Marys Peak Group, our vibrant local organization, has waxed and waned over its 37-year history. At times, the group pursued a vigorous conservation program; at others the focus, as now, has been more on outings. Mostly the Group has maintained a balance between the two and always remained true to the Sierra Club’s mission, “to explore, enjoy and protect the planet and promote the responsible use of the earth’s ecosystems and resources. …”

So how did our group start? As early as 1966, a small group of Corvallis members began exploring formation of a local Group (there were already Eugene and Rogue Groups), affiliated under the Pacific Northwest Chapter; no Oregon Chapter then. At least two attempts fizzled before November 1970, when about 50 members gathered in a meeting room in the Methodist Church basement and formalized a petition to the National Sierra Club Council for establishment of the Marys Peak Group. Instrumental in getting the group started were Ed Brazee, Bob Frenkel, and Ed Trione (all still doddering about Corvallis).

Petition accepted. The Group formally dates to April 7, 1971, with a letter and a Club allocation of $1.30/member. We started with 138 members and grew steadily, sometimes by accreting failed groups like the Mt. Jefferson (Salem) and coastal Sitka Group, but also as Willamette Valley population expanded and through our own membership activities.

Reading the April 9, 1971 (first) “News Letter”, one learns that Pat Harris Noyes was Conservation Chair, Ed Trione Outings, Phil Schary Publicity, Austin Pritchard Programs, John Dennis At Large, and Bob Frenkel Chair. A plea in that newsletter begged for a newsletter Editor, and lo and behold, Sara Stewart showed up and competently took over the task advertised as “just a little job,” I also note that Schary, that first year, managed 5 G/T articles and 1 in the Oregonian. The Marys Peak Group was off to a flying start! - Bob Frenkel

**PHIL SCHARY AWARD**

The Marys Peak Group announces the Phil Schary Award. Phil Schary was a long-time Sierra Club member and an early member of the MPG, serving as the group’s first Publicity Chair. He was a major contributor to many facets of the MPG, and through the years he led many outings. During the 1990’s and into this century, he continued to show us many trails and lead us on hikes. Sadly, he passed away this past spring, after a short illness. We honor the memory of Phil and his mentoring by naming this Award for the MPG member who has gone on the most MPG outings during the past year. This year, the award was given to Jane Luther, who went on 67 outings.
Have we as a nation come to believe in global warming yet? Are we ready to accept that the most recent climate changes are human induced? Are we ready to make the necessary lifestyle changes to ensure a healthy, sustainable planet that more than 6.6 billion humans can survive upon?

The current global warming trend has been well documented by scientists around the world. The culprits are primarily an excess of carbon dioxide and methane gasses generated during the industrial revolution and our love of the internal combustion engine that powers the automobile. Consider the rising progression in temperature as having set in motion a monstrous ship with little more than a paddle to steer it. The only way to change course is to reverse engines.

On the good side, people are starting to wake up to the dangers of global warming and climate change. Responsible and alert news media have helped spread the word. The bottom line is that humans are recognizing the necessity for change in their life styles to produce less in the way of greenhouse gasses. As Pogo once said, “we have met the enemy, and it is us.”

On the other hand, many of our politicians have yet to join with the public and resist the pressures of the fossil fuel and automotive industries and get with the program! The recent UN-sponsored climate change meetings in Bali found the United States delegation intransigent and opposing solutions to this global problem. The current administration in Washington is unwilling to take a leadership role and chart a responsible course in the effort to reduce global warming.

Therefore, we will have to take matters into our own hands. Changing our lifestyles will not be easy. Each of us must make sacrifices – for the common good and our own survival. There is no secret about what needs to be done. For example, drive and travel less, purchase a high mileage vehicle, eat locally grown crops whenever possible, and even change to energy efficient light bulbs. I’d prefer to plan and ease the transition rather than be shocked by a sudden calamity. With this New Year, ask yourself what you can do to reduce your carbon footprint. Then just do it!

Lelia tells a story of a backpacking trip in the Bull of the Woods Wilderness in the summer of 2007. Although the first two days were great fun, the third day was anything but. “On the third day out, I sprained my ankle about 100 yards from camp,” she explains. “I faced a very painful six-mile hike out of the wilderness. But I was tremendously impressed by the first-aid skills and leadership ability demonstrated by the whole group. Everyone pulled together to make the day a success. In particular, my buddy Larry Davis, a fellow Marys Peak Group leader, did an awesome job of taking care of me.”

