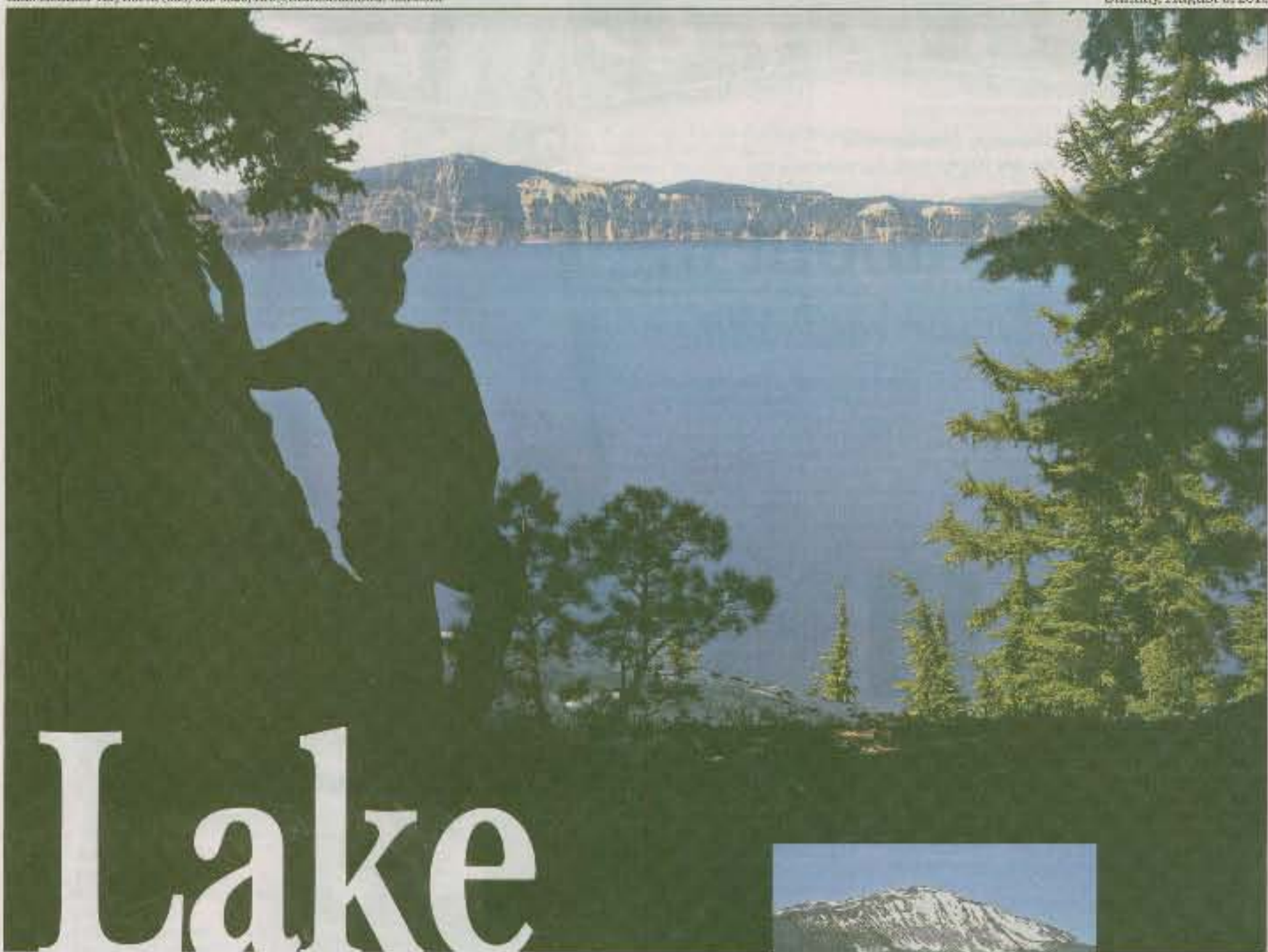


Arts & Life

SECTION
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Life: Heather Rayburn, (503) 589-8920, life@StatesmanJournal.com

Sunday, August 8, 2010



Lake HOPPING

Phil Decker and his family explore Crater Lake and its nearby cousins, Diamond and Lemolo Lake



A-frame cabins can be rented at Lemolo Lake Resort.



A family (left) enjoys the cool water of Diamond Lake, a lake near Crater Lake. Irma Decker (above) takes in a breathtaking view of Crater Lake.

