

'ON THE WAGON WEDNESDAYS'

Heights cidery starts alcohol-free evenings with live music

As we move into the new year, many people choose to refrain from booze for their health, their family, their wallets, and a myriad of other reasons. Additionally, countless adults in the Gorge have been sober for years or are somewhere along the path of their own recovery.

As an establishment that celebrates community, Slopeswell Cider Co. has chosen to host a series of alcohol-free nights for adults in their Heights Taproom, said Operations Manager Kristyn Fix in a press release. She said that if “On the Wagon Wednesdays” are popular, Slopeswell intends to host them throughout the year. The premise is simple: Adults who refrain from alcohol don’t always want to spend their time around people who are drinking. The idea came to Fix when she was talking to a friend about her path through sobriety.

Local artist Melissa Chavez said, “I’ve been without alcohol for nearly eight years and I think alcohol-free bars would be a great place for other non-drinkers to connect, especially those in recovery.” She went on to say, “A social setting and clean atmosphere is important for us to feel a sense of belonging and community, especially in the Gorge.”

With alcohol-free bars popping up all over the country, focusing on a social place for those in recovery and a general intention to be healthier, Slopeswell decided to give the idea a try.

“We host lots of different community-minded events in our intimate little taproom, so it just makes sense for us to extend our inclusivity to those refraining from alcohol,” said Fix.

She emphasized that these evenings are for 21-and-over only and that no alcohol will be served in the taproom. Rather, the staff have worked to create some non-alcohol mocktails, along with serving non-alcohol wine, beer, One Breath kombucha, and several other options.

The current calendar for “On the Wagon Wednesdays” is Jan. 15, 22, and 29 from 5-9 p.m. with live music by Megan Alder each night. Slopeswell hopes these evenings are successful so they can replicate and diversify them throughout the year. Slopeswell Cider Co. is located in the Hood River Heights neighborhood with regular business hours of Thursday to Saturday, 5-10 p.m.

Megan Alder cuts new album

Hood River singer Megan Alder will perform songs from her new EP, Megan Alder and the Woods, recorded live in October 2019 at Super Secret Studios in Portland, featuring fellow Hood River musicians Hunter Parmentier (bass) and Tim Ortlieb (drums). All songs are written by Megan Alder (vocals/guitar).

'WAGON WEDNESDAY'

Slopeswell, 1022 12th St., 5-9 p.m. Wednesdays starting Jan. 15.
Music by Megan Alder.
Look for alcohol-free cider cocktails.
This event is 21-and-over.

LWD: Locals pop-up market this week, 'Knit Night' next week

continued from A1

The Locals Wednesday Downtown (LWD) pilot project got its formal approval from the City of Hood River last month, and DBAC immediately began planning the first LWD, on Jan. 1.

Downtown owners, DBAC, The Hood River Chamber of Commerce, and City Council listened to the community and business partners and learned that the biggest barrier to locals being downtown is the perceived hassle and expense to park, according to Chamber executive director Kate Schroeder.

Offering a midweek afternoon where locals can come downtown without fishing for quarters or figuring out the parking machine (or shopping longer than expected and getting a ticket) appealed to the community, she said.

“We know we needed to give something to locals that feels tangible and is about them. Many locals want to support Hood River businesses and contribute to our economic vitality by shopping local,” said Schroeder.

“We want to recognize and invite community participation in our downtown. In short, we want Locals Wednesday Downtown (LWD) to be about supporting the people who live, work and contribute to our community every day.”

Posters and window clings in downtown businesses are intended to remind locals to think about and plan for Locals Wednesday Downtown (LWD) free parking.

More events are being added all the time, organized by a DBAC subcommittee in conjunction with local businesses and community groups, said a press release.

Surveys will be conducted throughout the program to measure response and impacts.

If successful, the City will consider implementing the program permanently, said a press release.

Currently, the plan is to run it through May and start again in September.

