

Welcome to American Mosaic from VOA Learning English.

I'm June Simms.

On the show today, we play music from a first album by country group Florida Georgia Line.

We also visit Money Island, New Jersey, a coastal community still recovering from a powerful ocean storm last year.

But first, we go to a fair!

County Fairs

Every year, county fairs take place across the United States. Visitors can see farm animals, find lots to eat and buy goods from artists and craftsmen. But some people go to fairs for the rides and games.

Christopher Cruise tells about the fun at one such event in Costa Mesa, California.

The people who work at the Orange County Fair operate the rides and games. But what really fuels the action are the fairgoers with clear goals. Like 11-year-old Cory Richards who won a huge toy animal by playing a game.

“I had the goal to get this guy, and I did it. So, now, it’s just win as many stuffed animals as I can.”

In one game, players throw baseballs. They attempt to hit and break empty glass bottles. In another, throwing a basketball or two through a basketball net can win a prize.

Cory Richards believes that the bigger the toy, the better.

“I played the basketball game. It was between this one or the round piggy. But this one was bigger so it made me feel more accomplished.”

The boy admits that winning at these games involves a little skill and a lot of luck.

Another visitor to the Orange County Fair, Kee An, says she may not have a good chance of winning. But that does not stop her from taking part.

“I’m always a sucker to these games. I always lose my money but that’s the thrill of it.”

Hear those screams? They were from a nearby ride. Meagan Tse was one of the riders. But she was brave.

“No it wasn’t scary. It was awesome.”

Many parents welcome the sight of their children having so much fun. Many capture the joyful faces in video recordings or photographs.

In one game, players try to roll balls into holes to make toy horses move forward along a track. Lanz Nicodemus gets his horse across the finish line first.

“This is one of my favorite games. I keep on winning.”

But what about those visitors who leave the county fair without a prize? Better luck next year, when the fair returns.

Money Island Needs More Money and More Sand

Last year, a powerful storm severely damaged coastal towns in New Jersey. The state is spending millions of dollars to rebuild the areas. But people in some poor communities are being urged to leave their homes and move away from the coast. Money Island is among these places.

William Bowen is the oldest living resident of Money Island. He remembers a time when there was a wide, sandy beach in front of his home.

Now workers are helping him replace the small, sandy ground that was washed away in super storm Sandy last year. Mr. Bowen says he will not leave his home.

Money Island is not an island. It is a village of small, older homes in the wetlands of southern New Jersey.

Money Island sits where the Delaware River meets the Atlantic Ocean. Mayor Robert Campbell says it seems Hurricane Sandy was a powerful influence on New Jersey officials. He says state agencies are now making policies aimed at forcing people to move away from the coast.

The government is requiring use of strong, structural supports to raise houses high above flood levels. And he says new costly rules are being ordered for waste and water systems.

Blue Acres is a state program that buys houses in flood zones. Renee Brecht is with the environmental group The American Littoral Society. It opposes using millions of government dollars to protect a small number of houses from rising sea levels.

Ms. Brecht says sea walls and other costly measures will only work for a short time. She would like to make much of the area a natural preserve for local wildlife. She notes a nearby project led by another organization, the Nature Conservancy. It turned 86 hectares of badly damaged neighborhoods into a protected area for plants and wildlife.

Adrianna Zito Livingston is with the Nature Conservancy. She says it will cost \$35 million to care for the area over the next 50 years. Some people in Money Island are left wondering why such money is used for nature and not for the people who live there.

Florida Georgia Line

We have had a couple of shows recently about summer songs. They included not just songs that are about summer, but also songs that are big hits during the summer. They are sometimes called summer anthems.

Next week we will play several of 2013's summer anthems. One of them comes from a two-man group called Florida Georgia Line. Mario Ritter tells about the band and plays songs from its first album.

Florida Georgia Line is Bryan Kelley and Tyler Hubbard. Guess where they are from? Georgia is Kelley's native state and Hubbard is from Florida.

Both men have been playing guitar since their teens. They met while attending Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee.

Florida Georgia Line had a hit song with their single "Cruise." It has become one of the biggest songs of summer 2013.

“Cruise” is on the group’s first full-length album “Here’s to the Good Times.” It was released last December. Kelley and Hubbard say they wrote many of the songs while on the back of Hubbard’s truck. “Tell Me How You Like It” might be one of them. It talks about driving on rough road and sending dust flying into the air.

Bryan Kelley and Tyler Hubbard seem surprised by their sudden fame. On their website, Hubbard calls their success a “whirlwind.” Kelley describes it as a dream come true.

We leave you with Florida Georgia Line performing the party song, “Tip It Back.”