

# 83 Days of Freedom

Summer fun for kids of all ages

BY VANESSA SALVIA

FROM THE BEGINNING of the Eugene 4J school district summer holiday on June 17 to the first day of school on September 7, you get 12 weekends—24 Saturdays and Sundays, or if you're counting in sum: 83 days of freedom (if you're a kid). What are you gonna do with those days? I can't guarantee that the following pages will banish the phrase "I'm bored" from your house, but they will make it much rarer.

KEY:



Science



Visual Arts



Sports/Recreation



Nature/Environment



Performing Arts



Culture/History



Just For Fun!

Fun on a budget!



## EXPLORE A HANDS-ON SCIENCE MUSEUM

The Science Factory (541/682-7888, sciencefactory.org), where the motto is "Engage, Excite, Inspire," has dozens of interactive, hands-on exhibits that change every few months. A "Tot Spot" for young visitors has toys geared toward the 5-and-under set, and everyone loves visiting with Renegade, the resident iguana. The museum offers events and classes regularly, including Tot Discovery Days on the first Friday of every month, featuring special activities for kids 5 and under. And the best part? Seasonal star shows in the planetarium dome are free with your admission fee. (The Science Factory is closed for all home Duck football games.)



## PEOPLE-WATCH AT CUTHBERT AMPHITHEATER

Have a picnic outside of the Cuthbert (541/762-8099, thecuthbert.com) while a band plays. It's free, and you can enjoy a beautiful park setting and hear the bands perfectly clearly (though you can't see them). Two concerts scheduled for June are the Moody Blues and Jethro Tull.



## HISTORIC HAZELNUTS

Established in 1892, Springfield's Dorris Ranch (541/736-4544, South 2nd and Dorris streets) is Oregon's oldest working filbert (hazelnut) farm. The 250-acre farm hosts nature walks geared to young children and seasonal events. Visitors to the Historic Village at Dorris Ranch can tour the 1852 pioneer homestead of William and Eliza Masterson (their 320-acre donation land claim would later become Dorris Ranch), a Northwest Coast Native American cedar plank house, and a replica of an 1830s fur trapper's cabin.



## START A FAMILY NATURE CLUB

Nearby Nature (541/687-9699, nearbynature.org) has resources to help you start your own Family Nature Club. Why? To spend more time outdoors with your family, with the support and friendship of other families who are doing the same thing. Nearby Nature offers a two-hour Family Nature Quest each month—a family-paced hike or nature adventure with lots of hands-on fun, a craft or special activity, a snack, and a visit from a costumed animal—that is free to Nearby Nature members or \$5 per family.



LANNY OLIVIER



## TAKE A HIKE

The Ridgeline Trail system is near the heart of town, but its quiet woodlands feel miles from anywhere. From downtown Eugene, take Willamette south; at 32nd, go straight onto Donald; take Donald to its end on Fox Hollow (about 18 blocks); turn right onto Fox Hollow and go 3/4 mile. Park at the Fox Hollow Trailhead for a connection to four moderately steep spurs that are each about 1 mile in length. Hikers along the 14-mile Ridgeline Trail system pass old growth Douglas fir, Oregon white oak and California black oak, upland prairie, ponderosa pine, incense cedar, grand fir, big leaf maple, black cottonwood, Oregon ash, and abundant native shrubs, wildflowers, and grasses.



## PAINT YOUR OWN POTTERY

Two local businesses, the Potters Quarter (541/434-9277, thepottersquarter.com) and BrushFire (541/485-7161, brushfire.com), offer hundreds of craft-ready items to choose from for all ages. Summer camps at BrushFire are half-day, with weekly themes, and include painting, pottery, fused glass, sculpting, and mosaics.

FREE!



## GET YOUR TIE-DYE ON

Open every Saturday from April through mid-November, the Eugene Saturday Market (541/686-8885, [eugenesaturdaymarket.org](http://eugenesaturdaymarket.org)) features booths selling handmade items of all sorts and delicious food. Best of all, it's free—and so is the entertainment, whether you choose to plant yourself in front of the stage or simply meander and people-watch. Avail yourself of the farmers market while you're there for farm-fresh organic produce.

FREE!



