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West End Fair 'a family friendly' event

BY MARTA GOUGER
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The West End Fair opens Sunday, Aug. 17 with a multitude of activities, food, entertainment and fun, and runs through Saturday, Aug. 23.

Admission is \$8 for guests 11 and older, while kids 10 and under enter free.

Fair President Peanut Greenzweig said the fair concentrates on offering "a family friendly experience."

The midway is black-topped to make it easier to maneuver wheelchairs and strollers. Areas by the office and gates 1 and 2 have been paved.

The fair is offering two new attractions: lawnmower racing and drag racing, in addition to the ever popular demolition derbies.

A new vendor will be displaying hunting blinds, and Brodheadsville Chevy will be returning with cars on display.

"We offer great entertainment and good food at reasonable prices," Greenzweig said.

The Main Stage entertainment is included with the price of admission and includes fair favorites like the Cramer Brothers, Steel Creek, Brian Dean Moore and the Rehrig Brothers. New acts include the Don Jovi tribute band, Katz 22 and Mystery City.

Don't forget to check out the fair exhibits, with everything from flowers, vegetables and herbs, to crafts,



A section of a quilt in the 2024 fair, made by Shelba Scheffner. MARTA GOUGER/TIMES NEWS

sewing and photography. Take time to see the livestock and learn what 4-H is all about.

"It takes a lot to put on the fair," Greenzweig said. Gate fees go toward fair costs, upkeep of buildings and other improvements. The electric bills and garbage collection fees take a chunk out of the budget, too.

This year the fair bought a new sound system for the arena and plans to upgrade the system throughout the grounds.

The roof on the St. Matthew's church stand was replaced and the West End Food Pantry stand is next.

A few highlights:

- Monday, Aug. 18: Buy two ride wristbands for \$20 from 2 to 6 p.m. Ride wristbands are \$30 Sunday through Thursday, with individual tickets available Friday and Saturday.

- Tuesday, Aug. 19: Sensory Day. From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. people with senso-

ry sensitivities can have a calmer fair experience with reduced lights and sounds. After that, from 2 to 4 p.m., they can pay \$5 for admission. Plus, Ride Wristbands for \$20 when you bring a canned item donation for the local animal shelter.

- Wednesday, Aug. 20: Senior & Military Appreciation Day. Seniors (age 65-plus) are admitted for \$4. Active and retired military members receive free admission with a valid military ID.

- Thursday, Aug. 21: Student Day. Admission is \$4 with a valid school photo ID at the gate. From 3:30 to 5:30, join Miss Jessie from the Western Pocono Community Library, who will be reading stories, meeting animals and exploring the fair.

- Friday, Aug. 22: Early Bird Deal. Admission is just \$4 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Opening day on Sunday, Aug. 17 will conclude with fireworks at 9:30 p.m.

WEST END FAIR SCHEDULE

The West End Fair runs from Aug. 17-23.

Gates open daily at 2 p.m. For events starting before 2 p.m., Gate 1 will open early.

The fair schedule includes:

SUNDAY, AUG. 17

Quarter Midget Racing, 11 a.m., Main Arena.

Opening Ceremony / Queen Coronation at 3 p.m. on the Main Stage.

Vesper Service, 4 p.m., Main Stage.

Mere Mortals, 5 p.m., pub.

Chris Eckert, shows at 7 and 8:30 p.m. on the Main Stage.

Cartesian Dance Academy, 7 p.m., bandshell.

Fireworks, 9:30 p.m. in Main Arena.

MONDAY, AUG. 18

Jimmy Mowery, shows at 3 and 4:30 p.m. on the Main Stage.

Steve and Steve, 5 p.m., pub.

Pleasant Valley High School Band, 5:30 p.m., bandshell.

KOI Drag Racing, at 7 p.m. in the Main Arena, with a meet-and-greet at 6 p.m.

Rick K at 7 and 8:30 p.m. on the Main Stage.

TUESDAY, AUG. 19

Last One Standing, 3 and 4 p.m., Main Stage.

Douge Kaetz, 5 p.m., pub.

East Stroudsburg South High School Band, 5:30 p.m., bandshell.

Demo Derby, Junk Car Race Heats and Feature, Pick-up/Van/Suburban Demo, 7 p.m. in the Main Arena.

