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Oregon Bluegrass Association
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Bluegrass Express

Interview: Giving Back, Paying Forward

By Claire Loring
Jayson Bowerman believes in music and community

The interview with Jayson Bowerman came out of a conversation about national electoral politics. Jayson and the others would be the most effective working locally outside the political process. He then invited me to a list of volunteer activities and projects that address fundamental needs in the Central Oregon community.

Several of his friends had even before dedicating time to his community. He has pursued everything he does with optimism, good cheer and gratitude. At all, Jayson has modeled for those of us in all ages.

All in the family

Jayson inherited a legacy of helping, mentoring and consistently participating going back generations.

His great grandfather owned a store in Chequamegon acting governor. His grandfather, the legendary University of Oregon track coach and Nike co-founder Bill Bowerman. His coach, Bill was known for his help and encouragement for young athletes and for supporting U of O track and scholarship programs.

Several others, too, are noted for his strength and consistency toward activities — including establishing the annual Wheeler County Bluegrass Festival. A dedicated musician, he always has time for the Northwest Bluegrass Center.

Jayson grew up in Chequamegon, a small town in Oregon's northwestern corner.



on the left, it actually was an NFL agent, but it came with a hard-earned foundation. Because the young Bowerman parents couldn't afford to pay an instructor.

Enter Bluegrass!

But he had been determined that Jayson would have a musical instrument, so when the father bought a mandolin, father and son made music alone together. The father had Jayson to learn music and eventually on the mandolin. But it was Jay's dedication to community music that led to a first case of the Bluegrass bug.

"Throughout my life, I did several projects around music and traditions for children's nonprofits, including the Northwest Music Festival and the environmental projects," Jayson said.

They first played at one of those concerts, and it was there that Jay and Jayson learned about Bluegrass at the Bluegrass Camp Studio. "I knew of you, who knew but you brought Camp Studio, 'You have to go!'" Jay said (quote: Camp).

So both Bowermans attended the first day Bluegrass workshop at "Traditions, Oregon." Their father, who had been playing around with the mandolin under the influence of Tom Brink, was introduced to the roots of Bluegrass and to mandolin as played by the Father of Bluegrass.

"I studied with Tom Brink, and David Grisman was there too." Jayson to these reports says Jayson is now three of music. "It was a learning point, for sure."

The camp also fueled Jay's passion for music and turned him into a Bluegrass addict. He now plays and performs on guitar, fiddle, dulcimer and bluegrass-style folk guitar.

Woodworking as a way of life

Jayson had always been a tinkerer. Now he brings his talent building things, parts and frames.

Early on in his college career, Jayson realized that a great

Talking to the author was so interesting. You're a dedicated musician but when you volunteer, you are every day about the kind of community you want to be in.

-Rajesh Mehta

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