## DISCOVER THE WATER WORKS AT RIVERPLAY

Skinner Butte Park is awesome by itself, but it just happens to have an incredible playground, too. Every play element in RiverPlay Playground was designed to illustrate something special about Eugene's history, including a push-button mini-replica of the Willamette River. Kids can also climb a miniature version of the Skinner Butte basalt columns, pretend to be settlers crossing the Willamette on a ferry, or play on, under, and around a climbing structure modeled after a Kalapuya summer dwelling.



LANNY OLIVER



## GET FLIGHTY

The Oregon Air and Space Museum in Eugene (541/461-1101, [oasm.info](http://oasm.info)) is home to various exhibits about aviation and space technology, including fighter and bomber planes used in conflicts from Korea through the Persian Gulf. See flight suits and a detailed timeline of space exploration, as well as a variety of aircraft engines. The museum frequently sponsors special aviation events such as fly-ins, dinner speakers, and open house air fairs. Ages 5 and under are free.



THOMAS BOND

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## MAKE A SPLASH!

Splash! Lively Park Swim Center (541/747-WAVE) is an indoor water park open year-round. Your kids can romp in the wave pool, slip down the slide, or splash in the kiddie pool. You can relax in the adult spa.



## SEE A 75-CENT MOVIE EVERY MONDAY

Movies at Cinemark Movies 12 at Gateway Mall (541/741-3438, [gatewaymall.com/movies](http://gatewaymall.com/movies)) cost merely \$0.75 per ticket on Mondays if you have a group of three or more ticket-buyers. Tickets cost \$1.25 all day on Wednesdays, and are only \$1.75 during the day on weekends.

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## PUTT AND PIZZA

Enjoy the mini-golf course Camp Putt (541/741-9828, [willamalane.org/campputt](http://willamalane.org/campputt))—lush landscaping of waterfalls, streams, and ponds are a challenge for golfers of every age, as you meander through holes with names like "Pond of Peril," "Thunder Falls," and "Hollow Hopes." When you're done, relax at next-door Roaring Rapids Pizza Company (541/988-9819, [rapidpizza.net](http://rapidpizza.net)) with a pizza and beer or ice cream, plus a fabulous view of the Willamette River.



## HAVE FUN AT THE FAIR

The Lane County Fair (541/682-4292, [atthefair.com](http://atthefair.com)) is something to look forward to in late August, from the 17th to the 21st. As of this writing, fair organizers were still rounding out the entertainment schedule, but the website teases that they plan to have more free entertainment and activities than ever before. If you plan on spending a lot of time at the fair, a season pass is only \$17.



## LEARN HOW EUGENE BECAME A COUNTER-CULTURE HAVEN

The Lane County Historical Society & Museum (541/682-4242, [lanecountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://lanecountyhistoricalsociety.org)), located near the fairgrounds, has extended the closing date of "Tie Dye & Tofu: How Eugene Became a Counterculture Haven" until September 30. This exhibit, the museum says, is the most popular one it has done in more than a decade. The exhibit snapshots Eugene from 1965 through the mid-'70s, with the people, events, politics, fashion, and music of the time. The museum also houses a large collection of historic items from the pioneer era, as well as rooms decorated by period.

**FREE!**



## DISCOVER THE INTERACTIVE DISCOVERY GALLERY

The Interactive Discovery Gallery (IDG) is on the first floor of the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (UO campus, 541/346-3027, [jma.uoregon.edu](http://jma.uoregon.edu)) and is free to the public during museum hours. The IDG seeks to "demystify" art by providing interactive, hands-on, and multi-sensory experiences for visitors of all ages. The museum also offers free general admission to everyone on the first Friday of each month. Exhibits change regularly, but the museum's permanent collection includes galleries displaying stunning Korean and Japanese art, works from imperial China, and American and regional art, including the largest collection of work by Pacific Northwest artist Morris Graves.

**FREE!**



## TAKE A BITE OUT OF EUGENE

The third annual Bite of Eugene festival ([biteofeugene.com](http://biteofeugene.com)) on Saturday, July 23, is a perfect excuse to knock off for a day, hang out in Alton Baker Park, and sample the most delicious food and drink that Eugene's restaurants have to offer. There's no charge to get in to the festival, and once in, you can enjoy music and kids' activities all day long, as well as booths selling bite-sized menu items (with beer and wine for the adults).