Steel Creek, 7 and 8:30 p.m., Main Stage.

See **SCHEDULE** on Page 3

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Goat milking and feeding fundraiser debuts

BY STACI L. GOWER
TNEDITOR@TNONLINE.COM

New this year, fairgoers will have the opportunity to milk a dairy goat and feed it.

"This is a fundraiser for the livestock area. This, along with other fundraisers like Cow Plop Bingo, help us raise money for certain things, so we don't have to use other fair funds," said Bill Bond, a Jackson Township fair director and the livestock superintendent for more than 10 years.

The funds will be used for improvement and beautification of the livestock department.

"Our department is quickly outgrowing its allotted space within the outdated buildings, and we are hoping to raise enough funds to completely redesign the entire livestock department to make it a better experience for animals, exhibitors and fairgoers alike," said Kelly Garrity, the fair's animal health coordinator.

Garrity is planning to bring seven milking does from her "Secondairy" herd and there will be five milking does from a herd called "Bar-

tholomew's Quiet Valley Farm."

Having at least 12 goats ensures that "we can alternate so all goats have appropriate breakaway from people and noise," Garrity said.

She has Toggenburg, LaMancha, some Nubian crosses and Recorded Grades. The other herd has Alpines and Recorded Grades.

"I think that people will be interested to try milking dairy goats, because the goats are cute and friendly, love people and the treats they bring," she said.

For \$10, patrons can milk the goat, and if they get some milk out, they will earn a ribbon that says "I milked a dairy goat."

There will also be an opportunity to feed the goats.

A cup with three animal crackers or an alfalfa treat cookie is \$5, and cup of grain or alfalfa pellets is \$2.

"Our goats love the animal crackers and alfalfa treat cookie the best, so those are at a premium donation," Garrity said.

Garrity, who will be running the goat milking and feeding event located near the 4H exhibit building, is hoping to find some goat-savvy help-

ers to provide coverage while she is writing for the rabbit show on Tuesday and while she is judging the goat and sheep show on Monday.

If she has help, "fairgoers can milk and feed a dairy goat every day of the fair from the time the gates open at 2 p.m. until it closes," Bond said.

Garrity and Bond are hopeful for a large turnout. Garrity wants to educate the public about different dairy goat breeds, and help dispel myths about goats and the dairy industry as a whole.

"The fundraiser is meant for all ages. Anyone who can sit and gently try to get milk out of a teat with their hands after a short instruction can try," Garrity said.

A few years ago, Garrity did a goat feeding and petting station when the Carbon County Fair held its Fall Harvest at the fairgrounds in Gilbert.

"We did quite well, at over \$300 per day," she said. "This event will be much more involved, and I am hoping it will bring in more money for our renovations."

SCHEDULE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 20

Antique Tractor Pull, 10 a.m. in the Main Arena.

Dan & Galla, 2 and 3 p.m., Main Stage.

Steel Creek Duo, 5 p.m., pub.

Senior Program, 5 p.m., Main Stage.

DE Nogia Academy of Irish Dance, 6 p.m., bandshell.

Chris Eckert, 6 p.m., bandshell.

Demo Derby, Small Car Heats, midsize, stock full size feature, 7 p.m. in Main Arena.

Cramer Bros. Band, 7 and 8:30 p.m. Main Stage.

Cartesion Dance Academy, 8 p.m., bandshell.

THURSDAY, AUG. 21

Stephanie Grace, 3 and 4 p.m., Main Stage.

Dan & Galla, 4 p.m., bandshell.

Cody Templeton, 5 p.m., pub.

Levels Dance Studio, 6 p.m., bandshell.

Demo Derby, Big Car/Small Car, Mini SUV & Trucks, heats and feature, 7 p.m., Main Arena.

Don Jovi tribute band, 7 and 8:30 p.m., Main Stage.

FRIDAY, AUG. 22

The Rehrig Brothers, 3 and 4 p.m., Main Stage.

Ally Brown, 5 p.m., pub.

Dan & Galla, 5 p.m., bandshell.

Cartesion Dance Academy, 6 p.m., bandshell.

Meet & Greet, 6 p.m., Main Arena.

Elite Mower Racing, 7 p.m. Main Arena.

