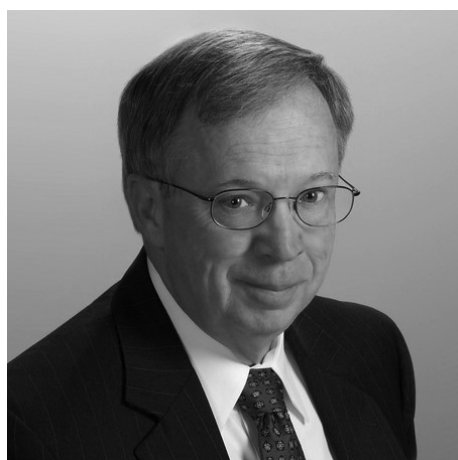




April ♦ May ♦ June 2016

Cougar ♦ Squak ♦ Tiger ♦ Grand Ridge ♦ Taylor ♦ Rattlesnake

## LENARD ASSUMES IATC PRESIDENCY



Kirt Lenard was elected president of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club January 28 at the club's annual meeting held at the Eagle Room of the Issaquah City Hall. Lenard succeeds David Kappler, who was later elected vice-president in charge of IATC's advocacy issues.

Ed Vervoort and Tom Anderson were re-elected to new three-year terms. David Dunphy was also elected to a board seat, replacing Scott Prueter. Re-elected to executive board positions were Doug Simpson, vice-president for communications; Jackie Hughes as treasurer; and Kathleen Petty as secretary.

It was a larger than usual annual meeting, with an estimated 30-40 in attendance mostly due to the

*continued on page 4*

## DUNPHY BRINGS YOUTH TO CLUB

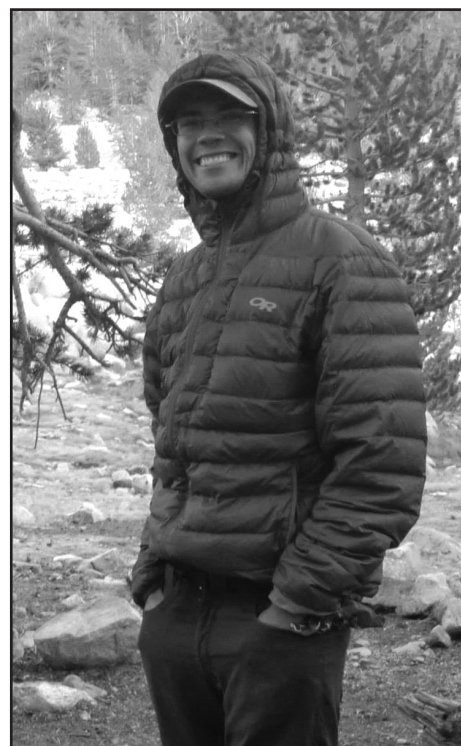
The newest member of the IATC Board of Directors is the youngest in memory. David Dunphy, elected to the board at the club's annual meeting January 28, is just 26.

Participating in last year's Mountains to Sound Greenway trek brought Dunphy in contact with IATC's Ken Konigsmark and others who extolled the wonders of the Greenway and the importance of protecting and adding to it.

Then drawn to the January meeting to hear the presentation of Karen Daubert, Executive Director of the Washington Trails Association, he was exposed to more green ideology and the enthusiasm of the many IATC club members in attendance.

"That level of engagement was inspiring," Dunphy said. "The club knows the landscape and is in the forefront of what's happening." So he was excited to accept his nomination and acceptance to the Issaquah Alps Trails Club.

Dunphy graduated from Skyline High School in 2008, then studied environmental studies and business administration at Gonzaga University, from which he graduated in 2012.



His interest in recreation and the outdoors led him to employment with the Seattle YMCA, where he oversaw the outdoor recreation program Bold and Gold.

Last fall Dunphy switched to the Sammamish YMCA. "I was excited to connect with what's happening at the Y," he said. "Sammamish has the highest per capita number of youth in the country, a great opportunity to influence kids."

*continued on page 5*

# The Apparatus

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Whenever possible, please use e-mail to contact any member listed below.

*The Alpiner* is published in January, April, July, and October.

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Website: [www.issaquahalps.org](http://www.issaquahalps.org)

IATC subsists on member donations only. Please send your tax-deductible contributions to the address above to help sustain our efforts to preserve, protect, and promote the Issaquah Alps and local environment.

Articles are welcome, preferably via e-mail to: [d.simpson6191@gmail.com](mailto:d.simpson6191@gmail.com)  
Send diskette or hard copy to post office box number above.

Issue deadlines: November 21 for January; February 21 for April; May 21 for July; August 21 for October.

(Note: All telephone numbers are area code 425 unless otherwise noted.)

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Kirt Lenard

Perhaps the first order of business as the new club president should be to introduce myself to those of you I have not yet met. I'm a relative newcomer to the area, having arrived in the Issaquah area about 15 years ago from the cold winters and hot summers of the Midwest. I distinctly remember the stunning beauty of the mountains and hills as we made the trek over Snoqualmie Pass and continued along the I-90 corridor to our new home near what I learned were the Issaquah Alps. It left quite an impression on a "flatlander."

Fast forward about ten years, and as I became more and more familiar with the area, I began also to appreciate that much of the natural beauty that we enjoy might have been swept away by "progress" were it not for the determined efforts of IATC, Mountains to Sound Greenway and other public and private sector visionaries. I too wanted to support those efforts in my own small way so I joined the Issaquah Alps Trails Club.

