

**Commentary...**

**Take the kids exploring**

By Edie Jones  
Guest Columnist

Summer! What a wonderful time for reunions, traveling, exploring, adventures, and introducing your kids to new cultures. I'm not talking about cultures of different countries. I'm referring to the many cultures found here in our own United States. There's great value in taking children from their normal routine and surroundings and exploring new scenery and people.

Whenever possible, leave the freeway. Get out of traffic and see the scenery. Doing so enables you to see the windmills of eastern Oregon, drink in the lush pictorial scenes of southern Minnesota, be amazed by unusual, expansive land formations of the Badlands of South Dakota and be in awe of places like Mt. Rushmore. Close to home the gorgeous, green hills of the Palouse country of Washington and the Rocky Mountains of Glacier National Park can be seen in a journey just a few days away. There is so much to share with your kids!

You may be thinking excursions such as these are expensive. Not necessarily so. Packing lunches, diligently sticking to a budget, allowing side trips to less expensive small towns and putting your smart phone to work can really pay off. On a recent trip across the country, I put the name of an inexpensive motel chain into my phone, got a local listing, called and got a \$57 reservation. Then the directions on my phone helped navigate us directly there in spite of being on the other side of the city not knowing our way around.

Every little town has history and museums, places and reasons to stretch young legs (and older bottoms that tire of sitting). Older, historic structures, markers that tell stories of the past, all have something to teach and

inspire interest.

And parks! When traveling with kids make finding neighborhood playgrounds a priority. Take along balls (all kinds and sizes), Frisbees, and lacrosse sticks, and plan time for play. These are the moments that make memories and are great for inter-generational fun.

Provide an inexpensive camera for each of your kids and have them document your travels. They will think it a marvelous gift and it will make everything you do an adventure.

The impression many parents have of long drives with kids is often unpleasant. If you can switch that idea to recognize the value of time together for conversation, singing, creating stories, word games and experiencing new things, the positive side becomes apparent. Just be sure to take breaks often enough to keep the kids happy. Pack small surprises of things to do to keep things interesting (markers and paper, small books, games, snacks, etc.).

Take along some rice paper and chalk or crayons to do rubbings of gravestones or historical markers. I'm sure you are also thinking movies, books on tape, CDs, and iPhones: Give the kids a destination for your map quest to find and have them plan the route. Establish limits on the use these electronic tools, especially when there are

things to see.

A great trip is to follow the Lewis and Clark Trail. Track where they went, wonder how they got from rivers to overland, and marvel at their trip down the Columbia all the way to our very own Astoria. This is a wonderful piece of history that comes alive for kids when you connect it with your own journey.

Outside our area are great places to explore, however, don't forget what's in our own backyard. There's much to do right here, close to Sisters. The book 100 Hikes in the Central Oregon Cascades, by William L. Sullivan, gives many suggestions of great places to go, with descriptions as to what age would enjoy them. Some spots that instantly come to mind are Tumalo Falls, Tam McArthur Rim, and Three Creek Lake.

Be sure to check out the Deschutes Land Trust ([www.deschuteslandtrust.org](http://www.deschuteslandtrust.org)), which offers walks for children and families to experience birds, butterflies, and water wonders. The Sierra Club offers hikes, and don't forget the Deschutes Children's Forest and The Environmental Center in Bend.

Take your kids exploring, a couple of days away or close by on an overnight. You'll not regret it, and the benefits for your young ones will be enormous.

**Bend man accused of abusing dog**

BEND (AP) — A Bend man has been charged with animal abuse after witnesses told police he kicked and punched his 6-month-old dog.

*The Bulletin* reports police obtained a search warrant Friday night to seize the shepherd mix named Diesel and have him evaluated. The

warrant was served Sunday, and a veterinarian determined Diesel had multiple injuries.

The suspect, 20-year-old Tyler Speas, faces charges of aggravated animal abuse and attempted animal abuse.

He tells KTVZ he spanked the dog for peeing in the car. He says he loves Diesel and the charges are "outrageous."

**Sheriff's office warns of scammers**

There are still active telephone scammers working the Central Oregon area saying they are calling from the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office or other local law enforcement agency.

This person will say that there is a warrant or some kind of fine related to a missed court date.

Most recently victims are instructed to go to Fred Meyer, Walmart has also been used in the past, and purchase some type of loadable charge card or debit card, then load that card with a specified amount of money.

The suspect will then instruct the victim to give them the card number over

the phone. The suspect using the number alone can withdraw all the money attached to that card almost immediately. The money is generally taken by someone outside of the United States and it is not recoverable by law enforcement.

The sheriff's office reminds the public that no local law enforcement agency will call you on the telephone and ask for money or instruct anyone to load a credit/debit card for them. If you receive any phone calls regarding this issue or have any questions call the dispatch center (541-693-6911) prior to following any instructions regarding this type of activity.



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