

SUMMER 2025

# KINNICKINNICK

SPOKANE MOUNTAINEERS



BACKPACK SCHOOL  
MOUNTAIN SCHOOL  
SUMMER EVENTS

# From Our President

JOHN MCKEE

WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE E-KINNI! I AM VERY EXCITED TO SEE THIS NEWSLETTER GOING OUT. I REALLY APPRECIATE ALL THE WORK THAT HAS GONE INTO MAKING IT HAPPEN. IT TURNS OUT THAT SENDING AN EMAIL TO ALMOST 1,000 PEOPLE IS VERY DIFFICULT TO DO FROM A TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVE.

THE SPOKANE MOUNTAINEERS HAVE CHANGED A LOT SINCE THE LAST PRINTED KINNIKINNICK, ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP. WE ARE NOW A GROUP OF ABOUT 925 MEMBERS! WHAT THAT MEANS TO ME IS THERE ARE A LOT OF OTHER PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY THAT PRIORITIZE CONSERVATION AND OUTDOOR RECREATION ENOUGH TO SUPPORT THE CLUB. WE ARE UNIQUE IN OUR OFFERINGS TO THE COMMUNITY - AND THOSE ARE THE SAME THINGS WE HAVE OFFERED FOR 110 YEARS!

AS MOST OF YOU ARE WELL AWARE, WE ARE ONLY AS STRONG AS THE PEOPLE THAT VOLUNTEER TO SUPPORT THIS ORGANIZATION. THANKS TO ALL OF THE PEOPLE THAT ARE ALREADY INVOLVED IN MAKING THINGS HAPPEN. IF YOU AREN'T ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE YET, PLEASE CONSIDER FINDING A WAY TO HELP. ONE GOAL OF THE NEWSLETTER IS TO LET YOU KNOW OF SOME OF THE WAYS YOU CAN HELP, AND ONE OF THOSE WAYS IS BECOMING A PART OF CLUB LEADERSHIP. EVERY YEAR WE HAVE FIVE BOARD POSITIONS AND THREE EXECUTIVE POSITIONS OPEN UP, AND WE FILL THOSE SPOTS WITH OUR ELECTIONS, AND THE TIME FOR NOMINATIONS IS NOW! WE ALSO HAVE A COUPLE CHAIR POSITIONS OPEN; PADDLING AND ROAD BIKING. AND IF THOSE ALL SEEM LIKE A BIG STEP, YOU CAN ALWAYS GET INVOLVED IN COMMITTEES, CLEANUPS, OR REPRESENTING THE CLUB AT THE MANY EVENTS WHERE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ASK FOR OUR PRESENCE. IF NONE OF THOSE ARE A FIT FOR YOU, BUT YOU ARE STILL KINDA INTERESTED, PLEASE ASK A BOARD MEMBER ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO THAT FITS YOUR SITUATION. IT CAN BE A VERY REWARDING EXPERIENCE.

THIS NEWSLETTER SHOULD REACH YOU IN OUR PEAK SEASON, A SEASON WHERE WE HAVE A LOT GOING ON, SO PLEASE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AN ACTIVITY OR TWO. AND PLEASE LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT OUR NEWSLETTER, INCLUDING SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER TOPICS THAT YOU THINK WOULD BE INTERESTING!

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU FOR BEING MOUNTAINEERS!

# Backpack School

BY CHARLES ROBESON

Backpack School 2025 was a fun and educational course for 51 students. There were eight nights of instruction from a knowledgeable and dedicated group of instructors on various subjects related to backpacking, such as Leave No Trace, First Aid and a food night tasting a variety of gourmet backpacking meal possibilities. The BPS25 students are a creative and invested group yearning for backpack intel and they are willing to do the hard work, including completing a map and compass day getting “lost” in Riverside State Park. Somehow all the students found their way out. A rainy Overnight Shakedown gave everyone the chance to test out their rain gear. Almost all succeeded in staying dry.

