

102nd ANNUAL



August 18-24, 2024



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A special supplement of **TIMES NEWS** and **LEHIGH VALLEY PRESS LVP**

# What's happening at the 102nd West End Fair

The West End Fair opens Sunday, Aug. 18, and continues through Saturday, Aug. 24. Admission is \$8 for ages 11 and older and free for 10 and under.

Located in Gilbert at the West End Fairgrounds, the fair offers rides, entertainment, live music, food, historic exhibits, flowers, quilts, demolition derbies and a rodeo.

The fair kicks off with opening ceremonies, crowning of the fair queen, classic country and gospel music and a spectacular fireworks display.

On Monday, enjoy free rides from 2 to 6 p.m.

Tuesday morning is sensory friendly day for people who are sensitive to lights and noise. Rides will be offered as well as fair activities from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

When gates open to the public at 2 p.m. it's Military Appreciation Day. Admission is free for all military personnel with a valid ID.

Senior Citizens Day is on Wednesday Aug. 21. Guests 65 years and older can enter the fair for just \$4.

On Thursday, Aug. 22, students with a valid ID can enter the fair for just \$4.

On Friday, admission is half-price from 2 to 4 p.m.



Cramer Brothers Band will play Aug. 19 at 7 and 8:30 p.m.

Throughout the week visitors can stop at the fair museum to learn about the rich history of the West End, see unique handmade craft tent and visit the animals to learn about agriculture.

Watch a wood carver as he makes unique designs and take part in the auction on Saturday.

Arena events include: quarter midget racing, demolition derbies, Black Cat Hell Drivers, truck and tractor pulls and a Bullride Mania rodeo.

Here is the schedule for the week:

**Sunday, Aug. 18**  
Main arena: 11 a.m.,

Quarter Midget Racing  
**Main stage:** 3 p.m., Opening Ceremony / Queen Coronation; 4 p.m., vesper service; 7 p.m. and 8:30 p.m., Chris Eckert

Arena hub: 3 p.m., Kid's Pedal Pull

Bandshell: 3 p.m., PV Clubs Cheerleading, and 7 p.m., Cartesion Dance Academy

Main arena: 9:30 p.m., Fireworks

**Monday, Aug. 19**  
Free rides 2-6 p.m.

**Main stage:** 3 and 4:15 p.m., Last One Standing; 7 and 8:30 p.m., The Cramer Brothers Band

Bandshell: 5:30 p.m., PV Band

Main arena: 7 p.m., 1980 & Newer Full Size, Feature only Stock Junk Car Race, \$12 admission.

**Tuesday, Aug. 20**  
**Sensory Day:** 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Military: Free admission for all military with ID

Main stage: 3 and 4 p.m., The Rehrig Brothers; The Mahoney Brothers at 7 p.m., Long Live the Beatles at 7 p.m.

Bandshell: 5:30 p.m., East Stroudsburg South HS Band

Main arena: 7 p.m., Demo Derby, Small Car, Mid Size and Power Wheels. Admission is \$12.

**Wednesday, Aug. 21**  
**Senior citizens' day:**  
Admission \$4 (65 years of age or older)

Main arena: 10 a.m.,

Antique Tractor Pull

Ag area: 11:30 a.m.,

Livestock Judging

Main stage: 3 and 4:30 p.m., Blue Angel Roy Orbison Tribute by Terry Harris; 5:30 p.m., senior program; 7 and 8:30 p.m., Jack & Davis Reid, grandchildren of the Statler Bros.

Bandshell: 6 p.m., De Nogia Academy of Irish Dance

Arena: 7 p.m., Demo Derby for Big Car/Mini SUVs, Full Size Trucks. \$15.

**Thursday, Aug. 22**  
**Students' Day:**  
Admission \$4 with school photo ID

See **HAPPENING** on Page 3

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# The Honky Tonk Twins ready for some fair weather

The Honky Tonk Twins are returning to the West End Fair this year and are hoping for better weather than their appearance last year in the pouring rain.

“We had a few amazingly faithful people who braved the storm — staying under their umbrellas and ponchos for the whole show — who we were VERY grateful for last year,” said twin Jessica Snyder.

The duo will perform at 2 and 4 p.m. Aug. 22.

