

Families Go Hiking

Like many of us, my first memories of hiking were less than positive. Something about that trail above Ross Dam was just too steep, and my father was so darn *cheery* even though it was hot and we didn't have much water. Here were all these amazing mountains of the North Cascades before us and all I could think about was getting back to the car and the grape sodas in the cooler.

But despite that early stumble, I stuck with hiking and camping, and now it's an important part of my life, and my own family's. I first took my daughter on a trail when she was an infant and now at 2 she's starting to lead the way. You just go *much* slower than you did when you were 22 and trying to get to the summit of Granite Mountain in record time. It's an excuse to linger, and really see a forest. She picks up nearly every rock and leaf, but she's having fun.

Call it "green bonding" or experiencing nature. Studies show, (including one undertaken by REI) that kids who experience the outdoors early may eventually lose interest for a while. But when they're in their twenties and out of the house they often retain that interest in the outdoors. No doubt my daughter will reach an age where she'll complain about a particularly "dumb" hike.

But hopefully we'll keep other experiences fun enough that she'll want to keep going back as an adult.

The following series of articles are aimed at encouraging families to get out and hike. It's like eating your vegetables *and* ice cream at the same time: good for you, and if you're smart about it, a heck of a lot of fun, too. —Andrew Engelson

But Why?

10 great things about hiking

The smell of fir trees

Hiking is a way to experience the sights, sounds and smells of the outdoors. And whether it's the taste of alpine snow or the smell of Douglas fir, hiking is a treat for all the senses!



Cooling your feet

On a hot day in August, there's nothing like dipping your toes in an ice-cold stream.

Yodeling

Hey, when you're high above a valley, there's nothing like letting out a big yell or a yodel to hear the echoes. Or try singing something from the "Sound of Music."

You probably won't meet playground bullies

Hikers are nice people.



M & Ms

Okay, we'll admit it—the main reason we like trail mix is it's an excuse to chow on M & M's. With peanuts, preferably.

Marmots

They're cute, furry, and boy can they whistle. Hiking is a great opportunity to see critters like pikas, deer and mountain goats in their environment.



Strong legs

Hiking is a great way to get strong, healthy and confident.

Finding your way

Learning to use a map and compass is a pretty cool thing—think about it: just a piece of paper and a little compass and you can say, "I am here."

Stars

There are a LOT more stars in the wilderness than back at home.

Because it's there

Okay, maybe you're not the first person to get to the top of Rattlesnake Ledge, but you can always pretend. All those great climbers had to start somewhere.

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Bring the Kids!

How to take children of all ages on the trail

CLOCKWISE, FROM RIGHT: ERIKA KLIMECKY, KARL FORSGAARD, DEBORAH DAVIS



Hiking is great fun. Just remember to keep your goals realistic, always pay attention to safety, and turn your outing into an adventure of discovery.

BY JOAN BURTON

Why would you want to take your kids hiking with you?

If you wonder why you should make the effort to take your kids hiking, answer these questions honestly:

Would you prefer that your kids remember a childhood spent playing video games and watching TV sports? Or would you like to give them a childhood in which they hiked to alpine lakes, waterfalls, ocean beaches and old growth forests?

Would you want them to become overweight from lack of exercise? Or would you prefer that they hiked, waded, swam and scrambled on trails, beaches and mountains?

Would you prefer to only drive them to and from athletic turnouts, practices, and games? Or do you want to hike with them to places of Northwest beauty and wonder?



Would you want them to grow up with no connection to the natural world, and therefore no commitment to saving it? Or do you want to help them build a bond to the precious and fragile Northwest environment?

What better way can you think of to have uninterrupted time together with your family, free of distracting phone calls, TV and video games?

What Makes a Good Hike?

A good hike is one that appeals to a child's sense of exploration and

adventure. Every trail has some kind of adventure in it. Speculate about its first users and why they built the trail. What were they looking for? At the summit or high point, get out the map and try to identify the peaks you can see, guessing which is which.

Look for discoveries along the way: Teach your kids to be good observers by looking for animal footprints, claw scratches on tree trunks, and insect and bird holes in dead trees. Small ponds usually have tadpoles or frogs they can watch for.

Plan for multiple destinations and turnaround places: If your child is faltering or the weather is changing, look for a streamside log or boulder where you can stop. Be ready to change the goal and to point out why this destination is a good place for lunch and a turnaround.

