

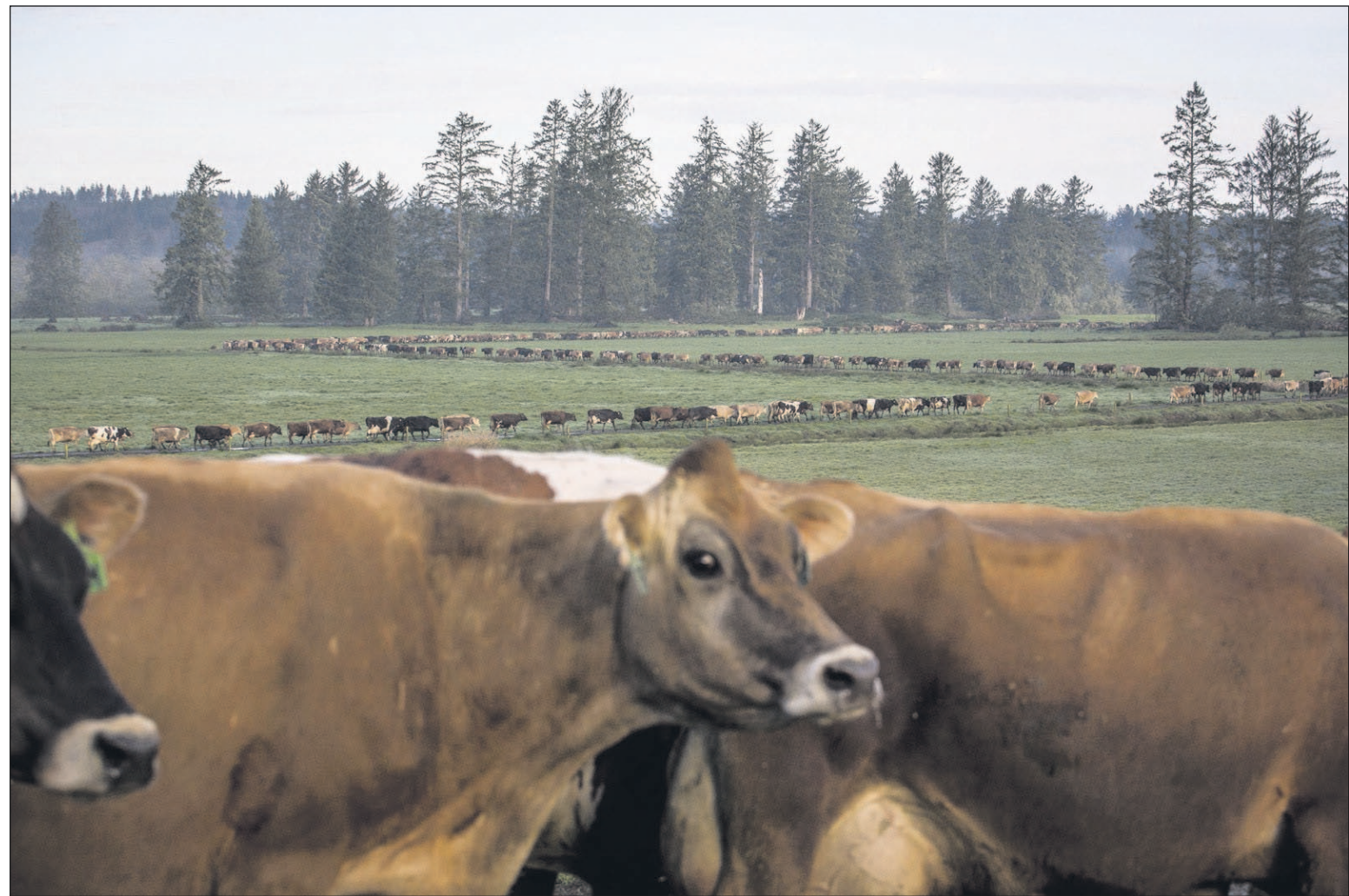


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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ONE DOLLAR



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Dairy cows walk toward a grazing field after being milked.

Cowan Dairy — A family affair

County's largest milking farm expands while grazing cows

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

On a foggy Thursday morning on Seppa Lane, 31-year-old Nathaniel Cowan checks the girth and udders underneath a cavernous hoop barn used for calving, before several cows make the procession down the driveway to the rotating milk parlor.

Inside the weaning barn, his mother and family matriarch Melody Cowan feeds newborns — about 500 of them divided into pens by age. Some will go to Nehalem, where patriarch Brad Cowan is setting up his family's second farm, GreenGold Dairy.

Brad and Melody Cowan, along with their children Julian, Nathaniel and Marika, all play a part in Cowan Dairy, a family-run operation that moved onto the former Seppa Dairy farm in Lewis and Clark in 1999 with 80 cows to become one of the nearly 100 farmer families supplying the Tillamook Dairy Co-Op. The family now runs the largest dairy farm in Clatsop County, with about 900 cows grazing on more than 1,000 acres in Lewis and Clark, nearly 300 in Nehalem and about 10 full-time and 10 part-time employees.

