

# Give the 'Devil' his due

Charlie Daniels reflects  
on 40th anniversary of  
his most famous song



Brandy McDonnell

**B**ack in 1979, music fans first became acquainted with a bold musician named Johnny who crosses bows with the Prince of Darkness in a high-stakes fiddle contest.

Forty years later, "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" remains the signature song and guaranteed finale for the Charlie

Daniels Band.

"I never cease to be amazed by what that song has done for us. ... A friend of ours that's mountain climbing, he's over in Chile, and he sent a note and he said, 'Crossing over from Chile into Argentina and Charlie's on the radio doing "Devil Went

See DANIELS, A12



Charlie Daniels Band [PHOTO PROVIDED]



The Oklahoman

# DANIELS

From Page A10

Down to Georgia.” It always amazes me when I hear about something like that,” said the band’s frontman and namesake in a fall phone interview.

“You know when you get to that every night it’s gonna be a song everybody’s gonna recognize and everybody’s gonna get into. So, it’s definitely a high point of the night. We close with that. There’s nothing we have to follow it with. ... We’ve climbed all the heights we can, it’s time to leave.”

The singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist will bring other hits from his platinum-selling, Grammy-winning career to Norman on Friday night for a concert at Riverwind Casino.

“People come to see you to hear the songs they’ve heard on the radio, so we always do ‘Devil Went Down to Georgia’ and ‘Legend of Wooley Swamp,’ but every year we add some new things,” Daniels said.

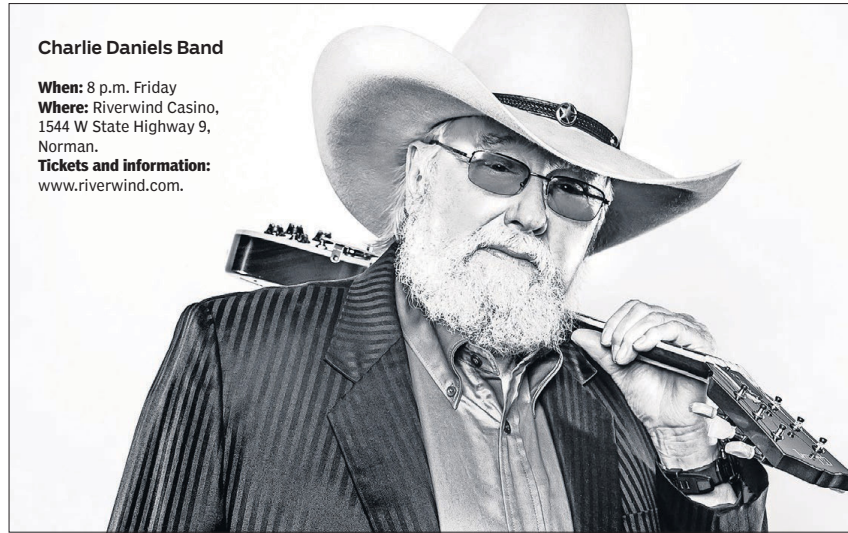
## Swampy side project

Among the new songs on this year’s set list is the rocking “How We Roll” from Daniels’ side project, Beau Weevils. The Southern rock foursome — Daniels and Charlie Daniels Band bassist Charlie Hayward, guitarist Billy Crain and drummer James Stroud — released an album titled “Songs in the Key of E” in late 2018.

“James Stroud, who produced our records for a long time and is a very notable, very fine record producer, he’s also one of the finest drummers in the world. ... We always said one of these days

## Charlie Daniels Band

**When:** 8 p.m. Friday  
**Where:** Riverwind Casino, 1544 W State Highway 9, Norman.  
**Tickets and information:** [www.riverwind.com](http://www.riverwind.com).



Charlie Daniels [PHOTO PROVIDED]

we’re gonna do a project together,” Daniels said. “I played all guitar — well, I played fiddle on one song — but it’s bluesy, it’s very swampy, it’s very Delta-like. It was four Southern boys playing our music we cut our teeth on, basically.”

The North Carolina native, 83, said he still loves making music as much as he did when he first started playing in rock ‘n’ roll and R&B bands in the 1950s and 1960s.

“I’m livin’ my dream. That’s what I’ve always wanted to do. Once I learned three chords on a guitar, I was never interested in anything else but playing music, and to me it’s a blessing of God to be able to do something you love so much for a living,” he said. “Music plays a part in my daily life, and it’s just the way I chose to make a living for 61 years now. It’s a blessing to walk onstage. I never take it for granted.”

He and his band will have played 110 shows by the end of the year. They typically take off January and February, when he enjoys vacationing with his wife of 55 years, Hazel, a Tulsa girl he married in Oklahoma on Sept. 20, 1964.

“I love what I do, and I’m ready to get away from it for a while when we go on vacation. I enjoy spending time with my wife and myself just doing what we wanna do — and then at the end of a couple of months, I’m ready to get back out there again,” he said.

## Avid Twitter user

The Country Music Hall of Famer followed his 2017 memoir “Never Look At The Empty Seats” with the 2018 gift book “Let’s All Make the Day Count: The Everyday Wisdom of Charlie Daniels.” Now in its second printing, the title of his second book matches the

frequent affirmation on his Twitter feed @CharlieDaniels.

“It’s amazing to me that I can communicate with people on the other side of the world by typing something in and pressing a button and sending it out. I come from a totally different generation. My son got me into all this,” he said.

Daniels posts on Twitter daily, sharing words of wisdom, a morning prayer, Bible verses, sports observations and more. As he ends every show with his signature song, he starts every day with a series of signature tweets: “22 veterans commit suicide every day,” “Pray for the blue,” “125,000 innocent unborn babies will be murdered by abortionists around the world today” and “Benghazi ain’t going away.”

“I don’t do politics on stage. I hate to go to a show and somebody’s spouting off about what they think. It’s kind of

my forum. It’s where I vent. ... I compliment things I like a lot, I tend

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Charlie Daniels

to downplay things I don’t like a lot, and it’s just a different sort of thing. It’s a different way of communicating than on stage. I would never attempt some of the things on stage that I do on Twitter,” he said.

“I’m not bashful about writing about my beliefs. There’s those people who agree with me and people who don’t, and I get comments from both sides.”

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