Katz 22, 7 and 9 p.m., Main Stage.

SATURDAY, AUG. 23

4-H Livestock Auction, noon, Agricultural Education Area.

Lorah's Garden Tractor Pulls, noon, Main Arena.

Mystery City Band, 2:30 and 4 p.m., Main Stage.

Patrick Conklin, 5 p.m., pub.

Wood Carving Auction, 5 p.m., Main Stage.

Brian Dean Moore Band, 7 and 9 p.m., Main Stage.

Bullride Mania Rodeo, 7:30

p.m., Main Arena.

Fusia Dance Center, 6 p.m., bandshell.

The fairgrounds is located at 570 Fairground Rd, Gilbert. Visit www.westendfair.com

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Coastal Cravings brings a seafood flair

BY STACI L. GOWER
TNEDITOR@TNONLINE.COM

There is a new food truck rolling into the West End Fair this year, but its owner is no stranger to the area or the fair.

"I have been here my entire life and attended the fair every year. When I got that phone call in late July inviting me to be a vendor, I was so excited," said Alexis Bridges, a Sciota resident who owns Coastal Cravings.

This is her second year operating the food trailer, which specializes in seafood and other tasty cuisines.

Coastal Cravings' nautical logo includes a lighthouse in the center, and the trailer is painted to look like a sunrise or sunset at the beach with its hues of blue, orange and pink.

"We are pretty excited to bring some new types of food to the fair," she said.

Her cuisine is inspired by her parents, JoJo and Ann Bridges, and their oth-

er house in Maine.

"My dad is from Maine," she said. "He taught me everything about seafood. We go up there to get the lobster."

She and her two employees, Sedat Sapil and Muslum Yilmaz, will be at the fair all seven days serving up their specialties.

"My fair week menu will include lobster cake sliders, crab cake sliders, fish sandwich, shrimp po'boy sandwich and lobster tacos," Bridges said.

Those are the items she's sure of, and there may be a few more dishes added once the fair board reviews her list.

"Everything takes five to 10 minutes to make; it is all made fresh, and nothing is kept under food lamps," she said.

Bridges said her operating season is April through November.

"Depending where I go, I have seen repeat customers," she said.

Earlier this year, Coastal Cravings was at the fair-



Alexis Bridges is bringing a new cuisine to the West End Fair. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

grounds for the Something for Everyone Sale and the West End Firemen's Carnival.

"We go to a lot of breweries and wineries. I've been part of food truck events in Mount Bethel and Lehigh," she said. "In addition to the West End Fair, Coast-

al Cravings was at Carbon County Fair and will be at the Allentown Fair. August is a busy month for us."

For more information or to see where the food trailer will be next, visit the Coastal Cravings Facebook page.

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1ST PLACE

Show off your lawnmower skills at the fair

ESMERALDA HERNANDEZ
EHERNANDEZ@TNONLINE.COM

The West End Fair is calling anyone who has ever been tasked to mow the lawn to bring their mower riding skills to a not-so-tedious event on the night of Friday, Aug. 22.

Alicia Goffus, one of the founders of Elite Mower Racing, started racing when she was just 8 years old. Now, her family is revisiting the professional scene after stepping down from the American Racing Mower Association.

"It was nice to be able to go back and connect with those fairs and events we had a relationship with before," Goffus said. "We have whole families that race, that's how I started."

"Getting to see other families do something that brings them together is a great kind of launching point."

Elite Mower Racing, a family-owned competitive mower racing organization, has been plowing



You already have a lawnmower. Why not try your hand at racing with it Friday night at the West End Fair? CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

through midways and arenas for four years. Coming to the West End Fair on Friday night at 7, Elite offers a wide range of vehicles for racers including stock mowers to top-speed machines.

According to Goffus, the roar of engines can be heard across the midway, making this event a quick attention grabber for fairgoers.

Another aspect of this motorsport that brings peo-

ple in is its affordable cost and approachability.

"You're not putting \$20,000 into a machine," Goffus said. "It's very, very affordable for people to get into."

"You tell people you race lawnmowers and it's definitely a conversation starter, but it's very family friendly."

Fairgoers can sign up for the race day-of, with no sign-up or waiver fee. Racers are placed into different classes based on chas-

sis style, engine and age for kids. The minimum age to race is 8 years old.

