

IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER

BIGLEAF MAPLE

When the rainy season begins as usual in the Willamette Valley, at the beginning of October, all is well with the world. This year the rains came in a series of unusually powerful storms, delivering almost twice its average monthly rainfall in the first two weeks. The wind accompanying the storms took down many trees, especially near the coast.

The rivers responded to the downpours with vigor, filling ponds, backwaters and sloughs with fresh runoff. The upland soil has soaked up water, too, causing a lift under houses where the clay subsoil had dried out during the summer drought. The corners of our house settle as the clay shrinks in summer, causing doorjambs to warp and doors to stick. Clay expands when it rehydrates and this year the sudden release of doors that had been sticking was dramatic.

The mushroom season that got off to a slow start in September has, well, mushroomed. The chanterelles that were dense and almost rubbery at the end of September are now filling out nicely: tender and tasty. The switch from summer active plants to winter active plants has also undertaken a dramatic turn. Bracken had been drying out and wilting in the mountains even before the first frost took it down. The leaves of bigleaf maple had started getting brown and falling even in August. But mosses on maple branches are perking up and making spore capsules. Dormant and invisible all summer long, licorice fern is uncurling its bright green winter fronds.

David Wagner is a botanist who works in Eugene. He teaches moss classes, leads nature walks and makes nature calendars. Contact

SLANT

- **What happened in the Portland courtroom that caused the jury to acquit Ammon and Ryan Bundy** and their accomplices in the 41-day armed takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Oregon? One theory is that the prosecution aimed too high with the charges. Another is that Judge Anna Brown should have removed two jurors instead of one when she received a complaint of bias, although that may not have affected the outcome. Another theory is that the courtroom clearly was out of control, as evidenced by the federal marshals chasing and tackling the defense attorney who shouted at the judge. Hopefully, government attorneys will do better in February in Nevada when Cliven Bundy and his sons face federal charges for their armed standoff with government agents in 2014.

- The Nov.-Dec. issue of *Via*, AAA's magazine, has quite a spread on downtown Eugene. Listen to this headline: "The walkable heart of this Willamette Valley city brims with new gastronomy and artistry. Head northwest from the University of Oregon to explore 20 delightful blocks." We'll take it, a positive promotional piece by Jennifer Burns Bright, formerly of the local food blog Culinaria Eugenius.

- Makes us proud. The cover story in the Oct. 31 issue of *The Nation* magazine compares Texas' "Jim Crow Voting Laws," worst in the country, with Oregon's

laws, "which make voting incredibly easy." The writer, Ari Berman, gives Gov. Kate Brown plenty of credit for her efforts as secretary of state to pass the motor voter law, which Berman says has helped Oregon to register 300,000 new voters in the past year, a 14 percent increase from 2015. Berman reminds us that Oregon was the first state to automatically register any citizen who obtains a driver's license or a state ID at the Department of Motor Vehicles.

- Dennis Richardson, Republican candidate for Oregon secretary of state, brags in TV ads and Facebook posts about his endorsements by the Oregon press. *Eugene Weekly*, one of Oregon's top 10 papers in circulation numbers, repeats over and over that we do not endorse him. **We urge a vote for Brad Avakian.** Richardson says he will shed his political coloration if he is secretary of state. That's impossible to imagine. Remember that the secretary of state is one of three members of the state land board, deciders of the future of the Elliott State Forest, and next in line to be governor.

- Note for your ballots: We hear from **Jim Evangelista of Realty Kitchen that he is running a write-in campaign** for Large Zone 1 Position on the Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District. He writes, "I've never considered holding office, but, as an educator and administrator of a nonprofit organization serving the employment goals of individuals experiencing intellectual and developmental disabilities, I feel qualified and responsible to bring my own perspectives, experiences and skills to weighing in on the issues of soil and water conservation in Lane County."



EUGENE WEEKLY GETS RESULTS



"With the number of partnerships, learning communities, and markets we serve, University of Oregon's Academic Extension division has many options of media to choose from. Eugene Weekly has been a reliable advertising source for a variety of our community-based learning programs and professional development workshops."

— **Molly Trudeau,**
Creative Services
UO Academic Extension

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



ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT FOREST FIRES.

www.smokeybear.com

