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Photo by Morgan Kaolan/AEROPIX

## Dead's music alive at opener

By SEAN SPILLANE  
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The first wave of music-lovers descended on Seaside Park in Bridgeport Thursday for the Gathering of the Vibes and, for the most part, were blessed with a perfect day to set up their campsites.

Day 1 of the festival was mainly for those who

will be staying over at the park for all four days, though live music was offered throughout the day on the Solar Beach Stage and, later, on the main Terrapin and Bandshell stages.

An estimated 6,000 campers are expected for the Vibes, which is taking up about half of the 370-acre Seaside Park. Thousands more are

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An aerial view of Seaside Park reveals the park's soccer fields converted into a campground for thousands of concertgoers.

## Gathering attracts thousands to park

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expected today through Sunday when those non-campers arrive for the daily sessions.

"It's been a challenge the past few months, but all the planning by Terrapin Presents and the city of Bridgeport have paid off," said Ken Hays, executive director of Terrapin Presents, which runs the event. "There've been minimal traffic issues and we're all very pleased with the way the kickoff of the Vibes is going.

"The music on the Beach Stage has been going all day since about noon and the main stage is ready to go. The weather's been all sunshine and 80 degrees and hopefully it'll stay that way for the whole weekend."

Around 4 p.m., the campers slowly migrated toward the main music area, where U-Melt, from New York City, played the Terrapin Stage. Later on that stage, The Dark Star Orchestra would pay tribute to the late Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia, which was fitting as the Gathering of the Vibes started as a tribute to Garcia.

And it was during the DSO performance that the Vibes really started to feel like the major event it has become. The band, which plays the music of The Dead, attracted everybody to the main stage for some dancing and singing along.

As a bonus, former Grateful Dead singer Donna Jean Godchaux joined in with Dark Star Orchestra for several songs.

Seaside Park hosted the Gathering of the Vibes in 1999 and 2000, and the festival has apparently gotten bigger in the years since it relocated to upstate New York. There seemed to be just as many out-of-state license plates as those from Connecticut.

Two friends, recent college graduates, made their way up from the Richmond, Va., area to take in the music, scenery and the general good feeling the Vibes gives off.

"We try to go to a lot of festivals and the [musical] lineup is a big part of it," said Bailey Horsley, who was attending his second Gathering. "But the people here give it a real friendly atmosphere. Everybody cares for each other and looks out for each other. It's like one big family."

"It's definitely something I can see myself going to for years and years."

His friend, Peter Cole, agreed.

"I love this," the Vibes first-timer said. "It's better having it in a city than in a small town in the middle of nowhere. And to have it right next to the water like this, it's so pretty."

The Vibes gets going in earnest today with some of the headliners scheduled to perform, including Dickey Betts and Great Southern, George Clinton and P-Funk. The Mickey Hart Band and Deep Banana Blackout, the Bridgeport-based band of some renown.

On the Solar Beach Stage, bands with local ties set to perform, starting at 10:45 a.m., are Electric Mayhem, Big Apple'achia, Fro, Nardy Boy, The John Hickey Band, Depth Quartet and Cosmic Jibaros.

For a complete schedule for Gathering of the Vibes, visit [www.connpost.com](http://www.connpost.com). For tickets, call 226-8749 or go to [www.gatheringofthevibes.com](http://www.gatheringofthevibes.com).

If you are attending the festival and want to share your photos on the Connecticut Post's Gathering of the Vibes Web page, e-mail them to [jbustraan@ctpost.com](mailto:jbustraan@ctpost.com).

# Festival offers a cornucopia of consumerism

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Are you planning to attend the Gathering of the Vibes, but worrying that you don't have a tie-dyed T-shirt?

Well, you can stop fretting, because there's plenty to be purchased on the festival grounds.

That goes for handcrafted sandals, jewelry and just about anything else you could want, as there are many vendors tents surrounding the main site, with names such as Sunshine Octopus and Dye the Sky.

The same goes for food. There are plenty of places to eat with a wide variety offered. A cursory walkthrough presented options such as pizza, Thai food, burritos, falafel, pita sandwiches and a host of organic eats.

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## Vendors have something for everyone, and ATMs too

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You can wash your meals down with fruit smoothies, preservative-free sodas and, of course, beer.

After dinner, you can find gourmet coffee and chocolate treats at one booth or head over to Ben & Jerry's vendor for some soothing ice cream.

There's even a booth offering organic skin care creams and lotions to help ward off the effects of soaking up too much sun.

So, you don't have to do too much in the way of organizing if you're headed to the festival, as seemingly everything you could want is available for sale somewhere on site.

And to help you pay for everything, there's even a Bank of America van with an ATM.

How thoughtful!

■ **MORE THAN MUSIC:** The Gathering of the Vibes started as a tribute to Jerry Garcia after his death, and one of the tents Thursday was showing some of

The Grateful Dead guitarist's original artwork. Worth stopping by to check out.

If you're bringing children to the Gathering of the Vibes and want to keep them from getting bored, there's a Kids Tent that has plenty of art projects to keep them occupied. It's open daily until 8 p.m. near the main food court.

## MUSIC BY THE SEASIDE



John Galayda/Connecticut Post

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■ For concert schedule and complete festival information, visit [www.connpost.com/vibes](http://www.connpost.com/vibes)



Brian A. Pounds/Connecticut Post

Above, Chris Kane, of Syracuse, N.Y., dances with a hula-hoop during the Gathering of the Vibes at Seaside Park in Bridgeport Thursday. At left, friends Shaina Kubalak, left, and Lindsey Papile, both 18, of Cresco, Pa., walk through the campground wearing flowered wreaths and angel wings.