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## CORONAVIRUS

### County to move into high risk for virus

Tighter restrictions will resume

By NICOLE BALES  
*The Astorian*

Clatsop County will move to high risk for the coronavirus beginning Friday after a climb in virus cases.

The high-risk designation from the state means a decrease in occupancy at churches, restaurants, bars, stores and indoor and outdoor recreation and entertainment venues. The county has been at moderate risk since March.

"As we face more contagious variants and increased spread of COVID-19 in our communities, the best way to protect yourself and others is to get vaccinated," Gov. Kate Brown said in a statement Tuesday. "Until you, your family, your friends and your neighbors are fully vaccinated, it's also critical that we all continue to wear masks, maintain physical distance and stay home when sick."

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Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Benny Clark, left, and Brayden Payne practice with Jewell School band director Cory Pederson.

## IN JEWELL, THE MUSIC PLAYS ON

Band students found ways to practice through the pandemic

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
*The Astorian*

**J**EWELL — Take high school band students who haven't played together since schools shut down abruptly last spring because of the coronavirus pandemic. Form an ensemble anyway.

Have them practice their parts in separate small cohorts where key sounds and key instruments are missing and everything feels a little off. Then finally get them all together in the school gym so they can try out, in front of a camera, for a spot in the state ensemble and solo championships.

"When we all got together I thought it was going to be a train wreck, honestly," said Brenna Shaw, a junior who plays clarinet in the Jewell School band.

At the start of the school year, music teacher and band director Cory Pederson had told his students: This is what we're going to do. We're going to practice and learn in small groups. You're not going to hear one another. And we're going to combine it together and it's going to work.

In the video of the performance that ultimately won them a qualifying spot in this year's state championship competition, the students sit in chairs at a distance from each other and launch into the opening, triumphant volley of "Renaissance Suite" arranged by James Curnow.



Logan Payne plays the glockenspiel during a practice with his cohort at Jewell School.

The performance is tight, tidy and correct — not an anomaly for a group made up of students who have taken Jewell to state band championships several times in recent years. But it gave Pederson goose bumps.

Despite his determination and his words to the students, he had no idea what to expect when the different cohorts finally rehearsed together as a single ensemble for the first time.

As he listened to them that day, he thought, "Wow, it's all there."

Instead of the train wreck Shaw was dreading, here was a real, true musical ensemble, playing together as one.

"All those parts we knew were there and were missing (in practice), we could hear now," Shaw said. "Everything fell into where it was supposed to be."

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### Astoria again denies hotel appeal

Developer wanted permit extension

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

The Astoria City Council tentatively denied a one-year permit extension for a four-story hotel on the Columbia River for the second time, blaming the developer for dragging his feet before using the coronavirus pandemic as an excuse for more time.

Bellingham, Washington, developer Mark Hollander received approval in December 2018 from the City Council to build a four-story Fairfield Inn & Suites for the hotel chain Marriott. The approval came after denial of the project by the Design Review Commission and the Historic Landmarks Commission.

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### Astoria Sunday Market to return

Popular event back on Mother's Day

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

The Astoria Sunday Market will return on Mother's Day, with or without food.

The market runs each Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. from May 9 through Oct. 10, drawing large crowds to booths spread out along 12th Street and in adjacent parking lots from Exchange Street to Marine Drive. It operated in a scaled-back format last year because of the pandemic.

The Astoria Downtown Historic District Association took over the market this year from longtime operator Cyndi Mudge. The downtown association hired Shelby Meyers to oversee the market and other promotions.

**THE MARKET HAS AROUND 120 VENDORS THIS YEAR SPREAD FARTHER APART TO PROMOTE SOCIAL DISTANCING.**

Meyers said the market has around 120 vendors this year spread farther apart to promote social distancing. Extra volunteers will be on hand to promote social distancing and mask-wearing. The market will require masks and have hand-washing and sanitization stations.

The market decreased the num-

ber of eateries in the food court next to Wells Fargo Bank to seven and has not booked any live music. Clatsop County has been designated as high risk for the coronavirus for at least two weeks. The food court will be allowed to operate amid the high-risk designation with 30 feet between food vendors, reduced seating, increased sanitation and volunteers monitoring occupancy.

The downtown association is also restarting the market's Biz Kids! program for young entrepreneurs and operating an information booth to direct people around the booths and downtown. Meyers said the market could also start accepting food stamps by June.

"We're just hoping the extra space between booths will encourage people to space out more," Meyers said. "... We are also having extra traffic barricades and such this year, working with the city on that to ensure that level of safety."

### Birch Field toys OK'd for another season

City cautions group to handle complaints

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

The toys will stay at Birch Field in Alderbrook, as long as the collection and complaints do not grow.

A majority of Astoria city councilors on Monday agreed to continue a pilot project allowing the toys to stay out through October before heading to storage.

Friends of Birch Field and Park adopted the field in 2018 after the city considered selling the property. The group made available a collection of children's toys that has become popular with visitors but also drawn complaints and liability concerns.

The City Council in July

allowed the toys to remain through October. The Friends group agreed to submit a proposal in the spring to put the toys back out.

City councilors on Monday weighed the popularity of the toys with liability concerns expressed by parks staff, who had asked that a larger slide and swingset be removed. City Manager Brett Estes also warned that city staff had spent more time fielding complaints about the toys than in managing the park.

Lisa Morley, a leader of the Friends group and a workplace safety consultant who ran for City Council last year, argued that the toys she put out are less dangerous than other city properties, such as the skate park at Tapiola Park. Randy Harris, another leader of the group, said the complaints

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