



# The Bulletin of the Washington Alpine Club

February 2019  
Edited by Robertson Miller

## Contributors

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## President's Corner by Elden Altizer

**There is something special about winter in the mountains, except when it's raining!** We've had a strange winter this year with the snow coming in bursts with gaps of dry sunny days or dreary rain. I hope everyone checks the [NWAC](#) avalanche forecasts when planning their outings.

Despite this, a lot of members are getting out and Guye Cabin is being used for lots of activities.

- The cabin is open from Friday evening to Sunday evening every weekend thanks to a core of volunteers.
- In January both AIARE 1 and AIRE 2 avalanche safety courses were taught at the cabin.
- The Wednesday night Telemark and Randonee ski lessons started January 9<sup>th</sup>.
- The backcountry travel class is underway and runs through February.
- February has groups at the cabin every weekend while still being open for our members; Two Boy Scouts troops, Inner City Outings and the Mountain to Sound Greenway will be there.



**It's great that the cabin is being utilized** in a way that supports our members, helps sustain it financially and increases the exposure to new potential members. Mike Mahaney has been doing a great job getting outside groups into the cabin as well as initiating our successful hosting of PCT hikers in August and September – Thanks Mike! I encourage you to think of groups that might want to use the cabin, especially in the summer and fall. Consider hosting this coming summer for PCT hikers – it's fun.

**Have you renewed your dues for 2019?** We have a good level of renewal and everyone should have received a personal reminder in January. Membership is key to the continued operation of our club, classes and to expanding activities. Please renew if you have not already one so, and thanks to all of you that already done so.

**Last month I shared some thoughts about new goals for club,** whether that is new classes, activities or outings. One area the board is working on is to re-establish first aid education. In the past we've offered Wilderness & Remote First Aid (WRFA) but this Red Cross sponsored course has been discontinued. We are working to assess the replacement course, Wilderness First Aid (WFA), for later this year. The companies that offer WFA have differences in the course material and we'll look closely at what is the best value and content. I'm a big advocate for everyone having first aid training. If you read my story last month of the accident on Carrantuohill I hope you'll agree.

For those that use **Instagram** the WAC now has an official page:

<https://www.instagram.com/washingtonalpineclub/> Also look for the hashtag #WACway. It's a great place to post and look at photos our climbs and adventures. This is a nice way to share our adventures.

**I can't ignore the impact that the government shut-down** has had on the alpine community. Please, please don't read any political position into my comments. The stories I've heard about damage and trash in Yosemite and Joshua Tree make me sick. Every day I've looked at the webcam of Paradise, watching the snow fill the parking lot. My planned hike in January at White Sands National Monument – Nope! But my inconvenience pales to the hardship and uncertainty of our dedicated government employees. I appreciate what they do, "keeps the wheels on the bus", and I'm grateful for what they provide us. **Some permit systems for summer trips may be affected.** The Mount Whitney permit lottery that normally begins Feb. 1 is postponed as are permits for Mount Saint Helens. The Enchantments permits seem to be on schedule for February 15th to March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

I'll close with a "save the date" for the Annual Olympic Beach clean-up on April 20<sup>th</sup>. This a great way to enjoy a weekend campout on the beach while doing good for the environment. Hope to see you in the hills and on the slopes soon!



# Cabin Report

by Mike Mahanay



February 02 was Groundhog Day and as you might have heard, our local Groundhog – Snoqualmie Sue slowly came out of her den through the hard pack, looked around at the low clouds and fog, and headed back in for 4 more weeks of winter. Now predicting March 01 as the start of Spring and end of Winter.

The temperatures have been a bit on warm side, and precipitation has come not only as snow, but rain too!

Snoqualmie Pass averages 252 inches of snowfall by the end of January. As of the end of January, about 148 inches had fallen. That translates into about 60” at Guye Cabin. As of last weekend the snow glacier ice!

There is still a lot of winter remaining before the end of the snow season, which is usually around early April. These odds for recovery diminish the longer we remain below normal and the closer we get to April. Will we catch up?



Scott Calhoun on Friday Feb 01. 2019

It rained just a bit!

