



Gazette-Times



OSU women's hoops

Jones seeks to build on strong start **B1**

Halloween

Celebrating amid the coronavirus **A12**



SUNNY 62 • 35 FORECAST, A10

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2020

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ANDY CRIFE, MID-VALLEY MEDIA

Corvallis men's cold weather homeless shelter manager Harry Reich points out the changed configuration that limits capacity from 50 beds to 15 beds because of social distancing rules.

Homeless facing winter

Mid-Valley services scramble to meet needs amid COVID-19

JAMES DAY
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The weather is getting colder and wetter. We are in a coronavirus pandemic. And there are hundreds if not thousands of homeless people in the mid-valley seeking shelter and other basic needs.

What is to be done?

"Realistically there are going to be a lot of people outside this year," said Shawn Collins, who helps manage the Corvallis men's cold weather shelter for the Unity Shelter nonprofit. "No matter who you talk to the forecast is that there will be more people out there."

And the higher caseload comes amid tougher barriers to serve the population.

Consider that:

■ Capacity at the Corvallis men's shelter, which opens tonight, has been reduced from 50

beds to 15 because of social distancing requirements.

■ Helping Hands in Albany has reduced its capacity from 135 to 100, although the nonprofit recently opened a warming center that accommodates another 25 people.

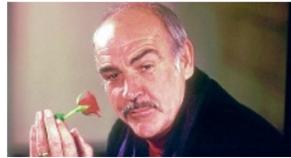
■ The Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center has had to completely rework its operations model because the virus has forced it to severely limit the number of people that it can let inside its Southwest Fourth Street location. Still, it is find-

ing a way to assist 70 guests per day.

■ The city of Corvallis has set the wheels in motion for clamping down on illegal camping, which has flourished amid a hands-off approach since the pandemic hit in March. A September city inventory, the first of its kind, found more than 200 camps, mainly on city property such as Avery Park, Pioneer Park and near the BMX track behind the men's shelter (see chart Page A5).

Please see **HOMELESS**, Page A4

FIRST LOOK



Obituary: Legendary actor Sean Connery dies

Sean Connery, the charismatic Scottish actor who rose to international superstardom as the suave secret agent James Bond and then abandoned the role to carve out an Oscar-winning career in other rugged roles, has died. He was 90. Connery's wife and two sons said he "died peacefully in his sleep surrounded by family" in the Bahamas, where he lived. Son Jason Connery said his father had been "unwell for some time." **A9**

Virus: England headed toward a lockdown

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Saturday announced a new month-long lockdown for England after being warned that without tough action a resurgent coronavirus outbreak will overwhelm hospitals in weeks. On the day the U.K. passed 1 million confirmed COVID-19 cases, Johnson made a sudden about-face and confirmed that stringent restrictions on business and daily life would begin Thursday and last until Dec. 2. **B6**

Health: Quick workouts for pandemic blues

Our special Sunday Health page takes a look at how just a two-minute, five-minute or 10-minute workout can help you ward off pandemic-induced inactivity. **B12**

COLUMNS

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ELECTION 2020 ANALYSIS

Is vote headed toward strife?

Volatility of the presidential race analyzed by experts

STEPHEN L. CARTER
Bloomberg News Service

As Election Day nears, the possibility of a disputed presidential election is worrying a lot of people. You've heard the scenarios: An embittered Donald Trump loses but refuses to leave the Oval Office. An embittered Joe Biden loses but refuses to concede. Ab-

sente ballot that arrive after November 3 aren't counted. Or they are counted. The angry left takes to the streets. The angry right takes to the streets. Lawyers take to the courts.

Whatever goes wrong — and chances are something will — we will likely be having an argument over the vote count.

Into the pre-election turmoil comes a useful new analysis from the economists Michael Geruso and Dean Spears of the University of Texas, who study and model presidential elections.

Last September, I wrote about an earlier paper in which they argued that inversions — where one party wins the popular vote and the other the Electoral College — are far more likely than we think.

