

## IN BRIEF

## Authorities investigate boat collision on the Columbia River

Authorities are investigating a boat collision that occurred Monday morning on the Columbia River in Astoria.

Officials say two boats sank and 11 people entered the water after one boat collided into another near the West Mooring Basin.

The people were reportedly pulled out of the water by nearby boaters.

One injury was reported.

"This incident highlights the necessity for every single boater to be constantly wearing a life jacket," Petty Officer Trevor Lilburn, the public affairs liaison at Coast Guard Sector Columbia River, said in a statement.

"Buoy 10 means a multitude of private and commercial vessels operating in close proximity to each other. Captains must exercise situational awareness and communicate with other captains to insure the safety of every boater.

"A successful fishing trip can turn tragic so fast that the difference between life and death is wearing a Coast Guard-approved life jacket."

## Warrenton man dies in crash

A Warrenton man's body was discovered Sunday afternoon on state Highway 53 after police responded to a report of a single-vehicle crash.

Investigators learned Kelly D. Ferguson, 48, was the driver and that the crash had occurred sometime earlier.

Police say Ferguson was driving northbound when he drove off the shoulder and cement stabilization wall. The vehicle flipped and fell down a steep embankment into heavy brush and trees.

The vehicle was not clearly visible from the roadway and was seen by people who were picking mushrooms.

Ferguson was reported missing on Aug. 9.

## Civil War reenactment canceled due to virus

The Northwest Civil War Council has canceled the annual Civil War reenactment on Labor Day weekend because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The "Battle for Clatsop County" event was scheduled for Sept. 4 through Sept. 7 at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds.

"We are looking forward to coming back in 2021 to share the history of the American Civil War with you," the council said in a statement.

## Fall wine walk canceled in Seaside over virus

SEASIDE — The Seaside Downtown Development Association's November Fall Wine Walk is canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"The SDDA Board of Directors waited as long as possible to make the difficult decision of calling off this wonderful event," Laurie Mespelt, the association's executive director, said in a statement. "It is one of the best fundraisers for the association as well as a coveted event for the merchants."

Hundreds of visitors typically attend Wine Walk, as wineries offer samples inside downtown businesses, alongside shopping, snacks, music and art showings.

Sales help fund the association's beautification efforts, which include flower baskets, sea stars and lighting.

— *The Astorian*

## ON THE RECORD

### Theft

• Misty Armstrong, 38, of Warrenton, was arrested Friday at Walmart in Warrenton for theft in the second degree and criminal mischief in the third degree.

### Disorderly conduct

• Fred Kelly, 53, of Warrenton, was arrested Friday on S.E. 12th Place in Warrenton for disorderly conduct in the second degree.

### DUII

• Ashley Johnson, 35, of Seaside, was arrested Sunday at Home Depot in Warrenton for driving under the influence of intoxicants, reckless driving and driving while suspended.

• Michael William Stunkard, 41, of Astoria, was arrested Saturday on Hillcrest Loop and U.S. Highway 30 in Astoria for DUII and hit and run.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

### TUESDAY

**Clatsop County Board of Commissioners**, 1 p.m., work session, (electronic meeting).

**Warrenton City Commission**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

**Astoria Planning Commission**, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

### WEDNESDAY

**Astoria Parks Board**, 6:45 a.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

**Clatsop County Board of Commissioners**, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

### THURSDAY

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

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# Virus outbreak on trawler suggests antibody protection

By SANDI DOUGHTON  
*Seattle Times*

Crew members from a Seattle-based fishing boat that experienced an explosive outbreak of the novel coronavirus have serendipitously provided what could be the first direct evidence that antibodies can protect people from reinfection.

Blood samples collected before the vessel sailed in May showed that three of the 122 people aboard had robust levels of neutralizing antibodies — the type that block the virus from entering human cells — indicating they had been previously infected and recovered. All three were spared during the shipboard outbreak, which quickly spread to more than 85% of the crew.

"It's a strong indication that the presence of neutralizing antibodies is associated with protection from the virus," said Dr. Alex Greninger, assistant director of the University of Washington Medicine Clinical Virology Laboratory and co-author of a report posted on the preprint server MedRxiv that has not yet been peer-reviewed. "It's hopeful news."

However, it's not really surprising, Greninger added. Researchers are generally confident that prior infection will provide some level of immunity. But what constitutes a protective immune response and how long immunity lasts is still unknown and of vital importance to the race for vaccines and other treatments.

Early vaccine trials, including one in Seattle, have induced strong antibody responses in volunteers. But the only direct evidence so far that neutralizing antibodies can protect against infection have come from monkeys and other laboratory animals.

It wouldn't be ethical to deliberately expose humans to the virus — even people who have recovered from infection. But in this case, researchers from the University of Washington and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center were able to analyze results from a natural experiment that played out in the close quarters and isolation of a vessel at sea.

"While this is a small study, it offers a remarkable, real-life, human experiment," Danny Altmann, professor of immunology at Imperial Col-



Greg Gilbert/Seattle Times

**More than 85% of the crew on the Seattle-based factory trawler American Dynasty became infected with the coronavirus earlier this year.**

lege London, wrote in a commentary on the report. "Who knew immunology research on fishing boats could be so informative?"

The report does not identify the vessel, but Greninger confirmed it is the factory trawler FV American Dynasty, which was fishing for hake off the Washington state coast when the outbreak struck. A statement from American Seafoods, which owns the ship and several others, said the company has partnered with the University of Washington on its testing program and shares the data.

the virus during the outbreak, Slifka said.

