

New addition to the fairgrounds

Welcome to the first edition of the “Friends of the Fairgrounds Newsletter!” We are excited to bring this new feature to all of you, our family and friends.

We are going to start this out slow, as we don’t know exactly how often we will roll this newsletter off of the presses. Please be patient with us, as we work out all of the bugs, cobwebs and any other critters that get in our way.

Feel free to submit any news for possible publication to rlink@mercercountyohiofair.com. We do not guarantee everything will be published, but we can’t print it if we don’t have it.

Happy reading!

RVs rolling into Mercer County; car show slated

If you hear the sounds of wheels rolling through town, it could be the Monaco International RV Club heading to the Mercer County Fairgrounds. This large group will be hosting their rally July 1-10. There will be no public camping available during the rally.

Monaco International is one of the largest chapters of coach owners in the Family Motor Coach Association. They host several rallies every year in a variety of locations typically adjacent to the International FMCA Rally. Membership to the club is open to anyone who owns any brand of motorhome manufactured by Monaco Coach Corporation or Monaco RV or the Monaco Division of REV (Monaco, Holiday Rambler, Beaver, Safari, Royale, etc.) and is a member of the Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA).



Along with their own events, Custom Rod & Muscle Auto Sales, Celina, will be holding a car show on Sunday, July 9, from 1-5 p.m. There will be door prizes, trophies and dash plaques. Fritz’s Hog Wild BBQ will be on site.

This event is open to the public and in case of inclement weather, the event will be held in Multi-Purpose Building #2.

