



Spokane Mountaineers Newsletter



# Get Outdoors

Learn more about what is going on with the Spokane Mountaineers.



## President's Corner

Matt and Meridith are having their second son, so no comments from him this month. Instead, for this issue, we have some words from our Vice President, Li Ciavola. Congratulations Matt and Meri!

Spring is upon us! As the snow continues to melt, many of us who spend time in the mountains are putting the skis up on the walls and taking the ropes out of the closet instead. The changing of seasons brings changing of gear, and this year more than any before it, I can truly say I am proud and thankful to be a part of this organization. With so much turmoil and struggle in the world, I am finding my connection to nature and the outdoors to be an even more integral part of my happiness and balance as a person.

To me, that is the true value of being part of the Spokane Mountaineers. This organization provides access to recreation around us and an opportunity for growth, even in the face of difficult setbacks. As an instructor for our Mountain School this year, I am privileged to help others along their path of progression in the outdoors. There is a sense of authentic satisfaction in seeing the freedom that people discover by spending time in the mountains. Watching people grow as outdoor athletes reminds me of just how necessary it is to take time to connect with ourselves and our wilderness. To me and many others, it's paramount to living life in a fulfilled way.

The students that come through our school not only learn techniques to spend time and travel in the mountains safely, but also come face to face with their inner selves in those spaces. They are forced to question why they are there, what they hope to gain, and what the purpose is of putting themselves through the rigors of alpine adventures. Learning to climb is a process of growth both internally and externally, and though the process is never easy, the rewards remain for a lifetime.

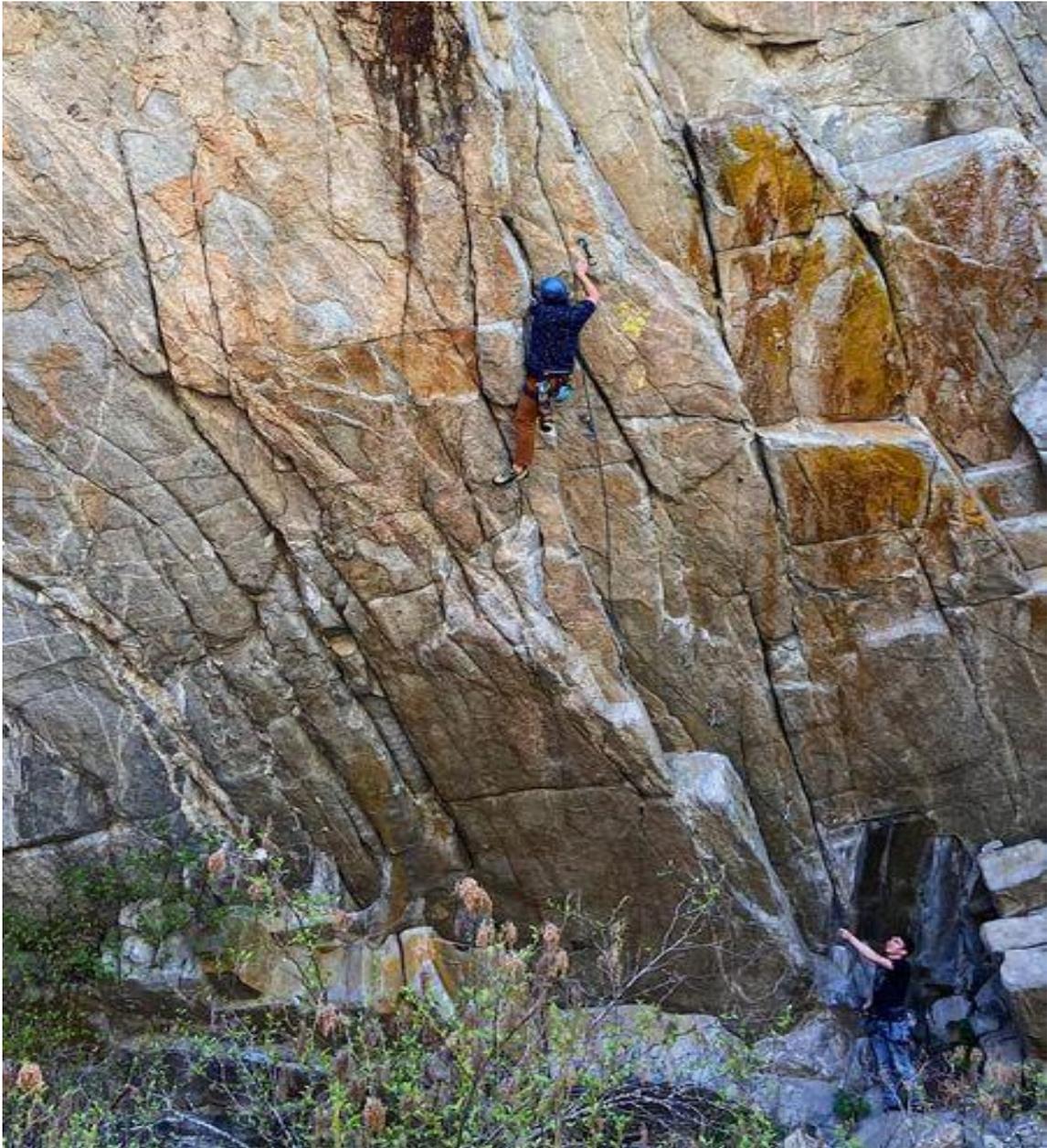
This season more than any other, I am feeling blessed and thankful to be a part of that journey for others, just as much as they are a part of my own. Taking others to new heights, and connecting along the way with them, is just what this world needs right now. I am thankful to the rest of the leaders that continue to volunteer and keep our schools on the schedule. I cannot help but feel like great leaps ahead are right around the corner, both for our organization as well as the world around it.