As part of ongoing efforts to protect fishing fleets, 120 of the 122 crew members were tested both for active infection, via nasal swabs, and previous exposure, via antibody blood testing, in the two days before the ship left port.

None of the nasal swabs was positive. But 18 days into its voyage, the ship returned to shore after a crew member became sick and needed hospitalization. Monitoring over the next 50 days showed that 104 crew members had been infected.

## 'WHO KNEW IMMUNOLOGY RESEARCH ON FISHING BOATS COULD BE SO INFORMATIVE?'

Danny Altmann | professor of immunology at Imperial College London

"We hope that their study will be beneficial to the broader scientific community in learning more about COVID-19," said Valentina Zackrone, chief human resources officer at American Seafoods.

Mark Slifka, an immunologist and vaccine developer at Oregon Health & Science University who was not involved in the work, described it as "very, very interesting."

The keys were the pre-departure blood testing of nearly the entire crew, and the stunning rate of infection — which means it's unlikely that the three crew members with neutralizing antibodies were simply not exposed to

After learning of the outbreak, Greninger and his colleagues reexamined the results from the earlier blood tests and conducted additional tests on leftover specimens. Before departing, six crew members tested positive for antibodies that bind to the capsule of the novel coronavirus, but only three of those also had neutralizing antibodies.

While none of the crew members with neutralizing antibodies reported symptoms or became infected, the other three all got the virus — suggesting their initial results might have been false positives, Greninger said.

That adds to growing concern about the accuracy of

many antibody tests and their ability to indicate immunity, Slifka pointed out.

Statistical analysis suggests it's highly unlikely to be a random coincidence that all three people with neutralizing antibodies escaped infection. But the study doesn't offer an explanation for the 15 other crew members who also apparently never became infected. It's possible their jobs or actions on the boat shielded them from exposure, Greninger said.

Genomic analysis of virus from 39 crew members suggests that all the strains are closely related, but it doesn't prove they all originated from a single infection, Greninger said.

The analysis doesn't rule out the possibility that people can catch COVID-19 more than once, Slifka said, though it strongly suggests those who develop neutralizing antibodies may be protected. But the number of cases is too small to draw sweeping conclusions, he added.

This isn't the first insight about the novel coronavirus to come from studying ships. Analysis of the outbreak early in the pandemic on the Diamond Princess cruise ship helped establish the importance of asymptomatic people in spreading the virus. Federal researchers who examined sailors on the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, where nearly 1,000 people were infected, documented a robust, neutralizing antibody response in more than half of those tested.

# Inslee clamps down on agritourism activities

By DON JENKINS  
*Capital Press*

Much of Washington state's agritourism industry will be sidelined this year under coronavirus rules released last week by Gov. Jay Inslee.

Customers can't pet or view animals. And hay rides are out, as are games and touching farm equipment.

Farmer Hilary Huffman called the rules a "gut punch." They'll nix most activities at her agritourist farm, The Patch in Ellensburg, Washington.

"We can sell pumpkins. You know who else can sell pumpkins? Safeway," she said.

The agritourism rules went into effect immediately and apply in the 34 counties that have progressed past phase one in Inslee's four-phase plan to reopen Washington businesses. Any farm that breaks a rule can be fined \$10,000.

Agritourism customers must wear face coverings and keep at least 6 feet apart. The rules ban activities such as wagon rides, haunted houses, playgrounds, farm equipment "exploration," animal viewing, petting areas, paintball and campfires.

A governor's spokesman



Rachel Smith/The Patch

**Washington Gov. Jay Inslee has banned wagon rides and some other agritourism activities on farms to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.**

said the Health Department gave strong direction to allow only primary activities such as U-pick, U-cut and pumpkin patches.

"We don't want families lingering, even in an outdoor environment," he said in an email.

In writing the rules, the governor's office said it consulted two farms, including Maris Farms in Pierce County.

Maris Farms co-owner Joanne Templeman said the farm wasn't involved in drafting the rules and had no influence on the outcome.

Templeman read a draft of the rules last week. "The final rules do not reflect any of our comments," she said. Prohibitions on play-

grounds, viewing animals and rides to fields are more restrictive than rules for public parks, zoos and public transportation, she said.

The farm already had a safety plan that included operating at 50% capacity and a sanitizing protocol. "I thought we had a plan that was exceedingly safe," Templeman said.

The governor's office didn't consult the Washington Farm Bureau, director of government relations Tom Davis said. Farmers might be able to adjust activities if they knew more about the concerns of health officials, he said.

"Farmers know how to mitigate problems," Davis said. "If we take away this

season from them, I'm not sure how many will survive and be around next year."

Snohomish County agritourist farms will "kindly" ask the governor's office to modify the rules, said Sarah Ricci, who, along with her husband, owns Bob's Corn and Pumpkin Farm.

"I think the governor's office is reasonable and am optimistic they will work with us on this," she said.

The rules will require one-way traffic flows in the fields and "appropriate signage to ensure washing of fruits/vegetables before consumption & use." Visitors can't be driven to fields and must be encouraged to sanitize their hands coming and going.

Huffman said she has been working with county health officials. She said she's stocked up on sanitizer, gloves and masks. "We had a good, solid plan."

Huffman said she had no idea the governor's office was going to write rules for her farm. She said she wasn't sure whether she should invest in the upcoming season and hope for revisions, or cut her losses.

"There's no sense to this," she said. "We don't pay the bills on pumpkins. We pay the bills on guests."