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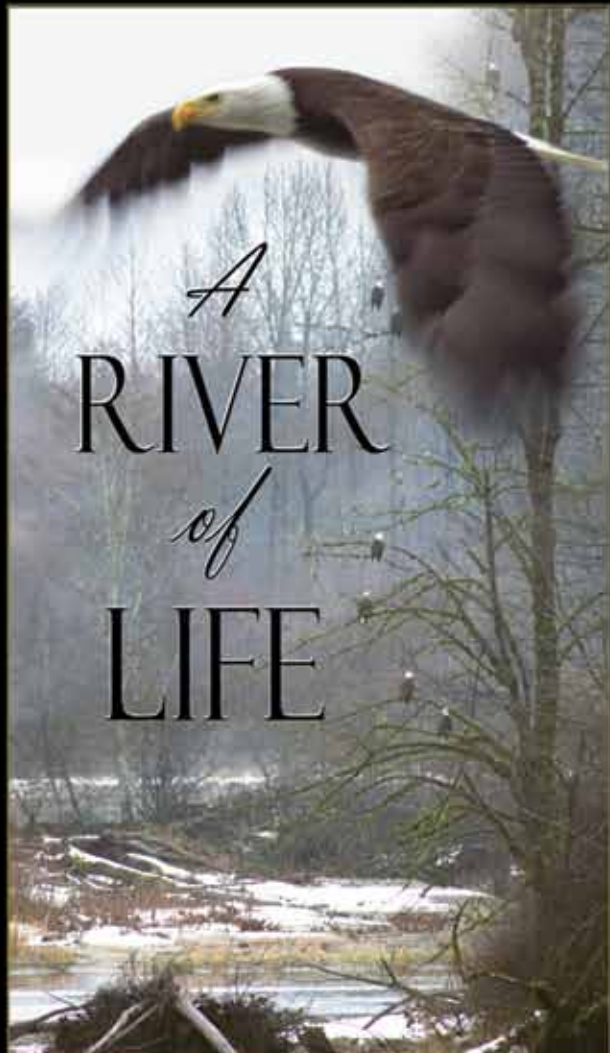
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Writer and professional skier **Molly Baker** spends her time shredding snowy wonderlands all over the world and posing for some of the industry's best action photographers. She also contributes to *ESPN Freeskiing*, *The Ski Journal*, and *Coast Mountain Culture*.

Mark Peterson's involvement with mountain bike advocacy

spans two decades, addressing access issues on both a national and local scale. He was integral in the pioneering stewardship agreement with Trillium Corporation granting mountain bikers access and management for Galbraith Mountain. Mark is the President and a board member of the WMBC.



Aaron Theisen is a Spokane-based outdoors and travel writer and photographer. Aaron's writing and photography have appeared in numerous publications, including *Adventures NW*, *Spokane Coeur d'Alene Living*, *Montana Outdoors*, and *Around the Pacific Northwest*. In addition, he is the Eastern Washington Regional Correspondent for *Washington Trails* magazine. Aaron is currently working on a wildlife-viewing guide to northeast Washington for Conservation Northwest.

Lisa Toner is a Suzuki violin teacher, cyclist, and climber. Though she spends much of the rainy season playing music and training for her warm-weather hobbies, some of her most memorable trips have taken place under the elusive winter sun.



Craig Romano is currently avoiding snow while researching his next book, *Day Hiking San Juan and Gulf Islands*. He's also busy making the final edits on his latest book, *Day Hiking Eastern Washington* (with Rich Landers) due for release this spring! When not hiking and writing about hiking, he can often be found napping with his cats, Giuseppe and Scruffy Gray. Visit him at CraigRomano.com.

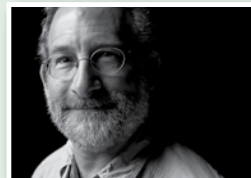
Ted Rosen is an adventure traveler. From his backyard in the North Cascades to the enchanted mountains of Bosnia

to the bamboo forests of Japan, he prefers day adventures and comfy beds to overnight excursions in the wild, but we don't hold that against him.



Pilot and photographer **John Scurlock** has a passion for aerial photography, especially in the mountains of western North America, from California to Alaska to the Canadian and U.S. Rockies. His images have appeared in numerous books and magazines, including *Snow & Spire: Flights to Winter in the North Cascade Range* (Wolverine Publishing, 2011). He resides along the Skagit River near Rockport, Washington, along with his seven cats.

Saul Weisberg is the executive director of North Cascades Institute. Saul worked throughout the Northwest as a wilderness ranger, field biologist, commercial fisherman and fire lookout before starting the Institute in 1986. He lives in Bellingham with his wife, Shelley. His passions include paddling, bugs and walking in the mountains in the rain.



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"Stuff your eyes with wonder . . . live as if you'd drop dead in ten seconds. See the world. It's more fantastic than any dream made or paid for in factories."

- Ray Bradbury

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Airborne on Galbraith Mountain
Photo by David Killian

Photo by John D'Onofrio



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Natural Resources

Galbraith Mountain is a treasure.

To have such an extensive and diverse mountain biking resource right on the edge of town adds value to Bellingham and Whatcom County in ways that are just starting to be fully appreciated. Increasingly this mountain biking Mecca is becoming known around North America as a world-class pedaling destination.

That's a good thing.

Quality of life (QOL) is precious and the recreational opportunities and beautiful landscapes that surround us here in Cascadia are increasingly understood to be a vital ingredient in the mix of elements that create this quality. We can think of QOL in economic terms - as a commodity. Like any other commodity, it is subject to the law of supply and demand.

Look around the country. Clearly the demand for QOL is at an all-time high - and growing. And at the same time, in our increasingly urbanized and resource-ravaged land, the supply certainly seems to be diminishing every day. I'm not an economist, but I think that means that its value is rising.

We have it. Everyone wants it.

Biking on Galbraith. Skiing at Baker. Hiking in North Cascades National Park. Sailing the San Juans. These and countless other ways to enjoy outdoor recreation in this most beautiful corner of the country contribute significantly to our growing appeal as a highly desirable place to live and work. Recreation is good business. It's clean, it's sustainable, it makes people healthy and happy and increasingly is being understood to fuel the economy.

There's *so* much heat (not so much light) about growing the region's economy. A lot of the talk seems a little desperate to me;

coal terminals and the like. But what if we thought long-term? The beauty of the idea of QOL as a resource is that it is the *preservation* of the resource that pays off, instead of the usual model wherein the resource is depleted; gobbled up until it's gone and then we look for something else. This old pattern is wearing thin. Think: timber, salmon, coal.

Here in Cascadia we have an opportunity to model a new paradigm by embracing this truly renewable resource, our recreational bounty - and highlighting it. Clean air and water. Open space. Natural beauty. These attract visitors, residents and businesses.

If we're smart, we'll embrace this reality, preserve what we have, and let the world know that when it comes to world-class recreation, Cascadia is *the* place - we've got it all.

Back in 1899 when Mount Rainier National Park was established, the locals were amazed that people would travel long distances (and spend lots of cash) - just to look at a mountain! The idea was completely novel. And guess what? They're still coming.

Clearly, recreation and natural beauty have the potential to be drivers of prosperity. If we recognize the opportunity and treat the resource with care, we might just find ourselves with an economic model that provides for our children in a sustainable, healthy way.

It's like money in the bank.

john



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Out & About

Vendovi Island:

Preserving a Gem in the San Juans

Bill McGown expertly rounds the breakwater in his aluminum boat and sidles up to the dock at Vendovi Island. McGown owns Leapfrog Water Taxi, a business he started in 2011 to ferry people and their gear around the San Juan Islands. McGown - who knows the San Juans as well as anyone - tells me that Vendovi is something special.

I've come to the island to meet Kathleen Foley, Program Director for the San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT), the oldest land trust in Washington State. The SJPT purchased Vendovi Island in December of 2010, after the island was put up for sale in 2008 by the Seattle-based Fluke family, who had owned it for nearly 50 years.

We walk through sun-dappled forest of Douglas fir and curvaceous madrone to Sunset Beach, with its spectacular view to the west. The beach is littered with shell fragments, an Indian midden. The tide is out and we wander along the water's edge among a multitude of orange and purple starfish. Seals out in the eel grass greet us with their vociferous snort-honks.



Starfish on Sunset Beach

The thin overcast begins to lift and the sun breaks through, illuminating the beach in radiant light. An idyllic scene. Pure San Juans. Our next stop is Sunrise Beach, which, as you might expect, faces east. More starfish and seals. More million dollar views.

The overlook known as Jack's Back features a view of Jack island, also owned by the SJPT. The sloping meadow above

culated risk. At a cost of \$6.4 million, it is by far the most significant acquisition that the Lopez Island-based conservation group has ever made. When the island was put up for auction, the SJPT was the sole bidder and the Fluke family agreed to sell for half the appraised value. Paradise at 50 percent off. An opportunity that could not be passed up.

"It was a big risk for us," Foley says



Vendovi Island: A treasure in the San Juans

the water is carpeted with wildflowers in the spring, Foley tells me.

Back in the forest, she points out a rain orchid in bloom and stops to point out an Oregon boxwood, rare in the San Juans. Vendovi has no deer population and minimal invasive species, so the natural flora of the San Juans continues to flourish here, a rarity in this cross-pollinated archipelago. Only two acres of the 217-acre island were impacted over the course of the Fluke's long ownership. Most of the island is more or less untouched. It is very quiet.

We make our way back to the caretaker's house - the former Fluke residence. It's a surprisingly modest place, a modular home brought to the island by barge. But the view is killer. We eat lunch on the deck and talk about Vendovi.

Purchasing the island was a bold move by the SJPT, a cal-

of the purchase. To launch the effort, they received a \$3 million gift - and a \$3.4 million bridge loan from an anonymous donor. It's the first time in the 33-year history of the organization that the SJPT assumed a loan. Ambitious? You bet. But what an island!

It's been a grass-roots effort. "We've had support from all over the islands," Foley points out. The money has come completely from private donors. The only government contribution has been "a little bit of grant money for trail work and signage.

"Our goal is to manage it as a natural preserve with low-impact recreational access for hiking and kayaking. It's a work in progress. Until we own it (outright), we'll manage it for day use only."

Foley is optimistic about the capital campaign currently underway to raise the remaining money but has a backup plan too. "If we're not able to save it by paying off the loan, we have enough eq-

uity to put a conservation easement on the property and resell it," she explains. "The ecological value would remain intact but you'd - of course - lose public access if it reverts to private ownership."

All too soon, Bill McGown arrives to take me back across the sparkling Salish Sea to Bellingham. I arrived on Vendovi curious. After spending the afternoon exploring the headlands, forest, and beaches, I leave smitten.

The San Juan Preservation Trust has given us a precious gift. They need to raise \$1.3 million by 2018 to service the loan and need \$400,000 by October, 2013 to secure a \$1 million challenge grant. Vendovi Island is truly a gem. Here's hoping that their "calculated risk" pays off and that their capital campaign is a success.

For more information about the campaign to save Vendovi Island, visit <http://sjpt.org/>

Legendary Banked Slalom: The Quest for the Duct Tape

The legend was born back in 1985 with the first running of the Legendary Banked Slalom at Mount Baker. Over the years, this annual event has become one of the premier snowboarding events in existence. In fact, it's the longest-running organized snowboarding event in the world. This year's event will take place February 8-10 and as usual, will draw snowboarders like moths to flame.

Each day will see about 310 competitors for a total of over 900 runs, according to Mount Baker Ski Area General Manager Gwyn Howat. Qualifying events are held on Friday and Saturday, and the finals are on Sunday.

Howat says that the idea was hatched by Tom Sims (of Sims Snowboards) and her dad Duncan Howat. At the time Mount Baker was one of only a handful of ski areas that welcomed boarders on the chair lifts. My, how things have changed.

The Legendary Banked Slalom provides a chance for "everyone - from 8-year old first-time racers to Olympians" to ride the same course on the same days, she says. The winner receives a trophy made out of - wait for it - duct tape. That's right: duct tape. It's sort of an inside joke, harkening back to the good old days when boarders applied the grey stuff to their winter boots to make them stiff enough to ride in as well as to use to attach themselves to their bindings. No prize money - just a duct tape



trophy.

Yet the event draws some of Planet Earth's best snowboarders. Why? Well, let's face it: Baker is a sacred mountain for boarders.

Howat puts it like this: "There are just some places on Earth where magic combinations of natural elements come together and create special conditions for a particular sport. Baker just happens to be one of those places for those who enjoy snow."



