

County reports 12 new virus cases

The Astorian

Clatsop County on Monday reported 12 new coronavirus cases. The cases include a female between 10 and 19, two women in their 20s and a woman in her 50s living in the northern part of the county. The others live in the southern part of the county and include a male between 10 and 19, two women in their 40s,

three men and a woman in their 50s and a man in his 70s. All 12 were recovering at home. The county has recorded 727 cases since March. According to the county, 16 were hospitalized and five have died. The Oregon Health Authority reported 138,587 cases and 1,882 deaths from the virus statewide as of Monday morning.

Port: Pier 2 has been a source of frustration

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the time, returned the grant to the state after the Port could not come up with the \$660,000 local match. Will Isom, who replaced Knight as executive director in 2019, said Pier 2 has been a source of frustration for the Port since he started with the agency as a staff accountant several years ago. “We sit there and we

talk about Pier 2 west being the highest priority for the Port,” Isom said. “We need to really push on this and make it the highest priority. “If you look at the Port’s mission, it only mentions a few things. It talks about safety and the environment, and then it also discusses job creation and economic growth. And this project touches all of those things.”



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The city has given the Astoria Senior Center to seniors.

Senior center: ‘We do a lot of medical things for the seniors and keep them up’

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“I think this is the culmination of a lot of hard work on everybody’s part,” City Councilor Tom Brownson said. “I think it’s one thing the city has been able to do to help our senior citizens have a really nice facility to operate in.” John Ryan, a Mill Pond resident and president of the board of the senior center, said the renovated center is performing well, with a maintenance fund established from user fees that has helped buy new items such as an emergency generator. The center has more than 400 members. “It has been a great benefit to the seniors in the community to know they have some place they know they can go to,”

Ryan said. “We do a lot of medical things for the seniors and keep them up.” Larry Miller, the senior center’s executive director, said the transfer is the culmination of nine years of work with the city. The senior center continues to provide services such as wheelchairs and walkers to members, he said, despite the center closing to the public during the coronavirus pandemic. The building has also been offered up to Clatsop County as a coronavirus vaccination site. “I have three retired nurses in the facility who are members who have also volunteered to assist if it should happen,” Miller said. “So, the county knows we’re here, and we’re willing to make it available to them.”

Olstedt: Was a standout athlete at Seaside

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The Gulls also would have played a home game Monday night against Knappa. Whenever that first game comes, Olstedt has been well trained for the moment. Her mentor at Seaside was Mike Jacobson, the former girls’ coach at Knappa and Seaside who now coaches at Astoria. The Jacobson coaching tree includes Tracie Nygaard-Brockey at Knappa and Olstedt at Seaside. “I’ve been very fortunate to have great mentors who have helped me along the way,” Olstedt said. “Between my high school coach (Jacobson) and my college coach Chad Meadors (Lower Columbia College), they’ve been great resources for my growth as a coach.

“Coaching alongside Mike Hawes was a great experience the last couple years, allowing me to help make decisions at the varsity level,” she added. Olstedt was a standout athlete at Seaside in soccer, basketball and track. Her brother, Dennis, the head track coach at Scappoose, was a Seaside Hall of Fame standout in football, basketball and track. “Being involved in the (basketball) program the last five-plus years, I have great relationships with the girls at all levels,” Olstedt said. “We will make sure all grade levels continue to be supported from the high school level.” And Gulls basketball will still be Gulls basketball, no matter what playground or gym it’s played in. “Traditions are a big



Gary Henley/The Astorian

Marla Olstedt soars in for a score in her last game with the Gulls in 2008.

‘THESE GIRLS HAVE DEDICATED A LOT OF TIME TO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND DESERVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY.’

Marla Olstedt | head girls basketball coach for Seaside

thing in our program. Just last week, I asked the high school girls their favorite memory to date,” Olstedt said. “The majority said our annual Cedar Ridge trip with grade levels four to 12. Three days of having fun with their peers. That won’t change.” Meanwhile, high school athletes and coaches in Oregon have been through a lot since September — yet none

have played or coached in a single game. “What a wild six months it’s been,” said Olstedt, who keeps herself busy by working in sales and marketing at Lum’s Auto Center. “As for our program, we have been offering voluntary workouts two to three times a week when the weather permits. Due to our county’s risk level, all workouts have taken

