

BRIEFLY
Greg Blake
rumbles into town

PENDLETON — The echo of generations of Appalachian mountain singers are infused in Greg Blake’s rumbling drawl.

The West Virginia native will perform with Isaac Callender and Ellie Hakanson as The Greg Blake Trio, offering a fresh perspective on traditional bluegrass, gospel and country. The show is Wednesday, Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. at Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St. Tickets are \$12.

Arts center regulars will remember Blake from his Jeff Scroggins & Colorado performance when he was in town this summer. He’ll be playing songs from his new album, “Songs of Heart and Home.”

The show is expected to sell out. For more information or to reserve a ticket, call 541-278-9201.

First Draft
welcomes two
regional authors

PENDLETON — A pair of Eastern Oregon authors who have both written for the *High Country News* are featured in this month’s First Draft Writers’ Series.

Rich Wandschneider and Cameron Scott will read from their new work Thursday, Dec. 15 at 7 p.m. at Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St. There is no admission charge.

Wandschneider has also written for *The Oregonian*, *Portland Magazine*, *High Desert Journal* and contributed a regular column to the *Wallowa County Chieftain*. He is one of the founders of Fishtrap Inc. in Enterprise.

Scott taught a creative writing workshop at Voices 110 Degrees, a program for at-risk youth. His freelance work has appeared in *The Fly Fish Journal*, *The Ski Journal* and he currently writes an outdoor column called Steelhead Nation for the *La Grande Observer*.

For more information, call 541-278-9201 or visit www.pendletonarts.org.

Holiday music to
fill Kirkman House

WALLA WALLA — Holiday favorites are featured in a collaboration with soprano Phoebe Gildea and harpist Noah Brenner as they tour the Pacific Northwest to introduce their first joint album.

The duo will perform Saturday, Dec. 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the Kirkman House Museum, t 214 N. Colville St., Walla Walla. Tickets are \$25.

The collection of Christmas classics includes “Carol of the Bells” and childhood memories like “Walking in the Air.” Old favorites come to life with new, original arrangements. CDs will be available for purchase.

Tickets are available at www.kirkmanhousemuseum.org. For more information, call 509-529-4373.

Submit information to:
community@eastoregonian.com, or c/o Tammy Malgesini, 333 E. Main Street, Hermiston, OR, 97838.

Swäwm Pass works to make
Eastern Oregon weird, too

Eastern Oregon is about to further embrace its freakiness this month. The Baker City noise-funk band Swäwm Pass (say their name three times fast in order to figure it out) will be releasing their first official recording via Brooklyn-based Cimiotti Records. Released on cassette — Cimiotti’s format of choice — “Eastern Oregon Landscapes Vol. 1” is 30 minutes of short bursts of booty-shaking rhythms that give way to bizarre electronic soundscapes with spectral strains of cello and saxophone wafting through the mix. It is the first in a series of releases from Cimiotti Records highlighting music from Eastern Oregon.



J.D. KINDLE
Comment

For those looking for a quick comparison to draw Swäwm Pass’ sound to, think of the sound collage “Revolution 9” from the Beatles’ White Album, the atonal psyche-rock of the Red Crayola’s early albums, the improvisational freak-out jams of pre-”Dark Side” Pink Floyd, and the industrial aural assault of Wolf Eyes.

Swäwm Pass could be described as “more of an invitation than a band,” according to their co-founder and drummer Riley Hall, a nurse by day who originally hails from Pendleton. Hall conceived of the band with guitarist Euell Macke as a musical outlet for themselves and their friends. Hall’s previous music experience had been playing cello under the tutelage of Loree Tucker-McKenna and singing in the Pendleton High School choir under the direction of Bill Mayclin, so picking up the drums and laying down a funky beat was an adventurous step forward. The same can be said for Macke, who had previously only played acoustic guitar in old-time string bands in Walla Walla.

In order to round out their initial lineup, Hall and Macke reached out to bass player Damon Rose. Primarily a drummer for alt-country bands in Portland, Rose relocated to Baker with his family in 2013 to operate Marilyn’s Music, the local musical instrument and recording retailer. A longtime screen printer and graphic designer, Rose has set up a screen



Swäwm Pass’s debut recording with art using topographic maps from Eastern Oregon.

Contributed photo

printing studio in the back of Marilyn’s where he prolifically produces T-shirts and hoodies bearing Swäwm Pass’ name in the most clever of ways. Rose has also converted a portion of Marilyn’s into a small recording studio.

Swäwm Pass’ first live performance was during the summer of 2015 at the Frontier Tavern in Haines, a town that inspired Walter Winchell to remark that “if you wanted to kill someone, Baker County was the place to do it.” In the audience was a recent transplant to Baker from the Bay Area, Justin Kendall. Kendall insisted that he must join the band. A tech savvy individual, Kendall fashioned a Wii gaming console that runs a program that turns the unit into a theremin emulator.

