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CORONAVIRUS

HOMELESSNESS

Businesses, residents probe for solutions

Seaside residents weigh in at forum

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — Sandy Palmer, who owns Five Star Henna, described her experience with the homeless as “men under my windows, in my doorways, with grocery carts, smoking, eating, defecating, urinating on my door and doing anything and everything for someone else to come and pick up their garbage.”

Unless the homeless are compelled to move along, Palmer said, side streets in the city are going to look like Portland. “And people are going to be more leery about coming into our town for tourism,” she said. “My solution would be to constantly move them along.”

Palmer’s comments came on Thursday at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center during the third conversation in a series on homelessness. A remaining conversation takes place at the convention center at 6 p.m. on July 1.

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Birth center adds family medicine options

Expansion planned for July

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Astoria Birth Center will add pediatric care and general family medicine services this summer.

The center, which opened during the coronavirus pandemic last year and started by providing prenatal, labor and delivery and postnatal care, announced it will bring on Dr. Kelli Stephenson, who previously worked in a hospital in Eastern Oregon, and also merge with Astoria Integrated Family Medicine with Carolyn Nygaard, a naturopathic doctor.

It has been one of the center’s goals to offer medical services throughout a person’s lifespan, said Rebeckah Orton, the manager and co-owner of the birth center. Orton previously ran North Star Doula Service.

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GRADS TAKE CENTER STAGE

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Astoria High School seniors attended graduation on Saturday afternoon at CMH Field. This year, students and guests sat socially distanced on the field, following coronavirus restrictions. • Xander Marincovich and Michael Berger take a selfie before graduation. • Valeria Gomez crosses the field with her family before receiving her diploma. • David Killion hugs supporters after graduation.

Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

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Astoria choir director takes last bow

Pierce to return to alma mater in Bend

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Like any self-respecting choir director, Matthew Pierce decided to tell his students some difficult news by singing a song.

He asked the students to pay attention to the lyrics: What did they say? What advice did they offer? Then he sang “Everything



Must Change” by the late singer and songwriter Bernard Ighner.

“Everything must change / Nothing stays the same / Everyone will change / No one stays the same.”

“OK,” Pierce said after he finished singing and the students had discussed the song, “now here’s some news.”

He was leaving the Astoria School District, where he’d acted as choir director for the high school

and middle school for 17 years. He was moving to Bend, his hometown, to take on the position of choir director at Bend High School, his alma mater.

Pierce had long known that if there was an opportunity to teach at his old school he couldn’t let it pass by. It doesn’t make the decision to leave Astoria any easier, though.

Because of the coronavirus, he ended last school year and started this school year online, encouraging virtual talent shows and passing along YouTube videos of interesting musical performances to create something like a normal classroom. He took up jazz piano lessons,



Katie Frankowicz/The Astorian

Matthew Pierce, the choir director for Astoria High School and Astoria Middle School, took up jazz piano during the pandemic. He announced he will be leaving to teach at Bend High School.

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