



Be a Joiner with the Obsidians

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To Get Outside More, And Eat More Desserts, Be A Joiner

Enjoying the great Oregon outdoors, all life long

By Joanna Bartlett



If you want to stay active, make friends and learn about your natural environment, consider the Obsidians. As Eugene's oldest outdoor club – it's been around since 1927 – the Obsidians welcome people of all ages into their fold of more than 400 members.

Most members are in their 50s and 60s, says hike leader, Janet Jacobsen, who welcomed hikers new and old on a Wednesday conditioning hike from the Amazon Creek headwaters to the top of Spencer Butte. "But our youngest member is 4 years old," she says. "He's the president's son." Jacobsen, a member since 1973, has led the weekly Wednesday morning hikes for the past two years.

At a hike in mid-March, the dozen or so folks on the hike said they'd joined the club after moving to Eugene or retiring. They looked for ways to connect with people and enjoy the outdoors and found a home with the Obsidians. A few were native

Oregonians, but many came from far-flung locales: Texas, Florida, Connecticut, Arizona and even England.

One of the newest members, David Lodeesen, joined earlier this year. "I like fitness in general," he says. "I like to move. I used to be a runner but gave up running 10 years ago. I didn't want to be a couch potato." So he took up hiking – and snowshoeing and cross country skiing.

Like Lodeesen, many members do more than one Obsidian activity. There are lots to choose from: hikes ranging from easy urban walks to overnight backpacking adventures, bike rides, kayaking and rafting trips, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain climbing, short and long bus trips and monthly potluck dinners.

Craig Molitor, a retired long-haul truck driver who grew up on a ranch in Cottage Grove, enjoys hiking and bus trips with the Obsidians. "I've always liked the outdoors. They know all these interesting, different places to hike," he says.

Last fall, Molitor went on a bus trip to Death Valley in Eastern California's Mojave Desert. He was paired with a retired minister as his roommate. While they had different outlooks on life, they became friends and requested each other as roommates again for this year's bus trip to Yellowstone National Park.

He also likes to attend the monthly potlucks. "You meet interesting people," he says. Plus the food is good, members say. (Tip: If you like some devilled eggs, get them on your first pass through; there won't be any left by your second.) The club is known for its famed desserts as well.



Carla Cooper enjoys hiking with her husband, David, and joined the Obsidians last year after they retired. The pair are training for the 192-mile Coast to Coast Walk in England this summer with two other Obsidian members.

"It's a fun group. I like getting out in the mountains, and there's a measure of safety going out in a group," Cooper says. "They're a very welcoming bunch of people."

They also know a lot about the natural world they enjoy so much. “A lot of the Obsidians know all about the trees, birds and flowers,” Cooper says as Jacobsen points out the first trilliums of the season and nearby calypso orchids. “These are also known as fairy slippers,” Jacobsen says as this reporter stops to snap a photo and get a quick breather before heading further up the trail.

Upcoming Obsidians events

April 1 – Amazon Headwaters 6.2-mile hike
April 3 – Ridgeline 10-mile hike
April 4 – Finley Wildlife Refuge hike
April 6 – Basic Mountaineering Course
April 7 – Old Town Bandon Birding bus trip
April 8 – Amazon Headwaters 6.2-mile hike
April 9 – King’s Valley hike
April 10 – Mt. Pisgah 7.5-mile hike
April 11 – Yachats to Waldport 7-mile hike
April 12 – Mary’s Peak 7-mile hike
April 12 – Talking Stones 5.5-mile hike
April 15 – Amazon Headwaters 6.2-mile hike
April 17 – Marion County/Ankeny Wild biking trip
April 18 – Goodman Creek 8-mile hike
April 18 – Angel’s Rest 4.6-mile hike
April 19 – Eagle Creek 6.6-mile hike
April 22 – Summer Trips Leader Orientation class
April 22 – Amazon Headwaters 6.2-mile hike
April 23 – Birding Wetlands 14-mile bike ride
April 24 – Potluck dinner with John Muir Trail presentation by Bob Welch
April 24 – Ridgeline 12-mile hike
April 25 – Brice Creek/Trestle Falls 11-mile hike

Obsidians events are open to members and non-members. Find out more and register online at www.obsidians.org.

