

Is there such a thing as a typical Seaside resident?

This industry employs the most people in the city of Seaside:

- (a) Education and health services
- (b) Retail trade
- (c) Manufacturing
- (d) Accommodation and food services

If you said (d), you're right. About 41.8 percent of workers in Seaside are in the hotel and food businesses. Retail trade was a distant second, with 14.1 percent.

One of the first things I noticed when I became the editor of both the Signal and the Gazette was how fiercely competitive the cities in the South County are — with each other. Living in Gearhart complicates matters. I've often thought if Gearhart, Seaside and Cannon Beach all got together we could sure give Astoria a run for its money.

There seem to be more divisions in Clatsop County than the European Union and I've met plenty of Seaside who are quite happy to never stray south of Avenue U or north of the Necanicum Bridge. But what does being a Seaside really mean?

Fourth of July fireworks, surfing at the Cove and griping about Hood to Coast come to mind.

But Shawna Sykes, workforce analyst of the Oregon Employment Department Research Division has a more scientific approach. Working for the employment department, her mission is to support businesses and promote employment.

Sykes reinforces what we already know, and shatters what we think we know. Sykes unleashed a PowerPoint demonstration at a Seaside Downtown Development Association's June breakfast. She put it all out there in numbers and graphs, city by city, county by county and throughout the state. Using "Jeopardy!" format, she ingeniously force-fed a half hour of dry labor and population data to an audience pleasantly distracted by Pig 'N Pancake French toast and blintzes.

Categories were "Employment and unemployment," "industry facts and trends" and "demographics." Responses revealed data about who's working, who's not, in what fields, education, income, age and housing.

The Clatsop County labor force has actually decreased since 2006, by 450 jobs — an 8.8 percent drop. Yet the unemployment rate is the same as the state's 4.5 percent, below the national average of 4.7 percent.

The county's unemployment rate is 11th lowest in the state, tied with Tillamook County. Corvallis, home to Oregon State University, at 3.3 percent, is the lowest; Grant County, at 8.8 percent, is the highest.

There were 3,551 total jobs in Seaside in 2014.

Top median household income goes to Gearhart, \$50,179; status seekers may be surprised to hear Astoria's median income is higher than that of Cannon Beach, \$45,104 to \$41,037. Seaside falls behind at \$41,037, but still beats Warrenton's \$38,693.

Highest percent of residents 25 years and older by educational attainment is led by Cannon Beach. More than 13 percent of its residents hold graduate or professional degrees. Another 26 percent are college grads. Seaside's 11.2 percent with graduate or professional degrees is the same rate as the state overall. Of Seaside residents, 22.4 percent have some high school, 30.9 percent possess a high-school degree or equivalent and 24.9 percent hold bachelor degrees.

Gearhart's residents are 51.7 married couples, slightly above the Clatsop County average of 51.1 percent. About 47.6 percent of Seaside residents are wed.

Which Clatsop County city has the youngest median age? Warrenton wins by more than a decade, with a median age of 32.1. The average Seaside resident is 44.2 years old, Gearhart, 45.2 and Cannon Beach, 52.4 years not-so-young.

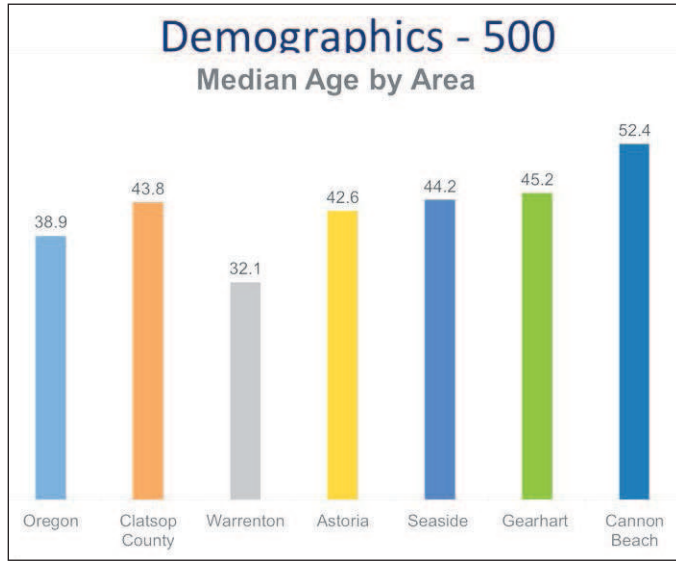
Manufacturing, public administration and finance and insurance have the lowest housing turnover rates; accommodation and food service are among the highest.

