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# Astorian



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## CORONAVIRUS

### Fireworks canceled in Astoria

Annual event a virus casualty

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

The Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce has canceled its Fourth of July fireworks show over coronavirus concerns.

The decision follows the cancellations of much larger fireworks displays in Seaside and Long Beach, Washington.

“Our team had hoped that we would be able to produce the Independence Day fireworks show as planned, but we are still facing many unknowns and uncertainties as we look ahead to July,” David Reid, the chamber’s executive director, said in a statement. “Under the current health circumstances, it would be irresponsible for us to proceed.”

“By making this decision, we are standing with other communities in the area that have canceled their events out of an abundance of caution.”

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Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Fort George Brewery will partially reopen on Monday.

### Fort George to partially reopen amid coronavirus

#### Upstairs pub with limited seating

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

Fort George Brewery will reopen the upstairs pub on Duane Street on Monday to limited, reservation-only seating, following Astoria’s smaller breweries.

Fort George has been closed to all but to-go orders since Gov. Kate Brown restricted seated dining to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Co-owner Chris Nemlowill said the brewery is taking a cautious approach and trying to avoid attracting many visitors.

The brewery will take reservations through its website for eight tables spaced throughout the upstairs, with a maximum group size of four, and two tables on its upstairs deck, with a maximum capacity of eight. The partial reopening will bring Fort George up to a skeleton crew of around 30 employees out of more than 120 who worked there before the pandemic.

“Everybody who works at Fort George, it’s like a big family,” Nemlowill said. “So, it’s been very difficult. What’s been sad is you’re letting people go that didn’t do anything wrong. They didn’t deserve to lose their jobs.”

Fort George was able to access money from the federal government’s Paycheck Protection Program, which Nemlowill said is part

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### Warrenton considers public safety fee options

City may base fee on water meter size

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

WARRENTON — Leaders are considering a new fee based on the size of a property’s water meter to help cover increasing police and fire costs in the rapidly growing city.

Warrenton was already facing a budget gap from commercial sprawl not covering the costs of delivering utilities, staff reviews and policing businesses. The City Commission recently voted to increase the penalties for traffic violations and other crimes, along with other administrative fees related to the city’s Municipal Court.

Commissioners placed a moratorium on utility increases because of the coronavirus pandemic, but have appeared receptive to the idea of charging a public safety fee given the calls for service to police and fire.

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R.J. Marx/The Astorian

Chef-owner John Sowa announced the closure of Sweet Basil’s Cafe this week.

### Sweet Basil’s Cafe to close

Cannon Beach eatery known for Creole-Cajun flavor

By R.J. MARX  
*The Astorian*

CANNON BEACH — Sweet Basil’s Cafe, the beloved restaurant and community gathering place known for its Creole-Cajun flavor, is closing due to the coronavirus pandemic.

With the release of the state’s reopening guidelines for restaurants, John Sowa, the chef and owner, realized the eatery could not survive. Social distancing measures would have limited seating to three tables inside —

four at the most.

“I don’t care how small you are, three tables doesn’t cut it,” he said.

Sowa is among a handful of chefs distinguished with long service in Clatsop County, a slew of Iron Chef Goes Coastal trophies and a loyal international audience.

A Brooklyn, New York, native, Sowa studied cooking in New Orleans at K-Paul’s with Paul Prudhomme, America’s foremost proponent of Creole and Cajun cuisine.

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Edward Stratton/The Astorian

Neal Cummings is moving Video Horizons from Astor Street to Duane Street, where his video collection will be joined by Richard Moore’s vinyl records.

### Video Horizons moving downtown

A merger with a record store

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

Video Horizons owner Neal Cummings is partnering with vinyl collector Richard Moore to create a new rental and record store on Duane Street.

Cummings closed Video Horizons, one of the few video rental stores left in the region, to walk-ins during the coronavirus outbreak. He recently raised more than \$4,500 through

a GoFundMe campaign to help with a slowdown, but said his rent at the Astor Street location is unsustainable.

On Tuesday, he began moving his video collection to 1156 Duane St. The storefront is next to the Deals Only thrift store and on the opposite side of the building from the Five Zero Trees marijuana store.

“I’m really looking forward to presenting kind of a physical media paradise,” Cummings said.

Moore, a former Elvis impersonator, has amassed more than 300,000 vinyl records spread between several storage units

across Oregon and southwest Washington state. He runs Play it Again, a record store inside a hangar in Gearhart selling a menagerie of media, including LPs, eight tracks, 33s, 45s, 78s and VHS tapes.

After moving his record store 21 times over the past 29 years, the 70-year-old Moore said, he’s ready for some stability.

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