

Awards: 'I was a crazy, wild animal when I came to Astoria'

Continued from Page 1A

Pulitzer that raised more than \$100,000 from about 125,000 people to pay for the pedestal on which the statue stands.

"The sum of all those small things is really just as important as all the big things she does," Waisanen said of Larsen's big and small, but always impactful, exploits, from fundrais-

ing for a disc golf course at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds to recycling newspapers with the Astoria Lions Club.

Taught to volunteer

"I was a crazy, wild animal when I came to Astoria," Taylor said amid raucous laughter.

A Boise, Idaho, native who moved to Astoria from Seattle in 2006 and took over Old

Town Framing on Commercial Street, Taylor said she had never volunteered before. Then Tiffany Estes, a downtown business owner and then president of the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association, shanghai'd her into the vice presidency.

"Dulcye always shows up," Estes said, introducing her friend and fellow downtown

advocate. "There are few things more valuable in a volunteer or a community leader than being present and being engaged. For her, there's no halfway. It's all or nothing. It's go big, or go home."

For the past six years, Taylor has been president of the downtown association, winning Volunteer of the Year at the Oregon Main Street Conference

for her efforts. She has since joined several other volunteer boards, recently co-founding the nonprofit Astoria Ferry Group to bring back the Tourist No. 2, which plied the Columbia River between Oregon and Washington state prior to the opening of the Astoria Bridge.

Taylor said it was City Manager and former Community Development Director Brett

Estes who taught her all about city government, while Tiffany Estes taught her how to be a Lady Liberty, an honor she said she is proud to share with someone as accomplished as Larsen.

"I don't think I have enough time to do everything you've done in your lifetime," Taylor told Larsen. "But I'm going to give it a good shot."

Pot: No signs of consumers losing interest

Continued from Page 1A

Holmes is the owner of Quality Growers, one of more than two dozen marijuana producers that have taken root in Pacific County since 2012, when recreational sales were legalized in Washington state. In 2014, there were only two marijuana producers based in Pacific County. Today there are 17. All but two — Green Labs in South Bend and Vancouver Weed Co. in Ilwaco — are concentrated in Raymond.

Pot production

Pink Floyd played on the speakers and a skunky smell swirled over a sea of green all basking under bright lights. Workers wearing latex gloves and sunglasses strolled along isles of hundreds of mature plants, pausing every few steps for a closer look.

It was a typical afternoon at Quality Growers, where up to 35 pounds of pot are harvested every 10 days for recreational marijuana stores across the state.

Depending on the strain, it can take between seven and 12 weeks for a clone to finish. They currently grow more than 20 strains, but are beginning to narrow it down to those which do best on a 60-day flowering cycle. Like a slow-moving conveyor belt, the plants are moved along in 10-day stages, with each stage occurring in separate buildings, starting with the nursery. Also known as the "clone room," the nursery is where hundreds of young clones are clustered under ultraviolet light. In the early stages, a close eye is kept on each clone's root length, an early indicator of health and readiness for transplantation. After 10 days, they are transplanted to bigger pots and moved under bigger lights.

In the second stage, now a little over a foot tall, the plants begin to take their characteristic shape and leaf structure. It's during this stage that the plants could essentially be considered teenagers while they experience rapid growth. Upkeep is important during this stage to prepare the plant for a successful harvest, said master gardener Tyler Solverson.

"It's a double function," Solverson said. "We clean it



Luke Whittaker/EO Media Group

Master grower Tyler Solverson works hands-on with the plants during every step of the process. "I consider myself a farmer," Solverson said. "Just a different form of farming."

up and we get clones." Like a gardener pruning a small tree, Solverson meticulously trims the undercarriage of the plants, cutting away smaller, secondary branches to allow light and energy to be concentrated to the top canopy, where he says the biggest and best buds are produced. Many of the trimmings are saved and transplanted as clones.

Potential to grow

Once the plants have passed through the first two stages, they go to the big building next door for flowering, the longest stage.

Inside, more than 800 marijuana plants are grouped together on tables of 20. For the next 60 days or so, buds will grow and expand the stalks, the "flower" of the plant. As a state-defined Tier 3 producer, Quality Growers is permitted to grow up to 30,000 square feet of pot, measured by the canopy, which is more area than two Olympic-size swimming pools. Currently, however, they are growing approximately 6,000 square feet, mostly do to space limitations indoors.

They will be expand the grow outdoors in the summer, when weather is more ideal.

"We're tiny now compared to the potential we have," Holmes said.

Typically between 120 to

150 plants are harvested at a time. The plants are flushed with gallons of water to strip any excess nutrients and fed sugar just before harvest.

"We give them a 10-day molasses flush, some sugar to sweeten and fatten them up right at the end," Solverson said. "It's all about the weight and the percentage of THC," main psychoactive component.

The buds are dried for seven to 10 days in a separate building. After the flowers are dried, the buds are divided into three classes based on quality and hand trimmed before being ready for retail sale about 30 days later.

After the pot is trimmed, it's ready for packaging. In the packaging room, a Michael Jordan poster hangs above employee Jimmy Forbes, who has perfected the art of rolling joints using a specialized machine. Forbes estimates he has rolled more than 30,000 joints for Quality Growers, which, coincidentally, is near the same point total Jordan scored during his basketball career — 32,292.

The marijuana at Quality Growers is separated into two categories including a premium and bargain line, each given a distinct name and packaging. The premium buds are packaged and sold under the name "PUR" line, while the lesser quality go into bags

branded "Uncle Rudi's." Each is aimed at attracting a different demographic through price and packaging.

"Not everyone wants to buy your grade-A bud," Roni Layman, a trimmer, said. "They may not have the budget."

