

FALL 2025

KINNIKINNICK

SPOKANE MOUNTAINEERS

Chalet History
Multipitch School
Trip Reports



From Our President

Fellow Mountaineers,

This is a bittersweet post for me. My term as president comes to an end, and I feel very honored to have had the chance to serve in this role. When I look at all the talented club presidents before me, I'm humbled by all they've done for the Mountaineers through their dedicated service!

I have also been fortunate to have worked with amazing leaders. Our chairs, school directors, committee members, and instructors continue to volunteer and provide the high quality schools and activities for which we are known. Our board members and officers volunteer their time to keep driving this club forward - and I am proud to say that we have done that.

The club is in very good shape. We have a strong, stable group of members (over 940!) that all share a common love of wild spaces, and recreation in those spaces. In a time when we have so much division in our world, this is a safe place for people like us. Let's work hard to keep it that way!

I want to call out some recent wins for the club, thanks to many volunteers. The newsletter you are reading is a great example. This is a big step from the paper Kinnikinnick, and there are more improvements to come. We've worked on getting out more information about our upcoming activities as well. A dedicated group has been working hard to improve our website. The chalet upgrades are transformational for a structure that is over 70 years old. Rich Bennett has done so much work there, and the chalet chair and committee have been key in driving the improvements as well.

Our finances are in a great place too. A small investment fund started over 30 years ago by Bill Fix is now a large fund that is under professional management and growing. While money from our dues and schools run the club, we can call on the investment fund for things like our chalet upgrades, large conservation donations like the \$10,000 we gave the Dishman Hills Conservancy, and some of the website upgrades. We are very fortunate to be secure financially.

In the next few weeks we will launch an endowment fund with the Innovia Foundation, started with a gift from the estate of Kay LeClaire, a past member, Mountain School graduate, and someone who summited the highest peak on all seven continents. The endowment fund will raise funds to create a place where Mountaineers can teach our schools, hold our meetings, house our library and gear, and provide space for other groups in the community. This is a huge tangible step towards the "home" that members have talked about for many, many years. Innovia will manage the investments and help solicit donations to the fund dedicated for this learning center, our future home.

I want to thank you all again for the chance to volunteer in this role! I would be remiss if I didn't remind everyone that this is a volunteer organization and we can use your talents and passion to move the club forward! We just celebrated our 110 year anniversary as a club, and need your help to keep it going. We are always looking for people to volunteer on committees, and serve as school directors, chairs, board members, and officers. Please consider taking your involvement to another level!