Photo by Charles Robeson



Photo by Charles Robeson

Memorial Day weekend included two fabulous backpack trips that offered rattlesnake and other wildlife sightings, great weather and lots of backpacking mileage completed. Seven students have completed all of the graduation requirements and there are many more students that are close to finishing the requirements. A summer of backpack trips and trail work days await!



# HISTORIAN CORNER

## CHIC BURGE

WE, THE CURRENT SPOKANE MOUNTAINEERS, STARTED OUT IN 1915 AS THE SPOKANE WALKING CLUB.

ALL THE EARLY MEMBERS WERE LIBRARIANS AT THE DOWN TOWN MAIN LIBRARY. (NOT CURRENT PHYSICAL LIBRARY)

FIVE LADIES JOINED THE CIRCULATION SECRETARY, ORA LITTLEFIELD MAXWELL, ON WALKS AFTER WORK.

SOON, OTHER LADIES ASKED IF THEY COULD ATTEND.

ON ONE OF THESE WALKS, SOMEONE SUGGESTED THAT THEY FORM A CLUB.

THEIR WEEKEND WALKS WERE USUALLY ALONG OR AT THE END OF BUS LINES AND TRAIN LINES.

THEY'D WALK ALL DAY, MAKING SURE THEY WERE AT THE STOP AT 9PM SHARP IN TIME TO CATCH THE LAST RIDE BACK TO DOWNTOWN.

ONE HIKE THEY DID OFTEN WAS FROM THE LIBERTY LAKE TRAIN STATION TO THE SUMMIT OF MICA PEAK, WASHINGTON.

THE STATIONS WAS NEAR THE YOKES AND SAFEWAY STORES.

IN 1916, THE HUSBANDS AND SPOUSES OF THE LADIES WANTED TO WALK WITH THEM ON THESE "OUTINGS."

AT A CONTROVERSIAL CLUB MEETING, THE IDEA OF LETTING MEN JOIN THE CLUB WAS DISCUSSED. BY THE END OF THE MEETING, MEN WERE ALLOWED TO BE MEMBERS.

OF COURSE, LIKE ANY CLUB, MEMBERS WANTED MORE AS TIME WENT BY.

BY 1921, THEY HAD CRUDELY CLIMBED MANY AREA PEAKS AND MOUNTAINS AROUND SPOKANE.

THEIR OUTINGS WERE VERY PRIMITIVE BY ANY STANDARDS.

BUT THEY WERE SPECIAL - AND OTHERS KNEW THIS.

OUTDOOR CLUBS FROM AROUND THE NATION, EVEN FROM AS FAR AS NEW YORK, CONTACTED US TO GET INFORMATION ON HOW WE DID OUR OUTINGS, INCLUDING OUR BULLETINS.

### SPOKANE WALKING CLUB

Local Walk # 25. Trip to Spirit Lake, Durham

Cottage, S.23, 1917.

Take 8:15 A.M. Car, Train Union

Station. Round trip \$1.

Take Lunch and Cup, & bathing-suit.

Distance 5 Miles, for those who care to walk  
over mt. to Twin Lakes & return from there.

Mr. Durham. Leader.

IN ORDER FOR THE MEMBERS TO HEAR ABOUT OUTINGS, THEY MAILED POSTCARDS.

THIS IS THE SINGLE OLDEST ITEM IN OUR ARCHIVES.

ALL CLUB "OUTINGS" WERE NUMBERED UNTIL 1952.

IN 1939, MATIE JOHNSON STARTED THE VERY FIRST OFFICIAL "CLIMBING CLASSES."  
WE HAVE COME A LONG WAYS SINCE THAT DAY!

EARLY ON, WHEN THE FOUNDERS HIKE IN SNOW, THEY USED SNOWSHOES AND OR  
ALPENSTOCKS TO NAVIGATE STEEP SLOPES.

IN FUTURE ARTICLES FOR OUR NEWSLETTER, I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT A LADY THAT CHANGED  
THE WAY WE CLIMBED.