Some medical patients favor the lesser line because they can buy the product in quantity at a cheaper price and use it for cooking, she said. Choice simply depends on the consumer and their needs.

Testing

After the marijuana is harvested, dried and cured, it goes to a third-party testing lab before being available for retail sale. The marijuana is tested for potency, microbiology, residual solvents and pesticides by labs approved by the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board. Holmes uses organic growing methods and supports the stringent testing.

"A sample of every strain is sent to the state," Holmes said. "We're held to a higher standard than the food industry." Upon passing the test, the pot is ready for retail sale.

When legal pot first entered the scene in Washington in 2014, prices were at a historic high of nearly \$30 per gram on average, according to state figures. Prices have since fallen as new retailers and producers come online and continue to flood the market with more marijuana.

Quality Growers fetches between \$1,300 and \$1,700 per pound wholesale — or \$2.80 to \$3.70 per gram — when sold to retail marijuana stores, according to Holmes. Once on store shelves, the pot fetches between \$1,812 to \$6,795 per pound, or \$4 to \$15 per gram after taxes.

Consumers haven't shown signs of losing interest, particularly in Pacific County. March sales reached \$392,359, the highest ever for the county, which is even more remarkable given there are only three stores. March was also a banner month for Quality Growers. They reached \$75,000 in sales for the first time, but Holmes believes the best is yet to come.

"We have the potential to do between \$120,000 and \$140,000 monthly," he said.

Fire fee: 'You have no clue of the area'

Continued from Page 1A

Seaside Golf Course

One parcel under consideration, for instance, was the Seaside Golf Course.

"This is one that we struggled with," said Neal Bond, a committee member and protection unit forester for the Astoria District. "Golf courses are not where ODF needs to be, where it should be."

While the course includes structures, putting greens and a river running down the middle, dense collections of trees surround it. In that case, the committee decided to reassess certain tax lots on the parcel, while leaving others as forestland.

The committee originally added 4,750 lots — owned by 2,300 residents — last year. It also removed more than 600 property owners. Forestland classifications are reviewed every five years.

The annual property tax fee assessed to owners of forestlands in the Astoria district is \$1.21 per acre. Owners are charged a minimum assessment of \$18.75 each year. A \$47.50 surcharge can be added if property owners build additional structures on their land.

Opposition

A handful of property owners voiced their arguments opposing the classification of various lands during the public comment session Thursday. Complaints included dissatisfaction with the assessment criteria, the process the committee has used to make assessments and communication between the Department of Forestry and the public.

Commenters implied that many residents living in urban areas, as well as local

officials who were part of the decision-making process, were unfairly exempt from the assessments. One decried the committee's process for determining assessments.

"Have you physically come and seen my property?" Shanon Meehan said. "I find it a little disheartening that you're calling swamp forestland. You have no clue of the area. You haven't gone there and researched it or looked at it or taken photos from a different view except from up above."

Dale Edwards said some of the minutes from past committee meetings have not been made public, so he needed to pay for open records requests. He still was unable to find information pertaining to his specific property assessment.

"I can't even argue with, up to this point, whether my place is forestland or not. And I don't believe it is," Edwards said.

Landowners who appealed will receive a letter in the mail stating whether or not their property was reclassified, Department of Forestry spokeswoman Sherron Lumley said.

While looking at overhead photos of properties, committee member and Olney-Walluski Fire Chief Ron Tyson noted a few properties that, though not part of the current appeals process, should be considered for removal during the next cycle of committee meetings.

One property near Lewis and Clark Road, for instance, was not part of the appeals process, but was situated in a similar location as a nearby property that was removed from forestland classification.

"Be sure to make note of that," Goody told his staff.

Bay: Celebration, ceremony scheduled for May 13

Continued from Page 1A

'Rest and refuel'

"Shorebirds undertake some of nature's longest migrations," Rob Clay, the strategy's director, said in a press release. "Their ability to travel thousands of miles depends upon a network of critical sites along the way, where they can rest and refuel."

Ferrier hopes the design-

ation will get people to pay attention to the area's importance for wildlife, and particularly species that are endangered or threatened, such as the snowy plover.

"The refuge and Long Beach Peninsula offer tremendous habitat for the birds, which translates into exceptional viewing opportunities for the public," she said.

The recognition also cred-

its property owners, conservation groups, businesses and state and federal agencies for managing land around the bay and peninsula with shorebirds in mind.

A conservation effort to bulldoze dunes and remove invasive plants is underway along area beaches. So far, cordgrass has been removed from almost 8,000 acres, restoring significant portions

of habitat for shorebirds and other native wildlife.

"Now, it looks like open sand," Ferrier said. "I think people will notice a difference."

An International Migratory Bird Day celebration and a ceremony to designate the site is scheduled from 2 to 4 p.m. on May 13 at the Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum in Ilwaco.

420 CELEBRATION

April 20th, 2017

Customer Appreciation
FREE BBQ 11AM - 6PM

(Sliders, chips, pop & water - provided by Mary's Bar & Grill)

Flower	\$4 Grams • \$4 Joints
Concentrates	\$4 Edibles
Edibles	
Beverages	
Paraphernalia & More 420 Blazing Deals	



Ilwaco - 133 Howerton Way (8AM-8PM)
Located at the Port of Ilwaco, Next to Jessie's Seafood

WARNING: This product has intoxicating effects and may be habit forming. There may be health risks associated with the consumption of this product. For use only by adults 21 and over. Keep out of reach of children. Marijuana can impair concentration, coordination, and judgement. Do not operate a vehicle or machinery under the influence of this drug.

He is Risen INDEED!

