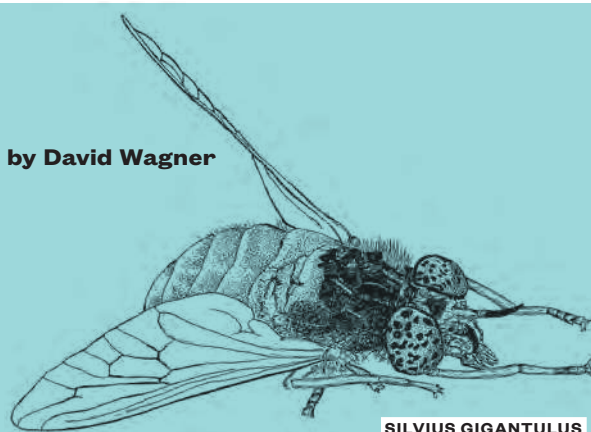


It's About Time by David Wagner

In recent years fire danger has been hikers' primary concern. Drought brought on by climate change has engendered fierce forest fires that have restricted access to large areas. North Pacific Ocean temperatures have been high in the past five years. The warm period extended into February of this year, when flowering of native plants was as much as three weeks early. However, there has been a shift to lower ocean temperatures recently, which may account for our cooler late spring. Although it's now hot and dry, the blackberries this year will not likely reach peak until the middle of this month. And no major fires have been reported. Yet.

It will be hard to celebrate my 75th birthday this month. We usually dedicate the occasion for an extended



SILVIUS GIGANTULUS
GOLDEN DEER FLY

camping trip. Sadly, the grip of COVID-19 has kept almost all campgrounds closed with no prospect of reopening soon. Our favorite resort destinations are closed or are not suitable for old farts like me. It grieves me that ignorance and political posturing has aborted control of

the pandemic that affects everybody. We cannot forget this on election day.

Living in Eugene is a great blessing, for it is not hard to find places to interact with nature on a one-to-one basis. Bird watching and flower photography are favored by solitary forays. Not every one-on-one is enjoyable. Mosquitoes are bad enough, but the Golden Deer Fly, illustrated here, is a green eyed monster that slices, not stings. Like mosquitoes, only females drink blood.

David Wagner is a botanist who has worked in Eugene for more than 40 years. He teaches moss classes, leads nature walks and publishes the Oregon Nature Calendar. Contact him directly at fernzenmosses@me.com.

slant

• It's months and months into this pandemic and every once in a while we take a deep breath through our fashionable face coverings and think, **"Wow, we are still here."** Newspapers, like other businesses, are taking a pounding from the corona recession, but *Eugene Weekly* is still covering the news and the arts, and still printing. And that is thanks to you folks picking up the papers, supporting our advertisers and the amazing contributions readers have made. There are some mornings when the news cycle is grim, our small news staff is swamped, and then an envelope comes through the mail slot that changes our mood. Sometimes it's a contribution and sometimes it's simply a nice note, but it makes a difference. One reader noticed our reporters walking down the street for interviews and dropped off two recumbent bikes! Thanks, readers. You rock.

• College sports administrators this summer contorted themselves beyond recognition in an effort to save fall sports — **notably the football cash cow** — in the face of COVID-19. Ticket sales? No, but there was TV cash on the table, and athletic cathedrals need to be maintained. No more. The Power Five conferences are now starting to fall in line with their smaller brethren. The Big Ten and Pac-12 announced Aug. 11 that they are canceling fall sports for 2020. Others will follow, even if they're kicking and screaming. It's the right thing to do. There's simply too much uncertainty about the coronavirus. Physicians affiliated with schools that have endured outbreaks note cases of myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart muscle caused by the virus. COVID-19 is real, and it shouldn't have to fall on young men and women to keep the palaces afloat during a pandemic.

• Latest word from President Donald Trump is that he might accept the GOP nomination for president at

Gettysburg National Cemetery. **What better place for Trump and his Republican cronies to celebrate his candidacy than the battlefield where thousands of Americans died in just three days?** Trump's mismanagement of the pandemic — and the GOP's refusal to get rid of Trump — are allowing a thousand Americans to die every day in a pandemic that much of the rest of the world has under control. As journalist Carl Bernstein told CNN this week, we have a national emergency on our hands. It is Trump. Check out our cover story this week on some conservative politicians bucking the Trump-trend.

• The **Oregon Legislature came and went for its second special session** on Aug. 10. Sen. James Manning and the Legislature's BIPOC Caucus developed legislation that makes a stab at much-needed police reform in Oregon. One of those police reform bills was HB 4301, which limits police use of force and chokeholds. In a statement, Manning says chokeholds are wrong and lethal: "It is not a tool to de-escalate; it's a tool to take a life. Chokeholds have been used disproportionately against Black and Brown people, and sometimes even used against our kids. There's no excuse for that. Law enforcement should approach their work as peace officers, not as if they are going into battle. This change in law is important. It will save lives."

• **What do American Association of Retired People (AARP), front-line educators, the Warm Springs tribe and Black Lives Matter have in common?** Not one of them has been at the table as powerbrokers in Salem try to hash out a deal giving immunity to nursing homes, schools, business and government when their unreasonable action causes someone to get COVID-19. The first question is why are the most heavily impacted populations not at the table? The bigger question is why immunity at all? If an entity is acting reasonably it won't be liable. That's the law. Maybe if the above-named

were in the room they could get that point across to our legislators? Or better yet, maybe we should all call our local legislators. This is all happening beyond our very short special session, so we have time to talk about it.



• Joe Biden has named Kamala Harris as his running mate — a move that the NAACP called "a defining moment in U.S. history." What can we do to help defeat Donald Trump on Nov. 3? **Write postcards!** Go to PostcardsToSwingStates.com and sign up to send 200 postcards.

• What we are reading: One of our best read friends, Josh Reckord, has two recommendations: **Begin Again by Eddie Glaude** and **Caste by Isabel Wilkerson**. Reckord says they are both "timely to our current situation." *Caste* was on the cover of *The New York Times Book Review* Aug. 9.

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