



Hood River News

'Exquisite Gorge' A River Mural

Page B1

MIDWEEK EDITION \$1.00
Vol. 114, No. 23
2 Sections, 20 Pages

Official Newspaper, City of Hood River and Hood River County

HOOD RIVER, OREGON • Wednesday, March 18, 2020

www.hoodrivernews.com

Governors Brown, Inslee order restaurants closed

COVID-19 impacts felt by businesses and community groups on both sides of the river

By EMILY FITZGERALD
News staff writer

Both Oregon and Washington have ordered all bars, restaurants, entertainment and recreation facilities to temporarily close as part of the ongoing effort to fight the spread of COVID-19. The bans do not include grocery stores, pharmacies, retail stores or workplaces, and establishments are permitted to serve takeout and delivery food.

Washington Governor Jay Inslee announced the ban Sunday evening, in addition to a ban on gatherings of 50 people or more, both to take effect



'IT'S HARD on everyone,' Anna Garcia of Hood River Taqueria said Monday afternoon, as she puts up a sign at the 13th Street restaurant.

Monday. No timeline was given for how long the restrictions would be in place.

Oregon Governor Kate Brown told reporters Sunday night that she was considering a similar temporary shutdown, or other measures for restaurants and bars such as a curfew or occupancy limit. Brown said Monday morning that those were measures she was not yet ready to impose; but later that afternoon, Brown announced that a temporary shutdown, as well as a ban on gatherings of 25 people or more, would take effect Tuesday and be in effect for at least four weeks.

In the same press conference, delivered in northeast Portland Monday afternoon, Brown advised Oregonians to avoid being around more than 10 people at a time and encouraged businesses to minimize interpersonal contact when serving customers, or shut down completely.

Many local organizations and businesses have already canceled events

or closed their doors in order to proactively combat the spread of COVID-19 (see A5 for a complete list). Among those is the Port of Hood River, which announced Monday that they would be closing their front office and would be temporarily closing manned toll booths on the Hood River-White Salmon Interstate Bridge beginning Wednesday, March 18. "This closure is not mandatory, but rather a social-distancing measure," said Port officials in a press release.

The innermost lanes of the four-lane toll plaza will be closed, and all traffic will flow through the outermost "BreezeBy" lanes, where the barrier arm will be raised to let vehicles through. Electronic tolling via the Port's "BreezeBy" electronic tolling system will continue, but no cash payments will be accepted.

"It's a big fairness issue right now," said Port Communications and Special Projects Manager Genevieve

See VIRUS, page A9

A community Coping With COVID virus

An invitation to readers: Help keep us better informed

By KIRBY NEUMANN-REA
News editor

It's a little ... too quiet.

As communities respond to COVID-19 and official and unofficial closures and protocols, life has greatly changed in the past week in the Gorge and every community around the globe. It changed in the hours just before presstime; please bear with us.

Baristas were serving up coffee, cooks prepared meals, barkeepers poured pints, and people gathered in cafes and pubs to partake with other people -- but that's changed as of Monday afternoon. Events such as the winter bowling tournament at Orchard Lanes and the monthly community run at Shortt Supply went on as usual. Pastors gave their sermons to people seated in socially distant places in the pews.

"We're all in this together — just a



EMPTY shelves do not define us. Bowling in groups does. Mike Weaver, left Don Ward, both of The Dalles, exchange elbow-bumps during Orchard Lanes tournament action Saturday. See A9 for related coverage, and page A5 for a list of cancellations and closures — and hoodrivernews.com for updates.

little farther apart," reads a placard on the counter at Dog River Cafe.

Life does go on, though word of changes in what's happening and not happening keep coming our way, and we will track those at hoodrivernews.com.

Meanwhile, the list of closures seems to include everything, everywhere: Schools, government offices (and their meetings), some churches, more and more businesses, and virtually all public places — visitor center, library, senior center, pool, and galleries and museums.

"Our rituals and relationships are in upheaval," Riverside Pastor Vicky Stifter said on Sunday.

Unfortunately, it's true. Hood River News wants to try to stem that. The absence of activity and congregation leaves the Hood River News literally at a loss: With so much closed, can-

celed or postponed, there is a great deal less for us to cover, in stories or photos. True, we can do much on the phone, and continue to use that channel. (Covering ... when you sneeze or cough is important, but covering — as in getting info into the paper — is also important.)

An invitation

Some of what you read in this edition might be unavailable or outdated, as closures and other decisions have come to us very rapidly. With all this shifting, known and yet-to-be known, we issue the following invitation:

Contact us with what you know. We rely now, more than ever, on what our readers send us, on the tips and news of note that form this vibrant community.