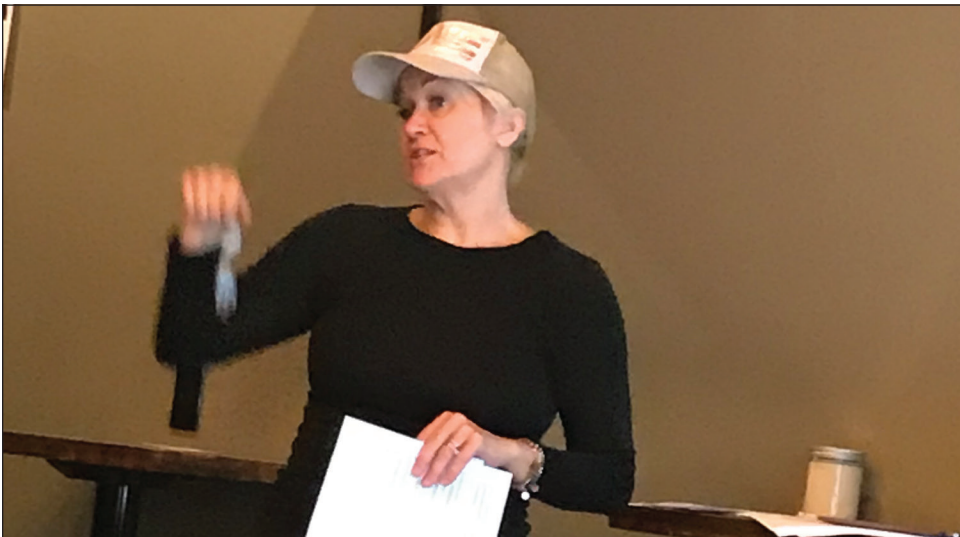


Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

LWD supporter Stephanie Adams, at a recent DBAC meeting, said organizers are looking for expanded participation from businesses and the public.

ALLYSHIP: Seeing the need 'to divest and listen'

continued from A1

everyone, so when there’s more voices in the room and more people in the room, that benefits everyone,” James said.

She said she has given similar talks from Medford to Portland, with strong reception each time, but of the Hood River attendance she said, “This is pretty impressive, I don’t know if this is typical for people in the middle of the day. I usually do this at 8 a.m. or in the evening. I might have to change my model.”

“I like to give someone something that is emotionally activating then people want to chew into it and own it,” she said. “It’s intentionally laden with coded language so you can talk about, ‘What does this mean?’”

One woman questioned the words “resource” and “benefit,” “and the danger of all groups thinking those words mean the same thing, especially when we’re talking about allyship.”

One man said that as a business owner, “a ‘business resource’ might not be much of a resource in a relationship-based community.

“Probably what I need to do is divest, and listen,” he said.

“I wrestle with that phrase, and I like where it’s going, and the ‘mutual benefit’ is the key,” he said.

James has taken her talk around Oregon, and said that in deciding on the title, she asked herself “Who do I want to attend? Who will the title call to? Do I use ‘dominant culture,’ ‘white supremacy,’ ‘white privilege’? There is an abundance of terms we can use that essentially say the same thing — whether you want to soften or harden the blow or be more direct. This title has gotten great responsiveness across the state.

“I think I found the sweet spot; we could use a harder term, but don’t tell me I should go softer,” she laughed.

At the outset, she said, “These are conversations that will make you feel uncomfortable, with a level of safety to where, while we’re not calling each other names, we’re owning our own experiences.”

James’ white mother and black father parted at age 18, shortly after she was born.

“That gave me the privilege, now I see, of navigating two vastly different worlds through my entire life. It was the moment I realized there were different roles within the cultures,” James said.

Early on, she spent most birthdays with her mom, and in the second grade started having two birthdays. “Which was great,” she said, “and then we got to where it was, ‘Let’s sing Happy Birthday.’ Anyone know the Stevie Wonder ‘Happy Birthday’? I said, ‘What?’ I was so confused. And then I realized it was different, and then I started to notice all the other differences between the two cultures and I think that has lent a strategic brain in my head.

