

hosting the event in the Pour House and Delicatessen.

“Our culture is pretty entrenched. I don’t think it would be a big surprise to our customers,” he says. “There’s a benefit to us. We get to bring in new people who might not come into Falling Sky, and people get to see us aligning with meaningful groups.”

Finding a location was just one barrier Trans*Ponder and HIV Alliance faced.

Because of a ban on the use of federal money to buy needles, finding funding for needle exchanges can be difficult, even when the needles aren’t being used for illicit drug use. While federal funding can be used to purchase prevention supplies like sharp kits and testing, HIV Alliance has to write grants to be able to purchase needles.

“Of course, that’s what we need most of,” McCluskey says.

And it’s what trans people need. Thompson and Feinstein say their experiences with health care and pharmacies are mild compared to what other trans-identified people experience. “For people who haven’t had the resources I have and are living on the streets and stuff like that, it increases the problem multi-fold,” Thompson says.

Besides facing barriers to health care, many members of the trans community carry heightened levels of stress and fear. Trans women and trans women of color specifically face some of the highest rates of hate crimes and hate-crime murders.

REBECCA THOMPSON



“Walking through the world with that sort of a safety issue on your back can be really difficult and can make it really hard to access all of the things you would like to, so we try to make it as easy as possible for folks to access our services,” McCluskey says.

Still, she worries about who doesn’t have access to the needle exchange program, either because people haven’t heard about the services or can’t make it to the events or into the office. Trans communities are often made invisible in health care and are thus hard populations to reach.

HIV Alliance’s partnership with Trans*Ponder and Falling Sky has created something more than just a needle exchange; the event has become a community space of support and a place where your needs, both medical and emotional, are known and met, according to Thompson.

“It’s nice to have people who, if nothing else, are friends and allies,” she says. “That’s one of those intangibles; it’s not directly related to needle exchange but it helps bolster a sense of safety, belonging; there are other people who have your back.” ■

*HIV Alliance’s office is at 1195A City View Street. You can find more info at hivalliance.org or call 541-342-1150. Find Trans*Ponder at transponder.community, info@transponder.community or 508-443-6337. This story was developed as part of the Catalyst Journalism Project at the UO School of Journalism and Communication. Catalyst brings together investigative reporting and solutions journalism to spark action and response to Oregon’s most perplexing issues. To learn more visit journalism.uoregon.edu/catalystor follow the project on Twitter @UO_catalyst.*

IT’S ABOUT TIME BY DAVID WAGNER

Global warming tends to manifest its effects in the form of droughts that dry our forest trees, especially Douglas fir, and cause bigger forest fires in late summer. Even in winter, however, the influence of global warming seems to cause a disruption of normal flowering time. This year our sasanqua camellia began flowering in November, while it usually begins around Christmas. A social media post by the Native Plant Society of Oregon reported seeing snow queen blooming already, when it usually starts a month or so from now. Going back through my notes, I see that there was a similar early flowering of Oregon grape in 2015, around Christmas.

I realize that the increased severity of fires that began four years ago is comparable to winter increase in precocious flowering. Winter effects of global warming are not easily noticed but the effect on the



environment can be expected to be profound. The consequences are not yet clearly defined. Incense cedar, white alder and domestic hazelnut will likely shed pollen early, marking a new, earlier challenge to sensitive allergy sufferers.

What makes me happier is seeing the American shovelers doing their circle dance in the Delta Ponds. Chorus frogs begin their chorus season with a few tentative croaks and an occasional “frigget, frigget.” Many of the first spring leaves of perennial woodland herbs that die down and become dormant in the summer are starting to push up from their rest. Soon begins red fox, coyote and opossum breeding season.

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.

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