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### Dates to Remember

Jan 16	Bus Trips Leaders Mtg
Jan 26	Potluck - Sullivan
Feb 7	Board Meeting
Feb 13	SciEd Tues - Switzerland
Feb 25	Bus Rally

Summer Camp News  
See Page 22

Summer Trip Plans  
Updated Trip Logs  
See Page 2

## When Challenged, Obsidians Deliver... and Deliver...and Deliver...and Deliver!

**T**HE MEMBERSHIP faced a major monetary challenge in 2005: Raise \$50,000 to pay for the renovation of the Obsidian Lodge. The goal wasn't just met, it was shattered! Club members donated \$74,205 to help pay for the project.

Despite this generosity, the dollars raised ultimately fell short of the actual costs. Delays in construction due to difficulties in getting permits, increased materials costs due to hurricane Katrina, and a much greater than anticipated cost to retain and reinforce the memorial climbing wall led the club to borrow \$30,000 from its own Endowment Fund.



To help repay this additional debt, an anonymous donor presented members with a *second* financial challenge: The donor would match funds received by Dec. 31, 2006 up to \$5,000. As of the deadline, reports Finance Committee Chair Stewart Hoeg, we didn't raise \$5,000 ...*we raised more than \$15,000!*

Since early last year, members have donated nearly \$90,000 to help pay for the newly remodeled lodge.

An integral part of the latest fundraising effort was the creation of three premium membership levels (Silver \$50, Gold \$100 and Platinum \$200), which were added to the basic membership (\$30) option. Many, many thanks to the 178 members who contributed to this latest challenge. A complete list of donors will be presented in the February Bulletin.

## New Year Offers Bright Prospects

By John Pegg

**W**ELCOME TO 2007. This year has all the potential for being one of the best years yet for the Obsidians. We have a full schedule of winter trips and the committees are already beginning to put together summer trips, climbs, bus trips and other activities, including a very exciting summer camp in Montana.

It is an honor to serve as your Obsidian president for the next year. As you know, the president is not a king. There are no paid officers. We are all volunteers. A nine-member board of directors governs the Obsidians. They are the true decision makers for the club. The president does not even vote unless he is needed to form a quorum at meetings. The real grass roots work of the Obsidians goes on in the committees.

(Continued on page 2)

## Disaster on Denali

Special Feature Begins on Page 5

**Welcome!**

**New Members**

**VAIDYANATHAN, KAUSHIK** (Active)  
4075 Aerial Way, Apt 44,  
Eugene, OR 97402  
914-1713  
[kaushikv\\_mail@yahoo.com](mailto:kaushikv_mail@yahoo.com)

## Trip Logs Updated

**T**HE CLUB'S TRIP LOGS have been updated and can be viewed on the Obsidian website in "Members Only." The count is based on trip reports filed as of December 6th.

Historian Lenore McManigal uses the trip reports to update each member's log sheet. Janet Jacobsen counted the trips and entered the number into a database. "We are mainly interested in the total number of trips so we can award trip patches at the annual meeting", says Janet. Trips are divided into three categories: Bus Trips, Climbs (summitted) and Trips (all other outings, including hikes, bike, winter, climbing activities). This is one task that is still done manually.

## New Year Offers Bright Prospects

*(Continued from page 1)*

But the president is a necessary and important position. I see my role as a focal point and funnel for the concerns of the membership and the important business the directors need to conduct. My job is to make sure issues and concerns come before the directors for informed decision making. I look forward to attending more committee meetings and other events to learn more about concerns and successes from volunteers and members. In addition, I recognize that the president is also a public face for the Obsidians. I hope to have many opportunities to share with people what we do and tell them what a truly fine organization we have.

**I HAVE BEEN** an Obsidian since the early eighties and served on the board of directors once before. I know many of you, but am looking forward to

## Cold? Think Summer Trips!

**F**REEZING FOG? Wet snow? Cold feet? *Think Summer!*

Summer Trips chairs Janet Jacobsen and Barb Revere will be gathering the phone calling and emailing troops at the lodge on February 1st and sending them out with their marching orders...to line up trip leaders for the coming season.

If you've ever led a summer trip (or look like a potential leader), you can expect to be contacted. So, think about trips and when you'd like to lead them (April - November). Thumb through Bill Sullivan's books and find a gem... maybe one that hasn't been led before.

Get ready... the callers are coming!

## Switzerland

### SciEd Tues - Feb 13

**J**OHAN AND JANET Jacobsen will present a slide show on their trip last year to Switzerland. Included will be their unique experience in the Swiss National Park during the fall red deer rut.

SciEd Tuesday, February 13, at 7 p.m., at the lodge .

meeting many more. My involvement for many years has been with leading climbs, serving on the Climbs Committee and helping to teach the annual spring climb school and crevasse rescue class. I have my "10 Peak" and "10 Peak Leader" awards and one of my proudest moments as an Obsidian was being initiated as a Chief, the group of Obsidians who have climbed all Three Sisters.

I've led lots of climbs over the years, so it is probably not strange that I see being president in many ways like being the leader of a climb. There are lots of things that can happen. But an experienced leader plans ahead, carries the 10 essentials and relies not only on himself, but the abilities of the group to solve the problems, push ahead and make the summit.

See you all on the trail.

## OBSIDIANS, INC

P.O. Box 322, Eugene, OR 97440  
Website: [www.obsidians.org](http://www.obsidians.org)

### Board of Directors

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Vice President - Stewart Hoeg  
Secretary - Laurie Funkhouser  
Treasurer - Sheila Ward  
Marianne Camp Jim Duncan  
Brian Hamilton Anne Dhu McLucas  
Barb Revere

*Board meetings are held at 6 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month, except August, at the Obsidian Lodge.*

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### The OBSIDIAN Bulletin

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#### Deadline

**for February 2007 Bulletin**

**Saturday, February 3, 2007**

### Assembly/Mailing Team

#### For December Bulletin

Sharon Cutsworth, Barbara & Don Payne,  
Yuan Hopkins, Marshall Kandell,  
Vera Woolley and  
Crew Chief Barb Revere

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Jacobsen, Marshall Kandell,  
Lou Maenz & Barb Revere  
Copy Editor.....Marshall Kandell  
Graphics, Design & Desktop Publishing ....  
John Jacobsen & Stewart Hoeg  
Assembly & Mail Manager.....Barb Revere



## January Potluck Preview

# *Sullivan Hikes NW Oregon, SW Washington*

**W**HEN WILLIAM SULLIVAN speaks about hiking trails, we all listen; partly because he is the author of a dozen books about Oregon, including five regional-specific hiking guides in the popular "100 Hikes" series. His clear writing and vivid descriptions tickle our curiosity. But I think we also listen to Sullivan, a native Oregonian, because we sense his genuine passion for the natural splendor and colorful history of Oregon.



At the January 26th potluck, Sullivan will talk to us about a dozen new trails he has discovered, all within a two-hour drive of Portland or Vancouver, WA. Among his dis-

coveries are new paths to a Columbia Gorge viewpoint on Cape Horn, a historic railroad grade near The Dalles and a timberline lake on the hidden side of Mt. Hood. Sullivan came upon these and other paths while conducting research for the third edition of his guidebook, "100 Hikes in Northwest Oregon and Southwest Washington."

**BESIDES THAT**, Sullivan says we can "expect tips on where to stay, from rental lookouts to rustic lodges and remote cabins." As always, he promises to "spice up" his presentation with anecdotes about the northern region's history, flora, fauna and outdoor lore.

Fellow Obsidian Sullivan also is the author of "Oregon Trips & Trails" (his latest), "Hiking Oregon's History," and "Exploring Oregon's Wild Areas." His journal of a 1,000-mile hike he took across Oregon in 1985, "Listening for Coyote," was chosen by the Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission as one of Oregon's "100 Books," tomes deemed most significant in the state's history.

-- By Chris Cunningham

### January Potluck

**Friday, January 26, 2007, Obsidian Lodge  
Potluck, 6:30 p.m. Program, 7:30 p.m.**

*Bring your favorite potluck dish to share...along with your own plates, utensils and cups...**and** \$1 to help cover lodge expenses.*

## Potlucks

### December Potluck Review:

# *Oregon to Pumori*

**S**UE SULLIVAN described the dilemma when she turned on her new computer and faced the challenge of choosing "just" 200 photos for her December 15th potluck at the lodge from more than 4,000 images taken on 14 digital cameras by her fellow climbers on their "Oregon to Pumori" adventure last spring.

She more than met the challenge! The result was a stunning series of photographs, breathtaking Himalayan landscapes, enhanced by Sue's explanatory and often humorous account of the group's experiences. While Sue was among a group of Obsidian and Eugene Mountain Rescue companions who set out to climb Island Peak, some of the group pressed on to Pumori, a 23,440' peak near Mt. Everest. Some expedition members were in attendance, but others were away on a rescue mission, seeking the lost climbers on Mt. Hood.

Sue's detailed journal was excerpted in recent issues of the Obsidian Bulletin (June, July/August, and September) and is also available on-line at: <http://www.obsidians.org/2006/articles/nepal-sullivan/>.

-- Reported by Ann-Marie Askew



*Sue and husband, John Mowat with unidentified friend in Nepal.*

## Voluntary Simplicity

By Ann-Marie Askew

**D**URING THE AUTUMN months, a group of Obsidians gathered at the lodge every Tuesday afternoon to explore the concept of *voluntary simplicity*, using course materials published by Northwest Earth Institute as a guide. The course purpose is to understand the meaning of *voluntary simplicity*, to explore the material and psychological distractions that prevent us from caring for the earth; and to consider how life might be enriched through the practice of simplicity. We took turns facilitating the meetings.

At the close of the course, Joan Bradley said the readings reinforced her thinking and beliefs, gave her additional insight and awareness, and increased her desire to learn and do more. She feels that most of our community lives in a “different world,” and she gets discouraged. The course, however, helped renew her energy and spirit.

Lana Lindstrom commented that she appreciated our discussions about how we can positively impact the world by buying more locally, growing our own crops, using Eugene Free-cycle and

local thrift shops, and carpooling. Effie Neth thought the group was a great forum to exchange ideas and get tips on what others do to live simply. She enjoyed the discussions and camaraderie, but struggles with the nagging thought that our small efforts are too little too late.

**CLARE TUCKER SAID** the discussion group provided new ideas, different approaches and shared struggles, as a group of like-minded people sensing something has gone wrong with our culture and trying to find ways to gain balance. LaRee Beckley focused on how we shared ideas to make the world better by using the free Eugene network, supporting EWEB’s use of alternative energy sources, walking and ride-sharing, reusing plastic dinnerware, exchanging clothes and equipment with Obsidian members and developing a plan to replace Effie’s lawn with a community garden.

Lou Maenz appreciated the gathering of thinking and like-minded individuals who are tremendously concerned about the quality of the world. She stated the importance of reaffirming the belief that caring for the world

is important, and that singularly and together we can make a difference. Charlie Van Deusen stated that we were essentially preaching to the choir. He suggested that the information should be available in a school curriculum.

Judy Newman stated that the course changed her attitude about how and where she wants to spend time, effort and money. “Shopping” is not on her list. Being outdoors and quiet time are necessities, and gifting has become the giving of shared experiences -- not stuff.

**AGREEING WITH ALL** these comments, I just want to add that I especially enjoyed the opportunity to share ideas with fellow Obsidians who are striving to live more simply so that others can simply live.

Additional NWEI courses include Exploring Deep Ecology; Discovering a Sense of Place; Choices for Sustainable Living; and Globalization and Its Critics. NWEI can be reached by phone at 503/227-2807 or e-mail at [contact@nwei.org](mailto:contact@nwei.org). Their web site is [www.nwei.org](http://www.nwei.org), and their address is NWEI, 317 SW Alder, Suite 1050, Portland, OR 97204.

## From Now On, Your Trips Will Be “Easy,” “Moderate” or “Difficult”

**O**VER THE LAST FEW MONTHS, an Obsidian committee has been working to develop a more uniform system for rating trips, replacing the “A” “B” “C” code that doesn’t always accurately describe hikes nor translate well to winter or bicycle outings.

Under the new system, announced by Winter Trips Chair Jim Pierce, Obsidian trips will be rated “Easy,” “Moderate” or “Difficult,” depending on their distance

and elevation gain. Elevation gain should be the *cumulative* gain, rather than merely low point to high point.

Conditions other than distance and elevation can also affect the degree of difficulty of trips; such as off-trail travel (think Hell Hole!), steepness of slope, condition of trail, condition of snow, weather, etc. And, of course, actual trip conditions and experiences vary among different types of trips (e.g., hikes, bikes, ski, etc.) and, so, different sets of values for rating their difficulty have been set, as follows:

	Hikes		Snow Shoe		X-Country Ski		Downhill Ski		Bike Trips	
	Dist (Mi)	Elev (Ft)	Dist (Mi)	Elev (Ft)	Dist (Mi)	Elev (Ft)	Dist (Mi)	Elev (Ft)	Dist (Mi)	Elev (Ft)
Easy	≤ 5	≤ 1000	≤ 3	≤ 400	≤ 4	≤ 400	Green Circles		≤ 20	≤ 1000
Moderate	> 5	> 1000	> 3	> 400	> 4	> 400	Blue Squares		> 20	> 1000
	< 10	< 2500	< 6	< 1000	< 8	< 1000			< 40	< 2500
Difficult	≥ 10	≥ 2500	≥ 6	≥ 1000	≥ 8	≥ 1000	Black Diamonds		≥ 40	≥ 2500





*Remembering Obsidians Lost in the...*

# Disaster on Denali

*By Marshall Jay Kandell*

**H**URRICANE FORCE WINDS knocked down everything standing in their way, blasting away snow trails and their markers in a seemingly diabolical effort to reshape the mountain itself. Those who could find cover huddled in their tents, clutching wildly shaking center poles and covering their ears to block out the screaming, howling, threatening gales. And cold? It was so cold that even time seemed to freeze!

