors from the Everett Branch kick and glide near Lake Wenatchee during class.





foot, then the other, careful to follow her instructions exactly. I was standing in skis! I turned to look at her with childish pride, but in turning, I began to sway, topple, and soon I was on the ground.

In class, shifting weight from foot to foot, I wondered if I would be able to maintain my balance on skis in the snow. As a kid I wasn't even able to maintain my balance on flat carpet. During the equipment demonstrations, I listened and watched. I played with bindings and twisted boots. I touched, explored, and asked questions of the experienced skiers. I stuffed myself full of information, hoping that along the way some of it would translate into the ability to stay upright.

Our first lesson during the class field trip was falling and getting back up. Our instructors fell, rolled on their backs, and kicked their skis free of snow over their bodies. "Roll around like a bug," they said. "Get everything free. Drop your skis parallel to each other. Use your poles for leverage in the snow like this, and push up onto your knees." They demonstrated the technique several times, then watched as their small group practiced. "Wiggle free." "Imagine a beetle on its back." "Stretch your legs and arms above you." "Well done." Laughter flew about in the snow flurries - falling had never been so fun.

Now on the Nordic trails for ski class, my already-small group diminished in size as I became one half of a remedial group.

The other student and I were given one-on-one instruction, as we weren't quite ready to advance to the regular class yet. I wasn't upset. I was happy that I would get a little extra time learning the basics: balance, posture, step-and-glide, stay loose, and of course "aufstehen" when I fell. In fact, I was getting very good at rolling over on my back and wiggling like a capsized beetle.

I went through several pairs of gloves and mittens, my hands growing cold and my legs becoming tired. I was exhausted. We had been practicing skiing down a slight slope - less of a slope than even the baby bunny slope in Austria. Nearly flat compared to the slope I had faced at Snoqualmie 20 years earlier.

## Learning to let go

I looked at this tiny slope with a slight turn at the bottom. I had fallen so many times that the instructor asked if I wanted to go back to the parking lot. I looked at the slope, looked at her, and said "One more try." I skied to the top, got into position, slouched like a dejected teenager, and pushed off. I let the skis turn in the grooves without fighting, resisting my desire to control every motion. I somehow came to a stop still standing, and a grin cracked across my frozen cheeks. I shared cheers and high fives with my instructor. We were finally ready to head home.





Clockwise: Heidi's pack and skis are ready to go for a Mountaineers outing at Snoqualmie Pass. A skier in the Methow Valley. Students in the Everett Cross-Country Skiing Course practice their technique near Lake Wenatchee.

But between me and the hot chocolate at the ski hut was a steeper, longer hill. My gut clenched as I stared down the slope to the bottom. More experienced skiers glided past and made it look easy - shift, turn, shift, turn. My instructor stood behind me. "It's ok if you want to walk down." But I knew if I didn't get down the hill now that I might never make it. I watched a skier pass, then tried to get my skis in their pie shape. They began to bounce and wiggle - panicked, I fell to control them. I didn't look at anyone as I got back up and repositioned my skis sideways on the slope. I looked at the walking route down and heard my voice say "No." I looked back down the ski slope. You can do this, I thought. The skis are going to bounce and wiggle, but just ride them. Ride them like you rode Patsy.

## A mule

Patsy was a riding mule I tried to make friends with in college. She was owned by my landlady, who would often take me on rides along the forest roads of southeast Ohio. She'd show up, pull out Patsy's saddle, and give me a look. Anything I was studying would be put aside, and soon Patsy and I were arguing about leaving her beloved pasture.

One afternoon we left the farm for a cross-country trek through the forest to explore a nearby creek, Terry on her horse and me on Patsy. While Terry's horse stumbled over rocks and roots, Patsy always walked steady through all

obstacles. Her even pace made the ride enjoyable. The sun lowered through the trees and the moon rose as we turned back towards the farm. Eager to be back in her pasture, Patsy started trotting down the dirt road. Then her trot became a full gallop. It was dark with only splashes of moonlight along the way, but Patsy knew her way home. I tried reining her in to a manageable speed before I remembered that this was Patsy, my sure-footed steed. I loosened the reins and let her run. Moonlit leaves around me became a kaleidoscope of yellow and green. I sat back to enjoy the ride as Patsy galloped through the forest sure and true.

Like Patsy, my skis know the way. They want to go downhill. I needed to trust them; to lean over my toes and enjoy the ride. I pointed the skis downhill again and pushed off. I let my knees become springs, bouncing with every bump. The forest around me became a blur of white and green. I moved my hands to the right and leaned in as the slope turned and my skis followed. There was a group of skiers at the bottom and I yelled a warning to them that I'm not good at stopping. They watched as I steered past them and came to a stop on the hill beyond their group. Then a cheer went up. They were cheering for me; my classmates, our instructors, even people in the parking lot. And the little girl waiting in the car for her sister's ski bus let out the biggest cheer of all. ▲▲

# TOP 5 BEGINNER SKI TOURS

By Mountaineers Staff



AIARE student in the Baker backcountry. Photo by Hannah Michlmayr.

**Y**ou've got the gear, taken the avalanche classes, found some friends, and are ready to hit the slopes. But where do you go for your first self-directed backcountry ski tour? Finding a safe place to explore, especially when you're new to touring, can feel overwhelming. To help you on your way, here are five favorite ski (and splitboard!) tours for beginners, from our enthusiastic backcountry-loving staff. Be sure to check the local weather and NWAC forecast before you go, always pick tours within your ability level, and of course carry a beacon, shovel, and probe (and know how to use them).

## Snoqualmie Summit Ski Resort

**Recommended by:** Kristina Ciari, Membership & Communications Director

**Ideal Time:** As soon as snow falls until it melts away

When you're new to anything, it's nice to be able to dip your boots in with relative comfort. Snoqualmie Ski Resort offers just the learning environment you need for your first self-directed trip: safe ski conditions, an easy grade to practice with your new setup, a warm place to soothe your ego and tinker with gear, and nearby emergency services should you need them. Be sure to abide by their uphill policy and watch out for out-of-control sliders. I recommend going on a weekday -

Snoqualmie is a great place to do your first Dawn Patrol. Keep in mind that half of being comfortable in the backcountry is getting your layering system dialed, so bring extra clothes (you can even leave them in the car!) to nail down the perfect setup for your next tour.

## Yodelin

**Recommended by:** Ethan Metzger, Associate Program Manager - Partner Programs & Gear Library

**Ideal Time:** December-March

If you like mellow slopes, nice glades, and plentiful options, check out Yodelin in the Stevens Pass area. Located just a couple miles east of Stevens Pass Ski Area, Yodelin was once a ski area of its own and now serves as a great tour location for both beginners and experts. From the parking lot, old forest road grades lead you to a bench area (a great place to practice digging pits and analyzing snowpack), where you can find remnants of the former ski area. From there, you've got options for gentle low-angle terrain, tree skiing, or following slightly steeper glades. Yodelin offers the opportunity for multiple laps throughout the day and a beginner-friendly, lower risk option for honing those risk management and decision making skills. Make sure to arrive early on weekends and powder days, as the parking lot can fill up quickly.





Skiers climbing near Panorama Point on Mt. Rainier. Photo by Sara Ramsay.

## Baker Backcountry

**Recommended by:** Tom Vogl, CEO

**Ideal Time:** December-May

Baker backcountry is such a popular destination in the wintertime because it has something for everyone: family snow play, day-long snowshoeing trips, and abundant backcountry skiing. From the Heather Meadows trailhead, backcountry skiers can experience a variety of terrain from easy to expert. Baker's location and elevation contribute to some of the highest snowfall totals in easily accessible places in the Cascades. However, the combination of frequent winter storms and proximity to avalanche terrain require backcountry travelers to plan ahead, ride within their ability and experience level, and exercise good judgment. Always be aware that even in low-angle areas, the terrain above you may be steep enough to slide.

## Pineapple Pass

**Recommended by:** Devon Schoos, After-School & Summer Camp Coordinator

**Ideal Time:** December-March

The Alpentel Valley boasts some of the best backcountry ski terrain you could ask for. Winter enthusiasts can find endless tours ranging in length, difficulty, and type of terrain. A great option is a tour up to Pineapple Pass. Pineapple Pass is a slightly more challenging intro-level tour, so make sure you feel confident with your skiing, navigation, and avalanche skills before heading out. Skin out to Source Lake via the Lot 4 trailhead at the Alpentel ski area. From Source Lake you'll travel through an area dotted with old growth trees (affectionately known as "Big Trees") before eventually reaching Pineapple Basin. Your tour ends at the saddle with a sprawling view of the valley below. For a more conservative day, cut your tour plan short and ski laps in Big Trees. Be aware that there is no way to avoid avalanche terrain in the Alpentel Valley as the out track crosses numerous avalanche paths.

