

It's that time of year again!



ESSEX DAY!

SEPTEMBER
17TH • 2017



A supplement to the East County Times, September 14, 2017.

FIND MAP OF THE AREA INSIDE.

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Welcome to the 42nd installment of Essex Day!

- By Devin Crum -

characters making their rounds. And fear not - THERE WILL BE CARNIVAL RIDES THIS YEAR!

That's right - after a brief absence last year, the carnival rides are back, and they will have quite a large rides and amusements area.

According to Ric Metzgar, chairman of the New Essex Day Festival Association, not having the rides last year was a disappointment for everyone, including the association. He noted that 2016 was the only year the festival was without the popular section, and the association did not know they would not have it until the morning of Essex Day.

The company that was supposed to supply the

amusements abruptly went out of business, Metzgar said, leaving them high and dry. He added that three or four other such companies in Maryland have also recently gone out of business.

Moving westward down the Boulevard, the opening ceremonies will start with elected officials and other honored guests being led down to the Main Stage at Taylor Avenue by the brass band from the United House of Prayer church. There and then, the festival will begin in earnest.

"And I got confirmation that Governor Larry Hogan is coming," Metzgar said. "He told me more than once that he wants to be there and it's on the schedule."

Providing great tunes all day on the Main Stage will be The River Dogs starting at 12:30 p.m., The Doug Lester Band at 2 p.m., beloved crooner Ronnie Dove at 2:30 p.m., The Dave Nicely Band at 3:30 p.m. and Covered from 4:40 p.m. to the end of the festival.

For more information on each performer, see their individual biographies later in this supplement.

Farther down the Boulevard, festival-goers will find

- see **WELCOME** on page 3B -

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WELCOME

- continued from page 2B -

the Gospel Stage on the eastbound side, across from Uncle Eddie's, pumping out enjoyable and family-friendly music all day long.

There, visitors will see the aforementioned United House of Prayer brass band starting at 12:45 p.m. following their march down from the Main Stage after the opening ceremonies. Next up will be Downing Lane at 2 p.m., followed by Heaven for Sure at 3 p.m. and Covenant Brit Ministries at 4 p.m.

"So we're going to have the gospel music all day," Metzgar said. "And it's going to be multi-cultural, going to be contemporary, to southern gospel to bluegrass. That's going to be a good thing."

Again, find more information on these artists later in this supplement.

At the west end, visitors of all ages will be delighted to see a variety of interesting vehicles, including Jeep Renegades, assorted boats and massive tow trucks meant for towing tractor trailers, according to Metzgar.

And everywhere in between these stops will be interesting vendors for food or other goods to purchase and make your day complete. However, Metzgar admitted there may not be as many vendors as there has been in the past.

"But we're trying to change a little bit around for more local arts and crafts and not so many of the same thing," he said.

Metzgar used snowball stands as an example, saying there will not be an abundance of them along the Boulevard.

"We've decided that everybody makes more money

and it's more fun to have one of each, not three or four or five of them. Because it gets worn out," he said.