Kendall has also added a visual element to the band by incorporating a projector into Swäwm Pass’ shows. He started with a hack of the visualizer from Windows Media Player that provides multi-colored psychedelic patterns in respond to the rhythms of the band. Most recently Kendall has made a cut of “Saturday Night Fever” for their concerts, which plays each scene from the movie in reverse. Watching John Travolta uncomb his hair is oddly satisfying.

Swäwm Pass has been augmented by additional members within the past year. Hall invited his neighbor Griffin Stone, a high school-aged baritone saxophonist, to join,

much to his parents’ delight. Paul McNeil, a regular performer with the Baker Community Orchestra, joined the group on electric cello as he was looking for a jazz project to participate in.

This “come one, come all” approach to band membership helps explain the cross section of attendees to their performances: hipsters who’ve expatriated from Cascadia, retirees who patronize the local arts scene, teenagers looking for a thrill, and families with small children. Their performances have seen them play cowboy taverns, sports bars, gazebos in municipal parks, and even the Let ’er Buck Room in Pendleton for a Halloween party. Even if audiences don’t quite get it, they are curious enough to stick around in order to figure out what this band of mutants is all about.

The fact that an avant-garde, noise-funk, art-project band can not only be born in Eastern Oregon but actually thrive here is encouraging news both for fans of challenging art in this region and those who wish to produce it.

If that weren’t enough, a fan of the band who works at the Bureau of Land Management identified an unnamed pass near Dooley Mountain in the Elkhorns. He promptly named it Swäwm Pass in their honor. The site of the pass sits 200 feet from the path of totality for a solar eclipse scheduled for August 2017. Swäwm Pass is plotting how to stage a performance during this astronomical event.

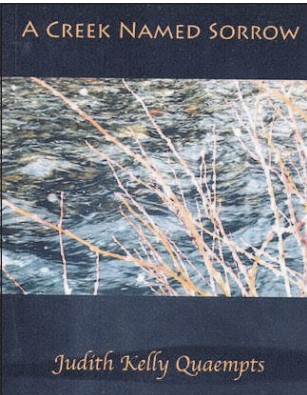
Get ready to freak out.

James Dean Kindle is the East Oregonian’s entertainment columnist and director of the Oregon East Symphony.

Photo contributed by Swäwm Pass



BOOK REVIEW



Cover courtesy Judith Kelly Quaempts

Dark secrets
surface in
Sorrow Creek

Local author Judith Kelly Quaempts first introduced us to Winter, a fictional town situated just outside the Umatilla Indian Reservation near Pendleton, in her first novel, “A Place Called Winter.” Quaempts has returned to the tiny town in “A Creek Named Sorrow,” where new neighbors and old friends are hiding dark secrets.

In 1939, a lonely and distraught young woman listened to the voices that told her the answer to her problems lay in the waters of Sorrow Creek. In present-day Winter, a girl is drawn to the same creek when her situation becomes unbearable. Are the figures she encounters a figment of her tortured imagination, or the ghosts of desperation past?

When Lillian Voight, an elderly resident of Winter, is found murdered in her home, her family is devastated. As the investigation into her death progresses, more questions than answers turn up. And the town’s newest inhabitants, the Fraziers, come under scrutiny when neighbors start to notice the family’s odd and reclusive behavior.

Who had a reason to kill Lillian, and will the skeletons hidden in Winter’s closets come tumbling out in time to save some of its most vulnerable residents? Quaempts skillfully weaves new characters into the tight-knit family that is Winter, and hints at a plan for a third installment in the narrative.

Renee Struthers is the records editor and book reviewer for the East Oregonian.

Small Souls emits
experimental
melodies

PENDLETON — Small Souls was created when singer-songwriter Brian Rozendal teamed up with multi-instrumentalist Bryan Daste (Emma Hill, Scotland Barr & the Slow Drags) to transform minimalist folk songs into expansive, haunting, lyrical soundscapes.

Five years later, the experimental folk duo continues with emotive melodies and lyrical songwriting. Check them out Monday, Dec. 19 from 7:30-10 p.m. at Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton. There is no cover charge for the all-ages show, which also features Pretty Gritty.

For more information, call 541-276-1350 or visit www.smallsouls.net.