## Camp Muir

**Recommended by:** Sara Ramsay, Associate Director of Leadership & Operations

**Ideal Time:** March-June (sometimes July)

Have you heard about volcano season? It's a special time in the PNW when backcountry skiers flock to the high alpine in search of "corn" - that perfectly slushy hero snow that's soft without being sloppy, but still firm enough to carve big arcing turns down wide open snowfields. If you're looking for your first volcano objective, Camp Muir on Mount Rainier is a great pick, as it does not require mountaineering experience. The route can be crowded on peak season weekends making it relatively easy to follow the flow of traffic, but make sure you have navigation tools to know where you're going, as skiers getting lost on the open snowfield in inclement weather is a common occurrence. My favorite thing about this tour is that the pitch is rarely steep enough to require kick turns or a boot pack. The Muir Snowfield can be likened to a sustained "green/blue" run for most of the 4,500 vertical feet up and down. With views the whole way, you can turn around any time you get tired. If the weather is clear, don't forget to pack all of your sun protection - there's no shade in the wide open (beginners often sunburn their kneepits, armpits, under their chins, and inside their nostrils!).

## Bonus Tour: Meany Lodge

**Recommended by:** Sara Ramsay & Kristina Ciari

**Ideal Time:** December-March

Want an easy tour with some exciting action at the end? Take a cruiser tour out on some cross-country ski trails to Meany Lodge, The Mountaineers very own ski resort! Nestled in the mountains surrounding Stampede Pass, Meany Lodge has three rope tows to provide hours of gravity-fueled fun. If the rope tow - which can max out at a whopping 17mph - isn't exciting enough, the Meany Lodge volunteers can point you towards additional touring opportunities from the lodge. Don't forget to pay for a day ticket to ride the rope tow. And know that the exit back to your car is about the same amount of skinning (or skating!) as it was on the way in, so save some energy to get back home. ▲▲





# MOUNTAINEERS OF INSTAGRAM

By Skye Michel, Communications Associate

Photo by Ryan Rodman.

One of the first impulses we have while recreating outdoors is to take a photo. We want to share the exhilaration of our alpine scrambles, the warmth of alpenglow on an early morning snowshoe, or the unexpected wildlife dotting our hiking trails. We photograph because we have a deep connection to these natural places and we want others to experience that connection, too.

The Mountaineers launched our Instagram (@mountaineersorg) in 2014 as a way for our community to connect with others and share the inspiration they find while exploring the natural world. Since then more than 170,000 photos have been tagged with The Mountaineers hashtag #OurPNW, which captures the beauty of the Pacific Northwest and the adventurous spirit of those who recreate here.

Luckily for us, there are a lot of Mountaineers who also happen to be incredible photographers. Somehow they manage to take their cameras up climbs, through mountains, and across waters so that they may photograph and share their moments of achievement, wonder, and joy with the rest of us.

To celebrate our digital community of outdoor-loving stewards and recreationists, we chose our favorite Mountaineers of 2022 to inspire you in the new year. Their photos celebrate the beauty of the Pacific Northwest and remind us why it's important – now more than ever – to protect and advocate for the places we love most.

## Ryan Rodman: @ryanradman

Ryan was born and raised in Washington and has always appreciated being surrounded by the mountains. He is a current Basic Alpine Climbing student and loves hiking, scrambling, trail running, and climbing.

"I grew up camping, exploring national parks, and doing small hikes with my family. That progressed as I got older into backpacking, scrambling, and now mountaineering and climbing. I have always enjoyed photography to capture memories. The weight of a full-frame camera and multiple lenses can occasionally be a burden but the extra weight has never prevented a summit and the photos are well worth having!"



## Ellie Bucknell: @elliebucknell

Ellie discovered The Mountaineers early on during her move from Massachusetts to Washington and was quickly drawn to the adventure and picturesque views that came with alpine climbing. She loves being able to learn, share her skills with others, and apply her knowledge to time outdoors.

"I had always known there was a bigger and more adventurous life for me outside of the town I'd grown up in. Right away, I felt a sense of belonging that I'd never felt before and sharing that world through photographs has made me feel even more connected. There's something about being out in nature and being able to stop and look at a landscape and capture not only what I'm seeing, but what I'm feeling, and bringing it home to share with others, that absolutely draws me back every single time."



## Mushtaque Silat: @kohgashta

Mushtaque joined The Mountaineers in 2015. Through his involvement, he has gained confidence in the outdoors and learned invaluable skills to help him explore our mountains safely. To pay it forward, he volunteers as an instructor for our scrambling and navigation programs.

"My hiking and photography sort of feed each other, and The Mountaineers has helped me get to places where I can capture some beautiful mountain scenes. I'm fascinated by sunsets, and lead a sunset hiking group where I try to photograph Northwest sunsets from mountaintops. This year I was finally able to lead and summit Mt. Rainier and completed ascents of all five Washington volcanoes. I attribute this accomplishment in large part to the skills I attained being a part of The Mountaineers."

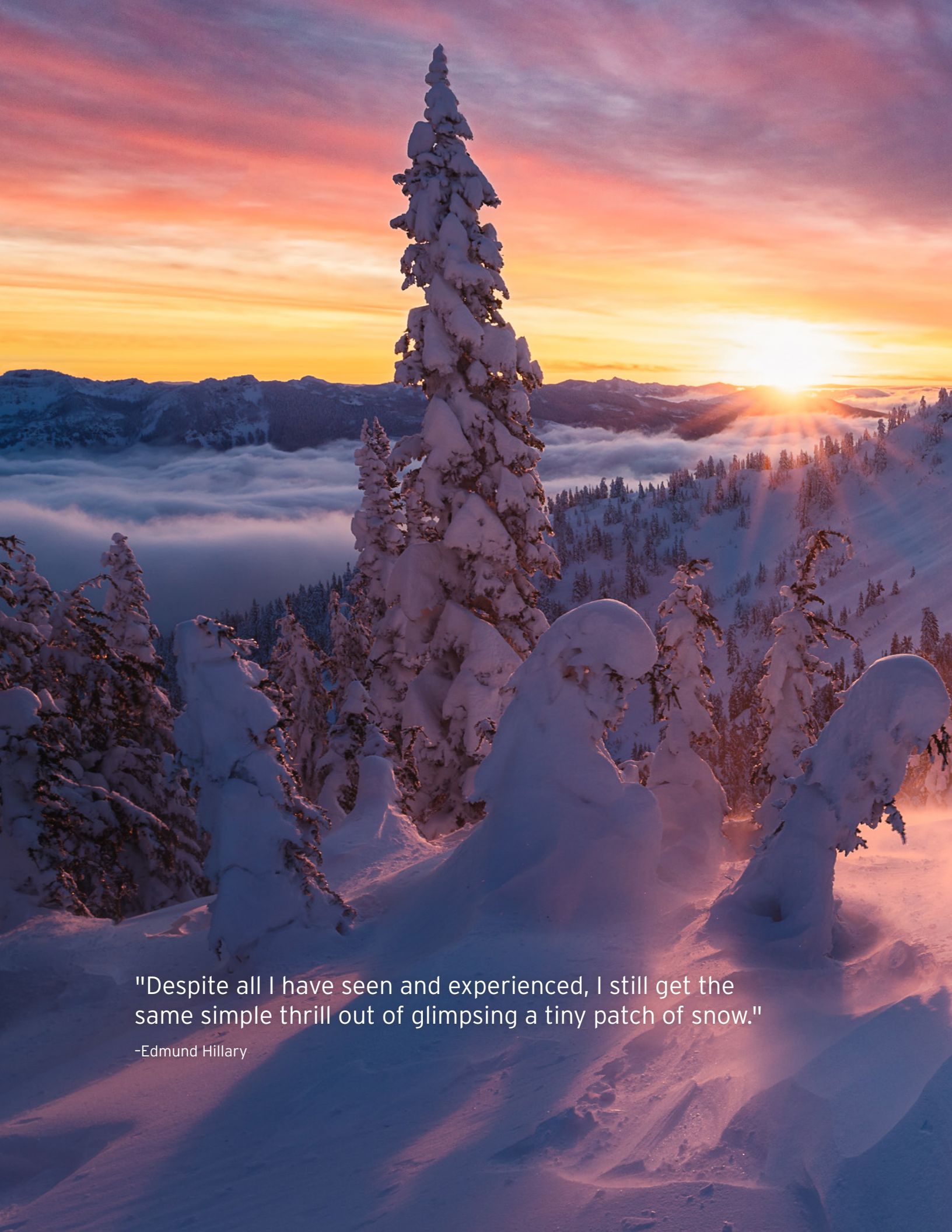
## Jake Huddleston: @jake\_huddleston

Jake is a dedicated volunteer instructor and trip leader for our canyoning program. Thanks to his background in video and photography he packs a camera on nearly every adventure, most of which involve canyoning and waterfall exploration.

"In my work I like to show how small we are in relation to nature, as well as the process of navigating difficult terrain such as steep canyons. My process typically involves packing a mirrorless camera in a well-padded waterproof case, which I often need to rappel, throw, and swim with. I've never ruined a professional camera while out exploring, although the same cannot be said for smartphones... I know I've ruined at least five of those!"







"Despite all I have seen and experienced, I still get the same simple thrill out of glimpsing a tiny patch of snow."

-Edmund Hillary





Photo by Aaron Wilson.



### Aaron Wilson: @awilsondc

Aaron is a master at capturing long-exposure shots of dreamy, star-filled skies. He is an avid climber and welcomes the extra weight of his camera to capture stellar mountain shots.