Racers are allowed to bring their own stock mowers, as long as it passes all the safety requirements put into place by Elite Mower Racing.

Proper safety gear is required, such as long pants, long sleeve jersey/jacket/shirt, over ankle leather boots, gloves and a helmet that is either full face or motocross DOT style with correct protective eyewear.

Rain boots, tennis shoes, Crocs and similar shoes are not permitted.

Anyone looking to build a prepared machine must meet the further safety requirements outlined in the rule book, such as wearing a neck brace and having a kill switch, along with the mower build requirements.

Questions, or requests for a rule book, can be directed to Alicia Goffus via email, elitemowerracing@gmail.com.

Be on the lookout for Gizmo

Fairgoers at the West End Fair may hear some beeping, whirring and clanking down the midway. No worries, it's not a faulty ride or an alien invasion: It's Gizmo D. Robot.

At 6 feet tall and 600 pounds of metal, some might compare Gizmo to a monster truck, but the goo-

gly eyed robot is far from it. Gizmo is fully interactive and mobile, meaning fairgoers can expect to see him all around. Gizmo jokes, sings and even shakes hands.

Visitors can connect with Gizmo by asking him questions, having whole conversations and even

having a dance party.

Gizmo is a well-traveled robot, making appearances at fairs and events across Pennsylvania, Virginia, Indiana, New Jersey and

more.

The futuristic friend will be available from Sunday, Aug. 17 to Tuesday, Aug. 19.

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Here's your chance to go drag racing

BY ESMERALDA
HERNANDEZ

TNEDITOR@TNONLINE.COM

Anything goes at a KOI drag race. As long as it has wheels and an engine, or even just one of the two, fairgoers are invited to bring it to the West End Fair on the night of Monday Aug. 18

For 14 years, KOI Drag Racing has been evolving the drag racing scene at fairs across the country. What started with one local county fair in Kentucky has turned into 130 events a year in nine states.

Lewis Cleaver, an ex-pro drag racer, started KOI Drag Racing with one message in mind: It's open to the world, just bring whatever you have.

"We've got so many people doing this, I mean, I couldn't count the thousands of people we've met," Cleaver said. "Once people come out and do these events, they travel with us to other events. If we race five nights a week



KOI Drag Racing is coming to the West End Fair. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

we've got guys that will be there all five nights."

On Monday, registration will open at 5 p.m., two hours before the event. For a not-so-action-packed two hours, Cleaver and his team work to get every participant registered and placed in their designated class. ATV Classes are \$10 each, and diesel trucks are \$20, according to Cleaver.

In 14 years, Cleaver said the only thing that

has changed is the classes.

"People like the way we run it, we're very user friendly," Cleaver said, "Somebody can bring their vehicle in and not know what class to go in, well that's what we're there for. Even if we don't have a class for it, we'll make classes for it."

Once 7 p.m. rolls around, the action revs up with the first round of engines. Spectators can let their expectations go

as the show is constantly changing. With over 250 to 300 entries a night, Cleaver said races go back and forth between ATVs, side by sides, diesel trucks, modified trucks and a variety of other vehicles.

"If you're participating you can run anything and everything. It's just a good family fun event," Cleaver said.

More about KOI Drag Racing can be found at koidrageracing.com.

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Agri-Golf offers free activities for children

ESMERALDA HERNANDEZ
 TNEDITOR@TNONLINE.COM

When Lee Andrews' 6-year-old son came to him with the idea for a fun learning attraction, the longtime fair performer was shocked, inspired and proud all at once.

After a year of traveling to more than 80 midways across the country, Agri-Golf became a huge success, and will be making an appearance at the West End Fair.

A collaboration of agriculture and golf, Agri-Golf offers a unique family bonding experience that's entertaining and educating.

The nine-hole LED miniature golf course features a state agricultural fact at each hole, a custom radio station with family-friendly music and professional child entertainers to keep kids engaged and parents sane.



Agri-Golf will be free to fairgoers. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"It's been a resounding success. When it's on the fairgrounds, it is a staple for family and friends to come over and play," Andrews said. "It's also a great spot for parents to relax and take a break from the hustle and bustle of the fair."