## GO FOR A SWIM

City of Eugene pool facilities Amazon Pool (541/682-5350), Echo Hollow Pool (541/682-5525), and Sheldon Pool (541/682-5314) host aquatic events for the entire family, from open-swim hours to lap swims for the fitness buff. Visit the city of Eugene's website, [eugene-or.gov](http://eugene-or.gov), for their complete Rec Events calendar, listing free and drop-in activities and special events.



**FREE!**



## ROMP AMONG ROSES

Visit the Owen Memorial Rose Garden (North Jefferson at the Willamette River), a beautiful garden that features more than 400 different varieties of roses. Its 8 1/2 acres is home to picnic tables, trellises, and pergolas, plus more than 4,500 rose bushes—and at the height of their season (the garden really comes alive in spring) the sight and smell is stunning.





LIZ BUSSEL

## GET TO KNOW OUR RESIDENT RAPTORS

Cascades Raptor Center (541/485-1320, [eraptors.org](http://eraptors.org)) rescues and rehabilitates injured birds of prey. Some of them can't be released and go to live on the center's wooded acres. CRC is open Tuesday through Sunday for visitors, with special talks by bird handlers (and their birds) on weekends. Admission is free to members, and you can sponsor birds for about \$100. Sponsorship gets you a one-on-one visit with a trained education bird and its handler. A "screech owl" membership donation of \$35 gets you free admission for a year.

**FREE!**



## SUMMER IN THE CITY EVENT SERIES

Last summer, the city of Eugene sponsored 45 mostly free events all over Eugene, including live music, outdoor screenings of classic and family movies, skateboard competitions, and Breakfast at the Bike Bridges. The 2011 series promises more fun times downtown and in local parks. (<http://1.usa.gov/dnD30h>)

**FREE!**



## MEET THE PAST IN THE PRESENT

Celebrating its 75th birthday this year, the Museum of Natural and Cultural History (UO campus, 541/346-3024, [natural-history.uoregon.edu](http://natural-history.uoregon.edu)) has a huge collection of stuff that most kids love: fossils, rocks, human artifacts, and cool animal specimens. The museum also offers special educational programs and classes for kids. Admission is free to the public each Wednesday. An exhibit planned for June identifies the individual weavers of Native American baskets in the museum's collection. An exhibit planned for July through October looks at the frustrations and hopes of a member of one Oregon pioneer family who tried to rid the family ranch of blackberries, with her own childhood memories of the ranch mixed in.

LANNY OLIVER

**FREE!**



## SHOWCASE YOUR THURSDAYS

On the first and third Thursdays of each month, SHO (Support Hult Operations, 541/682-5733, [1sho.com](http://1sho.com)) volunteers sponsor free events in the Hult Center lobby. Performances include excerpts from current opera, dance, or choral performances, band concerts, and student recitals.



### CELEBRATE OUR TOWN

The Eugene Celebration ([eugenecelebration.com](http://eugenecelebration.com)) is August 26, 27, and 28 this year, and while it does cost a few bucks to get in to the celebration, once you do there is no limit to the activities that you and your family can enjoy. For kids, a must-do is the KidZone, packed full of games, face painting, mini-golf, magic shows, puppet shows, dance performances, and more.

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### BOUNCE AROUND

Open gym days are a great way to burn off some energy. There are many places around town that offer open gym times for all ages, from babies on up. Enjoy safe, supervised use of equipment like trampolines, balance beams, and tumbling mats.



### HAVE A GOOD TIME DOWN ON THE FARM

There's nothing better than plucking a warm, ripe blueberry or strawberry off the plant and popping it right into your mouth. Many local farms have U-pick fields for fruits and vegetables as well as flowers. A map and index of U-pick places can be found on the website of the Willamette Farm & Food Coalition, <http://www.lanefood.org/pdf/farmstands.pdf>.



### SEND 'EM TO BABY-SITTER BOOT CAMP

The Oregon Red Cross (503/528-5614, [oregonredcross.org](http://oregonredcross.org)) offers Babysitter Boot Camps (one-day classes) and Extreme Boot Camps (four-day classes) to help young people between the ages of 11 and 15 launch their babysitting careers.