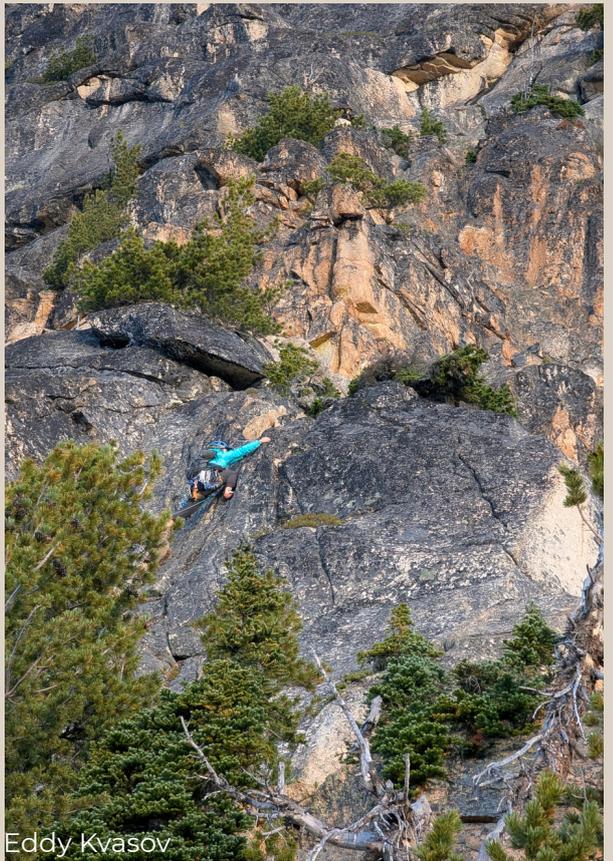
All good!
John McKee



Li Ciavola



Tyler Kent



Eddy Kvasov



Michael Pinter



Michael Pinter

Grand Tetons Mountain Adventure

BY JOHN GILLETTE

It's a cool autumn morning. You're hiking along a magnificent alpine lake, the quaking aspens are silent in the early morning light; they glow yellow as the sun rises above the far east range. The lake is like glass, reflecting the splendor of the rugged mountains beyond. The silence is deafening as you quietly hike along the trail. And then you hear it: the thunder of a bull elk's bugle just ahead. You stop and the serenade of bugles engulf the forest around you.



Eager to see the beast that dares to break the morning silence, you scan the lake shore. Then you see them: six magnificent elk just across the lake, grazing in the morning sun.

Yes, that really happened in the Grand Tetons. Six Mountaineers experienced the beauty and wonders of the Grand Tetons at the end of September. The Grand Tetons, especially in autumn, is a magical place. A place with magnificent fall foliage, sparkling aquamarine lakes, abundant wildlife, and masterpiece sunrises.

There are many great trails to choose from of varying length and difficulty. The hikes selected were some of the most popular in the park. The hikes included Jenny Lake (8 miles), Taggart/Bradley Lakes (7 miles), and Leigh Lake (8 miles).

The weather was perfect throughout the entire trip and the temperatures ideal for hiking. Early morning arrival at the trailhead ensured convenient parking ahead of the busy season traffic. It also allowed for a more peaceful experience on the trail.



After our morning hikes, we had time to relax and explore the historic town of Jackson, Wyoming, ride the tram to the top of one of the nearby mountains, or lounge in the hotel hot tub.

Although the Grand Tetons offer a once-in-a-lifetime experience, I hope I may visit this most magnificent place every year.



NEW CLIMBING COURSE

MULTI-PITCH SCHOOL

Directed by Breeyn Greer

Written by Taylor Dayton



Multipitch Sport School is a new class offered by the Spokane Mountaineers. The four-day class serves to advance Sport Leaders to the multipitch environment as well as bridge the gap between Sport Lead School and Trad Lead School. The class is held early September to allow students that have completed Sport Lead School in May to get several months of single-pitch practice before tackling the complexities of multipitch and allows for students to take full advantage of the Rocktober weather after the class to get a few reps of multi-pitch climbs in before winter strikes.

There were 8 students in attendance for the first year of Multipitch Class, with 4 instructors volunteering alongside the director, Breeyn Greer and assistant director, Taylor Brown.

"The ratio of instructors to students was nearly 1:1..." said student, Lucas Donnellan. "It was really cool how many people came by to help!"

The first outdoor session of the class taught belaying from above, anchoring after completing a pitch, rope management, swing leads, block leads, and gear exchanges at belay stations. The second day covered multipitch rappelling, climbing in teams of three, and basic bailing/rescue techniques.

"I really enjoyed the rescue portion. They taught us how to respond to most problems on the wall we could encounter." Lucas reported.

The class was able to utilize two local climbing hotspots - Q'emiln Park and Craiglandia. A prime feature of Q'emiln Park is Schoolhouse Rock - which allows short, low angle multi-pitch instruction at a 5.6 climbing grade. Students were able to comfortably able to learn and practice the basics of linking pitches without the additional stress of great heights or technical climbing. Craiglandia offers even more multipitch learning opportunities. Beyond being the local mecca of high-quality sport routes, Craiglandia offers several long multipitch routes - a key feature for efficient instruction and safe learning.

One of the unique aspects of Multipitch School is the capstone - the class ends with a DIY Grad Climb. Students are paired up and assigned an instructor who acts as a ghost partner while the students plan and execute a multi-pitch adventure. The class syllabus provides a large list of recommended climbs, but students are free to push themselves and plan any trip. The instructors are able to step in and provide feedback, help, or encouragement if students get stuck or have questions during their climb.

Students chose grad climbs all across eastern Washington and Canada, including burly routes on the gneiss of Skaha, BC and rugged Banks Lake, WA - accessible only by watercraft.

