

Dave Bennett and the Memphis Speed Kings keep the crowd dancing during the Seaside Jazz Festival kickoff Thursday at the Elks Lodge in Seaside.

Danny Miller
The Daily
Astorian



Festival: 'We never miss it'

Continued from Page 1A

"We always have a good time at this fest," Meredigilano said. "Lots of dancing, lots of enthusiasm for '50s and '60s rock — Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash, early Elvis Presley."

"A lot of Sun Records," Smith said. "And a lot of clarinet. We play some Benny Goodman and Charlie Christian."

Dancers are among the most passionate audience members.

Steve Gillyatt of the town of O'Brien in southern Oregon came to the Seaside Jazz Festival after an event in Fresno, California, two weeks ago. "Not only are they having the traditional Dixieland and jazz stuff, they're adding variety," Gillyatt said.

Becky Armistead of Coos Bay is a board member of the South Coast Clambake Jazz Fest, which at 25 years old, is a

contender with Seaside for the state's most venerable jazz festival. Armistead goes to at least four jazz fests a year, including Seaside.

Barbara West of Washougal, Washington, has attended 10 Seaside jazz festivals. "Great bands — good town, lots of fun tonight." She indicated a preference for swing, fox trot and slow dances.

'The whole scene'

Lowell and Shirley Weiss of Vancouver, Washington, have been married 55 years and have come to the Seaside Jazz Festival since 1982, drawn by the dancing, friends and music.

"It's the whole scene," Lowell Weiss said. "We never miss it. It's just like a family reunion after a while. Everybody likes everybody, there's no complaining, people are here smiling, having a good time."

Dennis Phillips, also of Van-

couver, Washington, was drawn by the music of Bennett's Speed Kings. He and his wife, Valerie, were joined by four of their best friends, attending the Seaside event for the first time.

"We're here for Dave Bennett, but we are going to enjoy the rest of the activities here," Dennis Phillips said. "If somebody asked me five years ago if I liked jazz, I would have said 'no.' But then I learned there's a lot of different kinds of jazz, and there's certain kinds I like. The neat part is you can walk in and if you don't like the music, you can go to another place. We like the choices — and the drinks at the Elks club."

Dean Martin from Indio, California, pays a stop at every jazz festival he can on the West Coast. "I rank this very, very high," Martin said. "I like to visit Seaside, and the environment's so casual and friendly. You can't beat it."

Forum: 'There's a lot of uncertainty when it comes to the economy and federal policy'

Continued from Page 1A

Clatsop County's average income is better than two-thirds of the rural U.S., he said, but only 2 percent of counties in the country have more expensive homes on average. About one-quarter of houses on the North Coast are classified as second homes, Lehner said. A housing crunch exacerbated by a lack of financing holds building rates at 40 percent below the level in the early 2000s.

Population growth

The county added 475 people in 2016 to 38,225, a 1.3 percent growth rate and the highest since 1994.

Knoder said that since the 2000s, most of the county's growth has shifted north. More than 1,500 of those newcomers were senior citizens, while the county lost 439 working-age adults.

"Somewhere between 30 and 40 percent of them are Californian, disproportionately retirees coming from California with a little bit of California home equity," Lehner said, which he added is at its highest rate since the 1990s.

Young migrants to Oregon are flocking to urban centers in the Willamette Valley, he said, while the coast and even Bend receives more retirees and late-career professionals looking to settle down and improve their quality of life.

"These are still very valuable people," he said. "They're literally voting with their feet, 'I want to be a part of your community.' You couldn't ask for anything more, right? There

are so many parts of the country that don't have that."

Charmed, relatively

"The coast runs north to south as far as economic success," Knoder said.

Clatsop and Tillamook counties are the only two on the Oregon Coast to be above their prerecession peak in employment, while Clatsop County rivaled some metro areas and vastly outperformed many rural counties in economic growth.

But much of that growth, Knoder said, is in the lower-wage positions such as the service sector, which added nearly 1,700 jobs in the county over the past decade, largely in hospitality, leisure and retail. Manufacturing has lost more than 500 positions over the same period of time.

"If you look over the last decade, low-wage jobs and high-wage jobs here on the North Coast are roughly where they were a decade ago ... middle-wage jobs, not so much. They had huge negative losses, and hardly any recovery."

Lehner said that as labor has become more scarce, wages and family income have started to rise. He said the increasing minimum wage, already effectively \$11 on the coast, will cause slower growth, but not job losses.

Some traditional middle-wage jobs such as manufacturing — including lumber mills — and office-support industries have surrendered jobs to technology, Lehner said, a national trend over the past couple of decades. Knoder said education and health have

become the main high-wage growth areas, while seafood processing has fluctuated with catches and the shutdown of the sardine fishery.

Modest growth

"This is roughly as good as it gets, in terms of unemployment," Knoder said of the county's 4.5 percent seasonally adjusted unemployment rate as of December.

Lehner said the U.S., now in its eighth year of economic expansion, can expect a more modest, sustainable growth rate than seen since 2011, because the labor force is almost fully engaged. There will be enough jobs moving forward, he said, but economic expansions won't be as pronounced as baby boomers age into retirement. Another recession is coming, as always, but Lehner said economists shy away from predicting when that will start.