More time passed, and as I completed a career in the insurance industry and began looking for ways to give something back to the community, I offered to "help out" with the club's insurance program. Then other volunteer opportunities presented themselves, and I was eventually asked to join the club's board. Then at our January membership and board meeting I was selected by the board to be club president. I am honored to serve and will do my best to help the club continue to do the important work of preserving wild lands in the Issaquah Alps. We are all well aware of the challenges of population growth, limited agency budgets and intensive development, so there is still a lot for us to do.

As is reported elsewhere in the Alpiner, we had a great annual meeting. It was well attended, but I

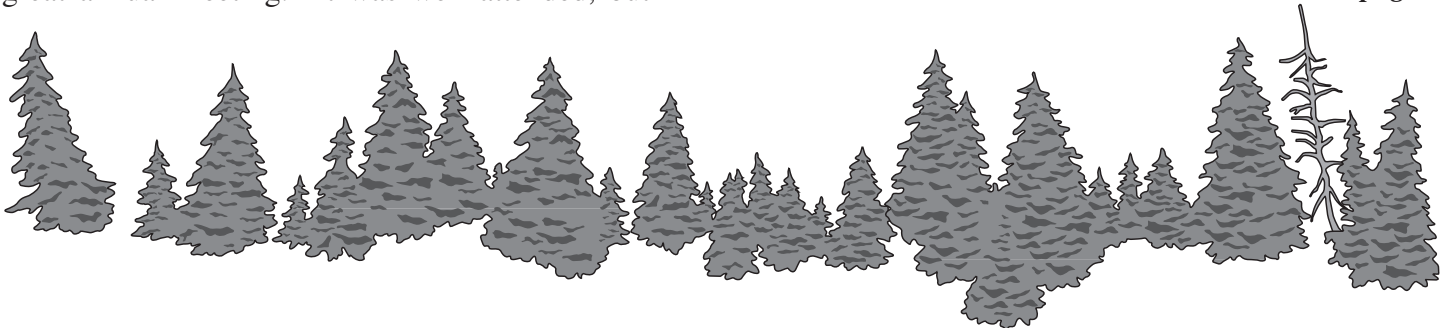
wish all members could have joined us. Karen and Jen's WTA program presentation was informative and clearly illustrates the kind of partnerships that will contribute to our future success.

We are especially fortunate to have David Kappler take on the role of vice-president for advocacy, where he will use extensive experience and well-deserved reputation as a friend of the Alps to keep us aware of and engaged with opportunities and challenges. We also welcome David Dunphy to the board. David brings with him considerable experience organizing and working with youth programs, which is very exciting. One of our highest priorities is to share our appreciation of the Alps with nature lovers of all ages.

What about the future? Lots of exciting things are being planned. In addition to Kappler continuing his vigorous advocacy to protect wild lands, expect to see a more dynamic presence on our website ([www.issaquahalps.org](http://www.issaquahalps.org)) thanks to George Potter, and continued emphasis on social media, especially the IATC Facebook page, where board member Tom Anderson and others have done so much to increase the club's visibility to the public. Other priorities include future expansion of our scholarship program and, by no means least on our list, plans for a campaign to grow our membership. So, you can see there is a lot going on already and more being considered.

I'd like to close my first President's Report with a challenge—OK, really two challenges—and a thank you. First, whatever your skills, we can make good use of them! So, please contact me or any of the board members and offer to help out as a volunteer. Our

*continued on page 4*



**PRESIDENT'S REPORT** *continued from page 3*

needs are many and varied including hike leaders, trail crew workers, writers, photographers, meeting attenders, and office staff, just to name a few. It's fun and very satisfying to be invested in the work of the club in that way. There are also links on our website to other volunteer opportunities, but think of IATC first!

Second, please reach out to friends and family members and invite them to join IATC. It's quick and easy to do. Just go to our website and click on "Support Us" then "Join/renew" to sign up. There are also instructions on joining by mail if that's your preference. In any case new members keep the club strong and influential, so let's all be recruiters.

Last, a big thank you to the members and friends of IATC who have done so much over the past decades to protect the Alps we love and enjoy so much. We need to continually consolidate and expand upon this legacy. Please join us in continuing to "pay it forward" for future generations. . . See you on the trails!

**LENARD** *continued from page 1*

publicized address by Karen Daubert (see story p. 5 ), the Executive Director of the Washington Trails Association.

Kappler, who was the club president from 2011-2015, left office touting the club's good relationships with WTA, the Mountains to Sound Greenway the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), King County and the City of Issaquah. He spoke of plans for a new trail to Shaun Falls and the Big View atop Taylor Mountain, a seldom visited peak by hikers.

In his first plans as incoming president, Lenard discussed making alterations in the budget process and plans to establish an endowment fund separate from the club budget to fund and expand the scholarship program, now in its sixth year. Plans to use video to present club hiking activities were also discussed.

Lenard announced a special March 24 meeting for future club planning. Lenard is the club's eighth president since 1979.

**KAPPLER TOUTS  
NEW CLUB PREZ**

By David Kappler  
Vice-President for Advocacy

I am thrilled that Kirt Lenard is our new club president. Kirt is committed to our mission, has vision combined with great management skills and is just a nice guy to work with. My "demotion" to vice-president for advocacy promotes me to doing the work I most enjoy and do far better at than trying to manage the whole operation.

Kirt questioned me about our priorities for advocacy and asked that I share them on the website and in the Alpiner. One priority is to be ready for the unexpected crisis that comes our way. We have a great deal of knowledge and positive experience working with local, county and state agencies and governments. We are a trusted partner with other non-profits working on land use issues, acquisitions and enhancements to our park, open space and trail systems. Every piece of ground or proposal requires some new learning on our part, but our experience in these battles since the 1970s really shortens our learning curve and often puts us in the role of the "expert" about how a certain piece of the Mountains to Sound Greenway puzzle is best handled.

