

Bachelor

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Bachelor” pointers onto the Cascade Lakes Highway for 21 miles to the gated entrance road to Sunrise Lodge on the left. For the free climbing trail, park on the wide shoulder of the highway on the left, beyond the gate.

Walk past the gate, fork left on the paved road toward Sunrise Lodge, and take an unmarked trail that angles up to the left. This path leads to the first of two giant paved parking lots that you have to cross, heading straight toward the mountain. Then take a trail across a cat road up to a forest on the right, where you’ll finally find a sign, “Mt. Bachelor Trail.”

From here on the trail is clear, climbing through mountain hemlock woods between ski runs.

After 1.2 miles, just above the top of the Sunrise chairlift, you’ll cross a service road. This is where you would join the route if you had chosen to take the Pine Marten shortcut.

Or did you choose the shortcut? In that case you’ll want to park at the West Village Lodge instead, a mile west of the Sunrise gate.

West Village has the main parking lot for the ski resort. In summer it is an immense sea of asphalt. Go straight toward the mountain and park near the “Mountain Gateway.”

Your first stop here will be the big building on the right, with a ticket office where you’ll buy a “scenic chairlift ride” for \$19 (\$16 for seniors and \$13 for kids age 6-13).

Ticket in hand, walk 200 feet up a ramp to the left to the Pine Marten Express. Most of the riders will be mountain bikers, with their bikes on special hangers. You’ll be asked to sit down, lower a safety bar, and hang on. Dogs are allowed on the chairlift, but clutch them tightly.

Five minutes later, at the top of the lift, the big building to the right is the Pine Marten Lodge, with restrooms, water, a café, and a bistro. Guided ranger walks leave from here at 11:45am and 1:30pm to discuss alpine ecology.

If you’re headed to the summit, follow green signs for the Summit Cross-over ski run to the left. This dirt road



A few leaning trees line the Mt. Bachelor Trail at Timberline in Krummholz. WILLIAM L. SULLIVAN/SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

goes slightly downhill to the top of the Skyliner chairlift, zigzags downhill, and continues to the base of the Summit Express chairlift.

The road forks near the Summit chairlift. Keep uphill to the right for 0.1 mile to find the crossing of the Mt. Bachelor hiking trail.

Above this road crossing, the summit hiking trail soon switchbacks past timberline. The final trees are struggling whitebark pines. Look for the blooms of red mountain heather and white partridge foot, both parasitized by bright red Indian paintbrush flowers.

The ground here is strewn with ash from the explosion of Crater Lake’s Mt. Mazama in 5677 BC. This suggests that Mt. Bachelor has been dormant since then, although the peak looks very fresh and must have erupted within the past 10,000 years.

Skiers sometimes say Mt. Bachelor must be an active volcano because they have seen fumaroles in snow near the summit. It turns out that these vents are merely the result of warm air seeping uphill through loose rock and lava tubes.

At the top you’ll reach a box-like building for the Summit Express chair-

lift. This also houses a University of Washington observatory that tracks air pollution, especially dust that blows across the Pacific from China’s factories and the Gobi Desert.

Walk to the right around the chairlift building and follow a less steep road/trail for 0.3 mile to the actual summit. Roped off lava areas to the right of the trail protect grape bush, a rare cushion plant with compound leaves and fuzzy flowers.

Sometimes thousands of tortoiseshell butterflies congregate at the summit. Orange and black with scalloped wing edges, they gather here to mate and assess where there have been forest fires. The larvae of tortoiseshell butterflies feed on snowbrush, a plant that thrives after fire. The larvae attack snowbrush and prepare the way for a new generation of tree seedlings.

South Sister is the star of the summit’s view. To the left, note Sparks Lake and its meadows. To the right are Middle Sister, Prouty Point (the “fourth sister”), North Sister, and Broken Top.

The cliff here is the headwall of a dead glacier’s cirque. The glacier’s crescent-shaped terminal moraine of sand, visible far below, remains from the Ice

Age.

Do not be tempted to romp down the mountain to the Pine Marten Lodge, also visible below. Cliffs of loose lava rock block that route. Instead return as you came.

Bill Healy, the vision behind the ski resort here, trained in World War II at Mt. Rainier and Colorado with the elite Tenth Mountain Division, a ski troop that served in Italy. Veterans of that group started ski resorts across America and built the Tenth Mountain Huts in Colorado.

Healy opened the Bachelor Butte ski area in 1958 with two rope tows and a 1000-foot poma lift. He charged \$3 per person.

The Summit Express chairlift opened in 1983. That same year the Bend Chamber of Commerce convinced the Oregon Board of Geographic Names to change the name “Bachelor Butte” to “Mt. Bachelor”, so the ski area would sound bigger. Today Mt. Bachelor is the tenth largest ski resort in the country.

In summer, when the skiers are gone, the old hiking trail to the summit recalls an earlier time, before Mt. Bachelor sparked Central Oregon’s development boom.

Miller

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Should you decide to take up the pastime, the nonprofit Santiam Flycasters provides a wealth of opportunities to develop and improve your talents.

Those range from monthly meetings with knowledgeable and entertaining guest speakers, to monthly group outings as well as networking with other members for fishing trips.

And for those who want to go all in, the Flycasters also have a monthly all-

comers Fly Tying Group that meets at 6 p.m. the Wednesday after the regular second-Thursday club meeting.

I’ve got to tell you, one of the most satisfying fishing experiences that you ever will have is catching your first fish on a fly that you’ve tied.

The Fly Tying Group meets from 6 to 8 p.m. at Garibaldi’s Family Mexican Restaurant, 1111 Edgewater St. NW in West Salem.

To find out more about that group, email Kent Toomb at kent.toomb@gmail.com

Hot item II: Not a subject line that you want to read in an email from your

sister: “Is your old house still standing?”

That would be the little craftsman-style with the big hexagonal window in the living room that I owned for a chunk of the eight years that I lived in Redding, Calif., before moving to Salem three-plus decades ago.

Beats me about the status of that house, but the Carr fire has forced several of my former colleagues at the Record Searchlight to evacuate.

If the subject line on the email was a little disconcerting, how’s this for a grim Facebook message reply from longtime friend Janet O’Neill:

“Thanks for asking (if she was safe).

Evacuated Thursday and have been at four different homes since. Fortunate to have such wonderful friends. My house was OK a couple of days ago, but we have no idea how/when this is going to end.”

Makes you think that whining about the recent hot spell is pretty petty, doesn’t it?

Guilty as charged.

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