

Mountain's shining cloak disappears

by SHARON NESBIT
of The Outlook staff

Mount Hood, contrary to all the tourism brochures, is not snowclad. She is parading around nude on the skyline.

Only a few patches of glacier cover the bare bones of the mountain that most Sandy area residents regard as their own. Conversation begins these days with, "Gee, I've never seen the mountain so bare."

"We're talking naked," says Cliff King who has looked out at the mountain for 19 years from his hair-dressing shop in Orient.

'We're talking this lady is stark naked. I don't care how naked she is, she is still the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.'

— Cliff King

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So how bare is Mount Hood? Nobody knows. Bare isn't measured. Snow is. And nobody bothers to get their rulers out until it snows.

Some people are pretty desperate about that. Mike Estes, 19, who works at Larry's Sports Center when he isn't skiing, did his last skiing of the season on the Palmer snowfield in September. In need of motion, he must resort to wind surfing and skateboarding until the snow comes back.

Estes says he has not seen the mountain so bare since the drought of 1981-82.

Up at Timberline Lodge, which just celebrated its 50th anniversary, Bill Connerly of the lodge's public relations staff says it may have been longer than that,



Photo by Steve Gibbons

Mount Hood may be as bare as it has been in 50 years.

perhaps 50 years ago.

"It's almost eerie, but we have old pictures of the mountain in 1936-37 when the lodge was constructed and it looked like it does now, just a tiny little patch of snow up there at Palmer."

The good news, Connerly says, is that the long spell of dry weather has made it possible for Timberline to finish two new ski lifts. No one, he adds, is real worried yet about lack of snow. There will be a few fitful snow falls early in the season and "Then the snow will come in one big plop," he predicts.

Ross Fanning, a retired Gresham area car dealer, has overlooked Mount Hood since 1937. "I've never seen the mountain so bare," he says. "But I'm just gonna sit here and look at it. There's not a damn thing I can do about it."

Dave Ulmer, 28, a Springdale resident, agrees. "It looked about the same up until the first of September. But since then, I doubt I've ever seen it so dry."

John Lea, who measures the snow on Mount Hood for the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S.

Department of Agriculture, says the opinions of observers about lack of snow are just as good an indicator as any.

"We finished measuring the snow up there in June when it was below average and we probably won't measure again until January," says Lea.

The Soil Conservation Service doesn't worry as much about the amount of snow as it does about the water packed into it. So people like Lea make their calculations based on the inches of water that are stored in a frozen state on the mountain. That helps them figure out how much will come off the mountain the following summer for people to drink and water their crops with. Measuring is done with a hollow tube with a scale on it. The tube is then weighed to determine the density of water in the snow.

The snow starts building in January and is deepest in May. In May, 1986, 71.7 inches of water content were recorded. It was considerably lower last May when only 53.8 inches of water content was found. That 53.8 inches translated to 108 inches of snow.

The snow on Mount Hood is measured in two ways. People like Lea can stomp around plunging that hollow tube into the ground, or they can rely on calculations sent in from unmanned snow telemetry stations. In either case, the measuring is done on Mount Hood at the base of one of the Timberline lifts and that site is high and dry right now.

"High and dusty, actually," says Lea, who points out that there also has been no rain on the mountain during the current drought.

Until the drought ends, local residents will have to get used to a mountain that is missing its glowing, white mantle. A mountain without snow comes dangerously close to being nothing but a big bump.

Timberline earns historic preservation honor

Friends of Timberline received an Honor Award for Preservation last week for its efforts to help restore Timberline Lodge's unique furnishings.

The award was presented at the national convention of the National Trust for Historic Preservation held in Washington, D.C.

Friends of Timberline were among 15 recipients chosen from more than 100 nominations nationwide. Carnegie Hall was another honoree.

The non-profit Friends of

Timberline shares the award with RLK and Company, which operates Timberline, and the U.S. Forest Service.

Friends of Timberline was formed in 1975 to repair, restore or replace Timberline's furnishings and art work. Beginning with \$3,000 in initial membership fees, the organization has raised over \$2 million in the past 12 years.

Those funds have gone to Northwest artists who have repaired or

replaced hooked rugs, hand-woven and appliqued draperies and bedspreads, wrought-iron smoking stands, oil paintings and watercolors, wood-carvings, mosaics, stained glass and many other treasures originally created in the midst of the Great Depression by WPA craftspeople.

The honor was accompanied by a \$500 grant, which Friends of Timberline used to send Linny Adamson, curator of the lodge, to Washington to receive the award.

Richard Kohnstamm, Timberline ski area operator, and Donna Lamb, Zigzag District Ranger in the Mount Hood National Forest, joined Adamson at the ceremony.

The award marks the second time this year that historic preservation at Timberline has received national recognition.

On Sept. 28, as part of its Historic Preservation Series, the United States Postal Service released a postcard commemorating the lodge.

In the military

David Gregg

Marine Sgt. David M. Gregg, son of Murlin Gregg of Sandy, recently reported for duty at Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

A 1981 graduate of Benson Polytechnic High School, he joined the Marine Corps in November 1981.

Tod Bailey

Navy Seaman Recruit Tod A. Bailey, son of Cynthia L. Bailey of Sandy, has completed recruit training at Recruit Training Command, Orlando, Fla.

During Bailey's eight-week training cycle, he studied general military subjects designed to prepare him for further academic and on-the-job training.

Bailey's studies included seamanship, close order drill, Naval history and first aid.

A 1987 graduate of Sandy Union High School, he joined the Navy in July 1987.

Audie Ellis

Marine Cpl. Audie D. Ellis, son of Dennis and Barbara Ellis of Sandy, was recently awarded the U.S. Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal.

Ellis received the award for good behavior and conduct over a three-

year period in the Marine Corps. He is currently serving with the 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

A 1984 graduate of Sandy Union High School, he joined the Marine Corps in August 1984.

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