We don't get 2 a.m. phone calls, but we get unexpected emails and calls that quickly become our highest priority. Some of the known issues at this writing involve the northeastern part of Cougar, western Squak, western Issaquah Highlands, Grand Ridge Park user conflicts, overuse of some sites, needed trail reroutes and maintenance, lack of trailhead parking long-term planning, resources to implement plans, non-native invasive plants—and that is just a partial list!

On our website we have identified area advocates and provide some background information. Admittedly, much of the information is outdated, and in some cases the listed advocate is little more than a place holder. When not working on the immediate crisis, updates will be a priority. I hope to hear from people that may have a special interest in an area and would be interested in being an advocate and/or providing updated material for our website.



# DAUBERT DISCUSSES ROLE OF WTA

By Doug Simpson

The Washington Trails Association is a busy and growing organization, its Executive Director Karen Daubert informed the Issaquah Alps Trails Club at its January 28 meeting. “This is our 50th anniversary this year, and we now have 13,600 members.” The WTA website had a million views in 2015.

In 2015, Daubert reported, the organization improved 180 trails statewide and had 140,000 volunteer hours equating to \$3.5 million in donated labor time. WTA utilizes youth and teens, who provided a quarter of the work party labor.

“Our goals are to get increased trail funding, to maintain access to trails, and to improve trail experiences,” Daubert stated. WTA advocacy extends from local, to state, to federal issues. Daubert was joined at the meeting by Puget Sound Field Manager Jen Gradisher.

“Our partnership with IATC is very important,” Daubert said. “We need each other. Our core programs, like those of IATC, are developing new trails and wildland, maintaining hiking trails and inspiring the next generation.”

Future trail projects for WTA, which maintains regular work parties on Sundays and Wednesdays, are on Tiger Mountain (Adventure Trail and Tradition Plateau), Grand Ridge (a watertower loop to be open by the end of the year), and Squak Mountain (the Chybinski Trail loop). In addition, youth events will be held on Cougar Mountain.

The Issaquah Alps area is not WTA’s only work site, as it has active programs now in the Spokane, Wenatchee and Roslyn areas.

In audience-response time, IATC’s Dave Kappler pointed out that hiker and biker trails are not compatible, and Ken Konigsmark stated that hikers and bikers are not equal in use, which Daubert confirmed, stating that 80-90% of trail users used

their feet for exercise. And Konigsmark requested that WTA publicize IATC hikes in its publication. Daubert promised to see to that.

In the current issue of Washington Trails magazine, a trio of staff writers wrote: “When outdoor organizations talk about the problems facing trails today, they give the impression that our favorite hiking thoroughfares were once perfectly provided for and that the issues we face. . . are new. The reality is that trails and wild places have always been threatened and outdoor enthusiasts have always needed to demonstrate their case for these things—it’s the very reason the Washington Trails Association was founded in 1966.”

In the same article, the future is discussed. “By 2040, the state will have added two million more residents. More people means more boots on the ground and more hiking buddies, but it also means more pressure on the state’s trail resources.” Thus organizations like WTA, the Greenway and IATC can be critically important over the years ahead.

In the past 50 years, WTA has built, maintained or protected 600 trails, utilizing 26,000 volunteers across the state putting in 1.2 million hours of trailwork. It has been a great contributor to trails, and it has an eye on work yet to be done in future years.

As stated in WTA’s strategic plan: “We believe that if outdoor recreation becomes widely recognized as vital to our state’s economy and quality of life, then good hiking practices and protecting trails can become social norms. This change in perspective would help Washington become a national leader in the recreation movement.”

## DUNPHY BRINGS YOUTH *continued from page 1*

Dunphy also interned with Mountains to Sound Greenway. He worked with Jim Berry to set up an outdoor work group. It was an easy stretch to participate in the 2015 Greenway trek. In 2013 he also became a member of King County Search & Rescue.

“I’m just learning a lot,” Dunphy said. “I want to engage youth and their families.” Hopefully, he can become a link to area youth that the club has sought to influence over the years.

## Editorial:

# HIKING TOTALS RAISE CONCERN

By Doug Simpson

Since its inception in 1979, the Issaquah Alps Trails Club has had a three-pronged purpose for its existence. Club founder Harvey Manning solicited a large active membership to show numeric support to justify acquiring land for a park on Cougar Mountain and thus keep the developers at bay. The membership needed to be an involved one, so an active hiking program was instituted. But perhaps the three-part factor is becoming inconsequential.

The advocacy portion of IATC has been strong over the years. Besides Manning and his girl Friday Barbara Johnson, Ken Konigsmark, Steven Drew and David Kappler have all excelled over the years in putting forth the needs and expansion plans for the club. Konigsmark and Kappler are still active and leading this critically important function of IATC.

The third prong is trail-building and trail work. Little opportunity remains to build new trails, partly because IATC's territory is pretty well staked out with trails and also because trail projects these days have been taken over by larger organizations with more connections and deeper pockets: The Mountains to Sound Greenway and the Washington Trails Association. Both are marvelous organizations doing great work. Even trail work efforts are of lesser impact since the death of the club's chief ranger Bill Longwell and the aging and retirement of the legendary Weed Whackers. For years Scott Semans led trail maintenance efforts, and in recent years Ed Vervoort has done terrific work, mostly on Tiger Mountain. But the volume of trail work pales in comparison to the productive efforts of the Longwell/Weed Whacker years.

It's the hiking portion of IATC that is most at issue today. Since 1979, the club has sponsored at least two hikes a week year round not only for its members, but also to all comers privy to the club's activities on

the website or other media exposure. The issue is the number of hikers on these consistently available outings. In past years, having hikes with 15-25 hikers was not unusual. (I had 24 on the first hike I ever led on a nice spring day back in 2001.) The numbers have tapered off in recent years—low-attendance hikes on bad weather days balanced down those nice weather 10-15 person hikes. The average was holding steady at an eight-hiker norm for several years. But the 2015 average was a paltry 5.6 hikers!