OK, they’re not really twins.

Snyder and Willie Barry are both from Frederick, Maryland, are both the same age, and have both been pursuing their solo careers since their early teens.

“Willie and I truly enjoy walking down memo-



Jessica Snyder and Willie Barry are the Honky Tonk Twins.

ry lane with our audiences and seeing them sing along with favorites that they may not have heard in some time. We focus on lots of the great duets, like “Louisiana Woman, Mississippi Man” by Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn, “Golden Rings” by George

Jones and Tammy Wynette, “Jackson” by Johnny Cash and June Carter-Cash, “Holdin’ On To Nothin’” by Dolly Parton and Porter Wagoner and many more,” Snyder said.

Beloved female artists include Patsy Cline with “Crazy” and her other hits,

“Harper Valley P.T.A.” by Jeannie C. Riley, Lynn Anderson’s “Rose Garden,” “Once A Day” by Connie Smith, “These Boots are Made for Walking” by Nancy Sinatra, and other favorites. Barry enjoys performing “Jambalaya” by Hank Williams, “Hello Walls” by Faron Young, Elvis Presley’s “Kiss Me Quick,” “Act Naturally” by Buck Owens and Charley Pride’s “Kiss an Angel Good Morning.”

“Audience members are sure to remember many of the songs we do and will be able to find something they enjoy in each set. With some costume changes and playful banter mixed into our shows as well, there is always laughter and fun to be had, and we can’t wait to share that with our audiences this year,” Snyder said.

## HAPPENING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Games: Ag Ed Arena at 3 p.m.

Agricultural area: 10 a.m., Halter Class Horse Judging, Driving & Trail Classes to follow

Bandshell: 2 and 4 p.m., Stacy Gable — Children’s Music; 6 p.m., Levels Dance Studio

Main stage: 3 and 5 p.m., The Honky Tonk Twins; 7 and 8:30 p.m., Burn the Jukebox, Variety, Tik-Tok Sensation Band

Main arena: 8 p.m., Black Cat Hell Drivers, stunt show. \$16 or \$50 for family of four.

### Friday, Aug. 23

**Main stage:** 3 and 4 p.m., Steel Creek Band; 7 and 9 p.m., Lovelace — The Seventies Band

Bandshell: 6 p.m., Cartesion Dance Academy

Main arena: 6 p.m., 6200 Modified 4x4 East Coast PPL, Interstate Sanctioned Two Wheel Drive Trucks. \$15.

### Saturday, Aug. 24

**Livestock Area:** 10 a.m., Livestock Auction

Main arena: Noon, Lorah’s

Garden Tractor Pulls

Main stage: 2:30 and 4 p.m., Whiskey Mansion; 5 p.m., wood carving auction; 7 and 9 p.m., Brian Dean Moore

Band

Bandshell: 6 p.m., Fusia Dance Center  
Main arena: 7:30 p.m., Bullride Mania Rodeo, \$15.



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# Eckert is a steady voice on the fair stage

**BY MARTA GOUGER**  
MGOUGER@TNONLINE.COM

Need to know something about entertainers at the fair?

Chris Eckert can tell you.

He's the emcee for the fair, introducing all the acts who appear on stage.

He'll start off the fair with the opening and the fair queen and move on through the week to the wood carving auction and the last band Saturday night, Brian Dean Moore.

Eckert will also take the stage himself for his traditional country and gospel sets at 7 and 8:30 p.m. Sunday.

The former West End fire chief got noticed when he would emcee the now defunct fire company carnival. The fair approached him and he was happy to oblige since he hasn't missed a fair.

Nine years ago, he retired and moved to Wellsboro but he is back every year. He and his wife and their dog are on the road for five months, as he also performs at fairs in Potter and Tioga counties, Plainfield, Jersey Shore, Greene Dreher Sterling and



Chris Eckert

Indiana, Pa.

The classic country songs always include songs by George Jones, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings and Johnny Cash.

"I always have to do a George Jones song," he said. At one fair he forgot and apologized the next day and quickly made up for it.

The rural fairs have

quite a classic country following, especially with young people. "These kids growing up on farms and competing in tractor pulls, know the old songs by heart," Eckert said.

