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## A Peak Down the Back Trail

by Larry Upson

Being a Fairly Personal and Not So Short Historical Account of Our Ancient and Honorable Affiliation for Alpine Endeavor.

### A Baby is Born

In the summer of 1948, Richland was still a strictly "government town". and GE was just cutting its teeth as prim contractor to the AEC, running the whole shebang and expanding its working force with scores eager young technical graduates and tender young clerks and secretaries. Most of them lived in rigorously segregated "dorms", and were more or less desperate for opportunities to meet each other and to find really satisfactory ways to spend their leisure time, in--(or within reach of--) this desolate but crowded community.

There were married men, too, without their families, for houses were scarce and the waiting list was long. One of these was a short, middle-aged chemist-engineer who arrived in mid-July, just as the "big flood of '48, was receding. Unlike most of the footloose throngs he was a native Westerner and Oregonian, and a pre-war hiker and mountain climber who knew and loved those high hills against the western sky. His name was (and is) Larry Upson.

Larry had come to Richland "temporarily, just to see what it's like" from Eugene, Oregon, where hdd left his family of one wife and 2 1/2, boys; and that long round trip on the roads of that time soon got to be just too much for an every-weekend thing. Besides, in the two years he had been home from the Army, he hadn't really gotten into the hills as much as he planned, hadn't seemed able "to overcome that natural inclination to not quite get around to doing even those things we really enjoy". So he called the GE personnel people and got in touch with Ray Radzitowski, who told him no, there was no hiking club here, but that it seemed like a good idea, and suggested he call Hugh Purcell to arrange a public meeting of interested persons. So he did, and about thirty wonderful people showed up --and by golly, we had us a hiking club.

### The Infancy

We had a few events, and quite a few meetings to get ourselves organized, and by year's end we were a real swinging thing. Our only official hike in '48 was not until late October--and very cold it was indeed! The hike was in the Blues, out Sawtooth Ridge and we took cars as far as we could--and a little more, and Bob Henderson, (our leader) tore the drain plug off the pan of his Plymouth on a rocky high center on the way out; but we made it home, thanks to a two-gallon can of oil in the trunk, on a thermos bottle stopper and a prayer. Less harrowing events that year included a weiner roast at Sacajawea Park (in one of those lovely dusters, no less) and a steak fry with the Spokane Mountaineers, at their Mt. Spokane cabin. One of our first problems, and a real "duzy" was in choosing a name for our baby. About half of us wanted a nice respectable name, and finally got together on Richland Hiking Club, but others wanted a name with a



little more "zing" and an alpine touch. Some young radicals came up with Desert Rats Alpine Club, but couldn't muster quite enough votes to put it over. (See what you missed)--so twice we adjourned with no decision. Then one morning on his way to work at Two-West, Larry looked out the bus window to see a P.I.E. rig passing and at the next meeting suggested a name that all factions could accept--the one we have today.

Speaking of names there were many who came to our early meetings and events, and who never, or seldom, were seen again and their names lost to posterity, but the first issue of the Yodeler (Jan Feb., 1949, Hazel Richard Editor) lists following 29 members:

Dorothy Apperson, Helen Appel (now Copple), Janice Barnes (Entertainment Club.), Randy Brown. Fred Clagett (Hiking), Lee Daniel (V.P.), Freda Fullmer, Mary Lou Gregory, Ann Guttermsson, John Haines, Warren Haussler, Bob Henderson (Director), Ruth Henderson (Aeschliman), Howard Johnson, Harold Kinkade (Climbing), Bill Lewis, Jerry Martin, Barbara (Bobby) McIntosh (Dir.), Chuck McIntosh (Dir.), Joe Morrell, Jean Nelson, Hugh Purcel, (Treas.), Ray Radzitowski, Hazel Richard (Publications), Dan Shadinger, Vi Sterling, Mildred Thomsom (Sec.), Larry Upson (Pres.), and Bob Wallace.

Almost-charter members, who joined in early '49 are E.Z. Block, Eunice Olund (Daniel), Burt Judson, Jim McKeen, and M. J. Stedwell; and your scribe recalls that Chick and Dick Hammond showed up at many of the early meetings.

### The First Year

Regularly scheduled events started in February with a mountaineering class, followed by a hike up Badger, a skating party and a hike up Juniper Canyon--and have continued ever since. Among the highlights of the year were climbs of St. Helens, Stuart, Adams, Hood, Chair & Tooth, and Chimney Rocks and Kloochman, as well as unofficial climbs of Hood (two routes), Rainier and Matterhorn and Sacajawea--plus a whole array of hikes, an exploration of Eliot Glacier and a boat trip up Lake Chelan. In addition to the "old timers" like Fred, Warren, Bob & Ruth, Harold, Bobby & Chuck, Larry--on the climbs and nearly all the others on the hikes, new names showed up on the rosters--like Les Clark, Bob Engh, Willy Ann Erickson, Jim Gough, Margaret Heim, Evelyn Jones, Bob Moore, Ken Sanborn, Ina Schwatz, John Young and Frank Yourkowski, who became members during the year, and guests Steve Jones, Doug Kerr, Frank Kruesi, Roy Roy Mehan, and Fred Schmits, and of course, Mary Hammond and Teddy Upson, most of whom joined later.

