



Pilot Butte as seen from the top of Overturf Butte, located on Bend's west side.

## Overturf

Continued from B1

Few would rate this the best trail in Bend, but for an in-town hike with some elevation gain and lots of bang-for-your-buck views, it will more than do. And there may be no better view of Pilot Butte than the one from there, at least not one the general public can access. Yet surprisingly few locals seem to be aware that this trail exists.

### Bittersweet memory lane

For this reporter, this short and simple hike was an emotional journey.

There's a lump in my throat even as I write this because this trail holds a special place in our family's collective heart, even if we've seldom ventured here.

For three years, from 2002-04, when Lucy, her twin Lilly and their older sister Caroline were but babies and a toddler, we lived in a little rental house two blocks east on Fresno Avenue.

This trail was a destination on family walks, as were Parrilla Grill, the long-gone Dairy Queen across the street and the erstwhile Galveston Avenue coffee shop Cup O' Magic, whose business model begs for re-creation. It was homey and brightly lit, with comfy couches instead of the here's-your-coffee-now-go metal or wood chairs that seem to be mainstays in shops today.

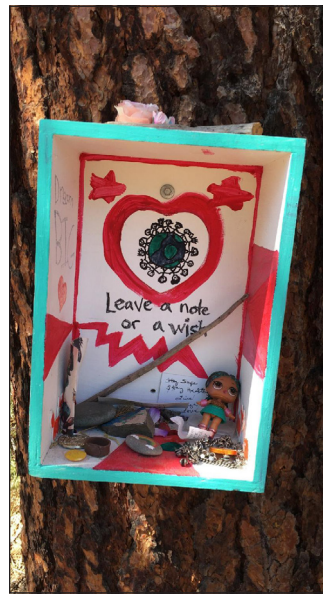
I digress, as older adults will do. I was in my mid-30s back then, and judging from my breathing on this hike,

more capable of uphill climbing than now. The first section from the park plugs into a service road, across which is Overturf Dog Park.

Lilly and I made our way up the trail — perhaps my first time back here since the days I pushed or carried Lilly and her sisters up. Did I really used to push the double baby jogger up this thing, sometimes carrying a third child in a sling?

Of course I did. I know I did. It just that it seems impossible now.

Those days were overwhelming. Everything felt Sisyphean. We were two working parents with no close family in the area. One time, as I stood in the yard with Lilly nestled in one arm and Lucy in the other, a neighbor passed by and said what people said often back then: "You



David Jasper/Bulletin photos

This wish-filled decorative box affixed to a tree is among the reminders that Overturf Butte is very much an in-town hike.

sure have your hands full." Ha ha, yes. Literally.

I know I wore the stress of it all on my exterior way too often. Would that I could, I'd do it all over again, better this time, maybe with a smile instead of a grimace.

Today, Caroline is 21 and a student at Portland State University. Lilly and Lucy are 18 and on their way to Southern Oregon University and University of Oregon, respectively, in less than two months. Where did the years go?

I don't know. All I know is my once-too-full hands are emptier now. My load is lighter; my heart is a mix of pride and sadness, joy and regret. I think of them heading away all too soon, and I know that the empty nest that once seemed far off and theoretical was actually the destination all along.

Nothing prepared me for the rigors of parenthood, and I'm not sure anything will prepare me for the next stage. Right now, I just try to savor my kids' company, and the moments like those shared with Lilly on this hike.

You can't go home again, but it sure doesn't hurt to try.

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## TOP PICKS WHERE TO EXPLORE

### Out in the High Desert

**Ancient Juniper Trail** — With the recent rain, the Oregon Badlands might be in better shape, terrain-wise. So head out early before the heat or hold off until after one of the rainstorms that may come our way again this week and check out the old trees along the easy 3.1-mile loop. There is no shade, so if you do decide to hike it, bring lots of water, sunscreen and a hat to keep cool. Park at the Flatiron Rock Trailhead and keep left.

**Has No Horse Trail** — The 11.8-mile trail near Horse Ridge east of Bend can get pretty sandy in the summer months, but with the fresh, and welcome, rain this week, it may be a bit firmer to ride. Pick up the trail at the end of Mad Max Drive and climb up the ridge for a pretty great view to the south then continue down the backside along Crooked Arm where you can connect to Crazyhorse for an even longer ride. Most trails at Horse Ridge have rocky and technical sections, and this intermediate trail is no different.

**Otter Bench Trail** — The 3.4-mile out-and-back trail near Crooked River Ranch takes hikers along the Crooked River Canyon. There is limited shade, so start early and bring lots of water because the views are worth the extra sweat. The trail is fairly easy unless you want to take the Pink Trail spur down closer to the river or unless you want to continue on to the Opal Canyon Trail which adds an additional few miles to your trip before it loops around at the Crooked River Arm of Lake Billy Chinook. Keep clear of the Horny Hollow Trail as the area currently under its seasonal wildlife closure.



Mark Morical/Bulletin file

The Otter Bench trail system offers several spots to take in the views of the Crooked River Gorge.

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