Stress safety: Carry a first-aid kit designed with kids in mind. (Some insect repellents and sunscreens are too harsh for children's skin.) Watch their feet for hot spots that can turn into blisters. Carry moleskin. Be sure the soles of boots or shoes have enough tread to prevent slipping. When camping, keep a sharp eye on kids around any fire-related activities.

If kids get wet or cold, they can easily slip into hypothermia. Watch for shivering, and be ready with a change of warm clothes.

How Do You Hike with Kids?

Put yourself in their boots. Their legs are short and some of the steps in the trail are high for them to reach.

Remember their sense of time. Have patience when they stop and ask questions. They may be seeing their first trilliums. Call for rest stops before they ask for them and praise them for how well they are doing.

Be in the moment with them. Experience the feel of the hike and talk about it. Remember how you felt when hiking a trail was a new adventure to you.

Joke with whiners and grumblers, unless they are justified. Be sympathetic about legitimate complaints. Make the

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hike fun by laughing and being positive about what you are doing and seeing.

Take siblings, neighbors, and companions along with you. Extra kids are actually less trouble because they entertain and compete with one another.

Top Things to Remember

Have confidence. Don't be afraid, but do be realistic. Kids can sense your fear and they will echo it. A storm can be a problem, but not something to fear.

Know where you're going. Read about the hike before you go and carry a good map.

Be sure their boots or shoes are appropriate. Some sports shoes give no ankle support and have slippery soles. Carry a change of dry shoes.

Carry enough food, water and first-aid essentials for any conditions. An extra meal you never use is good insurance. Extra fruit or trail mix may also be invaluable. Little flashlights for kids to carry while walking in the dark are worth their weight.

Turn back if weather, illness or injury changes the situation. Good judgment is essential.

Kids will compete with whoever else is along. Use rivalry to motivate kids to keep going.

Kids strive for your praise. Be generous with it, and they will remember your encouragement long afterward: "Dad said we were so strong and fast."

They will have fun if you do. Let yourself go, have a good time whatever the situation, and they will want to hike with you again.

Different Goals for Different Kids

Your two-year-old may want to be carried most of the way and won't care whether or not you get to the destination. A stop alongside a stream or small waterfall may be enough reward. He or



You'll learn to see things in much more detail when hiking with toddlers and young children.

she will see the ground, footprints, stones, leaves, moss, flowers and branches up close and will want to stop to investigate them, interminably. If a frog jumps across the trail, plan to stop to watch for it to do it again.

Your five-year-old will care more about reaching the destination. He or she will want to play in the lake, look for pollywogs or throw stones into it for as long as possible. You will need to adjust your own thinking about this and to compromise. If you hiked before parenthood, you will need to shift gears,

and slow down to your kids' pace. If you are a new hiker and a new parent, the good news is that hiking with your kids can be fun and that you can have a great time discovering hiking together.

Your nine-year-old not only will want to reach the destination, but he or she will also want to compete with a brother or companion to be the first and fastest. You will want him to slow down enough to see the old growth forest and the distant view of Mount Baker. (Views aren't as exciting to kids as they are to you; so don't be surprised if she doesn't ooh and ah over it.) If you are backpacking, she will want her pack to seem large and imposing to others on the trail, and once at camp, she will want you to give her tasks to help in setting up the tent and making meals. The challenge to you is to make her feel she contributes in important ways. Let her fill the water jug and carry it back to camp. Let her help filter the water before preparing the dinner. ♦

Joan Burton is a WTA member from Seattle. She is the author of Best Hikes With Children: Western Washington and the Cascades (The Mountaineers Books, Volumes 1 and 2, \$14.95).

FRANK HERBERT

Join WTA for Two Great Family Events!

Families Go Hiking Clinic

**Wednesday May 11
Seattle REI 7 – 8 p.m.**

This clinic will help get your whole family outside and on the hiking trails! Learn the basics of hiking with kids of all ages, including planning a trip, food, safety and what to bring. We'll learn the ten best trails for hiking with kids in Washington, plus how to choose your own hiking trail suited for small children.

Led by Joan Burton, author of *Best Hikes with Children: Western Washington and the Cascades*, and Lauren Braden, Washington Trails Association.