In addition to the free mini-golf course, Agri-Golf and their entertainers will host the Goofy-

Golf Games each day at the West End Fair. Kids can compete and win prizes by answering agricultural fact-based questions about Pennsylvania agriculture.

"The most rewarding part is seeing kids come in and, one, be successful at playing miniature golf, and two, when they answer those agricultural fact questions correct-

ly," Andrews said. "It's reaffirming to us that our teaching method is working, even when they're not realizing they're being taught."

Andrews created his first circus character at 3 years old, a foundation on which he would build his career. In 2004, he started performing in a comedy, magic and juggling show and has since strived to add more attractions to the fairgrounds.

"Agriculture as a whole is an important and integral part of the bones and makeup of a fair," Andrews said. "We've always wanted to create an attraction that would educate younger people, so when my son came up with the idea, that was our spark to start something."

Agri-Golf will be available to fairgoers for free daily at the fair.



ELEPHANT EARS A FAIR HIGHLIGHT

The Elephant Ears stand owned by the Hintons is one of the busiest food stands at the West End Fair. The sweet fried dough can be topped with marinara sauce or puddings and fruit toppings. The frozen hot chocolate is popular too. The Hintons have run the stand for 44 years now. TIMES NEWS FILE PHOTO

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Rick K brings high-energy rock to the stage

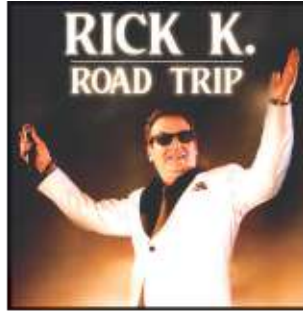
ESMERALDA HERNANDEZ
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With generations of rock 'n' roll, gospel and jazz musicians behind him, Rick K. is bringing a surge of energy to the main stage of the West End Fair on Monday, Aug. 18.

Growing up with different sounds all around, Rick started playing drums at age 6 and soon transitioned into lead vocals.

Twenty years later, he tours the country with his band. According to Rick, his performances are high energy rock 'n' roll with a modern edge.

"I'm inspired by the classic rock 'n' roll legends,



Rick K.

but also by a lot of modern bands. I'm inspired by the energy of live performances, the stories people tell in their music, and even my family," Rick said. "My wife, Auburn, and my

daughters, Presley, Emily and Annie, are a constant source of inspiration for me."

Fairgoers coming to the 7 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. performances can expect a show that will get them on their feet. Rick likes to get the audience involved and brings a sense of connection to the stage.

"I want people to feel like they're a part of the show, not just watching it," Rick said. "When you're on stage and you see people singing along, dancing and just losing themselves in the music, there's no better feeling.

"That shared energy is

what makes live music so special. It's an escape for me and for the audience, and it's a privilege to be a part of that."

As the show quickly approaches, preparation is a key part in success for this band. With a heavy tour schedule, Rick handles all the logistics first so he can focus on the music.

"My goal is to make sure everyone becomes immersed in the atmosphere, forgets their troubles for a while, and leaves the show with a smile on their face," Rick said.

For a full schedule and more information go to www.rickk.org.

The fair will be rockin' Friday and Saturday

ESMERALDA HERNANDEZ
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The West End Fair has a packed set of Main Stage music performances with a variety of sounds, including pure rock 'n' roll from Katz 22.

Taking the stage Friday, Aug. 22 at 7 and 9 p.m., Katz 22 is a daring rock 'n' roll band that brings energetic performances with iconic classics. According to their website, their performances have "No autotune, no backing tracks, just real, live rock and roll."

The band is made up of four members, drummer John Hawk, bassist Rusty

Fohner, keyboardist Zach Nyce and guitarist Kathy Rimm.

Since 2017, the four bandmates have gathered a growing fan base, and can be followed on Facebook, @katz22band.

The sound of rock 'n' roll will carry into Saturday, Aug. 23 with performances from Mystery City Band on the Main Stage at 2:30 and 4 p.m. Mystery City is a classic rock tribute band, performing across Pennsylvania since the 1980s. Audiences can expect a mix of songs from Aerosmith, David Bowie, Queen, The Sweet, Blondie,



Katz 22 will take the Main Stage at the fair. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ozzy Osbourne and Kiss. 9 p.m.