Everyone knows Cash's iconic "Ring of Fire." At the West End Fair there's a walkway between the stage and the audience. When he's performing the classic,

he'll see people stop in the middle and start mouthing the words to the song. "Young people come up to me and ask me to do the song," he said.

But his heart is in the gospel songs. "I've been blessed," he said. "This summer I am doing about 100 shows."

"Amazing Grace" and "How Great Thou Art" are beloved. Others that move people include "Softly and Tenderly," "Heaven Just Got Sweeter for You" and "Never Too Broken to Belong."

"Heaven Just Got Sweeter for You" is about a loved one passing and waiting for their relative.

"When I sing it I see people crying," he said. They'll come up afterward and say the song gives them hope.

Those times are especially endearing to him.

The West End Fairgrounds remains a favorite for him, with the trees lining the paths. They're pretty but also provide cooling shade.

"It's such a good feeling to go out and entertain people," he said. "It means the world to me."

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# Mr. Hypno brings his Magic Medicine Show

BY JILL WHALEN

JWHALEN@TNONLINE.COM

Prepare to be amazed. Prepare to laugh — and prepare to expect the unexpected when Stephen Christopher takes the stage at the West End Fair.

Christopher, of Stroudsburg, will perform his Magic Medicine Show at the fair several times each day. He'll also present his "Mr. Hypno" several times during the fair's run.

"For the Magic Medicine Show, I have an old western wagon and I appear there as the traveling snake oil salesman. I'm in character and I have my magic elixir potion," he said.

With the help of his potion and props, he presents heavy doses of comedy, magic and fun.

"It's enjoyed by the youngest of kids to teenagers to grandma and grandpa," he said. "They love the Magic Medicine Show."



Stephen Christopher performs the Magic Medicine Show at an outdoor venue. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Attendees should be sure to peek around the back of his wagon, for his "Museum of Oddities." In it, he has a two-headed chick, a voodoo necklace with a monkey paw — and other side show curiosities. He'll even deliver fortunes from a booth — just like a real life Zoltar.

A certified hypnotist, Christopher helps people break bad habits like smoking. But when he ap-

pears as "Mr. Hypno," it is pure fun.

"I take a few minutes to tell what hypnosis is and dispel some myths," he said. "And then I get 10 or so volunteers up on stage to get hypnotized. It's hilarious as they go through some funny scenarios."

Christopher stressed that volunteers are always in full control and won't do anything against

their will.

"The volunteers leave the show feeling empowered and energized."

He's taken "Mr. Hypno" to numerous resorts, colleges, amusement parks and other venues along the East Coast, and has appeared on TLC.

This will be Christopher's first time performing at the West End Fair.

"I'm so happy to be at this fair. I've attended there as a guest for many years and I'm just so glad to finally be there because I know everyone is just going to have so much fun with this show," Christopher said. "I love all the people there. The music and the festivities are fantastic. My Old West wagon is just going to fit in with the country vibe of the West End Fair."

For more information, visit [www.MrHypno.com](http://www.MrHypno.com) and [www.MagicMedicineShow.com](http://www.MagicMedicineShow.com).

## The pub is open in Everett Hall for drinks, music

BY TERRY AHNER

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It's a place where people can come to enjoy a cold one while taking in the entertainment at the 102nd annual West End Fair.

Located in the Everett commercial building over by Gate 1, "the pub" will be open each day of the event from 2-10 p.m.

The fair runs from Aug. 18-24 in Gilbert.

The pub has been in operation for several years, said Beth DeHaven, a member of the West End Fair Board.

"It's basically cordoned off to make it accessible to people who when they get to it, they show their license, and that signifies to us that they're 21 and they can come into the pub area, they get a wristband," DeHaven said. "There are about six vendors in there who sell craft beer, wines and spirits."

DeHaven noted there is

entertainment each day in the pub.

- Doug Katz, 5-9 p.m. Sunday.
- Steel Creek Duo, 5-9 p.m. Monday.
- Erin McClelland Duo, 5-9 p.m. Tuesday.
- Wayne Johnston, 5-9 p.m. Wednesday.

• Mere Mortals, 5-9 p.m. Thursday.

• Alley Brown, 5:30-9:30 p.m. Friday.

