



THE FIGHT FOR EQUAL PAY

Oregon politicians sponsor equal pay legislation

• April is **Jazz Appreciation Month** (shouldn't that be every month?) and the Willamette Jazz Society is celebrating. The nonprofit has been providing the Eugene area with live music since 2005 at the The Jazz Station, 124 W. Broadway. The all-ages concert venue includes an art gallery and community gathering space. The society also promotes jazz appreciation through outreach and scholarship programs for middle school through college. See thejazzstation.org for more information.

• **Coalesce Juicery** and Whole Food Kitchen was closed for the winter but has reopened in a new location, according to owner Karina Wolford. The food cart featuring organic, live and raw foods and juices, opened April 11 at 164 W. Broadway, in the alley between the Wayward Lamb and Oregon Contemporary Theatre. The cart was previously at 725 Olive Street and travels to summer music festivals and other events.

• **SeQuential** is a vertically integrated Eugene company that refines and distributes biodiesel from used cooking oils. Following the passage of SB 324, Oregon's Clean Fuels Program, SeQuential has expanded, rebranded and formed new partnerships, the company says. Some 150 new employees were hired last year as SeQuential replicated its Eugene model into Washington, California, Idaho, Montana and Nevada. SeQuential gets its used oils and grease from multiple sources now, including Kettle Foods and Burgerville, and partners with Pacific Biodiesel, Tyree Oil and Star Oilco.

• Employees at **Ninkasi Brewing** have gotten an unusual benefit over the past four years. The more than 100 people on staff can take advantage of half-price CSA [Community Supported Agriculture] memberships through Phoenix Farm, formerly Berggren Farm, located along the McKenzie River in the Berggren Watershed Conservation Area. "This demonstrates new ways businesses can connect with local food purveyors," says Ali Aasum of the company. "Our employees win by having their grocery bills lowered and getting fresh-from-the-farm produce and meats delivered right to our place of work."

• **Displaced workers** who signed up with the Lane Workforce Partnership now have access to the entire training library of the Eugene-based CBT Nuggets, a leading information technology [IT] training company. The programs target laid-off workers and out-processing military personnel interested in a variety of IT careers. Find out more at cbtnuggets.com or call 541-743-8975.

Send suggestions to bizbeat@eugeneweekly.com.

LANE COUNTY AREA SPRAY SCHEDULE

• Giustina Resources, 541-485-1500, plans to hire Strata Forestry, 541-726-0845, to ground spray 48.7 acres on three units south of Dexter Lake with hexazinone, sulfometuron methyl and High-Light Blue. See ODF notification 2017-771-03690, call Tim Meehan at 541-726-3588 with questions.

• Weyerhaeuser Company, 541-744-4600, plans to ground spray 47.9 acres southwest of Lorane Highway with glyphosate, 2,4-D with amine, 2,4-D with ester, atrazine, clopyralid, hexazinone, sulfometuron methyl, metsulfuron methyl, triclopyr with ester, triclopyr with amine, CLIMB alkalinity agent, Grounded, High-Light Blue, Insist 90, MSO Concentrate, No Foam and/or Odor Mask. See ODF notification 2017-781-03742, call Brian Peterson at 541-935-2283 with questions.

• Roseburg Resources, 541-679-3311, plans to spray their roadsides throughout Lane County with 2,4-D with ester, glyphosate, metsulfuron methyl, triclopyr with ester, Conquer and/or Crop Oil Concentrate. See ODF notification 2017-781-03672, call Dan Menk at 541-935-2283 with questions.

• Roseburg Resources also plans to spray their roadsides near Siltcoos and Woahink Lakes near the Oregon Coast with 2,4-D with ester, glyphosate, metsulfuron methyl, triclopyr with ester, Crop Oil Concentrate and/or Conquer. See ODF notification 2017-781-03669, call Quincy Coons at 541-997-8713 with questions.

Compiled by Gary Hale, *Forestland Dwellers*: 541-342-8332, forestlanddwellers.org.

Despite the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and federal civil rights laws, American women earn on average approximately 80 cents on the dollar compared to men — the gap widens for African American women who earn 63 cents and Hispanic women who earn 54 cents, according to a U.S. Senate news release.

New legislation introduced in both Congress and in the Oregon Legislature aims to close loopholes, bolstering current laws, and would introduce new protections for workers who take legal action against their employers.

The Paycheck Fairness Act, U.S. House Resolution 1869, was introduced by Democratic Rep. Rosa DeLauro on April 4 — Equal Pay Day — and is now in the House Committee on Education and Workforce.

Both Oregon senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden announced their co-sponsorship for the Paycheck Fairness Act in support of closing the wage gap.

