



ABOUT THE BAND

The Oregon Valley Boys hail from deep within the wilds of the Pacific Northwest in Oregon's Willamette Valley. Playing an eclectic mix of western and Texas swing, the band's music harkens back to the golden age of western swing, when bands like Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys and the Tune Wranglers were performing in packed dance halls around the southwest.

The Oregon Valley Boys consists of Randy "Tex" Hill on drums and lead vocals, Chuck "Doc" Zendner, bass; Paz "Smokey" Reingans, lead guitar; Paul "Hank" Saunders, guitar; Loren Depping, steel and lead guitars and Vicki White on lead vocals and guitar.

The Oregon Valley Boys have been nominated by the American Academy of Western Artists for Western Swing Band, Western Swing Song and Western Swing Album.





“The Sherman County Fair added the Oregon Valley Boys Band to our 101st fair opening kick off BBQ and Car show. What a “PERFECT” addition to our Tuesday afternoon. All ages enjoyed their western swing music. They are simply the BEST! Great Job and Thanks!!”

-Beth McCurdy - The Sherman County Fair, Moro, Oregon

“Oregon Valley Boys know how to get the party started... toe tappin’ tunes that’ll make ya want to dance the night away!”

-Trina Riemersma, Event Coordinator, The Oregon Garden, Silverton, Oregon

“The Oregon Valley Boys (which actually includes a girl....) provided me with the most musical fun I have had at my Cafe and Coffeehouse yet! Talented and upbeat, this group is a sure winner!”

-Jane Bleck, proprietor, The Underground Cafe and Coffeehouse, Newberg, Oregon

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Music scene heats up downtown

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Statesman Journal

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6 Experience Downtown

First Wednesday DANCING IN THE STREET

STORY BY NICOLE KRUEGER | SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

If the long-awaited sunny weather makes you want to dance for joy, you're not the only one.

The streets of downtown will teem with tapping feet Aug. 4 from 5 to 8 p.m. during this month's First Wednesday event, "Dancing in the Street." Live music and dance performances in a variety of styles will take center stage for the evening as Salem celebrates the pinnacle of summer. Be prepared to break out the dancing boots on Chemeketa Street between Liberty and High Streets, which will shut down while Western swing band The Oregon Valley Boys open up with their eclectic mix of blues, country, jazz, rock and pop.

In the Reed Opera House, Premiere Dance Academy will conduct ballet performances, while Macedonia Greek Cuisine will host Greek family dancing on the first floor. On the corner of Liberty and Court Streets, Mz Jitterbug will show off several dance styles starting at 5:30 p.m., followed by Tango 4 Salem at 6:30.

Other First Wednesday highlights include:

- **Irish cultural dance:** The Ceili of the Valley Society will demonstrate Irish dance from 6 to 8 p.m. Formed in 2006, the nonprofit group aims to educate the public about Irish culture.
- **Nia demonstrations:** Beginning at 6:15 p.m., Indigo Wellness Yoga will demonstrate Nia, which combines muscular movement with introspection, visualization and expression for mind-body-spirit healing.
- **Cabaret-style show:** Back by popular demand, The Razzle Dazzle Theatrical Group will entertain visitors in Salem Center Mall with music, tap, costumes and skits. The group, founded in 2006, features performers ranging in age from 55 to 95.
- **Line dancing:** Another First Wednesday favorite, The Emerald Point Jewels senior dance team, will perform line dancing and the arm-chair hula.



Above: The Oregon Valley Boys will perform on Chemeketa Street between Liberty and High Streets.
Below: Evangelina Trevino, center, and others play with Hula Hoops in Downtown Salem.

The details

"Dancing in the Street"

First Wednesday

Featuring live music, dance and art downtown.

When: 5 to 8 p.m. Aug. 4

Where: Chemeketa Street between Liberty and High Streets, and throughout downtown

Cost: Free

Contact:

www.gofirstwednesday.info

Retro cowboys swing with a Pacific Northwest flare

The Oregon Valley Boys will be playing multiple shows in the near future by Michelle Andujar

The popular culture of the Willamette Valley is being recorded by one Salem band in a genre a little unusual for the area.

The Oregon Valley Boys, who feature Western swing, have been hosting dance parties to their Southwest-style tunes for a little over two years.

A big fish in a small pond, Texan Randy Hill is a longtime musician. He toured Europe in the 1970s and resided in Austin known as the live music capital of the world until finally settling in Salem.

"Austin is so saturated musically. There are tons of clubs to play at but you're really making little money or paying to play at the clubs," said Hill. "But it's harder to get a band started here. There are very few music publications."

Hill has background in blues and country, but he



Oregon Valley Boys will be playing multiple locations in September and October.

Upcoming Shows:

September

25 - Salem Saturday Market,
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

29 - Eagles Hall, 8 - 11 p.m.