"I've been hiking and climbing mountains for around 20 years and currently think of myself as two parts peak bagger, one part landscape photographer. I got into photography as a way to capture the memories of the peaks I climb and it's really grown on me. Most of my trips into the mountains are to climb peaks, and of course I'll usually bring my camera along, but occasionally I'll head out just to shoot some photos and enjoy nature."



### Sarina Pizzala: @sarina\_pizzala

Sarina is an adventure and elopement photographer who can be found exploring Washington by foot, by ski, or through climbing. After taking the Basic Alpine Scrambling course in 2017, she fell in love with scrambling and mountaineering and enjoys adventuring to all the wild and remote places that Washington has to offer.

"Spending time in the mountains makes me feel alive, and I want that joy to translate into my photography. I've combined my passion for photography and mountains to capture some of the most remote parts of Washington in their best light. My photography has also evolved to capture couples in the mountains on their wedding day in remote places, sometimes requiring glacier or climbing skills. I've recently joined efforts with a few others to start the Queer Mountaineers, an LGBTQIA+ climbing and hiking social group aimed at increasing community and access to outdoor recreation."

### Kristy Sharkey: @kristy.sharkey

Kristy has lived in Washington since 2005 and is an avid naturalist and nature photographer. She began learning about photography four years ago and was immediately hooked.

"I joined The Mountaineers when I learned they had outings that were focused on photography. I've enjoyed meeting a lot of like-minded people who love being outdoors but also love making art while being there. I also love learning about the natural world, and love that The Mountaineers offers naturalist classes. For me, photography is often the thing that draws me to nature, the adventure is what follows!"





## Kathleen Neves: @\_thehungryhiker

Kathleen joined The Mountaineers in 2016 to immerse herself in an outdoor community and has since become a dedicated volunteer confident in wilderness navigation, snow travel, winter camping, and backpacking.

"As a Mountaineer, I'm not only a student but an educator and mentor. I've been a co-mentor for the B3 (Backpacking Building Blocks) class and have taught the Long-Distance Backpacking Course online over the last three years. As a former PCT thru-hiker, avid day hiker, and solo long-distance backpacker, I try to capture some of my favorite moments of my outdoor adventures through photos. My hope is that they will motivate and inspire other hikers and backpackers to want to explore these incredible places themselves."



## Jacob McHenry: @jacobmchenryphoto

As a Pacific Northwest transplant, Jacob went from a reluctant shoulder season hiker to avid outdoorsman through the skills he found in The Mountaineers. He was quickly drawn to the high peaks in Washington and is now an active scrambler, mountaineer, and rock climber.

"Initially my photography was about landscapes only, but after sharing and printing photos for friends and family it shifted to capturing more of my adventures. I'm often the one lugging a camera to the top of the climb or in horrible weather conditions, but it's the photos from those experiences that can turn out the best. I love being able to capture these moments in the outdoors."

## Jess Merchant: @jessexplored

Jess first fell in love with Washington on a hiking trip in 2018. She felt immediately at home and luckily her husband did too, so the following year they packed their bags and moved from Pennsylvania to Seattle. Since then they've spent countless weekends exploring the Northwest by foot, snowshoe, or ski.

"There are a lot of people in my life who don't have the ability to hike difficult trails or do multi-day backpacking trips, so along with capturing memories of my adventures for myself, I photograph these stunning places for them in hopes that they can experience even a fraction of the joy I feel when seeing these places in real life."





# SEASONS OF CHANGE

## A 30-year member reflects on a life outdoors

By Courtenay Schurman, 30-year member & Climb Leader emeritus

Climbers at basecamp on Mt. Shuksan, July 2012. Photo by Courtenay Schurman.

In the fall of 1990, my parents drove with me from Asheville to Seattle in Ol' Red, our ancient family station wagon. I'd heard only positive things about the Emerald City, except for one: would it really be as rainy as people said? As we drove west across Washington, I spotted Mt. Rainier in all her splendor and drew in a sharp breath. *I must climb that mountain.*

Nine months later, with classmates and colleagues from UW's Oceanography department, I got my chance. My climbing partners and I crossed a narrow snow bridge in the dark, early hours of the morning, only to find it completely melted by the time we passed it on our descent. Those same partners held me tightly on belay as I nervously inched across another snow bridge, convinced it would collapse and pitch me into a bottomless crevasse. Much later, as we drove away from the mountain exhausted but happy, I remember thinking *I'll never do that again.*

Two days later, I stared longingly at the mountain. *I gotta go back.*

Over the next year and a half I looked for ways to explore the Cascades, a challenge as I didn't own a car. One of my rope leaders had mentioned The Mountaineers as a great resource for anything outdoors. When I finally looked into the club and learned that I could go on hiking trips and meet other

outdoorsy people - without needing a car of my own - I signed up and never looked back.

That was October of 1992. I never could have predicted the huge role the club would play in shaping my recreational, social, creative, personal, and professional life over the course of the following 30 years.

### The early years

My earliest exposure to the outdoors came in grade school. On a car camping trip in Georgia, I remember being grotesquely fascinated as I watched a snake devour an entire frog in one gulp. As a Girl Scout for four years, I spent parts of two summers at Camp Northern Hills in Wisconsin. I came home having learned how to safely make a fire, navigate with map and compass, and tell intriguing campfire stories, including the one about a bunkmate nicknamed "Mosquito." The poor girl's arm fell outside of her bug netting, resulting in 54 bug bites and a calamine-slathered arm.

At sixteen, I spent three weeks canoeing through the boundary waters of the US and Canada with Minnesota Outward Bound School (MOBS). This included fending for myself on a small island for three days on a diet of only granola and blueberries, portaging a canoe half a mile balanced on my shoulders, and





Courtenay, her husband Doug, their daughter Brooke, and the family dog Emily enjoying a day in the snow, 2012. Photo by Doug Schurman.

voting to send a tripmate home early for stealing food.

My love for the outdoors continued at Mt. Holyoke College, a women's college in South Hadley, MA. I participated in crew for four years and learned how to cross-country ski during January terms on campus. The summer of 1987, I attended a geology field camp in Colorado and Wyoming. Several classmates wanted to climb Grand Teton and invited me along. The hike in went perfectly fine. But at the base of the technical portion, I flashed back to my experience at Girl Scout camp years earlier when I'd stared up at steep rock with trembling calves and panic, wondering how I would ever climb it. At the time, I didn't know what sewing machine legs meant – that moment when adrenaline meets fear and your calves start jitterbugging. As we assessed the route, the two guys leading our informal outing realized they didn't have enough gear for all of us to climb safely. I hiked out with two of my classmates, secretly relieved that I didn't have to face that fear again.

It would not be the last time I felt out of my element.

## Stepping into the mountains

In January of 1995, I met my husband-to-be. He had joined The Mountaineers in 1994, two years after I did (but no, we did not actually meet through the club like so many others have!). On a beautiful Friday afternoon in 1998, two years after we got married, we decided it was the perfect weekend to climb Mt. Adams. We teamed up with a hiking friend, grabbed some gear and snacks, and headed out.

We pulled up to the trailhead so late that it was technically an early morning start. Driven by our adrenaline and excitement

(despite running on fumes), we made decent time, watching the sun rise as we climbed above the tree line. Unfortunately, we did not succeed. As we approached the false summit our friend kept saying he saw bug carcasses everywhere, which we understood to be hallucinations from lack of water, food, and sleep. When we reached the false summit, he plunked down in the snow and refused to move. He may have even taken a short cat nap. We had to admit defeat, something I hate doing.

As I had the most experience in our little group (which wasn't saying much), I gave them a brief lesson on how to glissade and we started down. But the south side of Adams above the Lunch Counter is steep, and not the place to learn how to self-arrest. Halfway down, my husband pulled so hard on his ice ax that he injured a rib. Somehow, we managed to limp back to the car, delirious from the heat, hunger, and lack of sleep. At the ranger station, we stumbled out of the car to find shade under a tree and slept for an hour before starting the long drive back to Seattle. That clinched it: if we wanted to climb safely without a guide, we had to improve our mountaineering skills.

The next spring, we enrolled in the Basic Alpine Climbing program. Our graduation climb was a peak in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness called Lundin. A climbing friend of mine told me that one of her friends had died in rockfall on Lundin. I flashed back to earlier moments in Girl Scouts and at the base of Grand Teton. *What have I gotten myself into?* She suggested, "If you get sketched out, request a belay." So I did. But our leader took my request as a sign that I should not advance to the Intermediate Climbing program. He advised me to get more experience first. But I felt a sense of urgency. We





Children enjoying the newly-constructed south plaza climbing wall at the Seattle Program Center during "Mountain Week" in 2012, the first summer that Mountaineers youth camps were offered. Photo by Courtenay Schurman.

enrolled in Intermediate a few months later, and in 2003, we co-led a dozen climbs as newly-minted climb leaders. That fall we got pregnant, and our daughter Brooke joined our family in May of 2004. Everything changed.

## Motherhood

We'd just invested five years in getting on the climb leaders list. A new daughter meant new responsibilities, and the risks of climbing suddenly seemed much higher. We decided to try to maintain our status as climb leaders as long as possible, which meant alternating climb leads. For the next 13 years we did so, finally agreeing in 2017 to stop leading Mountaineers climbs. In the meantime, we looked for family-friendly opportunities within the club and came up lacking. How could we encourage more families to participate?