It was the summer of 1967. Twelve men set out to reach the summit of Mt. McKinley in Alaska, the highest point in North America and the monster also known as Denali.

Of the dozen climbers, only five returned. The other seven, including Obsidians Jerry Clark and Mark McLaughlin, are still up there...somewhere.

## Chapter One

**T**O UNDERSTAND what happened and, perhaps, why, we need to start the story a year earlier...with **Joe Wilcox**, then a 23-year-old married student at Brigham Young University in Utah. After two summers working for the National Park Service on Mt. Rainier, he spent a summer as a surveyor with the U.S. Forest Service in Alaska. He returned to BYU intent on climbing North America's most imposing mountain, Denali, and began to organize an expedition for the summer of 1967. His first task was to select the climbing team.

*"...I was rather non-gregarious, and had a strong straight-forward manner, sometimes lacking in tactful social amenities,"* wrote Wilcox in his book, "White Winds." *"Therefore, it would be important to select a couple of unfamiliar climbers, who would not be offended by my personality, nor I by theirs. Beyond this they would need to be self-disciplined and completely committed to the climb and to the group: this would not be a trip for the fickle or faint-hearted."*

When the experienced mountain climbers Wilcox knew proved to be unavailable for the expedition, his dream ap-

peared stalled. That summer, however, Wilcox happened to visit Obsidian Norm Benton, who had climbed McKinley in 1964 with the Seattle Mountaineers Expedition (putting 15 on the summit) following the same Muldrow Route Wilcox wanted to take. In addition to offering information, Benton also recalls recommending **Mark McLaughlin**, "a young fellow in the Obsidians with a lot of experience and a bright future in climbing."

**WITH MARK CAME HIS FRIEND, Jerry Clark**, who had even more experience and knew a lot of other excellent mountain climbers he suggested for the trip...including **Hank**

*(Continued on page 7)*

### PHOTO CREDITS

*Are the clouds streaking across the face of Denali in the photo above simply wisps of interest on an otherwise clear day...or omens of peril? Photographer Joseph Liftik has generously granted the Obsidian Bulletin permission to use the photo, adding: "Condolences (on) the death of the climbers; as a high altitude climber myself I unfortunately am acquainted with such events." To see more of Liftik's lens artistry, check out*

<http://www.traveling-images.com/>.

*All remaining pictures, portraits and maps used in this special feature are taken from "White Winds" with permission of Joe Wilcox, author.*



Fred Jerry Clark

**Born:** December 18, 1935, Goshen, Indiana

**Died:** On or about July 20, 1967

Mt. McKinley, Alaska

**Size:** 5'7" 145 lbs

**Climbing Profile:** *From 1957 to 1965, Jerry led or co- led numerous hikes in the mountains of Wyoming, including several in the Tetons, as well as Hagerman's, Medicine Box, Symmetry Spire, Pinnacle Peak, Moran, Gannett and Pingora. He also shared leadership on the first ascent of Oldenburg in Antarctica (where he served for two summers as part of a U.S. Geophysical Year exploration research group, receiving a civilian Congressional medal); and led a climb of Mt. Oliver in New Zealand. After moving to the northwest, he climbed Mts. Rainier, Jefferson, North Sister, Spire, Adams and Hood. He was mountain leader of the Purdue Outing Club, UofO Alpine Club, U. of Wisconsin Hoofers Mountaineers and the Obsidians (where he also was a member of the rescue team).*

Jerry received his M.S. in geophysical engineering at Purdue, where he taught geology for a year, while sitting in on occasional psychology courses. "A gradually increasing interest in what really makes people tick pushed me back to Purdue to a year studying psychology, computers and statistics." Then it was off to the Univ. of Colorado to work on his Ph.D... and ultimate disenchantment with clinical psych. He took a job in Eugene as an electrical engineer for a basic psychology research group. He lived with a family named McLaughlin.

Jerry's brother Jack recalls the tragedy: "Jerry's loss devastated me. I had awakened in a cold sweat from a sound sleep with a dream several days before we were called by the Park Service....The dream consisted of a vision of a central circular blackness, which I had identified as Jerry. Around this blackness was a soft fog-like whiteness. My heart was clutched in an icy tight grip. Beads of sweat stood out on my forehead. I could hardly breathe. In my heart, I felt my brother was in mortal danger."

Jerry's mother Alice reported that, "After Jerry's death the Space Agency in New Mexico phoned me. Jerry had applied for a job there and they said they wanted him to come to work for them. This was before there had been any moon landings. If he had lived, he might have been part of all that."



Robert Mark McLaughlin

**Born:** September 24, 1943, Palo Alto, CA

**Died:** On or about July 20, 1967

Mt. McKinley, Alaska

**Size:** 6' 1/2" 150 lbs

**Climbing Profile:** *Includes some 17 different mountains in Oregon and Washington. "I've been in the Olympics two times and to the top of Mt. Rainier four times. Last Memorial Day F. Jerry Clark and I and two other friends did Nisqually Icefall. Also have done the north side of Adams and St. Helens twice...I have done Hood, Jefferson from the east face and Jeff Park Glacier. Have also done all three Sisters and others....Also have done Jack in the winter...."*

A graduate of South Eugene High, Mark enrolled in the UofO Architecture & Allied Arts School, switched to geology. "One term later I flunked out of school. I went nights for 2 or 3 terms, just messing around, so gave it all up. This last fall, I finally realized I didn't want to spend my life working at some half-assed job, and started back to night school...Hope to apply to UofO for readmission fall term '67"

In October 1965, Mark was elected to the Obsidian board of directors; and for two years served as chair of the Climbing Committee and the Search & Rescue Committee. In 1968, he would have been the club's president. Instead, his close friend, Gary Kirk, took the gavel, but still named summer camp that year **Camp McLaughlin** in Mark's honor and memory.

Gary and Mark climbed together a lot. Gary had a young family and was not able to go with Mark on the Mt. McKinley expedition. In 1968, Gary and Tom & Bob Bauman were the first to ascend Mt. Thielson's sunlit ridge along the left center of the peak. The route was dubbed the **McLaughlin Memorial route**.

Ironically, Mark McLaughlin's first activity with the Obsidians was a climb of Mt. McLoughlin on June 19, 1960. In all he did 28 club climbs, leading 13 of them. Club Historian Lenore McManigal remembers a climb of North Sister Mark led that included her then 10-year-old son Rick. And even more ironic, the spokesperson for the National Park Service at Denali is Maureen McLaughlin...no relation!



# Disaster on Denali

(Continued from page 5)

**Janes and Dennis Luchterhand.** Wilcox wasn't comfortable leading an expedition made up largely of Jerry Clark's friends, people he had never met. Jerry pledged complete cooperation and support and was ultimately named deputy climbing team leader.

Full of enthusiasm, but short on cash, Wilcox sought out backers and underwriters, creating a "research" component of the hike. Heading up the scientific/support team would be **Anshel Schiff**, Ph.D., an assistant professor in engineering seismology at Purdue. Others added to the expedition were **Walt Taylor**, enrolled in an elite medical/Ph.D. program at the University of Indiana; **John Russell** of Eugene, a part time student and part time logger (who had never climbed with any of the other team members); and **Steve Taylor**, one of Wilcox's original Utah friends – a 22-year-old climber with sparse glacier and high altitude experience.

Despite the high educational backgrounds and scientific resumes of the expedition members, proposed research programs attracted meager funding. As a result, the scientific/support team (which was not originally intended to go above 11,000 ft.) was merged with the more experienced climbing team. It was hoped a two-day expedition workout on Mount Rainier would "result in the assimilation of valuable knowledge by our less experienced members and make our diverse group more homogeneous in climbing technique," wrote Wilcox.

Wilcox also reached out to the news media in the hope funds might be forthcoming from a documentary or other coverage. To sell such a proposal, Wilcox wrote to the expert on Mt. McKinley, Dr. Bradford Washburn, asking if some of the expedition's proposed activities had ever been done before. Washburn, highly offended, interpreted Wilcox's motive as publicity seeking. In his response letter, he wrote: "For your information, according to our records, McKinley has not yet been climbed blindfold or backwards, nor has any party of nine persons yet fallen simultaneously into the same crevasse. We hope you may wish to rise to one of these compelling challenges." The publicity seeking reputation was to

## Writer's Notes...

**IN THE WEEKS** and months following the Denali tragedy, expedition leader Joe Wilcox did a lot of soul-searching and submitted to many news media interviews. He and several family members of the lost men objected to aspects of a Time Magazine feature story. Perhaps in response to such media coverage, Howard Snyder published his version of what happened in "The Hall of the Mountain King" (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973). Snyder was extremely critical of Wilcox and his group. Norm Benton called it "the worst piece of journalism I have ever read!"

Wilcox kept a diary and began working on an item by item refutation of Snyder's charges. In 1981, Wilcox's "White Winds" was published (Hwong Publishing Co.). It was a much more detailed, balanced account of events, with deeper introspection. It reflected a great deal of research into Denali's history and weather patterns. A whole chapter was devoted just to wind. Don't read just one of the books. Read both.

Just about all the details, quotes and speculations in this feature are taken from the two books. I am not a mountain climber and am not qualified to judge what was right or wrong in the authors' discussions of logistics, equipment, rations, etc. In fact, I decided at the outset to strip the story of such voluminous technical detail. What was left after I did so was a dramatic human relations story...a deeply emotional story.

**AS YOU READ** this story – especially the breathtaking episodes of Chapter Two – you will likely feel those emotions. Anger at times, shock sometimes and sadness and suspense throughout, even though you think you already know the ending. Reading the books, it is easy to find yourself disliking the Coloradoans, particularly Snyder. Does that make his positions and opinions wrong? Is anyone at fault? Is it primarily a worst case history for study in a class in organizational dynamics? If it hadn't been for the weather, might any of the human high drama have mattered?

And, as was called to my attention by a couple of fellow Obsidians, consider how young the members of this expedition were.

Over the years, I have had a great deal of training and experience in organizational dynamics, leadership, teambuilding, conflict resolution and facilitating. From the first pages in Wilcox's book, I heard warning alarms going off in my head. Omens of organizational stress and dysfunction.

In the summer of 1967, however, I was just 29. My career was just getting off the ground. I was married and our first child had just been born. And I had not yet a clue about all those leadership issues! I would have been *older* than most of the members of the Wilcox expedition. Snyder was 22; Wilcox 24. Only Wilcox was married and nearly all the climbers were still in college or connected somehow to academia. How many of us, at that age, would have been capable of better handling the expedition's crises and decisions?

-- MJK

precede, accompany, follow and to this day attach itself to the expedition and Wilcox.

**MONTHS OF PLANNING** ensued. The nine members of the team tried out equipment, offered advice and preferences on gear and rations and mapped out the complex logistics of the expedition. They had to plan for multiple camps on ascent, figuring out how much food and equipment had to be carried to each camp, how much cached to serve on descent and how much to allow for storm-forced delays which could add a week or more to the month-long expedition.

The Wilcox group had about 1,900 lbs. of gear and rations

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# Disaster on Denali

(Continued from page 7)

that would have to be carried up the mountain on their backs. Although horses would pack the load to the snowline, there would be no other help thereafter. Unlike the Himalayas, there would be no Sherpas, porters or yaks.

## *The Colorado Group*

**WHILE WILCOX WAS ENGAGED** in planning his expedition, another man in Colorado was planning a similar expedition for the same time and same route. **Howard H. Snyder**, a 22-year-old geology student at the University of Colorado, planned to lead a four-man expedition to the Denali summit. All of the team members had similar climbing backgrounds and all were from Colorado.

Snyder had climbed extensively in the Colorado Rockies in all seasons; had climbed the Matterhorn, Monte Rosa, Eiger and Mont Blanc in the Alps; and peaks in Mexico. **Jerry Lewis** was a 30-year-old army veteran who had traveled the world from Greenland to Libya to New Guinea and had climbed many 14,000' peaks in Colorado. **Paul Schlichter**, 22, was a cadet at the Air Force Academy who had climbed with Snyder in Colorado, Wyoming and Mexico and had peaks of 17,000' and 18,000' under his belt. An equally qualified climber, Steve Lewis, was to be the fourth member of the team.

Four was the minimum group number the Park Service would permit to climb Denali. The Park Service was not satisfied with Steve Taylor's qualifications and only OK'd him after he updated his climbing resume. Still hesitant, the Park Service suggested the Wilcox and Colorado groups combine. This pleased neither group.

"The thought of joining two expeditions with separate logistics and leadership seemed to be asking for a lot of internal problems," wrote Wilcox.