Questions? Call (206) 625-1367.

Guided Hike for Families

**Saturday May 14
Lake Elizabeth Trail, off Hwy. 2
near Index, 10 a.m.**

Bring the kids on this easy hike around a small mountain lake beneath high peaks. We'll take frequent breaks, enjoy plants and wildlife, and talk about what makes a great hike for kids. We'll break into two groups based on speed: hikers carrying children in carriers, and families with and toddlers and children.

Led by Joan Burton and Andrew Engelson, editor, *Washington Trails*. RSVP required. E-mail lace@wta.org or call (206) 625-1367.

Kid-Friendly Hikes

DOUG DEREMA



Day Hikes

Pinnacle Saddle

A short hike to a viewpoint in the Tatoosh Range, where families can look north and up close to Mount Rainier and south to Mount Adams, Mount St. Helens and the Goat Rocks.

Boulder River Waterfall

A lowland old-growth forest along a river with lace-curtain waterfalls and a river beach access.

Naches Peak Loop

The dream hike that gives the kids snow banks to slide in, little streams to splash in, shallow ponds to wade in, flowery meadows to play in, and for the

parents, knock-your-socks-off views of Mount Rainier.

Sauk Mountain

A little mountain summit in the heart of the North Cascades, attained by switchbacks through steep flower fields.

Troublesome Creek

A magical loop walk along a creek off Steven Pass, with bridges on either end.

Excelsior Mountain

The Sound of Music mountain with meadows and sweeping views of Mount Baker and Mount Shuksan.

Grove of the Patriarchs

An old-growth forest on the east

side of Mount Rainier, with awe-inspiring giants between 800 and 1,000 years old.

Skokomish River

An Olympic river loop featuring enormous trees with trunks set on stiltlike roots, and river pools and rapids.

Overnight Trips

Boardman Lake

A 1-mile, 200-foot-gain trail takes families to a large lake set among old-growth Alaska cedars, off the Mountain Loop highway.

Barclay Lake

A 1.5-mile, 250-foot-gain trail leads to a shallow lake beneath Mount Baring, off the Stevens Pass highway.

Second and Third Beaches

The most accessible of the "wilderness ocean" beaches offers surf, sand, driftwood and play possibilities.

Hoh River Rain Forest

A world-famous rain forest offers families camping near the resident bands of Roosevelt elk, on grassy terraces or sand bars.

For more information, consult *Best Hikes with Children: Western Washington and the Cascades*, Volumes 1 and 2 by Joan Burton (The Mountaineers Books, \$14.95). For the latest trip reports, visit www.wta.org

Playing in the Dirt

Two brothers talk about the fun of trail maintenance



Trail Maintenance Pros: Brothers David (age 12, left) and Jared (age 14, right) Schiff have each been on 15 work crews. At right, they're seen hiking a ridge in Mount Rainier National Park.



David and Jared Schiff know a thing or two about trail maintenance. Brothers David, 12, and Jared, 14, live in Enumclaw, Washington and have been on 15 trail work crews with Washington Trails Association since their first trips to Tiger Mountain with WTA in February, 2004. We thought we'd ask them what keeps bringing them back.

When did you go on your first work party? How did you find out about WTA? How many work crews have you been on?

D: My first work party was February 11, 2004 on Tiger Mountain. I found out about WTA through my dad. I now have been on 15 fun work crews.

J: My first work party was on February 22, 2004 at Tiger Mountain, making new trail with Mike. My Dad did a work party first, said it was fun so I tried it. I have been on 15 work crews.

What's your favorite thing about doing trail maintenance?

D: My favorite thing is being outdoors.

J: I like to dig and be outdoors, and I get to meet new and interesting people.

What's your least favorite thing about trail maintenance?

D: Getting up early is okay, it's the rain and bugs I don't like.

J: I don't like working in rain or with bugs, but I've never had a work day that either were really bad.

Outside of trail maintenance, do you hike much? If so, where do you like to hike? What other sorts of outdoor recreation are you into?

D: My family and I hike a good amount. My favorite place is up at Sunrise, hiking from Frozen Lake to Skyscraper Mountain. I also like to mountain bike and climb.

J: We hike a lot, mostly in Mount Rainier National Park. I also like to mountain bike.

Do you get to work with Pulaskis and other trail tools much? What's your favorite kind of trail work?