Although Lelia says she is not much of a professional sports fan, she includes her mom as one of her heroes because “she was brave enough to let me take her camping for the first time when she was 60 years old. The expression on her face when I encour-
Early November snow fell silently around us. We stood there in our snowshoes and absorbed the moment, before I poked my ski pole toward a nearby ridge to point where we should head. The dark evergreen trees amidst the white landscape were enthralling. As we reflected on the moment, we all agreed that snowshoeing was a very nice way to travel in the winter woods.

Although I had encountered some deep snow as a toddler walking to school in upstate New York—you know, the kind that comes up to the kneecaps when you are that age—I didn’t really appreciate what it was like to be in a winter wonderland until I donned my first pair of skis when I was eight. Those wooden clunkers were some hard on the ankles, but, oh, such fun. My mother, who enjoyed downhill skiing, wanted both my brother and me to enjoy it, too. That was in 1948, and we were regulars at a mountain in western New York called Swain. It had a vertical drop that was all of 650 feet. Mom was pretty cool at commandeering some admiring gentleman to help me when we were standing in the line. Then I would grab the rope of the towline in front of the gentleman’s legs, and up we’d go. Over the years, we sought out more and more spectacular places in the East, finally reaching Sugarloaf, in Maine, by the time I was in high school. A fast downhill run there was the ultimate thrill.

Years passed, with many a soggy mitten while enjoying the freezing cold of a short January day. The lift operators would check our noses to see if they were white, which would indicate that we had frostbite. No one seemed to care if other parts of me were frostbitten. Although I never per...
MPG January-April 2008 Sierra Club Outings

Winter and spring – what a combo. Winter brings us snow sports and walks through nearby mossy, ferny Northwest woods. As early as February, those woods show subtle signs of spring, bursting into full glory by April. Always fun, MPG outings provide opportunities to explore our natural environment, learning more about the unique flora and fauna of our region and how they can be preserved.

Contact the leader before the event. Area codes are 541, unless otherwise noted. Please arrive before the stated time; we leave on time. Dress for the weather—sturdy boots or shoes, rain gear, no jeans or other heavy cotton for extended outings. Bring water, sunscreen, snacks, lunch if outing starts in the morning. Unless otherwise stated, carpool departures are from parking lot near Wilkinson Hall, at Arnold and 27th Streets on the OSU campus in Corvallis. Contact leader to meet group elsewhere. No dogs except on designated dog walks.

We suggest that riders reimburse carpool drivers $2.00 per person for every hour driven. Thus, the Cascades might be $8.00-$10.00; the coast $4.00-$8.00. All participants must sign a standard Sierra Club liability waiver before each outing. To read the liability waiver before you choose to participate on an outing, please see http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/, or contact the National Sierra Club Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version. Neither the Sierra Club nor the Marys Peak Group is responsible for participants during the trips to and from the trailhead.

* All winter sports activities are subject to change or cancellation if conditions are inappropriate. Often a hike is substituted. Watch weekly e-mails for updates, and check with leader.

**Sat Dec 29 – Cross-country ski.** If there’s snow, we’ll ski trails in one of the Cascade snow parks. Moderate, not for first-time skiers. 8:00 am at Wilkinson; call leader for Salem departure time/place. Larry Davis, (503) 390-8210, larrydavis@wvi.com; Karl Hartzell.

**Sun Dec 30 – Snowshoe.** We’ll go wherever there’s enough snow. Easy/moderate, suited to properly equipped beginners who are in reasonably good hiking condition. 8:00 am. Barry Wulff, 929-6272, wulffb@peak.org; Christy Stevens.

**Tue Jan 1 – New Year’s Day walk, Dimple Hill.** Once again, for our traditional New Year walk, we’ll go up a tree-lined gravel road from Oak Creek to Dimple Hill, with views over the valley – perhaps the Cascades, should the weather happen to cooperate. Moderate, 7 mi/1100’ gain. 1:00 pm. Doris deLespinasse, 753-4775, deles@proaxis.com

**Sat Jan 5 – Fitton Green.** We’ll visit this natural area near Corvallis, walking the Cardwell Hill road (closed to traffic) from Cardwell Hill, through oak-filled forests past the Marys River to open grassland near Wren. Moderate, 5.2 mi/935’ gain. 10:00 am. Bruce Encke, 753-6884, bruce.encke@hp.com; Loretta Rivard.

