

BLUES

SEAFOOD AND ART

Ilwaco hosts a two-day festival of hot live music and regional food plus a concurrent art show Sept. 23 and 24

By DWIGHT CASWELL

You may think of the town of Ilwaco as a sleepy place where fishing is the only excitement. Not true. Once a year the joint jumps with Blues and Seafood, a music festival with top blues acts showing up at the Port for a rockin' good time. The event takes place this Friday and Saturday from 3:30 to 10 p.m., and it's bigger than ever. Even the local arts community is jumping on board.

The presence of some first-rate performers is what sets Blues and Seafood apart. This year the headliner is Jimmy Thackery, co-founder of the Nighthawks, who closes things out Saturday night with a set that doubles as an album release event. Thackery is one of the few modern performers to have studied with masters of the genre, including Muddy Waters. He's spent his life on the road, playing hundreds of gigs a year, and all that experience is distilled into heavy riffs and near-impossible guitar dynamics.

"I put all my senses on hold," he says, "and find the zone and follow what's inside. There's an electricity from your mind to your heart to your fingers."

On Friday night harmonica and guitar duo Natty Bone lighten things up with some comedy, fol-



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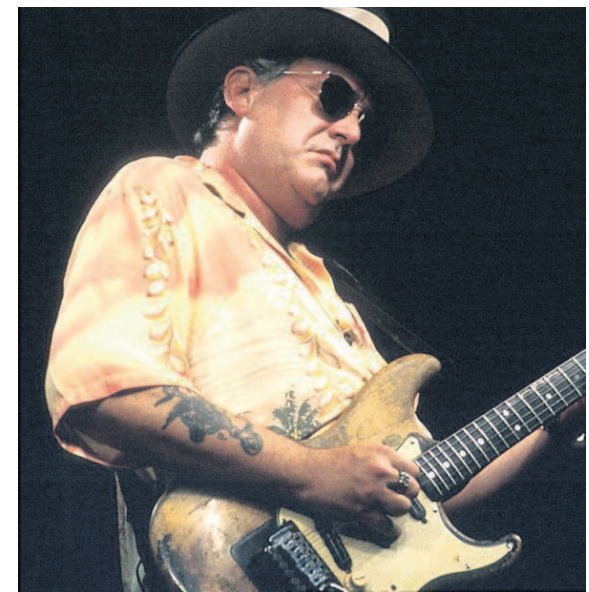
The Norman Sylvester Band has been performing in Portland since 1985. Sylvester, born in Louisiana in 1945, was inducted into the Oregon Music Hall Of Fame in 2011.

lowed by the Ilwaco High School Jazz Band All Star Jam. The name isn't too snappy, but you can't get talent more local than that. In the late afternoon, the Bottleneck Blues Band takes over with funky blues made for dancing. More local talent follows with North Coast Blues and Puget Sound's Cadillac Horns, with Tracey Fordice closing the night. Her award-winning five-piece band backs up Fordice's impressive voice.

Saturday will see Billy Desmond and his band, Billy

D and The Hoodoos. Desmond was born on the south side of Chicago and grew up surrounded by players like Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy, and James Cotton, and his band plays bluesy rock with conviction. Norman Sylvester, who has shared the stage with everyone from Five Blind Boys of Alabama to Peter Frampton, makes an appearance before Thackery closes the event with a very loud bang.

So that's the show, but there's more to enjoy at the event, like



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Though most associate headliner Jimmy Thackery with his 15 years as the co-founder of the Nighthawks, he ended his time with them in 1987. Since then, Thackery has been on the road as a solo musician for 15 years, proving each night that he is still a guitar powerhouse in the blues.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Helmed by the powerful vocals of Tracey Fordice, The Tracey Fordice Band performs rockin' blues, soulful ballads, originals and covers.

seafood. Try smoked oysters, smoked salmon chowder, and since there aren't a lot of seafood desserts, try the chocolate dipped cheesecake.

Then there's the art, and that's centered at ArtPort Gallery, located a stone's throw from the stage at 177 Howerton Way S.E. To complement the Blues and Seafood festival, the artists represented in the gallery are putting on a show called "Blue on Blue" to celebrate the influence of the blues on art. In addition to the show there will

be demonstrations by artists from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday and an open house from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

One of the ArtPort artists, Anna Lee Larimore, took the theme of the show literally, creating abstract paintings, "playing with different blues and the way colors play off against each other."

Another artist, Penny Treat, says, "I'm keeping blue in mind, whether I'm doing oils, watercol-

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