

Scholarship from 1A

important element in local students continuing their education beyond high school.

"The Beachcomber Scholarship Fund, as with so many of our great local scholarships, has helped many local students meet their financial goals to attend college or trade programs around the state," Grzeskowiak said. "This assistance is invaluable for students who might not otherwise have the resources to attend secondary education without taking on monstrous amounts of loan debt."

Beachcomber's fund has been able to raise relatively large amounts of money, often \$1 at a time, by posting the donor's name on small paper slips that are taped to the walls and ceiling of the pub.

Everyone that donates is then given a raffle ticket to win a custom designed bicycle, contributed by New Belgium Brewery.

A number of small posters scattered around Florence's oldest pub let customers know the raffle is underway. Many choose to contribute.

"Every time someone donates \$1, we put their name on a placard and put it on the wall. If somebody donates \$100, we put up 100 placards," Weiss said. "People see the placard and ask what is going on, which raises awareness about the fund, and they often make a donation. The real beauty of the fund is it doesn't matter whether somebody gives \$1 or \$100, or any where in between. It really makes a difference because it all adds up in the end."

The scholarship fund is continuing this year with a couple minor changes. One is the name of the scholarship and another is the opportunity for adults returning to college to be eligible for an award.

"This last year, we changed things around a little," Weiss said. "We awarded two scholarships to adults who wanted to continue their education, so now everyone is eligible. All they have to do is

apply through Western Lane Community Foundation."

Weiss's ongoing effort to support local students will now be known as The Beachcomber Community — Dan Barnum Scholarship Fund.

Barnum was a Siuslaw School District employee who passed away earlier this year in a single vehicle motorcycle accident.

Grzeskowiak said the staff and students miss Barnum's positive attitude and willingness to help with any problem that might arise.

"Dan served as the Technology Assistant in the district for several years. He handled much of the daily operational maintenance for our computer operations. Between the computer labs, classroom units, library labs, mobile carts and teacher computers, there are well over 1,000 individual computers in the District," Grzeskowiak said. "On any given day a computer lab might serve 200 students, so even without a little mischief, there was going to be some wear and tear on the units. Dan did this faithfully and with a smile on his face. More than being a 'techie' and problem solver, he was a people person and that trait, plus his ever present grin, were always appreciated."

Weiss feels the name change is a fitting tribute to his friend, who was a lifelong resident of Florence and donated time and resources to the community for many years.

"We felt it was appropriate to include Dan Barnum's name as part of the foundation's name," Weiss said. "Dan donated generously to the fund, he worked and volunteered at the schools, he loved helping the kids and he was involved in a number of ways at the school district for a long time."

The Beachcomber Community — Dan Barnum Scholarship Fund will hold the drawing for the winner of this year's New Belgium Brewery Bicycle on Dec. 15 at 5 p.m.

For more information, call 541-997-6357.

Festival from 1A

2017 was another year for newer sounds and more life — something organizers want to see continue in future Winter Music Festivals.

"There is a long-range building plan, and it is dependent on us doing well," Cusack added.

For Pearson, new life came to the festival through the sponsors, many of which have not been involved in music or art events in the past.

She said the sponsor package the team put together elicited great responses, including Brandborg Winery, KLCC and Ninkasi Brewing, Cusack said.

The wine and beer vendors will be "exclusive pourers" during Florence Regional Arts Alliance's (FRAA) Artisan Fair Jan. 12 and 13.

"FRAA is wonderful with this event," Pearson said. "The collective is returning for its second year, and Claudia Brown is coordinating."

"People will be able to walk around the building with a drink in their hands," Cusack said. "It will loosen people up and engage them a little bit more."

Admission to the Artisan Fair is free. Vendors include FRAA members, local groups such as the Rhododendron Quilt Guild and many more fine artists.

"We've got a really slam-bang event with more art," Cusack said. "Claudia has pledged to raise the level of artistry to as good as the music. We're trying to take everything uphill together."

Winter Music Festival will open on Thursday, Jan. 11, with two exclusive Kids Concerts by Katie Jane Lubien and Castletown. This invitation-only series for kindergarten through fifth-grade is why Pearson got involved with the festival.

