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BLUEGRASS

FESTIVAL
Sept. 9-10, 2023

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The show will go on!

'With a little help from our friends,' organizers say

When the chamber decided not to sponsor East Troy Bluegrass Festival, now in its 29th year, a group of volunteers decided to step in and do what needed to be done to make sure the show goes on.

In a post on the festival website, easttroybluegrass.com, the crew behind this year's event – which will be Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 9 and 10 on the stage in the Village of East Troy – shared a message about their passion and dedication.

"For the past 29 years we have worked so hard to maintain the integrity of this festival. Recently we found ourselves having to make a decision to take back control or shut it down ... so here we are to correct the mistakes made in the past and move forward to do what we do best," the website states.

Melissa Sherman, who is spearheading the festival, said the main thing needed is people to come out and support it, which will help make sure it continues for years to come.

"This is basically a small-town girl's dream that's carried on, and I'm going to make sure it happens," Sherman said.

Sherman, who said she founded the bluegrass festival nearly 30 years ago, has stayed involved even during the past several years when it was run by the chamber.

All of the bands are lined up to perform during the two-day music fest and, according to Sherman, many throughout the community have stepped up to help.

"The Lions Club, LD's BBQ, Homegrown, the historical society – and many others – have all rallied behind us to make sure East Troy Bluegrass Festival happens this year," she said.



STOCK PHOTO East Troy Bluegrass Festival

Sherman said the talent each year has been amazing and this year is no different. "Many from this festival have moved onto the national bluegrass arena. It's crazy how much talent comes to play here," she said.

The 2023 headliners are The Little Roy and Lizzie Show – which will take the stage from 4 to 5:30 p.m., Sept. 9, and the Kody Norris Show – set to perform from 4 to 5:30 p.m., Sept. 10. Read more about both groups inside this section.

Initially when the festival started, a hat was passed around for donations and the bands came for free. Over the years, an entry fee has been charged and increased. The increase this year will be so the financial obligations are easier to meet, according to Sherman, who asks people to keep in mind how much entertainment they're getting for the cost.

"We're going to charge \$20 for a day, or \$35 for the weekend. Where can you go for several hours of music by numerous bands

for \$20? It's still a great deal," she said. "If you come both days, that's 14 hours of music, a gospel service and hearing 10 different bands."

Note that kids 16 and younger can enter for free. Additionally, there is a special wristband for jammers, who need to have their instrument in hand when entering to get a special entry price of \$10 per day.

In addition, festival t-shirts will be sold as will a variety of food – brats, hot dogs, corn, soda and water – with all proceeds going back into the festival for next year.

"We start over every year and have faith we will make it! This festival belongs to you and the person sitting next to you. Our fuel is our dedication to educating and preserving true, traditional bluegrass music," the website states.

Sherman said organizers have also secured a rain venue – if the event needs to move inside – with East Troy Bible Church offering to be the backup venue.

"It can seat hundreds of people so will be perfect, if needed, and we so appreciate their support," she said.

For more about the event, visit easttroybluegrass.com or send an email to melissasherma55@gmail.com.

EAST TROY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

A publication of Southern Lakes Newspapers

1102 Ann St.
Delavan, WI 53115
(262) 728-3411

EDITOR IN CHIEF:..... Heather Ruenz
SECTION DESIGNER:..... Jen DeGroot
CREATIVE DIRECTOR:..... Heidi Schulz
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Little Roy and Lizzy Show

Bluegrass Festival

TO FEATURE 10 BANDS

Local contestants, headliners and Midwest groups sure to get toes tapping

East Troy Bluegrass Festival will bring the square alive with music once again the weekend of Sept. 9 and 10. Here are some details on the contests that will be held followed by information on the bands performing that weekend.

Contests

Banjo, Mandolin and guitar contests will each have one open division (for people of any age) while the fiddle contest will have three divisions – children ages 8 and younger, junior for

kids 9 to 16 years old, and open for people of any age. One accompanist is allowed but is restricted to acoustic instruments only and there will not be a piano available.

Two tunes are to be played from memory with both subject to judging. There is no warmup time on stage and contestants are advised to vary their selections to provide the judges with the best overview of their abilities.

Fiddle contestants can only enter one division. First place winners in the contests may be asked to play a brief encore if time permits.

Applications will be taken up until 15 minutes prior to the start of the contests, which are to take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 10.

Cash prizes will be awarded to the top three in each division.

