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LOCAL

Party in the park, new street entertainment series, market days and 'Cinderella': THE DIGEST



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Staunton News Leader

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Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

The Staunton-Augusta Family YMCA is hosting a free "Party in the Park" event at Gypsy Hill Park on June 12.

The Arcadia Project is launching a new street entertainment series starting June 14, featuring local musicians and dance groups.

Jones Community Gardens has kicked off its growing season, offering free produce, workshops, and volunteer opportunities.

The Wayne Theatre's 2025-2026 season opens with Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella" from August 15-24.

The Staunton-Augusta Family YMCA invites community to a party that is free, fun and family friendly

Designed to close out the nonprofit organization's Annual Giving Campaign in style, the SAYMCA's Party in the Park will start at 5 p.m. on June 12 at the Gypsy Hill Park Bandstand. This is the second annual Party in the Park celebration.

The SAYMCA's Annual Giving Campaign fund is how the organization provides scholarships for memberships and low-cost programming that reflects their

mission of creating positive impact in the areas of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Currently there are over 20 programs that benefit from this fundraiser.

“Events like this give us an opportunity to celebrate our mission and connect with our broader community outside the walls of the North Coalter Street facility,” said Candace Martin, branch director of the Staunton-Augusta YMCA. “It’s another way we can be of service.”

Party in the Park will feature live music by the Y Not Sing Singers, a dunk tank and live performances by Back in the Groove and teen hip-hop Regional Dance Machine “Mr. Teen Dance” winner Michael Prevette.

The family-friendly event will also feature children’s activities, in addition to vendors like Kona Ice and Noelia’s Lemonade. SAYMCA marketing coordinator Eleanor Rixey believes the event is a great way for families to usher in summer.

“Nothing is better than time spent outside with friends and family,” Rixey said. “It’s the perfect way to start summer.”

For more information about the event, check Staunton-Augusta YMCA's Facebook event page, call (540) 885-8089 or email Rixey at eleanor@saymca.org.

Arcadia Project's new series of street entertainment starts June 14

The [Arcadia Project](#) announced in a press release its first installation of ARCADIA PRESENTS, a new series of street entertainment programs designed for Staunton's Shop and Dine Out Downtown when main street closes for the weekend.

The new series begins 6 p.m. June 14 in front of the former Dixie Theater, located at 125 E. Beverley St., at the intersection of Beverley and North Market streets. The series includes local and regional musicians performing acoustically and two dance groups. The series continues several Saturdays each month through October 2025.

“We wanted to share with everyone a sample of some local and regional talent for everyone to enjoy,” said Elizabeth Respass, board president for The Arcadia Project. “We are working hard on our capital fundraising campaign so that we can start construction on the interior of our building.”

In addition to hosting entertainment in front of the theater, volunteers will be on hand for tours of the building and updates on the project starting one half hour before each presentation.

The current lineup for ARCADIA PRESENTS:

June 14 at 6 p.m. The Pete Echols Trio will play Americana and old-time tunes. The trio features Pete on guitar and mandolin, Joe Showalter on fiddle, and Andrew Green on banjo.

June 21 at 7 p.m. Arcadia Project co-founder Thomas Wagner and Caravanserai Music will play classical music and tunes from other genres, some of which have been featured at their recent concerts.

June 28 at 6 p.m. The William Hayes Duo will perform on this date. William Hayes (accordion) and Pete Echols (bass) look forward to performing Americana, jazz, country, and folk music.

July 12 at 6 p.m. The Shenandoah Latin Dance Company, based in Staunton, will be the first dance ensemble to be part of the series. They specialize in offering a

variety of dance styles, including salsa, merengue, bachata, timba, and cumbia, among other styles.

Aug. 2 at 6 p.m. Smith Avenue, based in Harrisonburg, is a husband and wife duo offering original songs and genre-bending covers. We welcome Graham McDowell and Cameron Church to our lineup.

Aug. 16 at 6 p.m. The Cotton Hill Band, which originated in Roanoke, features David Jessee (banjo and guitar), Bill Spahr (guitar), Annie Spahr (bass) and Kevin Rice (mandolin and harmonica). They play a variety of bluegrass and Americana music.

Aug. 23 at 6 p.m. PBJ Acoustic, including band members Amy Lessley, Gregory Culpen, and Sam Lessley, plays an eclectic mix of acoustic covers spanning several decades.

