

OUTDOORS



An instructor works with a group of students at Mount Hood Meadows' ski school. PHOTOS COURTESY OF MOUNT HOOD MEADOWS

HITTING THE slopes

How to get your kids started downhill skiing, while saving money

Zach Urness
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Over the previous two winters, I'd meant to get my kids into downhill skiing but it just didn't happen. ● The idea of jumping into that world of gear, lessons, a steep learning curve and significant expenses with two kids and just one me was intimidating and a bit overwhelming. ● But this season, with them aged 5 and 7, I finally made it happen and it was a great decision. There is nothing quite like the thrill and confidence that comes from learning to ski at a younger age. But it's still *a lot*. ● Earlier this month, I talked with Mount Hood Meadows lead ski instructor Tyler Barnes about getting kids on the slopes for an episode of the Explore Oregon Podcast. We talked about what age to start kids on skis, what you can reasonably expect at young ages and the best ways to navigate gear and lessons while keeping expenses down. ● You can listen to the entire episode at StatesmanJournal.com/explore or by subscribing on Apple, Stitcher or Spotify. Here's a few highlights from the conversation, which have been edited and shortened.



A young student makes their way down the hill during ski school.

Zach: In your years of ski instructing, what benefits have you seen that come with learning to ski and snowboard at a younger age?

Tyler: When kids learn to ski or snowboard on their own and can do it on their own, it is extremely gratifying. There are little milestones and hurdles and successes that can happen every time you go skiing or snowboarding, whether that's riding the ballroom carpet, making your first turns or adventuring into some slightly deeper snow. There's all these little challenges and it's great to see them be successful and have that smile on their face and the inde-

pendence that it gives them.

Zach: One of the big questions is what age to try and make it happen. You see parents on the slopes all the time with really young children. But what's a good age to start bringing your kids up there, so they actually get a lot from the experience?

Tyler: As soon as they can walk, they can start to get exposure to it. We offer a lesson called "parent and me" for kids ages 3 to 6, where the parent participates in the lesson with

See **SKI SCHOOL**, Page 2B

You're not made of sugar. Get outside and fish for free



Fishing
Henry Miller
Guest columnist

Not to cast shade on expired poet T.S. Elliot, but around our house, February, not April, is the cruelest month.

In 2021, we were without power for 13 days during and in the wake of the epic Feb. 13 ice storm. Happy Valentine's Day, tundra toes.

This year, a spate of near-60ish-degree days and full sun tripped the vent fan to rattle to life in the greenhouse. The thermostat hit 85 degrees on almost

the one-year anniversary of the ice storm.

Crocuses, along with Salemites with winter-pale, fish-belly-white appendages poking out of shorts and T-shirts, were in full bloom.

A day later?
There's 100% chance of rain, verifiable by the pipping of the drops against the office window, with a projected high of 49 and an overnight low of 39.

How's an angler/crabber/clammer supposed to plan an outing?

Anybody know where to get a rain suit with zip-off legs and sleeves on the pants and jacket?

Shortly after arriving in the Great Green Northwest several decades ago, a fishing buddy had enough of my weath-

er sniveling.

"Damn it, Henry; this is Oregon. You're not made of sugar. Get out there!"

Point taken. Dan's sentiments were short, succinct and accurate, as experience has proven.

And in this case, prescient, because despite a forecast of rain both days, President's Day Weekend, Feb. 19-20 are the first of six Free Fishing Days in Oregon this year, during which no licenses or tags are required in the Beaver State for anglers, crabbers and clambers.

On a personal note, despite being fully validated and licensed, it gives me and others who didn't buy the add-on, two-rod validation a chance to, ahem,

See **MILLER**, Page 2B



The fan kicked on at 85 degrees in the greenhouse on Feb. 12. HENRY MILLER/SPECIAL FOR THE STATESMAN JOURNAL