

What's HAPPENING

Guide to Local Arts, Entertainment & Events

free

INSIDE:

- The Pickles return ➤
- *Staying Young*—an interview with the authors
- Film: *Burke & Wills*
- Theatre: *Leader of the Pack*
- British blues/rocker Mick Clarke
- *Brigadista*—from Vietnam to Nicaragua
- Alexander Cockburn • Photography



by Rick Beasley

NESTLED IN THE MOUNTAINOUS fold of a river valley carved by the branching of the Willamette River's north and middle forks, the small and genuine Oregon logging town of Oakridge is no sleepy hideaway on a Saturday morning.

The last stop for many on their way to a recreation paradise known for its rich fare of year-round outdoor activities, Oakridge is a gateway that fills with boaters, hikers, bikers, skiers, campers and even a scuba diver or two.

With sailboards, mountain bikes or tents securely lashed atop their cars, they buy spare hooks, inflate their rubber rafts, re-stock their coolers and eat hot cakes and quaff hot coffee at a couple of highway cafes here.

A few miles up the road, these visitors will start taking separate paths: a park-perfect highway into Waldo Lake, an obscure Forest Service road near Too Much Bear Lake or a winding gravel route that skirts the bottom of Three Sisters Wilderness. What had been a brisk morning business for the merchants of Oakridge is swallowed quickly by the 2,500 acres of forest lands known as Waldo Country.

"This area is so vast and diverse that you can still disappear and never see anybody for days," says Richard Culbertson, a retired Forest Service employee and Oakridge Mayor. "You can pitch a tent in the forest or stay in a lakeside resort. You can hike, hunt, fish, ski on the water or the snow, pan for gold or sit in a hot spring. There's adventure here or just plain relaxation. I think it's fair to say that there's something here for everybody."

You've heard that pitch before from other tourist-hungry Oregon towns, right? But in this case, the claims are as true as the ghostly remains that lure the curious to the old Bohemia Mining District or the glitter that still remains at the bottom of creeks with names like Silverstairs, Prospect and Gold.

For many, Judge Waldo Days will celebrate the discovery of this gold mine of precious metals, big fish, tall trees and wilderness peaks. For day trippers or weekend campers, a guide to what's happening here is a good way to scratch the surface of fun found in this treasure box of late-summer outdoor recreation.

WATERSPORTS

For anglers, the lure is strong. Spread out over 1,700 miles of rivers and streams or across 500,000 acres of natural lakes and reservoirs, the fishing won't be elbow-to-elbow until well into the next century.

Continued on page 7

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Discover
WALDO
COUNTRY

See inside (page 7) for complete information on the new **Judge Waldo Days Festival** to be held in and around Oakridge August 8-16.

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