MERCER COUNTY FAIR BOARD

FAIR MANAGER
CARA MUHLENKAMP

PRESIDENT
JEFF SELHORST
Butler Township

VICE PRESIDENT
RYAN FENNIG
Jefferson B

TREASURER
AMY HAYES
At Large B

SECRETARY
TESSIE COLLINS

~~~  
ROB HECKLER  
*At Large A*

TOM MUHLENKAMP  
*Jefferson A*

ROGER HUEING  
*Granville Township*

CAITLIN GRIER  
*Union Township*

MARTHA KNAPKE  
*Center Township*

JERRY MEYER  
*Washington Township*

CHARLENE FINDLEY  
*At Large C*

NICK GRIER  
*Hopewell Township*

NICK ROSE  
*Liberty Township*

OPEN SEAT  
*Gibson Township*

OPEN SEAT  
*Marion Township*

OPEN SEAT  
*Franklin Township*

OPEN SEAT  
*Blackcreek Township*

OPEN SEAT  
*Recovery Township*

OPEN SEAT  
*Dublin Township*

**WEDDINGS! REUNIONS! PARTIES! SMALL GROUPS!  
LARGE GROUPS! EVENTS! MORE!**

# HALL RENTALS

**CALL 419-586-3239 TO RESERVE YOUR DATE!**

## 2017 Concert Performer Feature

# Brothers Osborne: Academy of Country Music's Vocal Duo of the Year and New Vocal Duo of the Year

Years before they climbed the country charts with songs like “Stay a Little Longer” and “Rum,” the Brothers Osborne grew up in Deale, Maryland, a small fishing town on the Atlantic seaboard. It was a cozy place, filled with blue-collar workers who made their living on the water. During the weekends, many of those workers would head over to the Osborne household, where a series of loose, all-night jam sessions filled the Maryland air with the sounds of Bob Seger, Hank Williams, Tom Petty and George Jones.

The Osborne siblings strummed their first chords during those jam sessions. From the very start, TJ Osborne was the brother with the voice. He sang in a thick, low baritone, crooning like Johnny Cash long before he was even old enough to drive. Older brother John, on the other hand, was the family's guitar shredder, his fingers capable of down-home bluegrass licks, arena-worthy rock riffs, country twang, and everything in between. Combined, the two Osbornes could play everything from traditional country music to rock & roll, creating a broad, full-bodied sound that would eventually fill the 11 songs on their major-label debut, *Pawn Shop*.

Like its title suggests, *Pawn Shop* offers a little bit of everything. There's bluesy slide guitar, country duets, southern rock solos, harmonies, and plenty of groove. The hooks are big, the guitars are loud, and the songs — every last one of them co-written by the Osbornes, who reached out to award-winning songwriters like Shane McAnally and Ross Copperman for help — introduce a duo whose music bridges the gap between the mainstream and the alternative world. Some songs were written at home in Nashville, while others came together on the road, where the guys spent several years headlining their own club shows, touring the country with Darius Rucker, and playing some of the biggest arenas in America with fellow

rule-breaker Eric Church.

“Most duos are built on singing,” says TJ “But John is an incredible guitar player, and this band is built on me singing and John playing guitar. It gives us two parallels that work nicely together.”

“It's like an old-school rock approach,” adds John, who cites classic bands like Aerosmith and the Allman Brothers as influences on the duo's dynamic. “Groups like that always had the lead singer as well as the sideman guitar player. That's what we're going



**BROTHERS OSBORNE will share the stage on Friday, August 11, at 8 p.m., during the 2017 Mercer County Fair with Granger Smith, featuring Earl Dibles, Jr. Tickets available at [mercercountyohiofair.com](http://mercercountyohiofair.com).**

for, too. We're carving our own path in country music.”

That unique path has already led the band toward the upper half of the country charts. “Rum” got them there first, mixing the feel-good sunshine of a beach tune with a far more realistic storyline. There's no actual beach in “Rum,” after all. Instead, Brothers Osborne turn the song into a tribute to the simple pleasures that their Maryland hometown offers: friends, good weather, and the occasional drink. They even filmed the song's music video in Deale, filling the clip with footage of friends, relatives, and locals.

“Most people we grew up with don't go to these beautiful beaches,” says TJ. “They can't afford to do it. They don't have the time

for it. What we're most familiar with is people going to the local bars and hanging out with each other.” John adds, “We tried to have the biggest time possible with what little we had. ‘Rum’ explains that.” The brothers agree, “We had to say it from our own perspective.”

A similar theme runs throughout “Dirt Rich” and “Pawn Shop,” two songs that stress the importance of appreciating what you've got. *Pawn Shop* dishes up plenty of love songs, too, from “Loving Me Back” — an old-school country duet featuring vocals from Lee Ann Womack — to “Stay a Little Longer,” the band's biggest hit to date. While a three-minute guitar solo brings “Stay a Little Longer” to an epic, anthemic close, Brothers Osborne also devote time to more laid-back songs, from the nostalgic California country of “21 Summer” to the 420-friendly “Greener Pastures.”

Brothers Osborne, who co-produced the album with Jay Joyce (the award-winning producer behind Little Big Town's *Painkiller*, Eric Church's *The Outsiders*, and Carrie Underwood's *Storyteller*), recorded most of *Pawn Shop* during breaks in their busy touring schedule, using members of their own touring band rather than session musicians from the Nashville community. The result is an album that's stamped with the unmistakable mark of a band. It doesn't sound like two singers, flanked by anonymous players. Instead, it sounds like a group of road warriors who've spent years sharing bus seats and hotel rooms, creating the sort of chemistry that can't be faked. *Pawn Shop* is both raw and real, and Brothers Osborne — who, years after those household jam sessions in Deale, now have a handful of nationwide tours under their belts, songs on the charts, and a career on the rise — are no longer a family secret.