"We were interested in coordination, not combination," wrote Snyder in "The Hall of the Mountain King," his book on the expedition.

## *A Forced Marriage*

**THE GENERAL AGREEMENT** for each group to support and back up the other, a sort of separate but equal arrangement, was shattered when Coloradoan Steve Lewis had a car accident and had to withdraw. That left the Colorado group with just three climbers and forced to either join the Wilcox expedition or stay home.

Whether you would call it an arranged marriage or a shotgun wedding, there was no love lost between the two groups. The Wilcox group never trusted or liked the Colorado group; which, in turn, looked derisively down on the Wilcox group as inferior. In his book, Snyder fills page after page with scorn for Wilcox and his men. He finds fault with their lead-

## The Mountain



**DENALI (THE HIGH ONE)** is the Native American word for North America's highest peak, Mount McKinley. Rising 20,320 feet, it is the centerpiece of Alaska's Denali National Park. Denali is often considered America's most classic climb. From top to bottom, it rises nearly 18,000', an elevation gain unsurpassed anywhere in the world. At a northern latitude of 63°, it is the most northerly of any big mountain over 20,000'.

Mount McKinley has a larger bulk and rise than Mount Everest. Even though the summit of Everest is 9,000 feet higher, measured from sea level, its base sits on the Tibetan Plateau at about 17,000 feet, giving it a real vertical rise of little more than 12,000 feet. The base of Denali is roughly a 2,000 foot plateau, giving it an actual rise of 18,000'.

The mountain poses an unusually severe risk of altitude illness and extremely cold weather due to its high latitude and its proximity to the jet stream. At the equator, a mountain as high as Mount McKinley would have 47% as much oxygen available on its summit as there is at sea level, but because of its very high latitude, the pressure on Denali's summit is much lower.

Hugging the Arctic Circle, Denali boasts a hostile environment far outstripping the high mountains of more temperate latitudes. Its relative isolation and proximity to the cold northern seas magnify its harshness and, like other singleton mountains, it makes its own weather. "The mountain's most dangerous hazard is elusive," according to Joe Wilcox. "In the vicious jaws of an arctic gale, McKinley's formidability is second to none."

ership, their climbing strategies, their equipment, their conditioning and their food.

Wilcox, on the other hand, found Snyder to be insulting, offensive and a poor team player. He felt the Colorado group was aloof, only interested in achieving their own goals, not in the overall group experience or welfare. This was a marriage that was forced, but never consummated, and certainly had all the earmarks of an impending divorce...if it lasted long enough.

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### Just Getting There

IT'S HARD TO PINPOINT exactly when the expedition began. In 1967, just getting to Alaska was a trek. Wilcox drove from Provo to Portland, where he met several members of the team for the first time; then headed north to Puyallup, WA, where the group unhitched their trailer and settled in at the home of Wilcox's in-laws while doing their pre-climb training on Mt. Rainier and getting their gear in order.

Clark and Janes were delayed and didn't get to the Rainier workout. Also missing it was the Colorado group. When the two groups met for the first time, Snyder explained that they had arrived late and didn't think they could locate Wilcox and his group on the glacier in foul weather. It was not a first meeting with lots of hugs. The ink on the wedding certificate wasn't dry yet and the relationship was already chilly.

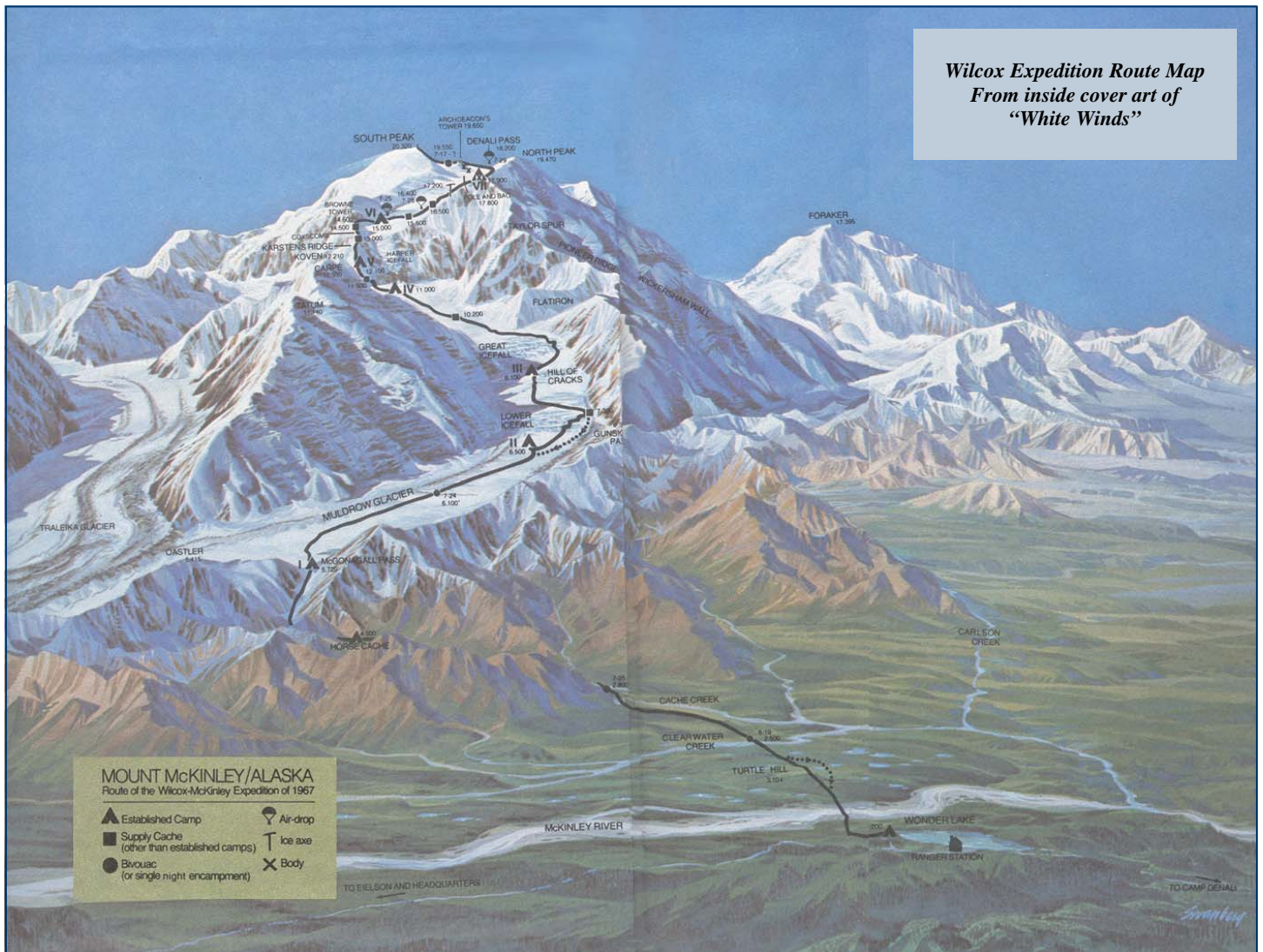
Arriving back in Puyallup, all 12 climbers were together for the first time. With their 1,900 lbs. of gear and rations (the Colorado group had less than 500 lbs.), the Wilcox contin-

gent piled into their two vehicles, with Janes' Dodge van towing a loaded down trailer. They were about 2,500 miles from their starting point! They had to cross the Canadian border, go up through British Columbia and survive the rough 1,200 unpaved miles of the Alcan Highway – which would get them within 500 miles of Mt. McKinley.

The cost of the expedition per man on the Wilcox team was about \$300, a tiny amount by today's standards, but even that was a budget breaker for some of the team. At least one member had nothing left for meals enroute and had to tap the climbing rations. Those who could afford to do so bought necessary items for the expedition out of their own pockets. Despite breakdowns (the Colorado group wound up towing the trailer), setbacks and other delays, they finally reached Denali National Park's Eielson Visitor Center – 33 miles northeast of the McKinley summit. It was June 17th.

Having come this far, they could now start.

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# Disaster on Denali

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## *The Expedition Begins*

**THE MULDROW ROUTE** started at Wonder Lake near the ranger station. It crossed the rain-swollen McKinley River and Clearwater Creek, the mosquito infested tundra and followed Cache Creek to Horse Cache at 4,500 ft. Camp I would be at McGonagall Pass (5,720'). Then it was up the Muldrow Glacier to Camp II (6,500'), through Gunsight Pass and the Hill of Cracks to Camp III (8,100'); past the Great Icefall and Flatiron to Camp IV at 11,000'. Camp V was at 12,100' overlooking Harper Icefall. Following Karstens Ridge and climbing through Coxscumb and by Browne Tower, Camp VI was at 15,000'. Camp VII was at 17,900', with Denali Pass above at 18,200', Archdeacon's Tower at 19,650' and South Peak Summit at 20,320'.

June 18th was spent sorting, checking and packing gear. On the 19th, Berle Mercer arrived with eight pack horses. About 1,000 pounds of Wilcox's gear was loaded and Mercer started down the trail to the McKinley River. The plan was for the Wilcox group to set out first, since it had some scientific stuff to do and for the Colorado group to follow a few days later with the second pack-in. With Steve Taylor falling ill, however, it was decided that Jerry Lewis would take his place in the advance team, with S. Taylor coming afterward with Snyder and Schlichter.

**IT WAS 18 MILES** from the highway to Camp I, a stretch mostly populated by voracious mosquitoes. The roaring McKinley River, more than a mile across and braided into a dozen swift silt-filled channels, was running at a record high. Attacking its widest point where they hoped it would also be shallowest, the group – under 80 lb. packs -- soon found the icy water numbing their feet and the abrasive glacier silt filling their shoes. Following game tracks when possible, the group reached Clearwater Creek around 8 p.m. A few risked crossing the stream, which was deeper and swifter than the McKinley River, while the others decided to wait until morning on the chance the creek would be running lower then. Both groups bivouacked for the night, rejoined in the morning and pushed on to the Horse Cache.

The horse packer had been stopped by a steep snow-filled gully of boulders leading to Camp I at McGonagall Pass. It was time for the men to start toting everything up the mountain. First stop would be the pass, 1,200 ft. higher. It was a trip to be repeated several times over the coming days.

On June 23rd, Mercer arrived with the second pack string. As Wilcox and his team of "porters" were returning from Camp I to Horse Cache to pick up more supplies, they saw Snyder and Schlichter on their way up. Where was S. Taylor? "He's a way behind and will be along soon," said Snyder, according to Wilcox. Mercer related how he gave Snyder, Schlichter and S. Taylor horseback rides across the McKinley River (nearly losing a horse in the torrent) and Clearwater Creek.

**WHEN TAYLOR ARRIVED**, much later, still weak and no-

ticeably upset, he told how the two Coloradoans had set a fast pace – goading, ridiculing and insulting him whenever he fell behind... finally abandoning him altogether the previous evening. Snyder's account in his book pretty much confirms Taylor's story. The Coloradoans assumed that, although slow, Taylor would be safe. He apparently made a wrong turn up a ravine and fell even farther behind, spending the night alone.

Pushing the pace for 14 hours under a 75 lb. pack was no way to treat an ill hiker, said Wilcox, especially when such a grind was unnecessary. He erupted and directly confronted Snyder and Schlichter, who in turn further criticized Taylor. It was a nasty scene. Without marriage counselors handy, however, they all bit their tongues, tightened their belts and pushed on.

(Note: To hear horse packer Berle Mercer's personal impression of the expedition team, you can listen to his actual voice on an audio file at:

<http://uaf-db.uaf.edu/Jukebox/DENALI/html/beme.htm>.)

## *Thinner Air, Higher Ire*

**THE ENSUING DAYS** brought, along with worsening weather, more dissension among the troops. Although they were accomplishing their goals, cutting trails to higher camps along Muldrow Glacier, they were also finding more things to bitch about. There was strong disagreement about the use of skis vs. snowshoes (Clark and McLaughlin preferred skis, which had been ruled out by Wilcox). Some were chafing under the heavy load of supplies and, in days to come, some team members would accuse others of carrying half-loads.

On Day 7 (June 25th), John Russell angrily accosted Wilcox and said, "I want four days of food, a tube tent and a stove. I'm leaving the expedition." After calming down a bit, he said, "This is a group leading itself in 12 different directions...the Colorado group is a clique; Clark, Janes and McLaughlin are a clique; and everyone else is strung out in no-man's-land."

Faced with a tempest in his group and a real storm moving in fast the next day, Wilcox called everyone together in a meeting and reminded everyone that they had accepted a pre-trip list of regulations without objection and that the issues needed to be dealt with at this point...not at 18,000 feet.

**THE PLAN WAS FOR** alternating roped four-man advance teams to lead the way, breaking trail to the next camp (or as far as weather and conditions would allow), with the remaining men bringing up supplies and rations. "Jerry Clark assumed the awesome logistics of the expedition," said Wilcox. "With some help from Walt, it was his responsibility to assure that the mass of supplies was kept organized, food was relayed in labeled order, fuel conserved, planned food caches made and marked, and new camps properly equipped before occupation. Jerry also had the major responsibility for outside radio communications."

