

BY AMY KLARUP

COLLEGE COURSES BRING ENRICHMENT TO LOW-INCOME AND UNHOUSED STUDENTS

JULIE AND BILL FERRARI MAKE LEARNING ACCESSIBLE

PHOTO: AMY KLARUP

On a bright weekday morning, 12 students fill out a downtown Eugene classroom as an excited buzz of conversation fills the space, and University of Oregon psychology professor Holly Arrow leads the class in a discussion about facts, opinion and confusion between the two.

It could be any small, college-level course — except for the fact that it's free, and there's food afterward.

"We're trying to make these classes accessible to as many people as possible," says Bill Ferrari, a teacher at Marist Catholic High School who helps organize the free series of classes called "Summer Seminar," which seeks to provide an academic experience for a low-income and homeless audience.

The series consists of eight, one-hour lectures throughout the month of August, each given by a UO professor and hosted at St. Mary's Catholic Church, with lunch provided after. This year's theme is "The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent."

The seminar series began in 2014 at Opportunity Village, and Ferrari recruited UO professors to teach classes.

"They're very supportive," Ferrari says of the partici-

pating professors. "They're thoroughly generous with their time — we don't pay them for this. And what I appreciate most about them, beyond their willingness to do this, is that they teach the class straight-up. They buy into the nature of the program and they give a full academic-level class."

This is the first year the seminar has taken place at St. Mary's, in order to encourage more attendance from downtown residents. Marist donors provide funds for flyers and lunch.

Ferrari says the series is inspired by a similar program at the University of Notre Dame, except at Notre Dame participants get homework assignments and earn college credit for attending class. Ferrari says he hopes to add that component as the series grows.

High school students from Marist help out each year with recruiting people to attend the seminar — Ferrari says they hand out flyers and chat with people at FOOD for Lane County's Dining Room in order to spark enthusiasm for the class.

This year, high school student Maya Dotson launched a social media campaign and is attending every class while helping out with recruitment.

Bill Ferrari's wife Julie Ferrari, also a teacher at Marist, says the experience enriches the lives of her students — three Marist alumni who will attend college this fall want to start a seminar series at Seattle University, Julie Ferrari says.

"It's so important for them to hear the stories and to have some firsthand experience to challenge any preconceived notions or judgments, which sometimes can happen with our brothers and sisters who are on the street," Julie Ferrari adds.

Daniel Neall, who attended Arrow's Aug. 4 class about facts versus opinion, says he enjoyed the class discussion and decided to participate after seeing a flyer. "I don't think a lot of people think very critically about things," he reflects. "People seem to mostly believe what they want to."

Neall says he plans to attend the next lecture.

The 2016 Summer Seminar continues Thursday, Aug. 11, with UO business professor Michael Russo, and two more classes follow on Aug. 17 and 18. All classes run 11 am to noon, with lunch directly afterwards, at St. Mary's Catholic Church, 1062 Charnelton Street. Classes are free and open to all. ■

IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER

NELSON'S JUNIPER HAIRSTREAK, *CALLOPHRYX GRYNEUS NELSONI*

The mosquito fern that covered the eastside Delta Ponds' surfaces with dramatic purple the past two winters had nearly disappeared by late spring of this year. The duckweed family overtook the mosquito fern and turned the ponds green, much to the gustatory delight of the waterfowl. Suddenly, in July, the mosquito fern has made a resurgence and may regain dominance; observations to come. Even the green is different. Instead of common duckweed, the green is dominated by the tiny water meal (*Wolffia*) of the flowering duckweed family. Duckweed is small enough, the size of an "o" in newsprint, while each *Wolffia* plant barely exceeds the dot on an "i."

Berry season is two weeks early. The tasty, wild and weedy Armenian blackberry started ripening even before the first of August. The

juiciest ones tend to be around ponds like the eastside Delta Ponds, where dust from roads is also minimal. As with the strawberries and cherries, they will likely peak early. Gather and enjoy.

In hot weather, gnats form small swarms in the meadows by water. A typical gnat cloud is about 2 feet through and a yard high. Gnats are not fun to walk through but they don't bite. I remember how my old friend, the late Marge Zane, showed how to herd a whole swarm. She guided them here and there, slowly, with arms spread in a wide embrace. We found that we could pass a gnat cloud from one person to another, the swarm was so coherent.

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