## 2017 Concert Performer Feature

# Granger Smith, featuring Earl Dibbles, Jr.

*Editor's Note: Take a listen to the words of Granger Smith about his life and career.*

My name is Granger Smith. Sometimes long, fancy industry bios are helpful, but other times you just need to hear from the guy actually living it, so here's my story.

I was born and raised Texan, and I'm proud of that. I grew up along with two brothers, a couple of yellow labrador retrievers and parents that stayed together because they loved each other.

My life changed when I was 14 years old and decided I would teach myself to play guitar. This was motivated by two things: I thought the guitar would make girls pay attention to me, and the fact that George Strait played one.

By the time I turned 15, I was performing weekends on small town stages in North Texas, and doing my best as a fan club member to attend every George Strait concert within driving distance. Playing high school football was an important rite of passage for me, along with hunting and fishing, but the dream of a music career consumed me.

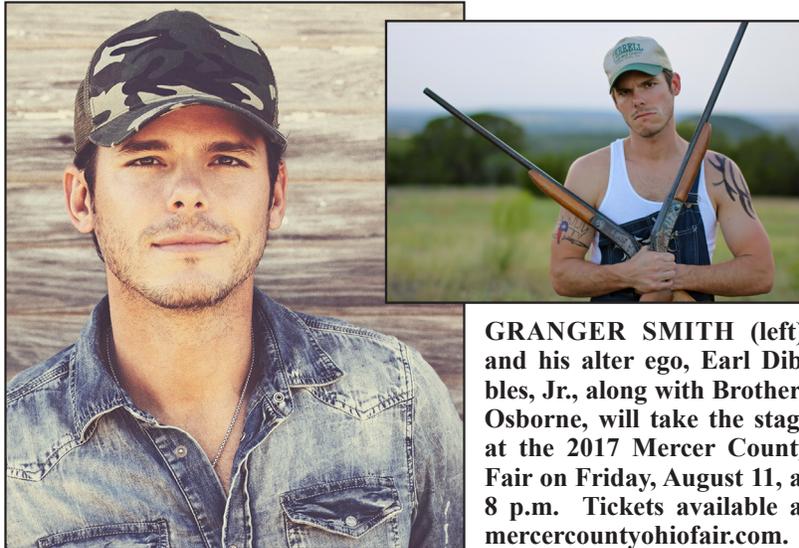
At age 19, I was satisfied with enough songs I had written to make an album. As a freshman at Texas A&M, I was able to scrape together some studio money by pre-selling the album to friends around campus. For being just a kid, that album did pretty good. It landed me a songwriting deal with EMI Music Publishing in Nashville, and the following year, I took the leap to Tennessee.

My time in Nashville was important. I absorbed the craft of songwriting from some of the best, learned my way around studios and recording gear, (which paid off for me later) and cut my teeth on countless stages as both a singer and as a steel guitar player for other singers. After four years, I had a shelf full of song demos, a little bit of music business know-how and a strong conviction to move back to Texas, finish my degree at Texas A&M, and start a band.

Moving back to College Station was basically starting over. The gigs were hard to book and when they did, nobody showed up to watch, but I was happy and felt creative. I saved money by making albums out of my house and using my band. We wore out vehi-

cles from two pickup trucks, to a suburban, to a van and then another van. The trailers we towed got bigger, and ever so slowly, so did our crowds. I learned how to use a camera & some editing software for making homemade music videos and we made lots of them.

My little brother, Tyler joined me in 2008. He traded a pretty good job at the bank to jump in an old van and sell t-shirts in honky-tonk dive bars. I think he did it not only because he shared the same vision as me, but also because his competitive nature was excited about proving a bunch of people wrong, and that's exactly what we did.



**GRANGER SMITH (left), and his alter ego, Earl Dibbles, Jr., along with Brothers Osborne, will take the stage at the 2017 Mercer County Fair on Friday, August 11, at 8 p.m. Tickets available at [mercercountyohiofair.com](http://mercercountyohiofair.com).**

Together we conspired and worked from the ground up with the goal of not only building an artist, but a brand. We embraced social media, searched for connection with fans, studied our predecessors and ignored our doubters. The good shows helped pay for all the bad ones, and the songs that sold helped fund all the others that didn't. We put communities first, knowing that without the people, we were without a job.

We created alter egos through videos to help promote the music and that's where Earl Dibbles, Jr. came from in the summer of 2011. It started as a short, funny video that my brothers and I filmed where my parents live in Central Texas, but it turned out to be something that completely changed the shape of my career. I actually like to think of it as an "intentional accident" because as planned, the video went viral and became a huge promotional tool for my music, but we had no way to know if it would actually work...especially since many of my videos before it never caught fire.

In the early morning of April 16, 2013, I woke up and checked the iTunes store on my phone with tired eyes. I was absolutely shocked to see my new album, "Dirt Road Driveway" sitting at #1. Things were rapidly changing on the road, too. We were seeing sold out shows in markets we had never played, and a passion in fans unlike anything I had seen before.

After independently releasing seven studio albums, one live album and two EPs, I finally signed my first record deal in 2015. I met some great people at Broken Bow Music Group in Nashville who sought us out, believed in my dedication and wanted to take what I was already doing, and magnify the message. We worked together not only as colleagues, but as friends on the same mission.

Within only weeks of the signing, my debut single "Backroad Song" was a hit a mainstream country radio faster than any of us expected. On February 14, 2016, the single became the most played in America as it topped all the mainstream radio charts. This was a lifelong dream for me both as a singer and songwriter. The following month, my first national

