

SPORTS



An elevated boardwalk allows views of powerful Majestic Falls at McDowell Creek Falls County Park outside Lebanon. PHOTOS BY ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

McDowell Falls an idyllic place to cool down on hot days

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One of Oregon's great and lesser-known recreation destinations are county parks.

Not as grand or crowded as a state park, but deeper in nature than a city park, county parks are often overlooked gems on the edge of town and forest.

McDowell Creek Falls County Park, northeast of Sweet Home and Lebanon, is a perfect example.

Home to booming waterfalls tucked in a remote canyon of temperate rainforest, McDowell is a miniature slice of Silver Falls State Park, except with fewer rules and smaller crowds.

Instead of Silver Falls' 10 waterfalls,

McDowell has four. Instead of 8 miles of waterfalls trails, it has just 3. But while Silver Falls prohibits dogs on its most popular trails and generally doesn't allow wading or swimming among its waterfalls, McDowell allows both of these things, in an environment that feels closer to a national forest.

McDowell is more laid-back than Silver Falls because it doesn't get nearly the same level of crowds, but it does become a popular place on nice weekends — so come early or better yet, come mid-week. While the waterfalls are most impressive in the rainy season, the ability to combine hiking and waterfall viewing with wading and even swimming have made traveling here during summer a

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There's lots of places to explore the water at McDowell Creek Falls County Park.

Grandchildren make the pandemic personal



Fishing
Henry Miller
Guest columnist

Is it just me, or do the words "Independence Day" while living under a pandemic seem oxymoronic?

Hang in there; we'll get through this. I was reminded of the need for the current precautions recently by a couple of incidents involving the beloved and much-missed grandkids, Jasmine and Nicolas.

Jasmine went to visit a friend recently, and found out later that the friend's mom tested positive for coronavirus.

Welcome to the quarantine clink for Jasmine, her mom, our daughter, Meghan, and Nic until virus test results came back.

Those were blessedly negative. Flash forward a couple of weeks.

Nic goes to visit his dad, Mario, Meghan's ex, and the dad has a friend over to play video games while the grandson is there.

Mario's friend feels punky, gets tested, and bingo.

Then Mario feels funky, gets tested, and you got it, also tests positive. So far, he's riding it out at home.

Who ever thought that unit about contact tracing in that Immunology/Hematology course as a college biology major would play out in grim reality?

I digress.

We just got word that Nic's test came back negative, and since he was isolating from his dad under quarantine, he just came back home.

The one thing we've learned is that if waiting is fretful and anxious for the grandparents, Meghan said it was excruciating for her and the kids.

They had video chats, texts and talked to each other at a safe distance, but it's not the same, Meghan said. Hugs count for kids and moms.

Looks as if we dodged a couple of bullets. So far it's been just some minor casualties during the current pandemic.

Jasmine didn't have her middle-school graduation, and doesn't know if/when she will start physically attending high school.

On our end, several items have been added to the to-do list, post self-isolating.

Among those are a do-over of a trip that we had planned to visit Meghan and the kids during spring break, as well as a summer visit to Oregon by the three of them that we were hoping to pull off.

Visions of outdoor outings and

FISHING THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"I only fish catch-and-release" is the best excuse for never coming home with anything. - Henry

teaching a few beginner fishing, crabbing and clamming lessons were dancing in my head until about mid-March.

Masks, distancing, sanitizing and scrubbing.

For parents and grandparents everywhere, I assume, that mantra seems like the smallest of sacrifices for those who we love.

The whole thing reminds me of a motto that according to some historians dates back to the time of the Roman legions: Death before dishonor.

Looking at the crowded beaches, bars and restaurants of mask-less people in "open" states, one almost gets the feeling that the motto has become "death before discomfort" in a lot of America.

It's back

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has resumed posting its Weekly Recreation Report (online at <https://myodfw.com/recreation-report>)

The report had been on hiatus for

three months because of the pandemic, recreational closures and staffing situations.

Most of the greatest hits are back, topics such as fishing, crabbing and clamming, big-game and game-bird hunting as well as wildlife viewing.

But rather than the previous laundry list of fishable waters, the "new-look" fishing reports feature general conditions for each zone as well as recommended opportunities.

Still missing because of the need to prevent crowding and to maintain social distancing, is the weekly trout-stocking report, but trout plants remain ongoing.

Reductio ad absurdum

Latin for "reduced to absurdity."

I emailed a long-lost friend during the doldrums of the corona lockdown, and he commented in his reply, tongue firmly planted in cheek, that "I didn't know that you'd joined the Jesuits."

No, Jon.

The SJ in the email address is shorthand for Statesman Journal, not the Society of Jesus, the Roman Catholic order aka the Jesuits.

Bless you, though, my friend.

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