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Vanquishing the Darkness

A Winter Sunrise at
14,000 Feet

Story by Lisa Toner

Sometimes, when clouds shroud the mountains and puddles linger in parking lots, winter feels like a steep price of admission for living in the Pacific Northwest. Every year, I make a deal with myself: I'll endure the dark and rain because of the glorious summer ahead. So, I train for my warm-weather hobbies. I suffer through rainy bike rides, flee to the indoor climbing gym, and hurry outside if the sun appears. But, in the depths of winter, early sunsets and soggy shoes wear on my patience. Fenders and Gore-Tex are burdensome. I start researching sunnier climates and think, *what would I give to be transported, just for a day, to summer in the alpine?*

But sometimes, even in the depths of midwinter, nature offers us a gift. On one such happy occasion in the generally bleak month of January, the weather forecast began hinting at the unthinkable: a strong system of high pressure that would bathe the region in sun and warm temperatures for several *weeks!* Sure enough, the storms quieted and the avalanche danger dropped to the kind of safe conditions usually found in midsummer. Yet, down in the lowlands, we didn't see the sun due to the bizarre weather phenomenon known as an inversion. Warm air rose into the mountains and cold air stayed trapped in the valleys, blanketing the lowlands in a hazy fog. From Seattle, you would

never know that good weather was waiting higher up.

The stellar forecast propelled my partner Jon and me out of our winter lethargy. We set our sights high - on Mt. Rainier, which I had not yet climbed. A ski approach and winter summit sounded like a memorable first trip up our state's iconic 14,409' volcano. All week, we worked and studied in a foggy gray shroud, wondering if the sun was really out there. It felt strange to fill our mountaineering packs on a dark Friday night in January.

On Saturday morning, the car's headlights struggled to pierce the heavy mist on I-5. Our brains were just as foggy; we made a series of errors before

even reaching the mountain. Jon, who had climbed Mt. Rainier five times previously, reassured me that he knew the way to the trailhead. When we started seeing signs for Olympia, it became clear that we'd long since passed the correct exit. Around that time, Jon also realized that he had left our fuel canister on the porch. We wandered around Olympia's empty streets until we found a store where we could buy a new stove. We blamed our bumbling start on the fog and drove groggily onward. This was not the most auspicious beginning.

Winding through the misty forest, we could barely imagine that the giant volcano loomed above us. Maybe Mt. Rainier had given up on this dark,

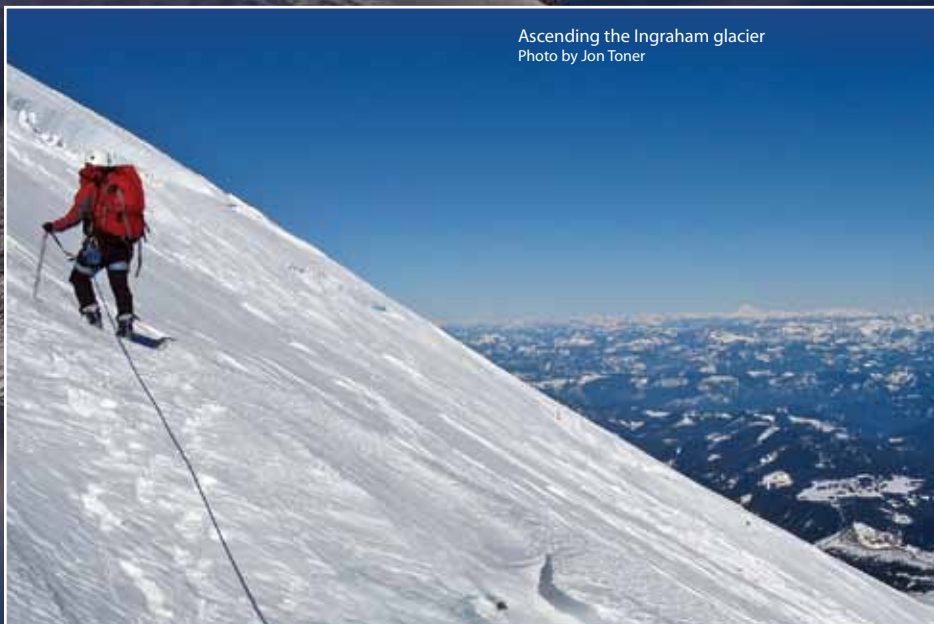


Mt. Rainier's summit dome with Adams, Hood and St. Helens in the distance.
Photo by Steph Abegg

forsaken place and simply disappeared. Perhaps the weatherman had played a joke on us and it was raining up there. Heck, even if we found the mountain, the thought of hiking up nearly 10,000 feet was exhausting. We drove silently on. Then, light penetrated the fog! We flicked off the headlights. Yawns became exclamations. Our tired winter eyes brightened and we donned sunglasses. Sunshine!

When we pulled into the parking lot at Paradise, it was nearly full. We stepped out of the car, flinching in anticipation of the usual winter chill. Instead, balmy 53-degree air welcomed us. Inhaling deeply, we took in sparkling blue skies and glistening mountains. Giddy skiers, snowshoers, and sightseers bustled about, slathering on sunscreen and gearing up for adventures. That day, all of us remembered why our state is the most beautiful place in the world. Mt. Rainier loomed above, so close, but so far away.

After securing our climbing permits, we extracted our skis from the car and carefully leaned them on a snow bank. This would be Jon's first back-



Ascending the Ingraham glacier
Photo by Jon Toner

country ski tour and my fourth. We marveled at our bindings, which could switch between uphill and downhill mode. On the bottom of the skis, we affixed skins whose grippy nap would give us one-way traction when we skied uphill. At the ripe old hour of 1 PM, we departed energetically from the parking lot, with 5000 feet to gain before sunset.

Swish. Thunk. Swish. Thunk. As we skinned efficiently upwards, Jon recited pointers from his backcountry skiing book. On a few icy, steep sections, we took off the skis to walk, but overall we found ourselves moving easily upward

across the snow. As darkness fell, we removed our skis and hurried the last few hundred feet to Camp Muir, at 10,188 feet. There, we joined a small village of climbers, skiers, and backpackers. We melted snow late into the night, wondering what conditions the mountain would give us in the morning.

My watch beeped at 4 AM, and we jolted awake in the dark. The knowledge that we were half way up Mt. Rainier in the middle of winter got our adrenaline pumping. Feeling the weight of the journey ahead, we strapped crampons onto our ski boots, tied into our rope, and hiked somberly away from Camp Muir.



Skiing down from Camp Muir on sastrugi snow
Photo by Jon Toner

I was alone on the end of the rope. In the pre-dawn blackness, my world was restricted to my own breathing, the faint boot track below my feet, and the frail circle of light cast by my headlamp on the glittering snow. Though invisible in the stygian darkness, the mountain loomed large in our imaginations. The awesome silence was broken only by the crunch of crampons on “Styrofoam” snow and the clink of gear on my harness.

We ascended steeply up through the eerily-named Cadaver Gap, glad that its treacherous boulders were firmly frozen in place. When we reached the Ingraham Glacier, we stopped for a snack in the

watch it tumble into a nearby crevasse - a stark reminder of the mountain's dangers, made more unnerving by the deep blackness of the winter night. I led onward on firm snow, finding a kind of zen peace in the silent, steady rest-step. Time seemed to stand still as we inched upward through the looming, moon-like landscape. Then, at 7:30, a hint of blue appeared on the horizon. A ribbon of peach, then deep orange, joined in, silhouetting Mt. Adams and Mt. Hood. At last, the sun crested the horizon! For a fleeting moment, the mountain was golden with new light.

Now the broad summit loomed above us, not seeming to grow any closer as we labored upward. Around 13,000 feet, we both began feeling the effects of high altitude. Our bodies protested, slowing our footsteps. Breathing became harder. My thoughts became fuzzy. I felt lazy. Sleepily, I muttered, “We’re close enough. Let’s just turn around here and say we did it.”

dark. I took my watch out of my pocket to check the time, only to drop it and

Yet, we pressed on, one step leading to another. Seven hours after leaving camp, we arrived at the summit crater and crossed over to Columbia Point, the highest spot on the crater rim.

With Washington State spread out below us, we took the obligatory summit victory photos and savored the calm and stillness. We visited some icy, sulfurous steam vents, where we found evidence of past emergency bivouacs – yet another reminder of how serious any climb of Mt. Rainier is.

All climbers love sunny summits, but we’re not meant to live there. Restlessness and cold soon spurred us

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downward. On the descent, we traded the slow, methodical rest-step for the fast, confident plunge-step. Bombing down the glaciers to Camp Muir, we reached the tent in two exhilarating hours. After a brief catnap, we packed up, donned our skis, and ungracefully skidded over frozen waves of snow called *sastrugi*. The mountain gifted us with a brief stretch of perfect corn snow before cement-like conditions prevailed.

As sunset painted the Tatoosh Range pink, the bliss of sun, mountains, and snow felt endless. Then, just before I reached the parking lot, the snow turned into deep, frozen ruts. My reverie was interrupted by a hard faceplant. Ugh. Back to reality! Sure enough, the rains returned and the mountains disappeared behind clouds. Yet, even now, the image of the golden sunrise on Mt. Rainier lingers in my memory. To me, it is a symbol of the hope and beauty that await us even when winter's darkness seems impenetrable.



Looking out over the vast summit crater
Photo by Lisa Toner

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A Few Decades on Galbraith Mountain

A Cultural History

Story by Mark Peterson

It has been an incredible experience to witness the immense amount of positive change a sport like mountain biking - and an asset like Galbraith Mountain - can bring to a community. North Lookout Mountain, commonly known as Galbraith Mountain, has changed drastically over the past 20 years as mountain biking has taken root and flourished both on the mountain and in the local community. But things weren't always the way they are now.

Early Days

In the years before mountain biking became popular, the gates to the roads were open and vehicle access was commonplace. The stories of the epic parties were at least mostly true, and if the amount and variation of trash provides us any clues, general mayhem must have surely ensued. After reaching a crescendo of craziness, the surrounding neighbors pressed for the gates to be closed and the free-for-all ended - but the litter remained. Mountain bikers, then a loosely organized user group, volunteered to help out and earned some big points with the timber company as a result. We took part in loading three dump trucks full of miscellaneous appliances, auto parts, scrap metal and more than a few indescribable and unsavory articles of who knows what.

Generally speaking, after that act of volunteerism, the mountain's owners adopted a "don't ask, don't tell" policy regarding mountain bike usage on Galbraith for many years. We were lucky to have Jim "Sully" Sullivan, considered by many to be the founding father of mountain biking in the Whatcom County region, living at the base of the mountain. His early efforts in working with the timber companies in a positive, albeit somewhat covert fashion, led to the access we enjoy today.

David Killian crosses it up on the Unemployment Line
Photo by Buff Black

Early trail crews met at Sully's house on Galbraith Lane, proceeded to get way too wired on espresso, and hiked up the skidder roads to build yet another section of trail. As the network of trails grew, so did the length of our trail crew marches. Looking back on those years, it is amazing the miles of trails that were constructed without any kind of vehicle access. Early trails were often game trails that were minimally cleared, narrow and brutally technical, or existing motorcycle trails in various stages of disrepair. General trail maintenance was also much less an issue as there were vastly less users resulting in probably less than a 1,000 passes a year - a far cry



those were the general conditions on Galbraith for almost a decade. We rode on the mountain and built trails without as much as an afterthought. Things were what they were, and access seemed, in a weird historical sense, like a given. Maybe it was because, at that time, most forested areas were openly accessible and minimally managed. In much of the surrounding woods it was commonplace to venture off via mountain bike, motorcycle or 4 X 4 and not ever really feel like you were trespassing or doing something wrong. We were just doing what so many other user groups had done in our region for so long before us.

Trail building during that era was pretty loose with the main rule being “don’t harm any marketable timber”, and that actually seemed really like the only rule. With that ethic at heart, the network of social trails expanded. Many of those same trails remain in some iteration or another and provide the backbone of the trail system, as it exists today.

Trailhead access early on consisted mainly of stealth trails through vacant lots at the end of a myriad of dead end streets that terminated at the foot of the mountain. Which streets were chosen was a direct reflection of how copacetic - or not - the neighbors were. Eventually, the preferred North side access became the ever-popular Ridge Trail currently served via the Miranda Trailhead and a small City of Bellingham Parking lot. Southside preferred access was via Galbraith Lane - a road name that was eventually conferred on the mountain by the user community at large.

To many of the long-time local riders, this era of Galbraith history is considered to be somewhat of a Golden Age. As the sport of mountain biking progressed so did the experimentation with wood features, ramps, stump drops and ladders, all showcased in the well-loved “Chutes and Ladders” area. Virtually no timber harvesting occurred during these years and the trail network expanded in a more or less organic fashion without incident or conflict. In a geographical sense this time coincided with being at the end of a long timber harvest cycle. The forest stood tall, in places dense and dark, and the landscape contributed to the sense of mystery and the feeling that this was an adventurous place to ride bikes, especially those outfitted with marginal 1980s mountain bike technology.

Changing Times

At the end of the so called “Golden Age” a local timber company and real estate developer, Trillium Corporation completed a long-pursued land trade and acquired essentially 95% of the mountain biking area as we know it today. The new landowners understood the potential liability of having an unplanned derelict trail system on their timber property but they also understood the potential value of having a user group help manage their lands. Fortuitously, the CEO of the company was as much a pragmatist as he was a mountain

from the 4,000 a month (*ITAL*)we see today!

