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SLANT

- When the president of your country talks violently about women, what message does that send? That was one of the niggling questions that came out of the March 10 City Club of Eugene program on "Cruelty to Women, Here and Now." Rachel Collins of Womenspace and Dr. Don Davies from the McKenzie River Men's Center rolled out the cruel data: One in four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes; more than nine percent of our homeless are there because of domestic violence; globally, more deaths result from domestic violence than from wars. What to do about it? The answer was "get more involved" at every level, and we would add, resist messages of violence against women from the top down.

- Tomi Douglas, director of Eugene's Cultural Services Division since 2013, announced her resignation on March 14, effective April 6. A sometimes-flamboyant thinker in the local arts scene, Douglas championed popular arts events like (sub)Urban Projections, a free music, lights and dance party in the lobby of the Hult Center, but drew fire from visual artists over the city's declining support for the now-defunct Jacobs Gallery. She cited health reasons for her departure and is returning to Portland, where she previously worked for former Mayor Sam Adams. Stepping in as interim director is Benjamin Klipfel.

- The Eugene City Council voted March 8 to ban dogs downtown until November in an attempt to get rid of the homeless and we are flabbergasted — as apparently are the many angry Eugeneans commenting on social media. The council did not vote a proposed smoking ban into place. This leaves us with a lot of questions: What will it cost to put up signs and enforce the ban? And when you add that cost to what the city paid to install fences under the bridges in Washington Jefferson Park, you wonder again how Eugene might have used those resources towards a shelter for the homeless? Why are dogs considered more dangerous than cigarettes, which are proven to be much more lethal than dogs. When the city says that the dog ban near the UO campus was successful, is it taking into account the fact it pushed the unhoused folks on 13th Avenue downtown? When is the city going to take steps to help the unhoused instead of move them around and hope they somehow disappear?

IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER



CEPHALOZIELLA DIVARICATA
 COMMON THREADWORT

For the past six months or so, some animal has been digging holes next to the path along the ponds on the east side of Delta Highway. Tracks left in mud on the path after a winter rain finally gave us a clue: nutria. Their distinctive tracks include a tail streak between footprints. Nutria are well known to dig up roots, worms and bugs. They seem to have been eating lots of roots of poison hemlock since its leaves have appeared. Considering how deadly it is to humans, I wondered how nutria could survive. Then I met the volunteers who work with the city habit restoration program and found they have been rooting out poison hemlock for the past month. Nutria are off the hook.

The ice-rain last December devastated a cottonwood beside the east Delta Ponds that supported a small colony of heron. As mentioned here in the January column, only two nests were left compared to the five we saw at this time last year. Monitoring on a nearly daily basis has been discouraging. Heron were absent all month. Then five heron showed up on the last Friday of February. Prospects are looking good!

Spring is slow this year, thanks to the cold winter. Indian Plum usually blooms in mid February; it didn't appear until March 1. Now is a good time to examine the tiny plants that grow all winter. They are beautiful yet unnoticed except by those who use hand lenses and home microscopes.

David Wagner is a botanist who works in Eugene. He teaches moss classes, leads nature walks and makes nature calendars. He can be contacted through his web site: fernzen-mosses.com.