"The Paycheck Fairness Act would bring equal pay law into line with other civil rights law and address the problem of pay inequity between men and women by requiring employers to show that disparities in pay between men and women are job related and not sex-based," Merkley wrote in an email to *Eugene Weekly*.

Under the bill, employers would be prohibited from retaliating against employees who discuss compensation with their coworkers and would make filing class-action lawsuits based on pay discrimination easier, according to Merkley.

Oregon House Bill 2005 is sponsored by Rep. Julie Fahey, a Democrat representing west Eugene and Junction City. It passed in the House 36 to 24 on March 28. The bill had a first reading in the Senate on March 29 and is now in the Senate Committee on Workforce.

Fahey says the most concrete change made by this proposed legislation is preventing employers from screening potential hires based on their past salaries.

"That's important because it will help break the cycle of pay disparity," she says. "So if you've previously worked at a job with a lower wage, this ensures that job offers are

made [based on] how employers value the position, not based on your past salary."

Internal hires are exempt from the salary screening provision.

HB 2005 also protects workers from "pay discrimination, retaliation against a worker for consulting a lawyer or filing a claim and retaliation against a worker for inquiring about wages," according to an Oregon House Majority Office press release.

Gov. Kate Brown says she's hopeful the Legislature will move forward with the bill. "I know from both personal experience and my work on the ground that it's absolutely unacceptable for people to get paid less simply because they are women," she tells *EW*.

"I think we need to use every single tool in the tool box that we have to make sure that women receive equal pay for doing the same thing as men," Brown says.

The Oregon Center for Public Policy says the reasoning behind the wage gap is complex. In the OCPP's 2016 gender pay gap report, research found that "education is not a factor."

In fact, average Oregon women over 25 with graduate degrees earn less than men with bachelor's degrees, according to an OCPP analysis.

Policy analyst Janet Bauer says HB 2005 can be helpful because it will set standards with human resources departments.

"One of the things that is a factor in the wage gap is a kind of discrimination that undervalues the work of women and that can be the type of work that women can engage in," Bauer says. "So for instance, when women go into an occupation where they haven't been before, their relative wages fall."

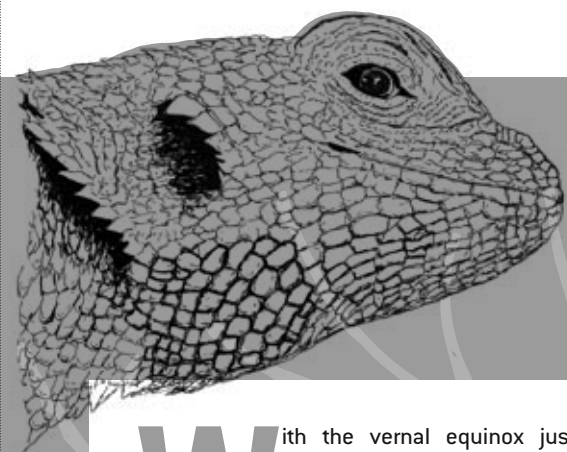
Bauer says this is true of fields like journalism, higher education and human resources.

"I don't think we are ever going to find a single thing that will fix the pay gap once and for all," Bauer says. "I think that there will need to be quite a number of additional steps that can address some of the other issues that contribute to the pay gap."

The University of Oregon is currently being sued by a psychology professor for paying her less than her male colleagues in violation of the federal Equal Pay Act.

Merkley says, "Equal pay for equal work is an important place to start."

He adds, "Additionally, raising the federal minimum wage would help more than 28 million workers — disproportionately women and people of color." ■



IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER

WESTERN FENCE LIZARD
SCLOPORUS OCCIDENTALIS

With the vernal equinox just passed, lengthening days coupled with warmer temperatures means the rapid appearance of first blooms on the wildflowers of the Willamette Valley.

When the blooming time is delayed by extreme cold weather, like this spring, the subsequent appearance is all the more dramatic. One week of warm weather will likely bring all species back on line with close to normal flowering time. April and May produce the peak of floral diversity in our region.

Hérons are having a hard time in the rookery beside the ponds on the east side of Delta Highway, the Eastside Delta Ponds. One of the two nests that survived the December ice storm was lost in March. A solitary heron stayed on the remaining nest for a little more than two

weeks but now that nest appears to have been abandoned. It looks like no baby heron will be fledged from the last nest this year.

Moss spore capsules are beginning to mature, as their growing season is approaching its final months. The licorice fern spores are reaching their dispersal state, too. Our only fern that grows on tree branches with the mosses has the moss growing cycle. In two months, they will curl up and fall to the ground.

Meanwhile, the terrestrial ferns are stirring, starting to uncurl new fronds. The sword fern is unusual in that its fronds do not uncurl from a spiral fiddlehead like most ferns but instead have a drooping hook that looks like an elephant's trunk.

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: fernzenmosses.com.