### GO FOR GOLF

Your kids will be the best golfers on the block if you sign them up for a youth lesson ([golfwithfreedom.com](http://golfwithfreedom.com)). Summer classes are open to first graders and up. You won't stand a chance against them in your next round of mini-golf!

FREE!



### PET SOME "ZANY" ANIMALS

Zary Zoo (541/345-3430, [zaryzoo.com](http://zaryzoo.com)) offers a free petting zoo of its exotic animals most weekend afternoons from 1 to 4 pm. Get up close with snakes, lizards, turtles, and more.



GREG B.

FREE!

### EXPLORE THE ART OF A DIFFERENT CULTURE

Emerald Art Center (541/726-8595, [emeraldartcenter.org](http://emeraldartcenter.org)) offers Family Art Sundays on the second Sunday of some months. The free art stations have hands-on projects honoring the artistic traditions and crafts of cultures around the world—past regions have included Scotland, Spain, Brazil, Greece, and Tibet.

### IMAX-IMUM MOVIE

Eugene's IMAX movie theater, with its huge 39-foot-by-60-foot curved screen, opened in February (Regal Valley River Center Stadium 15 complex, 541/242-0580). The IMAX theater costs a bit more than regular movies, but the expansive screen and powerful surround-sound is an "immersive" experience that can only be enjoyed in three other locations in the whole state of Oregon.



LILY BUSSEL

### LET LOOSE THE LASERS

Putters (541/688-8901, [bowlstrikecity.com](http://bowlstrikecity.com)) may sound like a mini-golf place, and it is, it has that too, but it's more like a "family entertainment spot." Putters also has pizza, a bowling alley, an arcade, an indoor tot-sized playground, pool tables, TV screen showing sports, plenty of space for parties, and the Northwest's largest and only multi-level laser tag arena. How can you go wrong with a place like that?

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### BE A GOOD SPORT

Kidsports (541/683-2374, [kidsports.org](http://kidsports.org)) holds nine sports programs each year—the summer months are consumed by t-ball, baseball, and softball, naturally. Any Eugene/Springfield/Pleasant Hill elementary and middle school students are eligible for Kidsports programs. Kids don't have to "try out," and no one is denied a team spot because of lack of previous sports experience. Weeklong camps during July and August help kids gain general athletic skills without specializing in one sport.

### WATCH THE WORKER BEES

If you're heading out for a hike in Mount Pisgah Arboretum—and why wouldn't you visit this lovely 209-acre corner of the 2,300-acre Buford Park recreation area, with 17 miles of trails through many environments?—stop at the visitor's center on the southeast side of the park first (open limited hours, so call the office at 541/747-1504 for its schedule). Not only do they have cool terrariums with reptiles and amphibians, and a touch-table, there's also an amazing see-through working beehive in a pullout "door" (\$3 parking fee per vehicle.)

### LEAD A HORSE TO WATER

C & M Stables, 8 miles north of Florence (541/997-7540, [oregonhorsebackriding.com](http://oregonhorsebackriding.com)), offers group rides that take you on horseback through the coast's scenic dunes and pine trees, all the way to the roaring, powerful Pacific Ocean. The stable can accommodate riders of mixed skill level for rides lasting from one to four hours. Closer to home, check out Arcuri Stables (541/746-0143, [arcuristables.com](http://arcuristables.com)) for lessons (riders ages 5 and up) to get you feeling good about your kids saddling up for the trail ride.

FREE!

### LEARN AT THE LIBRARY

In addition to the Eugene Public Library's more than 400,000 items in a variety of formats, including videos, CDs, DVDs, and audio books, the library also hosts special events throughout the week, such as story and music times for kids from babies on up, and free concerts. Check the calendar at <http://1.usa.gov/elsD2q> for info, or call 541/682-5450. The library also has 75 fun educational kits that can be checked out, which are great for enhancing the experiences of young kids. Go to the keyword search field of the library website (<http://1.usa.gov/elsD2q>) and type in "learning kit" to see the choices, such as the "microscopic world" kit, which contains books, a DVD, microscope, data cards, and 12 slides.

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