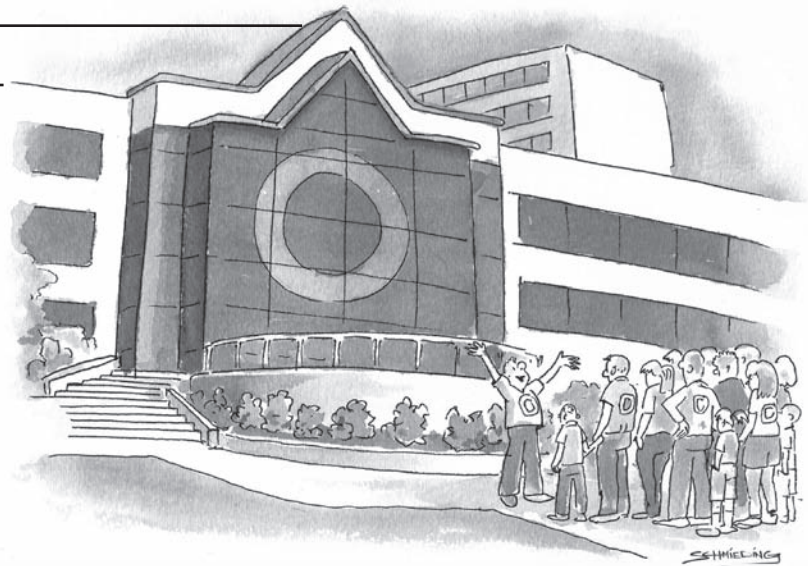




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EUGENE CELEBRATION OPTIONS POPPING UP

Soon after news broke of the Eugene Celebration being canceled last week, individuals and community groups came up with big plans to have a celebration without Kesey Enterprises, the private group that has run the EC and parade for years. Kesey Enterprises says a decision on the parade is expected "in the next day or so."

Already in the works is the Festival of Eugene with a website and Facebook page. A kick-off meeting was held June 10 at Porcellio Bistro to explore the possibilities, led by Krysta Albert of the Health and Wellness Faire, which has been part of the EC. "Our goal is to have a celebration that is funky, eclectic, fun and FREE," she says on Facebook. The three-day event Aug. 22-24 would be in the area of 5th Avenue, which would be blocked off between Willamette and Pearl.

About 20 people showed up to hear that Albert and her team have lined up 16 local bands and other acts on multiple large and small stages, 14 security volunteers, and are already taking applications for vendors and booths, including nonprofits.

Jon Silvermoon of Vipertoons Productions says he wants "something to happen," though perhaps not until the students are back and no football game is scheduled, such as Sept. 28. He says he likes the music festival he goes to in Clarksdale, Miss., that has small acts playing for free outside different venues during the day, and a wristband that allows people to go to music shows at venues at night. A shuttle bus takes celebrators around to different shows.

Friends of Civic Stadium (FoCS) is looking at doing some kind of community celebration and fundraiser following the parade. The parade could start and end at South Eugene High School, which is an easy walk to Civic Stadium. "We would not have to get national acts, but we feel we could get local headliners like Eugene Celebration used to have," says Jim Watson of the FoCS board.

City Councilor George Brown agrees and told *EW*, "Why not have a pared-down, one day celebration after the parade inside the Civic Stadium parking lot, or better yet, inside the stadium itself on the playing field?" Brown says School District 4J would be "extremely reluctant to allow any large-scale activity inside the fence, but I believe Friends of Civic Stadium, as well as neighborhood groups, nonprofits and others would do anything necessary to satisfy any safety requirements."

Cynthia Wooten is credited as the driving force behind the founding of the Eugene Celebration, Saturday Market and the Oregon Country Fair. She tells *EW* that news of the celebration canceling is "disappointing and I hope it is only for one year." But she adds that "every annual event needs to evaluate what they're doing, who they are serving and the very tough economics of public festivals, celebrations and concerts."

Wooten says "the cultural pendulum may have swung, and a new, more community inclusive approach could be embraced. It's basic instinct for people to gather, want to belong amidst diversity, to enjoy each other, explore, bask, learn, look, play, dance, be inspired and remember within the broader, more unified city." — *Ted Taylor*

See a longer, updated version of this story on our website.

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