We had 19 hikes and 15 climbs (9 of them official), and averaged 15 hikers (and 10 miles) per hike, and 7 climbers per official climb--the "wildcats" being smaller. Less official events included the marriage of Eunice and Lee Daniels, the completion of that 1/2 Upson, and a showing of sailplane shots by Bob Moore.

On the organizational front, we started the year with our Constitution already agreed on, and during the next six months Larry drew up a set of By-Laws, substantially as they are today, based on those successful hiking clubs in the NW, particularly The Trails Club of Oregon, of which Larry was (is) a member. Some points of club policy, however, brought out sharp differences in viewpoint among the members. On the one hand there was the socially oriented group who wanted just lots and lots of boat trips, picnics and parties, and not many hard hikes; and then there were the diehard climbers--and all those in between. Since the social group had the larger population from which to recruit, they threatened to take over the club in short order, so in a desperate "last chance" efforts Larry rammed through some fairly stiff hiking qualifications for membership, and a system of trip classifications to match. The membership requirements have since been relaxed, but the classifications remain. Also in '49 Ruth Henderson (Aeschliman) drew up our insignia, and we had those pretty patches made up.

Our first Banquet climaxed the year with M. G. Barnard, describing his trip to Baffin Land with Capt. Bob Bartlett, and vocal entertainment by the Four Bits of Harmony--about which ask Dick Hammond and Dick Brouns!

At year's end we had 44 members and happy memories, and, all in all, it was a very good year!



### The Second Year--and our First Summer Outing

The beginning of 1950 brought our first real promotion of skiing--with emphasis on ski touring, since a ski club also was forming in Richland. In February we hiked through deep snow up Multnomah Falls trail to the Trails Club lodge, Nesika, high above the Columbia--our second visit. In March we sponsored a movie-talk by Glenn Exum, "Teton Adventure". and made ourselves known to the community and to NW hikers and climbers. In April and May we had nine hikes and two mountaineering classes; and June and July were just as busy, with hikes every weekend and climbs of Hood, Matterhorn, Guye and Lundin, and Stuart and an unsuccessful try at Rainier. Then in August came the Summer Outing, and a climb of and in September a Cashmere Crags climb and another exploration trip on Eliot Glacier. And there were hikes, hikes, hikes--20 of them in all, added to the 11 climbs, with an average participation of ten in both categories.

The Summer Outing was something new for use and pretty ambitious for a new club with no equipment and little experience. On the way down, we climbed Hood via Cooper's Spur, and Three-Fingered Jack, and then hiked in to Jefferson Park from Breitenbush Hot Springs, and made a "virgin" at Scout lake (the packers wouldn't believe Larry's insistence that it would be a dry camp, but now use it regularly--worse luck!). It is a Most Beautiful Spot, with an unsurpassed view of Jeff across the lake, and an "impossible" little peninsula accenting the scene. There was a climb of Jeff--more or less "directly" from camp (which did NOT save time), a trip onto Jefferson Park Glacier, and hikes to Pamela Lake, and around the "park" (a natural nook on the north slope of the mountain, not a designated nook). The park was Beautiful the Weather Splendid, the Mountain Magnificent the flowers Unbelievable--and the swimming Petrifying! And Everybody (that means Bob Engh, John Young, Burt Judson, Henry Wise, Chick and Dick Hammond, Ruth and Harold Kinkade, Teddy and Larry Upson) came home Thrilled and Exhausted.

We again climaxed the year with an Annual banquet, and our speaker was none other than our good friend Rick (Mrs. F.D.) Mack of Sunnyside, with reminiscences from her years of mountaineering-with slides.

Our growth and activity were not as startling as before--the town was settling down--but we could rejoice in the fellowship of such new members and friends as Marge (Garbrecht) Lewis, Al Maupin, Marion Hovey, Marian & Pete Lee, Marge Springer, Mariam Jones, Lora Jean Dillon, Jeanette Watkins, Doug Cameron, Gordon Bob Schilson, Dale Glasgow, and Jack White. Jim Mckeen, Randy Brown and Ken Sanborn (with Evelyn Jones) left the ranks of the single, and Hazel Richard, Helen Appel, the McIntoshes, and the Daniels left the area.