Legislature: Many are critical of state’s vaccine rollout

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“The biggest problem is going to be that we will be doing the public’s business behind closed doors,” Johnson, D-Scappoose, said. There will be no cap-and-trade bill to divide Democrats and Republicans this session. Gov. Kate Brown took executive action in March to increase the state’s carbon reduction goals after Republican walkouts killed legislation during the past two sessions. Johnson said cap and trade is the least of the Legislature’s worries, with a revenue shortfall of around \$1.7 billion, a raft of big issues from wildfires to the pandemic, thousands of bills being submitted and only the internet through which to discuss them. The Legislature has created plans to take audio and visual testimony online, extend the public record by a day on all meetings and do outreach to people on how to be involved. But Johnson and Weber worry about people’s ability to adapt to the new version of government. “They’ll be so unfamiliar with the system, that I don’t know how fully people can participate,” Johnson said. “The pushback on that of course is, ‘Well, any-

body with a computer can fully engage.’ I would beg to differ.” Republicans have voiced a desire to open the Capitol for the sake of transparency, or wait to convene until it’s safer to let the public participate. “I think it would have been a better idea if we had just waited until that April date, and then worked really hard from April,” Weber, R-Tillamook, said. “Because I think that we’re cutting the public out of a lot of these decisions.”

Balanced budget

Johnson, the co-chairwoman of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, said crafting a balanced budget is her top priority. She has also introduced a bill to provide landlords income tax credits over several years equal to the amount of money they forgive in unpaid rent. State lawmakers banned evictions through June and set aside \$150 million to reimburse landlords 80% of unpaid rent, while providing another \$50 million to help renters. Johnson called it patently unfair to force landlords to give up 20% of rent because of government orders. “It brings relief to landlords,” she said of her bill.

“It brings relief to tenants. It avoids lawsuits (alleging) takings, and it occurs over a longer period of time to avoid the tremendous budgetary hit.” Weber, a retired teacher and former mayor of Tillamook, was named vice chairwoman of the House Committee on Education, along with appointments to committees on early childhood and housing. She and Rep. Daniel Bonham, R-The Dalles, co-sponsored a joint resolution to amend the state constitution and require the Legislature in odd years to pass an education budget before taking up any other budget measures. The resolution would go to voters in the next general election. Democrats hold three-fifths supermajorities in the House and Senate, allowing them to pass revenue-related bills without Republican support. The advantage was used to pass the Student Success Act, a tax on gross receipts used to provide an estimated \$1 billion a year to schools.

Education

Weber, who was criticized by Democrats during the election last year for her opposition to the Student Success Act, wants education to be the top priority. But

place outdoors, most often at Broadway Park.” The winter sports season — basketball, wrestling, swimming — is scheduled to take place the second week of May through June — when high schools are seeing their best weather of the school year. Winter sports should be getting players who are in great shape, playing their third different sport in three months. “We’ll be the final sports season of the year, so the girls will be in great shape to get on the court,” Olstedt said. “We just have to make sure they are prepared for each day. A regular season flies. I can’t imagine how quickly these six weeks will go. Whatever it looks like, I’m ready for these girls to get back in the classroom, on the court, field, etc.” And, “being that our season begins in May, we’ve included more conditioning and injury prevention drills in our workouts for the girls to prepare for their upcoming fall season. My hope is to prepare them the best we can. I’d hate to see any athlete sidelined due to injury in their already shortened season.” As for basketball, “I look forward to getting back on the court,” she said. “These girls have dedicated a lot of time to extracurricular activities and deserve an opportunity to play. We have a senior in our program who shows up to nearly every workout with great optimism for her final season. That’s refreshing to see.”

her bill could also stall other budget discussions. “I think it’s something that could impact other budgets,” Weber said. “But I’m not so naive as to think that there aren’t budgets out there that could be trimmed in order to make sure that our education budget is satisfied.” Weber is also a sponsor on a bipartisan bill that would allow five nonvoting student and faculty members on the state Higher Education Coordinating Commission to vote, while adding a sixth graduate student voting position. “All of the decisions that are being made by the board are decisions that are impacting their lives and their job,” Weber said of the nonvoting students and faculty. “They need to have a say in that.” Oregon, like many other states, has struggled to vaccinate residents against the coronavirus. Weber said she got the first dose because someone called her about leftovers in a vial that would have otherwise been thrown away. Both she and Johnson, who has not received a dose of vaccine, have been critical of Oregon’s rollout. “I can sure as hell tell you I’m not going to get a vaccination before every person in an assisted living facility gets one,” Johnson said.

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