More females are employed in Seaside than males, 58.6 percent to 41.4 percent.

The city's housing crunch and employment needs are easily



Shawna Sykes analyzes data at a recent breakfast.



Median age by area in Clatsop County.

seen by the numbers: an aging, affluent population of mostly second homeowners who occupy the housing stock and drive the demand for labor.

Sixty percent of the city's housing units are vacant — yet the city is unable to build for those who are here.

The state percentage of total housing units that are vacant is 10 percent. Yet Clatsop County has a 27 percent vacancy rate. Cannon Beach stands at 60 percent vacant, Gearhart, 58 percent and Seaside 37 percent. About two-thirds of the county's housing is used for seasonal, recreational or occasional use.

Only 10.8 percent of homes are available for rental.

I'm trying to figure out what this all means.

In a June Wall Street Journal piece, a headline reads: "In era of big data, storytelling matters more than ever." It was addressed to the advertising industry, but it could impact all of us as we translate the mountains of data before us.

What are our own stories, and how do the dots connect? How do our habits, our occupations and our education shape not only ourselves, but those around us?

Would the profile of an average Seaside resident be a 44-year-old female with a high-school degree working in the hospitality industry looking for an affordable rental?

For more data or to find employment in Clatsop County, visit workforceoregon.gov. The workforce center is located at 450 Marine Drive in Astoria; 503-325-4821.

Reminiscences from the America I grew up in

On a Friday in May, I had a visit from my niece Judy Wharton (Betty's daughter) and her husband Mike up from Cottonwood, California to take advantage of the clam tides during their regular vacation time. I went with them for lunch to the Circle Creek Trailer Camp south of town where they are during their stay.

Arriving later was Bob Nystrom, Judy's cousin and Jimmy and Sandi Ober, her brother and sister-in-law from Rio Dell, California. We enjoyed their company in the sunshine outside their mobile home.

When my friend Judy Parish brought me home from shopping last week, she ran her hand through low hanging camellia leaves and unearthed a copy of The Daily Astorian that had been thrown into the bush. It was dated Feb. 17. Nothing new there really, but the situation is better now. They put my paper on the front porch where I can more easily reach it. The positive result of this discovery is that I had an extra crossword puzzle. Yay!

The picture in the last Signal of people on the beach on a warm day is a modified scene of my growing up. It showed about 20 to 25 people and of course that was just a small part. In my beach going days, the sand was crowded with blankets and there were hundreds of sun worshippers trying to get a tan. When we were kids, we always thought that if you stayed in the water long enough, it would warm up (ha!) or one would become acclimated and endure. Somehow that never happened. We'd get wet for a few minutes and then go back to the sand to warm up. Wading was not so traumatic — sometimes I wonder that all the kids were allowed to go, unsupervised. As an adult, I took my kids to the beach but we didn't go in the water.

I was truly heartened one day when in watching "The Five" I saw a baseball audience (was it Cleveland?) where everyone sang the National Anthem. The soloist had pitched it low and people joined in happily, a past common occurrence, which I have always advocated. It was wonderful! The America I grew up in.

The memorial ad in The Daily Astorian for the June 21, 1942, shelling of Ft. Stevens brought back many memories. I was in my third month of bed rest for rheumatic fever at my sister Blanche's house on 5th and Jackson streets. My fiancé, who later became my husband, was on duty in the radio shack when the shells began coming in — 17 of them. I heard the sound but didn't realize what it was. I've forgotten the time, although it seems like it was evening. The paper said Saturday and Sunday, the 18th and 19th, there would be a Pacific Rim Peace Memorial from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Battery Russell. When my friend Judy and I arrived about 2 p.m. on Sunday, they were packing up to decamp.