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On June 27th, the camp at McGonagall was packed up and everything moved to Camp II, with several loads as heavy as 120 lbs. That same day, Jerry Lewis took a 10-foot crevasse fall, rescued when an ice screw was used as an anchor in the rock ice and he was extracted using a pulley method... a method the Coloradoans had learned from Wilcox, who wondered how much crevasse training that group had.

On June 29th it started snowing at 4 a.m. and kept up all day, depositing three feet of snow on the camp, covering everything. Pushing ahead up to Camp III, rope teams had to plow through waist deep snow, mark their trails with wands and probe each newly gained area for crevasses, marking safe perimeters. Late in the evening on July 2nd the last of Camp II was brought up to Camp III. The advance team had hoped to reach 11,000 ft., but deep snow and drained energy forced them to drop their loads at about 10,200 ft. near the Flatiron. The next day they found the deep trail they had left was completely filled in with wind-blown snow. Again, they were defeated, dumped their loads and returned to Camp III.

"The close pre-trip friendship of Jerry Clark and Mark McLaughlin continued throughout the climb; they usually hiked and tented together whenever convenient," noted Wilcox. "Jerry came to the climb in less than superior shape and took a while to regain proper conditioning."

### *Cold Weather, Cold Shoulder*

**COMPLAINTS AROSE** on the rope teams. Some climbers charged Snyder with being an inconsiderate leader, not matching his speed with the others on the rope. A rope team is only as strong as its weakest member, but Snyder maintained that speed was safety on the mountain. The other two Colorado climbers amplified Snyder's torrid pace when all three were on the same rope. What was worse, both on the mountainside and in Snyder's book, the slower Wilcox team members were derided and ridiculed for their frequent and lengthy rest breaks.

"The Colorado group did not make more relays or carry heavier loads," said Wilcox. "They simply spent less time on the trail and more in their tent. In camp the Colorado group was even more distinct, isolating themselves and offering essentially no social interaction. They had every appearance of being a separate three-man expedition."

**ABOUT HIS OWN GROUP**, Wilcox said, "We were like the siblings of a large family: sometimes irritated by close living, yet with an underlying bond of brotherhood stronger than life. The Colorado climbers seemed at times bewildered by this paradox."

At Camp III, an elaborate throne was constructed to everyone's delight and became a highly photographed outhouse (and you couldn't get much more *out*). Later in the climb they'd build a two room privy...with a his and a hers!

The details of the ensuing days are amply described in the Wilcox and Snyder books. Unbelievable efforts at higher and



*12,200 feet - Day 22 - July 10  
Paul, Mark, and Hank above Camp V on Karstens Ridge  
Photo by Dennis Luchterhand. From "White Winds"*

higher altitudes under difficult weather and ground conditions. Seeking routes around crevasses, dodging overhanging cornices and avoiding avalanches.

On July 11th (Day 23), Dennis, Hank, Paul and Mark finished breaking trail to 15,000 feet and put in 200 feet more fixed line near top of Coxcomb. It took 11 hours. The rest arrived at Camp VI in the middle of the night. They were 600 ft. higher than Mt. Rainier, 300 ft. above the Matterhorn. Several climbers began to notice symptoms of altitude: headaches and indigestion. The low temperature was 2 degrees.

**A COUPLE DAYS** of decent weather helped them get everything up to Camp VI and an evening meeting was held on July 13th in the cook tent to discuss plans for the imminent assault on the summit. The Colorado climbers were in their tent (one gets the impression from Snyder's account that they hadn't been informed of the meeting). Some observed that the Colorado climbers "were avoiding the energy draining task of trail-breaking." The forecast was for at least two days of good weather and everyone was getting excited about reaching the summit.

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# Disaster on Denali

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Wilcox went to report their plans to the Colorado group, the entire conversation taking place through the wall of the Colorado tent.

“Eight of us will be going up tomorrow for a summit climb the next day. The other four will bring up most of the Coxcomb cache and follow a day behind us.”

“And the Colorado group?” Howard asked.

“You will all be on the first team,” Wilcox replied.

**WITH A STORM DUE** on July 16th, the advance team would head up on the 14th and summit on the 15th. The second team of W. Taylor, S. Taylor, Russell and Schiff would move up to high camp on the 15th, giving the ailing Schiff and Taylor an extra day to rest up. If they didn’t attempt the summit, W. Taylor and Russell were well matched to be a two-man assault team.

To save weight and energy, Wilcox decided only essential items would be taken. “Just three more days,” he thought, “and then it will be all downhill.”

Snyder, however, was not happy with splitting the team, especially since the second team was composed of “four of the least experienced men in the expedition.”

## Chapter Two

### *Day Begins with a Bang!*

**AT 8 A.M., A COOK STOVE** malfunctioned. When the gas tank release valve was checked, it popped off, permitting fumes to escape that were ignited by a second stove. The entire tent ceiling exploded in flames and “six panicked bodies scrambled” for the exits. No one was seriously injured, but all that was left of the tent were the doorway zippers and the floor. In frustration, Russell kicked the sputtering stove, which, trailing flaming fuel, sailed across the corner of the other tent, which was saved when several men quickly smothered the fire.

Wilcox, Luchterhand (who was feeling ill), Janes and McLaughlin were on one rope team. Clark was teamed with the Colorado men and was hard pressed to keep up with their rapid pace. Wilcox’s rope tried to keep pace for a while, until McLaughlin complained, “We’re climbing this mountain too fast.” So, they let the Colorado team move ahead, out of sight, to establish high camp at 17,900 ft.

“We were camped at the upper surface of the earth’s life zone for the human species,” wrote Wilcox. “Tomorrow, as we stepped above 18,000 feet, we would enter a dominion whose scarcity of oxygen would tax our bodies beyond their ability to acclimate, a dominion where dead body cells cannot be replaced. Although fatal to the species, hearty individuals with careful attention to maintaining their physiology have lived in this realm for periods of several weeks without lasting ill effects....knowing that we would be living on biologi-

cally borrowed time was not comforting.”

**FIFTY MPH WINDS** woke the men on July 15th. When the winds calmed at 9 a.m. it turned out that only Wilcox and the Coloradoans were ready for the summit assault. The others

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*Oxygen starvation affects the thinking processes. “Simple tasks like strapping on my crampons required great concentration....”*

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would have to wait for the second group the next day.

Oxygen starvation affects the thinking processes. “Simple tasks like strapping on my crampons required great concentration and an unreasonable amount of time,” recalled Wilcox. “The alarming revelation was that this functional slowing did not register mentally. I felt I was performing at accustomed speed. My watch seemed to be running fast!”

An hour’s climb brought them to Denali Pass, the 18,200 ft. saddle between the mountain’s north and lower south summits. By 4:30 p.m., they had climbed to 19,550 ft. and crested the low ridge behind Archdeacon’s Tower. By 5 p.m. they were at 19,700 and at 6:15 they were in sight of the summit, less than 200 yards and 150 vertical feet away. Snyder was first on top, then Lewis, Schlichter and Wilcox.

They radioed their success to the ranger station, were congratulated and were told it was the “first time we’ve talked to anybody on the top of the mountain.”

After setting off a flare, planting flags and taking lots of pictures, Wilcox led the uneventful, but tiring, descent back to high camp, arriving at 10 p.m., just two hours from the summit. As they returned they found the second team just arriving from Camp VI after 10 hours on the trail. John Russell, who had become ill during the day, carried a bamboo pole decorated with strips from the floor of the burned tent. He planned to adorn the summit with this “warrior’s staff.”

**DAY 28 (JULY 16)**– An immobilizing storm strikes with 70-80 mph winds. They’re holed up in four tents with just two stoves. Three vital quarts of fuel, half their reserves, are stored outside the Colorado tent and are drifted under and lost. Morale was shaky.

**DAY 29 (JULY 17)** – Clearing weather, not unlike the first summit day, greets the team. What to do? Clark says, “I think we’ll just wait and see what the weather does.” The delay proved to be critical. Everyone wanted to try to summit except Schiff. Wilcox wanted to stay at high camp while the others tried the summit, but Clark tells him it’s not necessary, that he should descend with the Coloradoans and Schiff. “We have the majority of the strongest climbers with us and besides it would further conserve our fuel for you to descend....”

Wilcox offers S. Taylor a chance to also descend with him, but he declines, saying, “I think I’ll just stay with the

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high group.”

Clark, left in charge of the high camp, radios the ranger station, which is unable to get an updated weather forecast. Wilcox tells Clark not to take any chances. “Don’t worry,” Clark replies, “If we can’t climb today, we’ll probably go down tomorrow.”

Despite having to break trail all the way back to Camp VI at 15,000 ft., they arrive about 3 p.m. in calm weather. A shallow fog covers the summit slopes that evening; otherwise, the sky is clear.

At 8 p.m., the ranger station relays radio communications from the high group, which was in a whiteout. The previous day’s storm had also blown away a lot of the trail marking wands left by the summiting group. “We’re just floundering around,” reports Clark. “We don’t know if we’re on the summit ridge or not.” Equipped only with sleeping bags, the group bivouacs for the night.

### *Summit...then Silence*

**DAY 30 (JULY 18) – SUCCESS!** With their cold batteries weakening (reserve battery pack left at a lower camp), Clark and McLaughlin report that they are on the summit and dictate postcards to be sent to their families. They report that *five* climbers are on the summit...Clark, McLaughlin, Janes, Luchterhand and W. Taylor. Ill, S. Taylor stayed in camp. There is no mention of Russell! Later speculation is that Russell was in no condition to continue the climb and decided to either wait on the trail at around 19,500 ft. or tried to make his way back alone to S. Taylor at high camp.

At noon, wind increases at Camp VI, reducing visibility to a couple hundred feet. With a poorly marked route down from high camp, Wilcox worries about the upper party having to wait until the next day.

**DAY 31 (JULY 19) –** Strong winds all night. Northern storm moves in and drops a foot of snow on Camp VI. High wind clouds drape the summits. Everyone watches for evenly spaced dots to descend the upper glacier, but a snow-storm obscures the mountain. “Damn, they waited too long to break camp,” thought Wilcox. “They’re going to be stuck in high camp for another day.”

Snyder speculated: “They moved straight down the slope, not veering left toward the top of the ridge to Denali Pass. This was done either because the men had lost the route completely; or because they were trying to descend straight to Camp VII, avoiding the wind-blasted ridge ....At 19,400 ft. they left the gentle shelf of Archdeacon’s Tower and started down the steepening slope. They were marking their route, and one of their wands was later found in place on this slope. The wind was increasing steadily, and the slope was fearfully steep considering the weather and the physical condition of the climbers. A halt was called. Retreat was cut off now; it was probably beyond the endurance of even healthy men to force a way through the blinding and suffocating

storm....They had no choice, they must bivouac for yet another night...in sleeping bags already icy....Perhaps they tried to dig a hole...but it would have been a shallow shelter at best, since they had only ice axes and weary hands to use as tools. They huddled together for what little warmth and protection that could afford, and were soon covered by the drifting snow.”

For the second consecutive night there was no radio contact with the ranger station. Wilcox proposed that he, Schlichter and Snyder start that night for high camp to check the situation. “Howard, there’s some kind of trouble at the high camp. You, Paul and I will start up as soon as we can get ready. We’ll travel light with only our sleeping bags, a snow shovel and fuel. We can pick up some food at the 16,500 ft. cache.”

“We can’t go up tonight, Joe,” replied Snyder. “Let’s wait until morning.”

“What’s the matter?” Wilcox exploded, “You guys have already made the summit and now you don’t want to go up any more, even when people are in trouble up there?”

Forced to wait and boiling mad, Wilcox could not understand Snyder’s attitude. “I didn’t want to battle up to high camp any more than Howard, but rescue is not a matter of what a person wants. Our commitment to the upper party was as total as if we shared their climbing rope.”

Perhaps, Wilcox thought, he was overreacting. High camp might be in fine shape, troubled only by dead radio batteries. The storm persisted, dropping heavy snow on the camp.

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*“Retreat was cut off now; it was probably beyond the endurance of even healthy men to force a way through the blinding and suffocating storm....”*

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**DAY 32 (JULY 20) --** Wilcox, Snyder and Schlichter start out from 15,000 feet. After gaining only 3/4 mile in four hours of blizzard conditions, they are forced to turn back to camp, where shoveling out their tents has become a constant chore. With their batteries weakening (and spares cached below at 11,000 ft.) communications are failing.

**DAY 33 (JULY 21) –** Winds increase to 65 mph... estimated at least 80 mph at high camp. Colder than the weather was the discussion Snyder and Wilcox have about mounting yet another rescue effort. It was psychologically easier, admitted Wilcox, to remain at Camp VI shielded from the desperate drama playing out above, where they would be out of fuel by now with dehydration and frostbite taking over. Snyder points out that even if they can get to high camp, they’ll arrive in as bad a shape and just collapse on top of them.

Meanwhile, the storm increases its fury...winds of 100

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# Disaster on Denali

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mph howl through camp. The would-be rescuers are clinging to their own frail toehold on the mountain. They're reduced to sharing their body heat. Trying to retrieve equipment blown down the glacier, Wilcox is blown off his feet, clutches a tent guy line as he sails by and crawls back. In danger of being trapped and buried in a collapsed tent, Wilcox and Schiff move into the now crowded wind-buffed Colorado tent.