It is out of this early cooperative trail maintenance effort that the WHIMPS (Whatcom Independent Mountain Pedalers) were born. “I’d say the WHIMPs got serious around 1986-7,” Sully says, “mainly as trail clearers. Local solo riders saw value in coalescing.”

A Golden Age

As with many other things, people get along pretty well when there is a lot of supply and not a lot of demand and



James Mitchell on a snowy Galby day
Photo by David Killian

biker, and a groundbreaking stewardship agreement was forged. For the first time the mountain biking community had secured legal access for an expansive primary mountain bike use area in our region.

It was this stewardship agreement

that led to the rapid progression of the trails system. The original version of the agreement was a bitter pill for some, as one of the main stipulations for access was a 'no structures allowed' policy. In order to be in compliance with the new set of rules (and as many saw it, complicit with "The Man"), all of the wood features were decommissioned and for a few years the trail system was classic old-

school singletrack with no man-made features.

The decision to pull down the woodwork wasn't popular in some circles, but the unfettered trail building was reigned in and a more controlled trail management paradigm was adopted. But, the willingness to adapt to the new rules, along with the positive impacts of litter control, better trail construction and more responsible recreational use inspired confidence in the landowner. There were certainly struggles along the way as both the landowner and the WHIMPs adjusted to the new relationship. As new risk management practices were observed and Technical Terrain Features became the accepted standard in mountain biking areas around the country, the woodwork gradually returned and the trail network progressed in quantity and quality, facilitating a variety of riding styles.

Looking Ahead

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WHIMPS: Strength in Numbers

The WHIMPS (Whatcom Independent Mountain Pedalers) began as a loosely organized group of mountain bike aficionados in the late 80's, united by a desire to support and protect riding opportunities on Galbraith mountain. Now incorporated as a Federal non-profit, the group's executive board manages initiatives that include youth programs and rides as well as mountain bike education and outreach.

For more information: <http://whimpsmtb.org/>

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mountain biking within a 15 to 30-minute ride via a renowned Greenways trail system that connects the neighborhoods of Bellingham to Galbraith. Over 30 miles of former railroad and road right-of-ways have been converted to a well-thought-out connector system that provides great off-street access to the mountain bike trails.

Recently, the WHIMPS held a very successful fundraising event where nearly 500 people showed up to celebrate the visual arts that celebrate the burgeoning cycling culture in and around Whatcom County. When it comes right down to it, a huge reason - if not the sole reason - that the mountain bike community thrives is because of the one-of-a-kind metro mountain bike playground known as Galbraith Mountain. Today we have a municipality that is actively seeking ways to utilize the mountain as a recreational revenue generator. Whatcom County is home to four bicycle manufacturers, seven retail bicycle shops and is augmented by many other businesses like breweries, restaurants and hotels that support a large cycling community. An economy of scale is in place and the momentum keeps building.

The ability of businesses to attract quality talent utilizing the recreational opportunities of the area, especially Galbraith, is often cited by HR Managers as a way to combat the higher salaries that are offered in larger metropolitan areas. Some local companies highlight Galbraith Mountain and the world class mountain biking in their recruiting literature. Some have even been known to take candidates on bike tours

of the area. Many educational institutions including public, alternative and tribal schools also access Galbraith Mountain. Youth development activities such as Eagle

Scout and community service projects are now commonplace and the lure of Galbraith is a catalyst for youth volunteerism. Members of the mountain biking community view this increas-

ingly widespread acceptance from so many different sectors of the population as a success story for mountain biking as a sport and also for its contribution to the community.

We've seen a lot of changes in the last 20 years on Galbraith Mountain. Victories and setbacks. Conflict and compromise. But the future looks bright and the riding just keeps getting better.



Charlie Maliszewski, Koma Kulshan and the Sisters
Photo by Buff Black



Trillium Photo by Buff Black

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Making Tracks in

Story by Aaron Theisen

Snowshoes, Sunshine, and Silence

Just as winter snows shutter many of the region's outdoor recreation destinations, the Methow Valley, a multi-sport Mecca on the dry side of the Cascades, begins its second peak season. Although the area's Nordic ski system—the second largest in the country—is justifiably acclaimed, snowshoers also have plenty to celebrate.

The prime mover behind the Methow Valley's world-class winter trails system is the Methow Valley Sport Trails Association. In addition to maintaining the Methow's extensive Nordic trail network and organizing events throughout the year, including the three-day Methow Valley Nordic Festival, MVSTA also maintains a subset of trails specifically for snowshoers.

However, for the best Methow experience, make your own tracks in the backcountry. Although most of the Methow's beloved high-country routes in the Pasayten Wilderness, Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness and North Cascades National Park are inaccessible during the winter, several of the region's most popular and family-friendly trails, especially those along the rivers that meander through the Methow, are easily

Patterson Lake
Photo by John D'Onofrio

the Methow



accessible even when the snow piles up.

Winter is also a great time to enjoy the wildlife of the Methow. Chances are good to spot one or more of the Methow's mule deer in the open pine forests encircling the valley. (Mule deer also congregate in the fields and riparian areas near many of the region's major roads. Avoid a too-close wildlife encounter and be a deer-alert driver). And with abundant wetland areas and upland forests, the Methow Valley is one of the state's prime birding areas.

A word of warning: most of the Sno-Parks listed on maps cater to, and are quite popular with, snowmobile users. On peak winter weekends, the parking lots are packed with trailers. Avoid these and seek out one of the quiet non-motorized trails of the Methow.

Below, four great introductions to the snowshoe routes of the Methow Valley.

1. Sun Mountain trail system

Sun Mountain Lodge, just south of downtown Winthrop is the heart of a network of short trails that meander along the rolling ridges abutting the Methow Valley. For a superb introduction to the Sun Mountain trail system, check out the 6-mile Patterson Mountain loop, which departs from Patterson Lake and wanders through scattered

aspen groves and sunny slopes above the lake. Time your snowshoe for early morning or late-evening to watch the ever-present Methow sun glance off the showcase peaks of the North Cascades. The Patterson Mountain loop can also be accessed from an alternate trailhead near the Sun Mountain Lodge parking lot.

Driving directions: From Winthrop, drive east on SR 20 0.6 mile, crossing the bridge over the Methow River. Immediately after crossing the bridge, turn right on Twin Lakes Road. Follow Twin Lakes Road 3.1 to Patterson Lake Road. Turn right and follow this road 6.3 miles to its terminus at the Sun Mountain Lodge. Purchase a trail pass in the Sun Mountain Lodge gear shop on the main floor, then drive a mile back to the Patterson Lake trailhead.

2. Cedar Falls

Amble up a canyon 5.5 miles roundtrip to the crashing cataract of Cedar Falls. Views through the park-like east slope pine and fir forest are infrequent, though openings in the canopy reveal the rocky prominence of the Goat Wall above the tiny town of Mazama. Meantime, enjoy the sounds of Cedar Creek cascading in the canyon below.

Driving directions: From Winthrop follow State Route 20 west for 17 miles to Klipchuck Campground. Continue 0.25 mile from the turnoff, turning right onto Forest Road 200 (signed for Cedar Creek). Drive FR 200 for 1 mile to its terminus at a gravel pit and the trailhead. Note: the trailhead is only accessible by vehicle early in the winter. As snowfall accumulates, the highway closure moves eastward to Early Winters campground, adding three miles of 'shoeing on a popular snowmobile route.

3. Loup Loup Pass / Buck Mountain

The Loup Loup summit area east of Winthrop offers open-forest wandering on the western edge of the Okanogan River valley. Some of the state's best remaining old-growth ponderosa pine forests can be found here, intermixed with shrub-steppe mainstays like bitterbrush and bunchgrass. This 8-mile roundtrip, on a closed and quiet forest road, passes monolithic pines and rocky



Many of the Methow's most popular and family-friendly trails are easily accessible in winter
Photo by Aaron Theisen

outcroppings on its way to a still-standing lookout.

Driving directions: From Winthrop drive east on SR 20 21.7 miles to the summit of Loup Loup Pass. Continue another 2.5 miles east to a junction with Buck Mountain Road (FR 1100) on the left (north). Park in the plowed pullout at the base of Buck Mountain Road.

4. Lookout Mountain

Lookout Mountain looms over the town of Twisp, a relatively pristine island of roadless land only minutes from SR 20. An 8-mile roundtrip snowshoe, first on forest road, then through airy fir forest, grants panoramic views of the Methow Valley and its encircling summits. Especially attractive are the snow-cloaked peaks of the Chelan-Sawtooth

Wilderness to the south.

Driving directions: From Twisp drive south on SR 153 to Carlton and continue another mile before turning right (west) onto Libby Creek Road (FR 1049). Stay right at the first road junction at 2.5 miles, and at 3.6 miles turn left onto FR 1046. Drive 0.5 mile on this road, and park at the small unofficial snow-park area at the base of FR 200 on the left.

Making Tracks Around Town

Because the Methow caters to a winter crowd, apres'-snowshoe spots are easy to find. Winthrop, which has fashioned itself in an Old West aesthetic, complete with wooden sidewalks and storefronts, is the hub for tourism and outdoor recreation in the Methow Valley. Tiny Twisp, 8 miles east of Winthrop on SR 20, has a vibrant arts community and a more laid-back

charm.

Wander Riverside Ave. in Winthrop for a variety of food and drink options, from casual to chic. Carlos 1800 Mexican Grill and Cantina makes a great family-friendly post-snowshoe stop; try the poc-chuc Yucateco, with pork marinated in a unique spicy/citrusy sauce. Next door, the Old Schoolhouse Brewery, which serves up a large menu of craft beers brewed onsite, is the place to be on weekend nights, with locals and tourists rubbing elbows in the cozy space.

Winter weekends play host to a full calendar of events, from the Nordic Festival to the Hot Air Balloon festival. Come in February for the Winthrop Snowshoe Softball tournament, which belies the adage: "snowshoeing is just like walking".

Lodging abounds, too, although keep in mind that winter is high season in the Methow Valley. Although the winter closure of the North Cascades Scenic Highway means travelers from the west side of the Cascades must travel some seven hours from Seattle via Highway 2, hotel rooms are in high demand. Come December, “No Vacancy” signs go up as quickly as the rates. Book well in advance, or better yet, come in March for off-peak rates and quiet trails. Try the Chewuch Inn & Cabins, whose owners, Dan and Sally Kuperberg, are serious outdoors enthusiasts and can provide trail-tested knowledge and advice. The afternoon baked goods in the spacious, wood-appointed main lodge make for a nice post-trek treat, as does the outdoor hot tub.

Several locations in Winthrop rent snowshoes, including Methow Valley Ski School and Rentals, Methow Cycle and Sport, Winthrop Mountain Sports, and the North Cascades Basecamp.




Wander through open, park-like stands of ponderosa and bunchgrass - some of the best remaining in Washington - on Loup Loup Pass
Photo by Aaron Theisen

Winthrop Mountain Sports, on Riverside Ave. in the heart of downtown Winthrop, also boasts an impressive array of outdoors clothing and equipment behind its tiny storefront.

Check out the store’s extensive selection of USGS topographical maps of the region; very useful as many of the area’s forest roads are inadequately marked.



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Surfing Tofino

Story and photos by Molly Baker

“This is procrastination weather,” said my mother. “It feels like a slow death waiting for the sky to turn blue around here.” After three foreboding days of rain in Tofino, British Columbia, I was beginning to agree.

And so it began, my brave battle to convince my 54-year-old mother from California that surfing in British Columbia was a sane idea. I’d already gotten as far as our arrival in Tofino. But there was still the claustrophobic wetsuit, the awkward parade down to the beach with surfboard in tow, and the final plunge into the icy, raucous waves, charging the beach in an intimidating cacophony. I felt success being dragged from me like a sand dollar swept away in an unstoppable rip current. And then I remembered my mother’s fear of sharks. I was sure we might never touch the water.

An avid swimmer, shoe-shopping addict, and a snotty-nosed-kindergarten expert, my mother is a closet adventurer who often hides behind the curtain of a myriad of excuses, one of them being her lack of competitiveness. My father, an athletic and patient, 62-year-old retired San Francisco fire fighter, was the perfect recruit for my mission,

despite the fact that I ‘broke’ him on a recent backcountry ski expedition in Argentina. Possibly, if I’d neglected to implode his trust in my idea of an enjoyable vacation, he might have anxiously jumped at the job of being my mom’s cheerleader, but I could even see the hesitation in his eyes. So, I decided, why not put this into other people’s hands, someone who at least

appeared more trust-worthy? I jumped on the phone and immediately made a reservation with Tofino’s favorite, Surf Sister Surf School. They were my last salvation.

I checked the weather after booking our lesson. Forecasted was a heavy dose of the Sunshine Coast’s special—rain served with a cloudy mix of fog and cool temperatures. A few days later we arrived at the beach to discover that the weathermen around Tofino have the luxury of usually being right. The conditions just don’t change enough to provide the

opportunity for inaccurate forecasts. And when they are wrong, the unexpected sunshine is enthusiastically accepted. We didn’t get the chance to love the weathermen for being wrong, so we just liked them for preparing us, by being right.