I asked other parents with school-aged children to join forces to reignite the dormant Family Activities Committee. I didn't have a clue what I was doing; I only knew that I wanted to find other like-minded families with kids to hike with. In November of 2007, with our three-year-old daughter in tow, my husband and I led a small family group to St. Edward State Park as the kick-off activity. While this was a far cry from climbing Mt. Rainier, a walk with a three-year-old has its own unique challenges. Some families had zero experience hiking. Others were fully decked out. Kids ranged from babies to adolescents. Planning suitable activities proved to be a real

challenge. But we soon found our rhythm as families joined us with kids roughly the same age as our daughter.

When Brooke turned six, she asked if she could paint a bird-house for the woodpeckers in our yard. That interest sparked a cascade of new outdoor activities over the next decade. I enrolled in the club's Intro to the Natural World Course and Basic Photography classes. We installed bird feeders and turned our backyard into a certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat. My husband surprised me with a DSLR camera one Mother's Day, then surprised me again by enrolling himself in Seattle Audubon's Master Birder program. This developed into a love for international wildlife and birding photography adventures. We visited New Zealand, the Galapagos Islands, Hawaii, and Madagascar.

When we weren't photographing birds and wildlife, we co-led more than 50 Family Activities outings, introducing other families to the outdoors and having a great time doing so. With a very small number of adult volunteers and participating children who were quickly turning their interests toward school activities and sports, my goal of leading two events a month was not sustainable. I didn't have any idea what else to try. During the end of my tenure as chair of the Family Activities Committee, I received notice that I'd been recognized as Volunteer of the Year. I didn't even know there was such a thing! I also learned that the club had just hired paid staff to establish summer camps. What a relief! Maybe it was time to step down and try something else.





Courtenay on her graduation climb from the Basic Climbing Course, Mt. Adams, in June 2003. Photo by Ken Garrison.

## Shifting gears again

Throughout Brooke's childhood my role in The Mountaineers was ever-changing. For 25 years, my husband and I have run a personal training and alpine coaching studio in North Seattle called Body Results. I found myself in a unique position to share my knowledge of fitness and conditioning with Mountaineers members. I taught the conditioning portion of the Basic Alpine Climbing Course. My husband and I offered evening classes to help people prepare to climb Mt. Rainier. And in 2014, I landed the opportunity to contribute to both *Mountaineering: Freedom of the Hills* (editions 7-10) and *Mountaineer* magazine, which in turn led to being a regular contributor through my column "Peak Performance."

Then of course, everything changed again in March of 2020. The world spiraled out of control. Almost all of my volunteer opportunities disappeared and hiking trails closed for six weeks. No access to the mountains? My happy place? During a time when we needed access to nature more than ever? I was devastated.

Trail restrictions were lifted on May 5, 2020 and my dog Ajax and I immediately made up for lost time and headed for Mt. Washington. That would be the start of hiking more than 30 trips each year. Solo hiking provided the freedom that I'd yearned for in 1992 when I first joined the club. I also wanted to create something positive and long-lasting out of the pandemic. In July 2021, I combined all of my passions: photography, writing, physical conditioning, hiking, coaching, teaching,



Brooke (right) and her friend on a day hike of Wallace Falls, 2010. Photo by Courtenay Schurman.

and getting "unstuck." The result? I launched a weekly blog, CourtSchurmanGo.com. In it, I also started documenting another transition in my life - Brooke leaving for college.

## An empty nest

Our daughter graduated from Shorecrest High School in June 2022 and enrolled as a freshman at UW for the following September. So much has changed in the 30 years since I studied at UW as a newly-minted Mountaineers member. We have a wonderful new clubhouse in Magnuson Park, two miles north of campus instead of downtown. The organization now boasts opportunities for members in all seasons of their lives, from robust youth programming to the Retired Rovers.

I have evolved as well. While I remain a member, I wonder what my next role within the organization will be, now that I have more time with Brooke in college. I could learn more about trail maintenance and become a steward for green spaces. I might get more active within the Naturalists, sharing my love of birds. Maybe I could seek other like-minded people, starting an "Empty Nest" group for parents without kids. Or four-legged frolics for hikers and their dogs. The sky truly is the limit. I'm reminded of the slogan we came up with for our company 25 years ago. It applies here, too: Don't just dream it, live it.

Although my daughter and I are in completely different stages of our lives, I wonder if she will find her way back to the club someday. Will she return to find people to hike with? Or rediscover hiking or white-water rafting? Will she remember early backpacking trips to Sheep Lake and Barclay Lake, or want to relive those experiences with college friends? In 30 years, will she be writing a similar article about her own journey into and beyond the club? One thing is certain: in this new season of my life, I will continue to be a part of The Mountaineers. The club has shaped me and my daughter into who we are today. ▲▲

# RELATIVE MERITS OF DIFFERENT SLEDDING APPARATUS

By Kristina Ciari, Membership & Communications Director

My hometown of Bozeman, Montana, has four seasons: summer, fall, snow, and mud. Snow season is the longest. While the climate crisis has changed things, as a child I remember planning Halloween costumes based on what would pair well with my snowsuit, and I often celebrated my mid-May birthday in a snowstorm. I spent many a weekend at the local sledding hill sweating my way up (often quitting halfway) and squealing my way down. As such, I consider myself a connoisseur of fun in freezing season.

With snow just around the corner, we thought it was a good time to explore the best snow sliding apparatus options for you. Below are our favorite sledding devices, each contraption rated on a five-star scale for downhill speed, relative comfort, steering capacity, overall durability, and ease of carrying said device back uphill. Happy sledding!



## The classic toboggan

A classic toboggan is a sled made of wooden slats, most often painted red, and includes skis made of plastic or metal. Toboggans also come with a pull rope to help steer on the way down and pull on the way up. They're perfect for two riders, but can be dangerous should you find yourself on the wrong side of the sharp-edged sled.

- Speed: ☆ ☆ ☆
- Comfort: ☆ ☆
- Steering: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Durability: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Uphill carry: ☆ ☆
- Overall score: 3.2

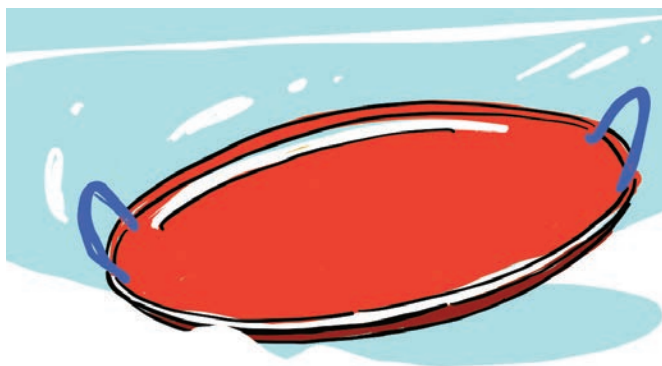


## A plastic sled

Plastic sleds are modeled after toboggans, but are lighter weight and thus less maneuverable. You can easily fit 2-3 adults on a bigger one (or up to five kids if you live dangerously), but do expect to careen wildly off course. It comes with a handy towrope for uphill travel (just don't get tangled in it on the decent) or for pulling your kids about town.

- Speed: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Comfort: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Steering: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Durability: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Uphill carry: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Overall score: 4.0

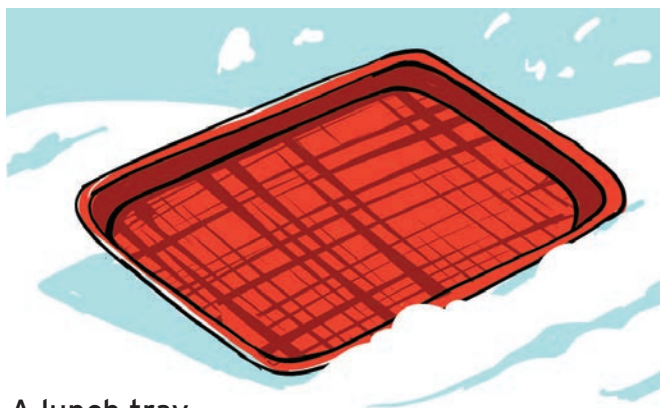




### The flying saucer

Like a UFO but for the earth, a saucer is disk shaped and comes in an array of bright colors. Crazy people will pair an extra person with the rider for added excitement (growing up we called these the ejectees). Saucers are built to take abuse, and their slick bottoms makes them surprisingly fast.

- Speed: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Comfort: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Steering: ☆
- Durability: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Uphill carry: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Overall score: 3.6



### A lunch tray

When I was a kid we used to have to steal lunch trays from the cafeteria to enjoy their sweet slickness, but nowadays you can buy a lunch tray style sled (I think they still mostly come in brown though). They're fast, light, and completely out of control.