Metzgar said, though, that there would not neces-

- see **INTRODUCTION** on page 15B -



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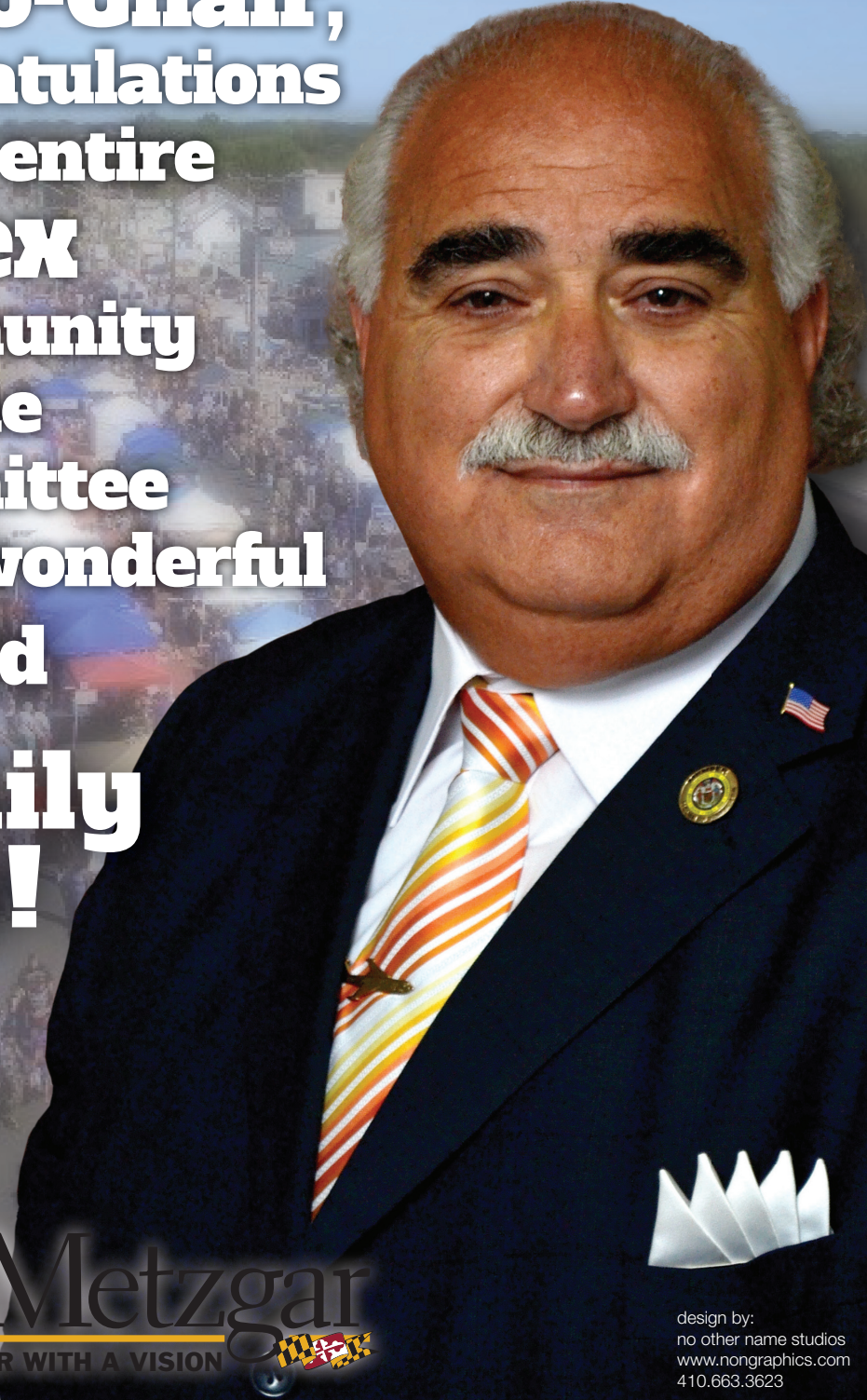
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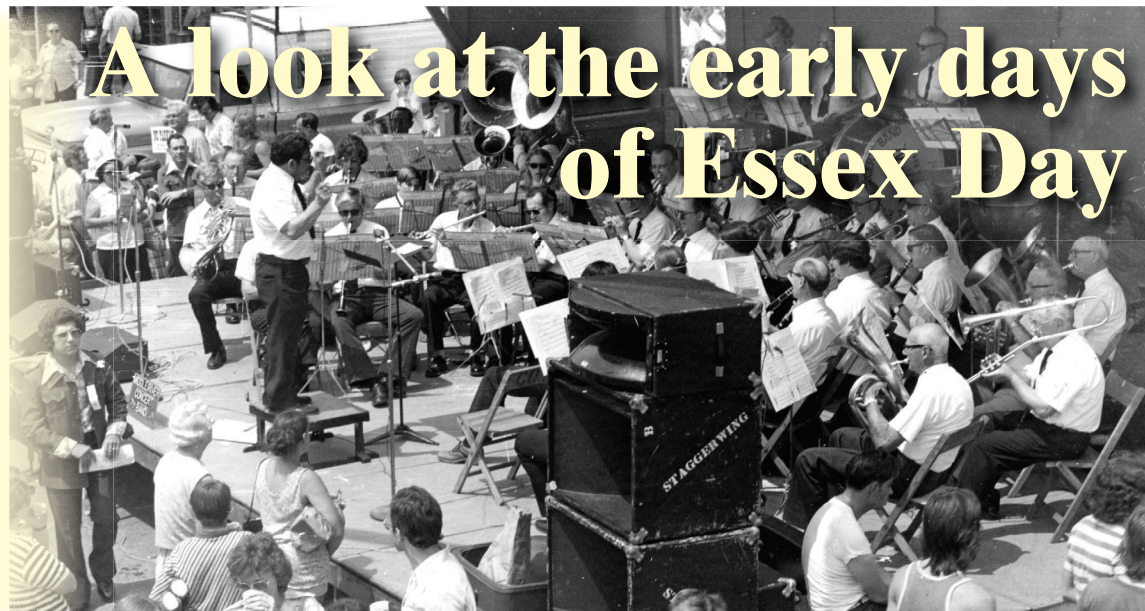
The photo to the right shows a glimpse of Essex Day in the late 1970s, near the time when it first began as a festival.

