

**SEQUIM, WASH.**

POPULATION: 6,000

TYPICAL THREE-BEDROOM HOME **\$300,000**ANNUAL PROPERTY TAXES **\$2,000 TO \$2,500**STATE INCOME TAX **None** SALES TAX **8.4%**

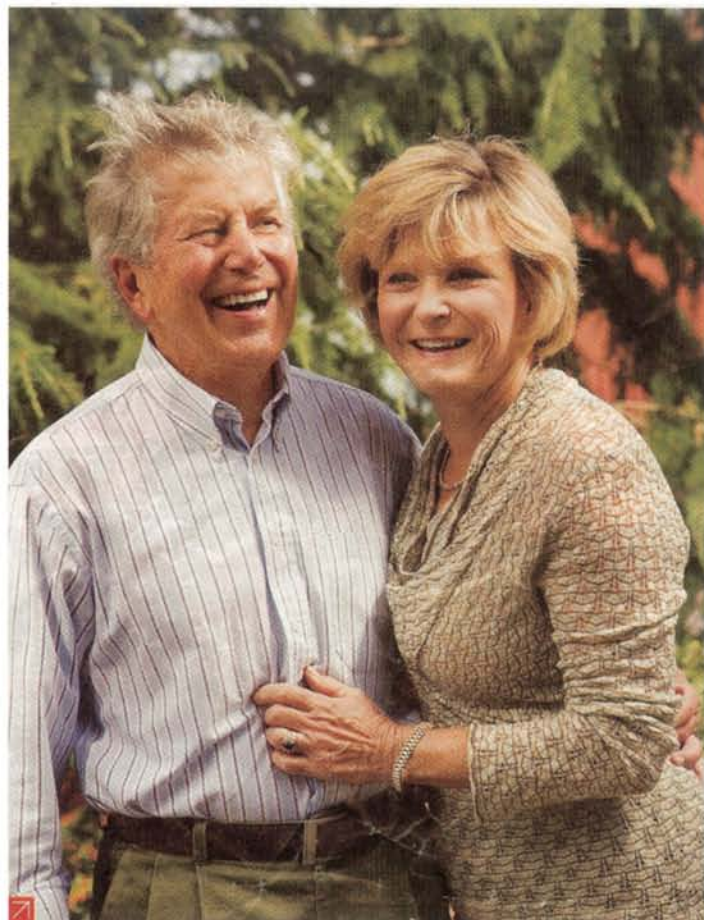
After they raised six kids in the Los Angeles area, Lois and Dan Smaltz began to tire of the frenetic pace and crowds of the big city. “We knew if we didn’t move away, we’d never quit working,” says Lois, now 66. (She was a state court judge; Don, now 71, was a lawyer.)

Last year, when Lois became eligible for full retirement benefits from her employer, the couple finally pulled the plug both on their jobs and on L.A. From colleagues, they’d heard about a small town two hours north of Seattle where “the cost of living was less and

the pace of living was better,” says Don. That would be Sequim (pronounced *skwim*). The Smaltzes bought a 3,200-square-foot, \$900,000 house there (the typical three-bedroom house in town goes for a third of that) with gorgeous views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, which leads to the Pacific.

When they’ve had enough of hanging out on land, they can

head to the marina, a jumping-off point to explore the Puget Sound and the nearby San Juan Islands. Those who don’t own a boat can ride the 30-minute ferry to Canada’s historic city of Victoria or explore the coast by car, bike or foot. The Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge, a few minutes from downtown Sequim, boasts the longest natural sand spit in the U.S., a historic light-

**DON AND LOIS SMALTZ, 71 AND 66**

THEIR JOBS She was a judge; he was a lawyer.

THEIR MOVE To Sequim from Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif. in 2007

THEIR HOUSE A \$900,000 three-

bedroom house with views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, which leads to the Pacific

THE WATER They frequently dine by the marina and watch sunsets over the ocean.

“Seattle is close, but everything we need is right here,” says Lois.

house, hiking trails and hundreds of species of birds. And the snow-capped Olympic Mountains loom just to the south—meaning Sequim residents can have lunch on the beach and dinner on the slopes in the same day.

What about that less appealing kind of H₂O—the kind that falls from the sky? Sequim is an anomaly in the Pacific Northwest: The town averages just 16 inches of precipitation a year, thanks to its location in the “rain shadow” of the Olympics.

Sequim also has a whole lot of culture nearby, from plays at Olympic Theatre Arts to rotating exhibits at the Museum and Arts Center to live music at the Port Angeles Symphony Orchestra. Don, who paid his way through college and law school working as a musician, plays jazz trombone in local bands four or five times a week. “There’s an intelligent culture here, whether you want live music or a decent restaurant or ingredients for an exotic meal,” says Lois. “We’re living in a place where we both can do all the things we love.”

Sequim’s lighthouse is surrounded by a wildlife refuge.