Long-term grazing

The Cowans eschew the maximum production of a confinement dairy in exchange for a seasonal pasture dairy. At peak production, they've produced nearly 45,000 pounds of milk in a day to be shipped to the Tillamook Dairy Co-Op. Over the past five years, they've provided between 9 and



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Marika Cowan hugs CeCe, a 10-year-old purebred Jersey cow, as cows make their way back to the milking parlor from the field. CeCe was the winner of the Lifetime Production Award at the Western National Jersey show in Puyallup, Wash., in 2013.

10.5 million pounds per year. While grazing lowers the milk production per cow, it also lowers the Cowans' feed costs and increases the life of the cows, some of which are upward of 14 years old and still producing milk. Since sending out their first milk shipment from Cathlamet, Wash., on Jan. 27, 1984, the family recently reached 5,600 cows tagged over the life of Cowan Dairy.

"It has to be good for the land; it has to be good for the cows; and it has

to be good for the people," Brad said, adding that the seasonal pasture model is more common in Ireland, Australia and New Zealand than in the U.S. "It all has to be a balance."

Each day, the Cowans and their employees set up a route, and their cows find their way to one of 60 to 70 paddocks to graze, sometimes more than a mile away. Each enclosed field takes about a month to regenerate after cows graze it, Nathaniel said, and the cows get a new one every day. The

Cowans have about 650 acres they own, and more than 700 they lease for grazing their cows and other stages of development.

"We'd be milking 5,000 right now, if we had the farm to put them on," he said. "But we don't, so we sell them."

A better herd

In the family's old milking parlor Thursday, Melody and employ-

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Wellville stands in lunch line at SHS

The get healthy challenge team explores healthy school lunch options

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

In a return trip to the Northwest, New York City-based venture capitalist Esther Dyson stopped in the Seaside High School cafeteria Monday to meet students and explore options for healthier school lunches.

Healthy living is a passion for Dyson, who is the founder of the Health Initiative Coordinating Council (HIC-Cup), which sponsors the Way to Wellville, a five-community, five-year challenge to improve health.

Clatsop County is one of the five communities selected for the Wellville challenge.

Ideas, such as improving school

See WELLVILLE, Page 10A

Struggle over design

Commissioners OK new home in historic place

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission voted Tuesday night to approve a new home in the Shively-McClure National Register Historic District, but commissioners struggled over how far they could go to shape design.

Dan and Kim Supple believe their two-story home on Grand Avenue between 15th and 16th streets will enhance a historic neighborhood that has a blend of architectural styles.

Yet commissioners were unhappy with the home's eclectic design, turning a review of the project into an unusual two-hour negotiation of sorts with the Astoria couple and their builder.

Commissioners appeared ready to suggest design ideas until Commissioner Thomas Stanley declared: "I'm not comfortable in telling these folks how to design their house."

Stanley said he does not think the commission has that right, "nor are we charged with that duty."

Commissioners voted 5-2 to approve the new home without any design changes.

The commission's role

The Historic Landmarks Commission is responsible for determining whether the design of proposed buildings is compatible with adjacent historic structures based on scale, style, height, architectural detail and materials.

See DESIGN, Page 2A

House advances \$7.3 billion school bill to Senate

By PETER WONG
Capital Bureau

'We do not have a revenue problem; we have a commitment problem.'

— Rep. John Davis
R-Wilsonville

SALEM — No new arguments were advanced during a two-hour debate — and no minds were changed — as the Oregon House voted along party lines Tuesday for a \$7.3 billion state school fund for the next two years.

The 35-25 vote sent the budget to the Senate, which is expected to take it up in a few days. Democrats have an 18-12 majority over Republicans in that chamber.

Twenty-one House members, 11 Republicans and 10 Democrats, spoke during the debate.

The amount is about \$600 million more than in the current two-year cycle. It includes \$220 million to cover costs of full-day kindergarten, which Oregon's 197 districts are required to start this fall.

"I did not come here to shortchange kids; I came to give them everything we can," Rep. Peter Buckley, D-Ashland,

who as House budget co-chairman was the budget's floor manager, said. "This budget represents the best we can do under the resources we have."

The school-fund budget contains a trigger that earmarks for the school fund 40 percent of any increased income tax collections projected in the state's next quarterly economic and revenue forecast May 14.

A procession of school district administrators and board members told lawmakers, however, that the minimum should be at least \$7.5 billion.

Rep. John Davis, R-Wilsonville, said lawmakers should be able to earmark more from the tax-supported general

fund with a rising economy.

"We do not have a revenue problem; we have a commitment problem," Davis said. "When will it ever be enough to make that commitment?"

The Oregon Education Association, the state's largest teachers' union, has not endorsed a figure. But its president said lawmakers should fund current operations before new initiatives such as increased spending on early childhood education, reading skills, and school-to-work and high school completion programs.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.



coast weekend

THURSDAY

College art exhibit

College art!