"Just go up!" Colin Xu cheerfully said to me when I asked for a summary of what he'd learned from the class. He was able to demonstrate both swing and block leading as we adventured around Rocks of Sharon, linking as many pitches as we could on Big Rock. We even spent some time repeating several of the rescue techniques that he learned in the class. I've enjoyed seeing my Mountain School friends build their climbing skills through the Mountaineers' offering of Rock Schools. Adding Multipitch School to the menu greatly advances the curricula opportunities to sport climbers who may not be interested in investing in a trad rack.

Students that are interested in taking Multipitch School in 2026 should plan their spring climbing season around completing Sport Lead School (or building equivalent experience), feel comfortable sport leading at a 5.8 grade, have the ability to rappel with back-up, be comfortable lead belaying, and be familiar with their basic knots (figure 8, bowline, clove, munter, double fisherman's, and girth hitch). Apply early!



Seven Summits

Kelly Lynch

Mountain Biking

A little over two hours north of Spokane is Rossland, B.C, home to the Seven Summits trail, recognized as an IMBA Epic. The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) awards this designation to trails offering majority singletrack trail experiences in a natural setting at least 20 miles in length. The route is point-to-point and shuttle services are available in town. There is also a loop that can be created by adding about 17 miles and 3,000ft of elevation gain riding along a nearly non-existent shoulder of a highway. In late September, a friend and I rode this trail, fought daylight and completed the loop with a 10.5 hour day covering 40 miles and 6,800ft of elevation gain.

For the thrifty, glutton-for-punishment type of bikers, like ourselves, it was an easy decision to completely ruin our legs to save \$30 on a shuttle. There is a gravel parking lot off the highway near Red Mountain that we selected as the start/stop point for the loop. This breaks the added almost-entirely uphill road ride into two parts and helps to ensure the last downhill will be completed in daylight.

The Climb

Two hours of uphill road riding brought us to the start of the defined trail and the immediate reward of yet another 2,000ft of elevation gain. The highway doesn't see a ton of traffic and most cars that went by gave plenty of room. We didn't take any stops but there were plenty of places to pull off if desired.

There are many beautiful viewpoints along the initial uphill and it tops out with one of the better spots to take a lunch break overlooking the valley below. The primary wildlife we saw were 3 grouse along the trail that were super cute and chased us as we went by.

The Middle

The highlight of the trail for me, though, was likely the first 1,200ft downhill section. This section contained beautiful fall colors, great views, and the trail was a great balance of some areas of technical rock and cruiser flow.

Maybe I just got tired, but after that first downhill the rest of the trail kicked my butt. Rolling uphill and downhill over some rocky terrain made it tough to keep momentum going on the sustained uphill or even on some short punchy uphill moments. There is really only one water source along the way, and for us it was barely trickling. A hand written sign says the water is clean, so that seemed trustworthy enough for me to risk disease and not unpack my filter. I wasn't sure where this water source was during my trip planning, and luckily I forgot to save the location so everyone will get the same joy of riding into the unknown. The source is right off the trail and impossible to miss though. Talking to a couple other riders on the trail sometimes the spring dries up.



The Descent

After the rolling topography of the middle section of the trail and the "final" uphill, the map shows we would be rewarded with about 4,000ft of downhill to make it back to the highway. Let me tell you. That is a lie. The first 1,500ft or so of downhill had so much uphill it was wild. I think the maps may be propaganda cause it certainly felt like I spent as much time going uphill as down for the first half of the final downhill. The trail does eventually go down and is super fun.

A big gravel lot marks the end of the defined "seven summits" trail. There are a lot of recommendations out there to continue down the Dewdney trail to the road. This continuation is the most flowy and high quality classic mountain biking section of the day and can't be missed. There was some logging that has occurred in the last few years but the trail has been cleared and the trail flows wonderfully.

The final road ride back to the car was finished in the dark with headlamps set to flashing red pointed backwards for "safety." Overall, this was definitely my biggest day ever on a bike and well worth the effort. I think next time however I might take the shuttle, or take the Red Mountain bike trails down for a shorter loop.