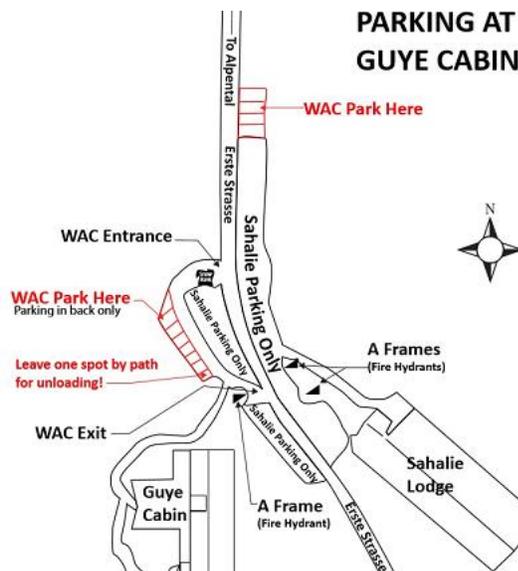
Please help around the Cabin. If you don't see something that needs to be done, please ask! Shoveling the snow from the deck, front and back stairs, and A frames needs to be done each weekend.



Please prepare to help out! Bring something to share, watch the kids, and take the trash home.

### ***Most important!***

Be sure you park in the WAC places! We are very fortunate that we don't have to pay for plowing so lets keep our neighbors happy! [Parking Map](#)



## **Up Coming Events**

**February 13, 7-9pm:** Basic Climbing Class Instructor Meet & Greet at Wonderland Gear Exchange

**February 21: 5-9pm:** Women of the WAC at Vertical World

**February 23-24:** Basic Class Instructor training at Guye Cabin

**March 6, 7pm-9pm:** Emotional First Responder by Danelle Cartun

**March 13, 7pm-9pm:** Community building, incident reporting, near misses by Amberleigh Hammond

See the calendar of events at <https://washingtonalpineclub.org/> for more listings

# WOMEN OF THE WAC: Climbing Focus Evening

This is an opportunity to change the narrative! Our goal is to create a space that will allow for growth, development, and increased opportunities for women to lead one another and lead in the outdoors. When women come together barriers start to come down, insecurities disappear, eyes open up, competition goes away, and we celebrate one another's achievements! WOW will host events built to further instill skills, knowledge and confidence while enhancing quality and longevity in our community of female members, instructors, and volunteers.

## WHEN/WHERE:

- February 21<sup>th</sup>
- 5 – 9PM
- [Vertical World: 2330 W Commodore Way, Seattle, WA, 98199](#)

## WHAT:

- [Hear it / See it / Practice It!](#) Whether you're brushing off the dust before climbing season starts or gearing up for the Basics Class Instructor Training weekend, this event will help you solidify your skills while getting to know other WOW members.

## WOW KICKOFF EVENT – CLIMBING FOCUS:

- \*Open Climb: 5 – 6 PM
- \*Meet & Greet: 6 - 7PM
- Welcome & Intro: 7 - 7:30PM
- Refresher & Development of Practical Instructor Skills: 7:30 - 9PM

*\*Optional*

## WHO:

- Audience: All female WAC members & prospective WAC members
- Event Volunteers: Looking for a few individuals that are willing to support this event with their talent and charisma! If interested please fill out [THIS SURVEY](#) (organizing up front, setting up at the event, and teaching practical skills).

Rachael Minucciani

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# Club Activities of the past month

## AIARE Classes

In December and January, the WAC hosted two AIARE (Avalanche Research Education) classes for club members at Guye Cabin. The classes were taught by Mick Pearson of KAF Adventures. These were AIARE Level 1 three-day classes. Day one was held on Friday at KAF Adventures in Seattle. Days 2 and 3 were held at the WAC Cabin. Students dug snow pits to study and learn about snow layers (weak and strong layers) and on Sunday students were led on a ski/snowshoe expedition towards Snow Lake. Students observed avalanche debris and discussed safe route finding.



Students digging a snow pit to study snow layers

## Basic Climbing Class Update by Brandi Garcia

The Basic Climbing Class starts moving for both instructors and students this month - although the co-chairs have been hard at work planning and meeting monthly since August!

Selection night took place on a January 24th and lasted almost three hours as 10 of our volunteers narrowed it down from 76 applicants to 32! When asked why 32 students Pat O’Brian noted “even adding 2 more people - for 34 in total - adds more rope teams on our Baker climb and creates more of an issue for the already tight Alpine weekends. More important, 32 allows us to keep the class small enough for the low student/instructor ratio that we feel makes safer and more knowledge student climbers”.

