

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.

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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 Northeastern 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-



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

Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

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 Wallows, is so dramatic that I find it ever fascinating. Most trails in the Wallows 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 Wallows, 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 Wallows.

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 fleecflower 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

	TONIGHT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED
	Mainly clear	Sunshine and very warm	Sunny and very warm	Sunny and hot	Sunshine
Baker City	43	90 48	89 47	95 48	89 45
Comfort Index™	8	5	6	5	7
La Grande	49	89 51	86 49	94 54	83 45
Comfort Index™	8	7	7	5	7
Enterprise	49	87 47	85 50	91 55	85 46
Comfort Index™	6	6	8	4	6

Comfort Index takes into account how the weather will feel based on a combination of factors. A rating of 10 feels very comfortable while a rating of 0 feels very uncomfortable.

ALMANAC			
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

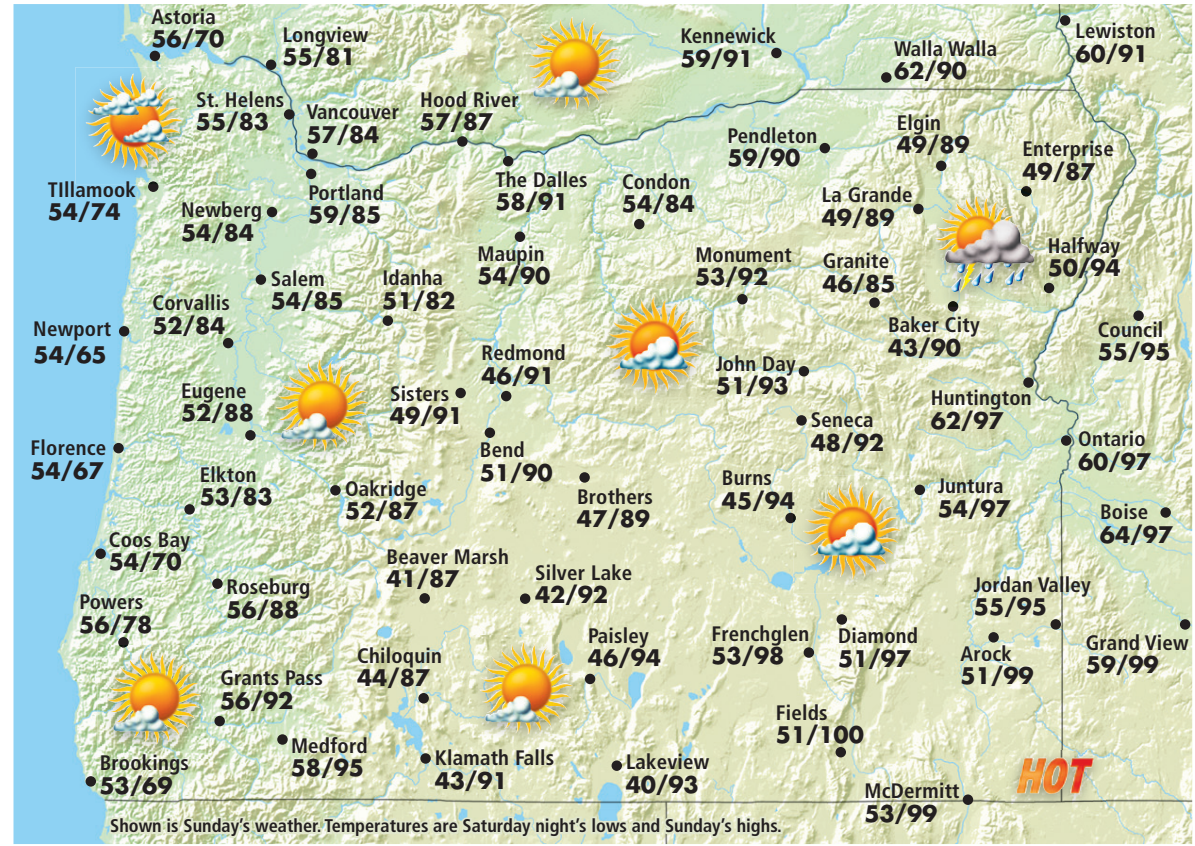
THURSDAY EXTREMES			
NATION (for the 48 contiguous states)	High: 124°	Death Valley, Calif.	
	Low: 30°	Bodie State Park, Calif.	
	Wettest: 2.10"	Terrell, Texas	
OREGON	High: 102°	Medford	
	Low: 35°	Lakeview	
	Wettest: Trace	Brookings	

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
☾	☽	☾	☾
Sept 3	Sept 10	Sept 17	Sept 25

AROUND OREGON AND THE REGION



REGIONAL CITIES					
City	SUN. HI/Lo/W	MON. HI/Lo/W	City	SUN. HI/Lo/W	MON. HI/Lo/W
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
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
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
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
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
Hermiston	93/63/s	90/55/s	Powers	78/58/s	77/51/s
Hood River	87/64/s	84/56/s	Redmond	91/48/s	86/51/s
Imnaha	93/59/s	92/61/s	Roseburg	88/59/s	86/58/s
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
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
Lakeview	93/44/s	94/47/s	Walla Walla	90/63/s	85/58/s

RECREATION FORECAST SUNDAY					
ANTHONY LAKES	Plenty of sunshine	70 44	PHILLIPS LAKE	Sunny; very warm	87 46
MT. EMILY REC.	Sunshine	77 48	BROWNLEE RES.	Sunshine and hot	96 55
EAGLE CAP WILD.	Warm with sunshine	75 39	EMIGRANT ST. PARK	Plenty of sunshine	81 42
WALLOWA LAKE	Very warm	87 50	MCKAY RESERVOIR	Plenty of sunshine	88 59
THIEF VALLEY RES.	Sunshine and warm	90 48	RED BRIDGE ST. PARK	Sunny; very warm	89 51

Weather(W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice