

Board Members

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Hello MCPA Members !

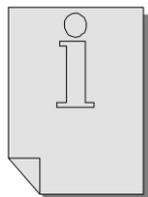
We hope everyone had a nice spring. We are excited to begin our new year with the **Annual Meeting, coming up on June 3rd** at the Verlot Service Center. As usual, we will have a nice potluck lunch at noon, prior to beginning our annual meeting. We have lots to discuss with members at this meeting so we hope everyone can attend. Please remember, we are now on a calendar year with our membership, January to December. Please bring your membership dues to this meeting. We will discuss plans for our first work party of the year at the Annual Meeting.

As with previous years, all our work parties will be on the third Saturday of each month, beginning in June. Those dates are: June 17, July 15, August 19, September 16, and October 21. **Please check our website, www.mcpa.us** for updates or last minute changes for these work parties in case of severe weather or road closures.



This year, we plan to begin work on our new interpretive site. Since this will be a one-time experience (probably spread between 2 years) if you would like to be a part of history and help with this endeavor, please sign up at the Annual Meeting or email me with your interest. At the Annual Meeting, we will outline the options we have discussed for designing the interpretive site and hope to start the project at the first or second work party.

As mentioned at the February Winter Social, and if you were unable to attend, we welcome your feedback on how you think the MCPA should respond to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) management plan for Monte Cristo. So we will also have this on our agenda for the Annual Meeting. I also want to discuss possible plans to continue our own Town Site Host Program at this meeting. This program has, in the past, been the only deterrence against vandalism in the area and the public has tremendous respect for what we are doing.



I am putting a link here in this newsletter, for everyone to use. It regards an article in the Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council: <http://npshistory.com/newsletters/the-wild-cascades/fall-2016.pdf>

Please read about the "Monte Cristo Road Challenge". We will be discussing this issue in detail at the meeting and you should read this beforehand.

This summer, the Forest Service will have a botanist on site to supervise the placement of 7,500 plants by Student Conservation Corps members. We imagine most of this will be on the repository but we can ask the Forest Service more about this at the Annual Meeting.

Those who volunteered last year have worn our new MCPA work vests, which many tourists commented on in a very positive way. New for our work parties this year, we will have a sandwich board, pre-printed with our logo and website, to warn visitors in advance of the work so they can expect noise and brushing of the trails and road that they use. Thank you, David Hartze, for managing all of this so far. It's been a great job! And it makes our organization look very professional, which we always try to do. The public has, so far, given 100% appreciation for our efforts when they see the professionalism exhibited by our volunteers wearing the vests.

Well, that should wrap things up for now everyone. Hope to see you all on June 3!

Sincerely,

Kal Klass, MCPA President

PS We encourage all members to start visiting the Town site early this year. Please report any signs of vandalism or suspicious activity to the MCPA and to the Forest Service. We appreciate a communal effort to keep a watchful eye on Monte Cristo. ☺



HISTORICAL ESSAY

With summer outdoor season approaching this is a reminder of the hazards, as well as of the fun. It was written by long-time member and friend the late Col. John Moriarty in 1996.

“A Bad Day on Mount Pilchuck”

I am relating this narrative just for the record, since it was a tragic day for a climbing partner of mine. For every bad day in the mountains there are hundreds of great days of outstanding views and interesting experiences. I typically go alone, but on this occasion I teamed up with two members of the Seattle Mountaineers for an unscheduled outing on Mount Pilchuck. It is visible from Everett and south of the ranger station at Verlot. The date was Sunday June 24, 1951. John Lehmann in his early sixties was the leader, and Wilfred (Fred) Lowthian age 49 was his friend. I was 29 and had just moved the family to Everett the year before.

My interest in climbing started in 1946 at Iowa State in Ames when I met Art Gilkey, the son of the Engineering Department Dean. Art and I hiked the bluffs above some of the rivers in central Iowa, and I learned the basics of rappelling and belaying. We didn't have any equipment except a 100 foot rope, so we put up with a hot spot in the crotch and rope burned hands. The next year Art told me he planned to climb the Devil's Tower in Wyoming and was looking for companions. I declined due to a pending marriage and a new job in Chicago. Art went on to climb and die on the descent of the unsuccessful 1953 K2 attempt, which had included Bob Craig, George Bell, Charles Houston, Robert Bates, Tony Streather, Pete Schoening, and Dee Molenaar.

Pilchuck is about 5320 feet with a start from a logging road at about 3100 feet. If you stay on the trail, it's classed as a "Girl Scout" mountain climb. If you approach from the east via the Lake 22 trail and up a fairly steep gully to a wide ridge leading to the summit, it makes for a strenuous long day. Lehmann drove us to the Lake 22 trail head on the Stillaguamish River. Today the trail head is improved with plenty of parking and toilets of the new Forest Service design. It's 2.5 miles to the lake and a lot of switchbacks following 22 Creek.

By late morning we are in well packed snow. I manage to fall through a snow bridge up to my arm pits, but was quickly pulled out by my friends. If it had been much deeper, I would have had a chilling experience from the water. Of course we had no rope, since Mt. Pilchuck is such a piece of cake. Next we are climbing this snow-filled gully kicking footings with our boots. I look up just in time to see what appears to be a bomb explode in the snow at the top of the gully. Snow and rock fly up in the air, and I call out "avalanche." We scurry to the sides and hug the rock walls as a 100 foot river of snow shoots past us.