Onward we climb, upwards we push.

Li Ciavola

Spokane Mountaineers Vice President

THIS MONTH'S  
TOP STORIES



### Committee Spotlight: *The Climbing Committee*

The Climbing Committee is essentially all things climbing in the club. The Climbing Committee is primarily known for and associated with Mountain School, which has been around for 75 plus years generating new members and burgeoning leaders. In addition, several courses and seminars are taught by this committee to support club members, economically and safely, in learning a variety of mountain crafts. Courses range in length from the comprehensive three-month course of Mountain School to the single and multi-day seminars of Rock School, Trad Climbing, Sport

Lead Climbing, High Angle Rescue, Aid Climbing, and Ice Climbing. Starting this year, the Climbing Committee is sponsoring a new Alpine Climbing Seminar. This full-year course teaches advanced alpine training techniques beyond what other courses offer and further develops instructors' expertise.

This committee stays well-informed of current trends and techniques by participating in seminars, web-trainings, and events hosted by other organizations. This knowledge is used to enhance and develop our courses for club members and the community. In addition, conservation projects are completed in partnership with regional organizations like the city parks departments of Spokane and Post Falls as well as the Bower Climbing Coalition, Kootenai Climbers, and the Southwestern Climbing Coalition. Sponsorship of a pit toilet at Frenchman's Coulee is one of the more noteworthy endeavors as well as routine Beacon Hill clean-ups with each outdoor Mountain School rock session.

### **MEET RICH BENNET**



**This month, Rich Bennet, the Chair of the Climbing Committee, is in the Spotlight.**

Originally from Crystal Lake, Illinois, as a child, Rich was inspired by the stories and magnificent pictures found in National Geographic magazines where he dreamed of his one-day adventures. He started rock climbing in his early 20's while working for a gear store and began to explore local spots like Devils Lake State Park in Wisconsin and Munising Bay in the Upper Michigan Peninsula where he cut his teeth on ice climbing before festivals were a thing. Now, nearly 40 years later, he's only missed one of the Bozeman Ice Festivals.