According to former festival organizer June Donovan, the photo shows the Middle River band - a more than 30-member concert band - performing on the main stage, which is a far cry from the rock and country bands that have filled the stage in more recent years.

The initial purpose of the festival, which was originally called Super Sunday, was to raise money for the restoration of the Ballestone-Stansbury House on Rocky Point.

In its third year, the festival's name was changed to Essex Day. And once the Ballestone restoration was complete, the main purpose shifted to showcasing the businesses along Eastern Boulevard in the heart of Essex.

No matter the purpose, though, Essex Day has always been a day for Essex residents to come out and celebrate who they are as a community.



A look at the early days of Essex Day

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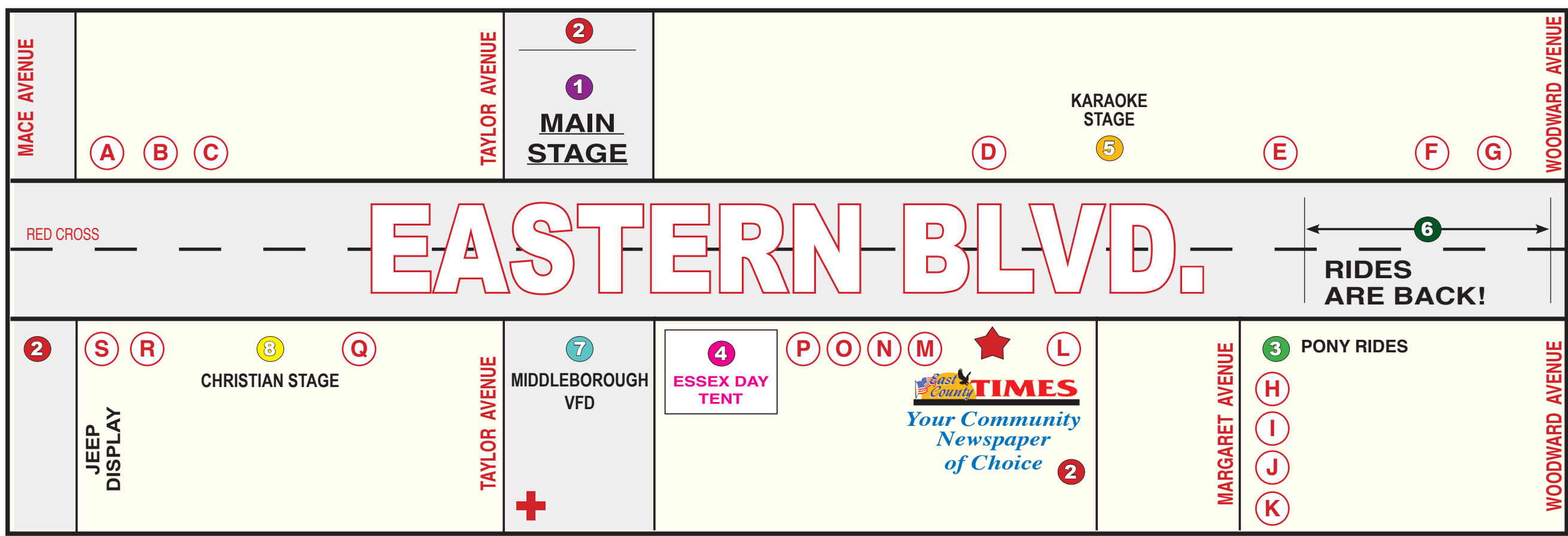
ESSEX DAY FESTIVAL 2017

