

# gO

NIGHTLIFE  
EVENTS  
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DINING  
EXHIBITS

7.23.09

'GATHERING  
OF THE  
VIBES'  
JAMMING  
AT SEASIDE  
PARK AGAIN



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# Seaside VIBES

Leno announcer  
John Melendez brings  
his stand-up act to  
Stratford and Danbury.

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Rocker Lita Ford is all  
revved up about her return.

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'Enchanted' evening  
in Ridgefield  
for screening.

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# Cover story

BY SEAN SPILLANE  
STAFF WRITER

There have been many changes to the Gathering of the Vibes since its start 14 years ago, from the services offered to festivalgoers to the very lineup of musical acts.

Once almost exclusively geared toward the fans of the jam-band scene, the Vibes now encompasses many genres of music during the four days each summer it springs up in Bridgeport's Seaside Park.

Of course, a festival that

started as a tribute to the late Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia still will have plenty to satisfy the most ardent Deadheads, including another visit from Dead singer-guitarist Bob Weir and his band, Ratdog. Former Dead member Donna Jean Godchaux also returns, as does Dead cover bands Dark Star Orchestra and Max Creek.

And there will be plenty of jam bands that are now carrying on the traditions of The Grateful Dead.

But there's much more variety on tap.

You like the blues? It

doesn't get much better than the legendary Buddy Guy, who will be at the Vibes Sunday.

Feeling funky? George Clinton and P-Funk takes the stage Friday night, followed by Bridgeport's Deep Banana Blackout, a longtime favorite of the Vibe Tribe, as the attendees are known.

If Americana music is your thing, the great Levon Helm will perform with his band Saturday, right before Weir and Ratdog.

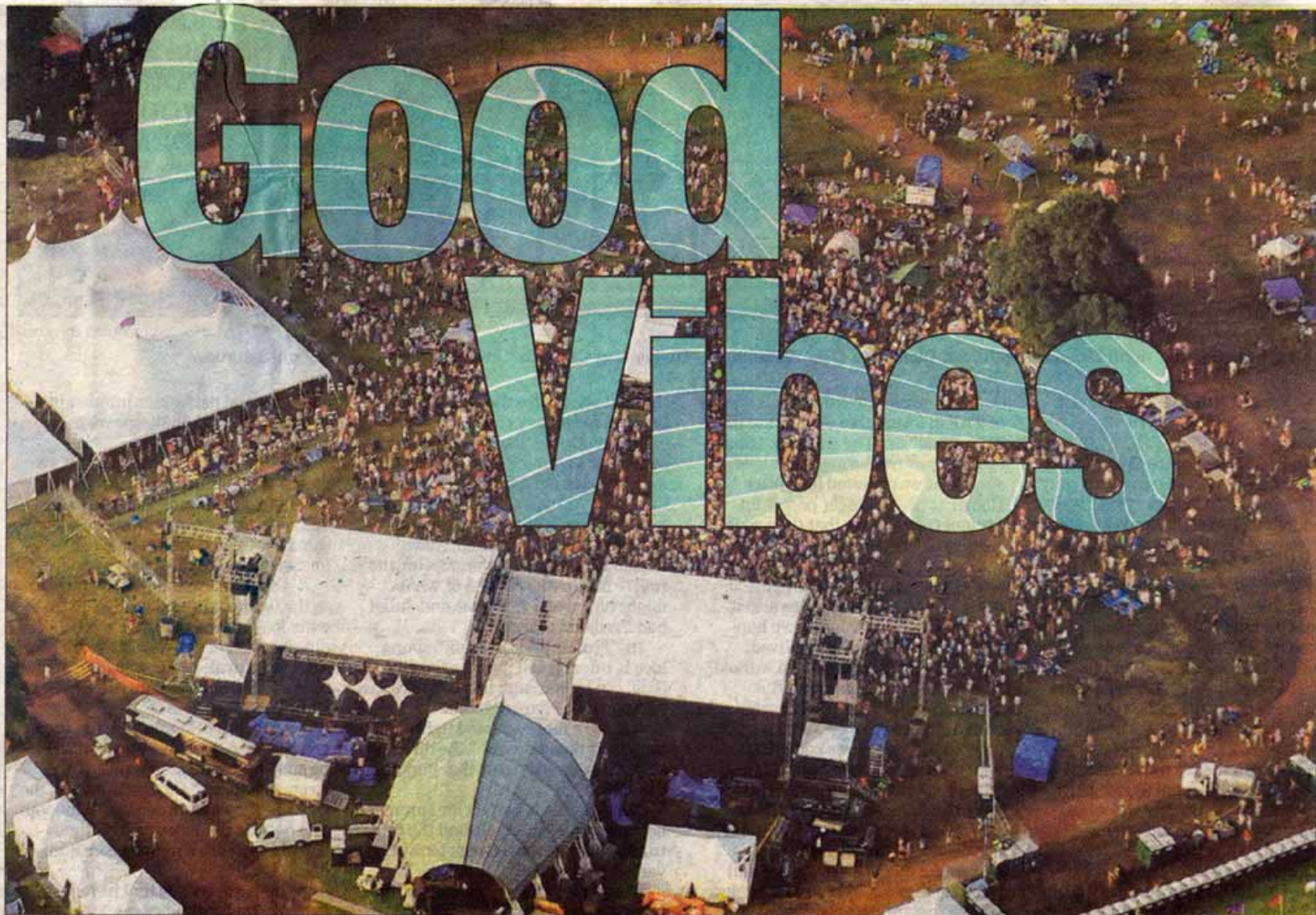
The Vibes also has many local and regional acts performing on the main stages and on