CHALET HISTORY

In 1920, founder Ora Littlefield Maxwell, and John Anderson, proposed buying lakefront property for the club. They found that the cost of this type of property was as steep as the lakeside terrain.

In 1939, the club heard about 40 acres of land for sale on Mount Spokane - they made the purchase that same year.

The land, and intentions to build a lodge, proved to be controversial within the club, as some members wanted nothing to do with the land or project at hand. In 1950, those members split from the Spokane Mountaineers and formed The Hobnailers, a hiking club, who are still in existence today. Relations between the Spokane Mountaineers and Hobnailers were maintained, as they were invited and attended our 75th, 90th, and 100th Anniversary festivities.

The first lodge on the Mount Spokane property was built by the club in 1942, which sat just south of where our current Chalet stands. However, the lodge was rarely used due to the nation's gas rationing from the effects of World War II.

To fund the building of the new chalet and rope tow (that's right, for skiing in our own front yard!), the club issued Baby Bonds for \$5 and \$10. In 1948, the club started construction on our current Chalet. The front room was completed by the winter, and the kitchen was built and completed in 1950.

The old lodge was carefully dismantled and the wood was reused for the rope tow and current chalet.



CHALET TODAY

The past year has brought many changes to today's Chalet!

A recent remodel includes a new roof, siding, windows, doors; enclosing the open back half under-building; and a new set of stairs serving as a fire escape. Like our history, this work was done mostly by our members volunteering their blood, sweat, tears, and time. Big thanks to all those volunteers and especially Rich Bennett for all the hard work.





Meet a
Mountaineer
**CORY
LUND**
Membership Chair



Bucket list adventure?

My bucket list adventure is doing a base camp hike in the Himalayas, maybe to Everest base camp? Definitely on the bucket list for one of these years.

Proudest accomplishment as Membership chair?

Probably all the work that's been put into this newsletter. I think it's filled a gap we had in communication and I'm glad to see the Kinni revived. Another goal I've worked towards is getting the club more involved in the local community and building those relationships. I think the world would be a better place if more people focused on helping their local community. All the little acts add up to something big as a whole. I think the club, more than ever, can help fill that role today when we've lost so much of that from other sources. I look forward to continuing that work and making the club stronger.

You have probably wondered "Who's the face behind our emails?" Well that man is our very own Cory Lund! Not only does he send our mass communications, but he connects us with local business for partnerships and deals, and helps resolve all things Membership.

How did you hear about the mountaineers and why did you decide to join?

It was during covid when my wife and I hiked up to Camp Muir for the first time. Seeing all the glaciers up close and seeing teams coming back from the summit made me want to learn how to climb mountains. I debated taking a 6 day course with one of the guide groups but a google search lead me to the Mountain School and it was a no brainer. A well priced 14 week course and the ability to network with climbers in Spokane? Sign me up!

What was your first experience with the club?

When I took Mountain School in 2022. It was an amazing experience. I learned so much, pushed my limits and faced my fear of heights. Rappelling for the first time was hard but Kelley was such a calming presence that it ended up being my favorite part of rock school.

Tell me about your favorite experience(s) with the club so far?

I'll never forget the feeling I had when I summited Mt Athabasca. We had truly spectacular conditions that day- northern lights while climbing and clear skies with amazing views at the top.

How did you get involved with Leadership?

After coming back to help with Mountain School I decided I wanted to get more involved with leadership. John had just taken over as president and approached me about becoming membership chair, a position that had been vacant for a number of years. I jumped at the opportunity to help out this club that I feel has provided so much for me, it was time to give back to the club.

Outside of the club and our great outdoors - what else lights your fire?

Spending time with my family. I have an amazing wife and a wonderful daughter. It's a huge joy watching her grow up and become her own person. My wife is a fellow mountaineer and outdoor enthusiast. My daughter? Not so much. But I try to find balance in both those things.

Most importantly - favorite trail snack?

I'm kind of boring when it comes to snacks as I can eat just about anything, but definitely watermelon Sour Patch- thanks to Jacob.



Meet a Mountaineer

Arika Kuhlmann

Originally from Cheney, but moved away in 1989 and lived in Texas, L.A., Arizona, and even the United Kingdom before moving back to Spokane in 2020. She works for an international inventory company, where they take physical inventory for retailers, as Director of National Account Management. She has been in the industry for 35 years.