"There's a lot of uncertainty when it comes to the economy and federal policy," Lehner said, addressing the effect of Donald Trump's presidency and a Republican-controlled Congress. "It's not weighing on the economic outlook now."

Tax cuts, increased infrastructure spending and deregulation of financial markets could all be a boon to economic growth, he said, while trade wars and rolling back the Affordable Care Act could have an outsized negative effect on Oregon. "If you look around the country at the economists out there, they've kind of settled on a mild, modestly positive impact on the short-term economic growth," he said.

Oregon lawmaker wants meadowlark out as state bird

Associated Press

SALEM — An Oregon lawmaker says the current state bird is unoriginal, and instead wants to replace it.

The Statesman Journal reports that state Sen. Fred Girod sponsored a resolution to replace the western meadowlark as Oregon's state bird with the osprey.

The Stayton Republican says the meadowlark is also the state bird of Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wyoming, making it unoriginal. He also says the meadowlark is no longer commonly seen in Oregon, making it an inappropriate choice. Girod says the osprey can be found throughout Oregon and better captures the state's spirit.

Salem Audubon Society president Ray Temple says meadowlarks are declining and could use the extra attention.



Robin Loznak/Great Falls Tribune

A western meadowlark trills from its fence post perch near Fort Benton, Mont. Oregon state Sen. Fred Girod, R-Stayton, is sponsoring a resolution to replace the western meadowlark as Oregon's state bird with the osprey.

Employees: Retiring next week

Continued from Page 1A

A party for the city stalwarts will be held Tuesday at City Hall, before the Planning Commission meets. It will be Williams' last day, three days before Yuill's.

Williams, who hails from Arizona and now lives in Astoria, said the town has changed "big time" since she began at the city more than two decades ago. She recalls numerous empty storefronts and neglected buildings.

Then Astoria experienced a renaissance. The town embraced tourism as an economic pillar, and historic preservation and restoration as a principle and practice. Downtown is now a frequently bustling strip, and cruise ships park along the riverfront.

Astoria's rebirth has included a flurry of residential rejuvenation, as property owners have taken more pride in their homes. "People are proud to be in Astoria, and I enjoy that," Williams said.

Yuill and Williams said they're going to miss their co-workers. And Williams, who has been on the front lines of the city's development projects, said she will miss having her finger "on the



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Julie Yuill, left, executive secretary to the city manager, and Sherri Williams, administrative assistant to community development, pose for a portrait on Thursday outside of City Hall in Astoria. Both will be retiring after a long history of working for the city.

pulse of what's going on in the city."

Yuill, who stepped up to the city manager's office in 1987, was a single mother for many years. The job "gave me an opportunity to raise my two boys and send them to college, and it's been just a great experience for me."

Yuill and her husband, Ken Yuill — who retired from the city's Public Works Department — bought a trailer and hope to travel. (Ken Yuill sits

on the Warrenton Planning Commission with Julie Yuill's son, Ryan Lampi, who ran for Warrenton City Commission last year.)

Williams' husband, Clark Williams, a former registered nurse at Columbia Memorial Hospital, retired in December.

Asked what she plans to do in retirement, Williams said, "That's a good question ... Whatever I want to do, whenever I want to do it — that's on my list."



COLUMBIA
MEMORIAL
HOSPITAL

What's your point-of-view?





We Want to Know!

Healthcare is a deeply personal experience. Please consider sharing your perspective as part of our Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC). This group of community members is passionate about helping Columbia Memorial Hospital be the best it can be. Join us by calling **503-338-7505**.

2111 Exchange St., Astoria, Oregon • 503-325-4321
www.columbiamemorial.org • A Planetree-Designated Hospital

Miss Oregon: Mather is striving for a Ph.D. in psychology at Portland State

Continued from Page 1A

that in the end was perfect for me, just because I learned so much more. I feel that I am better-equipped to be Miss Oregon, and I also received more scholarship money by doing it that way and continually competing.

Q: What did you initially think pageants were, and how has that understanding changed?

I've loved to sing ever since I was little, so I was thinking, 'Wow, I'd love to just go perform.' And then I was thinking, 'And you get to wear a spar-

kly crown? That seems like it's for me. That seems pretty cool.' But then once I started getting involved ... the personal growth aspect of it was beyond what I ever thought it would be, and then just also being involved in your community were the huge aspects of it that I never thought would be involved.

Q: What are some of the more memorable experiences from your reign?

Visiting Children's Miracle Network Hospital has been one of the most humbling experiences, because I love when I get the opportunity to just

honestly take off my crown and sash and let them hold it, wear it and the smiles on their faces. That's been a real cherished memory of mine, but also watching other contestants, because I remember being in their shoes.

Q: What comes after Miss Oregon?

I am currently getting my real estate license. I'll be working for Popkin Real Estate, and I am a current student at Portland State University, striving to get my Ph.D. in psychology to open up my own office as a therapist for parent-child relationships.