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Hot Time in the Old Town.....

Live music, street vendors, sidewalk cafes, huge crowds of people of all ages having a wonderful time! Mardis Gras?

Nope. Just lil 'ol Downtown Cumberland.

Welcome to 'Friday After Five' in Cumberland. If you haven't been, then you truly don't know what you're missing.

Every Friday evening, all summer long, there's a party goin' on and you're invited! You'd be hard-pressed to find more entertainment, more excitement, more friends, more refreshments and more just plain fun than you'll find at Friday After Five. Started just a few years ago by the downtown business community, Friday After Five has become THE place to start the summer weekends. Who knew?

Apparently, your friendly downtown merchants did. What a great idea! Bring area musicians downtown every Friday evening. Put up lots of chairs. Set up two or three, or even four bands, all at once in different parts of the mall. Invite the whole community to enjoy the music. And...better yet, make it all FREE!

Friday After Five has downtown looking like it should. Crowded. People begin to arrive around five-thirty or six o'clock. The music usually starts shortly thereafter and the party is ON till 10 pm or so. You don't have to worry about bringing refreshments because many of the restaurants and pubs are open for your convenience. Stores are open too. You can browse, shop, eat, drink and be merry, all in the same evening. How great is THAT?!

The musical entertainment is as varied as the crowd. Some bands are country. Some are blues. Some jazz, alternative, R&B, you name it. And, of course, just good old rock 'n roll. There is plenty of space for dancing when toe tappin' turns into happy feet.

As if all the entertainment isn't enough, on certain Friday evenings there are special events. One of the biggest is Hogs on the Mall. Imagine dozens of Harleys all lined up neatly. On other special dates are PT Cruisers, Street-roads, Corvettes... the list goes on.

While Friday After Five is certainly the biggest summer-time feature of downtown Cumberland, it's not the only one. Every Thursday is Farmer's Market on the downtown mall. Loads of freshly picked fruits and veggies. Bunches of fresh flowers and potted plants and free entertainment, too. You can hear great live music at town centre while you get fresh produce for dinner.

On Saturday evenings you'll find more entertainment at Canal Place from 7 till 9 pm. You'll also find wonderful specialty shops and delicious food and drink. Don't forget dessert at the Creamery and hot crabs at Crab Alley!

Now, just when you thought we'd covered all the free musical entertainment in the area, there's a little town just west of here called Oakland. In Oakland you'll find the Little Yough Summer Music Festival. All summer long, you can enjoy top performers every Friday evening at the Mountain Fresh Pavilion in downtown Oakland.

The Little Yough Festival is a bit different in that the shows are done in more of a concert setting. There is plenty of seating in the pavilion but some folks like to bring their own chairs, plus lots of room outside for the kids to run. The pavilion is quite open so the music can be enjoyed from many vantage points. The Little Yough concerts usually feature an opening act from the Oakland/Garrett/Allegany County area and then a feature act from the recording industry. Past performers include Sally Taylor, daughter of James Taylor and Carly Simon, Steve Chapin, brother of Harry, and Tamarack from Canada. Many of the acts come back year after year.

The Little Yough Summer Music Festival is entering its 8th year providing free concerts to the community. This year's schedule begins July 2 and continues every Friday evening for six weeks. The opening act starts at 6:30 pm and the feature performers begin at 7:30 pm. The concerts are free of charge and everyone is invited. The current schedule is as follows:

- July 2:** Dennis McClung Blues Band, also Channel Cats Blues Band
- July 9:** Liberty Ellman's Tactile Quartet, also Diane Hubka
- July 16:** Jim Truman, also Livingston Taylor
- July 23:** to be announced, also Mary Lou Lord
- July 30:** Kat Mills, also Mary Alice Wood
- August 6:** to be announced