We stepped out of my parent’s Subaru at the parking lot at





Mr. and Mrs. Baker follow Dominga into the water at Cox Bay, an ideal zone for pseudo-surfers and avid surfers alike

Cox Bay, in rain jackets and galoshes. A waterfall cascaded from the visor of my mother's hood, veiling the skepticism I knew I would see in her eyes. One thing was certain - this would be easier if it were sunny.

Dominga, our instructor, jumped out of the Surf Sister van looking the part of a modern-day Gidget. Blonde, slight, and athletic, I was sure that we had seen her in one of the surf posters at the storefront. She was a walking surf-girl advertisement. *Better* than Barbie, she was athletic, smart, and beautiful. And the rain seemed of no consequence to her. I hoped that the laid-back beach dweller stereotype was in her nature. As my parents mingled with the other middle-aged couple in the group, I quickly initiated conversation, hoping she was the person for the job. If I couldn't turn my mom into believer, Dominga would have to, and she did so, graciously and unknowingly.

"I don't know of a single shark attack in Tofino," Dominga told one of the other women in the lesson. "It is the main thing people fear, but here, it is really not a problem."

I watched my mother's eyes rapidly avert their attention from my father, help-

ing her squeeze into her wetsuit, towards Dominga. I could see the power of her hesitation deteriorating.

As we walked to the beach, I overheard my father laughing about getting into his wetsuit, a task I am confident not even veteran surfers find enjoyable. Wetsuits can be quite suffocating in a way that resembles trying to squeeze your body into a miniature balloon. The rubbery material drags against your bare skin squeezing the air barrier out and creating a suction that makes your body feel like it has been consumed by new skin. This fresh hide gives the confidence of an effective costume, which allowed all of us to bravely (and briefly) play the part of amphibious, cold-water aficionados.

Dominga initiated the lesson on the beach at Cox Bay with an hour of explanation regarding surf etiquette, weather facts, and tactics for standing on your board. Each of us, sprawled in the sand on top of our imaginary surf board, screamed beginner. Even worse, we were tagged as helpless novices in the classic magenta Surf Sister rash guards. I don't believe my father ever allowed a thought about sporting a small, pink shirt into his mind. My mom diligently listened to

every word that came out of Dominga's mouth, her rash guard fitting awkwardly, but never distracting her attention from the lesson. And there I sat, stressing about our temporary greenhorn tattoos. I realized that it was not just my mom's ego being tested on this vacation. Surfing made us all feel like fish out of water.

I've heard people say that love makes you brave. Experiences I'd had with my boyfriend, both of us professional skiers, provided insight into the truth of that statement the first time I'd heard it. Mountains somehow looked a little smaller, knife-edge ridges became benign walks, and days of snow camping in international wilderness areas have felt like luxury, with the subconscious incentive of being brave for *our* experience.

However insignificant, I believe that day in Tofino, all three of us benefited a little from this simulated bravery. I know I felt better having my dad paddle out into the water next to me. And I knew my mom was doing this as much for me as she was for herself.

"Wipe out" is a term that connotes a disastrous spill, a donation from surf culture to the mainstream, known and used by ocean and couch surfers alike.



Surf Sister Dominga shows us she is surf savvy, sans the wipe-out

It doesn't matter if you spend your days waiting for the surf to improve or for your favorite sitcom to start, people know about

wiping out.

After paddling out past the white water with my father, the bunny-slopes in the wonderful world of a surf novice, I turned to see him wipe out. Just as suddenly as he was standing on his board, he was violently thrown face down into the water, his surfboard catapulted into the air like a breaching whale. He came up with a look that suggested surprise to still be alive, salt water pouring from his nostrils. But he paddled back out to join me. Both of us squinted, looking towards shore for my mother. Laughing and smiling, she played on the 10-foot long board in the white water, trying to at least stand on her knees.

The waves were above our heads and so was the skill required to surf them. But we stayed, helplessly bobbing up and down on our boards, waiting for energy to return to our lifeless arms. My father "caught" a few rides into the beach, cautiously balancing on his board, demonstrating that in your 60's you really can be a

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surfer. I got over my fear of the vulnerability in being a beginner. Really, I had no choice, because you can wear an indistinguishable wetsuit and immediately jump into the water solo, but you can't disguise a beginner wipe out, of which I was served a plentiful portion. My mom did what she always does - tried the activities that life as a mother has not allowed her to completely pursue, but the courage of her children has allowed her to enjoy. I may not have made a surf bum out of her, but at least I was able to share a part of the life she had given me, a life with limitless horizons.

And by this point, all of us had completely forgotten about the rain.

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Outposts of Ice:

Winter Fire Lookouts of the North Cascades

Imagine a mythic hut – carved from frost and ice, fashioned into a form strangely familiar to our sense of what a house should look like, yet abstract and barely recognizable. If you could travel to this strange hut sitting in perhaps the most inhospitable spot found in the mountains of the Pacific Northwest, then you would have arrived at one of the very few fire lookouts remaining, in the dead of winter – the hidden, frozen season of the North Cascades.

When I began photographing these mountains from the air in December of 2002, I had not considered fire lookouts as an objective. It is one thing to photograph remote wintry alpine terrain – a strange and marvelous landscape indeed – but visiting fire lookouts and photographing them during winter turned out to be a unique and highly compelling endeavor in its own right. It is challenging from both the flight and photographic standpoint, and it adds perspective to a remote, unseen world virtually devoid of any human connection. Now, after



more than ten years, I've been exceedingly fortunate to photograph mountains and glaciers across western North America. But I return occasionally to these iconic spots such as Desolation, Slate Peak, and Copper Mountain – and I still retain that same old feeling of wonder and amazement when I circle the plane and glimpse these sturdy, lonely lookouts, confronting and withstanding

yet again that unbelievable onslaught of winter thrown at them by the North Cascades.

Check out John Scurlock's amazing aerial mountain photography at <http://www.pbase.com/nolock>.



Check out John Scurlock's Outposts of Ice photo gallery at AdventuresNW.com.



Clockwise from top left: Hidden Lake Peak, Slate Peak, Goat Peak, Desolation Peak, Sourdough Mountain, Scurlock flying high, Park Butte





The Edge of Paradise

A Walk on the Na Pali Coast

Story and photos by John D'Onofrio

I've been thinking about the 22-mile Kalalua trail for many, many moons. The trek is a world classic; winding along the breathtakingly beautiful Na Pali coast of Kuai'i on an ancient route that skirts heart-pounding cliffs and dives into primordial jungle. Na Pali is aptly named. It means, literally, the cliffs. Direct and to the point.

And at the end of the line is picture-perfect Kalalau beach; the very embodiment of tropical paradise. A place, it is said, where dreams come true.

The trip has been nearly a year in the planning. I'm accompanied by my two sons, Ethan and Christopher. It's a chance for us to spend some quality time together in one of the most beautiful places in the world. The hike has a reputation for being intense; rough travel, exposed cliffs, impenetrable jungle - epic in every sense of the word.

A Kuai'i-based friend has driven us from Hanalei to the trailhead with a promise to pick us up again in six days. His rusted-

out Buick Estate Wagon pulls into the parking lot in a cloud of red dust and we unload our backpacks among swarms of tourists taking pictures of each other. The trailhead shares a parking lot with Ke'e beach, a gorgeous (and extremely popular) north shore destination and today it's crowded with blissed-out tourists.

We hoist our packs and start up the rocky trail, climbing ancient stones placed there by the long-gone Hawaiians who once lived in great numbers on the Na Pali coast. It is estimated that at one point 5,000 people lived along this now empty stretch of coastline. Today, the permanent population is limited to the scattered feral hippies that have staked claims deep in the jungles of the Kalalau valley, escapees from civilization, left more or less alone by The State. Sanctuary: Elusive in this regulation-obsessed age.

We climb over the stones and remarkable gnarled roots into the jungle amongst throngs of camera-clutching day hikers, eagerly seeking a glimpse of Na Pali. The smell of sunscreen is thick in the air. Saying 'Hello' so often is exhausting. I look forward to the solitude of the trail ahead.



From a promontory the cliffs are revealed, receding into the distance like a Chinese brush painting, mist and dazzling ocean combining to delight the eye in ever-changing proportions. The path descends to Hanakapi'ai beach, two miles in and the end of the line for the day hikers. We cross Hanakapi'ai stream on boulders - we won't be at sea level again until the trail ends at Kalalua Beach.

From the beach, the trail climbs 800 feet in a hurry to the highest point of the trip where a giant boulder dubbed Space Rock marks the top. As expected, the tourists are all gone and we make our way quietly through the vibrant green jungle from one high point to another. Whales play far below in the sparkling sea and the air is filled with the music of unknown birds, the wind in the trees, and the distant crashing surf. We plunge into Hoolulu

Trail's end at Kalalua Beach

valley. After crossing the valley there is another climb. And another valley. And so on.

After several hours of this continuous up-and-down, we descend into the Hanakoa Valley, our destination for the night. We cross Hanakoa stream and make camp beneath wild coffee trees on a long-abandoned taro terrace in the bird-noisy jungle.

The next morning, a cool breeze blows through the canopy as we break camp and climb out of the jungle and onto exposed cliffs. We surprise a family of goats milling about the trail and they respond with irritated goat noises, unhappy with the intrusion. Far below, we can see dolphins jumping out of the water, their sleek forms appearing and disappearing against the sparkling surface of the ocean, an image of freedom and exuberance.

As we leave Hanakoa behind, the landscape changes rather abruptly – we are moving onto the dry side of the island and the dense tree cover now occupies only the gully bottoms. The cliffs rise even more sharply, covered only with a green patina of low vegetation and scattered swatches of exposed red dirt. Giant Sisal plants begin to crowd the trail, their bizarre forms like something imagined by Dr. Seuss.

The route now takes us along soaring cliffs with wide air a foot away. Because of the exposed nature of the trail, this area

is called Death Valley – not a place for acrophobic-types.

The cliff-hanger section of the trail



Paradise found:
the green spires of
Na Pali

gives way to another grunt up through thick vegetation on the northern side of Pu'ukulua. We cross a tumbling stream and dunk our sweaty heads in the cool water. From the top of Pu'ukulua we get our first glimpse of Kalalau beach, a vision in the distance. A final descent down a loose red volcanic slope (Pu'ukulua is also known as Red Hill) brings us down, at last, to sea level again.



Along the way:
The Kalalua trail

And there's the beach.

The pristine strip of white sand is bordered by precipitous black cliffs on each end and backed by the fluted green

spires of Na Pali. Waves crash in stupendous explosions of spray. A two-tiered waterfall drops from the heights to the beach, completing the vision of tropical nirvana.

We step onto the soft sand and drop our packs. Taking the boots off and feeling the sand between my toes is indescribably delightful. Within a few moments we're tumbling in the waves of the blue-green sea, all the sweat and dust of the trail gone in a splash. From out in the water the long coastline is fully revealed – miles of soaring sea cliffs in both directions.

The color scheme is stunning - the cliffs alternate between emerald green and the magenta of exposed volcanic soil, giving the scene the feel of a Maxfield Parrish painting. All that's missing is a toga-clad Greek maiden holding an urn.

We climb up to the travel-poster waterfall and rinse off the salt and sand by leaning back in the cascade, against the smooth time-grooved stone at its base. Yips are emitted.

The little bluff above the beach where we pitch our tent offers a million dollar view of both the ocean and the waterfall. Firewood is gathered from the base of the cliffs amongst the litter of boulders kicked down by goats. The impact zone.

As evening encroaches we watch the towering waves pound the cliffs, their foaming curls backlit spectacularly by the low angle sun. Mist rises from the green spires above camp. The sun drops into a complicated bank of clouds, illuminating them with expressionist strokes of light. The wet sand at the water's edge gleams with an iridescent luster in the golden sunset.

The following days are filled with a hundred variations on a theme of tropical reverie. Basking on the beach, splashing in the shore break, exploring the magnificent and mysterious jungle.

In the mornings, the cliffs above camp are crowded with goats, moving like tango dancers across the sheer faces. Birdsong surrounds us and the immense waves crash like tympani on the empty

beach. We've got this tropical Shangri-La to ourselves.

In the evenings the colors intensify and the coast is bathed in rich, golden light. When the sun sinks towards the radiant Pacific, the spires are painted in orange, purple and red. Each night a crescent moon rises and the moonlight shimmers in the foam of the waves. Our rhythms slow down and we find ourselves speaking in quiet voices.

On the second morning on the beach we load our day packs for an exploration of Kalalau Valley and head up the trail above the beach. Rounding a bend we encounter a somewhat wild-eyed and sun-darkened man walking our way, the first human that we've seen since the first day on the trail. He introduces himself as Duke and tells us that he's been here for four months, living in the jungle. He's got a kayak stashed in the bush that he uses to paddle to Hanalei for resupply. He bids us a good day and we continue on our way, up into the dense jungle.