CHRISTIAN ABRAHAM/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

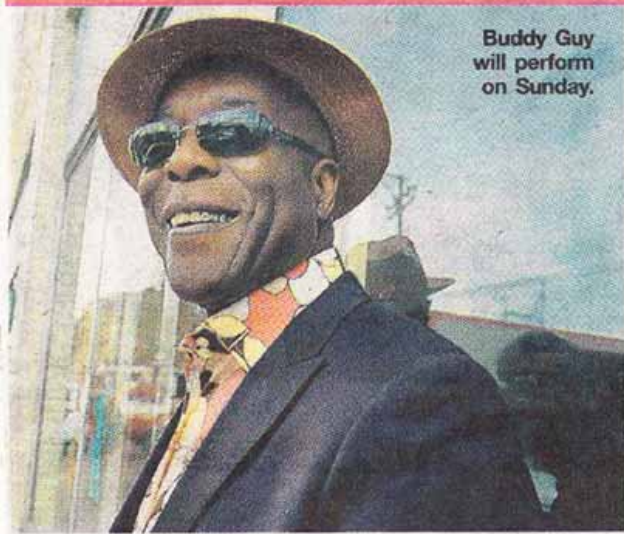
Sefra Levin of Westport served as the Hospitality Guru at the Solar Stage at Vibes 2008.

## FESTIVAL RETURNS TO SEASIDE, WITH EMPHASIS ON MUSICAL VARIETY, FAMILIES



MORGAN KAOLIAN/AEROFIX

Aerial views from the Gathering of the Vibes concert in Bridgeport at Seaside Park last year.



**Buddy Guy**  
will perform  
on Sunday.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

the Green Vibes Stage, which is partially solar-powered.

Aside from the musical acts, there has been a subtler change that has taken place at the Vibes over the years and that is in the dynamic of the audiences. Where it once was rather limited in scope — with mostly young fans enjoying four days of music and camping — it is now an event that is attracting larger numbers of families.

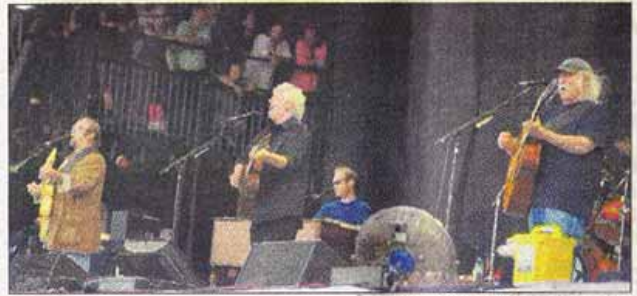
Vibes founder Ken Hays has recognized this trend and has altered his planning to meet this growing demographic, boosting the amount of activities for kids and turning Sunday into a family day.

"Last year, we had around 1,200 kids under the age of 13 years old come with their parents," Hays said. "We have amazing kids' activities and it's a great opportunity for parents to bond with their kids."