Later in the night, country fans can make their way toward the Main Stage for the Brian Dean Moore Band at 7 and

A full schedule of main stage and other performances at the West End Fair can be found on thewestendfair.com.

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Pop-punk singer to find his 'Voice' at fair

BY JIM RADENHAUSEN

TNEDITOR@TNONLINE.COM

Jimmy Mowery, a top 24 finalist on NBC's "The Voice" in 2019, will make his West End Fair debut on Monday, Aug. 18.

The pop-punk/pop-rock singer-songwriter, set to perform at 3 and 4:30 p.m., said the crowd "can expect two nonstop, multi-genre sets with some originals thrown in between."

Born and raised in Altoona, Mowery now lives in the neighboring town of Bellwood.

He said he had little interest in playing music before his father was killed in late 1998. Before that he said his life was all about sports.

"When my mom told me that my dad gave up his dream of being a professional singer when I was born it became my goal to finish his story after he passed," Mowery said.

Mowery's parents influenced his early music favorites, which included Kiss, Bon Jovi, Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston and Taylor Dayne. Mowery's grandfather listened to country radio station Froggy 98, introducing his grandson to Garth Brooks and Tim McGraw.

As he developed his own tastes, his favorites included pop-punk bands such as Green Day, Fall Out Boy and Blink-182, the latter with whom Mowery sang on stage at a 2017 show. Other favorites included early Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran, Bruno Mars and Florida Georgia Line.

Mowery acquired his first guitar at age 13 and started trying to write songs when he was 15.

At first, Mowery "tried to write what I thought other bands would say, but as I grew up, I got more comfortable with writing honest



Jimmy Mowery

lyrics about my life."

He started playing in his first band, Past Curfew, at age 15. He was a member of Like A Movie from 2004 to 2009, and Wake The Coast from 2010 to 2011.

Mowery and now-wife Heather, in 2011, moved to South Carolina's Myrtle Beach, where they lived through 2021. Mowery played in country cover act The Austin-Mowery Band from 2012 to 2015, also releasing the solo EPs "Jimmy Mowery" and "The Chase" in 2012 and 2014, respectively.

From 2015 to 2020, Mowery played in The New High, a modern-pop cover band. Following 2015 solo singles "There's Not a Reason" and "Disappear" — the latter featuring Will Pugh of pop-punk band Cartel — Mowery has released at least one single per year since 2018.

Mowery, burned out playing three-to-four-hour shows in bars and restaurants, "thought if I could make it onto one of the singing shows, I could take my career to the next level. Get opening slots on tours, co-write with bigger writers, work with bigger producers."

The singer tried out for the competition series "American Idol,"

"America's Got Talent," "The X Factor" and "The Voice." Though he failed to make it through the preliminary rounds for "The Voice," the singer received an email from the show's casting department regarding season 16.

After making "The Voice" top 24, Mowery, whom John Legend had "stolen" from Adam Levine, "thought I'd come home to emails from labels and major booking agencies. But I went right back into the corner of the same bars and restaurants."

Nonetheless, Mowery's experience on "The Voice," concluding with a playoffs performance of 5 Seconds of Summer's "Youngblood," helped his confidence as a singer and person. Levine "hugged me at one point and said something like, 'You belong here just like everyone else. Just be confident.'"

Mowery's post-"Voice" singles include "Ghost of You" — about his dad — plus "Drink to Remember" and "Waiting For You," the latter a collaboration with David Campoy released in June.

The songwriter, who in 2024 earned a songwriting degree from Berklee College of Music, feels "Damaged Goods," released in 2022, "could still be a big single. I could always hear someone like Miranda Lambert singing it."

In terms of challenges, "it's a constant battle of time vs. money," said Mowery, who recently taught music as an elementary substitute. "In the summer, I'm playing a ton of shows, so I'm doing OK financially, but have no time to write/record and promote new music."

In the winter, he can spend time on his craft and hopes to release more singles. "I have about 12 demos I'd love to finish and put out."

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Dan & Galla bring upbeat music from '50s, '60s, '70s

Dan & Galla will bring their unique music to the West End Fair from Wednesday, Aug. 20 through Saturday, Aug. 23.

Dan, from Iowa, started playing piano at age 6. His father started a junior drum and bugle corps in their small town and Dan was one of the first brass players to join.

