

**EL GORGO**  
Kids' sailing class  
a success A7



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# Hood River News

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## El Gorgo generosity

By ADAM LAPIERRE  
News staff writer

Last winter Mike Schend of Hood River Community Education asked Jaime Mack to help start a junior sailing program. Starting with zero boats in their fleet, the El Gorgo Sailing Program for Kids went from concept to concrete through the generous contributions of local sailing enthusiasts.

Jaime and Andy Mack purchased four Optimists sailboats for the class, Jimmy and Courtenay Dey loaned their personal Optimist, and Dave Sexton and Keith Hammer loaned their personal class-two 4.7 rigged lasers.

The Macks worked weekends to gel-coat dings and sew damaged sails to prepare for the class, which started in mid July. Now, with a fleet of seven boats, 12 young sailors 8-13 years old meet every Monday evening at the Hood River Marina for sailing lessons by world-class instructors.

Andy is a world-class 49-er skiff sailor and Jaime coached at the Olympic level, traveling recently to Athens to coach before the summer Olympics.

"Even though my husband and I have no children, we couldn't resist," Jaime Mack said. "We are both avid sailors and are heavily involved in the sailing community. We both fell in love with the Gorge after spending summer weekends racing our sailboats in Cascade Locks through the Columbia Gorge Racing Association. I eventually had an opportunity to work in the Gorge so we took the chance and moved down from Seattle. We haven't looked back."

"The class is absolutely incredible," said Schend. "It's amazing with the Olympic-level instruction they're getting. The Port of Hood River has also been very gracious for letting us use the Marina."

Jaime Mack offered the following account of the class so



Photos by Adam Lapierre

**EL GORGO SAILING** students listen to instructor Andy Mack Monday evening before setting sail in the Hood River Marina. Organizers are already trying to acquire more boats for next year's class.

far: "We are three weeks into the class and I have already met the primary goal: we have children learning to sail and loving it!"

"Our first class was held on shore, with a boat rigged on the

lawn. I was fortunate enough to have Brett Davis, a World Class sailor and youth Optimist Champion, help me instruct. We covered basics like wind direction, points of sail, safety, rigging and boat handling. All of the kids paid close attention

and seemed to have fun, especially climbing in and out of the boat.

"The next class was on the water. It was a perfect hot night, with a moderate breeze.

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## GORGO

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With me on the dock and Andy in our whaler, we launched our sailors one boat at a time into the Marina basin. Most got the hang of steering and sheeting in. It helped having two in the boats so that they could work together. All of our instruction concerning docking did not sink in on that first sail and I was so



thankful for all of the parents who hung out at the dock to fend off the returning sailors who tended to approach the dock at Nautilus-ramming speed. To the relief of all our over-heated sailors, we covered capsizing. One of the girls commented that it was "the scariest and the most fun part of the

whole night." I left the evening feeling tired but happy with the sounds of giggling sailors in my head.

"Our third class was small, with many sailors missing class due to family vacations. Again, we had another hot night and a perfect moderate breeze. Our friend Tracy Duryee assisted us in teaching the class. Tracy taught junior sailing at the Seattle Yacht Club for many years and I consider her an expert. We covered docking, rounding marks and stopping

were all impressed with the progress of our sailors. The perfect wind and water conditions in the basin are great for teaching sailing at the beginning level." Although this summer's class is beyond capacity, the Macks welcome anyone to come down to the Hood River Port Marine Park Monday evenings, 5:30-7 p.m. to watch or help, as they can always use riggers and fenders. After the success of this summer, Jaime is currently working with the Hood River Yacht Club to purchase 10-12 Optimists boats for next summer. The goal is to offer week-long youth sailing classes, held again in the Hood

on the whistle. Everyone got to sail alone if they wanted. We

River marina, as well as establish a youth racing team. The classes will be held through the Hood River Community Education. Fund-raising for the boats and next year's program is already in progress and anyone interested in helping with funds or as a volunteer is encouraged to contact Jaime Mack at jaimemack@charter.net.

"I would like to thank the following people for all of their support," Mack commented. "The Port of Hood River, Mike Schend with Community Education, The Hood River Yacht Club, Jimmy and Courtenay Dey of Three Rivers Grill, and Tracy Duryee of Locus Interactive."