October

2 - Eagles Hall, 8 p.m. - 12 p.m., Salem

7 - Dixie Creek Saloon,
7 p.m. - 9 p.m., Tangent

16 - Eagles Hall,

8 p.m. - 12 p.m., Salem

For booking and to contact the Oregon Valley Boys, contact Randy Hill 503.507.1228 or e-mail oregonvalleyboys@gmail.com. Their website is oregonvalleyboys.com.

chose to start a Western swing band.

"It was a smaller niche. There were no Western swing bands up here at the time and I love Western swing," said Hill, who began by placing an ad on Craigslist.

"I found good musicians in the Salem area, but a lot of the guys didn't know what Western swing was, so we spent the first year learning about Western swing, its history and how to play it."

Singing the band's three-part harmonies are bandleader Hill, who is also the drummer; Loren "The Man of Steel" Depping, in charge of the steel guitars, and Vicky Bakanoff, also a guitar player.

They're joined by Chuck "Doc Z" Zendner on bass and guitar players Paz Reingans, Paul "Hank" Saunders and Oscar Quijano, sometimes adding a saxophone or a fiddle player.

They named the band The Oregon Valley Boys to have a statewide appeal. Their music features public domain songs from the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s (Patsy Cline, Lefty Frizzell), as well as originals, mostly about the Willamette Valley.

Their first CD, released at the end of July, is titled "All Roads Lead to Howell Prairie," a street where Hill got lost upon first moving to Salem.

They also have a song titled "Molalla Waltz," about an Oregon cowboy and his Native American wife, one called "Willamette, dammit," emphasizing the right pronunciation of the word, and one about watching the stars with your loved one in the Valley.

"I wanted to translate some of that history. There are not a lot of songs about Oregon," said Hill.

Bob Wills (of The Texas Playboys) is considered the father of Western swing, which has country, jazz, blues, Texas swing and big band influences.

"It's different. It has a retro feel to it," said Hill. "You could compare us a lot to 'Asleep at the Wheel.'" That 1970s Western Swing, Austin-based band has won nine Grammy Awards.

"But we're not trying to be like a museum piece. We are adding our own little touch to it," he said, mentioning The Beatles as a musical influence.

The Oregon Valley Boys' live show lasts anywhere between two to four hours.

They match their outfits to the music, featuring retro cowboy clothes.

"We dress the part. We try to get the crowd to have fun, try to get them dancing," said Hill.

Loren Depping said the band generally receives very good feedback from audiences of all ages.

"It's pretty cool to have people in their 70s come up and say, 'This is music I grew up with and it's cool to hear it again,' and see their grand kids dancing to it," he said. "People come up and ask where we're playing next."

The Oregon Valley Boys are starting to get national and international radio play. "Germany, Sweden, Austria ... It's so different from anything they've experienced in Europe," said Hill, who hopes to tour Europe with the Oregon Valley Boys.

One of the Oregon Valley Boys is in the National Guard and he's being deployed to Afghanistan, said Depping. "We found out that one of our songs had been accepted to be played on Armed Forces Radio."

The song is called "One Foot," and it sounds like "old honky-tonk, West Coast dance music, with very twangy guitars, almost rock 'n' roll," he said.

The band had a busy summer. They have been featured at farmers' markets, the Cherry City Music Festival, and county fairs all over the state. They also performed at the Salem Art Fair, the Oregon Garden and many other events and dances.

The Oregon Valley Boys' "All roads lead to Howell Prairie" CD is available locally at Ranch Records, on cdbaby.com and at their gigs. **S**