The Precisionnaires grew to reach 14th in the nation, with Dan contributing musical arrangements and as a frequent featured soloist on baritone bugle. He went on to continue music as a career with several bands in the Midwest and East Coast.

Galla grew up in central Pennsylvania and had an all-girl singing group all through high school, performing at USOs and special events. She eventually cofounded the bluegrass/swing band that took her to Nashville.

They were the house band at the Maxwell House Hotel and the downtown Hyatt Regency, making TV appearances and lots of contacts. One of those connections sent the trio to Clear Lake, Iowa, and serendipity, where they met up with just the keyboard/vocalist and drummer they were looking for: Dan and his brother.

With Dan on keyboards/vocal/trombone and his brother on drums, that 5-piece show band performed in Atlantic City, Caesars, the Midwest and on cruise ships. Dan & Galla, now married, continued as a



Dan & Galla

duo, meeting many wonderful fair people when they performed at the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs state fair convention.

The fairs have kept them busy ever since. The Dan & Galla Musical Show is upbeat, fun and interactive, playing music from the '50s, '60s and '70s, polkas, country, calypso and more. They are fun, spontaneous and never the same twice.

Dan is an excellent keyboard/piano player and may treat the audience to a song or two on the accordion. Both strong singers, Galla doubles on guitar, flute and harmonica.

Dan & Galla will be on the main stage Wednesday at 2 and 3:30 p.m. and will also be a part of the senior show at 5 p.m.

Thursday they are at the band shell at 4 p.m. and Friday at 5 p.m. Look for them also serenading the fairgrounds in their "party cart," with Dan on accordion and Galla playing spoons.

Country-pop singer Grace set for fair return

BY JIM RADENHAUSEN
TNEDITOR@TNONLINE.COM

Stephanie Grace, who has not — no pun intended — graced the West End Fair's Main Stage since her first appearance in 2017, makes her return on Thursday, Aug. 21 to the Gilbert event.

The singer-songwriter, set to perform at 3 and 4:30 p.m., looks forward to “everyone seeing my new band and hearing my new songs. Both sets will include some country, pop and even classic rock covers, in addition to my originals. There will be a little something for everybody.”

Grace, currently living 7 minutes from where she grew up in Douglassville, knew she wanted to pursue music from the moment she first performed in front of a crowd.

“I was 7 years old and it was my first grade school talent show, at Immaculate Conception Academy in Douglassville,” she said. “I was an extremely shy kid, so the stage fright had me in tears prior to taking the stage.”

However, “the moment I faced my fear and felt the thrill of being on stage, I knew I wanted to do it again and again.”

During that time, Carrie Underwood had won “American Idol,” with



Stephanie Grace

Grace cheering her on. “I was blown away by her voice, but also felt she was a relatable sweetheart I wanted to emulate.”

Grace was also listening to Shania Twain on the way to school each morning and “loved how pop her country songs sounded. To this day, they’re both massive influences.”

By age 11, Grace was regularly performing “gigs” with her karaoke machine that her dad would set up.

Once Grace started performing, “I never saw myself doing anything else. And it’s continued to grow in the last 20-plus years — I’m now 28 — from recording my own music in Nashville to performing with an incredibly talented band.”

A key moment in

Grace’s early career came in October 2006, when she was 9. WIOV 105.1, a Lancaster/Ephrata country radio station, held a contest, with Grace winning a pre-opening-act performance slot at FallFest.

West Reading native Taylor Swift, who released her debut single “Tim McGraw” less than four months prior, was the opening act.

“Since she was an up-and-comer, she was incredibly approachable,” Grace said. “She was signing autographs after her set and told a mutual friend at the time that she wanted to meet me.”

The two chatted for a bit. “She strongly encouraged me to start writing my own songs,” Grace said. “I had plenty to write about

as an emotional fourth grader, so I started turning my little diary entries into songs.”

Though Grace has not since re-connected with Swift, “my band and I did get to entertain the Swifties at Xfinity Live a couple years ago when Taylor brought her Eras Tour to Philly. A friend of mine books some of the pre-concert shows at Xfinity and thought we’d be a perfect fit.”

