

The Holiday Herald **2**

Siskiyou County, California

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Home for the Holidays



Mount Shasta means welcome back to California.

Home for the Holidays

For travelers returning to California from the north, Mount Shasta's perpetually snow-capped peak is the sign that they have returned home.

Visible across much of southern Oregon, the 14,179-foot peak of California's tallest volcano and fifth-highest mountain stands as a welcoming white gatepost to the Golden State. Returning from my snow trip to Crater Lake National Park, Shasta was visible in my windshield for an hour and in my rearview mirror for two more – nearly half the drive.

At its base is an eclectic collection of towns including the City of Mount Shasta, location of a Zen Buddhist monastery, the railroad town of Dunsmuir, the former gold-mining settlement of Yreka, and Weed, where every store has its own design for the ubiquitous "I Love Weed" T-shirt.

The lore of the original Klamath tribes is that the explosion of Mount Mazama, now Crater Lake, was actually the Spirit of the Below-World hurling rocks and lava at the Spirit of the Above-World, who lived atop Shasta. On local radio you can hear a Christian debate between a rapture theorist and a postmillennialist followed by a program on Shasta's significance as a center of the Harmonic Convergence.

So even if you can't see the mountain, you know you're back in California.



At the base of the mountain in the City of Mount Shasta is the coolest venue for a kids pre-Christmas hockey tournament, the Siskiyou Ice Rink. Skinner's Truck Repair won this game.



MAIN PHOTO: Ray waits with his mom for the next line change.
INSET: Dad helps him out of his pads after the game.



This view of Mount Shasta from the northwest shows the main peak, called the Hotlum Cone, on the left, and flat-topped Shastina (12,330 feet), which grew of Shasta's side. The dark forested ridge in the foreground is actually the 500-foot thick Military Pass lava flow, which seeped out of the base of the mountain and extended 5½ miles before it solidified. The oldest parts of this complex mountain are about 600,000 years old – young geologically. The Hotlum Cone's most recent eruption was in 1786, and over the past 4,500 years has erupted on intervals of about 600 years.