Where have all the hikers gone? Other organizations lead hikes also—the Mountaineers, the Snoqualmie Valley Trails Club, the Renton Ladies and others. The trails are generally well-known and well-marked so perhaps many hikers are content to go in small groups of friends or by themselves.

The Issaquah Alps Trails Club has been a significant contributor to Northwest trail development and outdoor recreation for over 45 years. It has been carried on the backs of a cadre of dedicated, hard-working leaders. But if the hiking numbers continue to plummet, will the club continue to be a vital player in regional outdoor recreation? Is the IATC on its way to being an advocacy only club?

## SPRING OUTDOOR CALENDAR

- April 1: National Walk to Work Day
- April 21: John Muir Day
- April 22: Earth Day
- April 23: Washington Coast Clean-up Day
- April 28: IATC Board Meeting
- May 8: State Parks Spring Sunday
- May 16: Love a Tree Day
- May 25: Hike Leaders' Meeting
- June 4: National Trails Day
- June 11: National Get Outdoors Day
- June 14: WTA's Hike the State Day



## RAIL CORRIDOR PROGRESSING

*(Note: The following article is edited from the Mountains to Sound Greenway website.)*

The birth of a new regional trail in the Greenway has begun. The Eastside Rail Corridor, following the old Burlington Northern Santa Fe route, is a truly urban trail—traveling along the east side of Lake Washington through the downtown cores, business hubs and neighborhoods from Renton to Snohomish—so it presents a unique opportunity to both promote healthy lifestyles and strengthen local economies.

The first seven miles of the 42-mile route have been developed into a bicycle and pedestrian route through Kirkland. In January, the Greenway Trust joined forces with other regional partners to form the Eastside Greenway Alliance to advocate for the completion of this trail network

The Alliance aims to build a new way to move, connect and live on the Eastside through strong collaboration with corridor owners, stakeholders and other local partners. The Corridor fills a missing link in the trail network, and will create a new 40-mile connection from the Burke-Gilman Trail in Ballard, around Lake Washington, and south on the Eastside Rail Corridor to Renton.

Earlier the Metropolitan King County Council unanimously approved the removal of rails through county-owned sections of the corridor, further emphasizing political support, enthusiasm and urgency to move this regional multi-use development project forward. The King County sections will be open for pedestrian and bicycle use after the rails are removed.

By 2025, the Eastside Greenway Alliance envisions a fully built connected multi-use corridor from Renton to Woodinville. The Alliance is expected to provide the greater Eastside community with wide-ranging benefits from improved mobility and public health to economic development and a decreased carbon footprint.

“Completing the Eastside Rail Corridor is a key component of our 100-year Cascade Agenda, and Forterra is glad to be a key partner in the Eastside Greenway Alliance,” said Forterra President Gene Duvernay.

Washington Trails Association Executive Director Karen Daubert stated: “the Eastside Rail Corridor is a valuable asset that can act as a front door to connecting people to the region’s great hiking trails.”

## EASTSIDE AUDUBON PROTECTS BIRDS

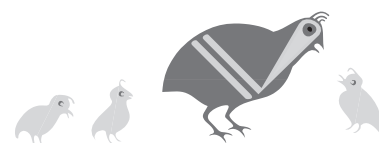


Eastside Audubon is committed to outreach and education to help communities offset the impacts of development on biodiversity by restoring, enhancing and protecting a landscape that allows for native bird species to survive in a growing community. You can participate by creating open spaces that are wildlife friendly, starting with your own backyard. The more people who do so enables us to create and protect important habitat for wildlife, allowing for a better environment for birds and for people.

Anyone interested in joining Eastside Audubon can adopt three or more of the following seven practices for simple eligibility. These will help restore and protect the avian habitat.

1. Plant native species that provide food and shelter to native bird populations.
2. Retain dead snags and branches that serve as rest and nesting sites.
3. Eliminate pesticides which can be fatal to birds and their food sources.
4. Remove invasive species such as ivy and blackberry.
5. Leave leaf litter to provide food for foraging birds.
6. Keep cats indoors.
7. Provide a water source.

You can protect birds and maintain biodiversity for future generations. Find more information about your local Audubon chapter at [eastsideaudubon.org](http://eastsideaudubon.org).



# MECHLERS HAVE LONG ISSAQUAH HISTORY

By Doug Simpson

Tom and Yvonne Mechler are the last of the original founding fathers of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club. They were in the small party at the “Day of Three Thunderstorms” May 5, 1979 when Harvey Manning first talked of forming a club. They were at the organizing meeting May 19 with ten or twelve others at the Issaquah Sportsman’s Club, and they helped decide the club’s name there.

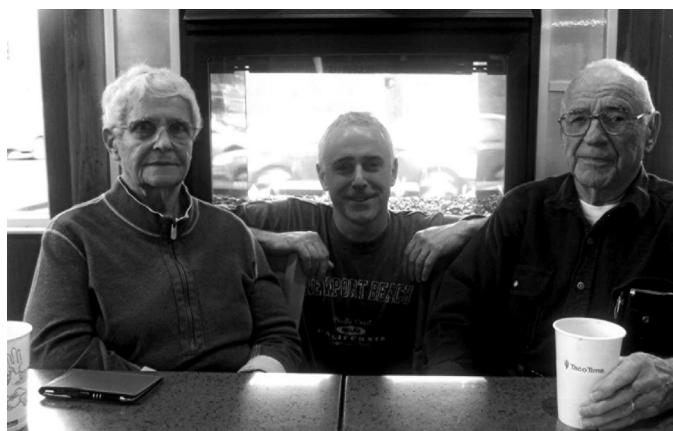
The Mechlers, who had been hiking trails from Manning’s guidebooks, met him in 1978 when he led three hikes for the Issaquah Parks Department—to West Tiger 2, Middle Tiger and Wilderness Creek on Cougar Mountain. Manning thus knew them well and relied on them to help him get the club off the ground.