Eventually, his adventurous spirit brought him and his ex-wife to live in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho in 1996 where they built their dream home and raised two daughters, Claire and Lily. Rich also found the Spokane Mountaineers and completed Mountain School in 1998. He began teaching the Ice Climbing Seminar in 2000 and continues to teach that today. In 2014, he became an honorary member for his long standing dedication and years of service to the club. He has been on three expeditions to the Adamant Range in British Columbia and Denali National Park in Alaska.

Residential construction and several hobbies round out his personal life. In 2004, Rich's life transitioned with his now wife Sara after a long friendship grown on rock and ice plus built out of trust and mutual interests. Today, Rich, with Sara's encouragement, plans on another ice climbing trip to Alaska, short excursions on his Ducati, weekly ice hockey, refurbishing and racing a herd of vintage Suzuki motocross bikes, and sailing their 30' Catalina on Lake Coeur d'Alene. They spend their days enjoying the fruits of their hard labor and dreaming of the next adventure.

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## Activities

**Mountain School** continued with a transition from overnight camping, with an emphasis on glacier and snow travel, to rock school. Students are now in the process of learning all aspects of rock climbing, which also is beneficial to alpine mountaineering.

**Backpack School** kicked off on March 25 and is in full swing now having completed several classes, guided hikes, and trail work.

**Monthly General Membership Meeting** presentations are organized and conducted by Vice President, Li Ciavola. For the April 19 meeting, Rich Bennett was the featured guest. Rich shared his background growing up in the Midwest and early fascination with ice climbing. That eventually led to his decision to relocate to the Pacific Northwest and settle in Spokane. It also led to his joining the Spokane Mountaineers and taking the Mountain School Course in 1998. Rich has been the long time chair of the Climbing Committee and also served as Director of Mountain School and the Ice Climbing Seminar. As always, you can re-watch these presentations on the Spokane Mountaineer Facebook page under the Events tab.

For the next general membership meeting scheduled for **May 17**, Chic Burge and David Crafton will talk about the history of the Spokane Mountaineers.

As a primer, you can see this photo from a hiking activity in the early days.



Chic and David will also talk about hikes and climbs throughout the Inland Northwest, especially those featured on [InlandNWRoutes.com](http://InlandNWRoutes.com). For example, the following image is the State Line Ridge at Stevens Peak, where our Mountain School students train on their second overnight session. This is also the first session where students experience an alpine start for a rope team summit attempt.



Please join us live from the Spokane Mountaineer website zoom link or on the Spokane Mountaineer Facebook page.

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## Key Announcements

### **Membership Renewal in 2021 from the Membership Committee**

Currently, the only **complete** online checkout and payment process available is using a PayPal account.

If you wish to pay by **Credit Card or Check**, please continue the renewal check-out process. When you get to the PayPal site, select "Cancel and return to Spokane Mountaineers." It will cancel the payment but maintain your account information for us to activate.

Then send an email to [membership@spokanemountaineers.org](mailto:membership@spokanemountaineers.org), and we can issue you a PayPal invoice to your email that can be paid by credit card checkout on PayPal. We can combine multiple renewals on a single invoice.

If you wish to pay by check, send the completed membership application to PO Box 1013, Spokane, WA 99201-1013. Please be sure to include the email account you are paying to renew or activate. ([membership application](#))

### **Summer Kinnikinnick information is due May 7.**

Please get events entered and approved with the activity chairs and submit any trip reports to [editorial@spokanemountaineers.org](mailto:editorial@spokanemountaineers.org). Any activity leader having difficulty putting an event into the website can reach out to the activity chair(s) or send event details to [ecomm@spokanemountaineers.org](mailto:ecomm@spokanemountaineers.org), and they will assist you with the event entry.

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## Outdoor Partner Events

Some Spokane Mountaineers teamed up with the BCC on April 7 to remove graffiti from the rocks at Minnehaha and clean up trash around John Shields Park. It was a good way to start the Earth Day celebration early.



Also, the Spokane Riverkeeper, Jerry White, has requested the Spokane Mountaineers help underwrite the 7th Annual Wild and Scenic Film Festival. It is scheduled for June 30 and the proposal is being discussed in the Conservation Committee.

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Spokane Mountaineers.  
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