• Patrick Conklin, 5:30-9:30 p.m. Saturday.

DeHaven said there's tables and chairs for people to come in with any food, listen to the music and catch

a break from the weather.

"It's a very fun environment in that area of the fair," she said. "There's cornhole boards in the back, propane fire pits to give it a slightly 'pubby' feel to it, but still a very good American country fair atmosphere."

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# Watch out for those dinosaurs and acrobats

**BY JILL WHALEN**  
JWHALEN@TNONLINE.COM

The Stone Age Show at the West End Fair is sure to give attendees something to roar about.

Presented by the Alvarez family, the show will allow attendees to journey back in time to a prehistoric era where cave men and dinosaurs roamed the earth.

“The Stone Age Show has a little bit of everything: educational, comedy and thrills,” said Martin Alvarez, a member of the performance group. “It’s a show that everyone will enjoy.”

With dinosaurs and acrobats, Alvarez said the show is family-friendly.

“Watch as the cave men perform crazy stunts like stacking chairs 20 feet off the ground and acrobatic juggling,” Alvarez said. “On top of that, this show will give



The Stone Age Show presented by The Alvarez Family at the West End Fair will allow audiences to get up close to dinosaurs. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

everyone the opportunity to meet several different dinosaurs including a T. rex, velociraptor blue and even baby dinosaurs.”

Audience participa-

tion is encouraged.

The family is five generations who have been performing across the United States and around the world. This is the first

time for the Stone Age Show at the fair.

“We are very excited to bring this new attraction to your fair,” Alvarez said.



## STEELCREEK ON THE MAIN STAGE

SteelCreek is a perennial favorite on the West End Fair stage. The six-member band based in the Lehigh Valley was named to honor the former workers and the legacy of the Bethlehem Steel Company and the Monocacy Creek. The band plays modern country cover songs with some classics and rock 'n' roll mixed in. New songs this year include “Wildflowers Wild Horses” by Lainey Wilson and “Memory Lane” by Old Dominion. The band plays at 3 and 5 p.m. Aug. 23. The Steel Creek Duo will play in the Pub on Aug. 19 at 5 and 9 p.m.

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# Children can learn about animals, farming

**BY MARTA GOUGER**  
MGOUGER@TNONLINE.COM

The West End Fair has activities for children to learn about the agriculture side of the event.

This year, the Western Pocono Community Library is coming to the fair.

Miss Jessie will be reading about donkeys, rabbits and horses from 2 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 20, in the Live-stock area.

Children will be able to hear the stories, meet the animals and explore the fair.

The schedule is 2:30, Feed & Donkeys; 3:30 p.m., rabbits; 4:30 p.m., horses; 5:30 p.m., goats; 6:30 p.m., lambs; and 7:30 p.m., cows.

"The library has a great following for its story times," said Julie Weiss, who is helping to coordinate the event.

She said it will be a great time for more children to learn about books and animals and for parents to decompress a bit.

4-H members will be on hand to answer questions about the animals.

The popular Farmer for a Day ex-



The Farmer for a Day is a popular activity for children at the West End Fair. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

hibit will be open daily from 2-8 p.m.

Organizer Jen Rufo said the walk-through hands-on activity gives children a chance to discover farming

and learn where their food comes from and how it grows.

Children can pick a wooden apple from a tree, dig up potatoes or "milk" a wooden cow.

The exhibit was built by Mark Green of the Lions Club. He had built one for the Carbon Fair and West End asked to borrow it. Of course directors wanted one to add permanently. This year the attraction has added a goat.

Children enjoy playing in the corn bin or mastering tic-tac-toe with little pumpkins.

Toddlers might spend 15-20 minutes in the exhibit. Other children might go through faster.

"A lot of kids go through multiple times," Rufo said.

The free exhibit is located near the fruit and vegetable exhibit building, near the livestock exhibit.

"Everything fits together," Rufo said.

For those children and adults who prefer a quieter fair experience, the fair is bringing back its sensory-friendly morning.

See **FARMING** on Page 10

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# Elephant ears with variety of toppings a sweet choice

**BY JILL WHALEN**  
 JWHALEN@TNONLINE.COM

Glenn and Debbie Hinton have been making homemade buttermilk sweet dough and serving it with a variety of toppings for 43 years.