debut album, "Remington" hit stores. A few years ago, I was standing with my boots in red, sandy Iraqi soil watching a beautifully majestic Middle Eastern sunset, when one of my band members asked me, "Can you believe music got us here?" No, I can't. What a journey it's been since I decided to chase this crazy dream. We've played 10 countries, three continents, even the White House a few times, and I still can't believe it all started with a few guitar chords.

I have a song called "Sleeping On The Interstate" where I wrote, "Connecting map dots like poets and prisoners, trying to live more like a lover than sinner, slave to dreams so far away." That's me.

If there's one thing I've learned from the music business, it's that you don't really choose this life, you are this life. That's the truth no matter if you're selling albums or not. I do what I love and love what I do, and there's no sweeter freedom than that.

## Reverse Raffle tickets on sale August 1

Slated for Saturday, March 24, 2018, will be the second annual Reverse Raffle. Held at the Cooper Farms' Junior Fair Building, the event will feature dinner, live/silent auctions

## Need camp site for fair week?

Due to the overwhelming need for more camping sites during fair week, 46 new sites have been added to E Lot. The Mercer County Fairgrounds is growing and these improvements are a welcome addition.

If you are in need of a site, call the office at 419-586-3239 for all the details and to reserve.

Do not hesitate, as these camping sites will go fast.

## New attractions for 2017 fair

Every year, the Mercer County Fair Board attends the annual Ohio Fair Managers' Association's Convention to gain knowledge on new and upcoming entertainment.

Other than the live concert with Brothers Osborne and Granger Smith, featuring Earl Dibbles, Jr., the fair will feature the following new attractions for the whole family to enjoy:

\*Father Leo Patalinghug - presenting and uplifting and passionate presentation plus a cooking demonstration on Sunday, August 13, at 7 p.m., at the grandstands. Bring your lawn chairs to sit up close. Free grandstand admission.

\*Bears of Bearadise Ranch - featured every day of the fair, Bearadise Ranch brings to you their big, beautiful bruins in loving human care. Promoting habitat preservation and conservation for all bear species, learn about bears and gain an appreciation for them up close and personal. Witness the love between man and bear.

\*Beer Garden Entertainment - a whole week of music will be heard with groups including Erastus, Southern Rock Super Stars, Anthems & Alibis, Supervillan, Aaron Daniel Band, Saw Creek and Pac-Man Productions.

\*Southern Rock Super Stars - taking the Beer Garden stage on Saturday, August 12, at 8 p.m., this group is America's Premiere Southern Lynyrd Skynyrd Tribute Band. They will get your blood pumping to all of Lynyrd Skynyrd's greatest hits, as well as other southern rock favorites from .38

and the reverse raffle with a grand prize of \$5,000. Doors open at 5 p.m.

Tickets go on sale at the fair-ground office on Tuesday, August 1. Each ticket costs \$100 with only 250 tickets sold.

This year's event will benefit the renovation of the restrooms located on the east side of the fairgrounds.

"These restrooms have needed repaired for along time," stated Mercer County Fair Manager Cara Muhlenkamp. "With the proceeds from this event, we will be able to enhance yet another part of the fairgrounds."

Last year's event raised over \$30,000 which went toward a new track announcer's stand and a permanent stage.

Special, Blackfoot, ZZ Top, Allman Brothers and more.

\*One Man Band & Son - strolling the grounds Friday through Wednesday of the fair will be a one-of-a-kind show of extreme music with comedy for all ages. The repertoire aims at songs every age should recognize covering the 60's through to today with a mix of Rock, Country, Pop and more. With improv comedic antics, no two shows are alike.

\*New Outlook - performing Monday through the last day of the fair will be this group performing great bluegrass and gospel music. New Outlook continues to thrill audiences with their impeccable vocal and instrumental performances.

\*W.A.R. Wrestling - featured at the grandstand, action hits the ring with live professional wrestling on Wednesday, August 16, at 7 p.m. Grandstand admission is \$3 per person and seats are first come, first served.



# SAVE \$\$\$

**When You Buy Pre-Sale Ride Tickets & Weekly Fair Passes!**

**LET'S DO THE MATH...**

**DAILY RIDE TICKET..... \$9 PER DAY**  
*Ride All Day/Every Day When Purchased Daily - TOTAL \$63*

**PRE-SALE RIDE TICKETS..... \$35 (\$5 PER DAY!)**  
**SAVE \$4.00 PER DAY!**

**DAILY GATE ADMISSION..... \$6 PER DAY**  
*Purchased Daily - 7-DAY TOTAL \$42*

**WEEKLY TICKET..... \$20 (\$2.86 PER DAY!)**  
**SAVE \$3.14 PER DAY!**

**SAVE YOUR MONEY & BUY PRE-SALE!!!**  
*Available At The Fairground Office Or At Locations Around The County!  
Listing Of Locations Will Be Posted On Facebook!*

**LIVE IN CONCERT!**



**FRIDAY, AUGUST 11 • 8 P.M.**

**MERCER COUNTY fair**  
PARTY PIT/STANDING ONLY \$50  
TRACK & BOX SEATS \$40 • GRANDSTAND/HANDICAP SEATING \$30  
VISA • MASTERCARD • DISCOVER

**PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE OR CALL THE BOX OFFICE AT 419-586-3239**



**WWW.MERCERCOUNTYOHIOFAIR.COM**

**ENTER**  
**YOUR PRIZE SENIOR FAIR PROJECTS AT THE FAIR!**

~ Choose From These Departments ~

**Agriculture • Floral**  
**Home/Art/Domestics • Household**  
**Dairy • Beef • Goat • Poultry**  
**Sheep/Lamb • Swine**

*Info & Entry Forms At The Fair Office,  
In The Fair Book, on Facebook Or At  
mercercountyohiofair.com*