The path meanders through the remains of old abandoned Hawaiian villages, passing over numerous overgrown taro terraces. Walking through the ancient colonnades of stone feels like walking with ghosts. One can only imagine this coast full of villages and people farming,

fishing and eating fruit from the trees. The garden of Eden.

I climb a crumbling red rib to a vantage point high above the tree cover and survey the valley spread below me. The green pillars rise in a great amphitheatre against the blue sky. To the west I can see the beach, its strip of white sand merging with the green sea. An ancient stone wall at the edge of the jungle bears the complicated patina of the passage of untold time; long years facing the open Pacific. A rainbow appears, unutterably beautiful, and the cresting waves flash in the last light of day.

Our last morning on the beach. A gentle breeze softly fingers the twisted trees above our camp — the sky is overcast,

a good thing as our hike today will be exposed to the tropical sun.

As we load our backpacks, Duke reappears from out of the jungle. A small old-fashioned rucksack is slung over his shoulder, a bamboo flute protruding. He greets us warmly and wishes us a good hike. Christopher asks him how long he plans to stay at Kalalau. He thinks for a long moment and then says, "As long as it takes."

We hit the trail, ascend Red Hill, and start across the plunging cliffs, among the ubiquitous bands of goats. A Hawaiian man passes us, going in. He's barefoot.

The miles pass in a series of zen-happy moments, the trail undulating along the spectacular cliffs, plunging into



The trail across "Death Valley": Not for acrophobic-types

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Hanakapi'ai stream and begin the final climb up the ancient paving stones over the last saddle above Ke'e beach and down to the trail-head. I walk down the beach, incongruous with my massive backpack and filthy clothes among the sun-bathing crowds on the sand. I drop my pack, don my swim suit and float in a state of exhausted bliss in the calm reef-protected water. Looking down the coast from the lagoon, the cliffs recede in the distance like a dream.

For us it's a dream that has
come true.

bird-filled jungle and then emerging on the green, wind-swept edge again. Once again we camp in Hanakoa Valley among the taro terraces.

We rise early and hike through the jungle on the indistinct path to Honakoa Falls, at 1,400 feet, one of Kuai'i's tallest. We're alone in the upper valley with

the birds and take advantage of the fine morning sun to submerge ourselves in the pool at the base of the bridal veil falls. Wet and refreshed, we linger in the lush green valley, reluctant to return to camp. Finally we retrace our steps, strap on our packs and head for home.

All too soon, I find myself back at

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Eight Crows, Flying

The pattern
forms
and reforms
never broken.

Someone once told me
that any two things
can be described by a ratio.

I'm not sure that applies to crows.

Owl Wren & Crow

Like the full moon
barn owl
bright in the night sky.

Deep within the forest
the song of the Pacific wren
quick splashes of light.

One hundred crows
tattered brush strokes
across the sky.

Approaching Storm

All day we watched the storm arrive
our candle burns clear in the still
evening.

Raven calls –
a low pitched bell above our tent
I fall asleep listening for wind.

Pumping water in the morning
the lake like shattered glass.

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saddle—not from the inside of a car.**



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Winter Hikes in Western Washington

No skis? No snowshoes? No problem!

These hikes are snow-free!

Story and photos by Craig Romano

The days have grown shorter and a shroud of snow has descended upon your favorite high country trails. Don't even think about hanging up your pack and hiking boots! This is Western Washington, not Montana, Minnesota or New Hampshire. There are plenty of places you can hike year round in the Evergreen State where the surroundings remain evergreen! While Washington's mountains get buried in snow all winter and spring - and lately, most of summer - the Columbia

River Gorge, Olympic rainforest valleys, Puget Sound, San Juan Islands, and Cascades foothills just see rain. And some of these locations don't even see too much of that, thanks to rain shadows.

Let skiers and snowshoers have the high peaks. Winter is a great time to check out those low country trails you passed by all summer. And what can you expect on those trails this time of year - aside from not trudging in snow? No bugs, a chance



A quiet moment atop Oyster Dome in the Chuckanut

for solitude, and great opportunities for observing wildlife. Hitting the trail during the dreary months is also a great way to fight the winter blues. A little fresh air and sun (it *does* come out occasionally) is the perfect remedy for cabin fever. Okay, let's hit the trail!

Columbia River Gorge

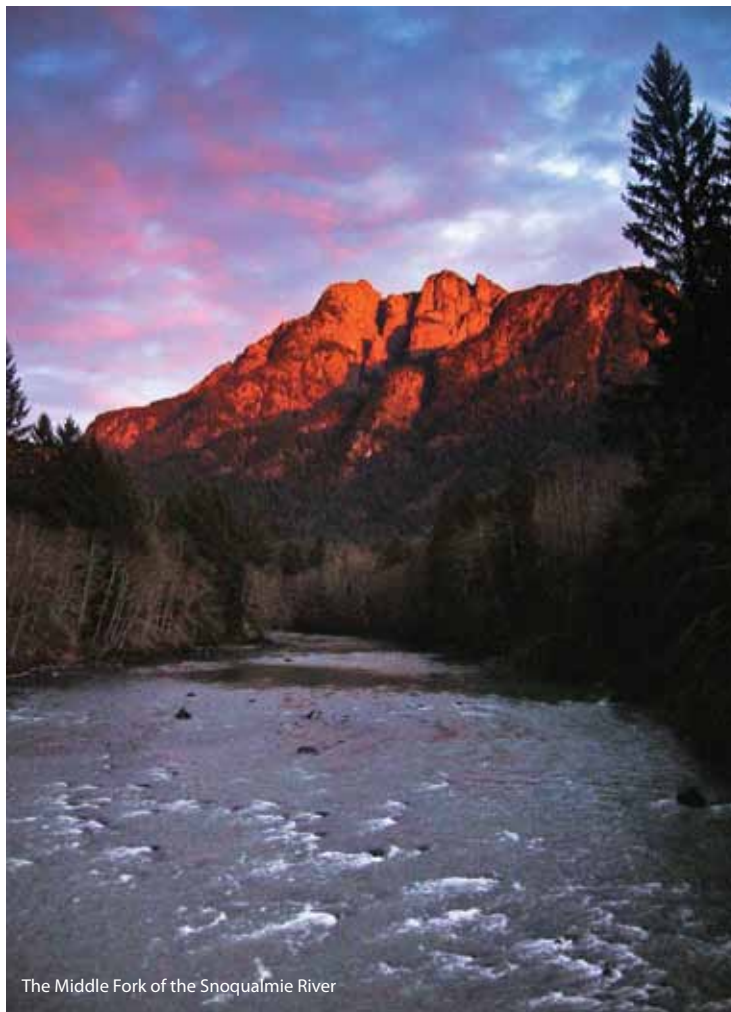
The only near-sea level gap in the Cascade Mountains, the Columbia River Gorge consists of ancient forest, thundering waterfalls, and towering basaltic bluffs. Mere minutes from the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Area and traversed by hundreds of miles of trails, the Gorge is a great destination for winter hiking. Waterfalls gush while trail visitation thins. During mild winters you can ascend mountains and ridges 4,000 feet or higher, keeping you in shape for summer expeditions. And there's no need to go to Oregon, as the Washington side has quite a trail assortment.

For waterfalls, head to Beacon Rock State Park's **Rodney and Hardy Falls**. Climb 500 feet in 1.1 miles to this pair of bellowing falls tumbling down Hamilton Mountain. Stand mesmerized, watching water cascade through a tight chasm into the Pool of Winds, a punchbowl basin. Pool of Mist is more like it - view it with your rain slicker worn snugly!

For sweeping views, hit the **Cape Horn Trail**. On this 7.5 mile loop, clamber over oak cloaked basalt bluffs that precipitously drop to river's edge. Skirt beneath a waterfall tumbling down a stark cliff face. Stroll across hilltop meadows where perpetual breezes whistle through contorted firs and stand upon lofty knolls

mouth agape, eyes wide open, beholding some of the most stunning scenery in the entire Pacific Northwest. (Note: the bottom half of the loop closes Feb 1st to July 15th to protect nesting falcons.)

For some of the best eagle watching outside of the Skagit Valley, wander the



The Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River

lower half of the 31-mile long **Klickitat Trail**. Hugging the banks of the glacier-born wild and scenic Klickitat River, hike past whitewater rapids and over a deep basalt chasm, thanks to a restored trestle.

Cast your eyes up to trees lining the river and spot scores of roosting bald eagles.

Olympic Rainforest Valleys

The Olympic Peninsula's temperate rainforest offers excellent winter wandering. Hike among some of the largest

living organisms in the world. Giant conifers cloaked in epiphytes and growing upwards of 300 feet dominate a saturated forest floor shrouded in mosses, ferns, and horsetails. While over 200 inches of annual rainfall is not unusual here, there are dry periods (albeit short) in the middle of the winter. The best thing about hiking the rainforest during the rainy season: few hikers and lots of elk that take reprieve from high country snows by hunkering down in the valleys all winter long.

Consider the 5.3 mile hike up the **Hoh River** to Five Mile Island. Traverse primeval forest, passing colonnades of Sitka spruce and walking under awnings of moss-cloaked maples. Formed by river channels, Five Mile Island is an inviting grassy bottomland graced with maple glades. If it's raining, head to the nearby Happy Four Shelter for your lunch break.

Find good family- and dog-friendly rainforest wanderings in the **Quinault Rainforest**. Starting near the rustic yet eloquent Quinault Lodge (a nice option for drying out afterward), hike through groves that inspired President Franklin D.

Roosevelt to establish a national park on adjacent lands in 1938. A classic loop option is just shy of four miles - incorporating Lake Quinault shoreline, a boardwalk through a cedar bog, and a handful of showy cascades.

Puget Sound and San Juan Islands

Thanks to the Olympic Mountain rain shadow effect, the San Juan, Whidbey and Camano Islands enjoy some of the mildest winter weather in Western Washington. Whidbey (if accessed from



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A winter's day at Ebey's Landing



the north) and Camano require no ferries. And riding the ferry in winter to the San Juans means no long queues. Hike to rugged rocky coastlines, sandy spits, and forested mountains punctuated with ponds. The islands' trails bustle in summer, but are quiet in winter and just as delightful.

On Orcas Island, hike the easy, nearly four mile loop around **Mountain Lake** in sprawling Moran State Park. Stroll through pleasant forest around one of the largest lakes in the San Juan Islands, admiring reflections of the stone tower and stark cliffs of 2,409-foot Mount Constitution, highest point in the San Juans. Admire too, beautiful signs, structures and trail work constructed by the Depression

Era Civilian Conservation Corps. For sprawling Salish Sea views, follow challenging trails up **Mount Constitution** - or hike up **Mount Pickett**, through the largest tract of old growth forest remaining in the Puget Sound Basin.

On Camano Island explore the

quiet trails of Cama Beach and Camano Island State Parks. While most activity at Cama Beach State Park is focused around its charming restored 1930s beachside cabins, its trails are often void of visitors. **Cranberry Lake**, a shallow wetland surrounded by cattails, spirea and huckleberry bushes is a nice family friendly destination.

On Whidbey Island, explore one of my favorite winter hiking destinations within the entire state, **Ebeys Landing**. Stroll across emerald fields, climb coastal bluffs towering above crashing surf, and wander along a beautiful beach gazing across busy coastal waters to a backdrop of snowcapped Olympic Mountains. For a 5.6 mile lollipop loop, start at the Prairie Overlook and hike across emerald lawns to golden bluffs. Then hike along bluff edges staring straight down at Perego's Lake - a lagoon bustling with shorebirds - formed by a narrow spit littered with giant drift logs. Loop back on the beach and return to the overlook.

Cascades Foothills

The rolling Cascades Foothills are great places for a winter hike, too. And depending on the year and location, you may even break the 3,000-foot line without encountering snow. Good views and a good workout are year-round incentives to head for the hills.

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Near Snoqualmie Pass, there are lots of excellent winter destinations. In the Issaquah Alps, I favor **Squak** over Tiger and Cougar Mountains as its trails are often pretty quiet and you can start right from Issaquah near cafes and brew pubs for both pre- and post-hike fueling.

If you want a real adventure, consider the **Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River Trail**. It offers a near-wilderness experience, following a glacier-fed rushing river through a deep valley of towering timber shadowed by craggy peaks. Watch for eagles and elk while listening for the echoes of the voices of First Peoples, trappers, miners, and lumbermen who passed before. Hike all the way - over 11 miles to Goldmyer Hot Springs or just saunter a few miles enjoying the trip just the same.

In the Skykomish River Valley, the Heybrook Lookout offers nice views, but the **Index Town Wall** offers much better ones. Forming a 1,200-foot backdrop of sheer cliffs above the town of Index, the town wall is imposing and awe inspiring.

Renowned among climbers, a not-so-well known hiking trail also leads to its top.