We continue and make the ridge in time for a late lunch. We proceed west with easy going, but are looking over a cornice and down on a lake. It turns out to be Heather Lake, but we didn't know the name at the time. Lehmann thinks we are running out of time to reach the Pilchuck summit and the easy trail, so we find a notch in the cornice and contemplate a long steep snow slope. The others try a glissade successfully. When I try it, I end up on my back going down like a rocket. I see some flat topped rocks flush with the melting snow below me. I shoot over the top of a big rock and don't feel a thing except frozen fingers from clawing the snow to slow down. Finally the slope eases, and I stand up none the worse for wear. My friends

sigh a relief as they call to me and hear that I'm ok. It occurs to me that I have been having all the bad luck so far, but the rest of the way looks reasonable once we reach the lake.

Lehmann leads the way down a steep slope covered with vine maple bushes. The slope is dicey in one spot, and Lothian watches me follow his lead, which made me feel I could do it. Lothian starts down some more and definitely is between me and the leader. I'm the tail end Charlie and getting real picky about my footing and what bushes I can grab to keep from sliding. Suddenly I hear a big rock let loose and crash down below me and out of sight. Calling to Fred (Wilfred) got no reply, so I press on downward. Shortly the steep part ends, and there stands Lehmann asking me if I have seen Fred. I told him about hearing the rock fall and that he should have been between us. Lehmann hurries down some more, swings to the left and up a gully. As I follow, I see Fred's body at the base of a 100 foot cliff. Lehmann has checked for breathing and a pulse and covered Fred's head with a towel from his pack. I did not recheck Fred's condition, since Lehmann seemed so positive that Fred was deceased. We built a small stone cairn at the entrance to the gully so that we could return with some help to carry the body.

It's now about 8 p.m., and light is fading fast, so I follow Lehmann through the marsh at the head of the lake and around it to the trail at Heather Creek. I'm really slowing down as we pick and feel our way over rocks, logs, and brush, since I can barely make out the trail in the dark. Finally we emerge onto a good logging road, and Lehmann decides to turn left, which unfortunately turns out to lead uphill instead of back to the car. Eventually the road leads us to the Mt. Loop Highway, and we head for the Ranger Station at Verlot, arriving about 10 p.m. We look a mess, but the ranger [Ed Anderson] lets us in anyway and listens to our story. His wife made coffee, which really hit the spot. He called the Snohomish County Sheriff's office in Everett, who asked that we report to them as soon as we return. I finally get to call [my wife] Peg and tell her what had happened. At the Sheriff's station we each gave a statement and convinced them that it was an accident.

The next morning they wanted someone to lead a group of county prisoners with a Stokes litter to the scene of the accident, but I am so lame in the legs I can hardly walk. Lehman volunteers to lead the way back, since he is able to walk ok. I remember that Sunday was Fred Jr.'s twelfth birthday, and Fred Sr. thought he'd be back in time to celebrate. Many years later I met Fred Jr. on a business trip to Everett and climbed back to Heather Lake alone to take pictures in the fog and the rain.

Mt. Pilchuck seems unassuming, known primarily because it dominates the Cascade skyline from the west but is largely tree covered and lower in elevation than the more rugged peaks behind. However, it has steep rock faces, frequent clouds, and a heavily traveled trail with a history of mixing up unwary hikers. Had they known the country better John's party might have stayed closer to the timber to the north and made a safer, less brushy trip over the ridge dividing the two glacial cirques. Years ago I made a count of ten known fatalities on the mountain. Oddly, I also first met Dee Molenaar atop Pilchuck when he had hiked up with two fellow World War II veterans. In the Coast Guard, Dee was stationed briefly at Big Four Inn.

David Cameron

MEMBERSHIP FORM: 2017

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____
Area(s) of Interest/Occupation _____

IF YOU WISH AN OPTIONAL BARLOW PASS GATE KEY:

For new members:

Please download the required "MCPA Waiver/Release" at www.mcpa.us, have it notarized, then mail it to us with your check for \$42 to begin the process.

For renewing members:

For renewing members the present key is still valid, but if you need a new key: check here and include the additional \$18 cost of a key to your membership dues.

\$24.00 - Annual Membership

Mail To: **MCPA**

\$42.00 - Annual Membership + Key

PO Box 471

THANK-YOU!

Everett, WA 98206

MCPA CHARITABLE DONATION FORM

I wish to donate to the MCPA. The amount I wish to donate is:

_____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ \$500 _____ \$1000 _____ Other

MCPA INTERPRETIVE CENTER DONATION FORM

I wish to donate to the MCPA Interpretive Center. The amount I wish to donate is:

_____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ \$500 _____ \$1000 _____ Other

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail To: **MCPA**

PO Box 471

Everett, WA 98206

THANK-YOU!

C.D. ORDER FORM

This is a C.D. with pictures from Monte Cristo, up to 100 years ago. Cost: \$20.00 -Includes Shipping

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail To: **MCPA**

c/o Kal Klass

3815 E Garfield St.

Seattle, WA 98112

Thank you for your order!



Monte Cristo Preservation Assoc.
PO Box 471
Everett, WA 98206-0471
www.mcpa.us

**The Annual Meeting is
June 3rd at the Verlot Ranger Station**

«FirstName» «LastName»
«Address1»
«City», «State» «PostalCode»