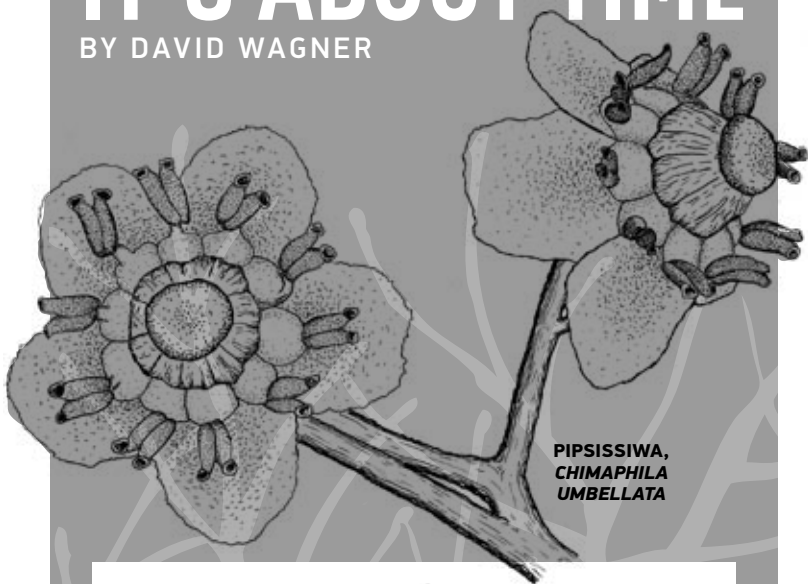


IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER



PIPSISSIWA,
CHIMAPHILA
UMBELLATA

By July, gardens are burgeoning with flowers and vegetables. They will thrive through the summer only if we pay diligent attention to adequate watering. Digital hose timers are great for extended trips out of town. We also have to deal with combatting weeds and pests. I wrestle with use of poisons. Slug bait offends my organic sensibilities but it seems the only effective way to keep snails away from our hostas and lilies.

Is it really necessary to use strictly organic fertilizers? Lawn grass can't tell the difference between one source of nitrate or another; fixed nitrogen is fixed nitrogen to a plant. What about the commercial fertilizer additives? Horse manure seems pretty noble at the end of these ruminations.

July is a squirrely month for Willamette Valley urbanites. Can we trap and eliminate fox squirrels humanely? It is not legal to catch and release these arboreal rats to another neighborhood.

The harsh realities of nature show up if we keep eyes open when taking our neighborhood walks. A bushtit nest on the ground reveals predators at work. The little hatchlings don't have a chance once discovered. Crows and jays don't survive on bugs, nuts and berries. A dried and flattened garter snake shows roadkill isn't just a country highway sight.

Escape to the mountains is always good for keeping mental balance with nature. Flower diversity is amazing in the forests and ridgetop meadows. Day hikes are best as high country camping is generally made intolerable by mosquitoes until late August.

David Wagner is a botanist who works in Eugene. He teaches moss classes, leads nature walks and makes nature calendars. Contact him directly at fernzenmosses@me.com.

NEWS

BY CAMILLA MORTENSEN

COUNTY COMMISSION TARGETS CITIZEN INITIATIVES

On June 28, the Lane County Board of Commissioners discussed giving themselves the power to block certain citizen-powered ballot measures the board deems not of "county concern" before those measures are voted on.

Commissioner Pete Sorenson was the lone dissenting voice on the agenda item labeled "Potential Changes to Lane County Initiative and Referendum Process."

Sorenson tells *EW* while no actual vote was taken, the "dominant flavor" was to move ahead with an ordinance. He says were the commission to move ahead, he has two questions that he would like answered. First, "Is there a problem?" Sorenson says he doesn't think Lane County has had a lot of problematic local measures.

During the meeting, Josephine County's 2014 ban on growing genetically modified crops that was struck down because it conflicted with Oregon law was pointed out as an example.

Second, Sorenson says there is already a system in place for dealing with local ballot measures that are passed by citizen votes but might have portions of them that are unlawful on a state level or are beyond the scope of the county, and that process throws out nonlegal portions of measures. He calls the proposed ordinance a "solution in search of a problem."

The Josephine County ban was still developing support when, in 2013, the Oregon Legislature essentially banned all GMO bans when it made the state the sole regulator of seeds.

The Josephine County GMO ban passed but was struck down thanks to the state law. If the Lane County Commission succeeds in pushing through this ordinance while local group Community Rights

Lane County is working on two initiatives — one to ban aerial spraying of herbicides and another addressing the community right to self-government — it too will ban a local rights effort while it is still developing.

Sorenson says the ordinance could "suppress rights people currently enjoy," and to change rules on a process that is already under way, such as the Community Rights initiatives, is "frowned upon."

Ann Kneeland, attorney with Community Rights Lane County, says an ironic aspect of the proposed ordinance is that the county commission is targeting Community Rights initiatives that seek to create greater legal authority for citizens to protect themselves from corporate harms.

Kneeland says that "local government is trying to stop the people from engaging in this lawmaking at the behest of corporate interest." She adds, "Here you now have the Lane County Commission doing precisely what the initiatives are trying to prevent."

The initiatives are trying to resurrect the people's authority to protect themselves, Kneeland says. The initiatives are "calling out that government and industry are in bed together."

Kneeland says that the discussion was not an arbitrary act of the board being concerned about the cost of the election. That, she says, is a red herring. "The elephant in our collective room is the government operating at the behest of corporations and not to the benefit of the planet."

Sorenson says if the proposed ordinance goes forward, there would be a public meeting.

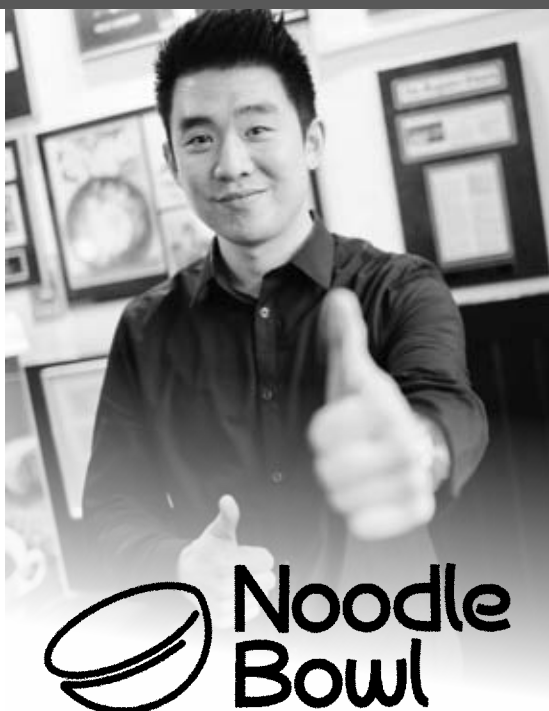
Community Rights Lane County meets 8 pm on the first Monday of each month, at the First United Methodist Church, 1376 Olive Street. More information about CRLC can be found at CommunityRightsLaneCounty.org. ■



EUGENE WEEKLY GETS RESULTS

"Eugene Weekly is not your ordinary publication. EW has helped me build my brand and ever since, my business has been growing in many different ways. On a weekly basis, I can have EW edit my ad exactly how I need it to be so I can let the people in Eugene know what is the latest at Noodle Bowl. At this point, I believe Eugene Weekly is the best publication in our community."

— Jc Lee



YOUR BEER HEADQUARTERS FOR SUMMERTIME FUN

For more information on how Eugene Weekly can help your business grow call 541-484-0519