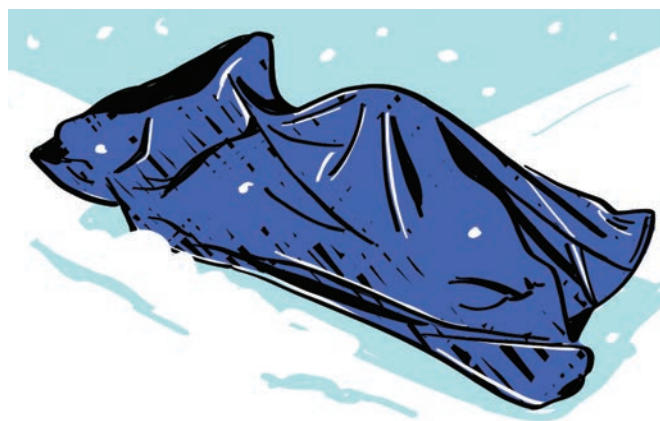
- Speed: ☆ ☆ ☆
- Comfort: ☆ ☆
- Steering: ☆
- Durability: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Uphill carry: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Overall score: 3.2



### The totally tubular

Snow tubes come in various shapes and sizes, and are even more fun thanks to the influencers of Instagram who prefer to float around pools on inflatable swans and unicorns. You can go with the classic black tube or upgrade to something fancier, like an inflatable duck. But what you gain in comfort you lose in steering and ease of carry, and depending on your style of choice you may only get one ride, as the more absurd tubes are often far less durable.

- Speed: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Comfort: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Steering: ☆
- Durability: ☆ ☆
- Uphill carry: ☆ ☆
- Overall score: 3.0



### A black garbage bag

A favorite of seasoned glissaders, a black garbage bag is the perfect tool for one person to enjoy insanely fast sledding for a single day. Pack that bag uphill without a care in the world, then slide down as many times as your unprotected bum can handle (or until the bag shreds to smithereens). The black garbage bag gets a bad rap, but those people sure look like they are having the most fun. My only caveat: remember to pick up your shreds!

- Speed: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Comfort: ☆
- Steering: ☆
- Durability: ☆ ☆
- Uphill carry: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Overall score: 2.8



# DISCOVER THE JOYS OF WINTER CAMPING

By Mike Kretzler, 24-year member & leader

Taking in the views on Box Canyon Road. Photo by Mike Kretzler.

**M**any years ago, I spent my first snow camping trip on the Skyline Lake Trail opposite Stevens Pass Ski Resort. As we settled in for the night, I could see the slopes across the valley light up for night skiing and hear alpine music playing. Our side of the mountains was quiet and dark. I was a downhill skier at the time, and was charmed by the difference.

After a long hiatus, I decided to rediscover the magic of winter camping in 2021. I took a Winter Camping Course with the Tacoma Branch and found it just as delightful as I remembered. For those considering bundling up for the night in the snow, here are some key tips and tricks to make your stay in winter wonderland as comfortable and enjoyable as possible.

## Navigating in snow

Navigation is trickier in winter because many of the usual landmarks, such as signs, trails, and even terrain features, are obscured by snow. I prepare for this by building a route and downloading it to my GPS (and phone as a backup); this includes marking landmarks, baselines, and handrails, and may include compass bearings from one landmark to the next. I include all of that on a printed map as well. While it may seem

that following a road would be straightforward – and it usually is – in bad weather it can be surprisingly difficult to find and stay on the road. And where there isn't a road to follow, you'll need those markers. But snow cover makes traveling much easier, too. You just stride over all the brush and downed trees on your snowshoes.

## Managing avalanche danger

The real concern with winter camping is avalanche danger. My approach is to carefully review the slope angles for any avalanche terrain along the route, paying close attention to where I plan to camp, and avoiding terrain that presents any significant risk of avalanche. The slope angle and satellite layers in GaiaGPS and CalTopo are very useful for this. I also watch the avalanche forecast from the Northwest Avalanche Center, and take an avalanche awareness course every year to stay refreshed. Even experienced mountaineers can catch themselves in an avalanche; it pays to be cautious.

## Gear

Regular backpacking and snowshoe gear covers most of what you will need to get by in winter. Comfort and safety should





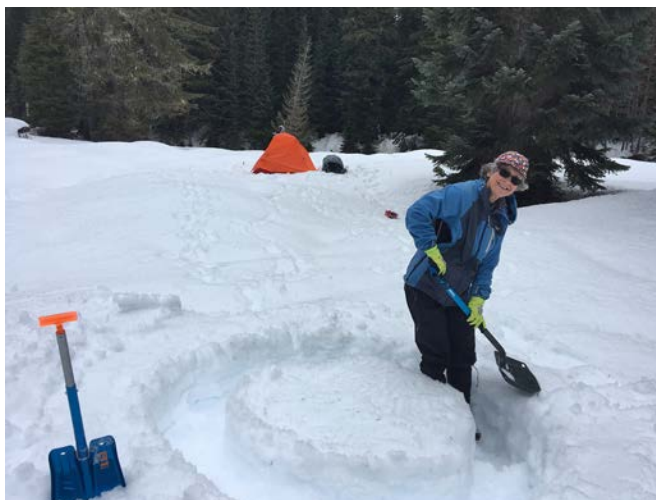
Clockwise: Snowshoers on a trip to the first of the Kendall Peaks Lakes. Angela French building a kitchen for three below Box Canyon Road. A four-season tent filled with winter gear. Photos by Mike Kretzler.

be your goals, rather than a low base weight. Be prepared to bring more clothing than you think you'll need. Your tent should be at least a solid three-season model, though a four-season tent is preferred. It should have solid walls (not mesh) and be strongly made. Keep in mind that many lightweight single-person tents are quite narrow, which, when pressed by 18" of new snow, might seem narrower still. You'll likely need a warmer sleeping bag and a more insulated sleeping pad than you use in other seasons (many people prefer to bring two pads for sleeping). I also bring two sit pads, one to sit on and one for under my boots. It's surprising how effective a little insulation under your feet can be.

While I recommend carrying a tent on all trips, you can also build a shelter from the snow. I've seen an igloo built and found it to be an exceptional shelter - it was light and quiet inside, while the storm outside was dark and noisy. However, it took a group of experienced people all afternoon to build with nice, wind-packed snow. Another option is a snow cave, again, with the right terrain and enough snow. I've built a couple and spent three nights in them, and they are fine shelter. They require shovels, a few hours of teamwork, and the knowhow to make sure the structure is safe.

## Choosing a site

Finding camp sites in winter is harder in some ways and easier in others. Trees create lumpy, icy snow in our mountains, so find an open area in which to set up for the night. You never



have to look hard for a flat place to set up your tent because you can flatten the area yourself, even on a slope, using your shovel and feet. Winter camping is also never crowded; even busy areas clear out by mid-afternoon. However, many places are inaccessible due to the snow and avalanche concerns. Be sure to have a strong working knowledge of avalanche danger before venturing out.

## Camp cooking

Water is everywhere thanks to the snow, but you will need to melt it. Sometimes a creek is available, but depending on the snow it can be risky to gather. You're better off planning





Meal prep at the kitchen site on an overnight trip to Kendall Peaks Lakes. Photo by Tricia Belcastro.

to melt snow, which will generally require using two to three times the amount of fuel you'd use on a summer trip for your winter trip. White gas stoves perform better in winter temperatures than canister fuel stoves. You'll need a bigger pot than usual, as snow is voluminous until it melts. I bring two cups in winter, which leaves one available for scooping snow into the pot as needed. I also bring an insulated pouch for my dinner and a koozie for my cup, both made from foam duct insulation.

If you're in a group, you can build a shared kitchen. Stamp out

a large circular (or rectangular) area, digging out a foot well and seating area around a table in the middle. It's a fun way to create a social focus for the trip and stay warm in the process. Just be sure to fill in all of the constructions when you break camp. When winter camping solo, I carve out a foot well in my tent's vestibule so that I can sit in the tent and have my stove just outside the tent on its platform, all at a comfortable height.

## LNT and wildlife concerns

Leave No Trace practices are also different in winter. Our camping platforms melt away in the spring, but our poop does not. Be prepared to carry yours out. A blue bag, WAG bag, or even a kit built of some waxed paper and a dog poop bag can make this easy. A plastic mayo jar is a good way to securely transport your waste.

While bears are supposed to be sleeping if there's snow on the ground, it still pays to protect your food. Foxes are a particular issue on Mt. Rainier, I understand. Bring a way to hang your food out of reach or use a bear canister.

## Winter camping courses

I had the opportunity to take Tacoma's Winter Camping course in 2021; it was excellent and offered a lot of helpful information and gear advice, which helped me feel confident on my first night out. Below are some upcoming Winter Camping Courses to check out this season:

- Seattle: Snowshoe/Winter Camping Course, Feb 9-Apr 9, 2023
- Foothills: Winter Camping Course, Feb 15-Apr 10, 2023 ▲

membershipmatters



# EXPLORE

with member benefits

## As a Mountaineers member you have access to:

**Courses, clinics, and seminars** to gain lifelong skills

**Activities** to get outside and find community

**Gear Library** access to help outfit your trips

**Lodge access** at our Baker, Meany, and Stevens lodges

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

**10-70% off** gear and experiences from our partners

**And more!**

To learn more, visit  
[mountaineers.org/membership/benefits](https://mountaineers.org/membership/benefits)



# Cross-Country Skiing in Yellowstone National Park

By Cindy Hoover and Cheri Solien, Global Adventures Leaders

**T**en Mountaineers were fortunate to have plentiful sunshine and no winds for last February's Global Adventure to Yellowstone National Park. We spent a week cross-country skiing in three sections of the park - Mammoth, North, and Old Faithful - which provided ample opportunities to experience the magic of winter in Yellowstone.

