

Husband and father tired of being ignored at home



DEAR ABBY ADVICE

DEAR ABBY: I have been with my wife for 25 years, married for 22 of them. I love her very much, but sometimes I feel it isn't mutual. We have three children, all girls, ranging in age from early teens to mid-20s. My wife also has an older son from a previous marriage. My complaint for years has been that I am the least important person in the world to her. The kids, work and friends always come first. I understand that kids have needs, but I should get some attention once in a while. We will be in the middle of a conversation, and if one of them walks into the room, texts or calls, she stops midsentence and totally ignores me. Sometimes I talk to her, and she doesn't even hear me if they are in the room. She and the kids laugh and joke about it, but I don't think it's funny. I have worked hard to support them, 60-hour weeks and week-ends to make ends meet, and I feel like I'm an afterthought to all of them. I spoil them on birthdays, Mother's Day and Christmas. One year not one of them remembered my birthday. Am I overreacting? — INVISIBLE MAN IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR INVISIBLE: What has been going on under your roof is no laughing matter. But your passivity may be partly responsible for it. You should have told your wife years ago how you felt, but it isn't too late to do it now. Tell her you feel ignored and unappreciated by her and the children. Tell her you are unhappy, and if she wants the marriage to last, she will join you in marital counseling because you are tired of being low man on the totem pole. I don't think doing that would be overreacting. In fact, I think it's overdue. DEAR ABBY: Our daughter and her cousin are the same age. Both are medical school graduates. Eight months ago, when this cousin got married at an in-person wedding, he was showered with gifts from the family. My daughter, in contrast, had a private ceremony because of COVID concerns and sent a wedding announcement to the family. To the shock and amazement of my husband, my daughter and myself, not a single person in the family thought to send her a gift or even a card. There's no bad blood in the family. Everyone appears to love her. She is disappointed and devastated. Should I just get over this, or should I say something to the family? She and her husband live 2,000 miles away, and at this point, I can't envision them making the effort to fly home and see the family ever again. — BAFFLED IN TEXAS

DEAR BAFFLED: I don't think anyone intended to give your daughter short shrift. The rules of etiquette state that wedding gifts are required if someone is attending a wedding. While it would have been nice of these relatives to have sent a gift or at least a card, they were not required to. I see no reason why you shouldn't inform these relatives that your daughter was deeply hurt that no one was inclined to send her and her husband so much as a congratulatory card. ■ Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

POLE CREEK

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How far you go before abandoning internal combustion for leg and lung power depends on your own, and your rig's, tolerance for steep, narrow and boulder-strewn roads. There are, it scarcely needs to be said, no guardrails. The 5536 and 150 roads aren't terrible. I wouldn't drive a low-slung sedan on either, but anything with decent clearance should go unscathed. The 160 and 170 roads are notably bumpier. The final "road" — there's a sign with a number, at any rate — is the 200 road, and it begins with a pitch so steep I was seeing mainly the Cruiser's hood through the windshield. If you park at the 170/200 junction it's about 2.6 miles to the point where the Pole Creek Ridge trail ends at an intersection with the Elkhorn Crest National Recreation Trail. That modest distance belies the physical challenge, though. Pole Creek Ridge trail climbs relentlessly, and often steeply (albeit perhaps not quite as steeply as that aforementioned section of the 200 road.) The route gains about 1,200 feet of elevation, reaching about 8,100 feet at the Crest trail junction. As Lisa and I started the hike it occurred to me that we hadn't been here for 14 years. I didn't feel quite so chagrined at taking the wrong turn down the ridge when I realized how much time had elapsed. Too much time, I thought, because Pole Creek Ridge is a tempting des-

