

Hemp: CBD described as an elixir

Continued from Page A1

They decided to forge ahead, planting on land that McCormach's family previously had farmed organic alfalfa. McCormach and Heger decided to stay organic, using no pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers. They braced for an agricultural adventure.

"By going organic, you deal with whatever challenges the field presents," Heger said. "You're hands-on."

The entire clan, which includes Heger's four children (ranging in age from 8 to 15) got involved.

"It's a family farm," Heger said. "Our kids were out in the field."

They laid down plastic to keep the weeds at bay, but later had to remove it when plants started going missing.

"The plastic was a natural tunnel for the gophers," McCormach said. "They were running up and down the rows having a heyday."

Without the plastic, the weeds came on. To beat the heat, the family arose at around 4:30 a.m. and got out the door by 5 or 6. They hoed and weeded and fixed leaks in the water lines. Jack, who is 8 years old, ferried drinks from the house to the field on his Honda 50 motorbike. Heger said the hemp farming experience brought satisfaction.

"There's something about being out in a field watching things grow," Heger said.

More fulfillment came after harvest. They shipped their entire crop to a processor who used an expelling process to extract the CBD oil.

Heger started her business slowly, first selling oil to a handful of people who had horses with health issues.

"One of the ladies had trouble with her horse not eating," Heger said. "Within one day (of taking CBD oil), the horse ate and performed better."

A woman whose horse had inflammation also noticed marked improvement after using the oil. When she failed to give the oil for a few days, swelling returned. Heger gives CBDs to her own family members and animals, including their quarter horse, Apple, that has cancer.

The pendletoncbd.com website offers 1-ounce and 2-ounce bottles of equine CBD. The website will soon feature oil for people, too.

With CBD being touted as a magical cure-all for a variety of conditions, one might wonder if it's just the latest form of snake oil. Heger said the more she learns about CBDs, the more she thinks it's the real deal, an elixir for everything from anxiety to arthritis.

"There's a reason it's good for so many things," Heger said. "Your body has an endocannabinoid system with receptors literally from head to toe."

The web of nerves runs from the brain all the way through the body, she said. It's connected to all vital organs and generally controls the state of homeostasis in your body.

The legislative climate is finally



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Rebecca Heger demonstrates the viscosity of her CBD, or cannabidiol, oil.

going the way of the hemp farmers like McCormach and Heger.

Last month, as part of the \$867 billion farm bill, Congress removed hemp from the list of federally controlled substances, which made hemp like any other agricultural crop. Oregon legalized hemp in 2015, but now growers can deal across state lines. Hemp farmers can get credit lines, write off business expenses and buy crop insurance. More Oregon farmers are jumping in, according to Oregon Department of Agriculture licensing numbers.

"We had 13 (registered hemp growers) in 2015. We had 584 last year," said ODA Cannabis Policy Coordinator Sunny Summers. "I consider that exponential growth."

The market keeps expanding. There are CBD-infused smoothies, coffee, beer and even lip balm. Coca-Cola is considering offering a CBD drink.

Summers expects another large jump in hemp grower registrations in Oregon this year.

Part of the reason, Summers said, is a saturated marijuana market compared with the sky's-the-limit CBD market. Also, there are fewer barriers to entry.

Plus, "you don't have to have security cameras," she said, "and you can grow pretty much anywhere as long as it's zoned for agriculture."

Heger and McCormach might argue about the security cameras. They dealt with thefts from both the field and from a barn where hemp hung drying. The thefts came despite signs on the fence line informing that hemp grew in the field, not marijuana. The experience made them guarded about sharing their farm's exact location.

On balance, though, the couple considers their hemp growing experience a success. They'll plant again this spring. This time, McCormach said, instead of 10 acres, they will plant 20.

Shooting: Status hearing set for Feb. 4

Continued from Page A1

the evidence against her client. That hearing could put Umatilla County sheriff's detective Kacey Ward on the stand. Ward investigated the homicide and wrote the affidavit for warrants to search cellphones, phone provider data and social media data of Vasquez-Vargas and his girlfriend.

The shooting occurred around 6:15 on the morning of Nov. 26, 2018, at the dairy at 50924 Umapine Road near the community of Umapine. Witnesses reported hearing gunshots from the barn, according to the affidavit, which is a public record. The ensuing statements and information about the homicide and the investigation are from Ward's affidavit.

Luiz-Antonio was shot three times. Bullets struck his right thigh and chest, and he died on the tractor he was operating. Witness statements and video footage pointed to Vasquez-Vargas as the suspect. He arrived to work around 2 a.m. and was gone moments after the shooting.

Detectives learned Luiz-Antonio and Vasquez-Vargas were beefing and the investigation soon turned up cellphone numbers for Vasquez-Vargas, his girlfriend and the location of his apartment in Walla Walla. Ward also asked special agents with the FBI for help in tracking Vasquez-Vargas's cellphone.

The cellphone communications led law enforcement to pinpoint Vasquez-Vargas and his girlfriend at the Clover Island Inn, Kennewick. The two FBI agents headed there to look for Vasquez-Vargas. They found the girlfriend's blue Toyota Corolla in the parking lot and saw the couple remove items from the vehicle and head into room 41. They came out to walk their dog. One agent spoke to them for a moment about the dog.

The agent identified the girlfriend and Vasquez-Vargas but could not make an arrest because there was no violation of federal law or a federal warrant in this case.

Ward next contacted the Kennewick Police Department, which sent cops

and vehicles to make sure Vasquez-Vargas could not flee. The sheriff's office issued a temporary warrant for his arrest on the charge of murder.