We enjoyed early morning walks with the fine spray of Old Faithful freezing in midair, and afternoon ski trips so quiet that we could hear water gurgling below the snow. We were fortunate enough to have a private off-trail tour with two wildlife ecologists. This four-hour ski gave us a unique look at the park's history, detailed wildlife information, and current political and ecological issues. Did you know that when a bison raises its tail, it's either going to urinate or charge?

One day we skied around a corner to find a magnificent bull elk just 20 feet off the trail, and another we followed wolf tracks through the snow. We saw herds of massive bison close enough to our ski trails and the main road to cause us to stop; we always yield to them!

Though based out of Gardiner for most of the week, we used a snowcoach to travel to and from Old Faithful Snow Lodge (a shuttle van on snowmobile tracks). We spent one night there reveling in the unique trails around geyser basins. If you're considering visiting Yellowstone in winter, go for it - you won't be sorry.

## Upcoming Global Adventures

### Nordic Ski the Canadian Rockies of Lake Louise and Canmore

Trip Dates: Jan 22-29, 2023  
Registration closes: Dec 16

Join us this winter to explore the winter wonderland of Lake Louise and Canmore, CA. Trip highlights include skiing Lake O'Hara and the Emerald Lake, stunning views of the Rocky Mountains, and classic scenes around Lake Louise. We will also have the pleasure of enjoying the world-class grooming of the Canmore Nordic Center, site of the 1988 Olympics.

We will ski 8-15 miles per day, with 600-1,700 foot gains, on groomed and skier-made tracks over beautiful frozen lakes and through stunning mountain scenery. We'll choose the best trail each day based on the conditions. Short drives get us to the trailhead from our comfortable lodgings. N3 intermediate Nordic skiing skill level required.



A snow-dusted bison as seen from a snow coach enroute to Old Faithful.  
Photo by Donna Hahn.



Cross-country skier standing on the Biscuit Basin Trail. Photo by Donna Hahn.

### Cross-country Ski in Norway

Trip Dates: Mar 5-18, 2023  
Registration closes: Dec 16

Early this spring, join us for a two-week adventure to the birthplace of cross-country skiing: Norway! We will ski beautifully-groomed trails out of three mountain lodges and one hotel in Lillehammer. The trip will also include three nights in Oslo, where we will get a taste of Norwegian urban life and visit a few historical and cultural sites. Norway has one of the most developed ski trail systems, with many trails connecting ski villages. This creates an extensive network in each area we visit, offering over 372 miles (600 km) of trails from which to choose. We will be skiing over mountain plateaus, gentle hills, forested areas, and past classic Norwegian farms, all with spectacular views of Norwegian winter scenery. N3 intermediate Nordic skiing skill level required. ▲▲



Craig being greeted by a bird at Artist Point. Photo by Suzanne Gerber.

## Embracing Winter

### Finding joy in the lowlands during Washington's wetter months

By Craig Romano, Mountaineers Books Guidebook Author

I grew up in New Hampshire, a state not known for agreeable weather. An old local saying boasts that in New Hampshire we have 11 months of winter and one month of damn poor sledding. While the climate has changed and winters have become milder (the winters of my youth were truly much colder, snowier, and longer), an abundance of snowy and cold days continue to make New Hampshire and other northern states tough places to live.

Unless you embrace the season and all of its charms and challenges, living in an area with severe winters can be one long drag. Fortunately for this native New Englander, I love winter. I learned how to ice skate at a young age and spent many cold evenings playing ice hockey at our neighborhood pond. I also learned how to ski at our town's ski hill and eventually

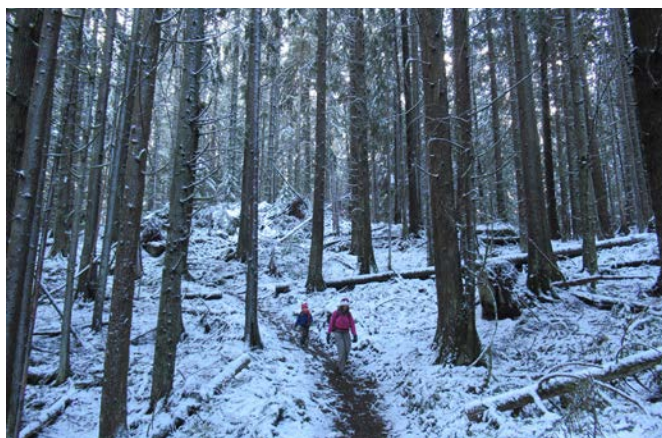
graduated from 'weekend skier' to 'ski bum' while working at a couple of ski resorts in Vermont and New Hampshire. Winters were long, but that was fine with me. I prolonged the ski season as much as I could, skiing well into spring with a run or two down Mount Washington's famed Tuckerman Ravine.

### Year-round recreation

When I moved to Western Washington I continued to embrace winter, but found that here winter primarily plays out in the mountains while the lowlands remain in an autumnal purgatory. That arrangement soon proved very advantageous as I could head to the mountains to ski or snowshoe then return home to the Puget lowlands to bike, run, or paddle. In northern New England it's pretty tough to paddle on a frozen lake. And it's near suicide to paddle in coastal waters in the winter. Biking is messy at best, treacherous at worst. Running? Yeah, I ran in New England during the winter, but with more clothes than I preferred and on rural roads made much narrower and frightening due to encroaching snowbanks.

In Western Washington winters I can run to my heart's content - and almost always do so in shorts. I don't let the weather keep me inside to pack on a few pounds, as I've learned to embrace the rain. It's a heck of a lot easier to run in than snow! I relish a winter routine, which usually involves running in the





Clockwise: Craig's wife and son hiking a barrier island on a cold December day. Craig on a snowy half-marathon trail run in Skagit County. Craig's family enjoying a snowy family hike on Blanchard Mountain. Photos courtesy of Craig Romano.

pouring rain and returning home to a hot shower followed by a warm drink near the fireplace. I enjoy the same routine after a long day of skiing, chilled to the bone.

## Slowing down

I also embrace the short daylight hours and long, dark nights of winter. For much of the year I am constantly on the go, taking long hikes and runs from sunrise to sunset. I welcome the shorter winter days as a time to rest and reflect, allowing my body to recover and my mind to recharge. While I reflect on my adventures and accomplishments of the receding year, I plan a new slew of them for the one approaching. And especially during the winter solstice and Christmas season, I deeply reflect on my life in general. I count my blessings, assess what is truly important, and seek validation and spiritual guidance. There is nothing more spiritually stimulating than an evening run, or a hike on a crisp, cool winter day to witness the fiery red alpenglow on the surrounding snow-shrouded mountains.

The short, rainy days of winter also allow me to better appreciate summer and to eagerly anticipate it as the rainy season inevitably overstays its welcome. But while I love running in the rain, hiking in the snow, and walking deserted beaches on a blustery day, after a few sun-less months it's hard not to get the blues. What I find the most difficult to endure during a Western Washington winter is not the persistent rain or the long nights - it's the incessant grey and lack of sunlight.

So each winter I take a break to enjoy a short taste of summer light with a trip to Southern California.

## Rainy days and cozy nights

Upon my return though, I am reminded of just how unique our Puget Sound winters are. The opportunity to transition from snowshoe trails and ski destinations to ample hiking, running, and bicycling opportunities (albeit wet ones) is not something I take for granted. Nature offers pockets of bliss in every season, you simply must choose to seek them out.

So as we approach yet another long, grey, and rainy winter, I say bring it on! I had a wonderful warm season on the trail and am looking forward to long runs in the rain, lonely walks along the coast, and a few ventures into the snowy mountains. I will have the opportunity to recharge, get caught up on neglected manuscripts, and enjoy movies with my family in front of the fireplace. I urge you to embrace the rain-soaked days and slow, cozy nights that winter in Western Washington brings. I have, and my life has been all the better for it. ▲▲

*Craig Romano is an award-winning guidebook author who has written more than 25 books, including Day Hiking Columbia River Gorge, Day Hiking Olympic Peninsula 2nd edition, and eight titles in the Urban Trails series (Mountaineers Books) which feature many hikes that can be done all winter long. Purchase his titles in our Seattle Program Center Bookstore, online at [mountaineersbooks.org](http://mountaineersbooks.org), and everywhere books are sold.*





# The 1934 Silver Skis Race

By Mountaineers Books

Skiers practice for the geschmozzle start of the 1934 Silver Skis race. Hans Otto Giese is third from the right. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.

Enjoy an excerpt below from *Written in the Snows*, written by renowned local skiing historian Lowell Skoog and published by Mountaineers Books. In it, we read the account of the first slalom ski race in the Pacific Northwest, an event characterized by equal parts thrill and chaos.