"It's fun, and always full," she said. "We never have a problem, except for where to put

all the kids."

Then, on Friday, the festival really gets started with the Friday Night Throwdown. This performance will open with Jeff Scroggins and Colorado and will be headlined by Laurie Lewis & The Right Hands.

"The stage will ignite, they're so hot," Cusack said of the opening act, adding that Lewis' Appalachian bluegrass stylings are welcome to play long into the night.

"We added Castletown last minute to start us off Saturday with a bang," Pearson said. "At 10:30 a.m., people will be dancing. And we're ending with a bang, too."

Saturday's performances — called the SuperSession 16, in honor of Winter Music Festival's 16th year — also include Calaveras, Cabin Fever NW, Pretty Gritty and Petunia and the Vipers.

"That's a pretty strong lineup," Cusack said.

However, Cusack said that's not what he built the event around.

"I thought of Al Stewart because he had a \$6 million selling platinum record and still gets played on the radio," he said. "I found out John Craigie, who I saw at the Oregon Country Fair, was opening the entire summer tour for Jack Johnson. He's only going to keep growing. So I thought, 'Maybe we should build this around them. We've got something going here.' And then we added a few more things."

Craigie performed at Winter Music Festival in 2016.

Stewart is a Top 40 singer-songwriter and folk-rock musician famous for "Year of the Cat," "Time Passages" and other albums.

Cusack knew of him through his 44 years of "doing shows" for the Rolling Stones, The B-52s, DJ Logic, Drake, Whiz Khalifa and more.

"I still keep my hands in things. It's the bottom of the

ninth, but I still have my fastball on certain days," Cusack said.

"The third part of this is Kirk," Pearson said. "He's a big bluegrass guy and a player in this, and he's the one who came up with the idea of adding a fourth part to our festival."

Mlinek developed Sunday's Gospel Gumbo Gathering with input from Pavilion Catering and Florence musician Marty Adams.

Adams specially invited local churches to encourage choir members to apply to be in a gospel choir. The group is already rehearsing, and will perform with live accompaniment by Adams' five-piece band.

"This will not be a church service," Pearson said. "It's more that we want you to sing with us. Let's all sing together."

Cusack said the music will be a mix between traditional and contemporary.

"We want it to be a combination of religious and secular so we get that cross representation in the community," he said.

There will also be a mix of local and regional, as Siuslaw graduate and local worship leader Billy Jones emcees the event and Eugene-based a cappella group On the Rocks takes the stage.

"They brings in a little different charge for this," Cusack said. "We're going to span the generations with the Gospel Gumbo Gathering."

The University of Oregon students will wrap up the entire festival.

"The day will be a celebration of faith, life and music rolled into one," Cusack said.

All that, and traditional New Orleans gumbo, too, for the hour before the music starts.

Pearson said it will give people a chance to gather together and eat before watching their friends, colleagues and community members perform.

"Most importantly, the people are going to get a great show," Cusack said.

Sponsors have partnered with several of the individual performers with specials and even if a wine tasting.

Cusack can see this aspect expanding in the future, with more community involvement and more music and art in Florence businesses during the event.

"We're bringing artistry into a small setting where we can be up close and personal with people. The FEC, at the end of the day, is a really excellent venue. Every seat in there is good," he said.

The organizers hope that the caliber of music, art and vendors will encourage repeat visitors to Florence, especially as some groups, including On the Rocks, will appear in the area for the first time.

"We're all united in trying to do something good for the community and promote Florence," Cusack said. "We're trying to grow the businesses and provide something that hasn't been done quite to this extent."

"We have an incredible support team and group of advisory people. They've been incredibly generous with their time. It's for us to execute their excellent advice. Once again, Florence is just a fountain of information if you know where to get the right drink. There's a lot of talent here in Florence, and we intend to tap every bit of it."

Winter Music Festival is held with support from the Friends of the FEC, area partners, sponsors and committee members, including graphic designer Karylynn Keppol and social media manager SK Lindsey.

"The people who have been on the committee for years have new energy, since they know this is going to work," Pearson said.

Volunteers are still needed in several key areas during the three-day event, including as ushers greeters and facilitators.

For more information, visit wintermusicfestival.org.

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