They call their fried creations “elephant ears” and while not quite as big as a pachyderm’s ear, they are quite large and cover the circumference of an 8-inch plate.

The Gilbert couple plans to bring their “Hinton Concession Elephant Ears” stand to the West End Fair, just as they’ve done over the past four decades.

“We started out with cinnamon and sugar, apple, cherry and blueberry toppings,” Glenn said.

Over the years, he said, they expanded the choices.

“Now we have powdered sugar, strawberry, raspberry and pumpkin cream



The Hintons have been making elephant ears for more than 40 years. JARRAD HEDES/TIMES NEWS

cheese,” he said.

Customers can also add vanilla or chocolate pudding for dipping “sauces.”

The latest flavor creation — added about a dozen years ago — is for those who enjoy a more savory taste.

“We have cheesy gar-

lic marinara,” Glenn explained. “We do a Parmesan cheese and we give you a marinara sauce as well as butter garlic” on the side.

The elephant ear stand often draws crowds, but would-be customers shouldn’t shy away.

“The line moves fairly

fast,” Glenn said.

The Hinton family has set up its stand at the West End Fair since 1982.

In general, the fair is all about the food and there are plenty of offerings from businesses such as Dale’s fries to nonprofits such as the West End Food Pantry.

The pantry will feature gyros, 1/3-pound hamburgers, fried chicken sandwiches, hot dogs, fried pickles, mac and cheese bites and corn dog nuggets.

West End Fire Company offers clam chowder and taco salad.

Middlecreek Church features a hamburger bean bake, a sweet bean creation and apple dumplings for dessert.

Speaking of dessert, the funnel cake stand is always a busy place.

Don’t worry if you can’t eat it all. The fair lasts seven days.

## FARMING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Children and adults who are sensitive to noise,

lights and commotion can spend time on rides and seeing exhibits.

The Farmer for a Day exhibit will be open during this time.

This year the fair will be adding a special performance of the dinosaur and acrobat show presented by the Stone Age.

Admission is free and so

are the activities. A couple of the food stands will be open.

For more details, email [wefasensory@outlook.com](mailto:wefasensory@outlook.com).

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# The Rehrig Brothers bring classic country to stage

**BY TERRY AHNER**  
TAHNER@TNONLINE.COM

They belt out classic country hits from times of yore.

Get ready to relax and listen to the sweet sounds of the timeless classics when The Rehrig Brothers perform from 3-3:30 p.m. and 4-4:30 p.m. Aug. 20 on the Main Stage at this year's West End Fair.

Dave Rehrig said the show consists of songs from the '70s, '80s and '90s.

"We do Classic Country; we take people through memory lane, the years that Country music was Country music," Dave said. "The older crowd, they still like the Classic Country."

Dave said the band truly enjoys performing at the fair.

"It's a great fair; you can't go wrong by going there," he



The Rehrig Brothers are scheduled to perform from 3-3:30 and 4-4:30 p.m. Aug. 20 on the Main Stage at this year's West End Fair. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

said. "If you don't go, there's a lot you're going to miss."

Dave said the band has been performing for 60 years.

The band has performed at a high level for five decades, and is comprised of twin brothers Dave Rehrig (lead vocals) and Dennis

Rehrig (steel guitar), along with brother Dean Rehrig (keyboard).

Dave said the band plays classic country songs by artists such as Alan Jackson, George Strait, Charley Pride, Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard,

Randy Travis, a little bit of Elvis, and also does a segment of Conway Twitty hits.

"The Rehrig Family" formed a band in 1963 with their father, Frank "Pop" Rehrig.

After "Pop" Rehrig retired, the three sons changed the band name to "Twitty Fever."

Dave took a break from the band in 1989 and Dean and Dennis formed "The Midnight Special Band." In 1995, "The Twitty Fever Band" re-formed. Dennis performs with "The Midnight Special Band."

The brothers decided to get together again as "The Rehrig Brothers" to perform in between their other two bands. Dave also does shows with his wife, Brenda, as the "Dave and Brenda Duo."