WHY WE HAVE 40 ACRES ON MOUNT SPOKANE.  
AND HOW THE CHALET CAME ABOUT.

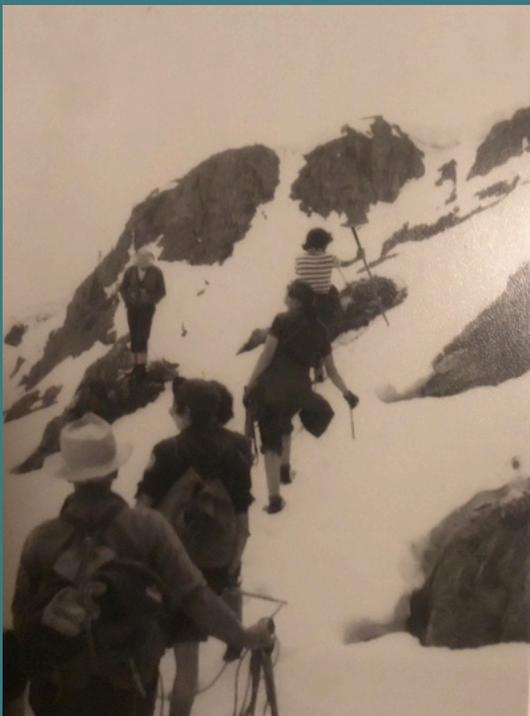
IN THE MEAN TIME, IF ANY YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SPOKANE WALKING CLUB,  
THEN THE SPOKANE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB, AND EVENTUALLY THE SPOKANE  
MOUNTAINEERS, INC., PLEASE EMAIL ME YOUR REQUESTS.  
PLEASE KEEP IN MIND, IT TAKE TIME TO RESEARCH REQUESTS.



CHIC BURGE  
HISTORIAN  
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PHOTOS FROM A CLUB OUTING TO  
STEVENS PEAK, IDAHO IN THE 50S





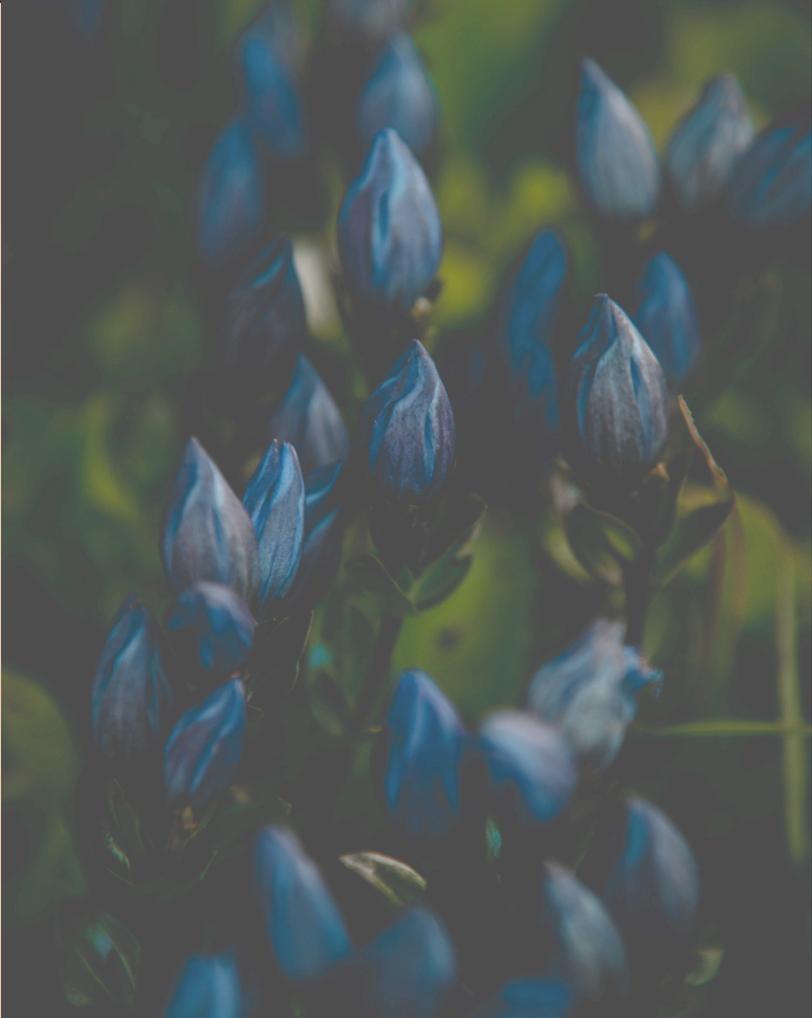
# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

