

IN BRIEF

College discloses virus case

Clatsop Community College disclosed Tuesday that an individual connected to the college tested positive for the coronavirus.

Julie Kovatch, a college spokeswoman, said that because the person did not come on campus while contagious, the Clatsop County Public Health Department did not contact them about the case.

“However, the person did contact the school and self-identified so we would be aware in case we needed to make accommodations for the person,” Kovatch said in an email. “This is not a confirmation of a case on campus as far as the county is concerned but the college felt the need to let the college community know that we have a person that was affected by the pandemic and to reinforce the need to wear face coverings and follow the guidelines we are establishing for on-campus activities.”

Man rescued from Columbia River

A man was rescued Tuesday afternoon from the Columbia River in Astoria.

Authorities were dispatched just after 2 p.m. to a report that a man went into the water at the foot of Sixth Street.

Officials said the man reported he was not in distress and was swimming. The man was known to the officers who were on scene to have a history of mental health issues.

Astoria police, the Clatsop County Sheriff’s Office, the Knappa Fire Department and the U.S. Coast Guard responded and made efforts to coax the man out of the water.

He initially evaded attempts to reach him and refused to come out of the water, but after over two hours of negotiations, he agreed to come out.

The man was taken to Columbia Memorial Hospital for medical and mental health evaluations.

Astoria home damaged by fire

A home was damaged by a fire Tuesday in Astoria.

A fire crew was reportedly driving past the house when they spotted smoke showing from the building. They reported the fire and proceeded to close 15th Street between Jerome and Niagara avenues.

Two people were reportedly home at the time of the fire, including a man who was trying to put the fire out when firefighters arrived.

The fire was brought under control within 15 minutes of arrival and firefighters remained on scene until 4 p.m. removing smoke from the structure, checking for fire extension and conducting an investigation.

The fire was accidental, authorities said. An occupant of the home was making a repair and it is believed that heat transferred to an object in the attic, which caused the fire.

No injuries were reported.

— The Astorian

Pacific County announces new batch of virus cases

SOUTH BEND, Wash. — Pacific County health officials announced six new coronavirus cases on Monday, the largest case increase in a day since the start of the pandemic.

With the six new cases, plus another case reported on Saturday, the county’s case count rose to 25.

The new cases show Pacific County is not immune from a spike across Washington state and in neighboring coastal communities.

— Chinook Observer

BIRTHS

July 19, 2020 KAHN, Lisa, and FOR-RESTER, Harrison, of El Portal, California, a boy, Skye Robert Forrester, born in Sonora, California. Grandparents are Steve Forrester and Brenda Penner, of Astoria, and Robert and Cindy Kahn, of Santa Fe, New Mexico.	July 8, 2020 STEPHENS, Kelli, and PARSONS, Josh, of Seaside, a girl, Avery Lynn Parsons, born at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria. Grandparents are Konnie Stephens, Gary Stephens and Helen Weinberger, all of Seaside.
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ON THE RECORD

Criminal trespass • Barbara Ann Rotunda, 73, was arrested Monday at Safeway in Astoria for criminal trespass in the second degree.	Unauthorized entry • Gerald Glen Luteavich, 62, was arrested Monday on W. Marine Drive in Astoria for unauthorized entry into a motor vehicle.
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PUBLIC MEETINGS

THURSDAY

Sunset Empire Transportation District Board, 9 a.m., (electronic meeting).

Warrenton Parks Advisory Board, 4 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

Astoria School District Board of Directors, 5 p.m., special meeting on school year recommendation, (electronic meeting).

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Luke Whittaker/Chinook Observer

A surfer carries their board down to Waikiki Beach at Cape Disappointment State Park on Sunday.

Virus: New restrictions announced

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The Public Health Department arranged to have the man tested at the county’s drive-thru testing program on Monday. Results for the test were received Tuesday, according to the county.

In a statement, county public health officials said “the cooperation of Da Yang has allowed the county to respond quickly to the case, and are hopeful any potential outbreak can be contained.”

The county has disclosed 68 virus cases since March 23.

Outbreaks at Bornstein Seafoods in Astoria and Pacific Seafood in Warrenton were directly tied to 38 of the county’s cases.

The Oregon Health Authority reported 15,393 cases and 271 deaths from the virus statewide as of Wednesday morning.

The health authority tracked 3,214 test results in Clatsop County, including the



Edward Stratton/The Astorian

A worker at Da Yang Seafood in Astoria tested positive for the coronavirus.

68 positive cases.

Responding to the increase in virus cases and deaths, Gov. Kate Brown on Wednesday announced new statewide restrictions aimed to slow the spread of the disease.

Starting Friday, all children 5 and over will be subject to the state’s mask requirement at indoor public spaces and outdoors when social distancing is not possible. The previous requirement applied to children 12 and over.

