

IN BRIEF

Boy drowns in pool in Gearhart

GEARHART — A 3-year-old boy drowned in a neighbor's pool Tuesday evening.

Authorities said Grayson Bishop was playing outside with his 5-year-old brother under the eyes of adults, who suddenly realized the younger boy was missing.

The adults started looking for Bishop. A short time later, his grandmother found him in the neighbor's above-ground pool. A fence that separates the properties had a small opening that the boy had slipped through.

Bishop was taken to Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria but did not survive.

"It's one of those tragedies that absolutely breaks everyone's heart, you know?" Sheriff Matt Phillips said. "It just really doesn't get a lot worse, if at all."

The family has set up a GoFundMe account to help pay for funeral and medical expenses.

Chinook salmon fishing closes on Buoy 10

Retention of Chinook salmon in the popular Buoy 10 fishery on the Columbia River closed Friday after higher-than-expected catch rates and mortality of an important Chinook stock.

Impacts on lower river natural tulle Chinook is managed under strict guidelines and can define how the fishery progresses. Buoy 10 fishermen are allowed only a certain portion of impacts on this stock for the summertime fishery.

Chinook retention opened on Aug. 1 and was scheduled to run through Sept. 6, but catch rates and angler effort has been relatively high since Aug. 11, according to fishery managers. Environmental conditions may have also been a factor, however. Higher temperatures upstream may have caused Chinook to stay in the estuary.

Fishery managers in Oregon and Washington state continue to allow anglers to retain hatchery coho salmon from the Buoy 10 line to the Tongue Point-Rocky Point line.

County adopts moratorium on vacation rentals

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a moratorium Wednesday night on new vacation rental licenses, giving the county time to reconsider the rules in which these businesses operate.

The moratorium, which affects enterprises in the county's unincorporated areas and Gearhart's urban growth boundary, goes into effect in September. Unless the county extends it, the ban will end Dec. 29.

The suspension allows the county to revise the ordinances around short-term rentals, a profitable venture that has proved divisive in some neighborhoods. While vacation rentals bring tourism dollars to the coast, some residents argue that these dwellings sometimes harm the well-being of residential areas with excessive noise, unruly or unsanitary behavior, parking problems and other issues.

The review process is expected to wrap up by February.

During the 120-day freeze, the county won't accept, process or issue new permits for short-term rentals. However, the county will continue to transfer permits already approved, and applications pending before the moratorium's approval would still be considered.

The county's unincorporated areas have more than 200 permits for vacation rentals.

Astoria public works staffer tests positive for coronavirus

A staffer in the Astoria Public Works Department has tested positive for the coronavirus.

The city said the staffer does not appear to have had close contact with other city employees.

"All health and safety protocols are being followed at the employee's duty station and regular business hours and access at city facilities are not impacted," the city said in a statement Thursday.

— *The Astorian*

DEATHS

Aug. 25, 2021

ANDRUS, Gayle Reams, 76, of Cannon Beach, died in Cannon Beach. Caldwell's Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center of Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIALS

Saturday, Sept. 25

SHEKER, Clifford James and Carrie Marie — Celebration of life at 2 p.m., 35380 Schwab Lane, Astoria. Casual barbecue and potluck. For information, call 503-440-6457.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Gearhart City Council and Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m., work session, (electronic meeting).

the Astorian

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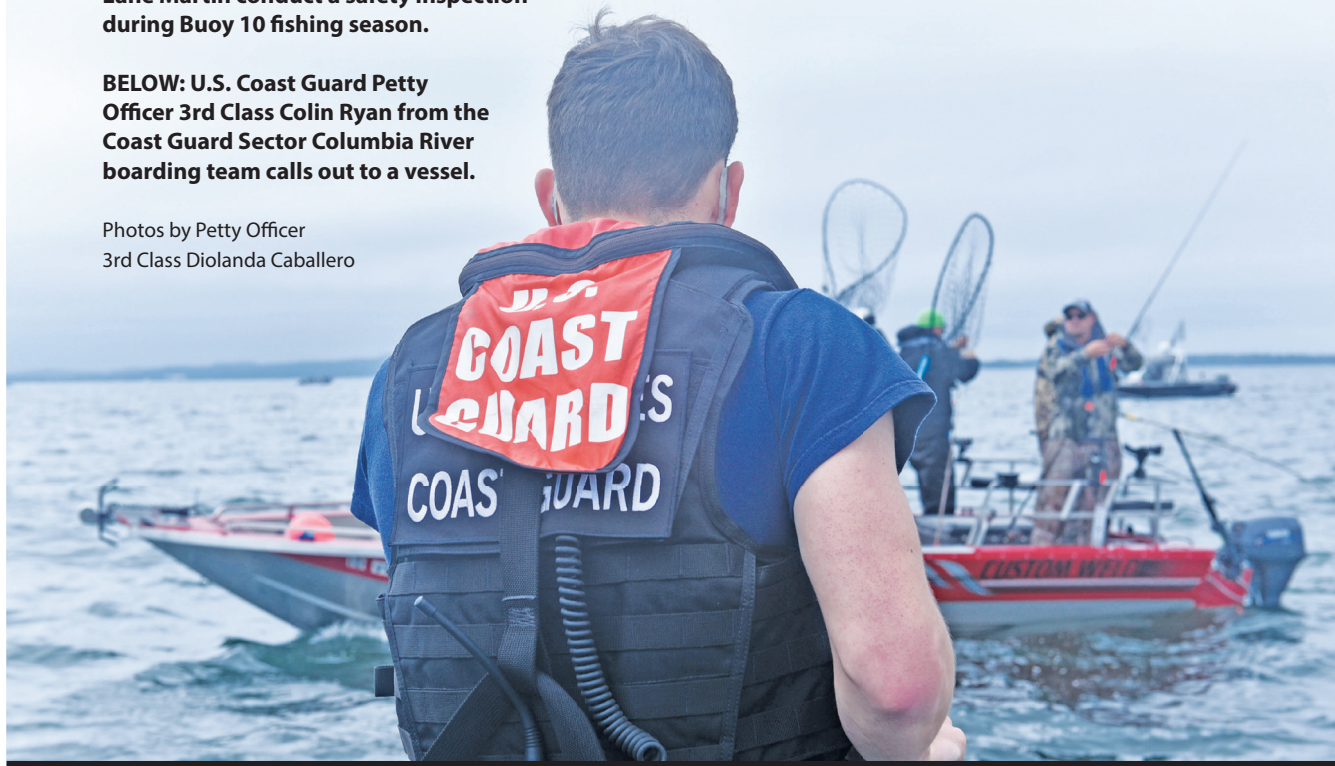
KEEPING WATCH