Tom Mechler, 84, led hikes and served on the original IATC Board of Directors (1979-1984). Yvonne, 83, was editor of the *Alpiner*, a name Tom suggested. She also maintained a card file of the rapidly expanding club membership. Along with young son Matt, Yvonne and Tom assembled each issue of the *Alpiner* until 1984 in their basement, usually with Manning assisting as well. “The old postmaster in Issaquah, Walt Watkins, used to hassle us with our bulk mailings,” Yvonne recalled, “until we got things straightened out.”

If the name Mechler seems familiar to those more recently living and hiking in the Issaquah area, it’s because Matt, who went on hikes with his parents from age 9 on, is now the Open Space Steward for the city of Issaquah. (More on Matt later.)

“Harvey was a fascinating guy,” Yvonne recalled. “In the early years he worked so hard to educate everyone about the trails and area history. And he was such a minimalist. He always wore the same woollen flannel shirt. He carried an umbrella if it was raining rather than a poncho, and if he needed to he wrapped himself in an old plastic tablecloth.”

Yvonne’s card file began with the club’s early leaders—Tim O’Brian, Dave Kappler, Ralph and



**The Melcher Family - Yvonne, son Matt & Tom**

Peggy Owen, Betty Culbert, Barbara Johnson, Bill Longwell, Laurene McLane, Larry and Marty Hanson, Yvonne’s friend Florence Boyce, and Joe Toynbee, among others. “Joe was so antsy on hikes. He couldn’t sit still and just had to keep going,” Yvonne remembered. “And Bill Longwell, regardless of how rigorous the hike was, always looked as neat when it was over as he did at the start.”

One early hike the three Mechlers remembered was the notorious summer evening hike that O’Brian led to Tiger’s Talus caves. “There wasn’t really a trail then,” Tom explained. “And there were very few flashlights. We crawled all through the caves (now boarded up for safety by DNR) and soon it was dark and we had bushwhack a way down through the trees and bushes.”

“There were kids along and some people were getting scared,” Yvonne remembers. “O’Brian was pretty laid back about it. It was pitch black hours later by the time we reached the power line and then Lake Tradition. We didn’t get home till almost midnight!”

Tom Mechler, after four years in the Air Force, attended Michigan Tech, where he got a degree in mechanical engineering, which got him hired at Boeing. After working 30 years there, he took early retirement at age 55 in 1987. He and Yvonne were

*continued on page 10*



## CHAPTER 11: 1990

# JULY MARCH TO PUSH FOR GREENWAY

By Doug Simpson

The next step in the eventual formation of the Mountains to Sound Greenway came with the new decade of the 1990s as plans for a five-day “Wilderness Within” extravaganza were set in motion. IATC’s Jack Hornung described “the proposal to create a green corridor from Lake Washington to the Cascades, centering on the Issaquah Alps and synthesizing the work that so many club members have been doing over so many years.”

The plan was to stay at Snoqualmie Pass on July 3 and set off on the 4th to Rattlesnake Lake; then on to Preston, to Issaquah and then near Factoria—to end in Seattle on Sunday, July 8. Modest cost was anticipated for food and lodging with “church camp style accommodations” along the way.

Harvey Manning’s “Wilderness on the Metro” concept was being celebrated. “This Interstate 90 area,” it was written, “offers a close at hand opportunity to gird the east west midsection of the county with a belt of green, open space. . . space that will be good for man and beast alike.”

The article went on, “Within this corridor, some 25 miles long and several miles wide, lies an unparalleled richness of flora, fauna and local history. . . if preserved, it will provide future King County with a heartland of reclaimed wilderness akin to New York City’s Central Park, but on much grander and wider scale.”

Mission accomplished! The Mountains to Sound Greenway has been created. It was a vision that IATC helped in no small measure to achieve. We can thank Manning, Hornung and many others who helped bring it about.

• • •

A potluck was scheduled for March 24 with Brian Boyle, State Commissioner of Public Lands, lined up to speak. The club planned to honor Boyle for his “invaluable contributions to the Issaquah Alps.”

Gail Palm announced that Susy Roth was replacing her as Hikes Coordinator. The Issaquah Park & Ride lot had gotten too busy as a gathering place for hikes and hereafter hikers were to gather at the parking lot south of the Issaquah City Hall.

At the January annual meeting on the 18th, Dave Kappler, Tom Wood and Susy Roth were re-elected, and Jim Cadigan succeeded Berni Dionne as treasurer. Joy Toynbee was elected to replace Buz Moore on the club’s Board of Directors.

By April, plans were well underway for the Mountains to Sound five-day event. This did not preclude scheduling an eighth year of Return to Newcastle, scheduled for June 3. History walks of one to two hours were planned, and a planning/training class was scheduled for May 22.

Dennis Burk wrote an article discussing five trails in the Grand Ridge area: the High Point North Trailhead, the 280th & 63rd Trailhead, the Sunset Trailhead, the 1st NE Trailhead and the Black Nugget Trailhead. One wonders how many of these are still accessible.

Will Thompson, a backwoods denizen himself, wrote “An Issaquah Manifesto” in which he mused on the effects of the rapid, expanding growth of the landscape. He concluded: “It is urgent that we enlist as volunteers. . . to ensure that our developing urban-alpine interface remains as open as possible to joyous movement of our people up and down (preferably on foot!), and thus to a flow of essential values from the *mountains to the sea* and back again.”