## Chapter 6: A Winter Paradise

### Chasing silver

By the winter of 1934, Mount Rainier had nearly everything a skier could ask for - open slopes, deep snow, comfortable lodging, and a lively social scene. But for Hans Otto Giese and a few friends, the mountain lacked one thing: a true skiing spectacle. Giese was a proponent of the alpine disciplines of slalom and downhill racing, having gained knowledge of and enthusiasm for them in Europe. He helped organize the first Pacific Northwest Ski Association slalom race at Snoqualmie Pass in February 1934, two weeks after Seattle Municipal Ski Park opened there. A couple days before the Snoqualmie Pass slalom was held, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer announced sponsorship of a "Thrilling Downhill Ski Race" to be staged on Mount Rainier later that spring. Giese was the race's leading booster. The race would run from Camp Muir to Paradise, a distance of about three and a half miles with 4,600 feet of descent.

For two months leading up to the race, the P-I pumped up the event, soon dubbed the Silver Ski Championships by the paper. Royal Brougham, an old-school sports writer who didn't worry much about the difference between reporting the news and making it, portrayed the race like a Kentucky Derby on snow...

At Muir the racers sported a motley assortment of gear. A few chose long, heavy jumping skis for the race. Others nailed lead strips atop their skis for added weight and stability. Some skis had metal edges, but many did not. Racer Emil Cahen wore a football helmet, the only participant with head protection. Friends recalled that he took a lot of kidding for it. As the starting time approached, Otto Sanford raised a red flag high above his head and eyed the official watch in his left hand. At precisely 1:30 p.m., Sanford dropped the flag and someone fired a pistol, sending the men on their way. Spectator Harry Webster, watching from far below, recalled, "It looked like someone had poured a bottle of ink on the snowfield below Camp Muir."

Racer John Woodward remembered that a dry, cold wind had frozen the snow near the start. "It was like little ball bearings of ice," he said. "It's the fastest snow you could ever have. We all got in a crouch, and all of a sudden the wind was screaming and the fronts of the skis are vibrating and sort of flying in the air." Racers faced daunting choices - whether continue in a deep crouch toward a likely crack-up, attempt to turn with





The Mountaineers Ski Team at Mt. Baker in the mid-1930s: Scott Osborn, Wolf Bauer, Bill Miller, Tim Hill, and Don Blair (in front). Photo by Robert H. Hayes, *The Mountaineer* annual, 1936.

racers hurtling on either side, or stand up to brake using wind resistance. Woodward chose the third option. "I'd never tried it at that speed, so I didn't lean forward far enough, so when I stood up a little too quick, it was like fifteen pillows hit my chest and boom. When I stopped tumbling one of my ski tips was gone. Busted clear off."

Other racers remembered similar spills. "I had gone into Spartan training doing deep knee bends during weeks of preparation in order to prevent the cramping effects of a deep crouch position against expected headwinds," all-around mountaineer Wolf Bauer recalled. "The extra speed cost me both poles, goggles, and a broken ski still hanging precariously together with a steel-edge fastening - result of a somersault at near sixty miles per hour." As he remembered, "Most of us had waited too long to check speed and change course because of the traffic on all sides. When checking became imperative, the smooth snow surface suddenly changed to shingled windrows and waves, bringing about a fearsome explosion of cartwheeling humanity. It was not until the race was over that I learned how others behind me had spilled at the same time and place. Somewhat dazed I picked myself up, deciding not to waste time looking for my poles and goggles, and immediately got under way again."

Don Fraser avoided the worst. "Fortunately, I was soon out in front of the mob headed for Little Africa," he said, "so I didn't witness the terrible collisions that took place just behind me." One of the most serious involved Ben Thompson, chief climbing guide on Mount Rainier, who collided with another skier who'd cut in front of him. Thompson woke up minutes later with a broken jaw and two teeth knocked out. He walked down from Anvil Rock to the foot of Panorama Point, where he was put on a toboggan and taken to Seattle to have his jaw set. The youngster that Thompson hit suffered torn shoulder ligaments. Another had a broken collarbone.

Fraser stayed near the front of the pack. Near McClure Rock and above Panorama, he recalled, "there were large mounds



Hans-Otto Giese, Fred Ball, and Andy Anderson. Photo courtesy of W.J. Maxwell Collection, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries, neg. no. 18134.

(like small jumping hills), and one was airborne 100 feet or more on each one. The speed, at this point, was far more than any of us had ever gone before - even on a jumping hill. Tired legs took their toll. Many skis and poles were broken and some god-awful falls took place." Below McClure Rock, Fraser said, "the shellac was clear off my skis and they were sticking. You'd suddenly be thrown forward when you hit sticky spots. I didn't fall, though." At the Panorama Point control gate, Fraser led, followed closely by Carleton Wiegel, then Alf Moystad, Bauer, and Giese.

On the sticky snow below Alta Vista, Fraser and Wiegel were running over the snow, pumping with their ski poles and striding as much as their leather boots would allow. Loudspeakers were set up at Paradise, and sports editor Royal Brougham called the action. "My knees were shaking," Fraser recounted. Wiegel poled frantically to catch up, but fell short at the finish line by about a ski length. Fraser crossed first to win in a time of 10 minutes, 49.6 seconds. Following Wiegel by a few minutes were Moystad, Tom Heard, Bauer, and Giese. Racers continued to arrive for another half hour.

Even the officials were not necessarily safe. Mel Borgersen, who was monitoring the race, somehow got hurt. "I'm sure it was Mel," John Woodward recalled. "The ski patrol was bringing him down in a toboggan. They weren't trained in those days, and they both fell down and the toboggan got away. He's strapped in and it's heading for the top of Edith Creek basin. Right below Panorama, those cliffs there. He was heading right for that and he knew it, so he rocked himself back and forth and finally rocked and turned himself upside down and skidded to a stop, with him underneath the toboggan."...

Nearly three thousand spectators witnessed the 1934 race. The Seattle Times reported the next day: "On the steep ski course from high Camp Muir to warmer Paradise today were tracks - scores of tracks; a broken ski tip here and there; holes dug by spilling skiers; control flags still marking a stretch of ski terrain where yesterday was run as astounding a ski race as America ever saw." ▲▲



# Virtual Education Center and Calendar

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



Conservation & Advocacy



Fitness & Performance



Gear Tips



Leadership Skills



Preparedness & Planning



Technical Skills

## How to Get Involved

### Step 1: Visit [mountaineers.org/courses/virtual-education-center](https://mountaineers.org/courses/virtual-education-center)

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

### Step 2: Choose what you want to learn

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

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

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

14

Online Courses

## What You'll Find

100+

Educational Blogs

29

Virtual Events & Activities



## How to Sign Up for Activities

### Step 1

Visit our website

[www.mountaineers.org](http://www.mountaineers.org)  
Click on the big green 'Find Activities' button, or hover over the 'Activities' tab and choose 'Find Activities'.

### Step 2

Filter your activity search

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

### Step 3

Select an activity & register

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

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

## How to Sign Up for Events

### Step 1

Visit our website

[www.mountaineers.org](http://www.mountaineers.org)  
Click on the 'Upcoming Events' button on the left of the main page, or click 'More' and choose the 'Events' tab.

### Step 2

Browse for local events

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

### Step 3

Select an event & register

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

## Frequently Asked Questions

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

**What are some easy ways to get started?** Sign up for an activity without prerequisites. These include day hikes, backpacking trips, stewardship activities, photography outings, and occasional sailing opportunities! Also, consider taking a basic or introductory course like Basic Snowshoeing, Introduction to Rock Climbing, Navigation, and much, much more! Visit [www.mountaineers.org/courses](http://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](mailto: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 ensure 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 send them an email. You can always email our Member Services team with questions at [info@mountaineers.org](mailto: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.