"For me, it was Shea Stadium with my dad. For others, this is a great way to do that."

Once again, the Vibes will feature a designated family camping area, and there will be Kids' Corner, with fun and games, and Teen Scene, complete with musical instruction, jam sessions and other activities.

New to the fest this year are three late-night concerts, but they are available only to



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**Crosby, Stills and Nash, at the Vibes Sunday, performs at the 2009 Glastonbury Festival in Somerset, England, above.**

campers and VIP ticketholders, as are all of Thursday's opening-day events. These shows — Pink Floyd tribute band The Machine on Thursday, Lettuce on Friday and Perpetual Groove on Saturday — will take place at 1:30 a.m., well after the festival's main events have finished.

This year's Vibes also pays tribute to the most fabled of all music festivals, Woodstock, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this summer.

"I felt that it was important to take a step back and acknowledge and pay tribute to the Woodstock festival that happened 40 years ago," said Hays, 44, a Greenwich native. "So much has changed that it's good to take pause and reflect on the social and community involvement of that time."

Several performers at this year's Vibes also played Woodstock, including Weir and The Grateful Dead, Helm with The Band and Crosby, Stills and Nash, who were joined by Neil Young at Woodstock. Another Woodstock survivor, Jack Casady, the bass player for Jefferson Airplane, will be at the Vibes Saturday with the band Moby.

One more final shared trait between the two festivals is the presence of the inimitable Wavy Gravy, the master of ceremonies at Woodstock and a fixture at many past Vibes. In addition to his duties entertaining the crowds, Wavy Gravy, a minister in the Universal Life Church, also has found the time to preside over a few weddings during his appearances at the Vibes.

## THURSDAY

### Main Stages

- 5:30 p.m. — P.J. Pacifico
- 7:15 — Donna Jean Godchaux Band
- 9 — Dark Star Orchestra
- 1:30 a.m. — The Machine

### Green Vibes Stage

- 11 a.m. — Steal Your Face
- 12:45 p.m. — Matt Turk and the Hobo Caravan
- 2:30 — Reckoning
- 4:15 — These United States
- 6 — Jennie Arnau

## FRIDAY

### Main Stages

- Noon — King for a Day
- 1:45 p.m. — Strangefolk
- 3:30 — JJ Grey and Mofro
- 5:15 — Keller Williams and MDS

- 7 — George Clinton and P-Funk
- 8:45 p.m. — Deep Banana Blackout
- 10:30 — moe.
- 1:30 a.m. — Lettuce

### Green Vibes Stage

- 11 a.m. — Tao Rodriguez-Seeger
- 12:45 p.m. — Klyph Black
- 2:30 — Commear
- 4:15 — Big Moon
- 6 — Chris Barron

■ denotes shows for campers and VIP ticketholders only

## SATURDAY

### Main Stages

- 11 a.m. — Moonalice
- 12:30 p.m. — Ryan Montbleau Band

- 2 — Assembly of Dust
- 3:45 — Max Creek
- 5:30 — State Radio
- 7 — Guster

- 8:45 — Levon Helm Band
- 10:30 — Bob Weir and Ratdog
- 1:30 a.m. — Perpetual Groove

### Green Vibes Stage

- 11 a.m. — Band Together
- 12:45 p.m. — Tom Crowley and the Speakers
- 2:30 — Jaimoe's Jassz Band
- 4:15 — Queen Killing Kings
- 6 — Pimps of Joy Time
- 7:45 — David Gans

## SUNDAY

### Main Stages

- 11 a.m. — World Peace Prayer
- 11:20 — Harlem Gospel Choir
- 12:45 p.m. — John Brown's Body

- 2:30 — Grace Potter and the Nocturnals
- 4:15 — Buddy Guy
- 6 — Crosby, Stills and Nash

### Green Vibes Stage

- Noon — Blues and Lasers
- 1:45 p.m. — Daria Musk
- 3:30 — McLovins



Gathering of the Vibes takes place Thursday through Sunday at Seaside Park, foot of Park Avenue, Bridgeport. (203) 908-3030, [www.gatheringofthevibes.com](http://www.gatheringofthevibes.com).

AUTUMN PINETTE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A scene from last summer's Gathering of the Vibes in Bridgeport.