



**Kathleen Quinlan, left, an Academy Award nominated actress in "Apollo 13" is featured in "The Stairs."**

## Horror:

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nearly two dozen wins and counting, including top honors at several festivals.

According to its synopsis, the chilling film is set 20 years after the mysterious disappearance of an 11-year-old boy and his grandfather. A group of friends find themselves along the same trail, unaware of a long-forgotten evil lurking just beyond the tree line. What started as a weeklong adventure with friends quickly turns into a terrifying fight for survival as they come face-to-face with the thing that nightmares are made of.

Presented by Cinedigm and Fathom Events, the film viewing is Thursday, Aug. 12, at 7 p.m. at Cinedigm Grand Cinema 12 in Walla Walla. Tickets can be purchased at the theater box office or in advance via [www.fathomevents.com/events/The-Stairs](http://www.fathomevents.com/events/The-Stairs).

Jones said the film will



**Adam Korson, best known for playing Josh Bloom in the TV show "Imposters," is part of the cast in "The Stairs."**

be released Aug. 27 on DVD/BluRay/VOD in conjunction with a week-long run at a few select theaters.

Melody Fowler, vice president of acquisitions for Cinedigm, said "The Stairs" delivers what horror fans look for in a movie — real scares, suspense and a terrifying conclusion. In addition, with its well-developed characters, superb stunts, cre-

ative design and effects, and the film's strong festival reception with genre fans, Fowler said it "further confirms that it is a must-see" film. Director Peter "Drago" Tiemann agreed, saying the isolation the characters face creates an added level of tension.

"The idea of being hunted by an unknown taps into a visceral part of us," he said, "and we become part of the story."

## Masks:

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who tested positive July 23 and died July 27. The state has yet to confirm where she died and if she had underlying conditions.

"The mask is not about protecting yourself," Fiumara said. "The mask is about protecting those you interact with."

The recommendations come as Umatilla County reports one of the largest COVID-19 case spikes in Oregon, with about 8% of the state's total cases over the past two weeks despite accounting for just 2% of its population. The county's case rate during that same time period was more than seven times higher than Multnomah and Washington counties, which each have more than 500,000 more residents than Umatilla County.

Health officials say the surge is largely due to social gatherings and large summer events that have ensued since the state lifted all pandemic restrictions on June 30. Infection is spreading almost entirely among unvaccinated people, health officials say.

Less than 40% of Umatilla County residents have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, according to federal data.

### Hospitalizations spike

The masking recommendations also come as COVID-19 hospitalizations surge statewide and at some regional hospitals.

More than half of all patients hospitalized at CHI St. Anthony in Pendleton tested positive for COVID-19, according to a hospital spokesperson.

The hospital has reported a "significant uptick" in positive COVID-19 cases during the previous week, nearing peak numbers last winter, the spokesperson, Emily Smith, said in an email. Fourteen people have



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

**Registered nurse Heather McLeod enters a negative pressure room used for COVID-19 patients on Tuesday, July 27, 2021, in the medical/surgical unit at CHI St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton. As of that morning, the hospital had seven COVID-19 cases, according to hospital spokesperson Emily Smith.**

been hospitalized with the virus last week, with eight hospitalized on July 26 alone.

Local hospitals will sometimes refer critically ill patients to other facilities for a higher level of care. But regional hospitals have been "unable to accept transfers" because they are full with patients, Smith said.

For one patient in need of a transfer, health care workers reached out to 15 different hospitals before finding one with an available bed, Smith said.

"We're seeing a big surge," Fiumara said. "And if they're already having issues with having enough room and being able to transfer people out when appropriate, that doesn't speak well for if this surge continues."

On July 23 and July 24 alone, approximately 40% of patients who came to the hospital with COVID-19 symptoms tested positive. None had been vaccinated against COVID-19.

The emergency department's physician director on July 26, reported a threefold increase in patients testing positive in the department during the past five days, Smith said.

Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston said they are also seeing an increase in hospitalizations and positive COVID-

19 tests. Five people were hospitalized with COVID-19 at the facility last week as more patients are coming to the emergency department and Good Shepherd Urgent Care with COVID-19 symptoms, according to Caitlin Cozad, the hospital's spokesperson.

The hospital's testing positivity rate has also more than doubled since earlier this month. From June 29 to July 12, 9.3% of tests came back positive. And from July 13 to July 26, that number jumped to 23.5%.

Fiumara said he expects hospitalization rates to continue to climb, as is common when infection skyrockets.

Just a few weeks ago, CHI St. Anthony's tested 73 people. Five of those tests came back positive, amounting to a positive test rate of 6.8%. But last week, the hospital has tested 107 people with 28 coming back positive. That's a positivity rate of 26.1% — a number that doesn't include the patients who come to the hospital known to have COVID-19.

The hospital reports between 25% and 30% of its daily visits now are due to COVID-19, which Smith said "has risen dramatically in the last week."

Since the pandemic began, Umatilla County has reported 9,395 COVID-19 cases. That's roughly 12% of the county's population.

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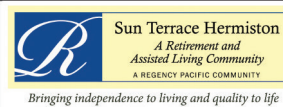
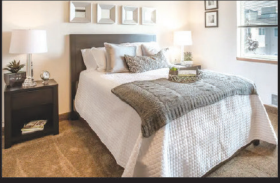
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