# Descendants of country royalty set for their fair debut

**BY JIM RADENHAUSEN**  
TNEEDITOR@TNONLINE.COM

Jack and Davis Reid, grandsons of music legends Harold and Don Reid, respectively, of The Statler Brothers, will bring country classics to the West End Fair in Gilbert.

The act, making its West End Fair debut, will take the Main Stage at 7 and 8:30 p.m. Aug. 21. Jack plays guitar and sings lead, while Davis plays piano and provides harmony vocals; a backing bassist and drummer accompany the duo.

Jack and Davis, sons of country duo Wilson Fairchild's Wil and Langdon Reid, respectively, formed their act about three years ago in their native Staunton, Virginia.

Jack, Davis said, "wanted to play music since he came out of the womb. I was more into sports until about three or four years ago when I began to play piano and fell in love with music, just as he has always been."

Since the cousins, in their late teens, "have been best friends and basically brothers since we were little, the ability to entertain and make music together came far too easy for us once we started."



Jack and Davis Reid will play on the Main Stage at 7 and 8:30 p.m. Aug. 21. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Aside from classic country, Jack and Davis — whose shows also include some comedy — play 1990s country, a few modern songs, and, naturally, Statler Brothers

music. "We'd have to sleep on the couch if we didn't," said Davis, who noted that he and Jack were not always aware of their grandfathers' musi-

cal importance.

"We grew up with their music playing around us, but it took us to probably around the ages of 11 to 14 to completely grasp the significant impact that they had on country music."

Formed in 1955 as a quartet, The Statler Brothers released some 37 studio albums up until the group's 2002 disbandment. Accolades include nine Country Music Association Awards for Vocal Group of the Year, and induction into the gospel and country music halls of fame.

The Statler Brothers — Harold passed away in 2020 — charted 66 singles on Billboard's country chart. Third See **ROYALTY** on Page 13

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# Burn the Jukebox setting social media on fire

BY JIM RADENHAUSEN  
TEDITOR@TNONLINE.COM

Burn the Jukebox, a young rock band boasting some 1.1 million followers on social media platform TikTok, will make its West End Fair debut Aug. 22 in Gilbert.

Hailing from the Wilkes-Barre area, the quartet — whose Playing With Fire tour included an Aug. 11 stop at Musikfest in Bethlehem — will perform at 7 and 8:30 p.m.

The group, whose TikTok videos have amassed 18 million-plus “likes,” also has a strong social media presence on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook.

Burn the Jukebox features high school students Virginia Franks on bass and vocals, Ethan Cutillo on keyboards and vocals, Luke Vanchure on guitar and Carter Dennis on drums. The band formed in 2020 after a mutual friend introduced Franks and Vanchure.

“Jamming with Luke those first few weeks was fun,” said Franks, who started playing piano at age 6, cello at 7 and bass around 10. “We were experimenting and getting to know each other.”

Franks’ parents had played in bands with Dennis’ parents, hence he was asked to join. After emailing piano teachers to find a singing player, the act found Cutillo, who like



Burn the Jukebox

Franks, was a child actor. Credits include the national Broadway tour of “The Sound of Music.”

Burn the Jukebox, whose name infers fans ditch a jukebox in favor of live music, played publicly for the first time during a community event in Hazleton.

“It was scary because we were only 11 and 12, but also exciting,” said Franks, adding that band members connect over their love of classic rock and modern alt-rock bands. Franks’ favorite include Queen and the Hayley Williams-fronted Paramore.

The group’s breakout

moment, Franks said, “was definitely on TikTok. We took on the challenge of posting a cover song daily for a year, and it blew up.”

A cover of Nena’s 1983 hit “99 Red Balloons” went viral, racking up 7 million-plus views. “That put us on the map,” Franks said, “and helped us connect with a wider audience.”

While Burn the Jukebox may record some of its covers, “right now, we’re focusing our energy on original music,” Franks said. The group’s singles discography includes 2024 tracks “Turbulence,” “Sugarcoat” and “Homesick,” plus a

dozen earlier releases.

The band of songwriting musicians, which will play originals and covers at the fair, has recorded, and mostly self-produced, material in the small studio at Franks’ house.

Though the group plans to release more individual tracks — “Reflection,” the first duet the act has written, arrives in early September — “an album is something we’re considering for the future,” Franks said.

