

CORONAVIRUS



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

TOP: Jessica and James Strecker tested positive for the coronavirus after hosting a baby shower in December. **BOTTOM:** The couple recovered at home.

Astoria man describes his experience with virus

Family likely exposed after baby shower

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

James Strecker and his wife, Jessica, planned a socially-distanced, mask-required baby shower for early December at Pier 39. But when the state listed Clatsop County as high risk for the coronavirus and limited indoor gatherings, the Astoria couple canceled the event.

Instead, they invited people they already saw on a regular basis and trusted were safe — their parents and a couple of other close relatives who live nearby. Everyone else who wanted to join was directed to Zoom.

The baby shower lasted a couple of hours in a small space. Since the people attending were in the same social bubble, masks were not worn.

Strecker started feeling sick a couple of days later. His mother, who had also come by the house the day after the baby shower, and his wife and father started showing symptoms of the virus within a week of the shower.

All four tested positive, and Strecker's father was hospitalized for several days.

Although Strecker doesn't know for sure if the gathering is where he and his wife contracted the virus, it is on the top of the list of possibilities.

"It's unknown whether or not anyone at the shower was carrying the virus and/or asymptotically already sick, but once Jessica and I were showing symptoms ourselves, we contacted everyone else who had attended the shower to double-check how they were feeling, and absolutely nobody else wound up sick," Strecker said in an email. "Maybe we got it off the surface of one of the presents, maybe from the food, maybe from a guest."

"I am just glad no one else at the shower wound up sick, besides my parents who seemed to have caught it through being around me afterward."

Strecker said the illness began like a common cold — a cough and stuffy nose, but then progressed into a fever, chills, loss of appetite and occasional mild muscle pains.

See Virus, Page A6



Slide closes Highway 30

Mud and rocks disrupt traffic east of Astoria

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

A mud and rockslide closed U.S. Highway 30 east of Astoria on Monday morning, disrupting traffic as many people returned to work after the New Year's holiday weekend.

Officials said the slide occurred at about 3:30 a.m. and closed the highway about 3 miles east of the city for about an hour.

The Knappa Fire District responded to the slide area at about 7:30 a.m. after a pickup truck was stuck by debris. One person was in the vehicle and was taken to a hospital by ambulance.

Oregon Department of Transportation crews doing cleanup work discovered that more extensive repairs were required and shut down the highway indefinitely by late morning.

After the second closure, only emergency vehicles were allowed to pass through the slide area.

Alternative routes include Washington State Route 4, Oregon Highway 202 and Oregon Highway 47.

"Oregon Department of Transportation geologists are working with the crews on the best approach for mitigating the slide issues," the agency said in a statement Monday afternoon.

Astoria had 4.8 inches of rain from Friday to Monday afternoon, according to the National Weather Service.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

U.S. Highway 30 was closed east of Astoria after a rockslide.

County reports 16 new virus cases

The Astorian

Clatsop County on Monday reported 16 new coronavirus cases.

The cases include a man in his 20s, a woman in her 50s, a man in his 60s and a man in his 70s living in the southern part of the county.

The others live in the northern part of the county and include two women and two men in their 20s, a man in his 30s, a woman in her 40s, a woman in her 50s and three men and two women in their 60s.

One person was hospitalized and the others were recovering at home.

The county has recorded 606 cases since March. According to the county, 10 were hospitalized and three have died.

A spokesman for the

county said the new cases appear to be tied to a combination of gatherings, travel and some workplace contacts.

The county declined to provide more information about the workplaces since they have not reached five cases, the Oregon Health Authority's threshold for reporting workplace outbreaks.

Nearly 60% of the county's cases have been reported since the beginning of November.

The county reported 207 virus cases in December, a record number in one month since the start of the pandemic.

The Oregon Health Authority reported 118,456 cases and 1,506 deaths from the virus statewide as of Monday morning.

'You get to be part of patient's family'

Retiring doctor's favorite role was delivering babies

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

For Dr. Robert Holland, medicine was a way he could be of service.

After serving as a U.S. Air Force pilot, he decided to pursue medical

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people

school because he thought it was a way he could do more for people. Throughout his career as a physician, he has taken time to go on medical missions around the world to help in disaster relief efforts.

The obstetrician and gynecologist retired Thursday after delivering babies for nearly 20 years at Columbia Memorial Hospital in

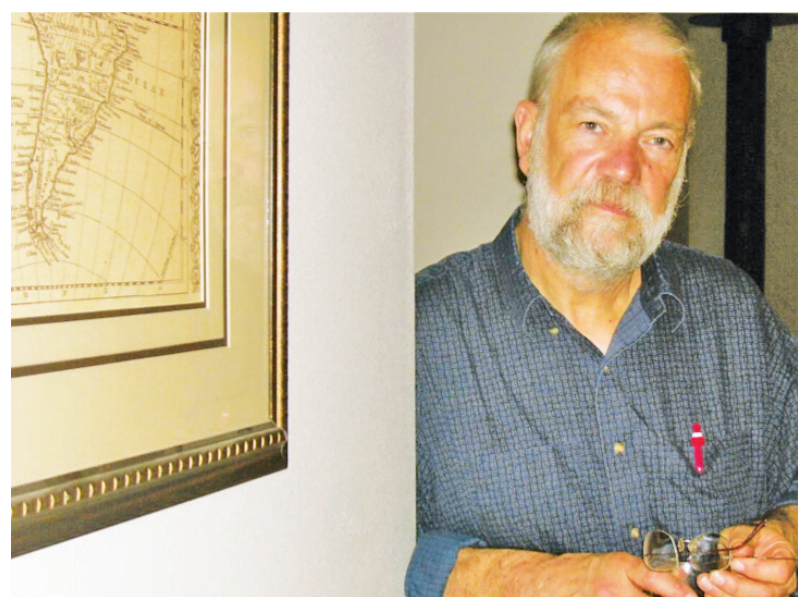
Astoria.

Colleagues describe him as dedicated and a mentor. He has served on nearly every leadership committee and board at the hospital and helped build up the hospital's women's center and health and wellness pavilion.

He plans to continue to serve on the hospital's board of trustees.

"I think it's everybody's obligation to do what they can," Holland said. "Everybody can do something. It doesn't have to be a big earth-shattering thing, but I think you're obligated to do something. And if you

See Holland, Page A6



Dr. Robert Holland retired from Columbia Memorial Hospital.



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