For more details including judging

criteria, visit easttroybluegrass.com.

Bands - headliners

Ten bands will entertain the crowd including two headliners, which lead off the list detailed below.

Little Roy and Lizzy Show Sept. 9, 4 to 5:30 p.m.

• Having roots in the heart of the south, Elizabeth Long, or Lizzy as her friends and fans know her was born on a farm in Lincolnton, Georgia. She began her music accomplishment at an early age.

While starting out on the piano, Lizzy soon took up the fiddle, guitar, autoharp, bass, banjo, and mandolin, and has become an accomplished musician, alternating between these instruments as part of her entertainment repertoire.

She has played with great acts such as Mac Wiseman, Jim and Jesse, The Lewis Family, and Earl Scruggs.

Continuing her quest for success, Lizzy has paired up with Little Roy Lewis from the legendary Lewis Family.

Her extraordinary voice shimmers with strains of America’s musical roots. Lizzy has won “Bluegrass Song of the Year” for a several songs called “Mountain Top”, a duet with Ty Herndon called “When We Fly”, and “He Washed My Soul”.

Most recently at the 2015 GMA Dove awards she was awarded Best Bluegrass Song of the Year for a Duet with Rhonda Vincent called “God is There”.

She is one of the youngest fiddlers to be inducted into “America’s Old Time Fiddler’s Country Hall of Fame” in LeMars, Iowa.

Her latest solo Album “Blueberry Pie” has ranked as high as No. 2 on

Billboard's Bluegrass Charts.

Little Roy summed it up the best, "pull a plank off the wall and she'll play it!"

• Little Roy is awfully hard to overlook. He makes sure that no one in the audience gets bored at any time. He has won awards as Entertainer as well as for his banjo playing. Little Roy learned to play banjo when he was only 6 years old, and won a local talent contest for his playing when he was eight.

Little Roy's favorite banjo players are Don Reno and Earl Scruggs. USA Today called Little Roy 'a banjo master, truly a picker's picker'.

He can also be found playing the guitar and autoharp. In fact, the song 'Good Time Get-Together' was written to highlight his instrumental skills. Little Roy is multi-talented - he sings, plays many instruments, tells stories, and acts.

When you see this duo, you are sure to notice Little Roy, and he'll make you smile. He has been inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame, SPGBMA Hall of Greats, IBMA Hall of Honor, and the Southern Gospel Music Hall of Fame.

**The Kody Norris Show
Sept. 10, 4 to 5:30 p.m.**

Award-winning country and bluegrass group, The Kody Norris Show took bluegrass by storm with four wins at this year's SPBGMA Awards.

In 2022, the band was named Entertainer of the Year and Mary Rachel Nalley-Norris won Fiddler of the Year. For this year's honors, they won in all four nominated categories including: Entertainer of the Year / The Kody Norris Show Instrumental Group of the Year / The Kody Norris Show Guitar Performer of the Year / Kody Norris Fiddle Performer of the Year / Mary Rachel Nalley-Norris.

Deeply rooted in North American folk music, Norris has crafted a performance that harkens back and tips a hat to the traditions created by Bill Monroe, Jimmy Martin's showmanship, the Stanley Brothers' harmonies, performances of the Grand Ole Opry and a bit of Vaudeville.

Top notch picking is center stage, but humor and visual flash are part of the entertaining package. Always clad in colorful, tailored suits adorned with rhinestones, ties, classic hats and ornate boots, the band earns its moniker as a "show."

The brand is traditional, clean cut, acoustic and always entertaining. The foursome is fronted by Norris on guitar and his fiddling "sweetie," Mary Rachel Nalley-Norris, Josiah Tyree on banjo and Cousin Charlie Lowman on the bass.

The band's album, When I Get the Money Made, was named 2017 Bluegrass Album of the Year by the National Traditional Country Music Association. The Kody Norris Show was honored with seven SPBGMA nominations in 2018 and four nominations in 2022.

In addition to winning Fiddler performer of the year, The Kody Norris Show was also named the 2022 Entertainer of the Year. Playing 90-plus dates a year, The Kody Norris Show covers the road from Canada to Mexico, only missing two states to date. They've been part of the University of Chicago Folk Festival, have performed at the Smithsonian and the Kennedy Center and are part of two weekly programs on the acclaimed RFD-TV's network, The Cumberland Highlanders Show and The Bluegrass Trail.

