

KEEPING TOM PETTY'S MUSIC ALIVE

■ Petty Fever, a tribute band to Tom Petty, plays Saturday, June 19, in Baker City

By Lisa Britton

Go! Magazine

BAKER CITY — Frank Murray and his tribute band weren't very busy in 2020.

"You can count them on one hand," he said of their concerts. "It was not a good year, but things are getting better. Things are starting to pick up."

Murray plays guitar and lead vocals for Petty Fever, a Tom Petty tribute band founded in 2009.

The band lands in Baker City this weekend.

Petty Fever plays Saturday, June 19, at the Ison House Bed & Brew, 1790 Washington Ave.

Gates open at 4 p.m.

Local band Trailer Hitch starts the music at 5 p.m., followed by Petty Fever at 7:30 p.m.

Beverages and food will be available. This event is for ages 21 and older.

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at www.theisonhouse.com.

Limited tickets will be sold at the gate.

Petty Fever started with five members, and still has the same five today.

"Which is rare," Murray said.

Band members are Murray on guitar and lead vocals, Tim Baltus on guitar and backing vocals, Steve Kuepker on bass and backing vocals, Jack Codron on keyboards and backing vocals, and Craig Ostbo on drums.

But Tom Petty had six band members.

"There are a lot of extra parts, if you really sit and listen," Murray said.

Now Petty Fever has six members, too.

Todd Jensen now plays bass, while Kuepker will focus on the extra parts of Petty's songs.

"This will be our third show with the new lineup," Murray said of



Petty Fever/Contributed photo

Petty Fever, a Tom Petty tribute band, plays in Baker City on Saturday, June 19, at the Ison House.



Trailer Hitch/Contributed photo

Baker City band Trailer Hitch opens for Petty Fever on June 19.

Saturday's concert.

They've worked on their playlist for seven months.

"We took every song, dissected them, and relearned them," he said.

Murray has always liked Tom Petty songs.

"I've been a Petty fan since Petty was on the radio," he said. "His musical roots are similar to mine — back to the '50s, '60s, R&B, rock 'n' roll, The Beatles."

He remembers hearing "Breakdown" for the first time in 1976.

"I learned it the next day," he said.

In the 1990s, people suggested Murray do a Tom Petty tribute.

He responded, "Nah, I'd rather concentrate on my own music."

Fast forward a few years to when another band asked him to open with a tribute to Tom Petty.

"The crowd loved it more than

"A lot of people miss Tom Petty. We do what we can to keep it going. Hopefully we do it justice."

— Frank Murray, lead vocalist for Petty Fever, a Tom Petty tribute band

of all time. I'm constantly jealous of his songwriting skills. The guy was brilliant."

When asked if he has a favorite Petty song, Murray goes silent.

Then: "What day is this?"

In other words, he could never choose just one favorite Petty song.

"It's like asking what my favorite guitar is," he said.

The fans who attend Petty Fever shows might also have a hard time choosing a favorite.

"They go crazy, they love it," he said. "A lot of people miss Tom Petty. We do what we can to keep it going. Hopefully we do it justice."

the other band," Murray said with a laugh.

Plus, he bears a resemblance to the famous singer.

"I kind of look like Petty, to a degree," Murray said. "It was one of those things. I fell into it."

Petty, he said, was a gifted songwriter.

"I gravitated toward his songwriting style," Murray said. "He's in the top five modern songwriters

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