Steve and Lisa Ball to bring the music of the Civil War to the Keeper's House

BY SHERI TRUSTY

MARBLEHEAD - When Steve and Lisa Ball perform Civil War tunes during Summer Music at the Wolcott Keeper's House on Saturday, July 11, the program will be part of their love story that blossomed amongst their music. The couple met when Steve was a Civil War musician in 2010, they reconnected over music in 2013, and they married in 2015. Now, they make music together.

Steve has performed the music of the Civil War for 27 years, and in addition to performing professionally in 2013, Steve would occasionally host casual jam sessions in his home. Lisa wanted to join in, so Steve suggested she learn to play bass.

"She was an accomplished musician and mastered it in nine months," Steve said. "Next thing I know, she was singing harmony and playing bass behind me, and I thought 'She IS the band.'"

The Balls married in 2015 and now perform Civil War music across the nation. So far, they have performed in 11 states. On July 11, they will play a variety of music at the Keeper's House, including tunes from the Civil War, the music of Stephen Foster and the Carter Family, and folk music from the 1960s that was inspired by songs written by slaves.

"People will be able to hear about whatever they want," Steve said.

Steve taught himself to play guitar when he was 12 and was drawn to Civil War music after seeing a photo of his great-great-grandfather holding a musket. His family had no information on his grandfather's military history, so Steve began reading books on the war in the hopes of better understanding his grandfather's life.

About forty years ago, Steve visited Gettysburg for the first time and discovered CDs of Civil War music in the gift shop. He bought one of each and listened to the music all the way home. He had discovered a new passion.

He performed with another musician at reeactments for many years and then developed programs that include songs and stories of the Civil War. When Steve and Lisa perform at the Keeper's House, they will intersperse stories of the songs between the music.

In addition to being a musician, Steve is a narrator for the 73rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regimental Band.

Steve and Lisa Ball will perform at the Keeper's House on July 11. (Submitted photo)

It's a happy connection because the grandfather whose photo inspired Steve's musical journey was in the 73rd OVI.

Steve and Lisa are looking forward to returning to the Keeper's House to once again share the music and the stories of the Civil War.

"I like that many different people come up to us throughout the day when we're at the Keeper's House. I'll ask them what their favorite Civil War song is, and I can often tell them there's a story behind it," Steve said. "We have a lot to play when people want to hear songs that are not mainstream, and every song has a story."

Steve and Lisa Ball will perform on Saturday, July 11, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Wolcott Keeper's House, which is located at 9999 E. Bayshore Rd. in Marblehead. Guests can tour the home and visit the gift shop/annex. Tours and the concert are free. The performance is part of Ottawa County's celebration on America's 250th birthday. For more information on local America 250 events, visit www.ottawacountyhistory.org. For more information on the Balls, visit www.steveballcivilwarmusic.com.

A patriotic peninsula parade

Lakeside and Marblehead collaborated on a peninsula-wide 4th of July parade that brought dozens of entrants and hundreds of people to the community. Danbury Township Trustee Dave Hirt drove his 1928 Ford Model A in the parade and captured this photo of a crowd of spectators in Lakeside.

The Ottawa County Bluegrass Band will kick off the 2026 Commodore Perry Federal Credit Union Summer Concert Series on Sunday, July 19. (Photo by Sheri Trusty)

Summer Concert Series returns to Oak Harbor Log Cabin

OAK HARBOR - Mark your calendars for the 2026 Commodore Perry Federal Credit Union Summer Concert Series on Sunday evenings from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in Oak Harbor. The concerts take place on the porch of the log cabin at Kraemer Park on the corner of Church and Main streets across from the Post Office. Parking is available around the park, around and behind the library on Main St., and at the Municipal Building on the opposite corner of Church and Main streets. Attendees are encouraged to bring a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy an evening of music and fellowship.