**Sat Jan 12 – Cross-country ski near Santiam Pass.** If there’s snow, we’ll ski trails in one of the Cascade snow parks. Easy/moderate, suited to properly equipped beginners who are in good hiking condition. 8:00 am at Wilkinson; call leader for Salem departure time/place. Larry Davis, (503) 390-8210, larrydavis@wvi.com; Lelia Barlow.

**Sat Jan 19 – Silver Falls.** This tree-lined trail to 10 waterfalls is one of Oregon’s premier sights. We’ll walk the Canyon and Ridge trails, with a stop by the fire in the classic lodge. Good rain gear and water-resistant boots or sturdy walking shoes are essential. Moderate, 7.1 mi/1000’ gain. 9:00 am. Jim & Nancye Ballard, 752-4441, ballardjm@gmail.com; Armand & Irene Schoppy.

**Sat-Sun Jan 19-20 - Overnight cross-country ski.** Ski 4 miles with packs up a moderate grade to the Mt. View shelter, near the Santiam Pass. Preregister; limited to 12. Intermediate or capable beginner skiers. David Anderson, 758-7602, DAAMP1@MSN.com; Tasha Wulff.

**Wed Jan 23 - Wastewater treatment and Corvallis Watershed tour.** Water, water everywhere... Come and sate your curiosity. Because we will be visiting two sites, this tour will be approximately 3-3.5 hours, including travel time; bring a lunch or snack. Meet at First Street parking behind Super 8 Motel. 9:30 am. Marilyn Hinds, 929-7136, mkhinballard@peak.org

**Sat Jan 26 – McDonald Forest hike.** The Section 36 Loop Trail / Powder House Trail is one of the leader’s favorite hikes in McDonald Forest. The hike will begin and end at Peavy Arboretum, passing by Cronemiller Lake and including a section of old growth forest. Moderate, 4 mi/1030’ gain. 1:00 pm. Lelia Barlow, lelia.trips@gmail.com (e-mail preferred); 758-8279.
**Sat Feb 2 – Cross-country ski near Santiam Pass.** If there’s snow, we’ll ski trails in one of the Cascade snow parks. Moderate, for intermediate skiers. 8:00 am at Wilkinson; call leader for Salem departure time/place. Larry Davis, (503) 390-8210, larrydavis@wvi.com; Lelia Barlow.

**Wed Feb 6 - Coffin Butte land fill tour.** If you have ever been curious about what happens to your garbage, join us. Due to limited capacity (land fill is providing a bus), we need reservations by 1-30-08. Meet at First Street parking behind Super 8 Motel. 12:30 pm. Marilyn Hinds, 929-7136, mkinballard@peak.org

**Sun Feb 10 – Willamette Mission State Park.** See the country’s largest cottonwood tree and the site of an 1834 mission settlement, near Salem. Perhaps also ride on a historic ferry across the Willamette. Easy, up to 5 miles/no gain. 9:00 am. Cliff Cooper, 760-2543, cliftoncooper2002@yahoo.com

**Sat Feb 16 – Cross-country ski near Willamette Pass.** If there’s snow, we’ll ski trails in one of the Cascade snow parks. Easy/moderate, suited to properly equipped beginners who are in good hiking condition. 8:00 am. Ray Drapek, 754-7364, drakep@fsl.orst.edu; Karl Hartzell.

**Sun Feb 17 – Lewisburg Saddle to Dimple Hill.** Gentle uphill on gravel roads through attractive forest to this Corvallis landmark. Great view of Corvallis and the valley; possibly Cascades if we’re lucky. Easy/moderate, 4.8 mi/545’ gain. 1:00 pm. Jane Luther, 758-8279, janeluth@gmail.com

**Fri-Sun Feb 22-24 - Moonlight cross-country ski.** Friday night we’ll ski with packs by full moon to the Mt. Fuji shelter near Willamette Pass; explore Mt. Fuji on Saturday; ski out Sunday. Preregister; limited to 6 intermediate skiers with good gear. David Anderson, 758-7602, DAAMP1@MSN.com

**Sun Feb 24 – Dog Walk, McDonald or Dunn Forest.** Dogs must be under leash or voice control at all times, be well-behaved and non-aggressive to people and other dogs. Moderate, up to 7 mi/1000’ gain. 9:00 am. Kay Yates, 754-0463, kyates@peak.org; Monika Shepherd, 754-5994.

