

ACTIVIST ALERT

• Civil libertarian **Raymond Brown**, a recently retired educator with the Bethel School District, will be celebrating Independence Day in period costume, reciting the Declaration of Independence by heart at 1, 3 and 5 pm July 4 at the top of Skinner Butte. He will also be flying 25 full-sized flags atop the butte. "After teaching for 36 years, I can guarantee you that the best guardian of freedoms is education," he says, adding he is inviting people to "put down their beer and hot dogs for a moment and appreciate the true meaning of the day." He says he is not associated with the Tea Party or other conservative causes. He can be contacted at sonoflibertywalk@gmail.com.

• More big events at **Buford Park**? A survey asking for public opinions about the adjacent Emerald Meadows, formerly called the "North Bottomlands," can be found at wkly.ws/1i9, put online by Friends of Buford Park & Mt. Pisgah, 344-8350.

• **No City Club** of Eugene this Friday, but Chuck Sheketoff of the Oregon Center for Public Policy will be the speaker July 12 and we hear Sen. Jeff Merkley has been booked for Aug. 9.

• A free dance party and day of political action for human rights will be from 5 to 9:30 pm Monday, July 8, at Kesey Square downtown. The event is part of Creative Maladjustment Week, and is sponsored by MindFreedom International. Call 345-9106 or visit mindfreedom.org.

• The next **Conversations on the Forest** free public forum is 7 pm Monday, July 8, at Cozmic, 199 W. 8th Ave. Organizers says the focus will be on "burning forest biomass for energy, timely as we are in the public comment period of Seneca's application to be a major source and get grandfathered in under the current, weaker regulations than the regs we think will be enacted in 2014." Speakers will be former county commissioner Rob Handy, forester Roy Keene and County Commission candidate Kevin Matthews. Email rob@robhandy.com or visit conversationsontheforest.org.

• **Industrial Workers of the World** will meet at 7 pm Tuesday, July 9, at New Day Bakery, 449 Blair Blvd. Contact iconoclasmo.scott@gmail.com.

• The **Lane County Fair Board** meets from 7:30 to 9:30 am Tuesday, July 9, at the Lane Events Center, 796 W. 13th Ave. Contact is Marsha Miller at 682-6910.

• **Lane Area Commission on Transportation** meets from 5:30 to 7:30 pm Wednesday, July 10, at the ODOT McLane Room, 644 A St. in Springfield. Contact is Stacy Clauson, 682-3177 or sclauson@lcog.org.

NEWS

OIL TRAINS TO BECOME PIPELINES ON WHEELS?

The Pacific Northwest is being hit with another fossil fuel threat: oil trains. Oregon and Washington have been faced with megaloads of tar sands equipment, liquefied natural gas pipelines and terminals, coal trains and now what conservationists are calling oil pipelines on wheels. Dan Serres, conservation director for Columbia Riverkeeper, says the trains are already under way here in Oregon carrying fracked crude oil from the Bakken oil field of North Dakota. A Sightline Institute report says that there's nothing to stop the trains from being used to ship Canadian tar sands oil through the Northwest as well as the fracked oil.

The bigger picture shows 'the Columbia River as a superhighway for fossil fuel, as these ideas just keep getting bigger and crazier.'

- DAN SERRES,
COLUMBIA RIVERKEEPER

Serres says that one proposal to ship oil on trains to the Port of Vancouver involves 380,000 barrels of oil a day. "The scale of it is unexpected," he says. The proposal calls for four full mile-and-a-half oil trains a day, but Serres says, according to his math, that much oil would need more trains than that.

According to a report by *Bloomberg Businessweek*, the typical amount of oil a train carries is 70,000 barrels, and the amount of U.S. crude oil being moved by railroads has increased 166 percent in the past 12 months. The controversial Keystone XL pipeline would carry 830,000 barrels of oil per day, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

The Sightline report says there are 10 other refineries and port terminals that are planning, building or already operating oil-by-rail shipments. In Oregon, Global Partners owns a former ethanol plant in Clatskanie's Port Westward that is bringing in more than 28,000 barrels of oil a day on trains and putting the oil on barges that go down the Columbia River. Serres says if there is an oil spill — the train tracks run along the river through the Columbia Gorge — a derailment of Bakken oil would be disastrous, and the heavy Canadian tar sands crude would be impossible to clean up.