D: Yes, I get to use pretty much all of the tools. I like making new trails and digging holes looking for mineral soil (pay dirt).

J: I've used all the tools except the pickmatic. My favorite kind of trail work is making new trail.

Anything unusual or funny ever happen to you on a trail crew?

D: Yeah, once when I was helping haul dirt and rocks for a wet clay section, I said "It really stinks here," and the four men I was working with didn't know what it was. One of them said, "Admit it, we hit a sewer line."

Any crew leaders that you particularly like working with?

D: Yes, I really enjoy working with Mike Owens, even though he is late with the candy now and then. Mike's trip reports are fun to read, we always look for them at the end of the day.

J: I like to work with Mike, he's my favorite crew leader. Mike's trip reports are well-written and funny.

Do any of your friends volunteer? If you had to name one good thing you get out of trail crew volunteering, what would it be?

D: None of my friends volunteer that I know of. If I had to name one good thing I get out of trail crew volunteering, it would be learning new things and meeting new people.

J: I've never had a friend volunteer. If I had to name one good thing I get out of volunteering it would be: I get to dig, shovel, excavate, haul, scrape, and pack down dirt. ♦

Back to My First Backpack Trip

By DAVID WILLIAMS

I have few memories of my first backpacking trip, but I know this: I hated it. The trail was steep and the switchbacks endless. It rained the entire time. Someone knocked down the line holding up our rain fly. I awoke cold, wet and crying. I didn't poop.

I am pretty sure that I went in 1978 when I was in seventh grade. I think we set up our tent in the middle of a side trail. I have foggy memories of rocks or piles of rocks in the middle of a lake, but I am not exactly sure where we went. I vaguely remember a name, Pinnacle or Spectacle Lake, but could not find either listed in area hiking guides we owned.

Despite my inauspicious beginning, I have spent much of my adult life working or teaching in the outdoors, including many great days and nights camping. I have thought about this first backpack trip for years. When my wife and I moved back to Seattle, after my absence from the Northwest for 15 years, the trip began to take hold of me. While hiking or backpacking, I'd wonder if we were where it had all begun, particularly if there were switchbacks.

As the years passed, I kept thinking I would go up to Lakeside Middle School, which I attended in 7th grade, and see if they had a list of where students went hiking. We must have signed up for a particular trip and they, of course, kept those lists for people like me. Optimism can make the most boneheaded ideas seem realistic.

I called the school. The archivist kindly listened to my rambling story and told me that no such records existed. She suggested that I contact one of the teachers, a Mr. Dougall, involved in the hiking program. He told me that in the 1970s Lakeside did go to

a spot called Pinnacle Lake. It was off the Mountain Loop Highway, which was chosen because the bus could drive down the road, drop kids off, and continue to the next trailhead.

With the name, I began to search in more hiking guides. I finally found a Pinnacle Lake listed in *Trips and Trails I*, a venerable, but now defunct series of



ELIZABETH SWISHER

Hiking trips help foster a lifelong love of nature. Here, the Swisher family walks Ruby Beach, Olympic National Park.

hiking guides published by The Mountaineers. According to the book, the trail was only 1.7 miles to the lake. It did not mention any switchbacks. I could see why the books were out of print; they shortened the distances and minimized the hazards of the trail.

I knew that I had to go to the lake. I wasn't positive that Pinnacle was the correct one, but it would do. On September 5, 2004, eight months after talking with Mr. Dougall, my wife and I drove with our dog to the trailhead. By this time I could admit that Pinnacle Lake was only 1.7 miles from the road, but I wasn't sure about the switchbacks.

We arrived under an overcast sky, put on our packs, and started hiking at about 10 a.m. After half a mile we hit a switchback. And then another. I joked that I recognized them. We continued on, eventually snaking up 14 switchbacks. We reached the lake at 11:30.

It fit the image I had: a rock or rocks in a lake—certainly a unique sight in the Northwest. I had remembered a more prominent pinnacle, but the low mounds would do. I looked for the spot where I had set up the tent, but nothing looked remotely like I remembered. We remained at the little lake only long enough to take a few pictures.

We continued around the shoreline and made two startling discoveries. First, an outhouse. Had this potential refuge been there in 1978? Would I have used it? Some questions we cannot answer. Second, we found another, larger lake, the official Pinnacle Lake. It was a handsome lake but not nearly as charming as my Pinnacle Lake.