“So my life work now is serving as a consultant with organizations and companies on diversity equity and inclusion and developing trainings on how to really shift hiring practices to create a mission that includes people rather than excludes them.”

James said her talks “walk the line, but without going so far as ‘What is your deepest secret?’ and ‘Have you ever called someone the N-word?’ And before you try to tell me, I don’t want to hear about.”

She asked participants in any racially-based conversation “that can be a little intimate, it’s important to have agreements; be present in this time, make sure you are present with the people in the room. Own your truth; we don’t have a lot of control over what others say or do — this is about what you have personally seen or felt. Stay curious; sometimes as adults we listen to respond rather than listen to understand and this will challenge you to stay curious in someone’s perspective, and what would it mean if everything someone was saying was true? What would it mean to hold a totally different perspective as yours at the same level as your own experience, ‘I wonder what that would be like?’”

She said that leaving the conversation, “There will be this feeling at the end of ‘What now?’” — of incompleteness.

“You will probably have more questions than answers, and I would encourage you to take those questions and continue the conversation with people in your circle,” James said. “This doesn’t have to be the end. Often what we do is we have questions, we don’t get answers and we stop questioning things. Take those questions ... to build more questions and more connections.”

Another rule of the gathering was “what is said in the room stays in the room, but what is learned must leave,” James said.

Most Anglos have what she calls a “trajectory of the unconscious to working for social justice; it’s more of a circle than a squiggly line,” she said.

ON BEING AN ALLY

Facilitator Alexis James defined allyship as “combining or uniting a resource or commodity with another for a mutual benefit.”

James stressed that the term ally is not self-given but one bestowed by the group you are hoping to engage with. She stressed that distinct differences exist between African American, Native American and Hispanic people, and added that saying, ‘I’m an ally for Trans rights’ is not a claim one can make but honor that is bestowed on you.

The next Lunch and Learn will be 1 p.m. on Jan. 16 in the same location, will focus on gender identity. The event is free and open to all.

“We are open to ideas for ‘Lunch and Learn’ topics in the future, assistant library director Arwen Unger told the group.

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FORECAST: Prepare for potentially dangerous travel conditions

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Low elevations in the Gorge are expected to get up to 4-inches of snow on Wednesday. River level should get 1-2 inches, and the Cascades are expected to get 6-8 inches.

Through Thursday, about 3-4 inches of snow are predicted to accumulate at river level, 1-3 inches on the I-5 corridor, and 4-6 inches at Government Camp. Thursday’s forecast shows continuing snow and freezing rain around the Gorge, Ayers said.

Snow is still possible in the Gorge on Friday but the weather is expected to melt out by Saturday.

Temperature highs are within the low 30s and high 20s, with lows in the low 20s.

The snow level in the Gorge is forecast to drop as low as 200 feet Thursday and Friday, rising to 600-1,100 feet on Saturday and going back up into the 2,600-2,700-foot range on Sunday.

Heavy snow continues in the Cascades, with ODOT reports showing 85 inches of roadside snow as of Monday afternoon (press time), though only 2 inches of that are new.

Chains are now required on Highway 35 near Mt. Hood Meadows (Mileposts 62-68), but traction tires are allowed in place of chains on vehicles under 10,000 GVW and not towing.

Weather advisories are in effect across the Pacific Northwest and some accumulating snow is possible for the Seattle and Portland metropolitan areas, according to the Weather Service.

Travelers should expect and prepare for icy travel conditions — especially as the weather warms up Friday and Saturday.

Visit tripcheck.com for the most current road conditions, and check www.weather.gov for updated forecasts.

TRASH TALK

Q. I have Holiday string lights that no longer work. What should I do with them? Tori, Wasco County

A. Tori, Those light strands are not recyclable at curbside. If you bring them to their Transfer Station in either The Dalles or Hood River, they can be recycled as ‘scrap metal’ because of the valuable copper wire. Ask attendant. Remove any large bulbs. Also, consider carefully saving boxes, paper and bows as packaging for next season.

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