

# Cottage Grove: A great place for company

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Days of bright, warm sunshine that defy the calendar's prediction for this time of year never fail to draw Oregonians, blinking and ready for action, from out of the gray that can typify a northwest winter.

Such uncharacteristic weather worked its magic in Cottage Grove this past weekend, and just about everywhere one looked, it was possible to see Grovers soaking up the sun, their work or play planned specifically to take advantage of Mother Nature's gift in an ordinarily soggy time of year. Looking a little closer, though, one could also identify visitors to our fair city, whose luck it was to experience some of the best that the Cottage Grove area has to offer under brilliant skies.

Since moving to Oregon a decade ago, my wife and I have always cherished the opportunity to bring visitors here to show them firsthand what we've been telling them for a long time: that this state, and particularly our area, offers a chance to revel in outdoor beauty and recreation from the moment one steps out-of-doors. It's the reason we brought our loved ones to Oregon for a wedding that showcased the area's natural splendor, and a big reason why we can expect visitors at various times throughout the year, be it swimming or skiing or berry-picking season.

This weekend, we were fortunate to have in town a couple of good friends from Portland and their playful pooches, and as is typically the case, visitors also served to bring together locals who don't see enough of each other. Through a couple days of glorious sunny weather, we proved that it's possible — the typical provisions necessary for a weekend away notwithstanding — to experience world-class recreation in South Lane County without spending so much as one thin dime.

After a mammoth Italian feast Friday evening, the fun began in earnest Saturday morning, as my friend, Zach, and I took our two chocolate labs for a romp on the Brice



photo by Jon Stinnett

Beautiful, dry weather makes for great relaxation along the banks of Dorena Reservoir. Pictured from left to right are Shealynn Ochoa, Nicole Pushell and Christina Conant, with loyal pooches standing by.

Creek Trail, long one of my favorite local destinations and a trail that offers miles of stunning views alongside the impossibly clear creek water rushing nearby.

Knocks Brewing served as a welcome treat post-ride. Those who didn't make the ride instead had a great time relaxing along the dry shoreline of Dorena Reservoir.

The next morning brought the continuation of a traditional four-person, best-disc Frisbee golf match. While not much of a disc golfer (I swear I'd improve if I got to play more), a round with friends is not to be missed, and with decent play and fast movers, it's possible to walk 18 holes at the beautiful local course in just a few hours. The

course already looks terrific this year thanks to the efforts of a lot of volunteers and city employees. It's indeed one of the often-unheralded gems of South Lane County, and a great time was indeed had by all Sunday morning, though the time change gave this particular golfer a late start.

Over the years, as life has brought our group the joys and responsibilities of adulthood, our gatherings have evolved, and these days we spend as much time and energy keeping up with children and work as whooping it up at night and recovering from a taste of the nightlife the next day. But a wholesome kind of life it is indeed, and all the more so because of the outdoor opportunities all around us in this part of the world.

The morning had the added wonder of watching Zach's dog, Willow — a 10-year old, blind Lab — navigate the uneven footing, the protruding tree roots, rocks and stumps along the trail with only the occasional slip or wavering footing — at full speed. "Willy" has amazed me over the years and taught me much about resilience and the power of trusting those we love, but no more so than for Saturday's trail run, which we extended to an eight-mile jaunt.

Zach had little time to savor the run, however, and training for an upcoming triathlon dictated that he try one more of the three disciplines. A group of three cyclists thus set out for a 35-mile loop of the Row River Trail, where it was possible Saturday afternoon to commune with hundreds of folks out for a ride, a run or a skate. Beers at Hard

## c.g. Daytripper

## OFFBEAT

Continued from page 4A

night on the distant shore of Oregon, but they dared not try to make for them for fear of running into an unseen field of rocks and reefs.

The next day was equally merciless. Toward sundown, the ship's cook — realizing they were due for another horrible, sleepless, thirsty night — became delirious and, leaning over the side, started gulping down seawater. Within a few hours he was lying in the bilge, waiting for death.

It came to him — but in a particularly cruel way. About 2 a.m. that night, they came across a big steamship, which cut power after they started hailing it. Thinking they had been spotted and were about to be rescued, the jubilant sailors woke up the cook.

"He got on his feet and seemed rational," said Zube. "Just then the vessel got under way again and left us. Then the cook gave up the fight. He lay down to die. Half an hour later we found his body cold."

All the next day, the feeble sailors saw ship after ship; but none saw them, and kept on their way. Finally, as a fourth miserable night came upon them, the castaways made out Tatoosh Lighthouse, off Cape Flattery at the mouth of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. With their waning strength, they guided the little boat around the light and into the protected waters of the Strait.

A few hours later, the crew of the little six-ton sloop Teckla, anchored securely in the harbor of Neah Bay, were startled by a weak, incoherent voice calling to them from over the side. Peering out, they saw a battered steel lifeboat slowly drawing toward them.

A few minutes later, the three survivors were safely on board the sloop, being warmed up — and tasting the first water that had passed their lips in 78 hours, since that deadly wave had bum's-rushed them off the deck of their dying freighter.

"Their tongues were so swollen from thirst that they could scarcely articulate," the Tele-

gram reported.

The next day, the news was flashed to the astonished authorities in Astoria, and the other survivors were given the news. The men had sailed their leaky, battered, one-oared lifeboat more than 200 miles to safety.

As for the Emily G. Reed, this ship has become to Rockaway Beach what the Peter Iredale is for Warrenton — almost like a municipal treasure. It's still buried there, deep in the sands of the beach, and for the last hundred years heavy winter storms have regularly uncovered parts of it. Most recently, a 75-foot-long section of the bow was uncovered in 2010, and the heavy black timbers looked sound enough to last another century.

(Sources: "Perils of the Sea: Ship Emily Reed Wrecked," Barrier Miner (Australian newspaper), 4-06-1908; Tobias, Lori. "Shifting sands reveal 102-year-old shipwreck," Portland Oregonian, 12-29-2010; Marshall, Don. Oregon Shipwrecks. Portland: Binford, 1984)

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