This time around, Geruso and Spears are warning of a significant chance that the presidential election could be swung by a few

Please see **ELECTION**, Page A3

■ **INSIDE:** See Page A2 and Page B7 for more election coverage.



JOHN MOORE, GETTY IMAGES

U.S. President Donald Trump smiles while criticizing Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden at a campaign rally at Oakland County International Airport on Friday in Waterford, Michigan.

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- **Gallery:** Halloween events
- **Video:** OSU's delivery robots



WEATHER BEAVER SAYS:

■ Look for sunny skies the next two days, with highs in the low 60s and little chance of rain. Right now, we're seeing a 60% chance of rain for Tuesday. **For details, see A10.**

BRIDGE	C3	OBITUARIES	A8-9
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RED HOT BUYS

LOOK INSIDE TO SEE OUR PROMOTION

Ace Exclusive Bonus Bit Set

Homeless

From A1

■ City officials are under no illusion that they found all the sites and they also don't know how many people those camps are hosting.

■ There is good news, too. Stone Soup, the long-time Corvallis church-based meal service, has received nearly \$80,000 in COVID-related relief funds, has hired paid staff for the first time and is serving at two new meal sites.

Here is a closer look at the situation:

Corvallis men's shelter

It is about 12:30 p.m. on a sunny and pleasant Wednesday. The temperature is about 50 degrees, but there already have been below-freezing nights for those living in the tent city behind the shelter on Southeast Chapman Place.

The tent city has grown dramatically since the spring. The city inventory, led by the Parks and Recreation Department, spotted nearly 70 camps in the area, a mix of tents, RVs and vehicles.

"We might have to move everything," said Grant Garewal, who was first in line for the shelter's showers, which open at 1 p.m. "And we've already had a couple of nights when it has been below freezing."

Garewal said he was "waiting on some housing," although he also said he is considering going back to California.

Second in line was Mike Brown. He, like everyone else at the shelter, was masked. And the shower line contains marked slots that mandate social distancing.

Brown admits he faces challenges because "he recently went to jail for some stupid stuff."

Brown is hoping to find better access to food boxes and, like Garewal, is hoping to score a housing voucher.

He waves his arm over the fence at the shelter toward the BMX track to note where his camp is, but adds "I don't know how long we're going to be able to live there."

David Estes, third in line, is having a frustrating time finding work. His employment background includes poultry and food processing as well as restaurant work.

"I'll do anything," he said. "I've applied at all the restaurants."

Also frustrating is the challenge of finding transportation to and from work if he can secure a job.

"I can still survive here," he said. "I'm already doing it right now. I'm keeping warm."

Up on a ladder on the west side of the old Hanson tire factory is Harry Reich, the shelter's full-time manager. One of his tasks on this day is to install some new vents to improve the air circulation in the shelter. This the fourth year the Hanson site has been used as the men's winter shelter. Every year shelter managers seem to find some improvement to make. Adding fire sprinklers. Better storage. Improved heat.

"It's come a long way," said Collins, "but we're still operating on a conditional use permit with the city. We just got it today (Wednesday). To get a permanent one we will need a capital campaign."

Key additions that shelter managers are hoping to add are more toilets and showers plus, said Collins "some code-compliance stuff. We have a chunk of work ahead of us, but we're on a path."

The work, Collins said, will cost approximately \$200,000.

Reich took the reporter and a photographer on a tour of the sleeping area. Most of the bunk beds are situated such that the occupant has a wall on one side. Two rows of beds run in parallel down the middle of the room, with the shelter planning sheets at the sides and foot of each bed to give the men the proper protection.

The communal dining tables are gone. The men will be given TV trays with which to eat their meals at their bunks.

The shelter is moving to a schedule of nearly 24-hour operations. Clients can check in at 6 p.m. and they must leave by 9 a.m. Reich

Illegal camping inventory

The city of Corvallis dispatched managers from its Parks and Recreation, Public Works, fire and police departments last month for the city's first survey of illegal camping.