**Sat Mar 1 – Search for Snow, Marys Peak.** Up the East Ridge Trail through Douglas fir and noble fir to the high parking area, return to Conner’s Camp on paved Marys Peak Rd. (closed to vehicles). Adverse conditions may force alterations in our route. Likely to be cold, icy and/or snowy. Boots, winter clothing required. Difficult, 7 mi/1200’ gain. 9:00 am. Cliff Cooper, 760-2543, cliftoncooper2002@yahoo.com

**Sun Mar 9 – West Corvallis-area loop.** A loop hike along ridges and creeks of Tom’s forestland property. We’ll see a huge madrone and an old-growth fir along the way. After the hike we’ll warm up with hot drinks by the fire in Tom’s home. Preregister, limited to 12. Easy, 2.5 mi, 500’ gain. 10:00 am. Tom Bucht, 738-1333, TomBucht@gmail.com

**Sat Mar 15 – Exploring NW History: Champoeg & Ft. Vancouver.** We’ll walk the 3.2 mile loop at Champoeg State Park, stop for a warm drink and a snack, then cross the Columbia River to tour Fort Vancouver National Historic Site museum and stroll the grounds. Entrance fees not more than $8 per person; probably less. Bring Oregon State Parks, Golden Age, or America the Beautiful passes if you have them. Easy. 8:00 am; late return. Nancye & Jim Ballard, 752-4441, ballardin@gmail.com

**March 18, 2008 - Source Recycling (Allied Waste in Albany) tour.** Have you ever wondered what they do with all those recycled goods? Due to limited capacity we need reservations March 4th. Meet at First Street parking behind Super 8 Motel at 12:45 PM. Marilyn Hinds mkinballard@peak.org or 541-929-7136

**Sat Mar 22 – McCulloch Peak geology hike.** We probably will have one or two OSU geology professors with us for this walk to the highest place in McDonald Forest – see weekly e-mails for updates. If so, we’ll be able to learn about local basalt flows and tectonic plates. Moderate/difficult, not more than 9 mi/1700’ gain. 9:00 am. Tasha Wulff, 619-5118, twulff@peak.org

**Sat Mar 29 – SOLV beach cleanup.** For the seventh consecutive year, we’ll join other Oregonians for the annual SOLV spring beach cleanup. Dress in warm layers; bring rain gear, sturdy shoes or boots. Lunch at a Newport restaurant. 8:30 am. Denise Nervik, 752-8241, nervikd@peak.org; Loretta Rivard; Bruce Encke.

**Sun Mar 30 – McDowell Creek Falls.** This Linn County park is a beautiful glen with easy, graded pathways that pass two lovely waterfalls, Royal Terrace Falls and Majestic Falls. Easy, 1.7mi/200’ gain. 9:00 am. Christy Stevens, 753-4353; Barry Wulff.
Sun Apr 6 – Sweet Creek Falls. This gorge east of Florence, with its old growth, cascading creeks, water ouzels, and dramatic waterfalls is among the most special spots in the Coast Range. Stop after in Mapleton for hot drinks at a unique coffee shop and bookstore. Easy/moderate, 5.2 mi/650’ gain. 9:00 am. Cliff Cooper, 760-2543, cliftoncooper2002@yahoo.com

Wed Apr 9 - Mendenhall Studio tour, Willamina Creek Valley. We'll leave Corvallis, lunch at Coyote Joe's Café in Willamina and then tour Mendenhall Studio. Meet at First Street parking behind Super 8 Motel. 10:00 am. Marilyn Hinds, 929-7136, mkinballard@peak.org

Sun Apr 13 – Wildflower walk. We'll look for early wildflowers near Corvallis with Matt Blakely-Smith of the Corvallis Chapter, Native Plant Society of Oregon. Probably one or more trails in McDonald Forest. Moderate, not more than 6 mi/1000’ gain. 9:00 am. Doris deLespinasse, 753-4775, ddeles@proaxis.com

Sat Apr 19 – Santiam Wagon Road cross-key. Much of this beautiful historic route has been restored for hikers and equestrians; so let's walk one of the best parts on this day close to Earth Day. One group will walk down from Seven-Mile Camp past beautiful House Rock; the other will go up. Lush forests, clear river; once we saw a spotted owl. Moderate, 7 mi/1100’ loss or gain. 9:00 am. Randy Selig, Leslie Hogan, 924-0130, qwizats@peak.org; Irene & Armand Schoppy.