After a short lunch, we hiked around the larger lake, up a drainage colloquially known as Iodine Gulch, to Bathtub Lakes, a beautiful plateau of clear ponds,

windswept trees and exposed granite. The stark beauty made me wish we had brought our camping gear and could have spent the night.

I have often pondered why, after such a disastrous first camping trip, I now love to hike and camp. My return to Pinnacle Lake confirmed what I have thought for many years. I am grateful that I gave camping a second chance. I treasure the beauty and solitude of the wild. Like many people, I am energized by being outdoors, by hiking, by sleeping out, even by being cold and wet. To paraphrase Thoreau, in wildness is the preservation of my world. ♦

David B. Williams is a WTA member from Seattle. His book, Street Smart Naturalist, will be published by Westwinds Press this month. He can be reached at wingate@seanet.com or visit www.seanet.com/~wingate/.

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The Troop's All Here

Memories of a less-than-perfect scout outing

KAREN SYKES



Not every trip can be sunshine and happiness. One particular Boy Scout outing in 1995 proved to be very soggy—and very memorable.

BY KAREN SYKES

The memories of co-leading Boy Scout hikes are becoming overgrown, like abandoned trails that disappear if not re-visited from time to time. Those outings blur together so this is a tale without a beginning, middle or an end. I don't recall the name of that Olympic river valley where a sleeping bag popped off Jeff's pack without anyone's knowledge or the name of that tributary along the West Coast Trail where Wally had to hike back several miles to retrieve a tent that hadn't been lashed on well enough to withstand the journey.

In the early 1990s I co-led several of these outings with my friend John Clubine, the Scoutmaster. The dates blur but few scouts will ever forget there was an overnight outing every month of the year. Inclement weather or injuries were no reason to postpone an outing. Even when John was recovering from a climbing accident he used his ice axe as a crutch and we went to Artist Point in a blizzard for an

overnight.

As for the Scouts, there was Jerry who was about the size of a wren. Jerry was sweet but clumsy, so in awe of his surroundings that he would hike looking at everything except his feet. He'd often fall down, pick himself up again and keep on hiking. He loved Earl Grey tea and always carried teabags.

There was Terry who showed up at Scout meetings in a black trench coat even when it was 85 degrees outside. He dreamed of becoming a writer and had a way with words. The boys looked up to him as a natural leader and if they could have, they would all have adopted black trench coats.

There was Brett, a good looking blonde kid with an edge who'd been in trouble with the law but when he fell asleep on the south summit of the Brothers he looked like an angel.

There was Quentin, a Native American with a quick temper who often bullied the smaller boys. Because he was much larger than the other boys he'd simply sit on them until he got what he wanted. He was often on the

verge of being kicked out of the troop but there was a sweetness about him that always won our hearts and he always came back. Who else but Quentin could have taught me how to make a whistle that would rival a marmot's out of an empty raisin box?

Incidentally these outings took place long before MP3 players, iPods, and BlackBerries. When cell phones were about the size of tennis shoes. Most outings involved long drives to trailheads with the boys crammed in the back seat, a Walkman glued to their ears. After a while the boys would get bored or the batteries in their Walkman would die and they'd start to kick at the seats or peel pieces off the interior roof

Trails at School

WTA to build a trail at Skyview Junior High

When a Junior High science teacher has a classroom of students and a small forest behind the school, the only conclusion possible is to build a trail through the area for "outdoor" studies. Skyview Junior High teachers John Schmied and Tom Nowak approached WTA to layout and help build this trail behind the Bothell School. The trail has been flagged, approved by the Lakeshore School District, and the first work party will be held Saturday, May 14. The students and area adults will build two loop trails behind the school. One of the trails will hopefully be a barrier-free trail so all students will be able to participate in the outdoor studies. The trails will be used not for recreation, but for the science classes to have a readily accessible area in which to teach biology, soil composition, and possibly experiments on composition. To help with this project please contact Matt Contorchick at matt@wta.org.

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of the car.

Some of the gear was marginal. The tents often leaked or were missing tent stakes or rain-flies. Keegan Hartman, a survivor of these outings writes, "...on my very first hike with the troop, John checked out a tent to me that was missing one or two tent pole links. We set it up and I slept in it. It was pretty lopsided but functional as long as it didn't rain." Keegan got stuck with this same tent on his second outing – in a downpour.