Location	Detail Location	Type	Agency	Number of Camps	Notes	Priority
2nd&Western C.S.O	2nd&Western C.S.O	Tent Sites	City - P&R, PW	1	On the bank of the Willamette at the east end of Western Ave. Several campers, 30yds debris. 1 large tarp camp	1
Filmore C.S.O.	Filmore C.S.O.	Tent Sites	City - PW	8	Camps located along Dixon Creek, south of the wastewater treatment plant 6-8 tents	1
Riverfront	Riverfront - lower bank of Willamette	Tent sites	City - P&R	2	Camps located near the water's edge on the bank of the Willamette. Two camps were identified at the time of the site visit. Actual number of camps and specific location may be different at Riverfront the time of the posting.	1
Shawala Point	Shawala Point -bank of river	Tent Sites	City - P&R	8		2
Orleans N.A.	Orleans Natural Area - City	Tent Sites	City - P&R	1		2
Orleans N.A.	Orleans Natural Area - ODOT	Tent Sites	ODOT	4		2
Pioneer Park	Pioneer - bank of Marys river	Tent Sites	City - P&R	14		2
Avery Park	Avery - Rose Garden Parking Lot	RV/Car Campers	City - P&R	2		3
Avery Park	Avery Park - bank of Marys River	Tent Sites	City - P&R	3		3
Avery Park	Avery Park - Behind Admin and along Marys	Tent Sites	City - P&R		Need to count the sites	3
Avery Park	Avery Park - Mr. Utt's property boundary	Tent Sites	City - P&R	1		3
Pioneer Park	Pioneer - RV Campers	RV/Car Campers	City - P&R	9	The sites below will be prioritized in December, 2020	4
Pioneer Park	Pioneer - along R&R - City property	Tent Sites	City - P&R	5	9-10 on a given day (RVs, trailers, cars)	4
Pioneer Park	Pioneer - Parking lot tents	Tent Sites	City - P&R	2		4
Pioneer Park	Pioneer - Meadow	Tent Sites	City - P&R	2		4
Pioneer Park	Pioneer - ODOT Hwy 34 embankment	Tent Sites	ODOT	3		4
Pioneer Park	Pioneer - along R&R - R&R property	Tent Sites	PRIVATE R&R	4		4
PW South Gate	SE of the south gate into PW compound	Tent Sites	City - PW	2		5
ODOT - North Riverfront	Parking area above boat ramp	RV/Car Campers	ODOT	1		5
ODOT - North Riverfront	Parking area above boat ramp	Tent Sites	ODOT	5		5
4th St. N Riverbank	4th St N River bank Marys (ODOT)	Tent Sites	ODOT	4		5
3rd&4th st Triangle	3rd st - 4th st triangle south of Marys - City Parks	Tent Sites	City - P&R	3		5
Marys River South Bank	South bank of Marys west of 4th st.	Tent Sites	City - P&R	2		5
Crystal Lake	Crystal Lake - Riparian area along Willamette	Tent Sites	City - P&R		Need to count the sites	6
Crystal Lake	Crystal Lake - Kendal Farm Natural Area	Tent Sites	City - P&R		Need to count the sites	6
Crystal Lake	Crystal Lake - RV Campers	RV/Car Campers	City - P&R	1		6
Willamette	Willamette Park	Tent Sites	City - P&R		Need to count the sites	6
Shawala Point	Shawala Point - Central grass area	Tent Sites	City - P&R	6		
Shawala Point	Shawala Point -near 3rd st under overpass	Tent Sites	ODOT? P&R?	7		
Riverfront	Riverfront - RV Campers north of Shawala Point	RV/Car Campers	City - P&R	3	1 RV in front of dog area	
Riverfront	Riverfront - upper bank of Willamette	Tent Sites	City - P&R	0		
Riverfront	North Riverfront - Upper parking area	RV/Car Campers	City - P&R	6	1 bus, 1 trailer, 3 cars	
Riverfront	North Riverfront	Tent Sites	City - P&R	1		
BMX	BMX - River bank	Tent Sites	City - P&R	4		
BMX	BMX - Mill Race	Tent Sites	City - P&R	4		
Berg Park	Berg Park - Riparian Area	Tent Sites	City - P&R		Need to count the sites	
Berg Park	Berg Park - Woodlot	Tent Sites	City - P&R		Need to count the sites	
SW Safeway	Behind SW Safeway	Tent Sites	City - PW	1		
Harrison Bridge	West side of 1st st under Harrison St. Bridge.	RV/Car Campers	City - P&R, PW	1	Next to the mural	
2nd&Western Parking Lot	City parking lot at 2nd & Western	Tent Sites	City - PW	4	4-5 tent sites	
Avery Park	Avery - Maple Grove Parking	RV/Car Campers	City - P&R	3	2 RVs and 1 Car	
Avery Park	Avery Park - slope up to topside	Tent Sites	City - P&R	3		
Avery Park	Avery - Topside	RV/Car Campers	City - P&R	1	One camp with 3 vehicles and a trailer	
Avery Park	Avery - Admin parking area	RV/Car Campers	City - P&R	1	1 Car (Clean, moves around)	
BMX	BMX - Track	Tent Sites	City - P&R	10	Set up around perimeter of track	
BMX	BMX - Track	RV/Car Campers	City - P&R	3	Parked on the track	
BMX	BMX - ODOT woodlot	Tent Sites	ODOT	35		
BMX	BMX - north of drop in center	Tent Sites	City - P&R	15		
BMX	BMX - parking lot	RV/Car Campers	City - P&R	5	3 RV/trailers, 3+ cars	
Forest Dell N.A.	Forest Dell Natural Area	Tent Sites	City - P&R	0	No camps at this time	
Chintimini Park	Chintimini Park	Tent Sites	City - P&R	0	No camps at this time	

