

WHAT'S HAPPENING

EVENTS AND ASSORTED NEWS

PACIFIC SCIENCE CENTER—Signposter Stephen Fry, a Woodinville geologist, will have two exhibits at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle beginning December 8. The titles of the exhibits are: "Mountains Defined and Measured" and "Washington's Fifty Highest Major Mountains."

The "Mountains Defined and Measured" exhibit will include unprecedented schematic comparisons of the base, rise above base, size and slope of famous world mountains such as Mount Everest, K2, Mount McKinley, Matterhorn, Mount Rainier, and Mount Saint Helens. The geographical boundaries as defined by Steve will also be displayed and compared for Mount Everest, Matterhorn, Mount Rainier, and Mount Saint Helens.

Water color paintings by Dee Molenaar will accompany the exhibit.

The "Washington's Fifty Highest Major Mountains" exhibit's main attraction will be a large table listing the "top fifty" (as determined by applying Steve's definition of a major mountain), plus many of Steve's finest photographs, in addition to select works by Lee Mann, Duncan Kelso, Charles Allyn, and Greg Plowman.

(For some background on this exhibit, go back to the April 1984 Signpost, and re-read Steve's article, "Washington's Steepest Mountain Faces."—AM)

LEPTOSPIROSIS—A sea lion found on Rialto Beach earlier this fall has been diagnosed as having leptospirosis. The disease, now an epidemic among marine mammal populations off the California and Oregon coasts, had not previously been reported this far north.

Hikers on the Olympic beaches this winter will notice signs warning of the danger of contacting leptospirosis from marine mammals, dead or ill, that are found on the beaches.

Symptoms are fever, headache, chills, severe malaise, vomiting, and other unpleasantness, occurring in about ten days after contact with the bacteria. The illness lasts up to three weeks, and with proper treatment is generally not fatal to humans.

Leptospirosis, also called "swine-herd's disease," has been around for millennia, and is considered a common

occupational hazard for farmers and veterinarians.

The disease is transmitted through contact of the skin with water, moist soil or vegetation contaminated with urine of infected animals, or directly from contact with the tissue or urine of an infected animal.

Signposters should have the good common sense to stay away from ill or injured animals, anyway. (It only traumatizes the poor creatures to have you approach to "help" them.)

Leptospirosis is not a gigantic public health problem. Its cycle appears to wax and wane over a period of years. Little is known about the proportions of the current epidemic, although Charles Janda of Olympic National Park Headquarters says the disease does not appear to be affecting any of our local population of Steller's sea lions, being mostly confined to the California sea lions which are migrating past our coast now.

Backpackers along the coast this winter can help keep tabs on the problem by reporting any dead or ill marine mammals to the local ranger, or to ONP headquarters.

WASHINGTON TRAIL NEWS—At the November meeting of the Washington State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) almost a million dollars from the gas tax fund was allocated to motorized recreation.

There was no input except from IAC staff and the Off Road Vehicle Advisory Committee.

Signposter Ira Spring attended the meeting and reported on it. He said that \$600,000 went to the Forest Service without question, to build and reconstruct trails to facilitate ORV use.

Another \$300,000 went to certain counties to enable ORV use to be monitored and supervised. There was some discussion on this point, the ORVAC stating that they preferred to have the money go into actual facilities on the ground, rather than for policing.

Spring reported that it appeared that other state agencies had had little or no chance to review the proposals and to give their input. The decisions on where and how to use the funds apparently were made with consideration only for ORV interests.

Spring added that in some counties deputy sheriffs are put to work in the off season by having them take motorcycles right into classrooms to explain their use and familiarize young people with them. Some hikers and horseriders might feel that, although certainly education in proper operation of a motorcycle is needed, such display of merchandise can also create a desire for ownership on the part of the young people.

The funding for trail improvement, policing, and education for the ORV



Mount Anderson.

Michael Rust