(There is no small hazard in letting any one person take too much of a fatherly or proprietary interest in any organization, both for the club and individual for it discourages participation and responsibility. In the case of the summer outing the appointed chairman found himself caught up in a "high ball" program at work, and was unable to carry through; and instead of reassigning the job, Larry took upon himself almost the entire responsibility for all planning, arrangements purchasing and packing--all during the last few weeks, during which he averaged about 3 1/2 hr. sleep night, and worked himself into complete exhaustion and irritability! This did not add to the spirit of fun and fellowship on the outing; and on the climb he couldn't even be roused from his catnap on the "saddle" to join the climb--which he was supposed to lead. In October, still exhausted, he came down with polio, which has pretty well eliminated him from serious hiking, and which broke his domination of the club. The first effect may be considered unfortunate but the latter has been most healthful).

### The Healthy Childhood

(The following years will be dealt with in scant detail, not only because your scribe was less involved and hence less informed and because more of you will remember, but mostly because this account is getting out of hand, and will never get finished in time at the preceding rate.)



The early fifties showed growth more in maturity than in numbers, for many of the young people were now married and settled down. Mary Hiem and Frank Kruesi and cute little Vi Sterling and George Wheeler, to name some of the earliest. And Warren Haussler took off for a jaunt through Yurp, never to return here, and his travels were faithfully reported to the Yodeler readers.

In 1951, the club became a member of the Federation of Western Clubs (FWOC) and we now exchanged newsletters with other ember clubs, and became active in promoting wilderness conservation. (Larry was FWOC Washington VP in '52).

Club presidents through the years 1951 to 1960 were Bob Henderson, John Young, Fred Facer, Dick Hammond, Tom Evans, Don DeHalas, Herold Triebs, again Triebs, Ben Johnson, and Dick Hammond, and other names prominent in club activities were Roger Thiede, Dave Heiser, Don Baker, Hank Helmholz, Ed Falk, Wheaten Smith, Dick Abbott, Al Zeits, Clark McKee, Ruth Dunn, Bill and Margie Tupper, Bev Dutton (Triebs) John and Sylvia Reddie, Tom Lane, Dick Morrow, El Mitchell, Elizabeth Moore, George Geering, Virginia Winsor, Dean Dickinson, Mary Ellen Has. . Hasbrouck and Mryde Orr, (don't all those names stir up memories?), not to mention Sklvia Carlson, Howard Gardner and Bob and Jeanette Vanderwater, and a few others there isn't room to name--like Ken and Kym Bell, Don and JoAnn Brown and Bob Smith (1960). The resident membership varied from 25 to 56, plus 8 to 10 non-resident, and club activity continued at about a level rate. We became a permanent part of the Richland scene, a stable and lasting part of the culture.

#### Those Teen-Age Years

That's where we are now, just about to turn twenty, and our teens have been terrific!. We have, in the years, completed a few more summer outings into far places, and we have amassed a treasure of experience in trips in all seasons to many hills and lakes and alpine wonderlands available on a weekend excursion--and perhaps a bit beyond.

Throughout the years, we have corrected the organizational flaws brought on by our early inexperience and by the unique demands of those times; and it seems we surely are now here to stay, and to be not only a source of lasting enjoyment to our now quite stable membership, but as always a guide to this really great kind of living to the newcomer--the "flatland furriner" or Eastern Dude. So that ain't bad, now is it?

Contributing to this growth and maturity in the last seven years hae been our presidents: John Young, Dean Dickinson, Malin Weiler, Warren DeMier, Gordon Hough, Bob Smith and John Brimhall, with the help of all the members, including especially such stalwarts as all those who preceded them in the various offices of responsibility, and who continued throught the years to support and strengthen the club. In addition to those previously mentioned, such names come to mind as Jim Moore, Clive Berglund, Dan Stepnewski, Marlyn and Bev Jakub, Bob Cahoon, Dick Ringle, Bob Bunch, Jim Stoddard, Duane Marr, Jim Pace, Duane Hudson, Jess Cleveland, Nell (Warner) Fraser, Berle Bezzio, Helen Gleason, Stan Slippern, Les Braby, Les Davenport, Bill Van Slyke, Chris Reynolds, Alan Gibbs, and Chuck and Ed and Kit and Pauli--and if I don't stop now I'll have no excuse left for anyone I missed! And surely I missed some of you who contributed much, for surely this is a club in which full participation by the membership has been not only the necessity but the reward--and that's how it should be! (All gripes from one-man committees to the contrary will be ignored.)

Thus, even before our twenty-first birthday, we have come of age. Middle age, and the golden years, still lie ahead; but our baby has grown up with a healthy constitution, with plenty of exercise and fresh air, with a happy childhood, and no visible frailties, and we can all look forward to its long life and prosperous future.

#### **From an early Yodeler**

Confucius say, "People who sleep on mountains are not on level."