Just 1.3 miles long, but gaining 1,300 feet, the trail emerges from forest to the top of the wall. Clutch your heart, catch your breath, and take in an astonishing view of the little hamlet of Index perched along the North Fork of the Skykomish River against a dramatic backdrop of Wild Sky Wilderness peaks.

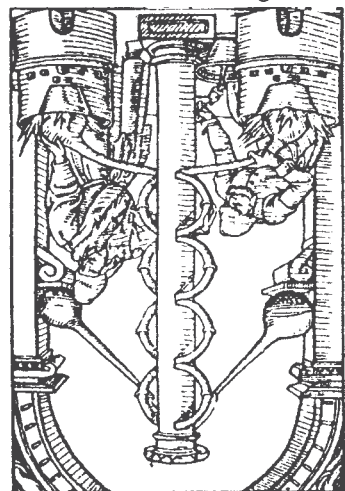
Further north in the Chuckanut Mountains between Bellingham and Mount Vernon, the **Oyster Dome** is a real pearl. Follow the Pacific Northwest Trail from the east or west to this 2,000-foot glacier-polished and fractured hunk of sheer cliff on Blanchard Mountain. Then take in an amazing view of the San Juan Islands, the snow-capped Olympic Mountains, and the Skagit River Flats.

If there are too many folks up there soaking up the sweeping maritime view, venture off onto adjacent trails back into the forest to Lily and Lizard Lakes.

Whatever you do, don't stay inside

this winter. Not when there are so many great trails and destinations to explore in Western Washington - regardless of how much snow falls in the Cascades.

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The **Adventures NW** Interview: Mountain Guide Larry Goldie

Story by Ted Rosen



On the Ortler: Larry Goldie, doing his thing in the Alps
Photo by Todd Sperry

When you think about a mountain guide, you probably imagine someone who has the physique of a lifeguard and the steel gaze of a jet pilot. Male or female, the mountain guide is preternaturally competent and patient. Whether it's a Sherpa on K2 or a Swiss uber-climber on the Matterhorn, the mountain guide is a global icon of strength, endurance, tenacity and courage.

Fortunately for his clients, North Cascades Mountain Guides co-founder Larry Goldie falls squarely into this stereotype. When you meet him, you'll get a smile featuring his TV-ad bright white teeth and a sincere greeting with a robust handshake. When you get down to business, he explains things clearly and authoritatively.

For Goldie, this isn't salesmanship. Instilling confidence can mean the difference between life and death up among the peaks. When things go to hell, the mountain guide is the one who assures you everything is OK - then goes on to prove it. Later on, as you gather 'round the fire and sip camp coffee, you can quietly express how you didn't think you were going to make it until that superhero somehow pulled your ass out of the soup.

Goldie has been delivering thrilling adventures to clients all over the world for over 20 years. Along the way, he's learned a few tricks that he likes to extol in brief epigrams:

"Be as comfortable as you can for as long as you can."

"The end goal is the parking lot, not the summit."

"If you don't know, don't go."

And the universally true: “If it’s free, it’s for me!”

He is an internationally certified mountain guide (IFMGA) and holds PSIA certifications in Nordic, Alpine, Telemark and Backcountry ski disciplines. As an AIARE trained instructor, his knowledge of snow conditions and avalanches is as comprehensive as you can get.

I caught up with him during a brief break in his busy schedule. Recently back from a ski tour in the Alps (followed immediately by teaching an AMGA ski guide course in Alaska), he was home with his wife Blue in the quiet hills above Mazama, Washington.

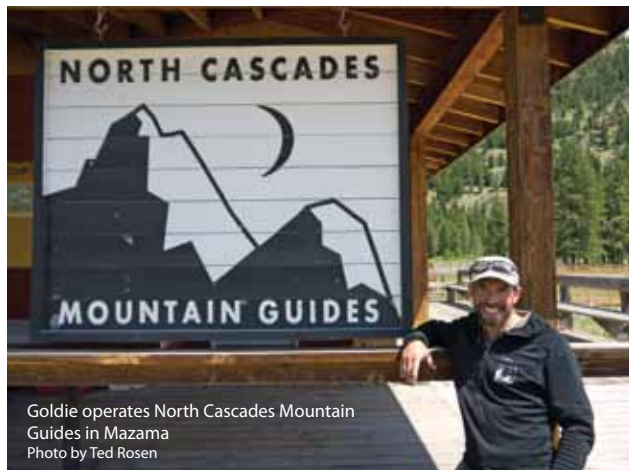
What got you into climbing?

Well, I was about 20 years old. I was living in the Adirondacks and I had been doing a lot of backpacking and hiking and I wanted to take things to the next level. I took a rock climbing course and found that climbing came very natural to me. Almost immediately I felt this connection. It was a new way of using my body. Climbing has this interesting dichotomy of its mental aspect – problem solving, figuring out physical moves – but then there’s the physical part of it, of using your body, being like a little kid...climbing trees or playing on a jungle gym. When you put those two things together, it just spoke to me right away. It felt very natural.

How did you graduate from climbing for fun into making it a career?

When I was studying at Western Washington University in Bellingham, I had become an avid climber and I was always looking for new climbing partners. Sometimes it was hard to find a partner so I’d find someone who was athletic and I’d teach them the skills they needed to climb just so I’d have a partner to go out with! After a while I found it was something I really enjoyed

– introducing the sport to people. It was at WWU where I started teaching rock climbing courses through the university’s Outdoor Program. During that time I got the opportunity to work with some much more experienced guides. Some of the people who taught at the university or worked at Whatcom County Parks Department were seasoned guides who had worked at places like the American Alpine Institute and other big guide



services. They weren’t guiding full time anymore but they still did it a bit so I got these incredible mentorships with these really experienced guides. They took me under their wing and “showed me the ropes”, so...

So I guess it was a straight line from that to running your own guide service?

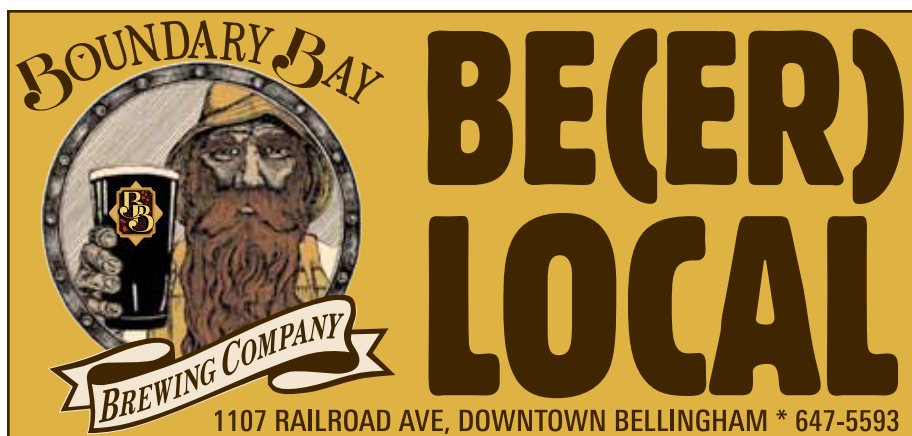
Not very straight (laughs), no... but...

You and your partners run North Cascades Mountain Guides. What kind of adventures do you offer your clients?

We do everything from first day rock climbing – people who have never ever gone rock climbing before – doing really easy short walls and introducing them to rope systems and managing rope safety, all the way up to full-blown climbing expeditions in places like Mount Kenya, the Alps and South America. And we also do everything in the ski world as well, from basic avalanche classes and first-time backcountry skiing to week-long ski traverses through the Alps, such as the Haute route and the Ortler. We do a lot of ski tours in the North Cascades of course, including ski descents of Mt. Shuksan and Mt. Baker, so really it’s the full gamut that we try to offer in the climbing and skiing worlds.

Obviously our backyard is here in the North Cascades. We do a lot of rock climbing right here in the valley floor in the Methow. In the summer we do a lot of alpine rock climbing, so you’re up in the mountains but primarily climbing on rock. We do a lot of stuff here at Washington Pass, just 15 minutes from our office in Mazama and overnight trips in the North Cascades National Park.

We also hold permits and regularly guide trips at places like Red Rocks in



Nevada. It's incredible there and we usually run a climbing camp for ten days in the fall when the weather isn't so great up here. We guide a lot in the Alaska range and in Denali National Park but not on Denali itself. We often have climbing trips to the east side of the Sierras in California. And we also offer quite a few trips in the European Alps, both climbing and ski trips

So it seems you can “graduate” students who have had local adventures and dream of going overseas.

Absolutely! And that's the philosophy behind our business. We don't want to take a client out once and never see them again. We're building a relationship with that person. We want to help them increase their abilities. If they have lofty climbing goals, we want to help them achieve those lofty goals. And even if they don't have such lofty goals, if they know they'll never become an elite

climber but they enjoy climbing or skiing at a moderate level and would like to do that at a variety of cool places, it's nice to offer them other venues.

What can clients expect on one of your adventures? What's it like?

A client can expect to be challenged. On all the trips we try to set clients up for success but there's always a certain level of challenge that they need to face and to push themselves at times, getting out of their comfort zone. But the one thing traveling with a guide assures you is a higher measure of safety than you would have on your own. Hiring a guide doesn't guarantee you any summits, it doesn't guarantee you the most incredible deep-powder skiing you've ever had. What it offers is a much higher margin of safety than if you were out there on your own. Many, many times, it does get you that summit or that powder. But keep in mind that as a guide my primary responsibility is to bring this person

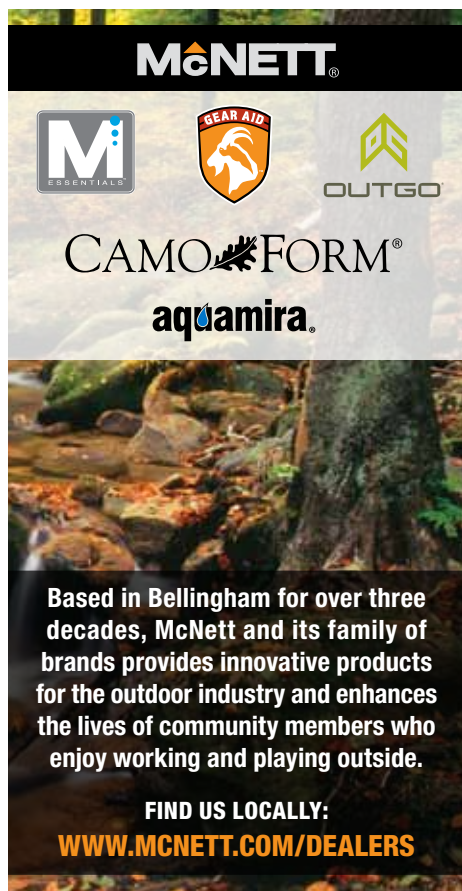
home safe and sound. If we get to the top, that's great. And we usually do. But ultimately, my responsibility is the care of that person.

You're an avalanche and snow condition expert. Any tips for the layman?

Generally speaking, the main avalanche danger is in the winter months. If you're going in to the back country in the winter there's a few basic things you can't be without. The most commonly mentioned ones are your safety equipment; beacon, shovel and probe. The more important one I would add to that is knowledge. If you haven't taken a basic avalanche course, you have no business heading out into avalanche terrain in the winter months. The saying we use all the time is “If you don't know, don't go.”

You take people on adventures all the time. What was your greatest adventure?

It's funny: we always joke that the



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true definition of an adventure is that it wasn't very much fun while it was happening. One that comes to mind is a climb with my good friend Scott Johnston in the Alps outside Chamonix. We were going to climb the Gervasutti Pillar on Mont Blanc du Tacul. It's a famous climb and an incredible test piece when it was first scaled. It's still a big challenging climb: a glacier approach up to a 2500 foot high rock buttress. It brings you up to a mountaintop where you can descend on a glacier.

We left our hut at 4 AM and started climbing. Scott's wife and my girlfriend were waiting for us back in town. We figured it'd be a tough day climb and that the early start would put us back with our loved ones in the evening. The local high mountain office said conditions high on the buttress were snowy, but we'd been climbing high in the area for some time and concluded that the climb should be just fine.

This was a big climb, but we were

climbing fast and everything seemed OK. We climbed up the buttress higher and higher until the rock forced us into north-facing terrain. As soon as I turned the corner, the rock was plastered with snow and all the cracks were filled with ice. This changed everything. It slowed us way down and it was a desperate lead to the top of that pitch. We switched to boots and crampons, slowing us down even more.

We didn't know how much time this cost us but we figured we'd still make it down in time for dinner. After hours more of desperate climbing, we realized we'd never make the last gondola down. We'd be lucky to make it back to the hut before dark.

We continued struggling on this difficult icy rock and it was so slow going that the sun set and some weather moved in. So now we're lashed to an icy rock at 12,000 feet in a blizzard, in the dark. At this point, I was no longer hoping we'd make dinner in town or at the

hut. I was hoping we'd simply get down!