### Key Basic Class February Dates:

Feb 13th:

Meet and Greet

7PM Wonderland Gear Exchange

Feb 23rd - 24th

New Instructor Training  
Guye Cabin

\*Mandatory for new instructors

\*All instructors must pass the knots test before volunteering for a fieldtrip

First Student Lecture is March 5th!!



Questions? Email the [Co-Chairs](#) or visit the Basic Climbing class [website!](#)  
<http://basicclass.washingtonalpineclub.org/>

## Member Activities of the past month

### Granite Mountain Winter Route by Robertson Miller

Granite Mountain is easily one of the most beloved hiking trails in King County. A reasonably short drive to exit 47 off I-90, the last eastbound exit before reaching Snoqualmie Pass ski area (and the WAC cabin) Granite Mountain is very accessible. The Forest Service lookout tower at the summit makes for a rewarding destination.

Granite Mountain has two very distinct personalities, summer and winter. The summer Granite is a walk among beautiful flower meadows that rival Mount Rainier's Paradise. Bear grass flower stocks are everywhere above the tree-line along with Indian Paintbrush, Avalanche and Glacier lilies and many other flowering plants. This, along with tasty huckleberries all along the upper trail.



Then there is the other Granite, the winter Granite, the unforgiving Granite that sometimes decides to keep the souls who venture onto its flanks. Sadly, Granite Mountain has taken many lives in recent years in snow avalanches. Extreme caution should be exercised when climbing Granite in winter. To emphasize the point, there is a large sign at the trailhead that says, "Warning, Area subject to sudden dangerous snow slides". Always check [NWAC](#) before climbing Granite. Additionally, in my view, whatever hazard NWAC has for the general area Granite should be considered one level worse. I recommend avoiding Granite Mountain for at least five days after any significant snowfall.

January 29<sup>th</sup> met the above recommendations has a high pressure kept the rain and snow away for nearly two weeks. The daily melt/freeze cycle turned the upper slopes of Granite into a smooth hard crust well-consolidated frozen snow. NWAC reported the entire western Cascade Range as "in the green," low avalanche danger. With those prevailing conditions I decided there was no better time for a Granite winter-route climb.



The summer trail makes switchbacks up through the trees then makes a long traverse to the east to gain the ridge that leads back to the west and up to the lookout tower. The winter route is to simply head straight the center slide-line keeping to one side or the other of the avalanche track. Conditions were perfect for crampons and ice axe. Soon I was high up on the 35-degree smooth slope. As I climbed, I did switchbacks, this way and that, gaining about 50 feet with each iteration. At one point a cascade of ice crystals came sliding and tumbling down around me. The ice crystals sounded like broken glass clinking past me. I looked up to see what the source was, my dog, Dantes, about 50 feet above me was knocking the ice loose. Later he came sliding down on all four paws. He slid past me as his paws had lost traction on the frozen crust. Finally, he turned and dug his natural crampons in and stopped himself, a dog self-arrest! The winter route up Granite mountain is about as good a simulation for climbing Mount Rainier as you can get (minus crevasses) within an hour's drive of Seattle.

Two hours and 50 minutes of hard climbing brought dog and me to the lookout tower. We spent all of about five minutes taking in the beautiful views of surrounding mountains and Rainier in the distance before starting down. With crampons I was able to walk straight down the frozen strata with Dantes following in my steps. Was one of the best days on Granite Mountain I've ever had.



# Important Notices

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<p align="center"><b>Basic Climbing Class Co-chairs</b></p> <p>Pat O'Brien          Angela Crampton          Brandi Garcia          Chris Gerber          Clement Gurrey</p>	<p align="center"><b>Intermediate Class Co-chairs</b></p> <p>Jennifer Abrahamson          Max Leitner          Paul Carduner</p>										
<p align="center"><b>Backcountry Class Co-chairs</b></p> <p>Nici Bissonnette          Gabe O'Leary          Ted Bashor          Telemark Ski: <a href="mailto:SkiWeds@gmail.com">SkiWeds@gmail.com</a></p>	<p align="center"><b>Property &amp; Membership</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Cabin Chair</td> <td>Mike Mahanay</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Work Party</td> <td>Mike Mahanay</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Membership</td> <td>Dave Wilson</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Publicity</td> <td>Kay Ishi</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cabin Supply</td> <td>Tami Sargent</td> </tr> </table>	Cabin Chair	Mike Mahanay	Work Party	Mike Mahanay	Membership	Dave Wilson	Publicity	Kay Ishi	Cabin Supply	Tami Sargent
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