



Photos by By Kathryn Houghton/EO Media Group

David Johnson, right, and friend Nels Flesher rake in cranberries the day before the rest of the crew arrives to harvest the loot. Flesher said the work’s peaceful nature and family atmosphere draws him to volunteer when possible.

Bog: ‘This isn’t natural for most families’

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He said he can see her work today when he waters successors to the vines she planted. He sees his grandfather in the patterns of the fields, and his father in the expanded acres.

Tending the fields is quiet work, until harvest time.

The celebrating harvesters call each other “migrant workers,” even though they are second cousins, aunts, daughters, brothers and friends of 30 years.

They gather, sort and rake in a somewhat offbeat rhythm.

“This isn’t natural for most families, and I guess even for mine it’s unique work,” Johnson said. “But it’s a part of our family.”



ABOVE: Audrey Johnson, right, knew when she was marrying into the family she was taking on life at the bog. After her husband’s death 11 years ago, Audrey’s son, David Johnson, left, took over the family bog. LEFT: Diannejoy Hughey (left) and Kevin Kelleher help gather cranberries to be sorted. Kellher, a second cousin to the Johnson Bog owner, said he works a desk job in Silicon Valley and dreams about harvest time.



Audrey Johnson, right, knew when she was marrying into the family she was taking on life at the bog. Her mother-in-law, spent the night before Audrey’s wedding watching the crop for frost. Today, Audrey Johnson still leads the family as they collect cranberries.



Steve Hall, left, teaches his 13-year-old daughter, Stephanie, how to prepare the crates for cranberries. Hall is a family friend who started helping at harvest time when he was in college. The annual collection has become a part of his family’s traditions.

Seaside: ‘We need to do more research and do it right’

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vigorously opposed the ordinance and the proposed amendment.

“Why can’t somebody ask for help?” asked Seaside’s Anne Danen. “I don’t like being accosted, but even less than that, I dislike that the town I grew up in is doing nothing to help these people. Look yourselves in the mirror. Shame.”

Condron said courts throughout the country have “struck down this kind of bill.”

“Not because you’re charging people onerous fees, but because it restricts free speech,” Condron said. “You cannot charge people to ask for help. It’s illegal. It doesn’t matter if you create an ordinance, because it violates the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. Supreme

Court says so. Who are you to disagree? If you pass this bill, rest assured, you’re going to find out, because it will go to court.

“I urge you not to pass it,” he added. “Strike down the itinerant merchant ordinance. You’re making a mockery of the city and making the city look horrible.”

Looking outside Seaside

At the end of discussion, councilors said they needed more information about the legal aspects of the amendment and a review of policies throughout the nation.

“I’m curious what other cities are doing,” Councilor Tita Montero said. “I know that other cities are overrun by itinerant merchants, panhandlers and the homeless. I think I’d be in favor of doing

a little more research and see how it’s handled elsewhere.”

“Even though this may be a good stop-gap, I think we can come up with something better,” Council President Don Johnson said.

“I think we need to do more research and do it right, so I’m going to move to table this amendment,” Barber said.

Councilors unanimously agreed.

After the meeting, opponents remained concerned about future council action.

“It’s discriminatory, at the very least,” Danen said. “They say all these pretty words how it’s not targeting the homeless, but that’s all it’s targeting. We might as well get down to brass tacks and give ’em a bus ticket and say, ‘Go somewhere else because we don’t want you here.’”

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