So, I'm a bit freaked out. I'm wearing all the clothes I had with me and I'm barely warm enough. Now, Scott was a very experienced climber. He'd been on K2 and many other big Himalayan expeditions. And we were both feeling pretty "out there". In a storm, up high with retreat out of the question.

I asked Scott, "You've been in situations like this before, right?" And knowing he was fully lying to me, he said, "Oh yeah, plenty of times...we'll be fine" and it was just what I needed to hear. I knew it wasn't true but after a few more hours we topped out. We descended the glacier and made it back to the hut at 1 AM.

Down below, the weather was much better. When we got to the hut, all these people were gearing up for a summit climb of Mont Blanc. They didn't realize there's a storm raging up there. We talked to a guide we had met earlier. We told him it was raging up

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Gear Spotlight

Black Diamond Carbon Megawatt
– Ridiculously Fat but Light and Snappy



by Chris Gerston

Whether the snow is wet and heavy or soft and fluffy, we get a lot of it in the Mt. Baker backcountry. We would expect a ski this fat (120mm underfoot) to ski well in deep powder. The amazing thing about the Carbon Megawatt is both how light it is for its width and how well it handles ice, slush, groomers, bumps, trees, chutes, etc.

The updated Megawatt has the same dimensions as the original megawatt, but with camber underfoot and carbon added to its construction. The camber and carbon have resulted in a truly versatile fat ski

that weighs 9 lbs in the 178 length. It's amazing how the elements of this ski - materials; dimensions; rocker; turning radius; overall flex of the ski vs. flex underfoot - all come together to create unbelievable performance.

To see for yourself what a ski like this can do for you, come on down to Backcountry Essentials, 214 W. Holly St. in Bellingham and demo this ski mounted either tele-style with BD O1 bindings or with Dynafit AT bindings.

*Check out more gear reviews by
Chris Gerston at AdventuresNW.com*



there; he'd never make it. The guide assured us they'd give it a try and everything should be OK.

We crawl into bunks and pass out. Two hours later, the huge climbing parties returned, turned back by the storm. They ejected us from our

bunks at four in the morning! We found a cold corner to sleep in and took the next morning's tram into the valley to meet our girls, who were unfazed by our absence. "We figured you guys were just running a bit late..."

It really was a great adventure.

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I'll admit it: When I heard about Heat Holders I was skeptical. Described as "the ultimate thermal sock," these socks claim to be seven times warmer than a basic cotton sock. My skepticism vanished when I slipped my feet into a pair of Heat Holders. Wow! Instant hot foot! How do they do it? Advanced insulating yarn provides high performance insulation and superior wicking. Innovative knitting technology means an extra long looped cushion pile. An intense brushing process maximizes the amount of warm air held in the inside. What does all that mean? It means the warmest socks your feet have ever known.

Learn more at: <http://heatholders.com>.



Let There be Light

The Clarus LED Lantern from UCO Gear, is an interesting hybrid. One moment it's a flashlight, the next it's the smallest, lightest LED lantern that you've ever seen. And it's surprisingly bright - 150 lumens at its brightest setting. Perfect for cooking dinner, reading a book, or playing backgammon in camp, the Clarus is small; only 4.5 inches long when compressed and weighs in at just 4 oz. (including 3 AAA batteries). The collapsible frame makes the switch from flashlight to lantern simple. The folks at UCO say that the batteries will last up to 70 hours - I can't attest to that but after three camping trips where I used it fairly extensively, the light was shining as bright as ever.

More info: www.ucogear.com



Winter Dreams

There's nothing like snow camping. Few outdoor pleasures rival the experience of spending the night out in the silence of a pristine winter's night. The benefits are many: solitude, spectacular snow-covered landscapes, the unparalleled clarity of the winter night sky. The trick - of course - is to be comfortable in what are often frigid conditions. And this comfort starts with a sleeping bag that will provide a good night's sleep when the temperature drops. Chattering teeth have a way of disturbing the tranquility.

The Sierra Designs BTU -20 sleeping bag is just what the doctor ordered. Stuffed with 800-fill down and protected by SD's DriZone™ waterproof shell, the BTU -20 offers serious protection from the cold, including an Expedition JacketHood™, Draft collar and a hefty zipper draft tube. In a touch of inspired design, the BTU -20 even has a

microfleece-lined foot box. And they've managed to pack all of this into a bag that weighs in at around 4 lbs. and compresses to a packed size of 19 X 9 inches. For a serious dead-of-winter bomber bag, not bad.

One word of caution: the zipper is only 40 inches long. This, of course, helps it hold the heat in better, but might elicit some in-tent wriggling for ingress and egress.

More info: www.sierradesigns.com

Travelling Light

Sometimes less is more. When you're travelling solo in the backcountry, less is definitely more when it comes to the weight of your shelter - to a point. Bivy Sacks are, of course, the lightest option but they have significant drawbacks in wet country like here in Cascadia. Sure, a good one will keep you dry when you're inside. But being able to sit up, change clothes and the like can be challenging - or impossible. On a five day backpack in the North Cascades this autumn, I left the bivy home and brought along the Sierra Designs Vapor Light 1, a one-person tent.

Weighing in at about 3 lbs (Sierra

Designs lists the "trail weight" as 2 lbs 14 oz but let's get real: you'll need the stakes, guy lines and stuff sack too), the Vapor Light offers a lot of real estate for the weight. An ingenious hubbed pole configuration really raises the roof; its peak height is 38 inches, high enough to sit up with relative comfort. At 82 inches long, there was just enough room for me to stretch out - this might be an issue for those much taller than six foot.

Pitching the Vapor Light is - literally - a snap. The Jakes Foot pole attachments snap into place with ease; it took me about two minutes to pitch. I spent one night with the rain fly off and it felt like I was sleeping under the stars - nothing but mesh between me and the heavens. Even with the rain fly on, with the vestibule open, I could indulge in star gazing. Not even a bit claustrophobic. The zippers are one-hand operational, a big plus in my book.

When the inevitable rain came, the fly did a great job and inside it was bone dry. The vestibule is not expansive, but big enough for my oversized camera bag and boots. You wouldn't want to stash your pack there but hey, that's why they make pack covers.

If you're travelling solo, the Vapor Light 1 might just make you forget about your beloved bivy once and for all.

More info: www.sierradesigns.com



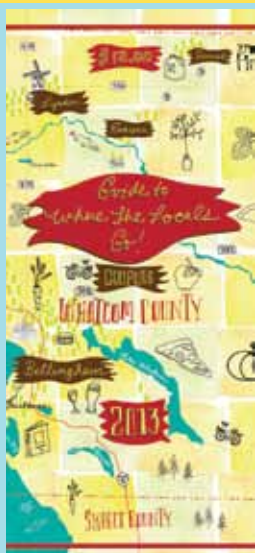
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NOV.-DEC. >>>

Friday-Monday, 16 Nov-24 Dec

SPEC 33rd Annual Allied Arts Holiday Festival of the Arts—10:00 am – 8:00 pm. The 33rd Annual Holiday Festival of the Arts is a six week long festival featuring the work of over one hundred local artisans and craftspeople. The affordable handmade products range from jewelry to paintings to wearable art to specialty foods. Weekends are packed with activities; hear live local music, catch some of our artists in action, and bring the kids in for fun art projects.



DEC.-JAN >>>

Saturday-Sunday, 1 Dec-27 Jan

SPEC Bald Eagle Interpretive Center—10:00 am – 4:00 pm. Starting in December 2012, the Guided Walks will be at 11:00 a.m. and Speakers at 1:00 p.m. unless otherwise posted. The schedule is subject to change, so please check the website to verify or call 360-853-7626. Hours of operation starting in December 2012: Friday, Saturday and Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Our school programs are on Friday's. Please call or email if you would like your school to be a part of the excellent program we offer. www.skagiteagle.org/index.php



**Skagit River Bald Eagle
Interpretive Center**

DECEMBER >>>

Saturday, 1 Dec

RUN/WALK Girls on the Run 5k—Bellingham, 9:30am. A downtown Bellingham fun run for girls and boys, men and women. jgallant@whatcomymca.org, whatcomymca.org

WALK Fairhaven Walking Club—Varied, 8:00 am – 10:00 am, Weekly walks in the Bellingham area, open to the public. www.fairhavenrunners.com

RUN/WALK Adventure Navigation Run or Walk (Orienteering)—Bridle Trails State Park, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, <http://cascadeoc.org/upcoming-events>

RUN Fairhaven Frosty 5K & 10K—Fairhaven Park, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm, http://www.gbrc.net/fairhaven_frosty.php

Tuesday, 4 Dec

RUN/WALK All-Paces Run—Fairhaven Runners & Walkers, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm, Weekly runs open to the public. www.fairhavenrunners.com

Friday, 7 Dec

SPEC Superhero Lighted Bicycle Parade—Bellingham Public Market 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Join us for the second annual Superhero Lighted Bicycle Parade. Decorate your bicycle with lights and reflectors, don your superhero cape, and light up the December Art Walk on a group ride downtown. Festivities and refreshments provided post parade at the Public

Market from 7:00-8:00pm. www.everybodyBIKE.com



Saturday, 8 Dec

RUN Fairhaven Frosty 5k & 10k—Bellingham, 10am. Run on road and trail, 1 or 2 loops from Fairhaven Park. Free kids 1/4 mile. gbrc.net

RUN Toys for Tots Airport 5k/10k—Arlington, 11am. 360-359-0868, arlingtonrunnersclub.org

RUN Deception Pass 50k, 25k—Oak Harbor. rainshadowrunning.com

RUN/WALK Jingle Bell Run for Arthritis 5k—Bellingham, 8am. www.bellinghamjbrw.kintera.org

Sunday, 9 Dec

RUN/WALK Holualoa Tucson Marathon—Cody Loop Rd 7:30am – 2:00pm Enjoy beautiful Tucson winter weather with temperatures at the start averaging in the high 30s and reaching 65-70 degrees Fahrenheit by 11 a.m. This is primarily a downhill marathon, with some hills around mile 2 and mile 10. Come run



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Sat-Sun, 8-9 Dec

PADDLE 7th Annual Deception Pass Dash—Deception Pass State Park. 206-940-6269, rubycreek-boathouse.com

Monday, 10 Dec

RUN Deception Pass 50k/25k—Deception Pass State Park, 7:00 am – 4:00 pm, <http://deception-pass50.blogspot.com/>

Saturday, 15 Dec

RUN Holiday Fun Run—Seattle, 10am. Multiple events. 206-335-9305, magnusonseries.org

BIKE Cascade CX #2: Thriller Cross—Civic Field, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, Costume themed race. Food vendors. Mud baths, stunt sections, silliness included at no extra charge. www.cascadecross.com

Wednesday, 19 Dec

SPEC Mountain Runners DVD Release Party/ Screening—Pickford Film Center, 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm, DVD Release Party and Screening. Presented in conjunction with Pickford Film Center, Whatcom Events and Adventures NW magazine.



Come early to meet the Director and purchase DVDs. Director Brian Young, Ski-to-Sea's Mel Monkelis in attendance. The Mountain Runners tells the incredible true story of America's first mountain adventure race, held in 1911. The marathon pit a stripped-down steam train

Visit AdventuresNW.com for complete listings of Outdoor events through 2013

against modified "Model T" race cars to deliver runners to a 10,781 foot volcanic, glacial peak where they would race to the summit in blizzard conditions...and return. Many would start ... few would finish.

Saturday, 22 Dec

SPEC Santa At Ski Hill—Leavenworth Ski Hill, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm, www.skileavenworth.com/events

JANUARY >>>

Saturday, 12 Jan

BIKE The Stinky Spoke, powered by Carter Subaru—Redhook Brewery, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm, 18-mile mountain bike "poker ride" starting and finishing at Redhook! You told us you loved this course, so we are doing it again in 2013. A chalk line will be added up "Heart Attack Hill" to provide separate lanes for riders and walkers for everyone's safety. The hill is a real beast; riders who conquer it without coming off their bike will receive a flashy medal (and bragging rights). Stinky Spoke benefits Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center which brings equine-assisted therapies to children and adults with disabilities.