the church parking lot. Power said that will be the capacity for now. City code changes allowed the units to be placed at area churches with the goal that their occupants would be transitioning toward permanent housing.

"We expect to have to turn away more women, since we have been pretty full all summer," Power said. "That is not fun, and there are not many options available for folks. We continue to work hard to get women into permanent housing, and we hope that more rentals will open up with OSU's student occupation lower. We have yet to see that happen."

In the meantime Power and her crew continue to focus on the basics, such as "keeping the floors clean. And we need more blankets for the winter. Preferably fleece that are easy to wash and dry. And warm socks!"

Camping inventory

Camping is illegal anywhere inside the Corvallis city limits, but there has been no enforcement of the regulations since the pandemic hit in March.

In September city staff brought a four-phase plan to the City Council for its review. The strategy started with education and outreach but aimed to start posting and cleaning out campsites in phase two and by phase three have limited all camps to within 50 yards of the men's shelter on Southeast Chapman. The final phase would eliminate all the camps by the end of the year.

The City Council said no. Councilors discussed the proposal at their Sept. 21 and Oct. 19 meetings before voting 9-0 at the second meeting to direct staff to limit the cleanups only to camps that posed high risk for fire, flooding or environmental damage to riparian corridors.

In addition, the council, led by Nancy Wyse (Ward 6) and Charles Maughan (Ward 2), directed staff to work with social service providers and Benton County to find other shelter options and report back to the council. No date has been set for that update and City Manager Mark Shepard cautioned the council that other city work will have to be delayed to move forward on the camping directive.

"I'm frustrated," Maughan said. "We were told by city staff that the plan just puts us back where we were before COVID. But COVID is still around. We're in a crisis here."

The staff report on the illegal camping proposals included an inventory that was conducted in September by managers with Parks & Recreation, Public Works, fire and police.

Karen Emery, director of Parks & Rec, noted in an interview that "the inventory is a dynamic document and will change daily."

Emery also noted that "there has been an increase of people moving to Corvallis. And significant increase in cars and RVs camping in the park system."