Sat Apr 26 – Little North Santiam. This Cascade foothills hike is east of Salem, in mossy old forests with spring flowers. It passes emerald pools and a waterfall. Steep and rocky in places; probably muddy. Moderate, 9 mi/900’ gain. 8:00 am. Bob Custer, 745-3994, laststand@exchange.net.net

Sun Apr 27 – Old Growth Trail. A gentle stroll to this lovely little trail, a favorite of the leader's and many other locals. Ferns, wildflowers, two lovely little streams to cross. May be muddy and slippery in places. Easy, 2 mi/260’ gain. 1:00 pm. Ray Drapek, 754-7364, drapek@fsl.orst.edu

Tue Apr 29 – Backpack class. Guidance on current backpacking equipment and practices for beginners and experienced backpackers. Information on MPG and Chemeketan backpacks planned for 2008. Chemeketan, 360-1/2 State Street, Salem, 7-9 pm. Bob Custer, 745-3994, laststand@exchange.net.net for information or car pooling from Corvallis area.

Sat May 3 – Tour of new Coburg Ridge Nature Conservancy Preserve. A Nature Conservancy tour guide will take us through this newest and largest Willamette Valley preserve, near Eugene. See http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/oregon/press/press2996.html Normally not open to the public, it preserves rare prairie and oak woodland habitats which shelter 26 species worthy of protection, including the Fender's Blue Butterfly. Moderate/strenuous; rough ground, with some steep and off-trail portions. 9:00 am. Preregister; number is limited. Steve Ford, 929-6207, sandsford@peak.org

Sat May 10 – Marys Peak North Ridge. Bruce Encke, 753-6884, bruce.encke@hp.com; Loretta Rivard.

Fri-Mon May 23-26 – Oregon Coast camping trip. Near Coos Bay. Tom Bucht, 738-1333, TomBucht@gmail.com

Sat-Mon May 31-June 2 – Backpack. New backpackers welcome. Location to be determined. Lelia Barlow, lelia.trips@gmail.com (e-mail preferred); 758-8279.

Sat-Wed June 14 - 18 – Grande Ronde rafting trip. The Grand Ronde River, in the Blue Mountains (Wallowa-Whitman National Forest) of Northeast Oregon, travels 40 miles between Minam and Troy through a beautiful and isolated wild and scenic river canyon. Class II+. This is one of Oregon's premier rafting opportunities. Outfitted by Free Spirit Rivers. $425 Contact leader for information and registration: Christy Stevens, 753-4353, christy.stevens@linnbenton.edu

Fri-Sun June 20-22 – Indian Heaven Backpack. New backpackers welcome. Allan King, 503-399-9990, ALLAN_B_KING@msn.com; Joanne DeMay.

MPG Foundation
You can help the Marys Peak Group with its outings program, trail work, and evening programs by donating to the Marys Peak Group foundation. Your tax deductible donations will support our efforts. Donations may be sent directly to the Sierra Club Foundation, P.O. Box 863, Corvallis, OR 97339. For information, contact Treasurer Mike Brantley at 754-0463 or mbinor@gmail.com
**MPG WINTER PROGRAMS**

**HIKING IN EUROPE**

Author and hiking guru William L. Sullivan takes us on Europe’s most interesting and least known hiking trails, from Greece and the Pyrenees to Norway and the Alps. Learn what to expect at a Slovakian “hut”, where to launch a tour of the Orkneys, and where to stay on the active volcanic island of Stromboli. As always, Sullivan spices his lecture with anecdotes about local history, wildflowers, and outdoor lore. The show also features areas that serve as settings in his new adventure mystery, “The Case of Einstein’s Violin.” Bill will also have the latest editions of his Oregon hiking guides available for sale at the program. Thursday, January 24, 7:00 p.m., Corvallis/Benton County Public Library. This program is co-sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

**JOURNEY ON THE SILK ROAD**

The ancient Silk Road in China continues to bustle with activity. Fifteen members of the Marys Peak Group and Salem Chemeketans traveled for three weeks on the Silk Road around the Taklamakan Desert in September, 2007. Join us as Marys Peak Group leader Barry Wulff recounts their adventures, from riding camels, to exploring bazaars, to hiking in the Pamirs on the road to Pakistan on this modern-day journey to the center of the Asian continent, and shares his insights into some of the environmental challenges facing China. Wednesday, February 20, 7:00 p.m., Corvallis/Benton County Public Library.