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2017 ESSEX DAY MAP KEY

- 1 MAIN STAGE LINE-UP:** 12:30PM The Riverdogs 2PM The Doug Lester Band 2:30PM Ronnie Dove 3:30PM Dave Nicely Band 4:40PM Covered
- 2 PORTABLE RESTROOMS** **3 PONY RIDES** **4 ESSEX DAY TENT** **5 KARAOKE STAGE** **6 RIDES** **7 MIDDLEBOROUGH VFD**
- 8 CHRISTIAN STAGE LINE-UP:** 2PM Downing Lane 3PM Heaven for Sure 4PM Covenant Brit Ministries

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Middle River band The Riverdogs a rock fan's delight

Since 2009, Middle River rock trio The Riverdogs have been working their way around town. One of the harder working bands in the area, it's an absolute rarity that a week will go by that these guys aren't playing. And more often than not, you can find them at local establishments like Sue Island, PatRick's or Carson's Creekside, or you can take a trip down I-695 to Pasadena to catch them around there.

Given their tireless work ethic, it should come as no surprise that Rob Michaloski, Darryl Matarozza, and Howard Zizzi have become local favorites. Their blend of country, rock and contemporary music will keep you moving throughout their set at Essex Day.

Taking the stage first at 12:30 p.m., The Riverdogs will play for a little over an hour, making their way

through oldies like The Beatles, Cream, The Who, Badfinger, Lynyrd Skynyrd, The Rolling Stones, C.C.R., The Zombies, Steppenwolf and the Talking Heads. They'll also weave in some country tunes, and have been known to tackle Luke Bryan, Keith Urban, Darius Rucker, Cole Swindell, the Zac Brown Band, Lil' Big Town, Big & Rich, Tim McGraw and more. So if you're holding out hope for some "Wagon Wheel," "Born to Be Wild" or "Sweet Home Alabama," you may be in luck.

What stands out about these guys, aside from the diversity of tunes they cover, is the fact that they can translate songs with four or five instruments down to three and not lose any of the feeling. Also, amazingly, they have the vocal chops to make songs from



Photo courtesy of The Riverdogs Facebook page.

all of these artists work, which can't be overstated.

If you're looking to find out more, like contact information for booking the band, feel free to find them at www.mdparty.com or on Facebook @theriverdogsband.

Doug Lester set to bring the oldies to life

For the last 45 years, Doug Lester has been honing his craft. A multi-instrumentalist who has played alongside some of music's biggest stars like Alabama, Steve Warner, Ronnie McDowell. While Lester (pictured below) can do it all, he primarily sticks to guitar. For the last 40 years, he has played with Ronnie Dove.



And Lester isn't the only one with an impressive background. At Essex Day, Lester will be teaming up with Annie B. and Clyde Allen. Both are seasoned vets who have played with chart toppers and notable figures over the past several decades.

This Essex Day, Doug Lester featuring Annie B. and Clyde Allen will take the stage from 2 - 2:30 p.m.

- see DOUG LESTER on page 11B -



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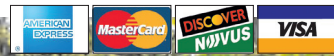
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DOUG LESTER

- continued from page 10B -

We recommend you get there right on time, because you won't want to miss a minute as Lester and company wind their way through a catalogue that includes Chuck Berry, The Doobie Brothers, Neil Diamond, Bill Haley and his Comets, Johnny Cash and everything in between. Lester, who is considered by many to be a highly influential figure in the Maryland music scene, takes classic songs and makes them his.

Besides being one of the area's best guitarists, Lester is also a quality vocalist, with a deep baritone delivery. And when you combine Lester with Clyde

Allen and Annie B., the entertainment value is maximized.

So if you're looking to dance the afternoon away to some big-band stylized performances, the Doug Lester Band is the perfect act for you. For an hour and a half he and the group will transport you back a few decades with renditions that rival the original cuts.

Whether they're working their way through "China Grove," "Be My Baby," "Sweet Caroline" or "Shake Rattle and Roll," Lester will keep you entertained. You won't want to miss this local legend, so make sure you stake out your place ahead of time, lest you be resigned to the back.