*(Famous for its storms, the Mt. McKinley area endured some of the worst in history during the Wilcox expedition. At lower levels, heavy rains caused rivers and their tributaries to overflow, roads to be washed out and a federal flood disaster to be declared. Wilcox's account relates what he experienced. Analysis of weather data afterward led Wilcox to conclude that the Clark party higher up experienced average temperatures of 2.2 degrees during the eight and a half day storm, with lows of -10 degrees. And one must also consider the wind chill factor, the group's already wet gear and winds probably averaging 80 to 100 mph, with gusts well above 150 mph. In 33 years of July observations, not a single wind velocity recording aloft was as high as the 1967 storm. Of course, Wilcox could know none of this at the time.)*

**DAY 34 (JULY 22)** -- Lewis was seriously ill and, according to Snyder, Schiff and Wilcox were "as weak as rag dolls." In their first radio transmission in over 36 hours, Wilcox indicated only one person (himself) was feeling like going up. At 11 p.m., Snyder wants Wilcox to tell the ranger station that they have sick men and won't be able to go back to Camp VII. Wilcox tells them they can't travel that night and are waiting for morning. Snyder takes the radio and tries to make the ranger station understand their situation, "We have three people pretty sick up here...We have to get these people down."

Wilcox is astounded by Snyder's "desperation to justify the desertion of the high party." He knew Lewis and Schiff were weak and wondered who the third sick man was supposed to be.

**DAY 35 (JULY 23)** – Wilcox awakes to find his hands numb and has to have Schiff strap his crampons on for him. He had to accept the fact that he would be going down the mountain with the others. "I had joined the deserters," he wrote. "No despair can be as great as that of abandonment."

Descending in milder weather, Lewis collapsed to the snow every 50 feet. At the top of the Coxcomb they clipped onto their fixed line and eventually, far down the ridge, they saw something that lifted their spirits: Their 12,100 ft. camp was occupied by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska Expedition. With the weather deteriorating again, the MCA climbers ascended to meet the Wilcox contingent at 12,500 ft. and helped them back to camp, hot food and rest. And even medi-

cal care, since the MCA group included Dr. Grace Jansen, an anesthesiologist.

Wilcox approached Snyder with the idea of borrowing a couple of dry sleeping bags and going back up with the MCA group, but was again rebuffed. So, thought Wilcox, perhaps he could get off the mountain quickly, dry his gear and return with an airlifted rescue group. Radio discussions with the ranger station involved possible overflights, air drops and all-out rescue efforts, but confusion, bureaucracy and continuing bad weather pretty much left the small MCA group the best bet.

**DAY 36 (JULY 24)** – In dense fog, two rope lines started their descent...the Colorado climbers on one and Wilcox, Schiff and Dr. Jansen (who was suffering migraines and decided not to continue her ascent with MCA) on the other. The descent was slow and treacherous. During the day, the two ropes became estranged, operating

independently. Changing boots at Camp VI, Wilcox felt frost-bite attacking his toes. Late in the evening, they reached Camp III. Throughout the night, they hiked on.

**DAY 37 (JULY 25)** – The Wilcox rope stopped on Mount Moraine for food and a few hours rest. Snyder's rope passed by and kept going. Refreshed, Wilcox moved on, ultimately reaching the tundra's rain sodden surface, so different from the snow and ice they had been on for a month. A mile below Horse Cache, they passed the Coloradoans' tent. At 9 p.m., they reached an MCA camp and stopped for the night.

**DAY 38 (JULY 26)** – The difficult hike resumed and at 8 a.m. they came to Clearwater Creek, only to find no likely crossing. Kicking, struggling and using his pack as a float, Wilcox crossed one channel, then threw his pack into a second channel until collapsing in exhaustion on the far shore. There was no way Dr. Jansen or Schiff would be able to duplicate his effort. He tried throwing a rope back to Schiff, but couldn't reach him. The Colorado group with Lewis' frost-bitten feet wouldn't be able to cross either.

Dr. Jansen said Lewis would need medical attention soon and signaled to Wilcox to send a helicopter back for them. Determined to move on, Wilcox dragged his water laden pack up the bank and found he couldn't lift it. Taking a couple packs of fudge and mixed nuts, he left his pack and moved away from the dripping figures on the far bank.

Plodding alone on the tundra, he topped a ridge in mid-morning and saw the flooding McKenzie River...not the braided river of before, but a single, roaring, mile-wide devastating force. A 14-mile detour around the head of the river was out of the question. He threw himself into the swirling nightmare.

For someone Snyder had described as *weak as a rag doll*, Wilcox was either miraculously revived by the lower altitude or found some amazing hidden reserve. His crossing of the

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river reads like something out of an Alistair MacLean adventure story...or a Rambo movie. The frigid water made the Clearwater seem tropical by comparison. Time and again, the current tore at him, sucked him down and thrashed him against rocks. His baggy wind pants filled like a parachute and were ripped down to his ankles, binding his frozen feet. He fought to get them up, only to have it happen again. Finally, exhausted, his body went limp and the current took him at will. He felt he had reached the end of the line. Against all odds, he was eventually thrown upon a rock bar. Coughing, vomiting, bleeding...but still alive.

**WITH GRINDING GLACIER SILT** in his boots (but not daring to remove them), Wilcox staggered to the campground at Wonder Lake and got a ride to the ranger station.

That afternoon, re-nourished by a meal that included roast moose, Wilcox was still trying to convince Ranger Wayne Merry that, since he was already acclimated for high altitude, he should go back up the mountain with a rescue team. He blamed his hobbled gait on glacier silt in his boots, trying to hide the fact that his feet were frostbitten.

Told that no military helicopters were available, but the Alaska Rescue Group would secure one the next morning, Wilcox blew his stack. "I risked my life to come here and get a rescue helicopter and I'm getting goddamned tired of this dilly-dally Mickey Mouse. I want a helicopter sent right now – *today!* And I don't give damn how much it costs!"

Meanwhile, the MCA were at 15,000 feet, searching for a supply airdrop in two feet of fresh powder snow and asking for more supplies to be airdropped so they could climb to 17,900 without having to first relay food and fuel up Karstens Ridge.

That evening, a chopper from Farewell, AK, 120 miles away, made two trips to bring back the Coloradoans, Schiff and Dr. Jansen. Schiff told Wilcox the Coloradoans were upset that he had called a helicopter without their permission.

**DAY 39 (JULY 27)** – By 8 p.m. the MCA had climbed to the Wilcox cache at 16,000 ft. and planned to camp for the night. After a considerable delay, they had located most of the July 25th air-drop. It had been packed in *white* pillow-cases, which hadn't been removed before the drop.

**DAY 40 (JULY 28)** – MCA proceeds to 17,900 ft. under mild snow and weather conditions. Airdrops being made a half-mile *down* the glacier from MCA...as high as the light plane could go. A larger C-130 was requested to make a large airdrop near Denali Pass ASAP.

At 8 p.m., MCA radios: "...we found one body – one body, over." They do not know who the body in the tent is and there is no sign of the other six climbers. They plan to go to the summit tomorrow and search along the way. Asked to

try and make an identification, they respond, "We cannot look at him. He's decomposed greatly...over." The temperature is hovering around zero with winds of 25 mph and gusting higher. The first guess was that the man in the tent was Steve Taylor, who had stayed behind.

**DAY 41 (JULY 29)** – Two more bodies are found...on the east side just above Denali Pass. Again, no IDs. The men were not roped. The impression MCA had was that "they tried to weather out the storm and the wind just blew 'em away."

No packs were sighted, but a Stubei ice axe (Steve Taylor's) was found. And one of the bodies had an Eddie Bauer sleeping bag wrapped around him. Asked if they could take photos, MCA answered, "Negative, negative." Indeed, MCA couldn't do much. Weather was worsening and they were locked in a whiteout. The next day, MCA began their descent, seemingly anxious to get down out of the unstable weather and, suspected Wilcox, spooked also by the bodies they found and a mountain that could vent such destruction, a mountain capable of killing men, apparently dropping them in stride. They brought back nothing from the mountain...not the bodies, nor any identification papers, nor any journals (if there were any to be found). No photographs of the bodies were taken.

**A COUPLE DAYS LATER**, the MCA climbers hiked out to Wonder Lake. Lengthy debriefing clarifies a few details. About halfway up the upper icefall, they found the Stubei ice axe, leaving it where they found it. At about 17,800 ft., a

couple hundred yards *below* high camp, they found John Russell's bamboo pole, still bedecked with neoprene streamers, stuck deeply into the snow. Around the base of the pole was a sleeping bag.

At high camp, they found a discolored, decomposed body partially wrapped in the tent's shredded remains. The body was in a

crouched or sitting position, as if he had been trying to steady the tent's center pole when he died. Based on the description of the body's matted hair, Wilcox later decided it was Russell, not Steve Taylor. Wilcox guesses that Russell got back to high camp in very weak shape and that Taylor tried to descend alone, taking just the sleeping bag and ice axe with him...discarding both enroute and, perhaps, wrapping the bag around the bamboo pole in the hope that it might be spotted.

The other two bodies, found near 19,000 ft. on the steep crevassed slope beneath Archdeacon's Tower, were 300-400 ft. apart, unroped and without ice axes. MCA described one as sitting with one leg extended "like he was trying to protect himself from the wind." His pants were orange and he had a red or orange parka. The lower body had an Eddie Bauer bag wrapped around him. Although the upper body could have been Walt Taylor, the lower body was easier to identify.

(Continued on page 16)

# Disaster on Denali

(Continued from page 15)

Only Dennis Luchterhand had a cloth covered Eddie Bauer sleeping bag.

In retrospect, Wilcox describes a scenario taking place below Archdeacon's Tower that is somewhat different than the one given above by Snyder...stretching the drama for perhaps another day or two...but with the same sad, final result. The other climbers were never found.

Reminiscent of the Japanese drama Roshomon, Wilcox and Snyder give eye witness reports that appear to come from different sides of the looking glass. And yet another book on the tragedy is due out next summer, promising to delve into the fundamental questions of risk and responsibility.

As for Jerry Clark, Mark McLaughlin, Henry Janes, Dennis Luchterhand, John Russell, Steve Taylor and Walter Taylor...they remain silent. Resting, perhaps forever, under Denali's cold white quilt.

## 1967 Wilcox Mt. McKinley Expedition

<i>Climber</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Joseph F. Wilcox, Leader	24	6-1	180
<i>F. Jerry Clark</i>	31	5-7	145
<i>Henry Janes</i>	25	5-5	140
Jerry Lewis*	31	6-5	220
<i>Dennis Luchterhand</i>	24	6-4	175
<i>Mark McLaughlin</i>	23	6- 1/2	150
<i>John Russell</i>	23	5-9	165
Anshel Schiff	30	5-10	175
Paul Schlichter*	22	6-4	200
Howard Snyder*	22	6-2	175
<i>Steve Taylor</i>	22	6-2	155
<i>Walter Taylor</i>	24	5-8	150

*Names in italics are still on Mt. McKinley.*

\* Colorado contingent

## Post Scripts...

• **HOWARD SNYDER** concludes "The Hall of the Mountain King" by saying all "the mistakes the group made are the same mistakes made by every expedition to a greater or lesser degree." "But usually nothing major goes wrong," and the mishaps and mistakes "are immediately forgotten when they have no ill consequences." He then recites a litany of blame, none of it directed at himself or his Colorado companions.

Wilcox does admit, upon reflection at the end of "White Winds," that "There are some things which I feel should have been done differently, yet I do not see them as in any way precipitating the tragedy." To Wilcox, the disaster hinged on a single day. "Had the expedition schedule been advanced by one day, the second summit would have occurred before the storm."

On the other hand, had the decision not been made to split the group (something opposed by Snyder) and had the first summiting group waited until everyone had caught up before advancing in numbers, it is possible

they would have all been caught in the horrendous icy clutches of that storm.

The other major issue that continues to nag at Wilcox is not immediately returning to high camp to help comrades in trouble...an option Snyder believed unrealistic considering the weather and their physical condition. In his December 16th presentation at the Obsidian Lodge, Wilcox reiterated his regret, saying: "I'm not sure it (not going up) wasn't the right decision...might have lost more people had we tried...but I wasn't in favor of going down at the time."

• **THE BAD CHEMISTRY** that kept the Wilcox and Snyder contingents from becoming ONE on the expedition continued to be reflected during Wilcox's slide presentation at the lodge. Nothing was said about the organizational problems, but at one point he referred to the Colorado group as "an appendage to our expedition."

Asked following the presentation if he and Snyder had seen or talked to each other over the intervening 40 years, Wilcox said, "He hasn't called me and I see no reason to contact him." Glowing coals of resentment

continue to burn near the surface about Snyder's accusations. If Snyder wants to blame him as leader, Wilcox says that's fair game, "but why speak ill of the dead who can't defend themselves."

• **FOLLOWING THE TRAGEDY** in 1967, various lawsuits stripped the National Park Service of its control over who got permits to climb. As a result, thousands of climbs have been attempted, some successful, some not. For example, in 2004, 1,275 climbers attempted to summit (11% women), with 51% successful. Average age of all climbers was 37. Of these, 289 expeditions with 1,173 people climbed the West Buttress route (most flying in and avoiding the long tundra trek) with only four expeditions (25 people) attempting the more difficult Muldrow Glacier route (with none of them summiting). During 2004, Mario Locatelli became the oldest to climb Denali at 71 years, 6 months, replacing Donald Henry who was 71 years 5 months old when he did it in 1988. Being blind or disabled has not deterred climbers. And some have had successful solo climbs, even in winter.