But Kennewick police told Ward they needed a warrant with a judge's signature. Ward obtained that at about 1:30 a.m. on Nov. 27 from Umatilla County Circuit Judge Eva Temple. Kennewick police reviewed the warrant and took Vasquez-Vargas and the girlfriend into custody.

Officers brought the couple to the Kennewick Police Department. The cop transporting Vasquez-Vargas had orders not to ask the suspect any questions. Still, Vasquez-Vargas stated he killed Luiz-Antonio "out of vengeance."

Detectives questioned the couple separately. The girlfriend admitted Vasquez-Vargas told her about the shooting. She said she warned him not to go to their apartment. She said she packed clothes for him, picked him up at an auto repair shop and they took off to the Kennewick motel to talk because, "That's where we always go."

Ward noted Vasquez-Vargas understood English and could "articulate himself in English very well." Vasquez-Vargas said he shot and killed Luiz-Antonio with a black .38-caliber handgun.

He claimed he dealt with "abuse" from Luiz-Antonio for more than a year. He blamed Luiz-Antonio for slashing his car tires. He said Luiz-Antonio's relative forced him off the road and shot his car door in an attempt to murder him. Three weeks earlier, Vasquez-Vargas told police, Luiz-Antonio and the relative again tried to force him off the road, but he floored the gas pedal and got away. He said he believed Luiz-Antonio would kill him in a way that left no witnesses.

Ward early in the investigation spoke to Luiz-Antonio's fiancé. She reported Luiz-Antonio complained for three months about a co-worker who threatened to kill him. The co-worker accused Luiz-Antonio of shooting his car and slashing his tires, she said, but Luiz-Antonio told her he knew nothing about that.

She said the trouble started when Luiz-Antonio became a supervisor and earned more money, she said, and she and his boss told him to ignore the co-worker. She said she did not know the co-worker's name, but she was sure it was the shooter.

The cops also asked Vasquez-Vargas about the gun. He is from Mexico and federal court records show the United States District Court of Eastern Washington convicted him in 2004 of felony reentry into the country after deportation and sentenced him to three years, three months in prison. All of that would have prevented him from purchasing a gun legally. The affidavit states Vasquez-Vargas told police he paid \$200 to "some guy" in September for the handgun he used to shoot Luiz-Antonio.

The morning of the shooting, Vasquez-Vargas said he arrived to work at 2 and he thought about everything Luiz-Antonio had done to him during the past year. He became angry. He saw Luiz-Antonio and the ire grew. He asked Luiz-Antonio for help moving some cows, and Luiz-Antonio ignored him. That made him angrier still. He confronted Luiz-Antonio, who continued to ignore him.

Vasquez-Vargas said he took out the gun from his waistband and dropped it. He picked it up, told Luiz-Antonio, "You know what? You want me dead. I'm going to kill you first." He told detectives that's when he pulled the trigger.

Vasquez-Vargas said he took off on foot, got lost and threw the gun into a body of water. He made it to Stateline Road and flagged down a ride into Walla Walla.

Luiz-Antonio never showed any weapon, Vasquez-Vargas said, nor threatened him right before the shooting.

"Antonio repeatedly said that he knew what he did was wrong and he knew that he probably ruined his life," the affidavit states, "but he indicated he felt justified."

Judge Brauer set the next status hearing for Feb. 4. Davis affirmed for the judge she would know by then whether she would want the bail hearing.

2019: 'I started with \$150 of my own money ... I've now turned that into nearly \$1,000'

Continued from Page A1

will eventually turn into a career.

Chavez began trading stocks, an interest he developed only recently.

"I found out about it in December," he said. While browsing on the internet one day, he read an article about the stock market that caught his interest.

Chavez had attempted to start college twice, but both times, it didn't work out.

"I decided that may not be my route," he said. "And when I found out about stocks, it felt like perfect timing."

Since then, Chavez has thrown himself into learning about the stock market, taking online classes on investing. The stock market is only open for a few hours, Monday through

Friday, and Chavez spends much of his time outside of that doing independent research.

In the first few weeks of trading, he said he has focused mostly on natural gas stocks.

"I started with \$150 of my own money, and I've now turned that into nearly \$1,000," he said.

He said he hopes he will someday be able to make a career out of his newfound interest, and has a timeline for doing so.

"Within the four years I'd have used to go to school, I can use those four years to make a living," he said.

Dustin Harper, who works in IT for Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery, has made it his goal to write a book about Windows 10 security.

"I'm big into Windows,

and I do security for work," he said. "I've been doing IT for 25 years."

Harper began researching the subject, and felt he could contribute a book that consumers would find helpful for understanding the basics of the computer operating system.

"It will go through the various applications in Windows," he said. "The best practices for researching each topic, the built-in firewall, antivirus."

He said he has tried to help family and friends with computer security, and hopes that the book will be easy for anyone with minimal knowledge of Windows to use.

Harper said he has started writing a book before, but this time, he has a plan in place to get it published by this summer.

"This time I have people interested in it," he said.

Hannah Young Williams plans to expand her volunteer duties at Umatilla-Morrow Head Start.

It won't be hard for Williams to keep her resolution, as she's already been involved with the program for a few years. She started as a member of the policy council, but recently decided she wanted to do more.

"I have six kids, and they all went through Head Start for at least two years," she said.

For her resolution, Williams decided to start working as a coordinator for the SMART reading program, where adults read to children to help them develop a habit and a love for reading.

She supervises about four other volunteers, and said they are always looking for more people to come

read to children. Young said when she started volunteering, she encouraged a friend to try it out — and that friend now coordinates a SMART reading program at another school in the district.

"We make sure there's readers every week, and that they're qualified readers," she said. "They have to make it child-led, and let the children pick the books that get read to them."



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