Venice Music distributes the group’s work, though Franks and her bandmates remain “open to the idea of signing with a label if it’s the right fit for us. Right now, we’re enjoying the independence and creative control we have.”

Aside from social media success, the band counts touring, a headlining show in Nashville, Tennessee, and a YouTube Play Button award for hitting 100,000 subscribers as career highlights. In addition, the act recently started working with events promoter Live Nation.

Burn the Jukebox — set to perform Sept. 1 at Shenanigans in Lake Harmony — hopes to “keep growing our fanbase, release more music and maybe even sign with a label,” Franks said.

“Ultimately, we want to keep making music we love and that resonates with our fans.”

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It's off to the circus with this themed exhibit in the flower building in 2023. Exhibits range from tabletop to floor displays and all have creativity and a flower or greens arrangement. MARTA GOUGER/TIMES NEWS



## ROYALTY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

ty-three reached the Top 10, with four topping the chart. The group's biggest mainstream hit, 1965's "Flowers on the Wall," hit No. 4 on Billboard's Hot 100 chart.

As for Statler favorites, "we love all the Statler music so much," Davis said, "but I'd say 'How Are Things in Clay, Kentucky' and 'Bed of Roses' can be seen at the top of our list."

In terms of what their dads and grandfathers taught them, "we learned so much about how to be a professional, on and offstage," Davis said, "and a few tricks here and there to make the life we live go a little smoother."

Jack and Davis consider "the Statlers and our dads as our biggest role models and friends, and always have and always will. Jack looked up to Randy Travis, Keith Whitley and Elvis, and I favored

Vince Gill, Merle Haggard and Billy Joel, but we both love them all."

The duo, which has opened for acts such as Lorie Morgan, Gene Watson and Blackhawk, performs outside of Virginia in states such as West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina and Kentucky, "but we're always looking to go further," Davis said.

Taking a cue from their grandfathers and fathers, Jack and Davis plan to add recording music to their repertoire.

"We both write music and are currently in the process of recording right now," Davis said. "We're hoping to release some music before the end of the year."

In the meantime, Davis regards the bus rides, improved ad-libs from the stage and post-show dinners as highlights of the last few years. As for the future, "we hope to accomplish as much as we can in an effort to climb the ladder of country music."

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# Lovelace takes fairgoers back to the '70s

BY JIM RADENHAUSEN  
TEDITOR@TNONLINE.COM

Lovelace — The Seventies Band will take West End Fair attendees back to a groovy era when the group performs Aug. 23 on the fair's Main Stage in Gilbert.

The act, set for shows at 7 and 9 p.m., plays genres such as bubblegum pop, soft AM/jam classics, funk, disco, album-oriented rock and heavy rock.

Lovelace, whose members hail from Berks and Lancaster counties, features: Al Fanella, lead vocals; Brian Levering, guitar, plus lead and background vocals; Joe Donato, drums; Jon Smith, keyboards, plus lead and background vocals; and Larry Mindler, bass and vocals.

Taking the Lovelace moniker officially in 2018 on Mindler's suggestion, the band "wanted a name iconic to the '70s era,"



Lovelace - the Seventies Band will play at 7 and 9 p.m. Aug. 23.

Donato said. "Watergate would have been kind of a downer for a band name, so Lovelace — The Seventies Band kind of struck a chord ... so to speak."

Rather than directly referencing '70s-era adult film star Linda Lovelace, the group's name, Donato said, "is more of a nod to the era in general."

Born and raised in Chester County, Donato — who attended the same high school as singer-songwriter Daryl Hall — had a strong pull toward music early on,

as did his bandmates. AM radio influenced the musician, whose parents gave him his first drum set at age 6.

"I would craft visions in my mind's eye of the stories being told. Songs like 'Seasons in the Sun,' 'Billy, Don't Be a Hero' and 'American Pie' were influential to drawing me into a narrative that I could daydream away to the song."

Sonically, Donato enjoyed strong hooks and pop sensibilities. He vividly recalls seeing Bay City Rollers play "Saturday Night" on Howard Cosell's mid-1970s variety show.

"I was awe-struck. I

wore tartan and plaid for a year afterward and would lip-sync rock concerts in my bedroom, complete with cheesy light show and phony Scottish accents."