-- MJK

# Obsidians Pack Lodge for Joe Wilcox Presentation on 1967 Denali Expedition

**M**ORE THAN 100 OBSIDIANS and guests packed the lodge for a special Saturday morning presentation on December 16th by Joe Wilcox, leader of the ill-fated 1967 Mt. McKinley climbing expedition that lost 7 of its 12 members, including Obsidians Jerry Clark and Mark McLaughlin.

For most of the presentation (given for the first time in 10 years by Wilcox), the audience reacted with awe as one slide after another reflected magnificent otherworldly scenes of Denali's frozen landscapes, immense glaciers and ice-falls and of young men camping between crevasses and toting 80lb packs through waist deep snow.

Only the night before, Sue Sullivan had enthralled a potluck audience with a slide program on a recent climb in the Himalayas. She and her husband, John Mowat, were awestruck by the images of Denali and expressed no desire to duplicate the experiences shown by Wilcox.

For most of the presentation, Wilcox kept the tone positive, introducing the audience to the expedition's members and showing photos of himself and the three Coloradoans atop McKinley's summit. Ultimately, however, the mood turned somber as he described the weeklong storm that struck the mountain and concluded his presentation by slowly showing the faces of the seven who never returned.

**AMONG THOSE** in the audience were Austin McLaughlin, Mark's brother; Obsidians Gary Kirk and Ed Lovegren, who climbed with Mark and remembered a bon voyage gathering the night before Jerry and Mark left for the expedition; Obsidian Norm Benton, who met with Wilcox in 1966 and rec-



Photo by John Jacobsen

Austin McLaughlin (left), brother of Mark, meets Joe Wilcox.

ommended Mark for the climbing team; and Obsidian Ron Funke, who began climbing as a junior member in 1963 and was also a member of the UofO Alpine Club along with his good friend John Russell, one of the climbers who died on Denali.

An emotional and historic event, the program came about through a series of linked connections pursued by Janet Jacobsen. The major renovation of the lodge included a decision to spend the money (\$25,000) to save the climbing wall (named in memory of Clark and McLaughlin). Responding to publicity announcing the dedication of the expanded lodge and rededication of the climbing wall, Mark's younger brother Austin attended the event. That encouraged Janet to seek out Clark's relatives.

A web search led Janet to Wilcox, a math and astronomy teacher at Highline Community College in Auburn, WA. Wilcox had an old phone number and address for Clark's brother Jack in Syracuse. Janet was delayed a bit in her search because of the natural assumption that it would be Syracuse, NY. Turned out there is a Syracuse in Indiana and that's where she found Clark's brother, who didn't know about the

wall in Jerry's memory.

**JANET INVITED WILCOX** to visit whenever he ventured down I-5 and was in the nick of time, since he was retiring on December 1st and heading soon aboard his boat, Shepherd Moon, toward his new home in Hawaii.

Wilcox provided the Obsidians with copies of Denali posters and his now out-of-print book on the 1967 expedition, "White Winds," generously donating the \$540 netted from their sale to the Obsidian Endowment Fund in memory of Jerry

Clark, Hank Janes, Dennis Luchterhand, Mark McLaughlin, John Russell, Steve Taylor and Walt Taylor.

*A limited number of books are still available at \$15 each (contact Janet at 343-8030 or [jbjacobsen@comcast.net](mailto:jbjacobsen@comcast.net)).*

Also attending the program was Bob McGown of the American Alpine Club, who presented Wilcox with a plaque recognizing his continued support of the Denali Weather Station Project (there are now two weather stations there). McGown also called attention to the American Alpine Club's national conference in Bend March 31-April 1.

Wilcox spoke during the presentation of the dangers and rewards of such mountain climbing adventures and said he has tried to live a full life to honor the memory of the lost climbers.

In an email to Janet, Margaret Prentice summed up the feelings of many at the presentation. "I couldn't help thinking how, even these many years later, this must be so wrenching for him and what a wonderful tribute it is to those friends he lost that he is willing to talk about them and share the events and conditions that led to their death."

-- Marshall Jay Kandell



# TRIP REPORTS & OTHER ACTIVITIES



## Hikes

### Cape Perpetua

October 14, 2006

Leader: Bill Montgomery

Photo by Zella Andreski

6 miles, 600 ft. (Moderate)



Jane Allen tree hugging

**T**HIS WAS a combination of three short hikes. The first took us from Cape Perpetua Visitor Center up to the lookout. It's a vigorous climb through a beautiful coastal forest -- about half a Mt. Pisgah in elevation gain and length. We descended and then hiked the much easier old growth Giant Spruce Trail to the enormous old spruce one can crawl through. We returned to the visitor center, looked around, ate our lunches and headed for the tide pools and the dramatic Devil's Churn. The tide was low, so we had to look further down for the tide pool creatures. The Devil's Churn wasn't as wild as it is at high tide, but one could walk further back and see the full extent of the channel it's creating. Zella took some great photos of this trip. Members: Jane Allen, Zella Andreski, Julie Dorland, John Lee, Bill Montgomery, Nola Nelson and Beki Ries-Montgomery; nonmembers Donna Courtell and Pat Soussan.

### Waldo Lake

October 28, 2006

Leader: Bill Montgomery

Photo by Zella Andreski

9 miles, 300 ft. (Moderate)

A CRISP, SUNNY autumn day in the mountains. We drove up 58 and Waldo Lake Rd. to the Shadow Bay boat launch near the southern part of Waldo Lake.

There was some icy snow on the road, but we all drove through it okay. We headed clockwise around the lake on the spectacular Waldo Lake trail. There were a couple of inches of crusty snow on the trail. I felt like we were probably sneaking in the last possible good hike on this trail this year. The snow got us all talking about snowshoes and skis and winter. A good seasonal transition hike.

We hiked to the Klovdahl headgates -- lingering evidence of a failed early 20th century scheme to obtain water for Lane County from Waldo Lake. Fortunately, Waldo Lake survived that threat. Now, bacterial contamination of the beautiful clean water is the biggest threat. Fortunately, the Forest Service is beginning to address this problem. We ate lunch in the sun on the shore of Klovdahl Bay, where we had a great view of almost the entire lake. Then we marched back through the crusty snow and went home better prepared for winter. Members Jane Allen, Zella Andreski, Walt Dolliver, Julie Dorland, Ed Durkee, Dick Hildreth, Linda Hovey, Janet Jacobsen, Bill Montgomery and Beki Ries-Montgomery; nonmembers Ken Augustson, Brenda Kameenui and Jim Zajac.



### Mt. Pisgah

November 25, 2006

Leader: Marc Hansen

4 miles, 1,200 ft. (Moderate)

**THIS PISGAH HIKE** provided a bird's eye view of the 1,400-acre Wildish lands. From the north trailhead, we hiked along the northern flank of Mt. Pisgah, went through the rain forest and up to the swing for a good view to the west. Then we hiked over to the summit trail and up to the BPA twin towers for a view to the east and up to the summit, a first for two of our party. The group had a high inter-

est in the Wildish lands acquisition. Enthusiastic hikers were nonmembers Helen Denzler, Harold Perkins and Nance Searle. I was the lone Obsidian.

### Mt. Pisgah

December 6, 2006

Leader: Lana Lindstrom

Photo: Barb Revere

7 miles, 2,400 ft. (Moderate)



**WE JOKE** it's OK to lose 10% of a group; on this hike, I gained 20%....I'm ahead! One-fifth of the group started at a different trailhead, joining us as we reached the main trail! We made a big X across Mt. Pisgah, starting and ending at the horse parking lot, hiking to the top, then down to the east entrance and then back up again. For most of the hikers, this was a new perspective on this wonderful treasure in our backyard. Joining me were members LaRee Beckley and Barb Revere; and nonmembers: Dave Compton and Chris Kellow.

### Elijah Bristow

December 10, 2006

Leader: Chris Stockdale

Photo by Jim Pierce

8 miles, 0 ft. (Moderate)

A LITTLE BIT OF RAIN and a little bit of wind didn't deter 10 hikers from exploring close-in Elijah Bristow Park. A large expanse of meadows, woodlands and wetlands, the park is bordered on the north side by the Willamette River and on the south by Highway 58. It contains a network of trails, many of which are used by horses, resulting in some muddy portions. Few people are aware these trails are so extensive one can hike all the way to the Dexter dam and cover 10 miles or more. Although level, many of the trails are rough, requiring concentration to avoid twisted ankles.

We set off from the horse parking area and headed for Lost Creek. As the

water was too high to ford, we used the main park road bridge to gain the other side and followed the main route west along the creek, looping around through the Lost Creek/Willamette River confluence reclamation area before heading up river to the dam. Lunch was eaten on the riprap that borders the river below the structure. The sun came out for a brief spell during the break, but rain started as we began our homeward route. We spotted signs of beaver, elk tracks and a few different birds.



*Busy beaver work*

Everybody enjoyed discovering this convenient hiking area, little known to so many people. Joining me were Obsidians Jane Allen, Walt Dolliver, Chuck Eysers, Margot Fetz, Dick Hildreth, Daphne James, Sam Miller and Jim Pierce; and nonmember Joanie O'Brien.

## **Mt. Pisgah/Solstice**

**December 22, 2006**

**Leader: Royal Murdock**  
**3 miles, 1,000 ft. (Easy)**

**ALL OF US WERE** on top of Mt. Pisgah at the monument for the 7:45 a.m. scheduled sunrise. The sky was clear, fog hanging on the side of Pisgah and filling the valleys. The sun was late. It was so close, just below the horizon, that we could determine almost exactly where it would rise; and that spot lined up very nicely with the southern slot on the monument. But this new sun, on his first appearance on the first morning of the new solstice year, modestly wrapped himself in fog as he came up from behind the mountains. And somewhat like communion, Margaret shared a pastry baked according to an ancient Scottish tradition to represent the sun and is eaten as part of the solstice ceremony (in this case, eaten to honor an *unseen sun*). Celebrants were members Marc Hansen, Sandra Larsen, Royal Murdock and Margaret Prentice; and nonmembers Pat Bean, Sue Carey and Bonnie Murdock.



## **Snow Shoe Trips**

### **Marilyn & Gold Lakes**

**December 17, 2006**

**Leader: Stewart Hoeg**  
**5 miles, 200 ft. (Moderate)**

**I T WAS VERY COLD** (25 degrees) and foggy as eight people met at 8 a.m. at SEHS. As we headed up towards Gold Lake Snow Park, the fog quickly burned off and the temperature headed down. We parked under brilliant blue skies, no wind and a temperature in the mid-teens. We hit the trail and were rewarded (despite low snow levels) with flocked trees and about 12 inches of fresh powder. The trail to the Gold Lake Shelter via Upper and Lower Marilyn Lakes was a bit of an adventure. About 100 yards from Hwy. 58 we had to negotiate a huge tree blown down in the recent storm. Negotiating the trail between the two Marilyn Lakes was a scramble to avoid water filled sinkholes created by the recent mountain rains. We arrived at the shelter right around noon and enjoyed lunch warmed by both bright sun and a fire in the shelter's stove. A bonus of the low snow levels was easy access to both the shelter and the restroom. We returned via the road and crossed two separate spots where recent rains had washed the snow off the road. A perfect day was completed by a stop at the Dairy Queen in Oakridge. Snowshoers were members Barb Bruns, Charles Durham, Stewart Hoeg, Lloyd McEntire, Sharon Ritchie and Sheila Ward; and nonmembers Jeff Goby and Kaushik Vaidyanathan.



## **Ski Trips**

### **Gold Lake**

**December 10, 2006**

**Leader: Laurie Funkhouser**  
**X-Ski 4 miles, 300 ft. (Easy)**

**U NDER THE THREAT** of rain, the crew of eight traveled in two cars to Gold Lake Snow-Park, where we were greeted by snow! Two participants discovered their boots and bindings did not

match and opted to hike into the shelter. Very adaptable! The snow was crusty with a light covering of fresh snow (maybe an inch). All arrived at the shelter, where Tom Woxell started a fire in the wood stove. After warming up, eating and sharing experiences, we headed back. Elliott Aronin challenged his "new" knee with this trip. Looking forward to the next trip! Members: Bea Fontana, Bob Freed, Laurie Funkhouser, Valentina Radchenko, Laurie Reed and Tom Woxell. Nonmembers: Elliot Aronin and Janet Winter.

### **Big Lake**

**December 22, 2006**

**Leader: Lana Lindstrom**  
**X-Ski 6 miles, 100 ft. (Moderate)**

**WHAT A GORGEOUS DAY** -- absolutely no wind, spectacular views of Mt. Washington, Three Fingering Jack and Hayrick Butte. The snow was velvety and the route had been tracked. We had lunch at Big Lake, enjoying the scenery, company and peace and quiet (no snowmobiles). Enjoying this picture perfect day on skis with me were members Richard Hughes, Bob Huntley, SatNam Khalsa, Carol Petty and Sue Wolling. Thanks to Bob for driving.