Best bets

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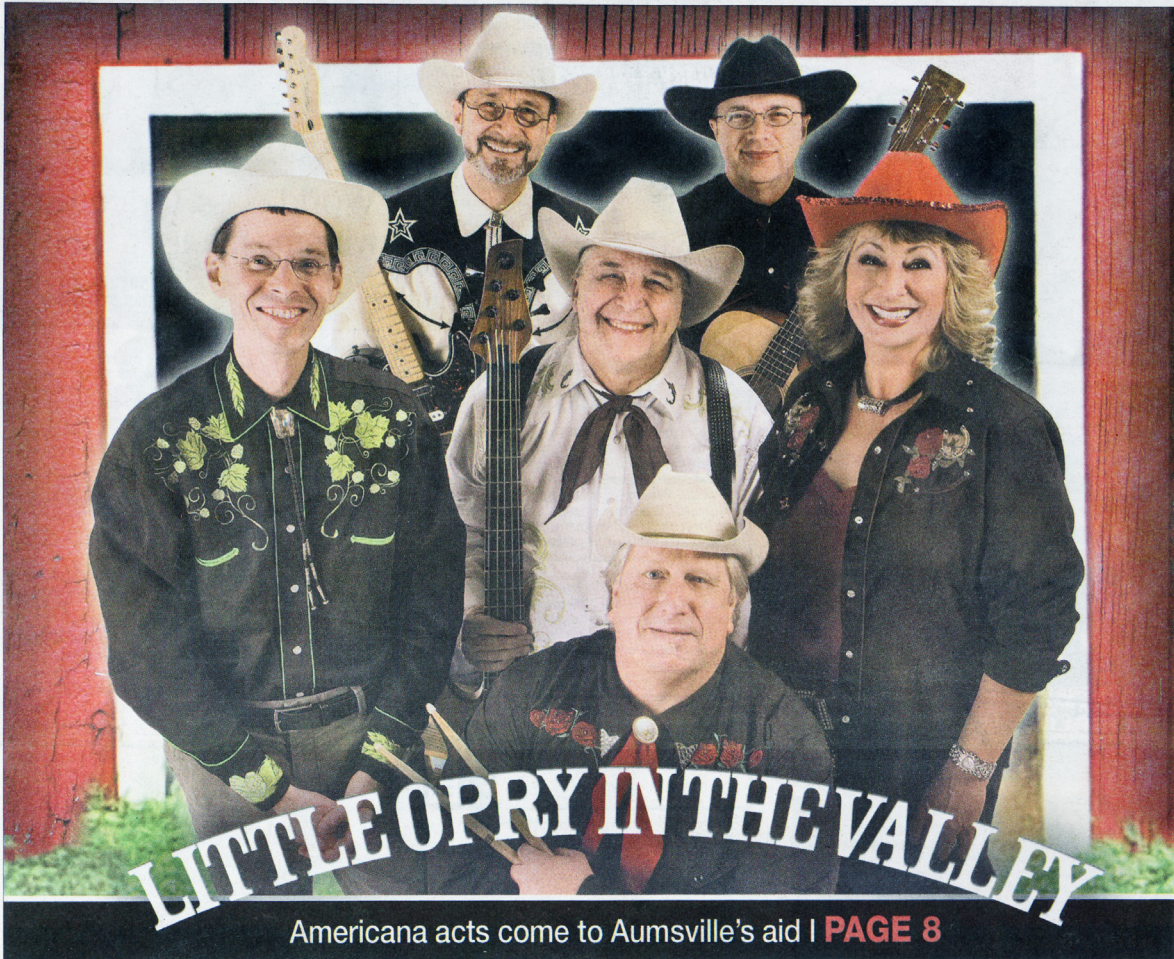
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Ol' Time Music: Grange Hall Tour

April 2011 Posted in Arts, Culture & History

By Mary Owen

For Texas transplant Randy Hill, Oregon's Granges are an "interesting concept."

"A lot of the Grange hall buildings were built in the early 1900s and also have dance floors and stages used to hold community dances back-in-the-day," Hill said. "I thought the buildings would be a great match for our music and the thought of holding community dances again really got me excited."

The challenge, Hill said, will be to get people excited enough to "turn off the computer and TV and experience a little sample of life like it was before we had all the technology to distract us from the 'real world.'" Hill was so taken by Grange offerings, he and his band, the Oregon Valley Boys, put together a 2011 Grange Hall Tour of the Willamette Valley.

The live western swing concerts and dances are: Scotts Mills Grange, April 23; Silverton Grange, May 7; and Salem Saturday Market, June 18. The band performs on Earth Day at the Oregon Garden on April 16. Concert times are 7 p.m. preceded by a Grange-sponsored dinner at 6 p.m.

"The purpose of the tour is twofold," Hill said. "One goal is to both help benefit and support the Willamette Valley's Grange halls, which are vital to local traditions. At the same time, we want to bid farewell and good riddance to the 'Great Recession' of the past few years." Admission for each concert is \$5, children 12 and under free. Dinners will be available for purchase at each Grange, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the Grange.

Members of the band hail from towns in and around the Willamette Valley. "When my wife, Dawn, and I moved here seven years ago, I felt it was the right time and place to start a band, which I had envisioned in the back of my mind for a number of years," Hill said. "I wanted to put together a band that would play Western swing music, a genre that fellow Texan Bob Wills created back in the 1930s, a blend of jazz, blues and hillbilly music. I grew up listening to some of this music via some old 78 rpm records that were handed down to me by my parents."

The name Oregon Valley Boys had a historic sounding ring to it, Hill said. "And it would also create a sort of 'state pride' associated with the band," he added. "I found the various members through a variety of places, and we have grown into a group of close friends and family."

The Oregon Valley Boys consists of Hill on drums and lead vocals, Vicki White on guitar and lead vocals, Chuck Zendner on bass, Paz Reingans on lead guitar, Paul Saunders on guitar, and Loren Depping on pedal steel. The band cut its first CD last year, with the title tune, "All Roads Lead to Howell Prairie." "We really enjoy playing together," Hill said. "We like to see people of all age enjoying the music, from little kids to older folks."

For information and a schedule, visit www.oregonvalleyboys.com