Bill Longwell wrote the first of a two-part series on “My Favorite Birds in the Issaquah Alps.” He discussed the Swainson’s Thrush, the Black-throated Gray Warbler and the Olive-sided Flycatcher. (Note: a reprint of this article is appropriate for the Alpinerssee p. 12.)



*continued on page 10*

**MELCHERS** *continued from page 8*

less active in IATC after that as they traveled often throughout the world, especially enjoying riverboat trips in the US as well as other cruises. Tom pursued other activities including the Boy Scouts, a 50-year involvement, where he served as a unit commissioner. He was also active in the Issaquah Spotsmen's Club where he has taught hunter safety classes for 40 years. And he remains a docent for the Issaquah Railroad Museum and does American Legion Honor Guard at the Tacoma National Cemetery twice a month.

Besides Matt, the Mechlers have two other children, Marci, 60, and Mark, 56.

**MATT MECHLER**

The third child of Yvonne and Tom, Matt, 48, has always been an Issaquah guy. While a senior at Liberty High in 1986, Matt's Eagle Scout project involved clearing blackberries and other invasive plants and building a fence at Issaquah's Hillside Cemetery. Al Erickson of the city's park board advised him. Erickson later hired him for summer employment for parks, where he worked until his graduation from Western Washington University in 1991.

Staying local, Mechler took his first full-time job with the city's Public Works Department. When a job came open, he was hired for the Parks Department in 1994. He was chosen for his present job in 2007, becoming the city's first and only Open Space Steward.

In this position, he has been overseer for the city's 1500 acres of parks and open space, dealing with acquisitions, park improvements, trail-building and maintenance—and, recently, the unwelcome task of identifying—and with police help—chasing out homeless campers throughout the city's open space. Park Pointe and the green space near Costco have been the two major settlements recently. In 2015, Mechler says, they cleared almost 10,000 pounds of trash.



His next project, Mechler says, will be replacing a bridge on the Squak Access Trail and putting in some new steps. Oh, and the long-time bachelor will be married this July.

For almost fifty years, the Mechler family has committed itself to developing and maintaining parks and trails in Issaquah and surrounding peaks, and it has benefitted the city in many ways.

**CHAPTER 11** *continued from page 9*

By the end of June, final plans for the MTS March were pretty well set. Over 60 people were set to serve in some capacity, and nearly twenty organizations were helping. Financial aid came from Boeing (\$4,500), REI (\$1,000), High Mountain Rendezvous (\$500) Perkins Coie (\$500), Marmot Mountain Works (\$500), and individuals too numerous to mention from \$10 to \$25. Notably, IATC leaders Jack Hornung and Ted Thomson each donated \$100.

In the second part of Longwell's feature on his favorite birds, he cited the Wilson's Warbler, Northern Bullocks Oriole, Western Wood Pee Wee, and the Western Tanager.

The major article in the October-December issue featured support for King County's Proposition 21, called TREE, for the Real Estate Environmental Endowment. The 10-year program would involve a 1% tax on real estate transactions "to acquire and preserve tens of thousands of acres of our most cherished natural lands and open spaces."

The article pointed out that in the last two decades Puget Sound's population had grown by 36%, while land lost to development increased by more than 87%. "TREE is fair. Growth, development and people moving into Puget Sound should help pay for the open spaces and parks we need." Residents of King, Snohomish and Pierce counties would be voting on this on the November ballot.

New hike leaders in 1990 included Pat Brewington, Judy Chamberlin, Maryann Tagney Jones, John Johnson, Paul Kaald, Patti Mercer, Betty Manning, Tom Palm, Fred Weinmann, Ann Weinmann and Everett Wilcock.



## JAMES TACKLING PACIFIC CREST TRAIL

By Doug Simpson

Many people choose to hike on the Pacific Crest Trail. A few even complete all 2650 miles of it. And this is the goal of 70-year old Marjorie James, Issaquah resident and IATC member.

"I've wanted to do this since my twenties," James declared. "Back in my college days at UC-Fresno several of us planned to do it after we retired. So for me this is fulfilling a dream."

Marjorie actually started last June when she and cousin Bob Linda, a Sacramento resident, hiked 61 miles in southern Oregon, their eight-day outing cut short by smoke from a forest fire that drove them off the trail.

"People hike at their own pace," James said. "I was a little faster than Bob, so I went ahead and set up camp each day. We communicated by cell phone."

Phase two begins April 1 of this year. After flying to San Diego, Marjorie will be picked up by a couple who will put up five hikers for the night, feed them breakfast, and deliver them to the PCT's southern terminus near the Mexican border to begin their trek. The couple provides this service for about 250 people every year. Since she doesn't know the others, she may well wind up hiking alone. She hopes to complete 150 miles to Paradise Valley, where Highway 74 crosses the trail.

That trek gets James started for the year, but she plans to hike again in July from Devil's Post Pile to near Yosemite with her sister Judy Linda. Then in



September she'll take on part of Washington PCT from Snoqualmie Summit to Stevens Pass with her daughter Karen Albrecht.

"It's very exciting," James exclaimed. "It's the adventure of a lifetime, but it's also scary." Her biggest worry is finding critical water sources. "There are a lot of internet sources you can use, including 'Craig's PCT Planner.' One source informs hikers of water sources. She also has to watch out for rattlesnakes and tarantulas on parts of the trail.

Recently retired, James is "enjoying this time of my life." She has been an IATC member for about seven years. When she's home, she happily babysits for her grandchildren, goes on hikes with IATC, and works out at Gold's Gym in Issaquah weightlifting. She also goes cycling and practices yoga.