## **Trail Maintenance**

### **Spencer Butte**

**December 9, 2006**

**Leader: Peter Asai**  
**3 miles, 200 ft.**

**OBSIDIANS** Peter Asai and Scott Youngblood and future Obsidian Matt Bell, met at Spencer Butte to work with city volunteer coordinator Matt McRae. This day was focused on brushing and clearing culverts from the main parking lot to the summit tree line and along the tie trail from Willamette/52nd St. As usual, the weather was ideal, cool and non-precipitating. This continues our record of two years work at Spencer Butte with no trail maintenance trip being rained out. The group cut back tree limbs, ferns and other brush protruding into the trail or causing head obstacles. The group was able to re-direct a father and his two toddlers from heading in the wrong direction, a graphic representation of the problem of inadequate signing given the multiplicity of trails on the Butte.



# Board Notes (Excerpted)

January 3, 2007

*By Laurie Funkhouser, Secretary*

Wayne Deeter passed the gavel to new president John Pegg. Board members present: Treasurer Sheila Ward, Brian Hamilton, Stewart Hoeg, Jim Duncan, Barb Revere, Marianne Camp and Laurie Funkhouser. Other members present: Larry Huff, Margaret Prentice, Liz Reanier, Peter Green, Lenore McManigal, Deb Carver, Zella Andreski, John Jacobsen, Janet Jacobsen, Julie Dorland, Kathy Hoeg, Joella Ewing, Jim Pierce, Doug Nelson, Dave Predeek. December minutes approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Board approved payment of outstanding bills. A CD from Umpqua Bank is maturing. It was recommended CD be renewed with a 10-month CD at Liberty.

## Old Business

**Committee Chairs:** Final two positions filled: Trail Maintenance, Peter Green; Conservation, Deb Carver.

**Winter & Summer Trips By-Laws:** Jim Pierce presented new by-laws to be reviewed. Discussion tabled until February.

## New Business

**Committees:** Board approved following committee members. **Summer Trips** (Jan Jacobsen/Barb Revere chair): Sandra Larsen, Joanne Ledet, Margaret Prentice, Tom Adamczyk, Rick Ahrens, Ann-Marie Askew, Anne Bonine, Joan Bradley, Sharon & Jim Duncan, Paul Flashenberg, Janet Hall, Mary Hamilton, Sam Houston, Bob Huntley, Becky Lipton, Norma Lockyear, Janice Marshall, Sue Meyers, Effie Neth, Carol Petty, Kathy Riddle, Karla Rusow, Barbara Schomaker, Judy Terry, Sharon Thomas, Charlie Van Deusen, and Helen Martz; **Climbs** (Larry Huff): Doug Nelson, Sue Sullivan, Wayne Deeter, George Baitinger, Virgil Lamb, Peter Green; **Trail Maintenance** (Peter Green): Peter Asai, Larry Dunlap, Rob Castleberry, Scott Youngblood; **By-ways By Bus** (Liz Reanier): Betty Hack, Ben Jeffries, Lenore McManigal, Rick Ahrens, Ethel Allen, Ewart Baldwin, Barbara & Paul Beard, Pat Bitner, Mary Lee Cheadle, Sharon Cutsforth, Evelyn Hile, Pat Jeffries, Ray Jensen, Rosella Jones, Verna Kocken, Barbara & Don Payne, Janet Speelman, Richard Speelman, Mary Ellen West, Vera Woolley; **Summer Camp** (Jim Duncan): Cork & Carolyn Higgins, John Jacobsen, Lana Lindstrom, Ken Kodama, Sharon Ritchie; **Extended Trips** (Lana Lindstrom): Sharon Ritchie, Leila Snow; **Conservation** (Deb

Carver): In process; **Membership** (Juli Dorland): Sharon Ritchie; **Publications** (Barb Revere): Stewart Hoeg, Janet & John Jacobsen, Marshall Kandell, Lou Maenz; **Entertainment** (Kathy Hoeg): LaRee Beckly, Gayle Berge, Anne Bonine, Stephen Brander, Chris Cunningham, Sharon Duncan, Lyn Gilman-Garrick, Yuan Hopkins, Sachiko Iwasaki, George Jeffcott, Lana Lindstrom, Patrice McCaffrey, Ellen Sather, Chuck Wagar, Sue Wolling. **Science & Education** (Joella Ewing): Rick Ahrens, Lynn Gilman-Garrick, David Strutin, Ronald Shaffer. **Publicity** (Marianne Camp); **Concessions** (Laurie Funkhouser): Sharon Duncan; **Online** (Wayne Deeter): John Jacobsen, Jan Anselmo, Stewart Hoeg. **Finance** (Stewart Hoeg): Dan Christensen, Lana Lindstrom, John Jacobsen, Liz Reanier, Sheila Ward; **Library/Historian** (Lenore McManigal); **Lodge Grounds** (John Jacobsen): Pat Adams, Max Brown, Brenda Kameenui, Sue Meyers, Doug Nelson, John Pegg, Dave Predeek, Martha Welches; **Lodge Building** (Brian Hamilton): Pat Adams, Rob Castleberry, Sharon Cutsforth, John Jacobsen. Martha Welches; **Safety** (Doug Nelson): Ben Jeffries, Sue Sullivan, Jim Pierce, Margaret Prentice, Laurie Funkhouser.

**2007 Budget Presentation** (Stewart Hoeg): Proposed budget which includes revenues of \$22,960 (2006 - \$16,900) and expenses before loan repayment to the Endowment Fund of \$19,200 (2006 - \$17,260) for a net positive cash flow of \$3,760. The 2007 cost of the loan repayment to the Endowment Fund is estimated to be \$2,000, which will result in \$1,760 to rebuild the Contingency Fund.

**Tree Removal:** Dave Predeek presented information from a habitat rehabilitation expert regarding the oak savannah, recommending the tree leaning towards the lodge be removed. Grounds committee will look into the tree removal.

## Committee Reports

**Summer Trips** (Barb Revere/Jan Jacobsen): Meeting set for Feb. 1st to prepare callers for contacting trip leaders. A short schedule will be in March Bulletin; a more complete one in April, with the schedule online April 1.

**Winter Trips** (Jim Pierce): 5 trip reports (3 hikes, 2 ski), 4 trips canceled and 2 rescheduled. 22 members, 8 nonmembers for revenues of \$62. The Register-Guard did a nice write-up of a Sweet

Creek hike.

**Climbs** (Larry Huff): Eugene Parks and Recreation agreed to loan climbing gear for spring climb school. The Obsidians and Eugene Mountain Rescue will have sole responsibility over registration and promotion of the school. Prospective trip leaders have been contacted and a preliminary climb schedule started.

**Trail Maintenance** (Peter Green): Continued involvement in monthly Spencer Butte Park trail maintenance. Difficulty level of the tasks discussed. Committee will explore adopting a trail to maintain.

**By-ways By Bus** (Liz Reanier): Trip took place 12/1/06 to Shore Acres. A check for \$2,000 was presented to the club. 2007 rally will be 2/25/07 at lodge.

**Publications** (Barb Revere): Committee is on lookout for anyone interested in mail crew chief position (involves about ½ day per month). A reminder to committee chairs to be timely and respect Bulletin deadlines.

**Entertainment** (Kathy Hoeg): 66 attendees for 12/06 potluck; 78 for presentation by Sue Sullivan; collected \$70.

**Science & Education** (Joella Ewing): Next program 2/13/07 at 7 p.m. The Jacobsen will presenting a slide show of their recent trip to Switzerland. More than 100 people attended the Joe Wilcox presentation, fees collected of \$88.66.

**Membership** (Julie Dorland): One membership application approved by board. Members to date: 539.

**Publicity** (Marianne Camp): REI presents WinterFest on 1/20/07; need volunteers to set up and support Obsidian booth.

**Concessions** (Laurie Funkhouser): Sales \$11.

**Online** (Wayne Deeter): 276 trip reports entered online in 2006. Chairs asked to review their web pages to update/adjust and consider whether or not they need one.

**Library/Historian** (Lenore McManigal): All trips have been recorded and those who have not paid dues have been removed to inactive books. The lodge has two rentals scheduled for January. Brian Hamilton will take over lodge rental duties after January, with Lenore continuing to maintain calendaring.

**Lodge Building** (Brian Hamilton): Committee considering coordinating work parties with the Grounds Committee.

**Lodge Grounds** (John Jacobsen): Trees downed by recent weather have been cleared away.

## Barb's Sampler: Winter Treats for All Levels

By Barb Revere

**Sat., Jan. 20 – Heceta Head Loop from Washburne Park** – A moderate 6-mile, 800-ft elevation gain hike. This perennial favorite can be hiked all year long and includes beach, headland lighthouse and wooded trail with beaver pond. Ann-Marie Askew leads. Join her and gain a new appreciation of the coast in the wintertime: swirling fog, bright sunshine, dense spruce forest and other wondrous sights await.

**Same Day (Jan. 20) – Rosary Lakes** – X-Ski, moderate. On the southern flank of Maiden Peak, Rosary Lakes is one of the loveliest areas of Willamette Pass. This small chain of lakes, nestled in the shadow of Pulpit Rock, is your reward for the gradual climb from the pass. Cameos of Diamond Peak and Odell Lake along the way add to the enjoyment. This trip is led four times in the next four weeks. This one will be led by Rich Peevers. The others: *Skiing* on Jan. 27 with Laurie Funkhouser and on Feb. 4 with Doug McCarty; and *snowshoeing* on Feb. 15 with Stewart Hoeg.

**Sat., Jan. 27 – Fawn Lake** – X-Ski, moderate. Away from the hustle and bustle of Willamette Pass, this area off the southern shore of Odell Lake offers many nice views of Lakeview and Red-top Mountains. Leader Bob Huntley expects some fine skiing on the trails of this wooded area. Seven miles long with 800 ft. elevation gain, the trail loops through forest and open areas and along the southeast tip of Odell Lake.

**Sat., Feb. 3 – Odell Lake/moonlight walk** – S'Shoe, no classification. Ever been out on a full moonlit night in the snow? If so, you will want to join leader Scott Hovis on this trip. The full moon is due and if the weather clears you'll feel like you are out in broad daylight. Elevation change and distance will depend on the group's desires and abilities.

**Same Day (Feb. 3) Amazon Headwaters to Dillard Rd.** – Hike, easy.

Explore one of south Eugene's wild places where pileated woodpeckers still nest. Leader Margaret Prentice, who led this hike last January, says: "Access to the Headwaters Trail, connector to the Ridgeline Trail, is much easier since the bridge at the end of Canyon Way was built in early September. Even if there has been a lot of rain, one can still get there without sloshing through deep mud. The ferns will be lush and the experience through the woods will be different now that most of the leaves are down." Four miles and about 300 ft. elevation gain.

**Tue., Feb. 6 – Island Park to Autzen Bridge** – Hike, easy. Led by Barb Revere, this flat four-miler is along a lesser-known part of Eugene-Springfield's river-path system. We'll visit East Alton Baker Park and Willamut Park and take in the hidden lake along the way. An optional lunch at a café in Springfield will end the trip

**Sat., Feb. 10 – Gold Butte** – X-Ski, difficult. According to leader Kevin McManigal: The trip takes off near Detroit on the North Santiam River. We'll ski the road up to a very fine fire lookout that is in good shape. It is a safe trip and, if the weather cooperates, we'll have good views of the Three Sisters, Mt. Jefferson and Mt. Hood. Years ago, seven people participated and I took my daughter in a ski pack. She loved it and screamed in delight all the way down. (8 miles, 2000 ft. elevation gain).

**Same Day (Feb 10) -- Walk to Wildlife Refuge** -- Hike, easy. This five-mile hike in the West Eugene Wetlands includes Stewart Pond, Meadowlark Prairie and a bus ride back to your starting point. Birds seen recently here include great blue herons, red-winged blackbirds, Canada geese and northern harriers. Leader Joanne Ledet says to bring rain gear, but the walk will be on pavement, so no mud. Little elevation gain.

**Same Day (Feb. 10) -- Three Fingered Jack** – X-Ski, difficult. Steve

Goins leads this harder ski trip up the southeast ridge of the mountain from Santiam Pass and PCT, so expect to do some real backcountry skiing. Steve emailed this description: "The total route is around 11 miles or so and climbs a couple thousand feet. This route used to require navigating through some thick forests but the (2003) burn has opened it up and made the route very pleasant for the trip up and particularly for skiing down." Climbing skins are recommended for the last part of the climb.

### Notes:

- A winter trip classified as "easy" is not a *lesson*. Participants in winter trips should test and know how to use their equipment before the trips. Contact Eugene Parks Department's winter schedule for lessons.

- If you will be leading a trip and would like us to highlight it in next month's Sampler, tell us what's so special about the trip in an email to:

[bulletin@obsidians.org](mailto:bulletin@obsidians.org).

## By-ways By Bus

### Space on Eagles Trip

**THERE IS STILL** space available on the Eagle Bus Trip to Klamath Falls Feb. 20-21. \$160 (\$164 non). Send payment to Liz Reanier, 853 Ascot Dr, Eugene, 97401

### Bus Rally, February 5th

**THE BUS COMMITTEE'S** annual rally will be on Sunday, Feb. 25, at 1 p.m. at the lodge. Obsidians will be able to look over the various trips and sign up for those they want to take. Bring a checkbook, as most trips require a small deposit, with remainder due at a later time. Beginning about 1:30, there will be slides of past trips and more descriptions of the 2007 bus trips by the leaders. Beverages and finger food will be available. The committee hopes to see many members at the lodge.



