

the Astorian

148TH YEAR, NO. 138

DailyAstorian.com // TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2021

\$1.50

CORONAVIRUS



Cindy Johnsen swims freestyle in the lap pool at the Astoria Aquatic Center. Lap swimmers now reserve their lanes in advance online.

Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Astoria fitness centers adapt to varying virus regulations

Local pool, dance center among those impacted

By ALYSSA EVANS
The Astorian

Throughout the Astoria Arts and Movement Center, signs remind students and instructors to wear masks at all times. Tape on the floor acts as a barrier, encouraging people to stay at least 6 feet apart from one another.

With mask and social distancing mandates easing for anyone fully vaccinated against the coronavirus, the precautions will no longer be needed for many of the center's visitors. The center will not require fully vaccinated individuals to wear masks if they verify their vaccination, though some instructors might still require masks.

"This could be due to the age demographic they teach, the type of class they teach and what they feel is safe for their class. We are completely supporting our instructors' ability to implement what they feel is best for their students," Jessamyn Grace West, the center's executive director, said in a statement.

Fitness centers, like many other venues, have had to adapt to ever-changing guidance during the pandemic. The social, physical and emotional connections people build through play have been disrupted by virus restrictions.

A few minutes away from the Astoria



Kathy Buford, left, and Sophie Thomas swim around the recreation pool at the Astoria Aquatic Center. The recreation pool now only allows 12 to 15 people at a time.

ria Arts and Movement Center, similar signs are placed throughout the Astoria Aquatic Center. Swimmers wait in line to use the center's slide and drop a face mask into a plastic bag before taking their turn.

As others swim laps or play with their family, plastic bags with masks are placed along pool decks and walls near pool entrances. A staff member watches over patrons to ensure safety and make sure patrons stay 6 feet

apart from those who live in different households.

The aquatic center reopened in March after being closed for a year.

"We're very happy to be reopened," said Terra Patterson, the aquatic center's supervisor.

All but two employees who were laid off in March 2020 returned to work this year, Patterson said.

See Fitness, Page A8

ASTORIA RIVERWALK

Grant to boost lighting

Expansion of lights on path to Pier 39

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

The state and federal governments are funding an expansion of lighting along the Astoria Riverwalk from the Columbia River Maritime Museum to Pier 39.

The Oregon Community Paths program, created to improve multi-use paths separated from vehicle traffic, will provide \$844,843 — or 89.3% — of the cost to add bollard-style lights to the Riverwalk east of the museum. The city will match 10.7% of the project cost through lodging tax revenue in the Promote Astoria fund. The project was one of 17 selected statewide out of 57 applicants.

Jonah Dart-McLean, the city's parks director, said some construction could begin this fall, but that most of the work will likely be in spring 2022.

Increased lighting on the Riverwalk was identified as a priority in the 2016 parks master plan to promote use of the path and deter vandalism and other negative behavior. The Mill Pond Homeowners Association, Astoria Downtown Historic District Association, Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce and Columbia Memorial Hospital supported the grant application.

"The parks master plan identified one priority recommendation to just improve the amenities throughout the parks system, rather than building anything new," Dart-McLean said.

The grant for the eastern portion of the Riverwalk comes after the city received \$428,408 from the state Parks and Recreation Department as part of a \$717,435 project to improve lighting, wayfinding signs and safety on the western portion of the Riverwalk between downtown and Uniontown. The project also includes a Portland Loo-style restroom near the planned Nordic Heritage Park. Construction is expected to begin in late summer or early fall.

The city will also receive more than \$30,000 from the Portland Trail Blazers and insurer Moda Health. Violet LaPlante Park in the Alderbrook neighborhood was chosen to receive \$20 for each assist made by the Trail Blazers in the regular season. The team ended the regular season Sunday against the Denver Nuggets, recording 1,531 assists.

Jewell staffer honored for work

Steinweg known as the 'mother hen'

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Paula Steinweg's workdays with the Jewell School District include a little bit of everything.

Truly, everything. During the 20 years she has worked for the district, she's filled a number of roles and earned the

EVERYDAY
people

nickname "mother hen." For now, she drives school buses, works in classrooms with students as an education assistant and is the school librarian.

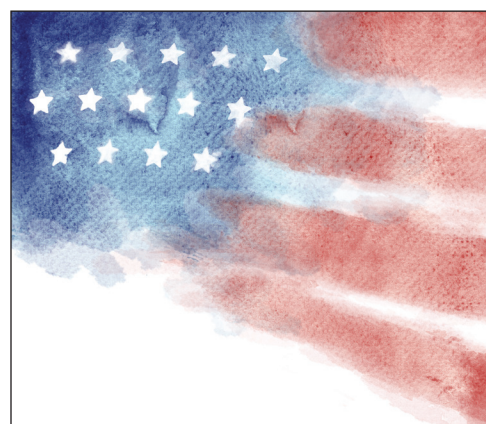
She also coordinates a biannual trip to Washington, D.C., for middle school students, working on the curriculum and travel plans as well as helping with fundraising. For many years, she has led



Paula Steinweg, who does everything from driving school buses to tutoring students, received the first state award honoring education support professionals in Oregon.

Oregon Department of Education

See Steinweg, Page A8



ELECTION DAY

Voters have until 8 p.m. on Tuesday to drop off their ballots for the May election.

The Clatsop County website has a list of ballot drop locations at bit.ly/3u0ZWSQ

Follow election results online at DailyAstorian.com



7 29467 20121 7