Laugh Line

A little boy asked his mother, "How was I born?" And she answered, "The stork brought you." Then he asked, "How were you born?" She told him, "The stork brought me."

Finally he asked his grandmother, "Grandma, how were you born?" And she answered, "The stork brought me."

Evidently the questions were a show and tell assignment for school because next day the teacher asked him how his family came to be and he said, "There hasn't been a natural birth in my family for three generations!"

Q: Why do some people not like Sunday school teachers?

A: They tend to be Babylon.

LETTERS

Angry about the anger

Today's world really seems like it is going to hell in a hand-basket. Why is there so much hate and anger spewed out of the politician on the GOP side? That hate and anger only begets more hate and anger. It is a vicious circle.

Isn't life hard enough in the world, without making more people hate more people? Really. His mind must be warped by all his money and privilege. He is so used to getting his own way that it is beyond him to believe he might not be in charge of everything. That he will lose to a woman, of all things. He thinks so little of the opposite sex that it is driving him crazier than he already is.

The problem with all this craziness is he is taking his followers with him. They have lost hope in their own lives, and are turning to him to find themselves because they are lost. Only those who are lost would follow this guy. I feel sorry for them, as they cannot think for themselves and need someone to tell them what to do. How sad is that? These people are following a reality star, for God's sake.

I'm sure God has nothing to do with this, as he likes to presume. He is a complete fake. There is nothing religious in his plans for this country. He will take us right into war and destruction. The rich will get richer, and the poor will get poorer. The only thing to trickle-down is something we won't want to be under.

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How timber revenues are worth fighting for

Here's my best effort to explain a complex set of circumstances to better inform public opinion and discussion.

Things got more complicated in March when the Linn County Board of Commissioners filed a class action breach of contract lawsuit against the state of Oregon and the state Forestry Department. Why does this matter? Because it's about money. A lot of money, and it's money that pays for our public services.

Timber revenue from forest trust lands counties, including the "big gorilla" of Clatsop County, is what provides timber revenue to the counties and specific taxing districts within these counties.

Why does this matter to you? Because all these governmental entities need adequate and stable income to provide public services like fire protection, public health, county roads, public education, health district services, law enforcement, recreation, and others.

I want to linger a bit in the legal weeds, because you'll be seeing even more letters to the editors of local newspapers as time goes on. You've already heard the phrase, "Cut more trees, cut more trees, cut more trees!" repeated as a mantra in the 2014 county com-

GUEST COLUMN
LIANNE THOMPSON



missioner election in Clatsop County.

Is cutting more trees the answer to our need for adequate and reliable revenue for our public agencies? Let's talk.

The trust agreement between the 15 Forest Trust Land counties and the state of Oregon has been found twice before by the courts to be a contractual agreement.

The gist of the current lawsuit is that the definition of "greatest permanent value" has been changed unilaterally by the State as it has drawn up its administrative rules to govern forest practices.

"Greatest permanent value" used to mean mainly that the maximum timber revenue should be realized from timber sales on the trust land forests. Recreation and watershed protection have always been a part of the "greatest permanent value" consideration, but their role was secondary.

The next legal issue is whether or not the 15 Forest Trust Land counties and

those relevant taxing districts constitute members of a class for a class-action lawsuit.

Why should you even want to bother understanding all this? Because we're in the midst of a community conversation that will determine our economic, ecological, and cultural landscape. Elected and appointed policy makers do the best we can in this democratic republic to make and implement good public policy. We can't do it alone.

Members of the broader community help us determine what that is. Of course the courts play a role. But lawsuits are blunt instruments of public policy. A better way is to have profound and significant public policy discussions about these issues so that we form ourselves into a connected, inclusive, and thoughtful community.

We need an economy that supports public services and provides good jobs. We need a beautiful world with air we can breathe, water we can drink, and healthy means of producing food, goods, and services. The answer for how we do that requires all of us thinking, speaking, and acting together.

Lianne Thompson is Clatsop County Commissioner, District 5.



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