As noted above the city does not know how many individuals are housed in the 200 camps that were found and that no inventory has yet been conducted at high-use areas such as Crystal Lake Park and Berg Park on the east side of the Willamette River.

About 45 of the high-priority camps still will be cleaned up, but the remainder are in limbo pending any updates from the city or the council.

Shepard, meanwhile, noted that some of the camps in the inventory are on railroad or Oregon Department of Transportation property and that those groups "might move ahead with cleanups at their own pace."

Parks & Rec listed four criteria that were used in the prioritization of the camps:

■ Life safety: Risk to life due to fire and/or flooding.

■ Environmental sensitivity: Risk of debris and objects being washed into waterways.

■ Public health: Presence of human excrement and proximity to waterways.

■ Public safety: Evidence of dangerous activity such as drug use and needles.

biggest is the ability to stay warm and dry. We constantly refer people to the shelters, or sources that may have housing available. Some of those we are attempting to help appreciate the direction and referrals, others are unwilling to look at services, because of the rules that come with housing, such as no alcohol or drugs."

Sometimes, Jones said, the problem can feel like a feedback loop that just keeps repeating.

"Law enforcement is often tasked to deal with the immediate issues, such as a camp and trespasser on someone's property, an illegal camp site in a park, or possibly someone passed out or sleeping on the sidewalk blocking pedestrian traffic," he said. "But that police response doesn't really contribute to addressing the issue, it just moves it to another place to be dealt with again."

Women's shelter

The Room at the Inn, the Corvallis women's shelter at the First United Methodist Church, has joined the men's shelter in moving toward year-round service. The shelter remained open after the usual April 1 closing date this spring and has increased capacity from 18 to 22 by expanding into the gym.

Sara Power, the executive director, said that the group was hoping to accommodate more than 22 guests but "wouldn't have room for tables for eating or our activities area if we added more beds."

Power added that the shelter plans to operate year-round "for the foreseeable future," although she notes that, as is the case with the men's shelter, "our permits with the city are temporary permits only."

The Room at Inn also has added four micro-shelters in



JAMES DAY, MID-VALLEY MEDIA FILE (2017)

Officials at the Helping Hands shelter in Albany say they, like many mid-valley social service agencies, have had to alter their procedures because of the coronavirus.

men and women.

Albany challenges

Emma Deane, executive director, of Helping Hands on Southeast Ninth Avenue, noted another unique challenge in 2020 — refugees from the catastrophic wildfires that raged in Linn and Marion counties and hit the Santiam Canyon particularly hard.

"We also have seen more medically fragile people, people in mental health crisis and people struggling with active addiction," Deane said, while also noting the difficulty of balancing the housing, meal and supportive services the center provides with the guidelines coming from the state.

One huge plus for Helping Hands is that, unlike the Corvallis men's shelter, the Albany shelter runs year-round.

Deane also sees the effort that is taking place around her.

"I am so proud of the team at Albany Helping Hands for their proactive work and continuous problem solving," she said. "I am also so thankful that our residents have remained flexible and vigilant in following the ever-changing safety guidelines. We have been able to maintain a COVID-19

HYGIENE CENTER NUMBERS

Here is a look at the numbers from the men's cold weather homeless shelter's hygiene center, which has been operating on Southeast Chapman Place since March 20.

- 1981: Hot meals courtesy of Stone soup
- 3,803: Food bags distributed
- 1,470: Showers
- 438: Loads of laundry
- 1,260: Charged phones
- 345: Donations of clothing and basic supplies to clients

said the shelter will give priority for beds to the most vulnerable in the population.

From 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. the shelter will be closed for cleanup. From 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. the facility will serve as a "hygiene center," the role it played after the pandemic shut down the overnight option on March 19.

"On March 20 we reopened as the hygiene center," Reich said. The center offered showers, laundry, food and hand washing.

From 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. there is additional cleanup ... and then the cycle starts again.