CORY LUND

Recently we've added more discounts for our members! We have partnered with Outdoorly, an online retailer for outdoor goods that's exclusive to outdoor clubs and professionals. They have offered us two discount tiers, one for members and one for instructors.

We've also partnered with Evergreen Gear Exchange, a new outdoor consignment store in Spokane. They have offered all of our members a \$25 discount towards one item and the ability to "Cosign for a Cause," meaning if you take any items there to sell you can donate the proceeds to the club.

Another new partnership is with Solnix (formerly Shred Sports) here in Spokane. They are offering all members a 15% discount on most items in store (some brand exclusions.) Solnix has also recently expanded into offering climbing gear. Make sure to say hi to Ben when you stop in!



Lastly, we have not forgotten about our North Idaho folks. We've partnered with Couer Climbing Gym to offer our members a discount on monthly memberships and access to future events.

All you'll need to do for any of these discounts is how your current membership with us from the website. You can check out details about all of our discounts at [Discounts](#)

If you have any feedback for us or any questions on your membership you can email: [membership@spokanemountaineers.org](mailto:membership@spokanemountaineers.org)



# MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

LI CIAVOLA



## GRAD CLIMB: MOUNT ATHABASCA, CANADIAN ROCKIES

It's a bright and Sunny May day 2019 and I'm using the pick of my ice axe to chip an opening in the ice that is clogging the mouthpiece of my water bottle. As I take a drink, I'm mesmerized by the view from the Summit of Mt. Athabasca. I'd simply never seen peaks of such wild remoteness or considered how much ice there could be in a place so seemingly close by. Before this moment I had spent many years in the woods and in the wilderness, but I had never been atop a big, glaciated mountain before. It had been a goal of mine, but one that only came into fruition when I learned there was an organization right at home that could show me how it's done. Now there I was, a student on a summit, finding it hard to believe what the Spokane Mountaineers had taught and shown me. As I plunged-stepped my way back down the peak, I felt like I belonged; not only in that environment, but in this community, and I vowed to myself I would be dedicated to helping people feel the same thing.

It's now 2025, and after 5 years of helping instruct our climbing courses, I felt that it was time to pick up the director's torch for our cornerstone program. I knew it would be a lot of work and was thrilled to hear that my trusted climbing partner and good friend, Eddy Kvasov, was willing to co-direct with me. With the help of a specially appointed curriculum sub-committee, we spent months on end going through the curriculum and logistics of the course with a fine-toothed comb.

As the season progressed, we were amazed at how much support we received from our friends and past students in helping instruct the program, and felt blessed to have a class full of 33 students that were attentive, dedicated, and excited to be involved. We told them from the beginning that the scores and performances on their final tests determined their ability to participate in the graduation climb, and week after week we saw students and instructors spending extra time outside of class to study and practice. When the day finally came to put their skills to the test, our students shook off the nerves and performed with confidence.



When it came time for the graduation climb of their own, the students' hard work was rewarded by the gods of weather, and we were blessed with another calm and sunny day on Mt. Athabasca. To be fully honest, it was almost too nice of a day, as I had concerns over the week's continual warming trend, and reservations over the stability of the steep snow during the ascent/descent of the headwall. But like many alpine experiences, it's impossible to know what conditions you will get until you arrive, and we were grateful to have a responsive, stable snowpack for the duration of our morning.