tinuation despite the vertebrae-rattling access roads. The ridge juts from the Elkhorns rather like a flying buttress on a Gothic cathedral. This spine of high ground separates its namesake creek to the east, and Wind Creek, another tributary to Cracker Creek, to the west. Although I've probably plied the trail a dozen times or so, I either hadn't noticed before, or had since forgotten, that the ridge boasts an unusual wealth of conifer species in a relatively small area. We noted grand firs, Douglas-firs, lodgepole pines, whitebark pines, sub-alpine firs, tamaracks and, on a particularly exposed spot, a lone ponderosa pine. The ponderosa in particular surprised me, since the species doesn't often range above 6,500 feet in North-eastern Oregon, and this one, according to the altimeter app on my phone, was at about 7,200. I'm no ecologist (or any other sort of ologist) but I have been fortunate to share a trail with several scientists who can deduce much from the lay of the land and its flora, notably the late Charles Johnson, a Forest Service ecologist for whom the Blue Mountains was a vast laboratory. I suspect that ponderosa was taking advantage of its southern exposure. The longer period of daily sunlight creates a microclimate that is, in effect, hundreds of feet lower. And ponderosas thrive in sunny places. I noticed too, even higher on the ridge, that a few Douglas-firs were interspersed among the sub-alpine firs and whitebark pines, the latter two typically the dominant, and often only, trees at these rel-



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

A whitebark pine snag along the Elkhorn Crest trail on Pole Creek Ridge.

atively lofty elevations. The Douglas-firs, like that lone ponderosa, were growing on south-facing slopes, and I imagine they were taking advantage of the same beneficent conditions. Besides being a hospitable place for certain conifers, Pole Creek Ridge marks the general boundary of a Forest Service grazing allotment. A recently reconstructed fence meanders along the ridge, and you'll have to go through three gates (one along the 170 Road). Remember to close any gates you have to open. As the trail ascends, the forest thins until, over the final half mile or so, only the whitebarks and the sub-alpine firs persist, all but oblivious to deep snow and

polar temperatures. About 0.7 of a mile from the Crest trail, the route narrows and becomes a proper footpath (albeit one that is open to motorcycles, the tracks of which we saw.) The trail, Lisa and I muttered to each other as we plodded ever upward, has the torturous design typical of trails in the Elkhorns. Which is to say, it takes a direct route in defiance of the topography. The difference between the type of trail represented by Pole Creek Ridge, and the many paths in the Wallowas, is so dramatic that I find it ever fascinating. Most trails in the Wallowas were built to accommodate horses, and as such they attack the terrain obliquely, with ample use of switch-

Pole Creek Ridge is a tempting destination despite the vertebrae-rattling access roads.

backs to make the ascent of even a steep slope a gentle, albeit much longer, undertaking. Lisa and I mused that the final 0.7 of a mile, had the trail been constructed to the standards of the Wallowas, would have been at least half again as long, but accomplished with much fewer gasps in the thin alpine air. Eventually we got to the Crest trail. It's not much like other trails in the Elkhorns, nor does it resemble most routes in the Wallowas. The Crest trail is comparatively flat but it achieves this not by incorporating switchbacks but by staying stubbornly, as befits its name, near the top of the ridge. The trail, which spans 24 miles from its southern terminus at Marble Creek Pass to the northern trailhead near Anthony Lake, is one of the grand paths in Oregon. The views from almost every one of those miles is expansive. But I find the vantage point of the Pole Creek Ridge trail among the more fetching. As we sat on the trail (me clumsily coming down on a patch of sandwort, a particularly prickly variety of groundcover that left spines scattered in my shorts), we could see, arrayed as in a diorama, peaks spanning left to right (or, rather, from south to west) that included Ironside

Mountain and Castle Rock, Strawberry Mountain and Dixie Butte and Vinegar Hill and, close to the west, Windy Creek Peak and Mount Ireland. To the north, the Crest trail was visible cutting through patches of alpine fleeceflower turning rusty red in the waning days of this torrid late summer (we were there on Sunday, Aug. 28.) We could also see how dramatically the geologic character of the Elkhorns changes, the generally brown sedimentary stone of the southern part of the range — primarily argillite, a type of compacted mudstone, and chert — giving way to the white granitic rocks that dominate the northern half of the range. I haven't found anything of the history of the Pole Creek Ridge trail, but I suspect it predates the Crest trail by some decades, starting as a route pioneered by miners, perhaps with an assist from sheepherders who once drove their flocks along the Elkhorns. The Crest trail was extended to Pole Creek Ridge in the 1970s, and in 1981 the 7 miles from there to Marble Creek Pass were blasted and gouged from slopes that range from merely steep to vertical. Lisa and I lamented that we hadn't time to indulge in the Crest trail's pleasant flatness. We started the steep, muscle-straining descent, pausing only to chuckle at the single, half-hearted switchback just below the Crest trail junction, a sort of desultory dirty trick played by a trail builder who's probably long in the grave but whose joke, if that's how it was intended, lives on.