# In Search of Summer Camp 2007

By John Jacobsen

**F**OR ME, one of the true pleasures of being a part of the Summer Camp Committee is scouting for a camp location. The search for a camp spot can sometimes be frustrating. Just when it seems nothing checked out fills the bill, however, you stumble upon what may be...just may...be the right spot. Beaver Creek Campground near West Yellowstone, Montana, was a place like that.

When Janet and I visited the Yellowstone area in late June 2006, I had a spot in mind -- a big group camp area which seemed like it might be just what we needed -- that I had found by scouring the Internet. But, as we pulled in to check it out, nothing really clicked. It just did not feel right...like it should when you pull into "the right spot." It had lots of parking, but it was a huge lot... and dusty. Soon, some four-wheelers came roaring through. Turned out, it was on a main ATV route. Not good! No water. Not enough toilets. Nope! Enough time wasted. So, we stopped to check with the Forest Service for ideas, and got lots of suggestions.

Again, we were off in search of the perfect spot; but none seemed to fit our needs. The dispersed camping areas we looked at were beautiful, but could not be reserved, or were too small, and, so, wouldn't work. One private campground would put us in the middle of *family vacation central*. Who needs that!?! We plod on, checking out one place after the next. While finding no campsite, we are discovering we love the area -- lots of hiking, beautiful scenery, next door to Yellowstone National Park, wildlife abounds -- perfect, if only we could find someplace for camp.

**THEN WE PULL INTO** Beaver Creek Campground. *Wow!*

Lots of space, light forest cover, some open meadows, quaking aspen, a lily pond, very peaceful, a lake nearby, gorgeous 360° views. Maybe, just maybe. If only this spot could work. I pulled out the check list and started checking. Water... check! Toilets...check! Room for 75...check! Check! Check! Kitchen could fit here, the tables there. Maybe, just maybe.

Wait. Reservations couldn't be made for this site either; but the Forest Service had suggested if we could work out something with the concessionaire, the Forest Service would not object to us staying there for two weeks. After two days of waiting, we finally scheduled a meeting with the concessionaire and, long story short, we worked out a deal.

In mid-September, Rick Ahrens, Jim Duncan and I returned to Yellowstone to give it another look-over. This time, we really checked out the hikes and the area in general. We were pleased. The site is great and, now, it looks like it is all systems go for Camp Pegg. Here are a few specifics:

## Camp Pegg – Summer Camp 2007 Beaver Creek Campground

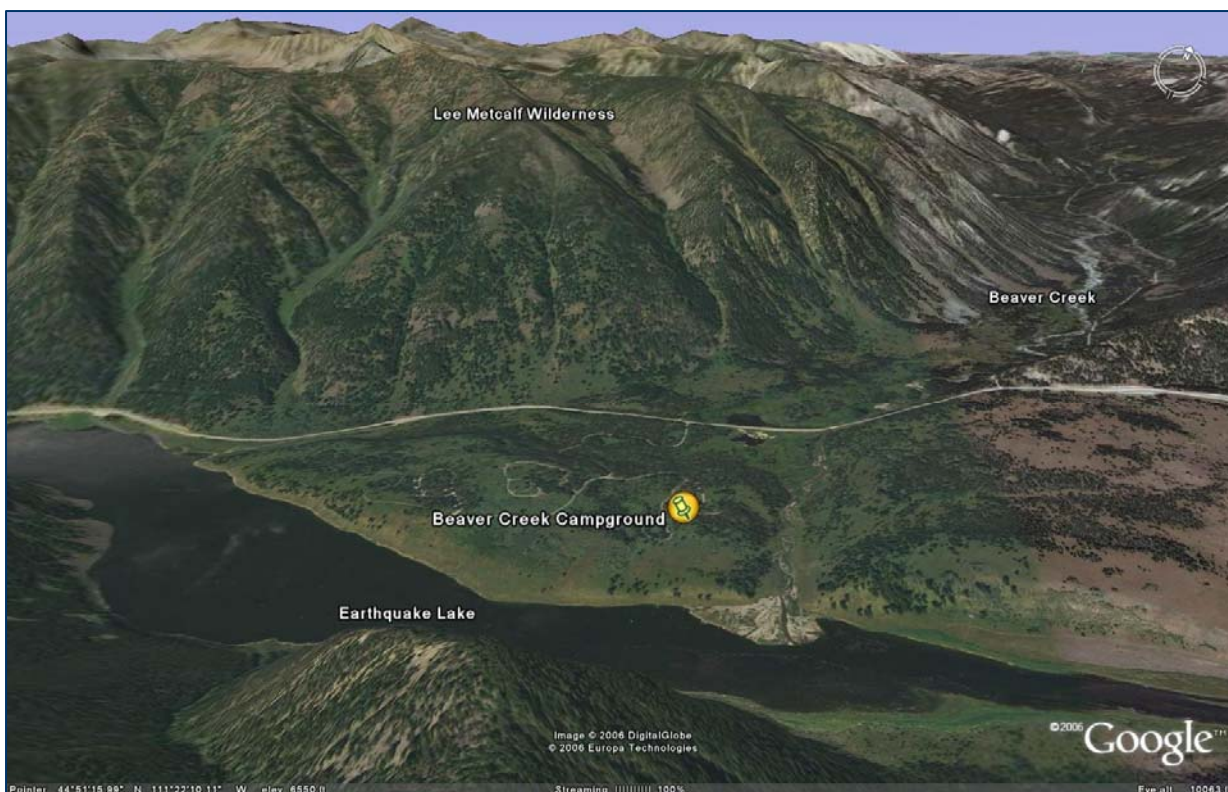
30 miles NW of West Yellowstone, MT

There will be two seven-day sessions:

**July 28-August 4 and August 4-11**

*Camp Boss* - John Jacobsen, assisted by Carolyn Higgins

The summer camp rally will be held in March and registration will begin at that time. Watch the Bulletin for more information, including camp fees next month.



*An eagle eye's view, courtesy Google Earth, of our campground with the Lee Metcalf Wilderness and the Madison Range of the Rocky Mountains in the background.*

# Crater Lake: Teddy Roosevelt Slept Here & So Will We! & Ski! & Snowshoe!



Photo by Sharon Richie

Sylvia Harvey and Mike BeBout on previous Crater Lake Trip

**A** WEEKEND TRIP of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing at Crater Lake is scheduled for March 30-April 1.

Theodore Roosevelt called Crater Lake one of the wonders of the world. With a depth of 1,932 feet, it is the deepest lake in the United States and fifth deepest in the world. It was formed by the explosion and collapse of 12,000-foot Mt. Mazama some 7,700 years ago.

Teddy slept at the Prospect Historic Hotel and Motel in Prospect...and so will we! From there, we'll carpool up to the rim of Crater Lake to ski, snowshoe or just take pictures of this beautiful natural wonder. At the rim the snowfall typically averages over 500 inches a year. If you've never visited in the winter, now's your chance.

On Saturday, there will be cross-country ski or snowshoe opportunities at Crater Lake and on Sunday a park naturalist will lead our group on a snowshoe tour. You will need to bring your own gear for Saturday; on Sunday, snowshoes will be provided by the Park Service. For non-skiers/snowshoers, there is excellent hiking along the nearby Rogue River with many spectacular waterfalls.

**INCLUDED IN THE \$137 PRICE** (\$147 nonmembers) are accommodations at the Prospect Motel for Friday and Saturday nights, delicious buffet breakfasts on Saturday and Sunday, sack lunches on Saturday and Sunday, and a gourmet dinner on Saturday evening in the hotel's lovely dining room. Rooms at the motel will be shared: 2-4 persons per room. This is a great bargain, and the trip will sell out quickly.

To reserve your spot, send a \$10 nonrefundable check payable to the Obsidians to:

**Sharon Ritchie, P.O. Box 50883, Eugene, OR 97405**

Please include your phone number and if you have email, your email address. The balance of the fee will be due by February 28. The pre-trip meeting date will be announced later. Questions: Call Sharon at 342-8435 or email at:

[trehugr@comcast.net](mailto:trehugr@comcast.net)

**NOTE:** The Crater Lake Lodge at the rim of the lake is closed in winter, which is the reason we're staying in Prospect, a 45-minute winter drive from the South Rim of the lake.

## Obsidian Calendar

### January

13 Sat **Clear Lake**, S'Shoe 6m 100' **M**, ..... B.Huntley 687-1823  
 14 Sun **Rosary Lk**, X-Ski 12m 1000' **D**, ..... McWhorter 345-8099  
 14 Sun **Sand Mtn Lp**, X-Ski 9.5m 1000' **D**, ..... Miller 484-4586  
 14 Sun **Square Lk** X-Ski 8m 1000' **D**, ..... Slipp 503-582-1100  
 16 Tue **Bus Trips Leaders Mtg** ..... L.Reanier 1pm  
 20 Sat **Heceta Head Lp**, 6m 800' **M**, ..... A.Askew 687-1659  
 20 Sat **Rosary Lakes**, X-Ski 7m 800' **M**, ..... R.Peevers 520-4071  
 20 Sat **TBA**, X-Ski **D**, ..... J. & L.Manotti 342-5357  
 21 Sun **Gold Lake**, X-Ski 5.4m 300' **E**, ..... A.McLucas 485-5608  
 23 Tue **Bus Committee Mtg**..... Lodge 1pm  
 26 Fri **New Hikes in Northwest Oregon—Sullivan**, ..... Potluck  
 27 Sat **Fawn Lake**, X-Ski 7m 800' **M**, ..... B.Huntley 687-1823  
 27 Sat **Gold Lk/Bechtel** S'Shoe 5m 350' **M**, ..... Camp 221-1866  
 27 Sat **Rosary Lk**, X-Ski 6m 800' **M**, ..... Funkhouser 206-2303  
 28 Sun **Spencer Butte**, Trail Mtn, ..... P.Asai 933-3927

### February

3 Sat **Amazon Hdws**, 4m 300' **E**, ..... Prentice 687-5850  
 3 Sat **Odell Lake (moonlight walk)**, S'Shoe, ..... Hovis 345-7788  
 3 Sat **Ray Benson**, X-Ski **M**, ..... S.Larsen 687-2589  
 3 Sat **Yoran Lake**, X-Ski **D**, ..... L.Wilken 484-0619  
 4 Sun **Midnight Lk**, X-Ski 6m 300' **M**, ..... Funkhouser 206-2303  
 4 Sun **Rosary Lakes**, X-Ski **D**, ..... D.McCarty 342-6962  
 6 Tues **Island Park**, 4m, **E**, ..... B Revere 726-4989  
 9 Fri **Willamette Ps**, X-Ski/S'S/D'Hill, ..... P.Graham 933-1612  
 10 Sat **Gold Bt** X-Ski 8m 2000' **D**, ..... McManigal 503-635-9973  
 10 Sat **Midnight Lk**, X-Ski **M**, ..... G.Svendsen 342-6497  
 10 Sat **Ray Benson**, X-Ski 10m **D**, ..... B.Johnson 746-1513  
 10 Sat **Salt Cr Falls**, S'S 3.5m 250' **E**, ..... Bruns 485-7285  
 10 Sat **3 Fingered Jack**, X-Ski **D**, ..... S.Goins 484-1018  
 10 Sat **Wildlife Refuge**, 4.5m 30' **E**, ..... J.Ledet 683-2603  
 13 Tue **Switzerland** Jacobsen's at lodge..... SciEd Tuesday  
 15 Thu **Rosary Lk**, S'Shoe 8m 600' **D**, ..... Hoeg 484-6196  
 16 Fri **Eugene Wetlands**, 5m **E**, ..... Cunningham 344-0486  
 17 Sat **Rosary Lk**, X-Ski 6m 600' **M**, ..... Huntley 687-1823  
 17 Sat **SEugene Nature Wk**, 4m 500' **E**, ..... Ledet 683-2603  
 17 Sat **Spencer Butte**, Trail Mtn, ..... P.Asai 933-3927  
 18 Sun **Fawn Lk**, X-Ski 7m 1000' **M**, ..... Hamilton 343-6550  
 18 Sun **Red Top**, X-Ski **D**, ..... G.Sayre 345-2370  
 20-21 Tue-Wed **Eagles 'n More**, Bus Trip.....L Reanier 687-1925  
 25 Sun **Bus Rally** ..... Lodge 1pm

## Bulletin Classifieds

Coming, Watch For It  
**GEAR SWAP**, April 15

### Wanted

**WARM SLEEPING BAG**, preferably down.

Contact: Charlie Van Deusen 685-1087.

### Obsidian Goodies

T-shirts, \$10 (no matter design or size); sweatshirt, \$15; cap, \$15; mug or tumbler, \$10; whistle, \$3.

Contact Laurie 206-2303 or [lafunkh@aol.com](mailto:lafunkh@aol.com).

**Note:** There is no charge for placement of Obsidian Bulletin Classified ads; however, only members can place ads and preference will be given to ads that relate to the club's mission and our members' outdoor activity interests.





*Ski into Big Lake - Mt. Washington in the background. See trip report on Page 19 - Photo by Lana Lindstrom*



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January 2007