

# Southington Fireworks The Thrill is Back!

## Excitement is growing for the fireworks celebration -Residents and town officials are looking forward to the event-

By Rob Glidden  
Staff Writer

Anticipation is building for the upcoming Southington fireworks celebration.

The event will be held at the Southington High School on Saturday, June 30, from 4-10 PM. The fireworks will be from 9:30-10 PM.

The celebration is a fundraiser for the Southington High School Gridiron Club.

"This will be a great Southington event," said Town Councilor Art Secondo, "A lot of credit has to go to Stuart Estra and all the sponsors. This is why a

lot of people come to Southington, because there's always events going on for families."

The Observer is holding a coloring contest for kids who want to win a pair of free VIP tickets to the event. There will be six winners, divided into three categories: 6 years old and under, 7-10 years old, and 10 years and older.

"My son's doing the coloring contest," said town resident Fred Parke, "He's really looking forward to the fireworks and wants to win some tickets."

Benjamin Parke, 5, could barely contain his

“

I love fireworks, and now I can sit with my husband and some friends in those VIP seats.

”

Sue Smayda,  
Southington Library Director

excitement over the fireworks show.

"I can't wait for the bright colors," he said.

The entry deadline for the coloring contest is noon, Friday, June 22. The entries must be received at the Observer office. The winners will be notified by Wednesday, June 27.

While at the celebration, kids can also enter

"Kiddyland," which features several inflatable rides and a host of costumed characters. A magic show will also be featured and several Southington restaurants will have food available.

VIP tickets, which can be purchased at The Observer office on Spring Street and at the Southington Parks and

Recreation Department for \$25, allow participants to enjoy free finger food and special seating for the fireworks display.

Southington Library Director Sue Smayda managed to secure some of these tickets through pure luck.

"I actually won four of the VIP tickets," she said, "They were a door prize

during a chamber event at the Aqua Turf. I'm very excited because I love fireworks, and now I can sit with my husband and some friends in those VIP seats."

Regular tickets cost \$5 for adults and \$3 for seniors and children. For ticket information, contact the Parks and Recreation department at 276-6219.

## The musical acts will make you do a double take

By Rob Glidden  
Staff Writer

The upcoming fireworks celebration will feature a trio of popular cover bands paying tribute to some of the most successful artists in history.

Rick Larrimore and his band, Blondes Have More Fun, channel Rod Stewart, Michael John and Piano Man honor the work of Billy Joel. Number Nine is a tribute to the career of the Beatles.

"I was trying to get some music that everyone would enjoy," said event organizer Stuart Estra.

Estra also admitted that his personal tastes played a role in selecting the entertainment.

Number Nine is a local group that broke out in March 2006, when they performed for the first time at a benefit concert in Meriden. Geo Filippides, lead guitarist and pbackup vocalist, thought it would be the

band's only performance.

"We thought it was going to be one and done," he said, "but it's gone absolutely insane since then. We are going all over the place."

The eight-member band is committed to reproducing the complex orchestration and vocals that the Beatles are still revered for.

Filippides said that this year's performances hold a special meaning for the band; June 1 was the fortieth anniversary of the legendary "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" album.

For the other acts, Estra worked with Michael Yorkell of Innovative Entertainment Group, which manages dozens of musicians and comedians for big events.

"Festivals, fairs, casinos," Yorkell said, "You name it, we do it."

Yorkell said he tries to appear at each one of the events he's involved in. That will prove to be quite a challenge on June 30.

"We have five events going on that day," he said, "including ones in New Jersey and Boston. I will try to be at the Southington fireworks for at least a little while."

"Blondes Have More Fun" has performed all around the country, but the majority of their tributes to Rod Stewart are at outdoor shows in Connecticut and New York.

"Rod's been around for about 35 years now," Larrimore said, "so we tend to appeal to an older crowd these days. But they are a

passionate crowd and they're always dying to hear their favorite songs. I'd be skinned alive if I didn't sing 'Maggie May.'"

Larrimore said he began his career as a tribute artist after years of people asking him, "Hey, do you know who you look and sound like?"

Initially, he was unsure about the idea.

"I've always found Elvis impersonators a little strange," he said, "Some of them take it so seriously. I may look like Rod and sound like him, but I don't live in that persona."

Billy Joel impersonator Michael John was born and raised in Las Vegas. He honed his act as part of the "Legends in Concert" tour, a long-running show featuring several tribute artists.

Since then, he has performed at hundreds of events all over America.

John did not return calls for comment.

The Bristol Brass and Wind Ensemble, a community band that has been performing in the greater Bristol area since 1996, will provide additional entertainment.

"You think of a concert band that used to play in all the community parks," said conductor Dave Carpenter, "We still do that."

The ensemble specializes in show tunes and patriotic songs. They plan to perform several marches by John Philip Souza as well as a medley of Andrew Lloyd Webber's work.

The fireworks celebration will also be the world



Submitted

Beatles tribute band The Number 9 is committed to reproducing the sounds of their heroes. Pictured, front row, left to right, Chip Hulten, bass, Ken Sullivan, vocals, Ted Andrzejczuk, vocals and accordion and Geo Filippides, lead guitar. Stairs, left to right, Ralph Bushnell, drum, Dave Zeno, keyboards, Bob Glick, guitar and Chris Griffin.

premiere of the "Pecos March," a piece composed by Cheshire native and bassoon player Jane Bate.

They will also play "Stars and Stripes Forever" right before the fireworks start.

### Parks & Recreation Department

Phone-276-6219

Fax-276-62074

William Masci  
Director

Commissioners  
Joseph Laporte

Richard Egidio Sr.  
Supt. of Parks

Dave Kanute  
Frank Galante

Gerri Roper  
Office Assistant

Michael Fasulo  
John Fontana



Submitted

Rod Stewart impersonator Rick Larrimore and his band Blondes Have More Fun are set for a stop in Southington.