Many of our students were able to successfully summit this year, and all of them worked hard to cross tons of technical and difficult terrain throughout the day while capturing huge views of the Canadian Rockies and Columbia Ice fields regions.

As we stood on another beautiful Athabasca summit, I saw two of my students hug each other tightly in an expression of victory and comradery. It whisked me back to the same moment of mine in 2019 and made me so proud to see the feelings coming full circle for others. Truly, our course and our community provides a gateway into experiencing the freedom and fulfillment of alpine travel, which can mean so many different things to the people who partake. Although many things have changed for me over the years, there are many that have not; and among them is my appreciation for this school and my desire to help others get to these high and beautiful places. So with that being said, Eddy and I will be running it back, and excited to pick up the reigns once again next fall.

Eddy and I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our volunteers and friends who helped make Mountain School 2025 a success. It was a massive team effort and we felt the love of your support.



# Meet a Mountaineer



## JOHN MCKEE, PRESIDENT

I WAS BORN IN THE PHILADELPHIA AREA, BUT I'VE SPENT MOST OF MY LIFE OUT WEST. I GRADUATED FROM MONTANA STATE WITH A CHEMICAL ENGINEERING DEGREE (REALLY?) A REALLY LONG TIME AGO. THAT LED TO A CAREER IN LARGE SCALE MANUFACTURING THAT TOOK ME TO SEVERAL DIFFERENT PLACES, MOSTLY IN THE WEST. I'M MARRIED (40 YEARS!) AND HAVE THREE AMAZING DAUGHTERS, AND FOUR GRANDCHILDREN. THIS SUMMER I TURN 70, BUT I STILL LOVE THOSE OPPORTUNITIES TO CAPTURE THE WONDERMENT OF A SMALL CHILD!

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

I moved to Spokane for work reasons in 2013 and I heard about the Spokane Mountaineers from people while I was playing outdoors. The chance to become part of a group of like minded people was compelling!

### How did you get involved with Leadership?

So much of this comes back to that first school. I remember how many people came back to help teach, and what a wonderful thing that was for me. So giving back to the club became part of what it means to be a Mountaineer to me. That led to being paddle chair, to the board, and then to president. It feels good to be able to help the people in this club in some way!

### What was your first experience with the club?

I joined the club in 2015 to be eligible for Mountain School in 2016.

### Bucket list adventure?

I've done several multi-week sea kayak trips off the coast of BC, but there are a few sections of the inside passage, and the outside passage, that I would still love to paddle.

### Proudest accomplishment as president?

The proudest accomplishment is representing the club. This is such an amazing organization with so much history. To be a small piece of that history is meaningful to me. Specifically, I am very excited about this newsletter though. To really be a "club" we need to communicate - hopefully in both directions! It has been quite a while since we had a communication vehicle. We haven't even published our first one and I'm already looking forward to improving it!

### Tell us about your favorite experiences with the Mountaineers

One favorite would be Mountain School. What an amazing experience! Our class wasn't able to summit Athabasca that year, but I returned the following year as an instructor and got to climb all night with the northern lights and then summit in the morning. That was definitely a favorite!

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

I love music, books (yea to the Book Club!), my family, friends, and dog. The list could go on for a while!

### MOST IMPORTANTLY - FAVORITE TRAIL SNACK?

Hahaha! It has to be sour patch kids, of course!

# Meet a Mountaineer

## TYLER KENT

COMING TO US FROM BELLINGHAM, WA BY WAY OF RENO, NV; DENVER, CO; AND HOUSTON, TX WE HIGHLIGHT OUR RECENT MOUNTAIN SCHOOL GRADUATE, TYLER KENT. WHEN HE ISN'T PLAYING ON ROCKS, HE SPENDS HIS TIME AS A GEOTHERMAL GEOPHYSICIST - THAT'S A LOT GEOS!