**RAFT THE TATSHENSHINI**

Join Mary Zuschlag on a 12-day raft expedition on North America’s wildest river, the Tatshenshini. The Tatshenshini-Alsek flows past glacier-cloaked peaks, icebergs, grizzly bears and unusual plant communities. The river winds 130 miles in the very northwest corner of British Columbia, nestled between Kluane National Park in the Yukon and Glacier Bay and Wrangell-St. Elias National Parks in Alaska. The Alsek Range provides exceptionally productive grizzly habitat, probably the best in Canada. The trip ends in Glacier Bay NP with spectacular views of 15,000 foot Mt. Fairweather. Corvallis/Benton County Public Library, 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 12.

**GALAPAGOS—ISLANDS IN TIME**

Five hundred miles off the coast of Ecuador, the volcanic Galapagos Islands offer the visitor a glimpse of a pristine world. Most animals, including the blue-footed booby and the marine iguana, are easily approached. Giant tortoises may live to 200 years or more. Sea turtles, sharks, rays, penguins, sea lions and dozens of species of colorful reef fish share their habitat with the snorkeler. Known as Darwin’s Islands, the Galapagos serve as a fascinating laboratory for the study of evolution. In this program, nature photographer and tour leader Donald Lyon will share his images and impressions of this intriguing and scientifically historic place. Wednesday, April 9, 7:00 p.m., Corvallis/Benton County Public Library.
Car-Camping in Eastern Oregon

The heart of northeastern Oregon lies around the town of John Day, which is named for an early American hunter and fur trapper. The autumnal golden, rolling hills, punctuated by the area’s mountain ranges, give the region a special character. It is ranch country. Cattle, sheep, and mule deer coexist in the fields. Coyotes roam at will. There is beauty all around.

To the west lie the Ochocos, the north has the Blue Mountains, and to the south are the Strawberries. The stately ponderosa pine, western white pine, and lodgepole pine cover the lower reaches of these mountains. Higher elevations have Douglas fir and white fir. Even higher, one encounters alpine fir and Englemann spruce. Strawberry Mountain was so named by local miners in the 1860’s for the strawberries they found growing on the slopes.

The woodland is elk territory, and hunters come from far and wide to ply their sport. Hikers find the region a change from the Cascade and Coast ranges. The entire region is dry, dry, dry, and lightning-ignited fires come frequently in late summer. The contrast with the Willamette Valley opens one’s eyes to another world.

In late August of this past year, ten Marys Peak Group members made the Strawberry Mountains a focus for a five-day, car-camping trip. The 5,700-foot Strawberry Campground, eleven miles south of Prairie City, was the perfect setting to give us a variety of hiking opportunities.

Our first day’s hike began with a 500-foot climb from the campground into the Strawberry Wilderness to picturesque Strawberry Lake, formed by a landslide a century ago. Rounding the lake, we continued upward past the refreshing Strawberry Falls to Little Strawberry Lake, at 6,900 feet elevation. Little Strawberry was very clear, and we saw many native trout. We had lunch at the base of a rocky scree slope: several of our members climbed up the slide for sport. The heat of the late August day forced several of us to take a quick dip in the cool waters of Strawberry Lake during our descent.

On our second day, feeling limbered by the previous day’s climb, we decided to tackle Strawberry Mountain from the south. The climb to the 9,038-foot summit is considered moderate, but exposure on the wrong day with lightning about can be dangerous. We drove around the range to the trailhead, where we quickly broke out into the alpine area, with views to the golden valleys far below. On our way up, we encountered a hatch of California tortoiseshell butterflies; they streamed past us like water, flowing down the mountain slope in abundance. We topped off the evening with impromptu poetry recitations around the campfire. In the early hours of the morning the light sleepers watched a full lunar eclipse.

By our third day, some of us elected to go on a road trip, while others took to the hills again. All of us found ourselves awestruck by the beautiful landscape viewed from the rural county roads. Part of the “road crew” visited the intriguing Kam Wah Chung museum in John Day – a museum containing artifacts and displays that illuminate some of the trials of everyday life of the Chinese who lived here in the late 1800’s. Our hikers climbed 1,500 feet over nine miles to Little Slide Lake for some more bone-chilling swimming. The evening campfire brought us together for great reminiscing of our day’s traveling.