Festivals

Holiday in Boardman
•Saturday, Dec. 10; 8-10:30 a.m.
•Boardman Senior Center, 100 Tatone St.
•Saturday, Dec. 10; 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
•SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman
\$3/Kiwanis Breakfast with Santa features food, photo opportunities and horse-drawn wagon rides. Free SAGE Saturday includes a holiday gift workshop to create craft items.
Christmas in Echo
•Saturday, Dec. 10; 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
•Various venues in Echo www.echo-oregon.com
Free. Bazaars and business hop provides holiday fun.
Old Fashioned Holiday Stroll
•Saturday, Dec. 10; 3-7 p.m.
•Downtown Pendleton www.facebook.com/events/726842304145210
Free. Celebrate the holiday season while admiring winter window displays and drinking free hot cocoa. Holiday carols performed by local musical groups. Also,

specials and discounts at many local shops and venues.

Art, Museums & Authors

Student Art & Felera McCullough + Tinkra Cullen
•Saturday, Dec. 10; 2-4 p.m., artist’s reception
•Saturdays/Sundays; noon-5 p.m.
•Arts Portal Gallery, 508 N. Main St., Milton-Freewater
Free. Exhibit features artwork from Central Middle School and Mac-Hi students, as well as the felted wool work of McCullough and Fink. The reception features live music by Switchfoot Delta and Christmas goodies to sample. Exhibit runs through Dec. 31.
Holiday Open House
•Sunday, Dec. 11; 1-4 p.m.
•Crow’s Shadow Institute of the Arts, 48004 St Andrews Road, Mission
www.crowssshadow.org
Free. Visit printmaking studio and view newest works by artists-in-residence.
“A Man Called Ove”
•Wednesday, Dec. 14; 1:30 p.m.

•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston
www.hermistonlibrary.us
Free. Bookminliners book club meets the second Wednesday of each month. The *New York Times* bestseller by Fredrik Backman is a feel-good story about the angry man next door.
Art of the Gift
•Tuesday-Fridays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
•Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.
www.pendletonarts.org
Free. Unique holiday gift shopping of more than 35 artists. Also, in the gallery are gorgeous antique American stained glass windows from the collection of Frank Duff. Handcrafted furniture by Bruce Gianotti and Jeff Blackwood also on display and available for sale. Runs through Dec. 31.
“Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race”
•Monday - Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
•Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute, near Wildhorse Resort & Casino.
www.tamastslikt.org
\$10/adults, \$9/senior citizens, \$6/youths, free/5 and under or \$25/family of four. Features a traveling exhibit from the United

States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which examines how Nazi leadership used science to help legitimize persecution, murder, and ultimately, genocide. Runs through Jan. 7.
“Celebrate Family”
•Monday-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
•Crossroads Carnegie Art Center, 2020 Auburn St., Baker City
www.crossroads-arts.org
Free. Features the Bingham family artists Pam Bingham (pottery), Greg Johnson (woodworking), Seth Bingham (metal art) and Amanda Jakobson (sign maker). Much of the artwork is for sale. Runs through Dec. 31.
Paul Hoelscher
•Tuesday-Sundays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
•Peterson’s Gallery, 1925 Main St., Baker City
www.petersonsgallery.net
Free. Features the charcoal and ink artwork of Paul Hoelscher. Runs through Dec. 31.
Music
An Evening with the Classics
•Saturday, Dec. 10; 7 p.m.

•Hermiston High School auditorium, 600 S. First St.
www.desertartscouncil.com
\$20/adults, \$10/youths (\$5 additional at the door). Desert Arts Council presents Hermiston’s own Kelly Kuo (piano) and Ron Blessinger (violin), who will perform classical music.
Guy Johnson Band
•Saturday, Dec. 10; 8 p.m. No cover
•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission
Holiday Music Festival
•Sunday, Dec. 11; 3:15 p.m.
•Vert Auditorium, 480 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton
www.oregoneastsymphony.org
\$20/adults, \$15/students, seniors, \$45/family. Presented by the Oregon East Symphony, a holiday celebration featuring a variety of community groups including Sisters in Song and The Pendleton Big Band.
Greg Blake Trio
•Wednesday, Dec. 14; 7 p.m.
•Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.
www.pendletonarts.org
\$12. Greg Blake’s rumbling drawl comes straight from the

mountains of West Virginia. He’ll perform with Isaac Callender and Ellie Hakanson as The Greg Blake Trio.
Phoebe Gildea & Noah Brenner
•Saturday, Dec. 17; 7:30 p.m.
•Kirkman House Museum, 214 N. Colville, Walla Walla
www.kirkmanhousemuseum.org
\$25. Introducing their CD release featuring Gildea’s soprano voice and Brenner’s harp playing. The classic Christmas collection features old and familiar favorites.
Sunny Ledford
•Saturday, Dec. 17; 9:30 p.m.
•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston
<https://thepheasant.ticketleap.com>
\$25. An evening of music with Sunny Ledford and Cory Peterson.
Great Pacific Christmas Pageant
•Sunday, Dec. 18; 1:30-7 p.m.
•Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton
Free/all ages. Plenty of guests (TBA) and Christmas music, both traditional and otherwise.