"We're trying to do the best we can and not get anybody sick," Reich said, who added "we've been lucky so far that none of our guys have gotten it."

The men's shelter is scheduled to close for overnight clients at the end of March, although Reich and Collins are hopeful that that deadline can be extended.

In addition, Collins said that Unity Shelter hopes to place 15 more micro shelters in the community by Dec. 1. Reich said he hopes three or four could be placed in the Hanson parking lot. Collins added that the shelters would be available to both

Homeless

From A4

Stone Soup

The meal service has been in Corvallis for 38 years, mainly offering meals at the First Christian Church and St. Marys Catholic Church. Stone Soup will continue its offering at those sites while adding service at the men's shelter on Chapman and at the South Corvallis Food Bank.

Stone Soup got a huge financial boost from a city of Corvallis community development block grant of \$43,973 and picked up another \$35,000 from the Oregon Health Authority. Both awards came from federal coronavirus relief funds.

The cash infusion has enabled Stone Soup to hire a food service manager, its first paid employee. Caitlin Garets, a Corvallis native, began working in the position Oct. 1 with the responsibility for coordinating and overseeing service

Garets

of all meals. Garets previously worked for nine years at Nearly Normal's Gonzo Cuisine and has experience as a community volunteer and event organizer.

Stone Soup now offers 14 meals to go each week, said President Sara Ingle. Volume has risen from 2,323 meals served in March to 3,581 in August, with a slight dip to 3,498 in September, Ingle said.

Helping out in the expansion, Ingle said, have been Valley Catering, the Linn Benton Food Share, Sage Garden and local farmers and businesses.

Drop-in center

"From my lens the Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center is doing great work," said Aleita Hass-Holcombe, the longtime volunteer coordinator and board president.

COVID-19 has placed huge limitations on the center, which before the pandemic served a critical role as a daytime hangout for the homeless and others. The center is open from 9 a.m. to noon and appointments with its service provider partners take place from noon to 2 p.m.

The center is seeing 70 guests per day. The Benton County Health Department administered flu shots on Thursday. Masks are required to enter the building or the parking lot. Guests start at a hand-washing station and then receive meal, mail and other services from staffers behind a Plexiglas window. Temperature checks are required for the service provider sessions.

"The number of folks inside our building is very limited but so far it seems like we are meeting folks'



Individuals line up Wednesday for the 1 p.m. opening of the showers at the men's cold weather shelter in Corvallis.



Charlotte Risland starts another load of laundry on Wednesday at the men's cold weather homeless shelter in Corvallis. Most days Risland does about six loads of laundry, which is part of the shelter's "hygiene" services that also include showers, meals and hand washing.



Here is a look at the tent city that has sprung up behind the men's cold weather homeless shelter and at the nearby BMX track. A city inventory counted nearly 70 camps in the area.

needs," Hass Holcombe said.

The center no longer can use volunteers for safety reasons, but executive director Allison Hobgood, the center's first paid employee, praised the assistance of interns from Oregon State University and Portland State University.

Other organizations that have been providing assistance at the center include Corvallis Housing First, Samaritan Health Services,

the Community Service Consortium and Cornerstone Associates, which provides COVID-19 outreach and awareness for guests, Hobgood said.

"In the last couple of months, we have been able to help folks get their COVID-19 stimulus checks, register to vote, and get counted in the Census," Hobgood said, although the Homeless Employment Launching Program has been

put on hold through the winter months.

"The biggest challenge coming into winter shelter season is the lack of warm, indoor spaces for people to inhabit. With the public library and CDDC's inside space unavailable (and with decreased capacity at the men's shelter), there are no designated spaces for folks to take respite from the cold

and rain and get some warmth during the day," Hobgood said.

"We are working closely with the city and county to figure out augmented day and night sheltering options."

Contact reporter James Day at jim.day@lee.net or 541-812-6116. Follow at Twitter.com/jamesday or gazettetimes.com/blogs/jim-day.

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