

The Chamber Connection: A July 24-26th Special Event for the summer!

By T. Myers

Last year's Newberry Event review: "For those of you experienced in the ways of music festivals and concert venues- this can't-miss event will make your days and nights so very special and give you memories of great music and fun for years to come." L. Work, Roseville, California

DiamondStone Guest Lodge has been part of Newberry Country since 1993. Owner Doug Watt is innkeeper extraordinaire, and a musician himself, with a gift for making friends. His lovely wife Gloria is an organizer who has been fighting Multiple Sclerosis (MS) over 30 years. In 2013 they created the Newberry Event Music and Arts Festival-Fundraiser to raise funds to fight MS, and to bring an exciting music venue to South Deschutes County. This limited ticketed event feels like a private party; nothing but good fun for a good cause.

The Newberry Event was born out of hard work and negotiations with some of the finest musicians to appear in Central Oregon. Come dance and enjoy many genres of music - rock, blues, jazz, reggae, zydeco and more. The Newberry Event started as a rural backyard party, and now has grown to accommodate 500 people/day, with a goal to raise \$10,000 for the Oregon Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. It is growing once again- in its third year- towards reaching a bigger goal of bringing more people to a fantastic venue that ultimately produces an amazing series of musical performances for three days and on top of all of it- it raises money for the MS Society while it feeds the needs of the musically hungry.

I have been to both prior events and can say personally that there is something special for everyone! Tickets include free tent camping. There are food trucks and beverage vendors (Deschutes Brewery and Crater Lake Distillery this year's sponsors.) Artisans statewide have craft booths, with homemade treasures, organic and eco-friendly items for sale, and donate their wares to the fundraising silent auction. The event is supported by Bend's very professional Sonic Sounds system, giving it a reputation for high quality sound that stretches for miles. Some guests float the Little Deschutes River throughout the afternoon enjoying the music from a distance.

2013 featured act after act, ending with the iconic '70s folk rock duo Brewer and Shipley. The beautiful setting and plenty of open space allowed people to stretch their wings, sit and listen, and dance. A multitude of the Watts' friends turned out to support the worthy cause. Unfortunately it was not well attended, but when the Watts reviewed the comments and experiences they themselves had, they took the risk again and planned year two.

2014 surprised folks with every kind of act, from the Riders in the Sky (America's favorite cowboys) to Portland's theater group Vagabond Opera (belly dancing and Klesmer music.) Some first year headliners returned, but they weren't headliners, rewarding festival attendees with great music and new acts. I only mentioned a couple of my favorites here, because seriously, there were too many to mention, who together, offered so many different types of music, I could not figure out why there weren't thousands of people at the event.

Now, for the 2015 event, tickets are on sale (541-536-6263) for the third year at the Newberry Event and Watt will not disappoint! Besides a few of the festival regulars (each act is a headliner in their own right), the Watts have found a way to add to the venue to wow us again this year with Craig Chaquico- from Jefferson Starship, The Terry Robb Trio- who can and do play everything, the big tribute band to Pink Floyd-Pigs on the Wing will be back for the floydies and he is adding Los Angeles icons from the late 70's to headline with Fishbone-(known for Ska, Punk and Hark Rock, funk and fusion sounds.) The list of other contributing bands is 23 names long- too much for this little piece, but I want to finish with the final word: Imagine green meadows, shady pines and huge aspens as the setting. Vast skies and no moon this year will dazzle stargazers during evening performances. Imagine music that plays on for three beautiful summer days and nights. Imagine a family friendly (no dogs please) environment with camping, great food, art, craft beers, vendors, dancing, morning yoga and plenty of room for all members of the family, then you can envision the beauty of this small town event to enjoy. Local? This staycation won't disappoint. Come for a day or all three, joining the caring community the Newberry Event has created. Help make a difference in the fight against MS!

Newberry Event TICKETS are available through BendTickets.com or the NewberryEvent.com website. There's information there too, about multiple sclerosis, plus band videos and last year's pics. DiamondStone Guest Lodges in Lazy River South is located next to Quail Run Golf Course, just 3 miles west of Hwy 97. Come support these local entrepreneurs, while they bring us a do-not-miss event on July 24, 25 and 26. Address: 16693 Sprague Loop, La Pine, OR.