

MUSIC: Last-minute changes in line-up worked for festival

Continued from page 19

new album ‘Off at 11,’ contemporary blues phenom JD Simo packed up his gear and flew across the country to get here in time.”

Simo was a hit for Walt Lewis from Boise, Idaho. He grew up in Chicago listening to the blues.

“My wife and I really loved JD Simo. He seemed to channel so many blues greats throughout his act!” he said.

Simo brought down the house, closing the first night of Sisters Rhythm and Brews Festival.

From Issaquah, Washington, Bruce Fish took a couple of days off for the festival to hear Larkin Poe.

He said, “I saw them in Seattle and they’re good old blues even with some of the new stuff they write. They are a variety of blues and I love the way Megan (Lovell) plays slide guitar.”

Larkin Poe stars sisters Rebecca and Megan Lovell, who began their career in 2005 as teenagers with their bluegrass/Americana group, The Lovell Sisters. They are an American roots rock band from Atlanta, Georgia, featuring strong Southern sibling harmonies and heavy electric guitar riffs.

Christone “Kingfish” Ingram blew the doors off to close the festival, bringing up fellow guitarslingers Eric Gales and Mr. Sipp

for crowd-pleasing extended blues jams.

Jennifer Rambo said, “I think the thing that means the most to me is the feedback we have gotten from the artists and crew. They are taking time out of their lives to be here for us. Many of them thanked us to be here and appreciate our professionalism. Joe and I wanted our musical tastes to be expressed, and knowing that the artists were impressed and excited to be a part of this experience is fantastic.”

She reflected on some changes made for this year’s festival — changes that paid off. The festival went to a single venue at Village Green, and they offered single-day tickets as well as weekend passes. There were more than 1,200 ticket-buyers, not counting walk-ups.

“Having one venue certainly helped us run a tighter ship,” Rambo said. “We stretched ourselves too thin last year... Through all the hard work, tears, and laughter at the end of the day knowing we put on a good show for the ticket-holders and artists combined is a pretty epic feeling.”

BOOK CLUB: Program will ‘bridge divide’ among viewpoints

Continued from page 3

Books will be selected by Jacobson and a professional moderator to represent differing points of view on a variety of challenging political and cultural subjects.

“It will very specifically not shy away from the difficult discussions,” Jacobson said.

The sessions will encourage vigorous but collegial discussions.

“Of course further discussion is encouraged,” Jacobson said. “Go grab a beer at the saloon afterward...”

In fact, that is a desirable outcome — getting to a point where people can get past sound bites and memes and slogans and really talk with each other about often complicated issues. Jacobson notes that delving into books encourages greater depth of understanding and discourse.

“You’re not getting shown those complexities in a three-minute thing on whatever cable news you’re watching,” he said.

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“This is not meant to change anybody’s mind,” the bookseller noted, but rather to “illuminate things that people might miss when they’re in their echo chambers.”

The first book on the curriculum is a means of laying the groundwork for what Jacobson hopes will be an ongoing Sisters cultural institution. It is titled “Think Again: How to Reason and Argue.” The publisher notes that author Walter Sinnott-Armstrong “says there is such a thing as a ‘good’ argument: Reasonable arguments can create more mutual understanding and respect, and even if neither party is

convinced by the other, compromise is still possible.”

“As much as they hoot and holler about stuff, I think people really do want these discussions, and when you have it in an environment where they don’t feel like they’re walking into a trap, they’ll engage with it,” Jacobson said.

The survey will be available this week either on the paulinaspringsbooks.com web site or by emailing Jacobson at Lane@paulinaspringsbooks.com. The selected members will be notified by Monday, August 19, and the first session will be scheduled for mid-September.

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