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“This is not like logging into a Zoom meeting,” Lay said. “This is an immersive space, where people can go and support people they love so much and see every year.”

Organizers want to make sure that the community still gets plenty of value from the event and that vendors and restaurants still bring in money like normal, Lay said.

Lay is new to organizing the festival so she talked to members of the community about what they wanted to see and then she worked to implement that love for the festival into the online version.

Using an online platform called Eventhub, festival attendees are able to chat live with vendors. They can turn on a camera and microphone and have actual face-to-face chats, Lay said.

The goal is to make connections between people, Lay said. Vendors will offer specials on products that attendees can't find the rest of the year.

“We are trying to bridge that gap,” she said.

With the mainstage feature, organizers can air musical performances from the musicians who normally perform at the festival. Interactive demonstrations will also add more excitement, she said.

“That’s why we chose this platform, for that live event feel,” she said.

Vendors will be at their booths, ready to chat throughout the weekend.

Booths will be available all the time between April 23 and May 23, but the vendors will not be available to chat at other times.

Anyone can attend the virtual festival, even those who are not in the area, she said. There is no charge for admission but the Chamber of Commerce will accept donations throughout the weekend in the online vendor area.

There will be a dining trail for locals and people visiting Astoria. Anyone can visit participating businesses, learn about those businesses and enter to win prizes that have to do with the festival. To participate, sign up for the Festival Feast Passport (free of charge). Then, check out festival-themed menu items and special offers from April 23 to May 9.

Every time someone uses their passport, they will be entered to win prizes, including a river tour, an overnight stay at Bowline Hotel, dinner at Buoy Beer Co. and more.

Restaurants participating in the Festival Feast dining trail include Astoria Brewing Co., Bowpicker Fish & Chips, Bridgewater Bistro, Brut Wine Bar, Buoy Beer Co., El Compadre Restaurant, Fishstix Seafood Market, Fort George Brewery, Gae-



tano’s Market & Deli, Hanthorn Crab Co., Hurricane Ron’s, Josephson’s Smokehouse, Mo’s Seafood and Chowder, Nekst Event, Olney Saloon, Peter Pan Market & Deli, Plaza Jalisco Mexican Restaurant, Reach Break Brewing, South Bay Wild Fish House, Table 360 Bakery & Bistro and Astoria Sunday Market.

One of the in-person stops this year is one that should make lots of locals happy. The Astoria Clowns will be selling their famous Clown Bread. Lay said as she has been planning the festival, there is one question she has heard time and time again: “Will Clown Bread be available?”

The answer, Lay is happy to say, is yes. The bread features a bread loaf, crab or shrimp, and a secret sauce.

The Astoria Clowns will be selling their bread at 11 a.m. in the parking lot at Astoria High School.



ABOVE: The Astoria Clowns will serve Clown Bread on Saturday. **TOP:** Local musicians’ performances will be viewable this weekend on the festival’s online platform.