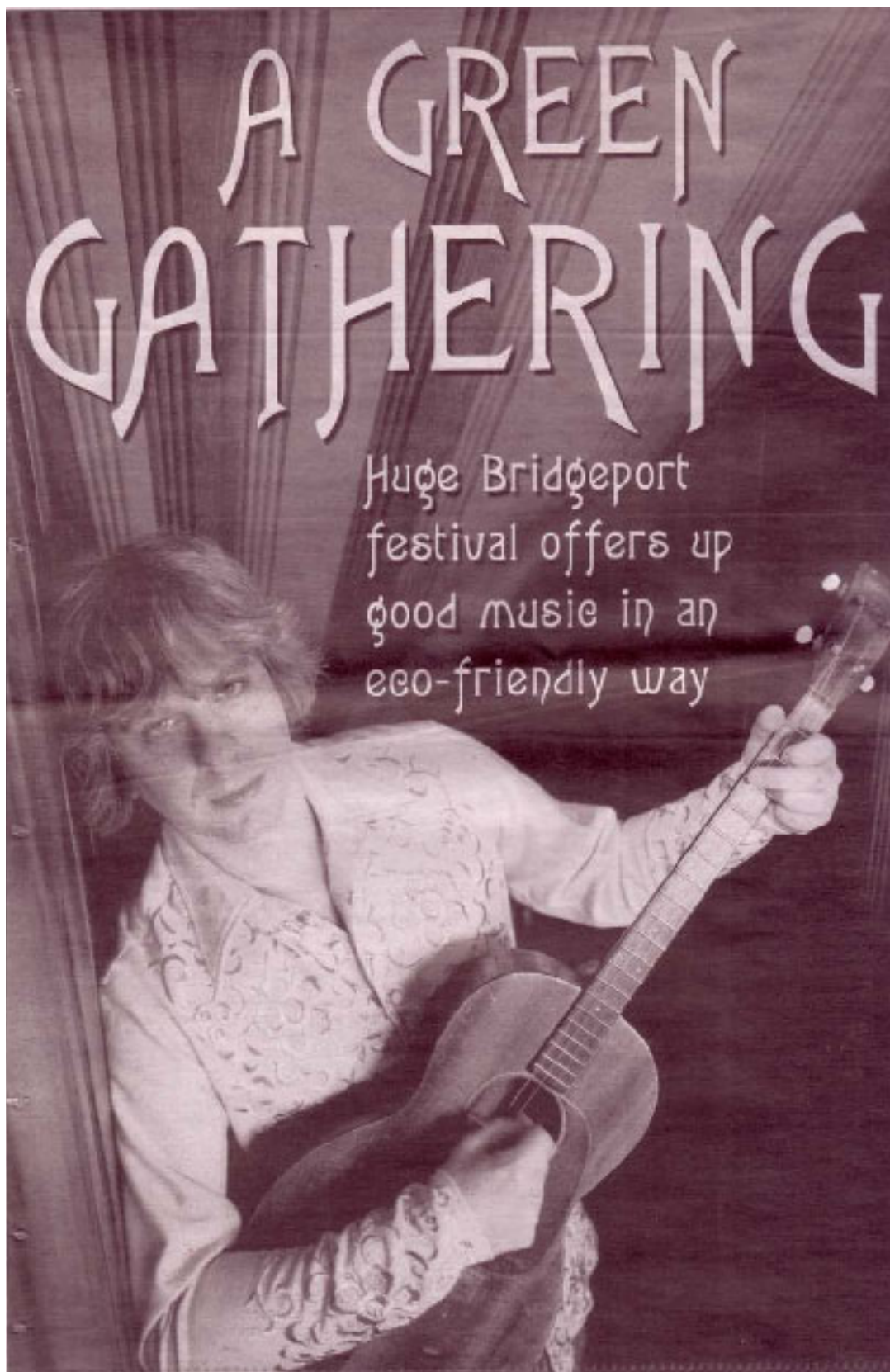


# New Haven Register

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## A GREEN GATHERING

Huge Bridgeport festival offers up good music in an eco-friendly way

By Phyllis Swebilius  
Register Staff

**BRIDGEPORT** — Ken Hays was inspired by the late Jerry Garcia's music, but the other Deadheads go into Hays' soul, and now Hays carries that into the Green Age with an environmentally friendly rock festival.

Hays, 43, is the owner of Gathering of the Vibes, a festival that began 13 years ago as a tribute to Garcia, frontman of the Grateful Dead. Hays has just signed a contract with the city to keep the event in Bridgeport for five years.

Hays loved the songs that came from Garcia's collaboration with Robert Hunter.