Marjorie invites IATC members to join her on the September in-state hike if they wish and can cover the miles with a backpack. She's especially looking forward to the Goat Rocks area.

Although she read Cheryl Strayed's book *Wild* and has seen the movie, she was not influenced by Strayed. "I've been planning to do this for a long time. I hope folks will join me for a big 75th birthday party after I have completed all 2,650 miles."

"I can't not do this," the determined James stressed.

# MY FAVORITE BIRDS IN THE ALPS

By Bill Longwell

*(Ed Note: This article, slightly edited, was written by the deceased former Chief Ranger in 1990. It was part 1 of 2.)*

I awoke with a start. It was 9:45 p.m. I lay in my tent, but could not quickly establish any continuity with previous days. Outside a shadowy silence occupied my campsite. The shadows in my mind began to clear as I sorted out the facts of my immediate existence.

My campsite, a grassy pocket along the Pacific Crest Trail, sat above the Columbia River. I was at the end of the second day of a four-day hike. This morning I had departed from the green views of Trout Creek in the Wind River drainage. Tomorrow I would cross the Columbia and climb towards Mt. Hood.

What had awakened me was a Swainson's Thrush calling from the darkening forest outside my tent. "Quirt. Quirt." I answered from my tent with a practiced imitation. Then came a flutter of wings as the bird flew into the brush near my tent. Again we exchanged calls, both rather interested in each other's conversation. The Swainson's Thrush seemed quite anxious to know what type of fellow bird called from the dark interior of the tent. Finally I tired and fell asleep.

I next awoke at 3:45 a.m. As I lay planning my ambitious third day's walk, wings again fluttered toward me. A Swainson's Thrush perched above the tent and continued the conversation of the previous evening. I was convinced this was the same bird. Had it waited for me to make some noise? Again I kept up my end of the dialogue before I fell asleep.

The memory of that thrush stands out as the highlight of that early summer backpack. Ever since 1970, when I began serious birding, I have worked to hold birds near me by whistling or trying to mimic their calls. As I learned their various names and habits, I began to look for certain species. Eight migrating birds became my favorites and began to stand out on the lists I kept, lists of dates and places of sightings. When I have tracked down all eight, then I figure that spring has arrived for me.

Here are my favorites.



**Swainson's Thrush**

This is the bird I love more than any other. In the past three years (1987-89) I have observed the arrival of this thrush on exactly the same date, May 12. For two consecutive years my first sighting the thrush occurred at the same location, the broad horseshoe curve of the Lake Alice Road.

This thrush has an easily-imitated, distinctive call and with a gorgeous song. Others have described the call as a "liquid sounding 'Quirt'," the same sound a drop of water makes when it falls into a pan of water. No other bird can match the song, often heard at dusk, a soaring melodious flutelike, upward spiraling trill. This is a bird that calls and sings in the darkness. It even sings as it migrates in the night skies.

Since each bird's territory is small, many Swainson's Thrushes seem packed into a limited area. Observe that this thrush is a little sleeker than a Robin, has a light brown back and dark speckles on its buff breast. I once came upon a Swainson's Thrush nest along the Tiger Mountain Trail, just before the descent into Fifteenmile Creek. The bird had carefully built its nest in an old springboard hole. The female sat there on its nest and eyed me as I eyed it. When I fished for my camera in my pack, that disturbance startled the female and it darted away.

The Swainson's Thrush always responds to my imitation of its call. With patience I can entice this bird from its perch to fly to a nearby branch. I'm sure it thinks it is responding to another thrush. Sometimes when it sees me instead, it apparently feels cheated and so flies right at me to let me know that I am no Swainson's Thrush. I duck and move on.

*continued on page 13*



**MY FAVORITE BIRDS** *continued from page 12***Black-throated Gray Warbler**

This warbler generally arrives in the Issaquah Aps in early April after wintering in Mexico and remains through August or September. It seems rather common in our forests. I've observed this bird far more the past three years than in previous years. Are its numbers increasing?

It is a bird of mixed forests and high tree tops. Its sleek shape gives it the appearance of a torpedo as it drops from higher branches to a lower perch. Its black and white face and black-streaked breast gives it the appropriate uniform for speed. When it first returns to our area it is curious. If I'm patient, by mimicking its call I can coax it to descend to branches just above my head. But once the Black-throated Gray Warbler begins to nest, it's almost impossible to attract. Its wheezy, musical song is full of the sound of "z" or "PSS" and rises in a series of four notes. As with other species, this warbler has its own rhythm in calling, "Pss-PSSSS-pss-pss."

I've often found this warbler along the service road between the High Point trailhead and the powerline near Lake Tradition. Another place to observe it is along the Railroad Grade on the north side of I-90.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher**

Our family has always used a password or a hand sign to communicate to each other. Any form of the word "three," whether three whistles, three fingers or the word "three" means to us "I love you." Hearing the "pip-pip-pip" of the Olive-sided flycatcher instantly reminds me of my family and our commitment to each other. Perhaps this is the reason this bird has worked its way onto my "favorite" list.

The song is even more memorable. Some thirsty ornithologists have characterized it as "Quick! Three beers!" This bird chooses high perches. With its three-part call, the Olive-sided Flycatcher warns all nearby visitors that they walk or fly in its territory.

Because of its large, stocky head, this bird is larger than the Wood Pee Wee. It is also the most prolific of flycatchers. If you see a flycatcher on a snag, you most likely are viewing an Olive-sided. It builds its nest in conifers. Manning's Reach may be an easy place to search because most conifers there are human-sized.