Doug Lester (left) performs with Ronnie Dove. Photo courtesy of Facebook.

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Get a lesson in chart topping with Ronnie Dove

Perhaps no artist set to perform this year has the clout that oldies legend Ronnie Dove has. The country and pop crooner has been working in the music industry for over 50 years, with 23 appearances on the U.S. Hot 100 chart - reaching as high as No. 14 with the title track off of his 1964 album *Right or Wrong*. On the U.S. Adult Contemporary charts, he reached as high as No. 2 with "I'll Make All Your Dreams Come True" from 1965.

Comparable to contemporaries such as Lightnin' Lou Christie, Bobby Vee and Mel Carter, Dove is oft associated with the pre-Beatles era rock landscape. With jangly guitars, paint brush drum sounds and Dove's silky smooth

voice, Dove's career kicked off in Baltimore in the 60's with the band The Belltones. While he and the group primarily worked out of Baltimore, they quickly drew a following up and down the east coast. Dove then went solo and signed with Diamond Records, where he stayed until the late 60's. Diamond would eventually fold, with most of their catalogue lost to the ages. Fortunately, Dove's music managed to live on. And if you needed proof of that, just hop on YouTube and see the hundreds of thousands of hits his works have collectively garnered over the years.

Since his very first public appearance in a grade school play singing



Ronnie Dove (center) knows a thing or two about hits. Photo courtesy of Facebook.

"Away in the Manger" in his hometown of Herndon, Virginia, Ronnie heard the roar of applause and knew he was born to perform.

He later honed his vocals and musical proficiency as a four-year member of his high school glee club. After graduation, he joined the U.S. Coast Guard and was stationed on a buoy tender off the coast of Baltimore. It was during these four years that Ronnie became a burgeoning pop performer, singing Elvis covers in local pubs on his evenings off. After his time in the Coast Guard, he formed The Belltones, and the rest, as they say, is history.

From the beautiful arpeggiated "Say You" (which ends with a breathtaking

falsetto) to the joyful stomper "Happy Summer Days," Dove's set is guaranteed to keep you grinning from ear to ear.

Ronnie Dove is set to take the stage from 2:30 - 3:20 p.m. Considering he has made appearances on "The Ed Sullivan show," "Merv Griffin" and "American Bandstand," you'll want to take in this performance even if you aren't familiar with his tunes. But if you aren't familiar, you should quickly get acquainted and be sure to catch an absolute legend in the flesh.

For more information on Ronnie Dove, including a list of upcoming performances, feel free to check out www.ronniedove.com.



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Ronnie Dove: 'Essex Day will be a special day for me'

- By Devin Crum -

Renowned crooner and inaugural entertainment hall of fame member Ronnie Dove will hold down the middle spot on the Main Stage at Essex Day this year, which he said will be "special" for him because of his familiarity with the area and its residents.

Dove, born in Virginia, was stationed in Baltimore while serving in the U.S. Coast Guard in 1955, which was when he truly got his singing career started.

According to Dove, he visited an establishment called Elmer's in Baltimore one night and ended up getting on stage to sing a few songs with the band that was playing. That band later broke up, he said, but he stayed with them, "and I sang with them there for four years while I was in the Coast Guard."

When he left the Coast Guard, he said, he formed a group called The Beltones, working many different clubs around the city.

Then in 1963, he went to Nashville and recorded four songs, including his first hit, "Say You."

"And then we had 21 in a row after that," Dove said. "We were on the charts for six years."

He also met Elvis Presley in 1964, "which was an exciting moment for me," he said, because Presley was why he got started singing in the first place. He said he met Bobby Darren not long after that.

Soon after, Dove traveled all around the country, touring different cities and appearing in several music circuits and television shows, such as Dick Clark, Ed Sullivan, Ralph Emory and more.

However, he said he is always happy to be in and around Baltimore.

"Baltimore's been good to me," he said, noting that he has done many shows and other appearances all around the region. "The whole state of Maryland is my playground. I love it."

Aside from being in one of his favorite places, Dove said Essex Day will be "kind of a special day" for him, particularly because of the Main Stage lineup.

Dove is scheduled to follow The Doug Lester Band on the Main Stage, starting his set at approximately 2:30 p.m. And Doug Lester's father was Dove's first guitar player when they played at Elmer's in Baltimore.