ABOVE: U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Colin Ryan and Petty Officer 3rd Class Lane Martin conduct a safety inspection during Buoy 10 fishing season.

BELOW: U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Colin Ryan from the Coast Guard Sector Columbia River boarding team calls out to a vessel.

Photos by Petty Officer
3rd Class Diolanda Caballero



Virus hospitalizations could peak on Labor Day

By GARY WARNER
Oregon Capital Bureau

The steep rise in COVID-19 cases that began in July could peak on Labor Day and begin a two-month decline, according to a new state report.

The COVID-19 forecast released Thursday by Oregon Health & Science University in Portland included an updated scenario of hospitalizations.

"The forecast shows a peak census level of 1,197 on 9/6," wrote Dr. Peter Graven, the chief COVID-19 analyst at OHSU.

Hospitalizations would make a painful retreat with earlier low levels of virus hospitalizations unlikely until late October — just before Halloween.

Graven said the toll on the state has been heavy and will continue for weeks ahead with levels of cases remaining high as the virus retreats. Oregon is experiencing the highest rate of virus cases of the 18-month pandemic.

The rapid influx of unvaccinated people arriving with severe infections has pushed the state's network of medical centers to the breaking point.

"We're seeing the number of people hospitalized going up at rates we've never seen before," Graven said.

While there is now hope that the spike driven by the highly contagious delta variant could be slowing its rocket-like trajectory, there will be a long, costly fall back to levels seen before the spike.

COVID-19 hospitalizations could fall to about 200 patients around Oct. 23. The decline would continue until reaching pre-spike levels around Nov. 6. The forecast shows hospitalizations could continue to near zero by Christmas.

The Oregon Health Authority has reported that 95% of hospitalizations and



Andrew Selsky/AP Photo

Two visitors peer into the room of a COVID-19 patient in the intensive care unit at Salem Hospital in Salem as a nurse dons full protective gear before going into the room of another patient.

deaths during the last two months have been among unvaccinated people.

Among vaccinated people with breakthrough cases, 5.5% have been hospitalized and 0.9% have died. The median age of the vaccinated people who died was 83.

Dr. Renee Edwards, OHSU's chief medical officer, speaking Wednesday during a media briefing prior to the official release of the report, said the crisis remains dire.

Hospitals reported over 92% of all adult staffed beds were occupied. Intensive care unit beds often had even fewer openings. Reports of patients backing up into emergency rooms and ambulances unable to bring in new patients came from around the state.

Compounding the problem: Oregon has the lowest per-capita supply of hospital beds in the nation at 1.7 beds per 1,000 residents, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, a health issues nonprofit. South Dakota ranks first, with 4.8 beds per 1,000.

The death of a patient in Douglas County waiting in an emergency room because of not enough intensive care unit beds being available made international news.

Edwards said a graphic

of the spike showed a roughly symmetrical rise and fall, with the increase from early July mirroring the projected drop over a similar period.

"The downward angle looks kind of exactly like the upward angle, that the path back down would look just as steep and long as the path up," Edwards said.

OHSU scientists underlined that the forecast peak was not the end, but the middle of the crisis. An equal number of unvaccinated people are expected to get sick during the next two months.

Progress toward improvement could stall if residents get "COVID fatigue" and become complacent about masking, getting vaccinated and other safeguards. The delta variant has increased cases twelvefold since early July.

Unvaccinated people are also a potential breed-

ing ground for new variants, which could be even more contagious and virulent than the delta variant.

OHSU reported Thursday that just over 63% of all Oregon residents are vaccinated. That includes children under 12, for whom there is no federally approved vaccine. Oregon ranks 19th in the nation for overall vaccination rate.

Edwards said that until most of the world is immune, variants could come from the next city or from around the world.

"That's what viruses do," Edwards said. "Viruses are constantly changing and mutating and looking for their best opportunity to spread."

Oregon could approach herd immunity — in which the total number of people who are either vaccinated or been exposed to the COVID-19 through transmission slows or stalls the ability of the virus to spread.

Edwards said Wednesday that Graven's forecasts have shown reaching herd immunity is possible — but at a much greater human cost than through vaccination.

"Dr. Graven said we are getting to herd immunity, but through mass infection, which is not the way to get there because too many people get sick, too many people die and it overwhelms our health care system," she said.

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