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WEEKEND BREAK

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The sun sinks into
the sea behind
Clatsop Spit.
Photos by Ron Baldwin

Here comes summer

2020 may mark the most unusual season yet

By RON BALDWIN

Welcome to what may be the most unusual summer in recent memory.

People in the Columbia-Pacific region normally embrace summer as the reward for enduring our damp, cold winters. We usually embrace the new season with great enthusiasm but with the dual threats of a pandemic and civil unrest, many are somewhat skittish about how summer 2020 will play out. As we continue to follow social distancing guidelines, we're faced with adapting to small gatherings throughout the season.

So, what is summer? The word summer is taken from the Old English word "sumor." Anyone who's been to England in that season may not understand how the English learned anything about summer at all. Still, much of our traditional summer shore visits were handed down from Europeans. Here in Oregon, wealthy Portland families, emulating their European and Atlantic coast peers, began "summering," as they called it, in the towns of Gearhart and Seaview in the 1880s. The merchants and services that served these communities gave birth to the tourist industry that has been the backbone of coastal economies ever since.

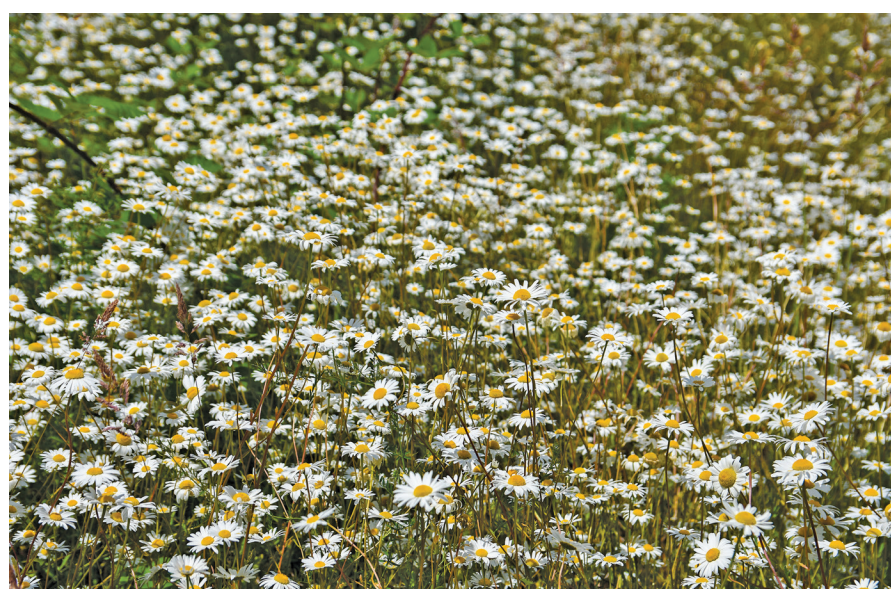
Astronomers and chronologists consider summer to be the time between the summer solstice, around June 21, and the autumnal equinox, around Sept. 23. In the American education system, summer vacation was scheduled to reflect and serve the agricultural base since most families were large and children helped raise and harvest crops. Here on the North Coast, people generally consider summer to be the months of June, July, August and September with maybe a pinch of May; roughly, Memorial Day to Labor Day. This encompasses quite a range in temperature and precipitation levels. In the last few years, the weather on the North Coast has stayed warmer throughout October, too.

What to do?

What can we look forward to this summer, you might ask? Well, like many questions, the answer depends on who you're talking to. Communities have all canceled their Fourth of July celebrations and the ensuing fireworks displays, so the holiday may be somewhat quieter. The family barbe-



A lone surfer salutes the arch in a rock near Cape Kiwanda.



Native daisies by the thousands decorate a field near Brownsmead.

cue will have to suffice for those who want to celebrate.

Even though all states have opened

in some respects, if you want to travel this summer, be aware some states still have travel restrictions and quar-

antines. Oregon has opened a number of parks for access and fewer for camping. Washington parks are also open for access and camping at some parks at 50% capacity. National forest campgrounds and recreation areas are mostly open.

According to some travel experts, 2020 may see the return of the family road trip. RV rental inquiries are off the charts and families are frantically planning and calling for reservations at campgrounds across the country. Hollywood created the powerful term "summer road trip," and countless movies since have depicted everything from endless hilarity and fun to outright mayhem. Americans ate it up. Remember the one with the long car ride with kids and a mountain of camping gear, dad's gone silly trying to maintain everyone while mom burns the pancakes, oh yeah, and the bear?

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