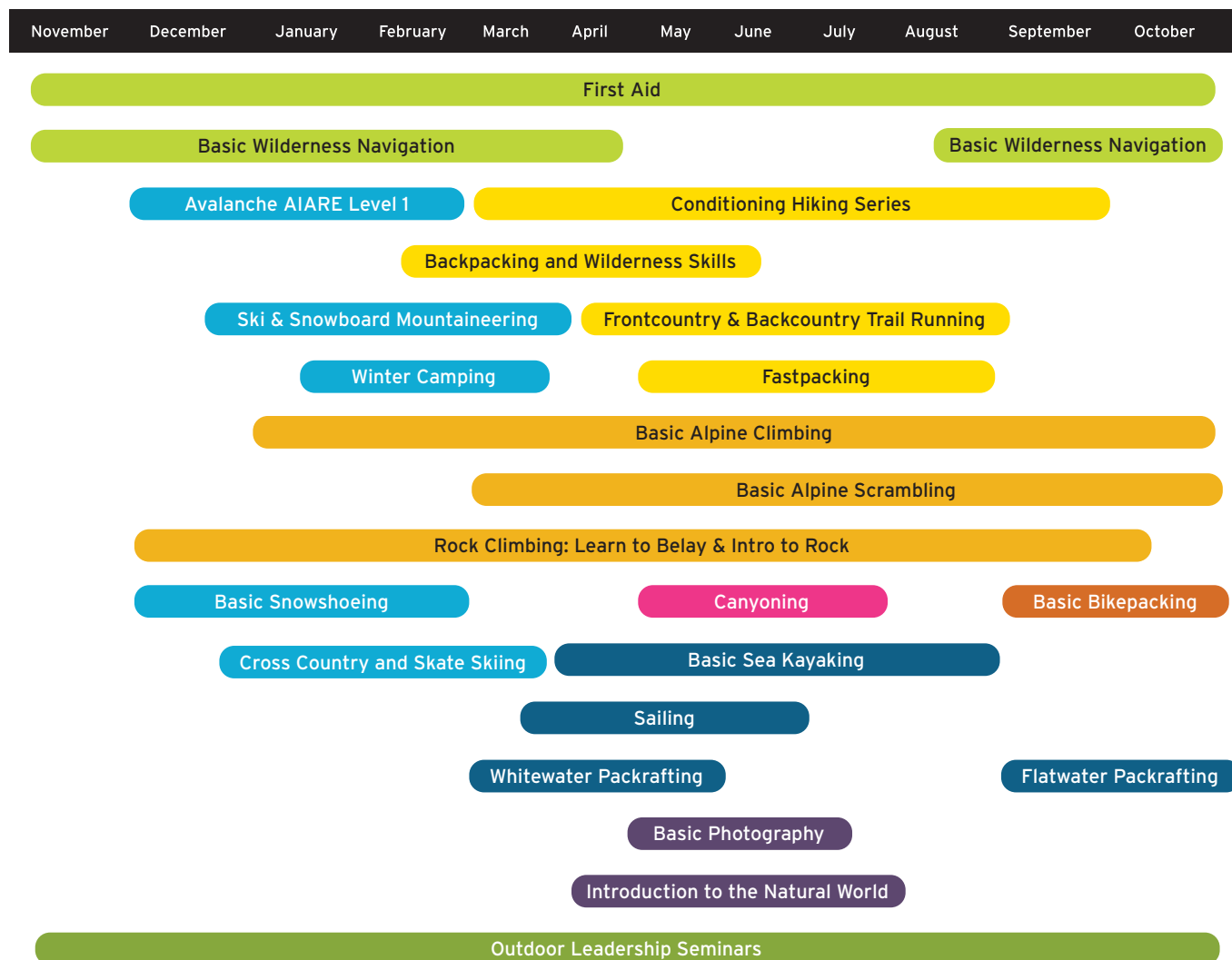


## Introductory Course Overview

Updated October 2022

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:



Please visit [www.mountaineers.org](http://www.mountaineers.org) to see current course listings and to sign up.

Course selection varies by branch. Registration usually opens 1-3 months prior to the start of the course.



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](http://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](http://mountaineers.org/bakerlodge)

Our rustic Mt. Baker Lodge is nestled in the spectacular North Cascades and is a beautiful getaway year-round. The lodge is located within walking distance of the Mt. Baker Ski Area and numerous summer and fall hiking trails.

## Stevens Lodge

[mountaineers.org/stevenslodge](http://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. The lodge is currently open at a limited capacity for fully vaccinated guests.

## Meany Lodge

[mountaineers.org/meanylodge](http://mountaineers.org/meanylodge)

Meany Lodge operates a rope-tow on our ski hill for ski lessons, cross-country skiing, and snowshoe excursions. The lodge is currently open at limited capacity for fully vaccinated guests. Visit our webpage to sign up for an upcoming work party.



## Kitsap Forest Theater

[foresttheater.com](http://foresttheater.com)

The Kitsap Forest Theater has been alive with music and the power of imagination for 100 years (1923-present). Celebrate our centennial with two fabulous musicals perfect for all ages. In **The Sound of Music**, showing spring 2023, an exuberant young governess brings music and joy back to a broken family, only to face danger and intrigue in 1930s Austria. Showing summer 2023 is **Seussical, The Musical**, which celebrates friendship, loyalty, family, and community with the best-loved characters from Dr. Seuss' magical books.

Come be a part of this milestone year, either on stage, behind the scenes, or in the audience. Enjoy our incredible outdoor theater by planning your day away in the forest. Tickets make great gifts and are available online; save on our two-show package.

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](https://mountaineers.org/locations-lodges).



## BELLINGHAM

**Chair:** Nathan Andrus, [nathan.andrus@gmail.com](mailto:nathan.andrus@gmail.com)  
**Website:** [mountaineers.org/bellingham](https://mountaineers.org/bellingham);  
[bellinghammountaineers.com](https://bellinghammountaineers.com)

**COURSES & ACTIVITIES:** avalanche safety, navigation, climbing, first aid, hiking, scrambling, stewardship and conservation.

You'll find the Bellingham Branch tucked alongside the upper craggy expanse of the North Cascades. We enjoy easy access to the peaks that drain into the Nooksack and Skagit River basins. Our close-knit community offers climbing courses, hiking trips, and backcountry adventures in a diverse, inclusive, and supportive environment. 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:** Nick Mayo, [nicholas.e.mayo@gmail.com](mailto:nicholas.e.mayo@gmail.com)  
**Website:** [mountaineers.org/everett](https://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:** John Mackey, [john@pttaxcpa.com](mailto:john@pttaxcpa.com)  
**Website:** [mountaineers.org/kitsap](https://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:** Tess Wendel, [tesswendel@gmail.com](mailto:tesswendel@gmail.com)  
**Website:** [mountaineers.org/seattle](https://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 and reach out to the branch chair if you are interested in organizing activities for members based in greater South Seattle.

## FOOTHILLS (I-90/I-405 CORRIDORS)

**Chair:** Brad Peacock, [bpeacock@aol.com](mailto:bpeacock@aol.com)  
**Website:** [mountaineers.org/foothills](https://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, climbing, and trail running.

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 film screenings, guest speakers, stewardship events with the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, 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  
[curtis@tacomamountaineers.org](mailto:curtis@tacomamountaineers.org)  
**Website:** [mountaineers.org/tacoma](https://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:** Janette Zumbo, [janettezumbo@gmail.com](mailto:janettezumbo@gmail.com)  
**Website:** [mountaineers.org/olympia](https://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.

**Our Adventure Speaker Series** has returned. Visit our branch calendar for details

**Branch Council Meetings** are held at 6pm on the second Wednesday of the month, alternating in-person and Zoom, though Zoom is always available. Members are encouraged to attend. Contact Janette Zumbo for information about attending.



# Get Involved With Your Branch

**Visit Your Branch Page** Go to [mountaineers.org](http://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](http://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](http://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 in to these emails, visit [mountaineers.org/profile](http://mountaineers.org/profile). Login, then scroll down and make sure the box next to 'Branch Communications' is checked.\*

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

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# The Sound of Silence

## Why snow brings quiet

By Skye Michel, Communications Associate



Photo by Nate Brown.

**T**he most exciting moment of winter is the season's first snowfall. Sometimes snow falls at opportune moments when you can witness small flakes gently speckling the sidewalks. Other years you wake up to the world carpeted in a perfect blanket of white. You step outside and marvel at the winter wonderland while scouring for the best place to have an epic snowball fight. Standing there, one of the first things you notice is a serene silence almost as breathtaking as the snow itself. You aren't imagining things - the world actually is quieter when it snows.

### The structure of snowflakes

Some of the reasons why it's quieter after a snowfall are obvious; everyone is either stunned silent at the majestic beauty of winter or unwilling to expose themselves to the freezing cold. Many animals - like birds - fall into the latter category, hunkering down to avoid the chilling weather. But a major factor in why silence and snowfall go hand-in-hand is because of the sound-absorbing qualities of snow.

To understand this science we must first consider the structure of the snowflake. I'm sure most of us are familiar with what a snowflake looks like: ornate, star-like crystalline patterns whose uniqueness and beauty has inspired everyone from existentialists to kindergarteners. Because of the snowflake's elaborate shape, empty space is left between their hexagonal ridges. A lot of empty space, it turns out. En masse, snowflakes form a fluffy and porous blanket of powder that is exceptionally good at cushioning our wipeouts, and even better at cushioning sound.

### The science of sound

Sound travels in waves. Its speed and reach are influenced

by environmental factors like humidity, temperature, and path-blocking obstacles. For sound to reach us clearly, an unperturbed path is needed. Anything standing in the way, like snowflakes falling from the sky, can scatter, bend, or trap soundwaves and block or alter the way they reach our ears.

When snowfall accumulates, those large spaces between the snowflakes' ridges as well as the spaces between each snowflake themselves act as a sound absorber that catch or dampen the amplitude of the waves traveling through them. This is similar to how industrial foam boards lining the walls of music rooms operate, and why when a fresh blanket of snow falls all the ambient noises of our busy lives seem to disappear.

Snow can absorb anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of sound, depending on the severity of the snowfall and the texture of the snow. A lighter sprinkling of snow doesn't capture much sound, similar to how a tissue shoved under a door wouldn't block sound as effectively as a towel. Larger amounts of snowfall hold a lot of empty space and thus are excellent at trapping soundwaves.

### Breaking the silence

Although serene, the silence can only last so long. Once the snow begins to melt, the spaces between the ice crystals shrink, compacting the snowflakes and impairing their ability to absorb sound. In fact, once snow melts and refreezes it actually begins to amplify sound waves as they bounce off of the hardpacked snow, which has melted to fill in all the empty space. The next time you marvel at the quiet of newly-fallen snow, enjoy your brief window of serenity before the regular clanging and banging of our daily lives return. ▲▲



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