Children will also have to wear masks when they return to K-12 public schools for the new school year.

Brown is also lowering the capacity for indoor venues — like larger restaurants, bars, community centers, churches and gyms — from 250 people to 100 people.

Restaurants and bars in counties in phase two of the governor’s reopening plan, like Clatsop County, will be required to close by 10 p.m.

“I don’t make these decisions lightly, and there are no easy choices,” Brown said at a news conference.

In a positive development, long-term care providers can allow limited outdoor visits for residents with safeguards to prevent the spread of the virus.

Brown said a number of virus cases have been linked to tourism and she is speaking with neighboring states about potential travel restrictions from places with high infection rates.

“It still may be possible for us to keep our restaurants and shops open, to gather in groups, to continue to hike, camp and get out into state parks, but it all depends on you. Your choices determine our future,” the governor said. “If we don’t slow the spread of the virus, I will have no choice but to force widespread and difficult closures again.

“We are truly all in this together.”

Toys: Will be allowed to stay through at least the end of summer

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“So I’m confused,” Morley said. “I’m very confused how trying to be a good citizen to our neighborhood, to our city, has gotten to this point.”

Jonah Dart-McLean, the city’s parks director, said he had reached out about the toys after neighbor complaints, and that the city had to accept liability for toys with warning labels against public use.

City councilors balanced the concerns over liability with the good work they said the Friends have done at Birch Field.

City Councilor Jessamyn West, a former resident of the neighborhood, said she appreciated the work done by the Friends, but that the city had legally binding concerns over liability. She offered to act as

a liaison to help the group better organize and create a plan for the park.

Councilor Joan Herman thought the larger play structures should be removed because of liability concerns, and because the Friends group had not asked permission first. Although Fisher-Price is a good brand name for residential use, she said, kids should not be playing on private play equipment in a public park.

“I hate that we live in a litigious society,” Herman said. “That’s another issue. But safety is a big one.”

Councilor Roger Rocka, while OK with letting the Birch Field toys stay, said he was also concerned about creating a precedent for people putting private items in other parks around the city. Councilor Tom Brownson disallowed any significant dan-



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

A list of rules and letters of complaint and support of the toys sit on a picnic bench at Birch Field.

ger from the toys, but said it is time for the Friends group to create a plan for the park and present it to the city.

City councilors ultimately landed on allowing the toys at Birch Field to stay through at least the end of summer.

Jones couched it as an experiment, like the city’s

allowance of parklet gathering spaces in parking spots, but said it should not be used as precedent at other parks. He proposed having the Friends group come to the City Council in September with a plan for the park before the toys are allowed to come out next summer.

Study: Researchers hope to catch new cases early

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The study will enroll 100,000 people to represent the state’s ethnic, socioeconomic and geographic population. In Clatsop County, 1,900 randomly selected households have been invited to participate and nearly 100 have signed up so far to report their temperature and other virus symptoms for up to a year.

“The goal with what we’re trying to do here is to really develop and implement a project that allows us to get a better understanding of what that real prevalence is of COVID-19 across the state of Oregon,” said Jackie Shannon, the study’s lead researcher. “And then being able to use that data to inform decision-making, whether that’s at a local

level, a regional level or a statewide level with regards to things like our businesses, our schools and our own individual decision-making.”

Shannon said researchers want to identify where and how the virus is spreading and examine regional differences. Researchers hope to catch new cases early, provide early warnings of emerging virus “hot spots” and identify asymptomatic cases.

People over 18 can respond to the invitation and enroll to track their temperature and record virus symptoms on a web-based portal. The process takes less than 10 minutes a day.

People who show symptoms of the virus receive a home test kit through LabCorp. A subset of asymptomatic people will also be selected for testing to help

measure how the virus could be spreading undetected.

Participants will also receive optional surveys asking about how the virus impacts other parts of their life, including physical activity, access to medical care, mental health and child care.

The information will be shared with the Oregon Health Authority and state and regional officials. Data will be publicly available through an online dashboard.

Shannon said researchers have made modifications to better reach historically underserved groups.

“We essentially developed a schema that would identify a certain percent of households within each zip code. And then we oversampled in zip codes that were primarily rural and in zip codes where there was a higher percent of

individuals that self reported at household level as being Black, Native American or Latinx,” she said.

Tyler TerMeer, the CEO of the Cascade AIDS Project, is partnering with researchers to make sure the study is effective at addressing the needs of people of color who are being disproportionately affected by the virus.

“And we want to figure out how together do we effectively reach communities that have a very valid and long history of medical mistrust or trust of large institutions,” TerMeer said.

“And I think I’m just really proud to be a part of a team that is taking the hard look at how we not only impact all Oregonians through this research, but also work to create a model for what research should look like.”