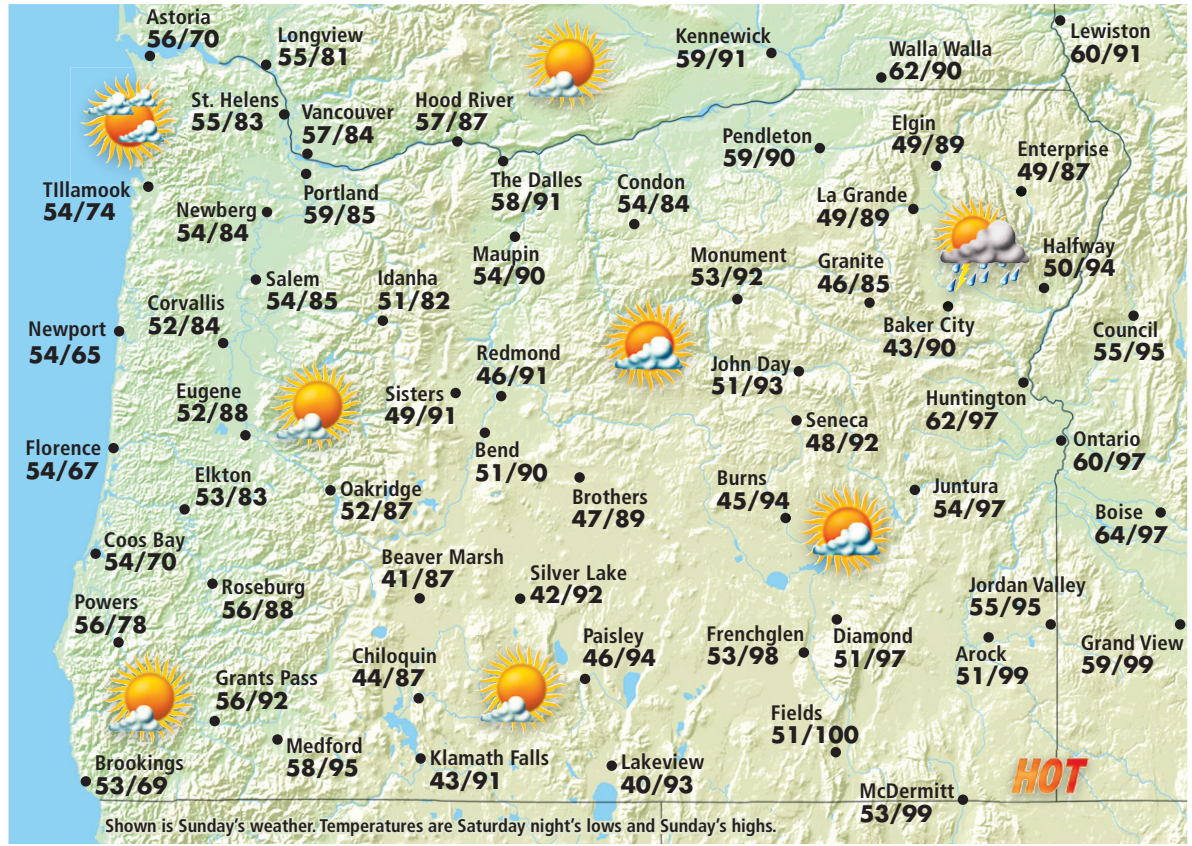


Weather forecast table with columns for TONIGHT, SUN, MON, TUE, WED and rows for Baker City, La Grande, and Enterprise. Includes temperature ranges and comfort index values.

ALMANAC THURSDAY EXTREMES TEMPERATURES Baker City La Grande Elgin High Thursday 91° 95° 100° Low Thursday 44° 48° 49° PRECIPITATION (inches) Thursday 0.00 0.00 0.00 Month to date 0.00 0.00 0.00 Normal month to date 0.01 0.02 0.03 Year to date 4.73 9.22 18.21 Normal year to date 6.43 11.35 15.94