Our fourth and final day was spent hiking six miles along the Malheur River, which runs south out of the Strawberry Mountains. Water can bring out the silliness in people – we took to the cool waters for some splashing fun. The many deer in the area, were they looking, must have wondered if we had gone off the deep end. Our spirits high, we enjoyed the evening campfire in rhyme and song.

This was the first chance many of us had to spend some time in Eastern Oregon. The landscape and culture are very different from what we experience here in the valley. We urge everyone to get to know all of Oregon. - Barry Wulff

Strawberry Lake

Access this Benchmark On-Line

The Benchmark is available on-line in .pdf format. You can switch to receive notice of the Benchmark in .pdf format and save the MPG printing and mailing costs. More than 180 people now receive their Benchmark by this route. E-mail Barry Wulff wulffb@peak.org to request this change.
impacted anything resembling good form, my days of downhill skiing were enjoyable. The body was strong and flexible; my reflexes were quick. I skied almost every mountain in the eastern U.S. at one time or another. Yes, there were many wipeouts, with aches to follow.

My aging body and some wisdom gradually changed my view of a pleasurable downhill ski adventure. “Slow down, easy does it,” friends coached me. So, I took up cross-country skiing, to smell the roses, so to speak. The arms became engaged as much as the legs. This is work, I often complained. I poked along, hoping not to fall over. Moving from downhill to x-country is akin to downgrading from a motorcycle to a self-peddle bicycle. Nevertheless, taking to Oregon's Cascades on performance, metal edged, cross-country skis is a beautiful backcountry winter experience. Forget the pressure or the next black diamond downhill run. To be amongst the tall spruce and fir in the fresh November snow would, I thought, probably be the closest thing to freedom that I'd ever encounter. Cross-country skiing in the backcountry means having to maneuver around trees and various frosted sinks, some of which I occasionally fell prey to. My downhill experience helps, but sloppiness often gets me into trouble, and getting up after having fallen is getting harder and harder to do. Maybe there's a safer and equally enjoyable way to experience a winter day in the backcountry.

So now, with even more maturity under the belt, and perhaps some better sense, I stand here in deep snow with my new pair of snowshoes. I have had a pair of antique, handcrafted, ash-split snowshoes with me for years. They are a good three feet long and more than a foot wide and rested in the garage most of their life. They look like overgrown tennis racquets. I just couldn't bring myself to strap those babies on and take to the woods. Too cumbersome!

Wearing a pair of smaller-sized, modern, aluminum-framed snowshoes with nylon webbing, I can trek without having to pretend I'm bowlegged. I'm learning how to shuffle along in great depths of powder. I really smell the roses now. What a delight to watch the huge flakes slowly drift down all around! I'll stick out my tongue and see how many I can capture. Bleh!

The camp robbers are perched on nearby branches, waiting for a handout. They seem to appreciate our presence. Only a slight breeze moves the tops of the trees. Only our breathing breaks the silence. We have trekked here to escape the hoards of people and the noise of everyday life and to see what sort of stuff we are made of. I chuckle to myself. Is this what the winter world will be for me in the future? New muscles are being challenged and engaged. Will I adapt? I hope so. I can wander anywhere: no trails need be followed. Scrunch, scrunch, scrunch. We wander off to explore the unknown, to walk where it appears no one has walked before. This is now my thrill. - Barry Wulff

Lelia Barlow from page 2 aged her to follow me across an ice-cold stream was priceless!”

Some of the more recent trips Lelia has participated in include Rick Cooper's Wallowas backpack trip, Bob Custer's High Uintas backpack trip and Dave Anderson’s cross-country ski backpack trip.

When she's not enjoying the great outdoors, Lelia is busy working as an engineer in the field of computer security. She currently splits her time between Corvallis and the Portland area, and she is often on the road.

Since Lelia’s immediate family members are not quite as outdoorsy as she is, MPG and the Chemeketans help give her the outlet she needs. “One of the great things about backpacking is that I can’t take my laptop or cell phone into the wilderness with me,” she says. We agree.

- Lori Fluge-Brunker

Beazell Trail Work - October
Sierra Club Outings:  
“Safe, Happy, and Inspired”

An evening of traditional Celtic music

Bridgetown with the Hanz Araki Trio

Marys Peak Benefit performance

March 8th, 2008

7:30 PM
First Presbyterian Church
Corvallis
7th and Monroe Streets

Tickets available at the door
$15