## SCHOLARSHIPS FOR GRADUATING SENIORS

The Issaquah Alps Trails Club is once again making three scholarships available to area graduating high school seniors via the Bill Longwell Memorial Scholarship Program. Bill Longwell was a longtime member, supporter, and chief ranger for the club. He hiked and built many of the trails on Tiger Mountain, often getting students from nearby high schools to help with the task. As an English teacher at Hazen High School, he was able to captivate his students with his own enthusiasm both for trail building and for protecting our local wild lands. He had a vast knowledge of both plants and birds.

Shortly after his death in 2007, the club decided to start a scholarship program in his name to honor his legacy. Three scholarships are available to graduating seniors at Issaquah, Skyline, Liberty, and Hazen high schools. Graduating seniors who are sons and daughters of current club members are also eligible. Each applicant is asked to participate in both a trail work party with Washington Trails Association or Mountains to Sound Greenway AND to take a scheduled hike with the Issaquah Alps Trails Club. Each then writes a short essay describing their experiences.

First place is \$1000 and two runner-up awards of \$500 and \$250 will be offered. Entrants must complete both activities and submit their application and essay by May 1. Application forms are available from counselors at the above high schools or at the club's website, [issaquahalps.org](http://issaquahalps.org).

# Hiking Information

## Hike Leaders

Hike leaders are volunteers who donate their time to lead people who want to hike and explore the trails in the Issaquah Alps and other nearby foothills (Cascades) in King County. Hikes are scheduled and led year-round unless severe conditions pose a safety hazard. Minimum attendance is three, including the leader.

Trails in the Issaquah Alps may be good or bad, easy or hard, muddy or dusty, brushy or clear, steep or flat—or all the above. Some are not much more than animal trails. As volunteers, neither hike leaders, the Issaquah Alps Trails Club (IATC), or Club directors are in any way responsible or liable for a hiker's comfort, transportation, property, safety, or general well-being while traveling to and from the trailhead or hiking or working on any trail.

The Club's sole purpose is to show hikers where the trails are and to lead the way. The public, other clubs, youth groups, church groups, and others are welcome and wholeheartedly invited to join hike leaders and others who want to hike these trails. Children under 18 should be accompanied by an adult. Please, dogs only on designated dog hikes.



## Degree of Difficulty

**Very Easy:** up to 4 miles and 600 feet of elevation gain – for beginners.

**Easy:** up to 6 miles and 1200 feet gain – not difficult for occasional hikers.

**Moderate:** up to 10 miles with 1200 to 2500 feet gain – usually not difficult for regular hikers.

**Strenuous:** up to 12 miles and 3500 feet gain – for experienced hikers in good condition.

**Very Strenuous:** over 12 miles and/or over 3500 feet gain – only for experienced hikers in very good physical and aerobic condition.

## Hike Description Modifiers

**Leader's choice:** The leader had not decided where to hike before publication of the hikes schedule.

**Trail party:** Trail maintenance work party.

**Exploratory:** The leader goes cross country off the main trail system to explore animal trails, canyons, old logging roads, or old railroad grades.

Expect to go through brush, over logs, tiptoe through wildflowers, and/or mud while having a good time hiking where others seldom tread.

### WEBSITE HELP NEEDED

IATC wants to update its website and could use help. If you are knowledgeable and can help, please contact George Potter at 425-557-6554.

## HIKING INFORMATION

*continued from page 14*

Family hike: For parents and children. Easy pace. Call leader for hike particulars.

*NOTE: Group hikes do not lend themselves to dogs unless on designated dog hikes.*

### Meeting Place

Trails Club hikes meet in the parking lot at the corner of First and Bush streets next to the IATC clubhouse (the little yellow stationmaster's house). To get there, take exit 17 (Issaquah Front Street) from Interstate 90 and turn south into downtown Issaquah. Go about one mile through town on Front Street, then go two blocks past the light at Sunset Way, and then turn left on Bush Street. Go two blocks to Rainier and turn into the lot on the left.

### Clothing

Dress for the Pacific Northwest outdoors. Expect rain, snow, sunshine, fog, and everything in between. Bring extra clothing, raingear, food, drink, matches, flashlight, and first-aid supplies. Wear comfortable hiking boots or hiking shoes.

### Trail Maintenance

Volunteers periodically organize and schedule trail maintenance parties as listed in the hikes schedule. Work parties meet at the same place as hikes (see above). The club is well supplied with heavy trail maintenance tools, but workers may also bring their own loppers, weed whackers, and other tools.

Trail work parties last at least four hours. Trail maintenance is vital to the Club's work and is

### ✓ Checklist:

- Food
- Water
- Daypack
- Raingear
- Warm clothes
- Hiking Shoes

Each item is required in order to participate in an Issaquah Alps Trails Club hike!

*Don't leave the trailhead without them!*

an integral part of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) management plan for Tiger Mountain.

Work parties must limit their activity to trails listed by the DNR as scheduled for maintenance. Construction of new trails is not allowed. Work parties are a great way to meet people!



Issaquah Alps Trail Club  
P.O. Box 351  
Issaquah, WA 98027

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Issaquah Alps Trails Club

### Issaquah Alps Trails Club Foundation and Membership Request Form



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

All donations are tax deductible. Your donations fund The Alpiner publication costs and the club's minimal operating costs first, with 100% of remaining funds being directed where they can best address the trail design, construction, maintenance and advocacy needs throughout the Issaquah Alps. **Note:** Membership does not require a donation; however, donations help us preserve and enhance your Issaquah Alps.

Suggested donation levels:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The basic hiker.....\$25       | <input type="checkbox"/> The visionary.....\$100 and above  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The project supporter.....\$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> The adventurer.....\$250 and above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The IATC sponsor.....\$75      |   |

**IMPORTANT:** This form and your donation and/or membership request form should be mailed to:  
IATC Foundation, P.O. Box 351, Issaquah, WA 98027