PHIL DECKER
Special to the Statesman Journal

IF YOU GO ...

THE CRATER LAKE LODGE: Located on the edge of the caldera overlooking Crater Lake, open from late-May to mid-October. (888) 774-2728 or www.craterlakelodges.com

CRATER LAKE: For general information, the latest road, weather and trail information, check www.nps.gov/crla or call (541) 584-3000. For Volcano Boat Cruises or half-day or full-day Wizard Island Tours, call (888) 774-2728. Typically, the Volcano Boat Tours season runs from early July to mid-September (weather permitting).

LEMOLO LAKE: 30 miles north of Crater Lake National Park and 10 miles from Diamond Lake, in the Umpqua National Forest, with hiking trails, fishing, boating and swimming, plus options of camping, hotel or cabins, open year-round. (541) 643-0750 or www.lemololakeresort.com

DIAMOND LAKE: 5 miles north of Crater Lake National Park on Highway 138, with hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, fishing and snow sports, with motel rooms, cabins and camping, open year-round. (800) 733-7383 or www.diamondlake.net

By PHIL DECKER
Special to the Statesman Journal

We were all set to go to the Grand Canyon. The plan was for my wife, Irma, two of my daughters, Alex and Toni, and I to fly to Vegas, stay a few nights at a hotel with an amusement park in the lobby, then rent a car to tour the north and south rims of the canyon.

Our adventure's demise began when we started checking out 10-day forecasts; 100, 99, 101.

During a dinner conversation, we got cold feet, as we kvetched about the prospect of hiking in the scorching desert heat, spending nights in lodges without AC and spending so much money on airfare, a rental car, hotels, eating out. Alex seized the moment to remind us that we've never even seen our very own national park, Crater Lake, though we've lived in Oregon for 16 years. So, the next day, I cancelled our Vegas/Grand Canyon reservations and planned a Crater Lake tour. Our travel window was just two weeks away. The Crater Lake Lodge was full. Diamond Lake Resort was booked. But the Lemolo Lake Resort, about 45 minutes from the crater, had a reasonably priced lakeside A-frame cabin for rent.

A sunny morning in mid-July, we watered the garden and headed south on Interstate 5; one hour to Eugene; another to Roseburg, then we followed the clear rapids of the Umpqua River along Route 138 for about 70 miles.

As soon as we got to the cabin, we were greeted by a hungry pack of vampire mosquitoes. Irma and the girls raced inside and quickly shut the door. They enjoyed a good laugh watching me run multiple laps from the van to the cabin, schlepping duffle bags, the cooler, charcoal, beach towels, blankets, board games ... as I tried in vain to swat the swarm.

After licking my wounds (not literally) and applying a thick coat of repellent, we headed down a trail to see Lemolo Lake. It's a small lake tucked in the pine forest with Mt. Thielsen's



PHIL DECKER | Special to the Statesman Journal

A boater heads back to shore at Diamond Lake.

pointy peak watching over. There was a dock with a couple paddleboats and a swim area. Unfortunately, our evening stroll was cut short once the swarm discovered us again.

The next morning, I took Alex for a driving lesson on a windy mountain road. Upon our return, we found Irma and Toni standing on a bed to escape the wrath of a little grey field mouse wandering around the kitchen. I notified the manager who proceeded to go mouse hunting, while we headed down the highway about seven miles to visit Diamond Lake. It was a relief to find few mosquitoes there, not to mention a boat rental, a large swimming area, picnic tables on a grassy lawn and a restaurant that makes great milkshakes. When I asked the desk clerk if there was a day use fee, I was thrilled to hear him say, "Nope. Just remember us next time when you make reservations." We definitely will.

After dinner, we rented a couple canoes for an evening paddle, following the reflection of the setting sun, like bright white sequins dancing on the surface of the sea-green water. On the way in, we hugged the shore in hops of spotting a black bear. No such luck.

See Lakes, 6D



VICTOR PANICHKUL
Statesman Journal

GETTING THERE

The Deckers took I-5 south to Roseburg, then took Highway 138 across and down to Crater Lake. For a slower but more scenic route, take Highway 20 east to Bend, then take Highway 97 south to Highway 138

MORE ONLINE

See this story online at StatesmanJournal.com/Life for a photo gallery of Decker's photos

NOT SO LAME
Local fame allows plenty of opportunities to judge others
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