True, this invitation is right in



Photos by Kirby Neumann-REA

line with this paper's long-standing practice of accepting a wide variety of press releases, public notices, meeting notices, social notes, club and sports reports and the like, as well as essays, op-ed pieces and, of course, letters to the editor. Readers' long-standing role as information providers is what keeps us going.

But this is the time to take it up a notch or two, since meetings, games, concerts, lectures and the whole range of community gatherings are simply not happening. We can't as easily come to you, so feel free to come to us. Contact info is on A1. We've tried to update and make note of the COVID-caused changes, but we won't be able to catch everything. "Call first" to make sure an event is still going.

That way, you will know for sure, and it's a way for folks organizing

these events to get feedback and stay connected.

'Coping with COVID'

We are open to just about anything (staff discretion to publish, and right-to-edit, still prevail) but, as we see, it your input will come in three main forms:

- First, keep letting us know about events, or results or details of events that have happened.

- Second, tell us about canceled events, meetings or other gatherings, and what would have been discussed and, broader still, what your organization is doing long-term, be it ongoing projects or things happening this spring or in the summer.

We know groups look ahead — they have to. Now is the time to tip us off to

See COPING, page A9

CONTACT US

General information (attach your photos, too) including "Coping with COVID" go to hrnews@hoodrivernews.com

Happening and Gatherings updates go to Trisha Walker: twalker@hoodrivernews.com
Government information goes to Emily Fitzgerald: efitzgerald@hoodrivernews.com
Sports notes go to Gabriel Bravo at gbravo@hoodrivernews.com

'Superhero Fun Run' supports local student Kyle McCarthy



Photo by Trisha Walker

KYLE MCCARTHY has been wheelchair-bound since contracting EVD-68 in elementary school. His mother, Debbie, says the family hopes to purchase a new SmartDrive attachment for his wheelchair that will allow Kyle to go between manual and electric settings with a tap of his finger.

By TRISHA WALKER
News staff writer

Kyle McCarthy, 13, and his family are looking to upgrade his wheels.

The Wy'east Middle School seventh grader is the beneficiary of funds raised from a planned Superhero Fun Run organized by the PE department; a similar fun run was held in 2016, organized by Mid Valley staff to help purchase an ultra-light wheelchair as recommended by his physical therapy team.

The run, originally scheduled for April 4, has since been rescheduled for May 16 due to concerns about COVID-19.

When Kyle was 8, he contracted EVD-68 — enterovirus — a rare virus that left him dependent on both a wheelchair and ventilator.

"It was a cold," said his mother,

Debbie McCarthy. "He got it from a cold. Even to this day, they don't know how to fix it or how he got it. If you're going to get it, you're going to get it."

The last four years have seen Kyle regain respiratory independence; he no longer requires a ventilator. Two months ago, he underwent a nine-hour full spinal fusion surgery and is now in his third month of a six-month recovery period.

"They went from T3 to L6 and gave him 80 percent correction," McCarthy said. He is not allowed to do anything more physically demanding than arm push.

His family is looking to purchase a SmartDrive Max Mobility 2 attachment for his wheelchair. Similar to an electric bike, it will allow him to go long distances and up hills with-

out help, something he now cannot do alone. The device is activated by vibration: A tap on the leg to start or stop, utilizing a watch.

"It reminds me of a handheld vacuum," she said. "It hooks onto a crossbar underneath his chair, and you can clip it on and off. It combines a manual chair and a power chair into one and will make it easier to get around."

The attachment costs \$6,000 — \$500 more than his wheelchair. To this end, Wy'east is sponsoring the Return of the Superhero Fun Run for Kyle, a 5K and 10K walk/run, on Saturday, May 16 beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the Odell middle school. Preregistration at tinyurl.com/superherokyle is \$20, and day-of registration is \$25.

"Post-surgery is a great time to get

See KYLE, page A9

INSIDE

Classifieds	B6
Entertainment	A3
Gatherings	B4
Greater Gorge	A2
Happenings	B3
Kaleidoscope	B1
Legal Notices	B5

Obituaries	A6
Opinion	A4
Sports	A7
Yesteryears	B2

"We hope you will honor Min's heroism in a manner that protects the most vulnerable ..." — Page B2

BRIEF, HEALTHY REMINDERS ABOUT COVID-19 PREVENTION

From Dr. Christopher Van Tilburg, County Health Officer: Anyone who has minor symptoms or illness, or who has had contact with ill people, should stay home ... Get rest and fluids, eat healthy, use over the counter medications,

and limit contact with household members ... Always wash your hands and don't touch face ... If you are concerned about an illness, please call your primary care provider; do not come to the Health Department ... Except for

high risk patients, testing is at the discretion of your primary care provider ... Health Department will assist providers in case of positive cases ... To date, we have no positive cases in our county but likely the virus is circulating.