Growing up, Donato drove his parents "bonkers," playing favorites such as Wings and Electric Light Orchestra nonstop. One song, The Knack's "My Sharona," blew his mind.

"The lyrics intimated at something a bit more dangerous than just good hooks, and firmly planted the themes that make rock 'n' roll and puberty inseparable."

Donato — who gravitated to genres such as classic rock, metal, singer-songwriter, and alt- and old-school-country — previously played with Fanella and Mindler in multiple bands. He also recorded five records as a member of rock band Anthrophobia from 1995 to 2008.

Levering plays in other bands, while Smith's project Jon Smith's Voyages

See **LOVELACE** on Page 15

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# Lehigh Valley band to make fair debut

BY JIM RADENHAUSEN  
TEDITOR@TNONLINE.COM

Music of the 1970s and 1980s will fill the West End Fair's final day when cover band Whiskey Mansion performs Aug. 24 at the Gilbert fair.

The Lehigh Valley group, making its West End Fair debut, will take the main stage at 2:30 and 4 p.m. Formed in 2018 in Nazareth, Whiskey Mansion plays a variety of music genres.

The band's lineup consists of: Traci Bevacqua, lead vocals; Matt "Redzy" Smith, guitar and vocals; Bill Wehbe, piano, keyboards and backup vocals; Bob Yale, bass guitar and vocals; and Fred DeRea, drums.

Co-founder Smith, residing in the quintet's current base of Danielsville, started playing guitar and singing around age 16.

"Eventually, I took vocal lessons from the late great Gloria Davis of Allentown and guitar lessons from world-renown Easton native Greg Howe. Influ-



The Lehigh Valley group, making its West End Fair debut, will take the main stage at 2:30 and 4 p.m. Aug. 24. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ences are so vast. There are many talented players and songs that touch people in different ways."

Whiskey Mansion, Smith said, "came by chance. My wife was helping a local animal shelter raise money. Traci and Bill were neighbors, and during a conversation, it came out that maybe the three of us could play for her event."

The act named itself Whiskey Trio at the aforementioned event, though "this needed to be fuller, so we added a bassist and then a drummer," Smith said. "The name needed to

change. Bill came up with Whiskey Mansion."

The band's main goal, Smith noted, was to "dig deep in music and strive to play those rare gems everyone knows, loves and appreciates, but don't really hear other bands playing."

Wehbe, Smith added, "opened that window of opportunity for me to sing songs I never could in any rock band I've ever been in. We were playing songs from Styx, Meatloaf, Little River Band, Elton John, The Who, Journey, Three Dog Night and many more."

Band members, who

work regular jobs, have played in various groups for 35 to 40 years. Even today, "most of us play on the side in other acts," Smith said. "Bill does duets, weddings and cocktail hours. Bobby plays in Groovy Tunes.

"I play in Maiden America, an Iron Maiden tribute," he continued. "Traci is always involved in a big event that takes place every year in Tamaqua. Music is in our souls."

While Smith recorded original music in the early- to mid-1990s with local bands Cobalt Blu and Barking Starfish, "Whiskey Mansion is not interested in originals," he said. "We just want to entertain people with tons of good music."

Smith said the group has "been enjoying seeing the shows fill up with more people and attendees confirming our choice of songs. We have been playing many local carnivals and fairs, which is always fun."

## LOVELACE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

— which recently released a new album, "Unattended Symphony" — draws heavily from the 1970s. Lovelace, meanwhile, has discussed recording original music, though the idea has yet to materialize.

Some Lovelace members, Donato said, have regular jobs, though a couple make their living as performers, music instructors and sound engineers.

Looking ahead, Donato has a full-theater Lovelace show in development. He hopes the project grows into a national touring production that plays larger

venues and events.

In the meantime, the drummer relishes the chance to make emotional connections with fans.

"It is always a great feeling when you get a high-five after a show and a fan says, 'You guys rocked tonight.'"

However, "the greatest highlights are when some-

one may approach you sheepishly after a show and tell you how much hearing a song meant to them.

"I have seen people smile from ear to ear while we are playing a tune, and I have seen one or two people cry," he said. "That's powerful. That is what music is supposed to do."

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