The oil trains would run along the same tracks as the coal

trains, Serres says. Studies show that the coal dust that comes off the trains affects the ballast rocks that the tracks are on, increasing the chances of derailments. This would mean that in addition to coal dust and increased diesel particulates from all the train traffic, communities along the way would face possible oil spills. Serres says, "The companies are saying they have this great record, moving oil by rail, but spills are more likely to happen moving these volumes by rail."

The International Port of Coos Bay ended its recent effort to export coal by rail earlier this year after public outcry and two of the major players in the deal dropped out.

U.S. law says that unrefined crude oil cannot be exported, but that does not apply to Canadian tar sands oil, opening the door for ports that don't have oil-refining capabilities to export oil. The oil industry has long lobbied to end the ban on U.S. crude oil export.

Serres says that the bigger picture shows "the Columbia River as a superhighway for fossil fuel, as these ideas just keep getting bigger and crazier." He says there are opportunities for the public to comment on the Port of Vancouver proposal on July 9 and again on July 23. For more information go to ColumbiaRiverkeeper.org. — *Camilla Mortensen*

DEMS FIGHT FOR NATURAL RESOURCES APPOINTMENT

Lane County enviros and liberal politicians want Congressman Peter DeFazio to know that they aren't pleased with his green credentials lately. They have signed on to a letter to Nancy Pelosi endorsing Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) as the next ranking member of the House Committee on Natural Resources. About 200 environmental and conservation groups from across the country signed the letter. Local signatories include Cascadia Wildlands, Forest Web of Cottage Grove, Forestland Dwellers and several former county commissioners — Rob Handy, Bill Fleenor and Jerry Rust, as well as former congressman Jim Weaver. The League of United Latin American Citizens has also endorsed Grijalva for the position.

Whoever takes the ranking member position gains a greater influence over public lands, including the federal O&C forestlands that generate money for counties and have long been a source of contention by conservation groups versus timber interests. Both sides of the debate have criticized DeFazio's forest plan, which calls for splitting the lands between logging and conservation.

The House Resources spot opened up because Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) recently won a special U.S. Senate race against Republican Gabriel Gomez.

IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER



BLUEBERRY FLOWER

If you wanted to carve a dugout canoe from a log, is it better to chip out the inside first? Or should you first shape the outside and then scoop out the inside? The answer at the end may surprise you.

The night of July 21 we expect a supermoon as dramatic as June's was supposed to be. Supermoon is an astrological term. The astronomical term is delicious on the tongue: syzygy at perigee. Perigee means the moon is closest to earth in its elliptical orbit so it looks 15 percent bigger than at apogee. Full moon happens when three celestial objects line up (moon-Earth-sun), called a syzygy. Maybe this month the clouds will not obscure the big moonrise in Eugene!

Berry season is picking up pace, bringing on the tastiest two months of the year. Early strawberries are pretty much over while blueberries approach abundance. The inside of a

blueberry flower, cut in half, looks like a vegetable zombie in a robe.

July and August are the months for a sequence of cane berries of subtle shape and taste varieties. Time to get pie making skills sharp for delivering marionberry, boysenberry, olallieberry or raspberry pie. Not forgetting plentiful and free blackberries, both native and exotic.

Northwest Natives carved the sinuous lines of a canoe hull from a solid cedar log. They drilled small holes exactly to the depth of desired hull thickness, then plugged the holes with charred pegs. When an adze struck charcoal from the inside, the perfect thickness of the hull was established.

David Wagner is a botanist who has lived in Eugene for more than 30 years. He teaches moss classes and leads nature walks. He may be reached at fernenmosses@me.com