"The depth of their lyrics, intertwined with Jerry's unique style, opened my eyes to music for the first time," he says. "Social activism comes from the type of community that surrounds the Grateful Dead."

Hays, who is expecting up to 25,000 people daily this week end at Seaside Park, says the undertaking is enormous.

While there will be thousands eating, sleeping and partying on 370 acres facing Long Island Sound, he says the issue is

arranging to stage the biggest camping music festival in the Tri-State area in an eco-friendly way.

"I don't want to be a hypocrite, but can we try to limit [the carbon] footprint?" he asks.

A carbon footprint is the total of all greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, that are emitted by activities in a specific period.

Hays says his resolve to help the environment is a reflection of the music world.

"Especially in the rock 'n' roll community, these artists are really committed," he explains.

Hays sees the environmental movement from the perspective of an individual identifying one activity that will make a change.

"What can we do to conserve in our daily lives to help protect the Earth?" he asks. "If we can do that, then we are well on our way. Our job here is to educate and hopefully inspire them to create change."

### MAKING IT GREEN

To give him a hand, Hays has hired Clean Vibes of Marion, N.C., for the ninth year.

Anna Borofsky of Clean Vibes

Phish bass player Mike Gordon is just one of the many big-name artists taking up residency in Bridgeport this weekend for Gathering of the Vibes.

Register

### GREEN NOTEBOOK



Vanguard

Bridgeport's own The Alternate Routes performs at the Vibes Saturday.

will bring a crew of 12 paid staff members and up to 80 volunteers to "handle all things waste management," she says.

Clean Vibes sets up garbage and recycling containers, distributes plastic bags for trash, educates the attendees about recycling and cleans up all weekend, including the campgrounds and the concert field. Park City sanitation trucks go through the site every day.

When the fans leave, Borofsky says, her crew and the city sanitation clean the entire site.

"It's a great partnership between the city workers and our company," she explains.

Their work earned the praise of Paul Albuquerque, an acting supervisor for the city roadway operations.

"Last year, they actually formed a line across the whole field and they picked up everything, right down to the cigarette butts," he recalls.

In Bridgeport, Borofsky esti-

mates they will collect 60 to 80 tons of trash and 10 to 20 tons of recycling. All of it is processed by the city.

The Clean Vibes mission is to "inspire and educate a new generation of responsible stewards." It aims to decrease the amount of trash in landfills and incinerators by increasing the amount of recyclables collected and delivered to recycling centers.

Borofsky has an "amazing team of people who don't get paid a lot, but their payment is knowing they've made a difference," Hays says.

The result, he explains, is "we've minimized our impact (on the environment)."

#### COMMITTED TO SOCIAL CAUSES

Hays' social consciousness extends all across the festival.

First, there is the food collection. Last year's audience donated 3,500 to 4,000 pounds of nonperishables, which were given to some local food banks.

"We want to double that this year," Hays says.

Also, about 40 nonprofits are expected to staff information booths. "Groups are asked to give the attendees information on where we are in sustainable technology; five years ago, today and five years from now," he says.

Some examples of Hays' envi-

Vegetarian Cooking Since 1975  
Cool Indoor Dining or  
Al Fresco Under Our Awning Watching the  
Summer Action in Downtown New Haven



## IF YOU GO

- **Event:** Gathering of the Vibes
- **When:** Noon to 12:45 a.m. today; 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Saturday; 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday
- **Place:** Seaside Park, 1 Barnum Dyke, Bridgeport
- **Tickets:** \$195 (all weekend, with camping); \$175 (weekend, no camping); \$80 for single-day tickets
- **Info:** (203) 908.3030, [www.gatheringofthevibes.com](http://www.gatheringofthevibes.com)

ronmentally friendly initiatives are:

- To encourage use of mass transit, there are shuttles from the bus and Metro-North stations and the Port Jefferson ferry, satellite parking lots and local hotels.
- "All vendors have the most environmentally conscious products out there; no polystyrene," Hays says. For example, beer must be sold in compostable cups made of corn resin.

■ To foster carpooling, Hays is offering a discount for people driving with three or more in a vehicle.

■ The festival has bought renewable energy credits that support the growth of wind and solar-energy options.

■ Attendees are advised on the Vibes Web site to bring reusable water bottles; avoid bringing individually wrapped food; buy reusable products instead of disposable; bring bags for garbage and recycling; avoid Styrofoam coolers; bring an ashtray; consider borrowing camping equipment, and if they have to buy new gear, to recycle the box before they arrive. Glass bottles are not allowed.

And finally, "to avoid bringing unnecessary items that become pesky waste, such as Silly String, confetti, balloons and packing peanuts."

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