Food consisted of as much junk food as the boys could carry though John tried in vain to pass on his outdoor culinary skills. Most of the boys didn't know how to cook but neither did some of the adults. Another adult who cooked with us had the unfortunate habit of adding canned string beans and almonds to everything. Noodle Death was a favorite of both the adults and the boys. Noodle Death was anything that came in a box that you could add milk or water to, even string beans and almonds.

Here is John's Recipe for Boy Scout Happiness: Ingredients: Mix together slippery boardwalks, plenty of rain, 3 adults, 10 Boy Scouts, and spread out along a strip of the Pacific Ocean Coast. Pour ½ of the Scouts into wet tents and the other half into the emergency shelter at Sand Point. Add darkness and wind. Wait a bit then flood the shelter with water and stir with hungry raccoons. Wait until morning.

The above recipe is the result of an experience that is vividly remembered by Keegan. Remember that malfunctioning tent? This outing to Sand Point took place in November about 1995 or thereabouts. We should have paid attention to the fact that there were no other cars at the Sand Point/Cape Alava trailhead. You know the weather is going to be terrible when there are NO other cars at that trailhead. We made it to Sand Point through horizontal rain and we adults set up camp a little distance from the Scouts. Some of the

Scouts wanted to stay in the emergency shelter rather than pitch their tent and John said that was okay. It rained hard the whole night.

When John went to check on the boys in the morning he found them standing dejectedly outside the shelter in their underwear, looking like drowned prairie dogs. There was about a foot of water in the shelter and most of their gear was floating around. The raccoons had gotten away with most of their food. It was only when John returned to our campsite out of their earshot that he burst into laughter at the sight of them – though bedraggled, the boys were none the worse for wear.

Keegan explains they set up the dysfunctional tent next to the emergency shelter but he and some of the

When John went to check on the boys in the morning he found them standing dejectedly outside the shelter in their underwear, looking like drowned prairie dogs.

other Scouts decided to sleep in the shelter. Keegan writes, "when we returned to the shelter the rain had picked up considerably and there was a little stream running through the shelter from the leaky roof. It ran out the low side of the shelter near the front entrance." They moved the sleeping bags and pads out of the way as according to Keegan "it was still relatively dry in there, certainly drier than the lopsided tent that was still set up and doing a poor job of repelling the rain." They settled down but not for long. Before they got to sleep, "Chuck and Jerry began complaining about being wet as they were pretty much under the leak. So we all started to move over. Soon everyone was wet. We made the decision, (probably around midnight) to abandon our sleeping bags when the Therma-rests started to float when the person rolled off of them."

During all this the raccoons raided the shelter and made off with their food

and some of their gear. All the boys moved into a three-person tent that had been set up full with packs. Some of the boys were without dry sleeping bags. Keegan continues, "One image I remember is of Jerry huddled over (there wasn't room for everyone to lie down) dressed head to toe in his yellow rain gear. I believe he slept that way the whole night."

We used to wonder when the boys would outgrow the Boy Scouts. Bumbershoot began to compete with the Labor Day climb of The Brothers and most of the boys had grown taller than John. Our question was answered on a one-way beach outing from Hoh Head to Third Beach.

We turned the boys loose at Hoh Head, told them where to camp, left a car there and then shuttled the other two cars to the Third Beach trailhead. We thought we had time to catch up with them but John had misread the tide-tables. By the time we got back to Hoh Head it was raining and the tide was coming in, not going out. We made a valiant attempt to get around Hoh Head but the tide

was coming in too fast and darkness was falling. We did the only thing responsible adults could do under such circumstances. We rented rooms at a motel in Forks and only felt slightly guilty about staying dry.

Next morning we raced to catch up with them not knowing what condition we'd find them in. We finally spotted them way out ahead of us plodding along the beach, giving every indication they were not going to wait for us. When we finally caught up to them and they told us they had appointed a leader, made camp, built a fire, grilled steaks and planned to continue without us.

"Oh," we said. What else was there to say? Somehow when we weren't looking they had become young men instead of boys in need of a guide. ♦

Karen Sykes is a WTA member from Seattle and writes "Hike of the Week" for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.