The Oak Harbor Log Cabin Committee is a volunteer group that plans and organizes the concerts which are offered free of charge thanks to the Endowment Trust Fund of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. This year's schedule includes:

- Sunday, July 19, Ottawa County Bluegrass Band
- Sunday, July 26, EZ PICKENZ featuring Lyle Diefenthaler
- Sunday, August 2, A Change of Plans featuring Kendra German
- Sunday, August 9, Mark Wilkins
- Sunday, August 16, Jerry Wittman

In the event of inclement weather, cancellation signs will be posted at the cabin by 4 p.m. that day.

Ottawa County Bluegrass Band bringing its music and its many fans to The District

BY SHERI TRUSTY

PORT CLINTON - One of the area's most popular bands doesn't perform with electric guitars or strobe lights. Their idea of special effects are fingers that play a banjo so fast it's hard for the toe-tappers to keep up. And that's exactly why the Ottawa County Bluegrass Band draws some of the biggest crowds in the county. They will perform for Roseann Hickman RiverFront Live in The District in downtown Port Clinton on Friday, July 10 at 6 p.m.

Ottawa County Bluegrass Band includes Joe Mitchell on banjo; his brother, Dennis Mitchell on guitar; Danny Bryant on mandolin; and Simon Edwards on bass.

The Mitchells are Port Clinton natives who grew up playing bluegrass music with their father. Although the bands play across Northwest Ohio, there is something special about playing in their hometown.

"It's kind of fun playing in our hometown. We know a lot of people," Joe said. "We see a lot of familiar faces. I enjoy it."

Bluegrass isn't a typical lake community style of music, but the band has integrated bluegrass into the fabric of Port Clinton and the hearts of its people. Although The District usually features rock or modern country bands, no one is disappointed when Joe starts picking his banjo.

"Sometimes, it surprises me that so many people like it. It's just good fun, but some people have never heard this kind of music," Joe said. "Sometimes people have stereotypes, but we've been able to overcome a lot of that."

RiverFront Live, hosted by Judi Halstead, features free outdoor concerts every Friday in the summer. For more information on upcoming RiverFront Live concerts or to watch the performance online, visit the RiverFront Live Group Facebook page.

Hair Nation will perform on the Tracy Colston District Stage on July 11. (Submitted photo)

Hair Nation bringing a big hair, loud music dance party to Port Clinton

BY SHERI TRUSTY

PORT CLINTON - Hair Nation out of Cleveland will bring a 1980s hard rock party back to The District in downtown Port Clinton on Saturday, July 11. The band will play nonstop dance music on the Tracy Colston District Stage from 8 to 11 p.m.

"What we're going for is giving them a show that will bring them back to high school," said the band's drummer, Brian Conroy.

The crowd can expect to hear songs like "Paradise City" by Guns N' Roses, "Dr. Feelgood" by Mötley Crüe, and "Rock of Ages" by Def Leppard.

"We've added about 20 songs since we were in Port Clinton last year," Conroy said. "While we don't write songs, we do play songs that you haven't heard in a while that no other bands play."

Hair Nation doesn't just play music. They give a whole 80s-feel rock concert with big hair and loud music.

"You have to look the part. You have to take people back to what it was like. You have to have that visual," Conroy said.

In addition to Conroy on drums and vocals, the band also includes Jude Brzozowski on bass, Rob Draye on guitar and vocals, Greg Gruben on guitar and vocals, and Brian Maunus on lead vocals. They are looking forward to performing in downtown Port Clinton again.

"There's a different vibe when you're lakeside out there. It feels like more of a party vibe," Conroy said. "We're excited to come, and we hope everyone has a good time, dances the whole time, and sings out loud with us."

For more information on Hair Nation, visit www.clehairnation.com.

Congratulations to Chad Hill who was chosen among 167 entries as the winner of the ***Find Dino Contest in The Beacon!*** Dino was hiding in the ad for *Lakeside-Marblehead* on Page 8. Chad wins **6 VIP Passes to African Safari Wildlife Park!**