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

I found the website when I moved to Spokane in 2021 and wanted to meet fun outdoor folks and also wanted to do more Trad climbing so I asked to join Trad School 2021.

**Tell me about your favorite experiences, so far, with the Mountaineers?**

I just finished Mountain School 2025 and it was such a fun program! There were so many fun days, even the brutal snow/ice at Mt Spokane this year was a great way to test gear in some rough conditions. My favorite aspect was the relentless support and time that the instructors and volunteers showed.

**What was your first experience with the club?**

Brett (a previous Trad School director) let me join the class with my previous experience and I had a great time with my fellow students in Leavenworth! After a fantastic weekend I decided to Mountain Bike with a couple other friends in the afternoon on Sunday and went over my handlebars and broke my collarbone. Classic climbing injury.

**Favorite trail/climb/mountain? Local AND far**

Snowboarding is my favorite activity so my favorite ski mountains are 49 North local, Mt Baker (worked there for 6 years) far and Chamonix really far.

**Bucket list adventure?**

My wife and I joke that we try and do a once in a lifetime trip, every year. We have a big spreadsheet of future trip ideas that we keep ideas on. Our current dream is to try and see the Eclipse in the Mediterranean in 2027.

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

Now that I think about it, Triathlon is my favorite. When I met my partner Danielle she got me into it and we trained together for years. We did two full Ironman races together and I proposed to her at the end of a race in Houston. You really know a person when you spend that much time in the pain cave with them.

**Most importantly - favorite trail snack?**

Sandwich made from my homemade sourdough. Then a double espresso GU for the finish!



### Summer Events

This time of year is a busy one for us all! From rock climbing, backpacking, wildlife sightings, and miles, and miles of trails - we're all on the go.

Events are always popping up on our calendar! Keep up to date with events by subscribing to activities of interest to receive email notifications.

[Calendar of Events](#)

### Newsletter Photos

As our Newsletter grows, we will be needing more photos to share with our members. If interested in submitting a photo, please keep an eye out on the website for a portal to upload to.



Cory Lund



Cory Lund

Photos credited to Eddy Kvasov, unless otherwise stated.



### Weekly Recurring Events

Tuesday:

- Drop-in Rock Climbing: No experience necessary! We'll bring the ropes, you bring your harness and helmet. Location and host will be posted on the calendar.

Wednesday:

- Hiking: Tie up those laces and join Hiking for our weekly evening hike! A great opportunity to check out new and familiar local trails. Location and host will be posted on the calendar.
- Drop-in Rock Climbing: Join climbing for their Wednesday evenings in Post Falls. Note will be posted on the trailhead of which wall we will be at.

Thursday:

- Mountain Biking: Riding our local trails in and around Spokane! Location will be determined based on conditions and communicated via GroupMe. Check the website for time and link to join!
- Drop-in Rock Climbing: Catch the sunset from up high over the Palouse for our weekly climb at Rocks of Sharon.

### Monthly Recurring Events

**Conservation Happy Hour:**  
Join our conservation group for their monthly meeting at our favorite brewery! Keep an eye on the calendar for the exact date and location.

**General Membership Meeting:**  
Our chance to meet once a month as a club, with guest speakers, different topics, and even gourmet backpacking food to try!

### Summer Club-wide Events

Club BBQ - July 21<sup>st</sup>  
Location TBD.

Summer Campout - Aug 13<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup>  
TumTum, WA

Plenty of other events are happening, along with volunteer opportunities! Chalet will be hosting numerous work-parties and our Families division will be hosting a campout at our Chalet. Like always, check the calendar!

Want to get involved further?  
Looking to step up as a Leader?

Leadership has been working hard to put together different seminars to make us better Mountaineers and stewards by hosting a Leave Not Trace and Leadership seminar. These evening classes are highly encouraged for those looking to grow as leaders in the club.

### Conservation:

With so many events, opportunities both within and outside of our own organization, and general information, Conservation has an additional newsletter. You can find these posted underneath the Conservation group feed. Click the link below!

[Conservation](#)