AGRICULTURAL INFO. HAY INFORMATION SUNDAY Lowest relative humidity 20% Afternoon wind NW at 6 to 12 mph Hours of sunshine 8.0 Evapotranspiration 0.24 RESERVOIR STORAGE (through midnight Friday) Phillips Reservoir 4% of capacity Unity Reservoir 37% of capacity Owyhee Reservoir 16% of capacity McKay Reservoir 67% of capacity Wallowa Lake 3% of capacity Thief Valley Reservoir 9% of capacity STREAM FLOWS (through midnight Thursday) Grande Ronde at Troy 546 cfs Thief Valley Reservoir near North Powder 65 cfs Burnt River near Unity 92 cfs Umatilla River near Gibbon 45 cfs Minam River at Minam 87 cfs Powder River near Richland 21 cfs WEATHER HISTORY Denver's earliest snow on record occurred Sept. 3, 1961. City accumulations reached 4 inches. The foothills west of town were buried by wind-whipped snow more than 2 feet deep. SUN & MOON SAT. SUN. Sunrise 6:16 a.m. 6:17 a.m. Sunset 7:26 p.m. 7:25 p.m. Moonrise 2:38 p.m. 3:51 p.m. Moonset 11:09 p.m. none MOON PHASES First Full Last New Sep 3 Sep 10 Sep 17 Sep 25

AROUND OREGON AND THE REGION



REGIONAL CITIES SUN. MON. City HI/Lo/W HI/Lo/W City HI/Lo/W HI/Lo/W ASTORIA 70/56/c 70/54/pc LEWISTON 91/62/s 89/61/s ASTORIA 70/56/c 70/54/pc LEWISTON 91/62/s 89/61/s BEND 90/49/s 84/53/s LONGVIEW 81/57/s 78/54/pc BEND 90/49/s 84/53/s LONGVIEW 81/57/s 78/54/pc BOISE 97/64/s 97/65/s MEACHAM 87/45/s 82/47/s BOISE 97/64/s 97/65/s MEACHAM 87/45/s 82/47/s BROOKINGS 69/54/pc 71/54/s MEDFORD 95/59/s 95/60/s BROOKINGS 69/54/pc 71/54/s MEDFORD 95/59/s 95/60/s BURNS 94/48/s 94/50/s NEWPORT 65/55/c 66/51/pc BURNS 94/48/s 94/50/s NEWPORT 65/55/c 66/51/pc COOS BAY 70/58/pc 72/53/pc OLYMPIA 78/55/s 77/49/pc COOS BAY 70/58/pc 72/53/pc OLYMPIA 78/55/s 77/49/pc CORVALLIS 84/56/s 83/53/s ONTARIO 97/60/s 97/58/s CORVALLIS 84/56/s 83/53/s ONTARIO 97/60/s 97/58/s COUNCIL 95/55/s 95/57/s PASCO 93/60/s 91/53/s COUNCIL 95/55/s 95/57/s PASCO 93/60/s 91/53/s ELGIN 89/51/s 86/51/s PENDLETON 90/60/s 87/58/s ELGIN 89/51/s 86/51/s PENDLETON 90/60/s 87/58/s EUGENE 88/57/s 84/52/s PORTLAND 85/62/s 80/58/pc EUGENE 88/57/s 84/52/s PORTLAND 85/62/s 80/58/pc HOOD RIVER 87/64/s 84/56/s REDMOND 91/48/s 86/51/s HOOD RIVER 87/64/s 84/56/s REDMOND 91/48/s 86/51/s IMNAHA 93/59/s 92/61/s SALEM 88/59/s 86/58/s IMNAHA 93/59/s 92/61/s SALEM 88/59/s 86/58/s JOHN DAY 93/51/s 91/52/s SALEM 85/58/s 83/54/pc JOHN DAY 93/51/s 91/52/s SALEM 85/58/s 83/54/pc JOSEPH 87/50/s 86/50/s SPOKANE 86/58/s 83/54/s JOSEPH 87/50/s 86/50/s SPOKANE 86/58/s 83/54/s KENNEWICK 91/61/s 89/53/s THE DALLES 91/64/s 89/57/s KENNEWICK 91/61/s 89/53/s THE DALLES 91/64/s 89/57/s KLAMATH FALLS 91/45/s 93/51/s UKIAH 85/45/s 82/48/s KLAMATH FALLS 91/45/s 93/51/s UKIAH 85/45/s 82/48/s LAKEVIEW 93/44/s 94/47/s WALLA WALLA 90/63/s 85/58/s LAKEVIEW 93/44/s 94/47/s WALLA WALLA 90/63/s 85/58/s