She has participated in a number of courses, including Backpack School, Mountain School, Sport Lead, and assists with our Scramble School



How did you hear about the mountaineers and why did you decide to join?

I first heard about the Mountaineers from my next-door neighbor who was a member 20+ years ago. She recommended both the Mountaineers and Swing Dancing in the same sentence. I have yet to adventure into Swing Dancing – due to the high-risk nature of the sport. I love being in the outdoors so thought this would be the perfect opportunity to enjoy my passion with a like-minded community. I joined fall of 2023 so I could take the Backpacking course spring of 2024.

What was your first experience with the club?

The first experience was the Denali climb presentation fall of 2023. I won a Spokane Mountaineers buff in a drawing that night – recently donated to the amazing porters during my Kilimanjaro climb.

Bucket list adventure?

In my head, the 7 summits [climb the highest mountain on all seven continents]. In my heart (and more of a reality), another adventure into the Pickett region of the North Cascades.

Favorite trail/climb/mountain? Local OR far.

Athabasca – my first graduation climb after Mountain school which could not have been more perfect!

Tell me about your favorite experience(s) with the club so far?

My favorite and true first experience was a 2-night backpacking graduation hike in Riggins, ID with Tyler Nyman. The hike in, may have been a mile or 10 longer than anticipated. The following days' adventure was voluntary with 4 of the 30ish students opting in. There was bushwhacking, off trail navigation, and additional miles...., but the destination proved incredible and well worth the journey. I realized that weekend my passion for challenging outdoor adventures. I was roped in at that point.

Outside of the club and our great outdoors - what else lights your fire?

Running, international travel, live music, and trying new holiday baking recipes.

What's your favorite activity - and why? What draws you to it?

Climbing mountains with scuba diving as a close second. The feeling of the surroundings is amazing. That feeling of "pictures could never do justice", and the effort put forth to earn that feeling.

Most importantly - favorite trail snack?

Trader Joe's miniature peanut cups.



ICE LAKE BACKPACKING

Five hikers, Christine Schultz, Rick Nolting, Justin Shemwell, Brean Nieman, and Ben Nieman camped at Wallowa State Park, Oregon, with fingers crossed that the bank of smoke enveloping the surrounding mountains would clear in the morning.

Overnight the winds blew out the smoke, so with beautiful skies we began our adventure at Wallowa Lake Trailhead. The temp was perfect to meander along the West Fork Wallowa River, and not long into our hike it was apparent we were definitely in the wilderness!

After the water crossing, the trail gained significant elevation, however it was over 37 switchbacks so we were elated to finally make it up to the lake.

It is well known that Ice Lake (Oregon) is a popular place, and while secretly hoping we would find a place to camp amongst the established sites, all were full. Fortunately, Ben, a former Boy Scout, had camped with his troop just above the east side of the lake. We climbed up to "Boy Scout Camp" where we had an abundance of grass, lupine, and small shade trees that made for the perfect campsite. We even had the occasional visitor that didn't seem to mind our presence.

Saturday's skies remained clear and our next goal beckoned, Matterhorn Peak 9,826ft. We ventured west around the lake and began our ascent.

The terrain varied from Mars-red scree to limestone that had broken apart into patches of white sand reportedly made of the skeletal remains of tiny marine creatures, likely coral. We hit the summit(s) and sat amongst rock formations resembling ocean white caps for a well-deserved rest and snack.

While Sacajawea Peak also beckoned, and seemed a short ridge hike away, other descending hikers had attempted to navigate the shorn pinnacles and felt it was too sketchy. The group decided to save that summit for another time and headed back down in anticipation of a swim to cool off.

"Ben the Boy Scout" turned out to be quite the fisherman. Friday he caught fish for his dinner, trout tacos, that left us all salivating. Ben decided for Saturday's dinner to fish again, catching two more trout that he fried up and graciously shared with us, what a treat!

Sunday morning arrived, and alas, it was time to say goodbye to our lovely meadow, the beautiful lake, and celebrate another day well-lived in the mountains.





Eddy Kvasov