"I've known [the younger Lester] since he was born," he said. "So when he turned 17, he started playing bass [guitar] for me in my band and he's been with me ever since. So he's like my other son."

Dove called Lester a great guy, great singer and a great guitar player.

"Just a marvelous, marvelous guy," he said. "He's unbelievable."

Dove is also showcased in the Maryland Entertainment Hall of Fame, which is on display at the Heritage Society of Essex and Middle River museum, located at 516 Eastern Blvd. in Essex. In fact, he was the first person inducted into that hall of fame.

He said Buddy Love actually created the MEHOF just so that Dove could be showcased in it.

Dove has appeared at Essex Day many times, the last being about three years ago, he said.

"It's always been fun; it's a special place for me," he said. "I love that part of town. It's always fun to get there and do something."

He noted that he also performed at the Dundalk Heritage Fair for 15 years in a row from 1998 - 2012, so he is intimately familiar with the area.

Dove commented that he has always enjoyed performing at Essex Day because he knows so many people in Essex and around the area.

"They're all friends," he said. "Years ago I used to have fans. Now I have friends that I have known their

children, their mothers and fathers." He added that some of those children were raised on his songs.

"It's like 'old home week,' and I enjoy it so much," he continued. "It's going to be a special day for me."

The well-known singer turned 82 years old on Sept. 7, but said he has been singing since he was 5. And he has no intention of retiring any time soon, stating that he wants to perform on his 100th birthday. He also plans to make plenty more Essex Day appearances in the meantime.

Dove noted that he also signed a deal three years ago with Real Gone Music to sell all 21 of his greatest hits on one album.

He mentioned that he discovered the better-quality master recordings of his songs in England and made a deal with RGM to make and sell the record.

"I owned the masters from when I was with Diamond [Records, Inc.], but they were all recorded in Mono."

The higher-quality masters allowed RGM to put together a superior greatest-hits record which is now for sale on Amazon. The record also comes with a book, Dove said, that tells his whole story from 1964 - 1969.

Dove was named the top singles artist, top easy listening artist and top easy listening selling artist in the 1965 Billboard Awards and won four Cashbox Awards the same year, including best singles male vocalist,



Through The Years



best LP male vocalist and best R&B male vocalist, according to the biography on his website.

"Today, although his good looks have matured, this veteran performer hasn't lost his voice, enthusiasm or his public appeal," the biography contends. "He still makes every lady feel that he is singing just to her."

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ESSEX DAY

Dave Nicely and Covered to round out the musical performances for Essex Day

Rounding out this year's list of local legends performing at Essex Day is Dave Nicely, a veteran performer of over 50 years.

Nicely, taking the stage from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., is known for his country renditions from greats like Merle Haggard, Buck Owens, Ray Price, George Jones and many more.

If you're looking to get a feel for Nicely and his tunes, he has a new album out, entitled *Forever Country*. Nicely, with his classic country wail, masterfully works his way through classics with impeccable backing.

Nicely is an old country aficionado who has been carving his path for 50 years. He picked up notoriety during the halcyon days of the now-defunct Club Stabile, a 300-seat club where Nicely led the house band.

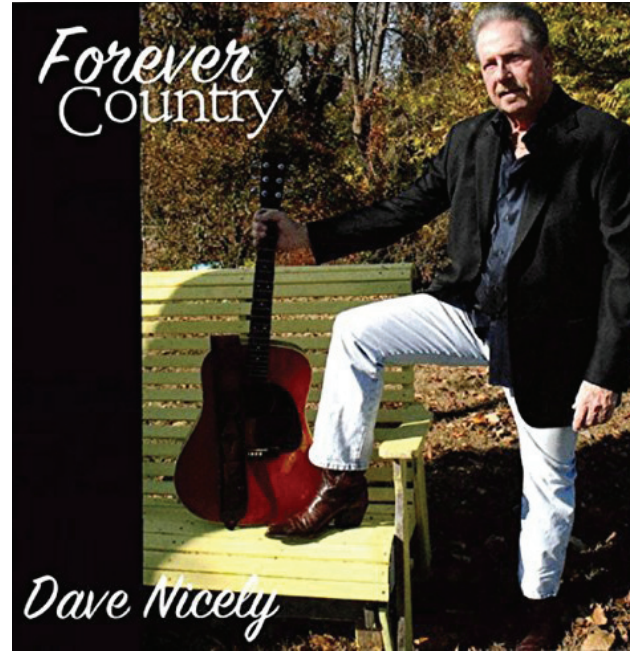
While Nicely is certainly a local legend, his star extends a bit outside of the Baltimore area by nature of playing in Nashville and elsewhere along with his band, Southern Delight. If it's real country you crave, Dave Nicely and Southern Delight are for you.

