

**VIRUS SURVEY**

## Conservatives more likely to decline vaccines

Vaccination has become politically polarized in US

By SUZANNE ROIG  
*The Bulletin*

COVID-19 vaccination rates drop significantly outside of the Portland metro area, according to results of an Oregon Values and Beliefs Center survey.

The online survey of residents showed the three counties making up the Portland metro area had a 77% vaccination rate. Among people living outside the metro area and the Willamette Valley, 42% of those surveyed said they had not received a COVID-19 vaccine.

The survey results mirror those from December that gauged how likely someone would be to get vaccinated.

The results were released as Gov. Kate Brown announced the state would follow the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indoor masking guidelines after

a surge of new virus cases statewide.

Over the past few days, the Oregon Health Authority said there were 2,056 new virus cases statewide, including 39 in Clatsop County.

People who identified as socially conservative were four times as likely to say they would not receive a vaccine than those who said they were liberal. Nearly all those surveyed who said they were college educated reported having received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

“In Oregon, as in most other states, vaccination has become a politically polarized issue,” said Amaury Vogel, the associate executive director of the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center. “Political ideology, when it comes to social issues, is a strong predictor of whether or not a person has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.”

The reasons for vaccine hesitancy have ranged from doubts about the severity of

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Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

South Bay Wild owner Tiffani Seitz tops off a plate of Dungeness crab fry bread.

## FACTORS CONVERGE TO MAKE CRAB SCARCE

Pandemic, labor shortages and supply chain issues disrupt market

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
*The Astorian*

It's one of the most popular seafood items on the North Coast and a valuable local fishery, but Dungeness crab has never been harder to find, or more expensive.

At restaurants, portions may be smaller, prices are steep and crab may be off the menu completely this summer.

Seafood distributors, sellers and processors point to a number of factors that converged to create a perfect storm: the coronavirus pandemic, labor shortages, product shortages, supply chain issues and market demands. All have contributed to drive prices up from the usual \$25 or so per pound to as much as \$52.

“There’s a lot of theories and a lot of possibilities and a lot of reasons for things and it’s kind of, ‘Take your pick,’” said Tim Novotny, a spokesman for the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission.

Oregon’s commercial Dungeness crab season traditionally opens in December and doesn’t end until Aug. 14. Most of the crab are landed within the first eight weeks of the season opener.

This season was difficult for many in the industry. It opened late and yielded a mere 12 million pounds to date — compared to last year’s 20 million. On average, commercial crabbers land around 16 million pounds in Oregon, though the fishery can be cyclical, with boom and bust periods.

Demand in the live crab market played a role in driving up prices this year. Fishermen were getting — and could command — high value. Demand came, as usual, from China, but also from California, where low catch numbers and a shortened



Malcolm Cotte owns FishStix Seafood Market in Warrenton.



With rising prices, FishStix Seafood Market is selling crab meat at \$48 per pound.

season pushed nontraditional live markets.

Then there was the pandemic’s impact on restaurants. Shut down on

and off for much of last year or curtailed by various regulations, restaurants began to open more this spring and summer. Seafood orders that had slowed last year suddenly ramped up, said Jim Matlock, general manager for Ocean Beauty, a seafood distributor in Astoria.

Not all processors were well-stocked on crab when demand from this sector arrived. A labor shortage has meant that even if new product arrives or is available in freezers, there may not be enough employees to quickly and consistently prepare it for sale.

Jeff Grannum, the sales director for the Washington-state based processor South Bend Products, has been in the fish business for most of his life, accustomed to its ebbs and flows, the peaks and valleys of employment. But he has never seen such a struggle to bring in workers.

“I’d say this is definitely uncharted territory,” he said.

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## A swap meet for collectors

Comic books, vinyl records, toys and memorabilia

By ETHAN MYERS  
*The Astorian*

Calling all collectors.

Twenty vendors from across Oregon and Washington state are coming to Astoria for a comics and collectibles swap meet on Saturday. Fans of comic books, vinyl records, toys, memorabilia and other kinds of collectibles will be able to buy, trade and sell items.

Funds will go toward repairs at the Masonic Lodge on Franklin Avenue, where the event is being held.

Quinn Allan, the organizer of the event, said visitors can expect a wide range of unique collectibles, including vintage clothing, Disney memorabilia and

several independent comic books.

“If you are into high-end collectibles, there should be some of that,” Allan said. “But if you are a kid and want a cool Hot Wheel or an old Star Wars toy or something for five bucks, there is going to be that as well.”

“But if they are into something completely different that is not toys or comics, there will be a lot of other people selling different kinds of things.”

While a ticket costs \$3, the event will also offer a \$5 early bird rate for “those really savvy and avid collectors that really want to get in there first and try to snatch all the good stuff before it’s gone,” Allan said.

Since the swap meet is a brand new event, Allan said he has no idea what to expect.

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Franki Fischer

Cindy Kirby was featured in Warrenton’s Fourth of July parade.

## Transportation director helps drive student success

Kirby recognized with state award

By GRIFFIN REILLY  
*The Astorian*

WARRENTON — Along with each of Cindy Kirby’s emails is a message in bright purple: School bus drivers keep education moving.

That’s just what she did this past school year.

Kirby, a Warrenton native and the transportation director of the Warrenton-Hammond School District, was named transportation supervisor of the year by the Oregon Pupil Transportation Association.

She was nominated for the award after bus drivers in Kirby’s district spoke out on her behalf to the dis-

trict superintendent.

“Any time anybody needs anything, she’s there,” said Leanna Glover, a bus driver and trainer who advocated for Kirby.

The award, Glover said, is typically given to a representative of a larger school district with a higher level of exposure.

Initially, they were worried that dealing with the coronavirus would be especially hard for Warrenton. “We felt very isolated. It was very hard on the children,” said Glover. “We’re very little out here.”

But Kirby’s work in going the



extra mile for students throughout the pandemic — a job she attributes equally to her co-workers — earned her this year’s title.

“We’re a team here. We do this as a team,” Kirby said. “To be recognized, as a small district, means the world to me.”

When the pandemic hit, Kirby didn’t flinch. “Right away,” Glover said, “she came up with ideas and made it happen.”

In addition to regularly sanitizing the buses — something Kirby said has always been a practice of her team — they worked to help students beyond transportation.

After quickly assembling a skeleton crew of bus drivers, lunch ladies and more, Kirby organized a way for school buses to help distribute food to children in the community.

It wasn’t the first time Kirby had

thought of an idea to aid local students, either. In 2019, she helped start a fundraiser for the Warrenton High School football team by selling old jerseys and football gear as memorabilia. The event raised over \$900, all of which was given back to the team and other sports programs — specifically children who needed money for food while the teams traveled.

“People loved it,” Kirby said. “I wanted it to go to kids who maybe would’ve had a hard time eating or getting food on away games.”

Kirby takes pride in how she and her team are able to make a difference. She strives to never let transportation be a barrier to education.

“We pushed through. We persevered,” she said. “I never wanted kids to not be in school because of transportation.”