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Hicks: In Yosemite, a good place to go after a day of keeping kids alive

By Tony Hicks
Contra Costa Times
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There's nothing like looking down your nose at someone as you watch their child do something potentially lethal, only to turn around and see your kid just about to try the same thing.

But that's really part of the fun of taking kids to Yosemite, I suppose. You never know when they're going to try jumping off a waterfall or riding a bear or something. It's good for parents who enjoy three straight days of an adrenaline rush. There are no seat belts, no nets, and no one stops the ride if something isn't working right.

I only wish I had a dollar for every time I ended a sentence last weekend with —... or you will DIE!"

But enough about the drive. So, yes, my soon-to-be 4-year-old daughter almost -- and I stress almost -- did get a leg through the fence on the bridge in front of Vernal Falls, right after I watched another kid try the same thing.

For some reason, I produce children who are not afraid of water. Maybe there's a mackerel in the family tree or something. Another of my daughters had this charmingly horrifying habit of jumping into swimming pools when she was 2. Now she's 10 and wants to go over Yosemite Falls in a barrel.

Annual treasure

Constant parental horror aside, our almost-annual Yosemite trip has become a family highlight, right up there with the annual groundhog day mystery-meat feast and spending Independence Day finding English neighbors to declare war on.

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Three times now we've stayed just outside the main gate at the Evergreen Lodge, a kid-friendly place that still manages to make you feel like you're in the middle of the woods, maybe because you are, as evidenced by the herd of deer grazing at the foot of the bed each morning. It's also just a few miles up the road from Hetch Hetchy, one of the most underrated scenic spots in California and another wonderful place where children can frighten their parents by trying to jump over a dam.

At the lodge, the kids play tackle shuffleboard in the same game room every year, roll around the same with the same Ping-Pong same red-hot s'more sticks at nt of the big outdoor fireplace. l for a fami

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mething great about going to the ame place every year, especially if it's a place the y when our kids take off from the cabin, because we know they will ar before. Instead of trudging back to a motel to stare at TV after a ing back to evening activities with a bunch of kids their own age

ging around.

people in their early 20s (sadly, those qualify as "young people" them up. Apparently they'd made friends the previous night around vailable in a couple of spots. Kids have to actually play, or go chew

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ess cake. It's part of establishing a family tradition like that brings ible when the 4-year-old is trying to jump into a river.

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