For more than three years, The Kody Norris Show has been the host of the Farm and Fun Time Noon Show. This



The Kody Norris Show



Annie and the Oaklies



Cork and Bottle String Band



is also a weekly broadcast through The Birthplace of Country Music Museum and Radio Bristol, hitting over 5 million views collectively.
The Kody Norris Show signed with Rebel Records from Charlottesville, VA in 2019 and has since then released, All Suited Up, which debuted No. 7 on the Billboard Charts.

Rounding out the bands

The East Troy Bluegrass Festival will bring two days of music to the square.
The schedule is as follows:

Saturday, Sept. 9

- 11-11:45 a.m., Down from the Hills
- 12-12:45 p.m., Cork and Bottle String Band
- 1-1:45 p.m., Grass Attack
- 2-2:45 p.m., Band Scramble
- 3-3:45 p.m., Piper Road 50th Anniversary
- 4-4:30 p.m., The Little Roy and Lizzy Show

Sunday, Sept. 10

- 10-10:45 a.m., New Legacy (gospel service)
- 11 a.m.-1 p.m., contests
- 1-1:45 p.m., Annie and the Oaklies
- 2-2:45 p.m., The Soundbillies
- 3-3:45 p.m., Dance around Molly
- 4-5:30 p.m., The Kody Norris Show

Here are highlights on a couple of the bands.

Down from the hills

Down From The Hills plays bluegrass music inspired by the likes of Bill Monroe, Earl Scruggs and John Hartford. Our music features both instrumental solos and vocal harmonies. Often they add Cajun music to our shows, with Pat Downing on the Cajun button accordion, according to the band's website.

Pat Downing plays mandolin, fiddle and melodeon. He is a luthier & piano tuner/technician living in Dane County. The band leader, Pat began making music at age 5 banging on kitchen pots & pans. At 12 he took up the trombone and in his 20's almost took it along instead of a guitar while hitchhiking around the USA to play the campfire circuit. In later years, he played session music in Ireland & jammed with Cajun musicians in Louisiana. His aim is to bring live music



to folks.

Bill McWilliams plays 5 string Banjo. His day job is Structural Engineering and he lives on the westside in Madison. Bill was exposed to Bluegrass TV as a child on Hootenany, Andy Griffith and The Beverly Hillbillies. His first stringed instrument was the Ukelele in middle school. He took up the banjo after watching John Hartford's weekly banjo solos for the Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour. Always playing or singing somewhere, he's been harmonizing with DFTH since 1985.

Dan Hildebrand plays guitar, mandolin, fiddle and sings vocals. Dan had a Chicago Blues band in High School and later toured with Del Shannon in the early 70's. Got started on Guitar while living in Chicago when he was 12 years old. For the last 10 years he's also been playing Jazz Mandolin and Old Time/Bluegrass Fiddle. He now leads a Beginners Bluegrass Jam class for The Southern Wisconsin Bluegrass Association and lives in Madison.

Brad Wolbert plays the doghouse bass and has re-joined the band after a four-year stint in Austin, Texas, where he played with a number of bluegrass and country bands. He started out as a musician playing in blues bands on electric bass, but gradually switched to mostly acoustic bands in the Madison area before giving Texas a try. He also sang in the choruses of the Madison Opera and Symphony. He is an environmental manager and lives and works in Madison.

Grass Attack

Grass Attack regularly performs at town festivals, bluegrass festivals, county fairs, outdoor community park concerts wineries and Breweries in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin.

Randy Tackett, Monroe, plays lead guitar and banjo;

Jeff and Liz Wagner are from German Valley, IL. Jeff plays banjo and guitar. Liz plays mandolin and guitar.

Liz, Jeff and Randy all sing lead and harmony vocals.

Tim Magnuson is from Rockford, IL and plays bass and rhythm guitar.

Other bands on the festival schedule are: The Soundbillies; The Piper Spring Road Band 50th anniversary; Dance around molly; The Cork 'n Bottle String Band; Annie and the Oakies; New Legacy.



Grass Attack



Dance Around Molly



New Legacy



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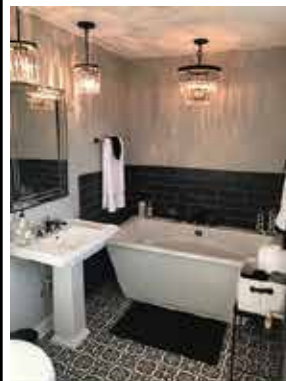
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