



Astorian

A dry farming trial produces some success



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

On a misty morning, Larry Nelson adjusts the basket holding up a tomato plant in a dry plot on his 3-acre farm, LaNa's Conscious Farm. In dry farming, farmers do not rely on irrigation to cultivate crops, like tomatoes.

Farmers sidestep irrigation

By LUCY KLEINER
The Astorian

In mid-May, as soon as the sun came out and the soil warmed, Teresa Retzlaff dug into the earth at 46 North Farm. She filled holes with seeds and starts of zucchini, dry beans, summer squash and more. She covered the holes with soil and made sure the beds were free of weeds.

And then, she walked away. About 10 miles down the road, the same thing happened at LaNa Conscious Farm. On a 2,000-square-foot plot of land, Larry and Nancy Nelson's field was filled with the same plant varieties and, aside from light weeding, was left untouched.

Now, in late August, the starts have grown to produce-bearing plants. The zucchinis' wide leaves shade dozens of vegetables, the full-sized tomatoes are ripening from green to red. One of Retzlaff's winter squash is more than



Katie Frankowicz/The Astorian

Teresa Retzlaff, left, shows off zucchini plants in her dry bed on 46 North Farm during a presentation last August.

2 feet long. All of this happened without any irrigation. "I didn't really think it was going to work," Retzlaff said. "I kind of thought they'd all be dead in a few weeks and they weren't ... It was phenomenal." The process is called dry farming.

Farmers who practice it do not irrigate their plants throughout the dry summer season. Aside from occasional rainfall, plants rely only on moisture from below the surface to sustain growth.

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Teresa Retzlaff | farmer

Student project adds solar array to Warrenton

Panels on a school breezeway

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

WARRENTON — It took on average 873 kilowatt-hours of electricity a day to power Warrenton High School over the past year, equivalent to what the average U.S. home requires in a month.

A summer student project will supply a small portion of the high school's power needs with a 3 kW solar array installed on top of a breezeway.

Stephen Shumaker, an instructor with Clatsop Community College's Upward Bound Summer Academy, has been developing renewable energy and other sustainable technologies to make his home carbon-negative.

"It's something I'm just really interested in and passionate about, sustainable energy in general," he said. "I think that in teaching this generation of students, they're the ones that are going to have the biggest impact."

Shumaker secured a \$40,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education to fund his project and the solar array, which cost around \$11,000. The 11 students in his project group this summer learned about renewable energy. They visited entities that employ newer electric technology, such as Lektro, an airplane tug manufacturer, and the Portland Bureau of Transportation.

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Senate Democrats retreat on fines

Republican walkout over cap and trade

By AUBREY WIEBER
and CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — More than two months after voting to fine protesting Republican state senators \$500 a day for walking off the job, Senate Democrat leaders announced they will not make good on the threat.

Instead, Democrats said they are pursuing a constitutional amendment to change Oregon's quorum requirement from two-thirds to a simple majority. That would allow the Senate to convene with 16 of the chamber's 30 senators, instead of 20. Forty-six states use the simple majority requirement, according to a Senate Democrat news release on Friday.

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Parents organize new softball team

Girls get more chances to play

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Astoria's new tournament softball team, Future Fish, made a splash this summer.

A group of parents organized the 10-and-under team to give children more opportunity to play softball after T-ball.

The only other softball tournament team in the area is the North Coast Merchants, which draws



players from Oregon and across the river in Washington state.

"I wanted to do something different and try and get as many kids playing 40, 50 games a year as we could," Adam Svensen, one of the coaches, said.

"Most of these kids I've coached since T-ball and I'm like, 'OK, we have a pretty good little nucleus here, why don't we put a tournament team together and keep it Astoria so that we got 12 Astoria kids that are playing a lot of softball?'"

Svensen coaches alongside Alina Carlson. Their team has received plenty of parent and sponsor support. With their help, they hope to eventually build 12U, 14U and 16U tournament teams in Astoria.

The head coaches and assistant coaches bring experience playing competitive softball and baseball, as well as coaching. Svensen played baseball at Willamette University. He also has two daughters on the team, Hailey and Kilee.

He coached the girls on the 10U team when they played T-ball and said he has seen vast improvement in their performance. The team practices for two hours three days a week and plays about two tournaments a month.

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Carolyn Nygaard

Future Fish and their moms won a relay race at nationals.

