

SLANT

• It's an uphill climb to **"repeal and replace"** **Greg Walden**, conservative congressman from Oregon's District 2 in eastern Oregon, but the state Democratic Party is enthusiastic about Jamie McLeod-Skinner. Who knows? This is the Year of the Woman in American politics. Maybe Eastern Oregonians will remember that Walden led the fight to get rid of their health care and will vote for McLeod-Skinner.

• **Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley managed to be mild and polite and fiery and mad** at the same time as he tangled with police over his attempt to get inside a Texas detention center holding immigrant children the Trump administration is separating from their parents. The interaction was filmed and appeared on Facebook Live, racking up more than a million views. There is a Families Belong Together rally opppsing Trump's policies 11 am Thursday, June 14, in Kesey Square.

• **These are "perilous times," our Congressman Peter DeFazio** told a full house of loyal and loving Democrats May 31 to kick off his 2018 campaign. Val Hoyle, newly elected

commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries, introduced DeFazio at the new Bari Trattoria. DeFazio emphasized that the D's must take back the House, and that he's not taking Art Robinson's candidacy lightly. As always, Robinson is well financed by the jillionaire hedge fund Mercers, but the money hasn't mattered in the past. We predict that DeFazio will continue to represent us well in these truly perilous times.

The U.S. Supreme Court **sided with a Colorado bakery who had refused to bake a wedding cake for a gay couple in a June 4 decision.** The ruling, though, should have no effect in Oregon or elsewhere. That's the word from commentators such as Garrett Epps, former University of Oregon School of Law professor and current law prof at the University of Baltimore. Writing in *The Atlantic*, Epps argues the 7-2 decision was based on narrow grounds and doesn't touch on larger civil rights issues. "After prolonged labor," he writes, "on Monday the Court brought forth

what can only generously be called a mouse."

• Big congrats to **Martha Walters, who becomes Chief Justice of the Oregon Supreme Court** on July 1. A Eugene lawyer who practiced employment and civil rights law, she is the first woman picked by the seven-member court as chief justice. A 1977 UO Law School grad, Walters was appointed to the high court in 2006 by Gov. Ted Kulongoski, making the unusual move straight from private practice to highest court in Oregon. She lives in the Whiteaker district with her husband, legal aid lawyer and housing expert John Van Landingham.

• Petitioners are on the street in Lane County to put STAR voting on the November ballot. Mark Frohnmayr, head of Arcimoto electric vehicle company, and Alan Zundel, retired political science professor, **explained STAR voting to the City Club of Eugene** on June 1. Chief petitioners for this initiative, Frohnmayr and Zundel want to try this in Lane County, eventually going statewide.

STAR — Score Then Automatic Runoff — means voters score the candidates on the ballot, and the two highest scoring overall advance to an automatic runoff. Is this what we need to increase voter turnout or restore faith in government? Let's do something about money in politics.

• Sports columnist **Austin Meek's fascinating interview of Phil Knight** in the June 3 *Register-Guard* left us contemplating how our public university came to be "Nike U," dominated by one man and his money. Knight is behind the Knight Library, Knight Law School, Jaqua Learning Center For Athletes, Matt Knight Arena, enhancements to Autzen stadium, endowed chairs, and recently the important Knight science campus on Franklin Boulevard. When we citizens of Oregon drastically cut public money for higher education, the UO continued to prosper in part because of Knight generosity. But the Hayward Field project shows it's time for the university and the community to share decision making with Phil Knight. That will take courage.

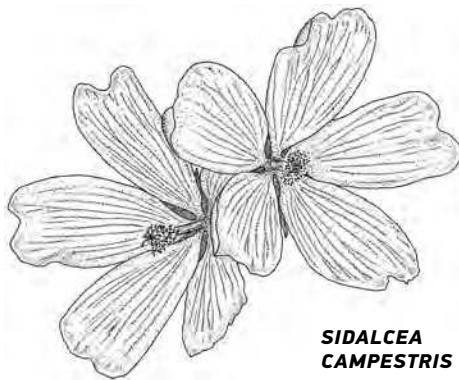
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IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER

Each solstice brings with it a change of the season, a slowing down in nature's landscape, while the equinoxes are periods of rapid change. The passage of the sun is the driver, changing day length slowly around a solstice. The seasonal extremes trail the sun's lead because the oceans change temperature more slowly than the day length changes. Oceans are still warming up after the summer solstice has passed.

With the peak of flowering in the valley coming to a close, flower and butterfly watchers will seek meadows in the mountains. Ridgetop rocky slopes and grassy openings are where the greatest diversity of wildflowers and wildlife are sought. What we see in these places today is different from how the mountain meadows looked a century ago, when huge flocks of sheep and goats were pastured in the high Cascades. In eastern Oregon, many of the great meadows are still



SIDALCEA
CAMPESTRIS

recovering a century since over grazing ended.

The greatest loss of grassland ecosystems, however, has taken place in the Willamette Valley. Almost all the upland grasslands have been converted to agriculture with great loss of native flora. Most Willamette Valley grassland preserves are wet prairies with standing water in winter.

Some of the best representations of upland grassland flora are now found on roadsides and the strips of land between fields. Flowering plants that were once abundant are crowded into these linear fragments. The field checker meadow and the endangered peacock larkspur are two species seen in roadside strips and rarely elsewhere.

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 website, fernzenmosses.com.

SATURDAY JULY 14TH, 2018



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