

A bluegrass blast from the past

EOCenes first played together 50 years ago

By Lisa Britton
Go! Magazine

BAKER CITY — Bluegrass music will finally fill Churchill School when the EOCenes perform live on Saturday, April 23.

They were supposed to play on March 20, 2020.

"We're just two years and a month behind schedule," Duane Boyer said with a chuckle.

Doors open for the concert at 6 p.m., and the music starts at 6:45 p.m. Tickets are \$10 in advance at www.churchillbaker.com, or \$15 at the door. Admission is free for youth age 15 and younger who attend with a ticket-holding adult. Proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test is required.

Churchill is located at 3451 Broadway St., but enter through the 16th Street parking lot.

The EOCenes formed at Eastern Oregon College (now Eastern Oregon University) in La Grande. The musicians were members of the EOC Ambassadors from 1969-1971, and

EOCENES IN CONCERT

Saturday, April 23
Doors open at 6 p.m.
Churchill School, 3451
Broadway St., Baker City
\$10 in advance, \$15 at the door
www.churchillbaker.com

performed concerts around the Northwest as a recruiting program for the college.

After graduation, the musicians went their separate ways and played with various bands throughout the years.

Boyer said they gathered again at a festival about 12 years ago.

"We had such a good time," he said.

They all remembered their parts from songs they'd performed 40 years in the past.

"Having played together for so long, everything was ingrained in our minds," Boyer said.

They decided to become a regular bluegrass band and, in typical years, play six to seven times during what Boyer calls "music season." The members are Boyer, Hal Spence, Hugh



Duane Boyer/Contributed photo

The EOCenes will play Saturday, April 23, at Churchill School in Baker City.

McClellan, Ron Emmons, Alan Feves and Doug Jenkins.

They play bluegrass "from old to new" — songs from the 1920s, '30s and '40s up to current music.

"We've taken newer songs and given them a bluegrass treatment," Boyer said.

He said bluegrass really got started in 1946, and gained popularity with the movies "Bonnie and Clyde," "Deliverance" and "Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?"

Although bluegrass festivals are held around the Northwest, Boyer said it's quite popular on the East Coast, where multiple

bluegrass festivals are held during summer weekends.

As for the EOCenes, they didn't have any concerts in 2020, and played just a couple times in 2021. This year, Boyer said they "have a fairly full lineup" beginning with the Churchill concert.

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