



Crosby, Stills and Nash will be the closing act on Sunday, July 26, for the annual Gathering of the Vibes Festival.

Gathering of the Vibes

The music continues at Seaside Park

by JEANNETTE ROSS

Take some new rock, old rock, add some blues, funk, reggae and gospel, mix with the spirit of Jerry Garcia, pay tribute to the 40-year legend of Woodstock and you have an idea what the Gathering of the Vibes festival is all about.

It's where music lovers will want to be Thursday through Sunday, July 23-26, at Seaside Park in Bridgeport. (Ticket information, the musical lineup, and other details can be found at gatheringofthevibes.com.)

The weekend celebration will open with Norwalk's P.C. Pacifico on the Main Stage at 5:30 on Thursday and close with Crosby, Stills & Nash on Sunday at 6. In between festival-goers will hear Bob Weir of the Grateful Dead; Levon Helm, former drummer and vocalist for The Band; progressive reggae artists John Brown's Body; neoclassic rockers Grace Potter and the Nocturnals; and blues guitarist Buddy Guy; indie rockers Tate Radio and Guster; funk's George Clinton; and the Harlem Gospel Choir among many others. Pulling it all together will be the irrepressible Wavy Gravy, back for his seventh gig as master of ceremonies.

In addition to two music venues, there will be food and craft vendors, a Kids Corner, Teen Scene, and the Green Vibes Awareness Village where people can learn about environmental initiatives and the work done by local charities. Festival-goers are asked to bring a donation of non-perishable food for a food pantry collection.

Now in its 14th year, Gathering of the Vibes has been organized as a family-friendly event. To further that goal, children 15 and under will

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Norwalk's P.J. Pacifico, above, will open the Main Stage performances on Thursday, July 23, at 5:30 and the inimitable Wavy Gravy, right, will emcee the events.

The vibes will be good at Seaside Park festival

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be admitted free with their parents on Sunday, July 26. Last year, 1,600 children under 15 came to the festival, said Ken Hays of Weston, executive director of Gathering of the Vibes.

"I think that's a testament to the overall well-being of Gathering of the Vibes," Mr. Hays said. "So many parents feel it's an incredible bonding experience. There's such diversity of entertainment and they can just leave the daily grind behind."

The festival is being held at Seaside Park, a 370-acre expanse with more than two miles of coastline. There are beaches, sports fields, hiking trails, ample parking, and campsites. Many of the festival-goers, known as the Vibe Tribe, will be camping out for the weekend. For them, late-night shows from 1:30 to 3 a.m., are planned Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights on the Main Stage.

The festival began as a tribute to the late Jerry Garcia, leader of the Grateful Dead. Mr. Hays admits to being a Deadhead, having attended some 370 concerts from 1985 through 1995. "The

Grateful Dead had something no other band had," Mr. Hays said. They were one of the few bands that would allow fans to record their concerts and swap tapes. "There are many bands with a deep sense of community and love of music, but nothing like the Grateful Dead."

Mr. Garcia died in 1995. "When Jerry passed away they had a beautiful tribute in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco," Mr. Hays recalled. When the City of New York nixed a similar festival, Mr.

Gathering of the Vibes takes place July 23-26 at Seaside Park in Bridgeport. Music on the Main Stage goes from 5:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. on Thursday; noon to 1 a.m. on Friday; 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. on Saturday; and 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Sunday. There will be performances from 1:30 a.m. to 3 a.m. or so on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Music on the Green Vibes stage is scheduled for 11 a.m. to 7:10 p.m. on Thursday; 11 a.m. to 7:15 p.m. on Friday; 11 a.m. to 8:40 p.m. on Saturday; and noon to 4:30 p.m. on Sunday.

Single-day tickets for Friday, Saturday, or Sunday are \$60 in advance. A weekend pass, which offers camping privileges, is \$185 in advance. A VIP pass, good for the

weekend and including perks such as a Concert Field Hospitality Tent, catered lunch on Friday and Saturday, and brunch on Sunday is \$420. A Kids VIP pass is \$125. A Sunday VIP pass is \$125, and a Kids VIP Sunday pass is \$40.

Access to the music on Thursday night is available only to those with a VIP pass or a weekend pass with a \$20 surcharge.

Complete ticket information is online at gatheringofthevibes.com. WPKN Radio (89.5 FM in Bridgeport and wpkn.org) will carry music from the festival as well as studio programming throughout the Gathering of the Vibes.

Hays and some friends organized their own memorial — Deadhead Heaven, A Gathering of the Tribe — held that year at SUNY Purchase.

"We had about 3,500 people," Mr. Hays said. "We had great music and fellowship." The following year the name was changed to Gathering of the Vibes. The festival has taken place in a number of locales, but Seaside Park has been a favorite. Daily attendance has climbed to 20,000.

You don't have to be a Deadhead nor a Woodstock fanatic to enjoy Gathering of the Vibes. "We wanted to pay tribute to the 40th anniversary of Woodstock. It wasn't just a concert, it was a cultural and societal movement," Mr. Hays said. "To reflect on that is important."

It was at Woodstock that Crosby, Stills & Nash first played together. Also on stage was The Band, and Wavy Gravy was there, too, helping to hold the security together with his fellow members of

the Hog Farm Collective.

While a music festival in and of itself isn't easy on the environment, Vibes organizers have taken steps to mediate their carbon footprint through an initiative called Green Vibes. The Green Vibes stage, separate from the Main Stage, will be powered in part by solar energy. There will be a Green Vibes Awareness Village near the stage where people may learn about alternative energy solutions through exhibits and talks. "It's a non-biased, factual space where you can gain knowledge and take that back home with you and implement it in your day-to-day life," Mr. Hays said.

The Green Vibes stage will not be empty, with a diverse lineup of musicians planned from a founding member of the Allman Brothers Band to local performers from Connecticut and New York including Chris Barron, Jennie Arnau, Matt Turk & the Hobo Caravan, and Daria Musk.

"Something we focus on every year is to try to integrate what the teenage kids like, which I refer to as new school and give the old fogies — old school — something they like," Mr. Hays said. "There's truly something for everyone, and that's true for the kids, too."