For Nicely and Southern Delight, the shifting winds of the musical landscape didn't quite appeal to them. While clubs and scenes changed throughout the years, Nicely and his crew dug their cowboy boots in and stood firm, earning them their reputation for taking on true, old school outlaw country. Whether taking on Ray Price's "You Wouldn't Know Love" or "I Don't Believe I'll Fall in Love Today" by Buck Owens, Nicely handles these tunes with the reverence and respect that you'd expect from a seasoned veteran who loves a genre steeped in tradition and mutual admiration.

Finishing off the day from 4:40 - 5:40 p.m. is Covered, a relatively new band based out of Rosedale.

For the last two years, Covered has been honing their craft, and their closing set at Essex Day should be something to behold. The five-piece band has a mix of influences and backgrounds, making their performances a bit of a question mark in regards to what they will take on.

We hope you come ready to dance and enjoy all of our musical performances at Essex Day.



Dave Nicely's new solo album, "Forever Country," is now available for purchase.

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INTRODUCTION —

- continued from page 3B -

sarily be only one of each of the more popular food vendors - like pit beef, hot dogs or snowballs - to avoid the potential for long lines. But they wanted to assure a good variety for everyone.

He added that there will be a lot of informational vendors as well, such as the health department providing information on Narcan training or banks educating people about sound financial management.

Other vendor highlights include the popcorn stand, pony rides from Mystic Moon Farm, Charm City Ghostbusters and the Baltimore's Best Hons. Additionally, WBAL Channel 11's Tim Tooten will be signing copies of his book at Essex Day.

"That's going to be a highlight," Metzgar said.

Baltimore County police officers will

also be at the festival, ever watchful, but there to enjoy the day as well and interact with the community to build relationships.

"This year, I can promise you it's going to be a fun, fun time," he said. "It's going to be like it was when it first started - back to local stuff, people in the area, vendors and crafters from the area. So I'm excited about that."

Essex Day began as an effort to raise funds for restoration of the Ballestone-Stansbury House in Essex, adjacent to Rocky Point Golf Course. But when that restoration was complete, the focus shifted to showcasing the businesses located in Essex, particularly those along Eastern Boulevard.

Angel Ball, another Essex Day Festival Association member, was highly optimistic about the festival as well.

"Even though we've had this minimal amount of time to get this together, we've totally flipped this thing around," she

said. Now, Ball is just hoping for good weather.

Although, it has been famously said that (and let's all knock on wood here) "it just doesn't rain on Essex Day."

(Also, two points for whoever can name the speaker behind my favorite Essex Day quote. Hint: he has an ad back on page 3B.)

"It's going to be a great, fun day," Metzgar said.

So whether you go for the food, the rides, the games, the crafts or other vendors, the cars, the music or just the good old-fashioned community camaraderie, Essex Day has a little something for everyone.

And if you don't live in Essex, come out anyway and have a great time while maybe meeting some new friends. From all of us here at the East County Times, we hope you enjoy Essex Day 2017!



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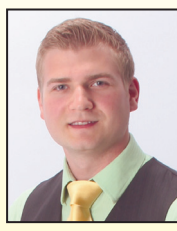
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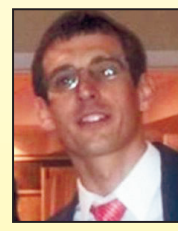
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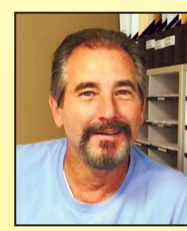
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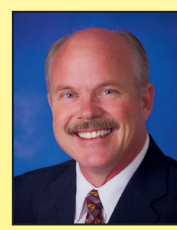
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