Fall offerings include:

Oct. 11 at 5 p.m. The Blue Ridge Irish Music School will bring their dancers to perform in our space. The school specializes in traditional Irish dance in soft shoe, step dance, and Cape Breton style dance, among other genres.

Oct. 18 at 3 p.m. In time for the Halloween season, The American Shakespeare Center will present a workshop on how to make theatrical blood. Join us to learn this skill and to meet with members of ASC to learn more about what they do.

All presentations are free. Any at-will donations will go either to the performers in their gratuity jars or to the Arcadia Project to be used towards renovations inside the theater.

About the Arcadia Project

The Arcadia Project is a nonprofit cultural initiative based in downtown Staunton, Virginia, dedicated to revitalizing the historic Dixie Theater at 125 E. Beverley Street. Established in 2019, the project aims to transform the long-vacant theater into a dynamic, mixed-use cultural center that fosters community connection through film, music, education, and the arts, where all visitors can "Bring Who They Are." Visit <https://thearcadiaproject.org/>.

More: [Ex-teacher's aide, accused of sex crimes with students, jailed again on new charges](#)

Growing season kicks off at Jones Community Gardens

Free fresh produce and programming available

The growing season is officially underway at [Jones Community Gardens](#), and this year's kickoff features a fresh lineup of hands-on learning and community-grown produce.

Garden labs return

The Garden Labs series returned June 6. The labs are free workshops for all ages are hosted right at the garden with help from local experts. Topics range from composting and pollinator planting to herbal remedies, garden-to-table cooking, and more. Each lab offers practical takeaways visitors can apply at home, plus, participants take something useful home with them from every session. Stay tuned for the full schedule at jonesgarden.org/garden-labs.

Market Days return

The weekly Market Days have also resumed, offering fresh, pesticide-free produce grown right on site. The market is open Fridays from 3-6 p.m. and

Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. through October at the garden's Montgomery and Peck location in Staunton. Produce is priced below market value to ensure accessibility, but there are also two easy ways for Staunton residents to get produce completely free of charge:

The Composting Program: Exchange your household food scraps (like fruit peels and coffee grounds) for fresh produce. Pick up a free collection container at the expansion garden and return it full on Wednesdays, Fridays, or Saturdays at 9 a.m. [Learn more and sign up here.](#)

Weekly Work Days: Lend a hand with planting, weeding, or harvesting during volunteer hours and head home with fresh produce in return for your service. Work days are held Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 9 a.m. [Learn more about volunteering.](#)

Additionally, Jones Gardens hosts Sample Saturday at the market. During the growing season, the team highlights an ingredient from the garden and creates samples and the recipe card for visitors to take.

Jones Community Gardens is a nonprofit that relies on public support to survive and thrive. You can make a gift to the garden online at <https://donorbox.org/jones-gardens>.

More: [A large structure is being built near I-81 in Staunton. What exactly is it?](#)

Wayne Theatre begins 'ERAS' production season with Rodgers and Hammerstein's 'Cinderella'

The Wayne Theatre announced in a press release the opening of its 2025-2026 ERAS season with Rodgers and Hammerstein's enchanting musical, "Cinderella."

This fresh Broadway adaptation of the timeless tale will grace the Wayne Theatre stage on weekends from August 15 through August 24.

Directed by Lesley Larsen, with musical direction by Kat McLean and choreography by Corey Holmes, this contemporary retelling of a classic story offers audiences of all generations an inspiring message: courageously believe in the impossible and take charge of your own destiny.

Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella" features beloved musical classics such as "In My Own Little Corner," "Impossible/It's Possible," and "Ten Minutes Ago." Tony Award nominee Douglas Carter Beane provides a witty, romantic, and refreshingly modern script, portraying Cinderella as a proactive heroine who charts her own path rather than passively awaiting change, the release said.

"This show truly resonates across generations," says Lesley Larsen, director. "It reinforces the empowering and timeless message that anything is possible when you have the courage to believe in yourself."

The Wayne Theatre's production of "Cinderella" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization. Performances will be held on the Wayne Theatre stage in downtown Waynesboro. Tickets are available online now, and advance reservations are encouraged.

Event details:

Production: Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*

Live Performance Dates: Weekends, August 15-24

Location: Wayne Theatre, downtown Waynesboro

Tickets and Information: www.waynetheatre.org

More: [Which way should a car wash door face? Waynesboro tables the question](#)