




est corporations, those with over \$10 million in Oregon taxable income.

The other measure temporarily changes the personal income tax rate from 9 to 10.8 percent on couples making more than \$250,000 a year and to 11 percent on couples making more than \$500,000 a year. The top rates decline in 2012, to settle permanently at 9.9 percent for the wealthiest taxpayers, couples earning over \$250,000 a year.

ACTIVIST ALERT

• Written public comments are due at 5 pm Friday, Aug. 14, regarding LRAPA's consideration of an air pollution permit for **Seneca's biomass-burning generator** in north Eugene. Send testimony by email to colleen@lrapa.org or deliver to LRAPA Permit Coordinator, 1010 N.

IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER 

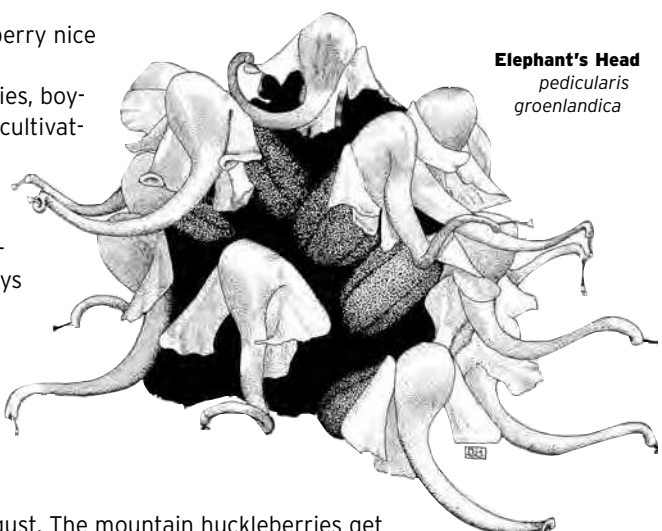
August is a berry nice month. Marionberries, boysenberries and the cultivated blueberries pass their prime early. Wild berries come into supremacy later. In the valleys the invasive, poorly named Himalayan blackberry (originally from Armenia) has juicy berries reaching perfection mid to late August. The mountain huckleberries get good toward the end of the month.

If you have planted zucchini in your garden, you should be rich. A half dozen vines is like a flock of chickens; every morning you can pick three or four which are no bigger than twice the size of your thumb. If you let zucchini get too big, chop them up and freeze them. They will thicken a late winter soup.

Watch for baby garter snakes. Unlike most reptiles, momma garter snakes retain their eggs internally and bear live young. They are ready to begin hunting for tasty bugs from day one.

If you camp in the woods seeking peace and quiet, expect only the former. When well away from the sounds of civilization and sitting very still, you will perceive the background hum of millions of insects. True silence in the woods won't return until the rainy season gets under way.

Plan now for camping in the high country. After Labor Day elephant's head still blooms in mountain meadows. Avoid the weekend opening of the high Cascade hunt Sept. 12. The issue is not danger from hunters; it's that all wilderness camp sites will be occupied. The Three Sisters Wilderness will be crowded!



Elephant's Head
pedicularis groenlandica

David Wagner is a botanist who has worked in Eugene for more than 30 years. He teaches mosses and is president of the Eugene Natural History Society. He may be reached at fernzenmosses@me.com

• The **Police Auditor Ordinance Review Committee** recommendations passed the council this week with shrugs all around and weary councilors saying, "Let's see how it works out," and "We can always come back and do it again." So far so bad.

After five long months of meetings and a public hearing, and endless hours of expensive staff and city attorney time, the council has actually diminished the power of the auditor and passed an ordinance that violates the charter. Our city attorney doesn't seem to mind the inconsistencies.

The charter language approved overwhelmingly twice by the voters requires the auditor to have unfettered access to all complaints against police. But the new ordinance builds in all kinds of restrictions. Police officers who receive complaints directly can now decide whether they should be forwarded to the auditor (remember the cops ignoring years of complaints against officers Magaña and Lara?). A municipal judge will now resolve disagreements between the auditor and police chief concerning concurrent investigations and other issues (so much for the auditor's authority). The police chief is no longer considered a "police employee" when it comes to complaints and answers only to the city manager. The auditor is now restricted to access to Internal Affairs "during office hours" instead of 24/7. The auditor's office must be located near the police department (soon to move across the river). And whatever happened to the important subpoena power proposed for the auditor?

This process, from the very beginning, was hijacked by people in and out of city government who are either hostile to police accountability, not paying attention or both. The council vote Monday night should have been a unanimous "no."

• Former police **auditor Dawn Reynolds** says she has "no plans of resigning" her position as assistant auditor. Her brief message, by email, came after our Slant blurb last week reporting on rumors that she was leaving Eugene. Reynolds is currently on medical leave. "I really didn't think it appropriate to comment one way or the other," she said. We're pleased to hear she's staying, but we're also hearing rumors that some members of the Civilian Review Board are thinking of resigning, frustrated by Byzantine city politics.

• **Town hall meetings** are traditionally a way for members of Congress on break to reconnect with their constituents, hear their concerns and talk about pending or upcoming legislation. Conservative "Tea-Baggers" are organizing to disrupt these town hall meetings in an effort to gain media attention and exaggerate their opposition to health insurance reform. The antidote to this tactic is for supporters of reform to show up in large numbers. Rather than getting into shouting matches, respectfully ask for a show of hands of those who support progress on reform. See our Activist Alert this week for dates of times of Peter DeFazio's town halls.

• **Don't sign the petition** that's now on the streets of Eugene, Springfield and Corvallis. The Legislature's tax hikes on wealthy Oregonians and profitable businesses could go to voters next January, but the initiative drive needs 55,000 signatures to qualify for the ballot. These petitions are being circulated by paid signature gatherers who are clueless about what they are promoting. Anti-government groups are using the campaign not only to gather signatures but also to distribute false and misleading information about the impact of the Legislature's action. One unsubstantiated statement being touted is that the new taxes "will cost 79,000 Oregonians their jobs."

Who's going to help pull the state out of its financial crisis if not the people and businesses who can afford to pay more taxes? The money has to come from somewhere. This is just one piece of the puzzle. Another piece would be retaining the tax kicker for a rainy day fund. Such a fund could help even out the ups and downs of income tax revenue.

If anyone is unclear about what the Legislature passed, read our News Briefs item this week, "New Poll Says Oregonians Back Measures."

• **Who will replace Chris Edwards** as he leaves the House to take Vicki Walker's seat in the Senate? Democrats are rumored to be pondering a couple of names: Val Hoyle and Carol Horne Dennis. Any other good people out there?

• EWEB's **Community Advisory Team (CAT)** is working to conjure up a vision for developing EWEB's riverfront property and wants input from enviros, but we hear too-few people showed up at a recent meeting to talk about green considerations. Got some ideas about parks, open space, solar access, pedestrian-friendly design, protecting riparian habitat, green construction standards, bike access to downtown? The CAT contact person is Mark Oberle, 341-1851, or email Mark.OBERLE@eweb.org

SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, editor@eugeneweekly.com