Throughout her career, Grace has self-released three EPs and numerous singles. The biggest challenge, she said, leading up to recording her 2012 debut EP and every EP/single since “is the pressure I put on myself to pick the right song(s).”

She wants to select the ones with the most impact.

As an independent artist, Grace finds it difficult deciding the format in which she should release her music, “especially with trends changing constantly. It seems it went from releasing a full album to only releasing an EP to now just releasing singles. Stay tuned as I figure that out.”

Grace released her latest single “Can’t Relate” in June. Among her favorite singles to date: “Life’s Okay,” the title track of her 2013 EP; 2020’s “Look What I Got,” about her now-husband; and 2022’s “Regardless,” which honors her dad for the father-daughter dance at her October 2021 wedding.

Aside from opening for Swift in 2006, Grace’s career highlights include a national radio tour in 2012, opening for Charlie Daniels in Reading in 2015, and releasing her original music.

Grace wants to “inspire as many people as I can, to show the shy kids out there that you, too, can go after any dream you may have.”

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Bon Jovi tribute to rock the West End Fair

BY JIM RADENHAUSEN
TNEDITOR@TNONLINE.COM

Tribute act Don Jovi will bring Bon Jovi's catalog of hits to the West End Fair's Main Stage on Thursday, Aug. 21.

Don Jovi, marking its West End Fair debut, plans to play distinct shows at 7 and 8:30 p.m. The current band lineup consists of: Don Chaffin, lead vocals; Sean Tarr, lead guitar; Chris Tristram, bass; Nick Troiani, keyboards; and Matt Ricci, drums.

Bon Jovi, formed in Sayreville, New Jersey, in 1983, has 16 studio albums to its credit. The rock band scored its biggest albums success with "Slippery When Wet" and "New Jersey," released in 1986 and 1988, respectively. Combined, the sets sold more than 22 million copies domestically.

Bon Jovi scored four No. 1 singles on Billboard's Hot 100 chart: "You Give Love a Bad Name," "Livin' on a Prayer," "Bad Medicine" and "I'll Be There For You." Other hits include "Runaway," "Wanted Dead or Alive," "Born to be My Baby," "Bed of Roses" and "Always."

Chaffin cited "Blaze of Glory," Bon Jovi frontman Jon Bon Jovi's 1990 No. 1 solo single, as one of his favorite songs to perform.

Born in Bay Shore, New York, and raised in Lindenhurst, New York, Chaffin knew at a young age that he wanted to pursue music.

"Watching 'Don Kirshner's Rock Concert' and 'The Midnight Special' with my



Don Jovi will make its West End Fair debut this year. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

parents on TV, specifically Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis and Chuck Berry. That original inspiration stuck with me as I then got into Kiss, Led Zeppelin, Van Halen, etc."

Chaffin recalls his first public performance occurring when he was 14, with the band Smokey Rose in front of the House of Music store in West Babylon, New York. He went on to play in a number of bands thereafter.

"I'm still active with Voices of Extreme, which started back in 2004 and has now secured a new record deal and will be releasing a new album shortly. Red Lamb is no longer active, but I'm proud to be a part of that as it included Dave Mustaine and Dan Spitz."

Ram Jam, he continued, "is no longer active, but I'm equally proud to be a part

of that and the friendship and partnership with Jerry Kasenetz and Jeff Katz. Riot Act may still be doing some music and performing in the future, as well as Road Crew."

The name and idea of the Don Jovi band, Chaffin said, came about 15 or 20 years ago, "as I was constantly compared to looking very similar to Jon." The band, though, he added, formed in 2023 in Long Island, New York.

As far as Chaffin knows, Don Jovi members have not interacted with any member of Bon Jovi.

Aside from Don Jovi, Chaffin performs in a special-

ty Legends of Rock show, now called Bon Halen. The show features Don Jovi and Chaffin's friend Gene Henriksen, of the Van Halen tribute band Completely Unchained.

In terms of career highlights, Chaffin feels "blessed to have friends and industry veterans that I work with such as Debbie Gibson, Nicko McBrain, Dave Mustaine, Dan Spitz, Jerry Kasenetz, Mark Rivera, etc."

Furthermore, "I look forward to continuing to work at a high level in this industry with both my original music and touring the world with Don Jovi."

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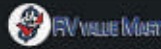
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