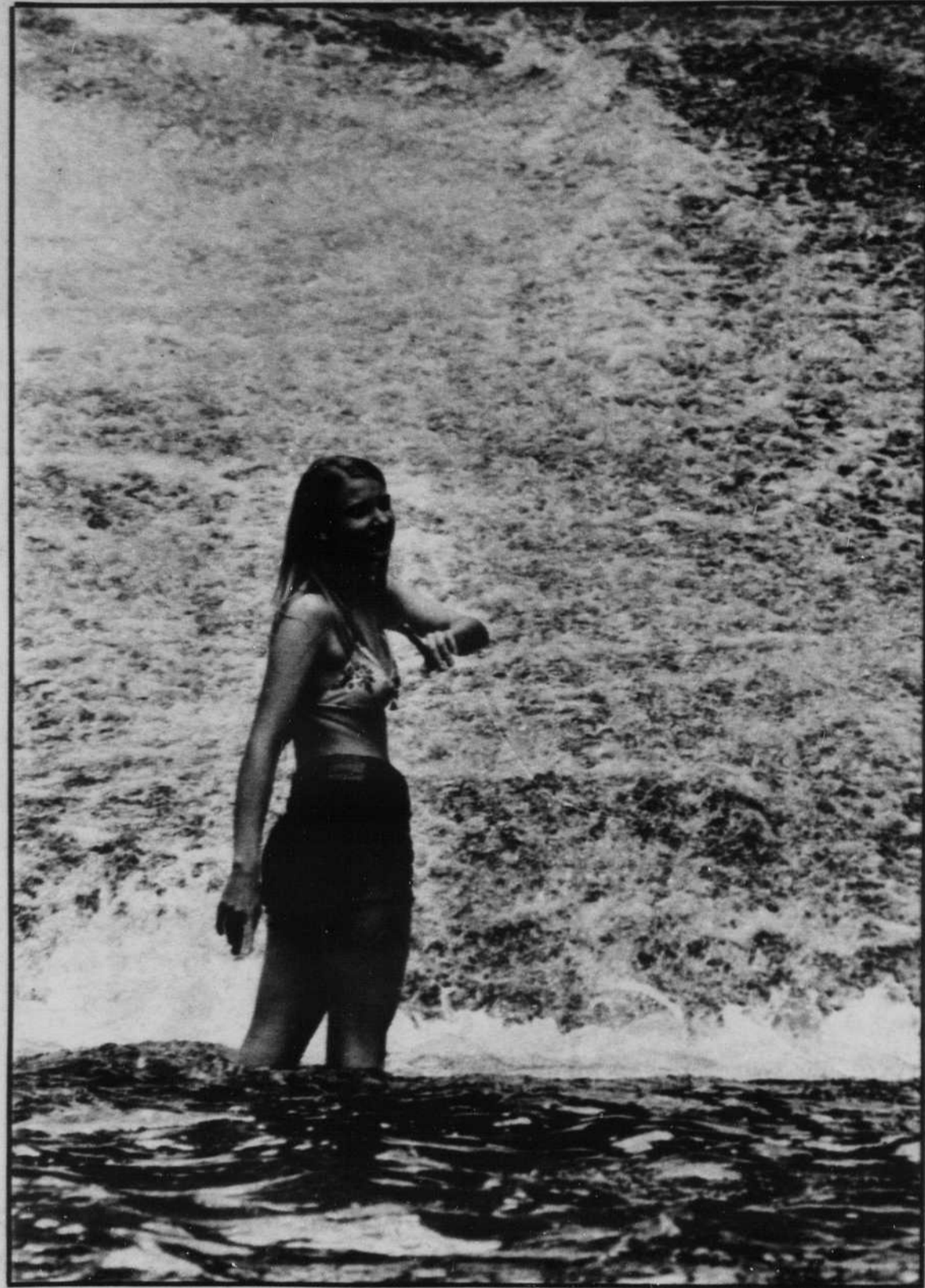


# Fun in the wet



Photos by Warren Morgan, story by Mary Beth Bowen

The newcomer to Eugene will hear a lot of talk about the glorious swimming holes which supposedly abound in this area. The trouble is, he may have a hard time finding them.

Good swimming holes seem to be the most carefully guarded secrets in Eugene, for the simple reason that people are the fastest way to spoil them.

With that in mind, here is a run-down of some of the better-known swimming spots in Eugene. The lesser known ones you'll have to find yourself.

*The Footbridge* is just five-minute bike ride from the University. Follow the bike path to Alton Baker Park and you'll find a long concrete bridge spanning a fairly clean stretch of the Willamette River. The big attraction here is the rapids, which are great for inner-tubing and body-surfing. Beware of the rocks, however, and keep those feet up. This reporter ended up with five stitches in the knee after her first attempt at shooting the surf. It's not as easy as it looks.

*The Old Mill Stream in Springfield* is a half mile down river from the Weyerhaeuser mill. But don't let that stop you—it's quite a diamond in the rough. There are rapids to shoot, lagoon-like pools to float around in, thousands of blackberry bushes and even a warm water area (resulting unfortunately from steam emitted by Weyerhaeuser just upstream). If you can ignore the source, it almost feels like a Jacuzzi.

To get there, take Franklin Boulevard into Springfield, follow

Main Street and take a left on 42nd Street. Continue on 42nd till you pass under a white freeway bridge. Stop about one hundred yards after passing the bridge, climb up the hill to your right, cross the railroad tracks and you'll see a gravel road. Follow it around the bend and voila, you're there.

If you yearn for a truly magnificent Oregon swimming hole, *Wildwood Falls*, which is 35 miles southeast of Eugene, may be just what you're looking for. The falls plummet 50 feet into a deep pool of clear water and the huge rock formations that partially ring the pool make for great diving. And if you want to get away from everybody, there are all sorts of quiet, secluded spots hidden away upstream.

To get there, take I-5 south to the Cottage Grove exit and get on the River Row Road going towards Dorena. Fifteen miles outside of Cottage Grove you'll see a turn-off for Wildwood Falls Park. Follow that road for a mile. You'll hear the falls before you see them.

There are also a few good creeks around Dexter, about 25 miles southeast of Eugene, most notably Wildberry Creek and Fall Creek, but to divulge the whereabouts of these two would be a sacrilege.

One last tip: Oregon river bottoms are hell on the bare feet, so invest in a good pair of tennies. To stand up in the middle of the rapids on nothing but your bare feet is to know true pain. (See related story, Page 14)



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