Saturday, 19 Jan

SNOW Tubbs Romp to Stomp—Mt. Bachelor, 9:00am – 1:00pm. Join us in 2013 at Mt. Bachelor. The gorgeous snowshoe course, fun atmosphere, and FREE demo snowshoes* from Tubbs make the Washington Romp great for participants of all levels. Since its inception in 2003, the Tubbs Romp to Stomp out Breast Cancer Snowshoe Series® has engaged nearly 23,000 people in the sport of snowshoeing and raised more than 1.8 MILLION DOLLARS for Susan G. Komen

for the Cure® and the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation! tubbsromptostomp.com

Sunday, 20 Jan

SNOW Ice Fest's Snowshoe Demo & Relay Race—Leavenworth Ski Hill, 10:30 am – 1:30 pm, <http://www.skileavenworth.com>

SPEC Ice Fest's Movie Night—Festhalle, 6:30 pm – 10:00 pm, <http://www.skileavenworth.com>

Wednesday, 30 Jan

SPEC Wilderness Survival Training Class—WVU Outdoor Center, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. <http://www.wolfcollege.com/early-release-family-homeschool-and-evening-classes-on-herbalism-survival-navigation-wildlife/bellingham-sumas-whatcom-skagit-valley/>

FEBRUARY >>>

Saturday, 2 Feb

SNOW Tubbs Romp to Stomp—Stevens Pass Nordic Center, 9:00am – 1:00pm. Join us in 2013 at the Stevens Pass Nordic Center. The gorgeous snowshoe course, fun atmosphere, and FREE demo snowshoes* from Tubbs make the Washington Romp great for participants of all levels. Since its inception in 2003, the Tubbs Romp to Stomp out Breast Cancer Snowshoe Series® has engaged nearly 23,000 people in the sport of snowshoeing and raised more than 1.8 MILLION DOLLARS for Susan G. Komen for the Cure® and the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation! tubbsromptostomp.com

SPEC Adventure Navigation Run or Walk (Orienteering)—Fire Mountain Scout Reservation, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. <http://cascadeoc.org/upcoming-events>

SNOW Bakke Cup—Leavenworth Ski Hill, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm. www.skileavenworth.com

Saturday, 9 Feb

SNOW Bavarian Cup—Leavenworth Ski Hill, 8:00 am – 9:00 am. www.skileavenworth.com/events

SNOW Tubbs Romp to Stomp—Mt. Hood, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. Join us in 2013 at Mt. Hood. The gorgeous snowshoe course, fun atmosphere, and FREE demo snowshoes* from Tubbs make the Washington Romp great for participants of all levels. 33% of OR Romp participants have never snowshoed before! Since its inception in 2003, the Tubbs Romp to Stomp out Breast Cancer Snowshoe Series® has engaged nearly 23,000 people in the sport of snowshoeing and raised more than 1.8 MILLION DOLLARS for Susan G. Komen for the Cure® and the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation! www.tubbsromptostomp.com/or

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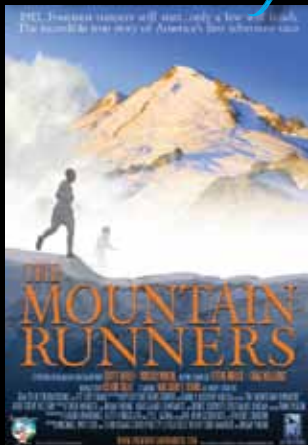
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Wednesday, 27 Feb

SPEC Local Wild Edible Foods & Backcountry Herbal Medicine—WVU Outdoor Center, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. <http://www.wolfcollege.com/early-release-family-homeschool-and-evening-classes-on-herbalism-survival-navigation-wildlife/bellingham-sumas-whatcom-skagit-valley/>

MARCH >>>

Sunday, 3 March

RUN 2012 Lost River Winter Triathlon—Mazama Corral, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, "Get your early season tri fix in by joining us for the Lost River Winter Triathlon (former MVSTA event), 17.2Km Bike, 10.7Km Ski, and 7.5Km Run. The course runs along the majestic Lost River, starting and ending at Mazama Corral. FREE local microbrew, warm snacks, prizes and rad race t-shirts. Come solo for \$55 or \$110 for a 2-3 person teams." <http://lostriverwintertriathlon.blogspot.com/>



Saturday, 9 March

RUN Lake Sammamish Half-Marathon—Lake Sammamish State Park, 8:00 am – 11:30 am, One-way Redmond to Issaquah, scenic, flat, fast, chip-timed, long sleeve tech shirt, finisher medal, www.LakeSammamishHalf.com

Sunday, 10 March

RUN OZBALDY 50Km Marathon. Kongsberger Ski Club—Cabin Creek Sno-Park, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. www.kongsbergers.org

Monday, 11 March

RUN Natural Running 101—MEC, 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm. <http://www.mec.ca/AST/ContentPrimary/Community/Events/EventsCalendar/BC.jsp>

Tuesday, 12 March

RUN/WALK All-Paces Run—Fairhaven Runners & Walkers, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Weekly runs open to the public. www.fairhavenrunners.com

Thursday, 14 March

RUN/WALK Hit the Trail Run—Fairhaven Runners & Walkers, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Free weekly trail run open to the public. www.fairhavenrunners.com

Saturday, 16 March

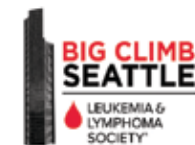
WALK Fairhaven Walking Club—Varied, 8:00 am – 10:00 am. Weekly walks in the Bellingham area, open to the public. www.fairhavenrunners.com

RUN/WALK Runnin' O' the Green—Depot Market Square, 10:00 am – 11:00 am. This is a fun run/walk to celebrate the St. Patrick's Day and enjoy time with friends and family. Enjoy Maggie's Fury after the event along with dancing and smiles. www.cob.org/races-trithecookie.com

Saturday, 23 March

SPEC Forest & Wetland Restoration—Shadow Lake Nature Preserve, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. www.shadowhabitat.org

Sunday, 24 March



RUN/WALK The Big Climb—Columbia Center, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, 788 ft vertical elevation, 69 flights, 1311 steps. Climb. Conquer. Cure. www.bigclimb.org

APRIL >>>

Tuesday, 9 April

RUN/WALK Birch Bay International Road Race, 5K, 15K, 30K—Birch Bay Water Slides, 8:30 am – 11:00 am. <http://www.birchbayroadrace.com>

Wednesday, 10 April

WATER Learn to Sail—6:30 pm – 8:30 pm. www.boatingisfun.org

Sunday, 14 April

RUN Whidbey Island Marathon—TBA, 7:15 am – 1:15 pm. <http://www.whidbeyislandmarathon.com/>

Saturday, 20 April

BIKE 32nd Annual Tulip Pedal—La Conner Middle School, 7:00 am – 2:00 pm <http://members.lovelaconner.com/events/details/31st-annual-tulip-pedal-233>

Sunday, 21 April

RUN Spokane River Run—Riverside State Park, 7:45 am – 2:00 pm. <http://www.spokaneriverrun.com/>

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Wednesday, 24 April

SPEC Safety, Tracking & Bird Alarms in Cougar, Wolf & Bear Country—WWU Outdoor Center, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. <http://www.wolfcollege.com/early-release-family-homeschool-and-evening-classes-on-herbalism-survival-navigation-wildlife/bellingham-sumas-whatcom-skagit-valley/>

Sat-Sun, 27-28 April

WATER 3rd Annual Bellingham Bay



Rendezvous—Bellingham Cruise Terminal, (all-day) Kick off the cruise at a lively waterfront celebration in historic Fairhaven. Tour the local charter boat fleet, kids activities, music, arts, crafts. Bellingham Cruise Terminal – 355 Harris Ave.

RUN Eugene Marathon & Half Marathon—7:00 am – 2:00 pm, This premier event in 'track town USA' includes a 5K and Kids Run (Sat, 4/27) and Marathon and Half-Marathon (Sun, 4/28). The courses are beautiful, flat and fast—taking participants by numerous parks and miles of riverfront trails before reaching the spectacular finish line on the track inside historic Hayward Field. Don't miss one of the prettiest and most unique certified races in the country! Run in Eugene, and run in the footsteps of LEGENDS.



Sunday, 28 April

RUN Mt. Si Relay & Ultra Runs—Snoqualmie Elementary School, 6:00 am – 5:00 pm, 59-mile relay, 50K, 50M. 30th annual event by Eastside Runners in the Snoqualmie Valley. <http://mtsirelay.com>

MAY >>>

Saturday, 18 May

RUN/WALK Seattle's Best 15K & Best Dressed 10K—Gas Works Park, 7:30 am – 11:00 am. <http://www.seattle15k.com>

Sunday, 26 May

SPEC Ski to Sea Race—Bellingham, WA, 7:45 am – 6:00 pm, Experience the legacy of the 1911 Mt. Baker Marathon and discover the "Ski to Sea" race held in Bellingham, Washington, USA every Memorial Day weekend. More than a race. Ski to Sea -May 26, 2013 – Limit of 500 Teams. A Relay Race of Seven Race Legs – Over 90 Miles. Seven Sports include XC Ski, Downhill Ski/



Snowboard, Run, Road Bike, Canoe, Mountain Bike, Sea Kayak. It's one big party moving down the Mountain! www.SkitoSea.com

Tuesday, 28 May

RUN/WALK Heroes Half Marathon & 10K—Port of Everett, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm. www.heroeshalf.com/

Friday, 31 May

Wild Canyon Games—6:00pm – 4:00pm. Wild Canyon Games is a unique competitive team challenge in the high desert of central Oregon for athletes from every walk of life. It's broken down into 4 phases: an Olympic length triathlon; Geocaching; Challenge Events; and a 7-person Creak to Peak relay race. Each team is comprised of 7

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members and the team that earns the most points by the end of the weekend will be crowned the 2013



WILD CANYON GAMES

WCG Champions!! Team Price: \$2100 (7 Person Teams) \$300 per Individual includes: \$150 Entry Fee and \$150 Food and

Lodging DON'T MISS OUT! The 2012 Games sold out by March 1, 2012! So REGISTER NOW! wildcanyon-games.org

JUNE >>>

Saturday, 1 June

WALK 10th Annual Leavenworth Wine Walk—12:00 pm – 6:00 pm. www.cascadefarmlands.com

RUN/WALK Starlight Run—Lincoln High Track & Field, 7:45 pm – 9:00 pm. www.starlightrun.com

Wednesday, 19 June

SPEC Patricia Walden Yoga Workshop—Yoga Northwest, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. We are extremely excited to host a 5-day yoga workshop with Patricia Walden once again! www.yoganorthwest.com/yoga/workshops-retreats/5-days-w-patricia-walden

Saturday, 22 June

RUN/WALK Rock & Roll Seattle—Seattle Center, 7:00 am – 11:00 am. <http://runrocknroll.com/competitor.com/seattle>

JULY >>>

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Friday, 19 July

RUN Ragnar Northwest Passage—Blaine, WA to Whidbey Island, 7:00 am – 5:00 pm, Ragnar Relay is the overnight running relay series that makes testing your limits a team sport. You and your band of 11 teammates will run day and



night from Blaine, WA to Whidbey Island in one of the craziest and most unforgettable weekends of your life. Sign up today and join the Ragnar Nation! www.ragnarrelay.com/race/northwestpassage

Sunday, 21 July

RUN/WALK Benaroya Research Institute Seafair Triathlon—Seward Park, 6:30 am – 11:00 am. www.seafair.com/anevent.aspx?ID=5

SEPTEMBER >>>

Saturday, 14 September

RUN/WALK Fairhaven Runners Waterfront 15K—Fairhaven Village Green, 8:30 am – 10:30 am, Whether running or walking along this 9.3 mile course,



you get a great opportunity to traverse Bellingham Bay's beautiful waterfront. Tour the Taylor Street Dock, Boulevard Park,

downtown and the marina. The race features chip timing and finishes with a post-race party including food, live music and complimentary massage and chiropractic care. Be sure to stay for awards (5 year age groups to 80+), random prizes and prompt race results! Prizes include shoes, hotel stays and more. All participants will receive a commemorative tech shirt. We have a beautiful, well-staffed course starting in Fairhaven and running out through downtown Bellingham and back on water-side paths. From elite racing to fitness walking this course is awesome. Capped at 1000 participants. Advance registration only.

Sunday, 15 September

BIKE Chuckanut Century 2013—Boundary Bay, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm. The 2013 Chuckanut Century will be held on September 15, 2013. Come join us and ride one of the most scenic rides in Washington. With many routes offered you can pick your distance ranging from 25, 38, 50, 62, 100, or the double metric century of 124 miles. Although all cyclists should be fully prepared when they take to the roads you can enjoy the added security of knowing that there is ride support if needed and food stops with a wide variety of high-energy food and drinks

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overlooking Bellingham, Samish, and Padilla Bays along with stunning views of Chuckanut and Blanchard mountains, also known as

"where the Cascade mountains meet the sea." The north loop offers spectacular views of Mt Baker as it stretches to meet the sky at 10,800 feet, as well as incredible views of the Canadian Cascades, Mt Shuksan, the Twin Sisters, Birch Bay, and Vancouver Island. The 25 mile loop is perfect for the family, parent and child, or the first timer to an organized event. All routes start and finish at the legendary Boundary Bay Brewery. www.chuckanutcentury.org/top.html

Visit AdventuresNW.com for complete listings of Outdoor events through 2013

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Silent Season

photo by **DENNIS WALTON**

It was one of those rare clear days after the snows blanketed the Cascades. I decided to dust off my snowshoes and head up to Artist Point. The short trek from the ski area parking lot takes you past the snow covered ranger station at Austin Pass. Everything was so quiet and so peaceful. Snow does that! This season I'll be keeping a close watch on the weather forecasts. My snowshoes are ready to go!

Dennis Walton is a Bellingham-based photographer. View his work at: <http://denniswalton.zenfolio.com/>



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