



We wrote about changes afoot at **Wings Seminars** in this column Dec. 10 and we've since heard from Wings founder Kris King that the company is for sale following a personal tragedy. "My son died a year ago and I realized I work too much. Working 28 days a month is not the smartest thing," she says. "I have two offers and three more are coming in." Finding the right new owner may be a challenge, she says. The new owner "needs to be ethically aligned ... I'm not just selling a business. They need to really care about this work." If a change of ownership does not happen soon, Wings will close its doors Jan. 31; however, advanced seminars and trainings already fully booked in February and March will go on.

"It's been a great 30 years," King says. And the biggest rewards? "I've seen many incredible transformations" during the seminars. Wings has worked with some 35,000 people over the years, including those sent to the seminars by corporations and government agencies to improve confidence, focus and communication skills.

We hear through the biz grapevine that **Andy Vobora**, LTD's director of Customer Services & Planning, will be retiring from LTD after 32 years and will become Travel Lane County's vice president of stakeholder relations. Vobora was a finalist for the general manager position at LTD, but Aurora "A.J." Jackson was offered the position in October. Jackson replaced Ron Kilcoyne at LTD.

Kaiser Permanente, a nonprofit provider of both health care and health insurance, opened a medical clinic in the former Eugene Public Library, 100 W. 13th Ave., along with a dental clinic in the former Fletcher's for Children at 1011 Valley River Way. The clinics serve Lane County members of Kaiser, including UO students on their families' plans, plus Medicaid patients assigned through Trillium. Call the medical clinic at 431-1250 or the dental clinic at (800) 813-2000. For more information, visit kp.org/lane. Kaiser has a business model that's unique in health care. It's vertically integrated, combining hospitals with insurance plans, increasing efficiency and keeping down costs.

The seventh annual **Fun with Fermentation Festival** will be from 11 am to 4 pm Saturday, Jan. 9, at the Unitarian Universalist Church at 13th and Chambers. The festival, a fundraiser for Willamette Valley Sustainable Foods Alliance, highlights the many ways of food and beverage preservation. More than 25 regional businesses will be attending and sampling fermented products, from kefir to beer to pickles. Admission is a suggested donation of \$5 with two cans of food for FOOD for Lane County, or \$10 without food donation. Kids 12 and under are free. See sustainableeugene.com or email info@wvsfalliance.org.

NEWS

MALHEUR MILITANTS BENEFIT FROM FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Vanilla ISIS, Y'all Quaeda, YeeHawdists, terrorists, militants, militia — whatever you call them, and whether you fear them or laugh at them, the band of mainly out-of-state, armed and anti-government protesters who have taken over the headquarters of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge on Oregon's east side have drawn almost nonstop attention since their siege of the remote bird sanctuary began Jan. 3. Ironically, the armed protesters who hate the federal government also benefit from the feds.

At the heart of the standoff lie America's public lands. More than half of Oregon's land is federally owned. Some ranchers want that land moved into state, county and private hands. The leader of the occupying group is Ammon Bundy, the son of Cliven Bundy, who famously had an armed standoff with federal authorities at his Nevada ranch in 2014 over a similar issue — grazing cattle on federal lands. Ammon Bundy was Tasered during that standoff for kicking a police dog.

The Bundys owe more than \$1 million in grazing fees.

The Oregon standoff began over the Hammonds, a father and son who have had a long-simmering feud with the Bureau of Land Management. In the late '80s the senior Hammond allegedly made death threats against refuge managers over his cattle trespassing on refuge land. In 2012, Dwight and Steven Hammond were convicted of lighting two fires that burned federal land, in 2001 and again in 2006.

According to a statement by Acting U.S. Attorney for Oregon Billy Williams, the first fire was set to cover up a poaching incident, but it also endangered nearby hunters. The second was set without notifying firefighters battling nearby fires. Judge Michael Hogan sentenced the men below the congressionally mandated prison terms. They served time and were released. The case went back to court, and later Judge Ann Aiken resented them to the five-year mandatory minimum. The Hammonds reported to prison Jan. 4.

Despite sharing the armed protesters' ire for the feds, the Hammonds have said via their attorney that Ammon Bundy does not speak for them.

While the Bundys and the Hammonds might claim to hate the federal government, data shows they have benefitted from the feds. *Mother Jones* reports that in 2010 Ammon Bundy received a federal small business loan of \$530,000. Data collected by the Environmental Working Group shows Hammond Ranches Inc., received farm payments totaling \$295,471 from 1995 through 2012.

Finally, a 2015 report by the Center for Biological Diversity shows that in 2012, the BLM's grazing fees were 93 percent cheaper than the average market rate in 16 Western states, and in 2013, it cost Oregon ranchers an average of \$1.35 a month to graze on federal land and \$15 on private land for a cow and her calf.

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On Jan. 4 the Bundy group met with widespread derision after one of its members put out a plea on social media for supporters to send them snacks and energy drinks.

Bundy has said he will remain at the refuge for "as long as it takes." According to *The Guardian* newspaper, sources say the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which runs the refuge, intends to cut off power. "It's in the middle of nowhere," said the official, who is based in Washington, D.C., and has knowledge of the planned response to the militia. "And it's flat-ass cold up there."

Many on social media have questioned why the authorities are willing to wait out armed white men when in other situations law enforcement has been quick to shoot or quash the protests of people of color. Others have noted that when talking about the rightful ownership of federal lands, Native Americans have more rights to it than the ranchers. The federal and ranch lands at issue in the Hammond case were historically Paiute lands. — *Camilla Mortensen*



WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW, *ZONOTRICHIA LEUCOPHRYS*

IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER

Kind of like in summer, the winter Solstice just slipped by with nary a wink or a nod. The approach is so gradual in both ways that only a calendar watcher (or member of a pagan community) knows for sure what day to celebrate Solstice. The extra rainy December meant that it was cloudy most nights. Night sky changes were hard to follow despite regular bedtime walks. I have seen Orion less than five times since he first returned to the night sky. The same goes for seeing the Pleiades, a little distressing as I have always thought getting

a glimpse of this seven-sister cluster brought good fortune.

Star viewing may be limited these overcast days while whale watching at the Oregon Coast is at the year's best. In the four weeks spanning the New Year, southward migration of gray whales moves through faster than the northward migration with cows and newborn calves. The males will follow soon, more slowly. My favorite whale-watching lookout is the shelter at the top of the Cape Perpetua trail. Shelter is the critical word here. There are volunteers offering whale information at

the Cape Perpetua Visitor Center as well as the overlook along Hwy. 101 at Cape Perpetua.

The next year will certainly be different from the last. We begin with a snow pack in the mountains that last year's winter never came close to accumulating. The mountain meadows will have lots more flowers to watch. Hopefully, the stressed trees will recover.

David Wagner is a botanist who works in Eugene. He teaches moss classes, leads nature walks and makes calendars. For information on how to get his 2016 Oregon Nature Calendar, contact him at fernenmosses@me.com.