

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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## **Anniversary of 1889 Great Johnstown Flood approaches**

*Commemorative events to include luminaria,  
Presentation at Heritage Discovery Center*

The 1889 Johnstown Flood was a defining event in the history of this region – and for our entire nation. Once again, the Johnstown Area Heritage Association (JAHA) and the National Park Service are preparing a slate of events to mark the anniversary of this disaster, which occurred on May 31, 1889. In chronological order, events include:

**Friday, May 29**

**The Luminaria**

**Time: 8:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.**

**Place: The Johnstown Flood National Memorial**

**Sponsor: The National Park Service**

**FREE and open to the public**

**Call: (814) 495-4643**

Every year, the luminaria serves as a moving tribute to the victims of the flood. More than 2,209 candles are lit on the ruins of the South Fork Dam. The candles will be lit around 7:00 p.m. and will burn for several hours. The visitor center at the Johnstown Flood National Memorial will be open until 10:00 p.m. that evening.

**Sunday, May 31**

**Open House at Johnstown Flood Museum**

To mark this highly significant date in Johnstown's history, the Johnstown Flood Museum will offer free admission on Sunday, May 31 during its normal opening hours of 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

**Sunday, May 31**

**"The 1889 Flood: Through the Eyes of the *Johnstown Tribune*"**

**Time: 4:00 pm**

**Place: Frank & Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center**

**Sponsor: JAHA**

**FREE and open to the public**

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Dr. Patty Wharton-Michael, assistant professor of communication at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, has investigated the *Johnstown Tribune's* coverage of the 1889 flood, and will present her research in commemoration of the flood's May 31 anniversary.

With a special focus on the *Tribune's* editor, George T. Swank, she will discuss the five main themes of the flood coverage: firsthand accounts of the disaster, identification of bodies, requesting help, informing the community, and identifying the flood's cause. In her audiovisual presentation, Wharton-Michael will show how the newspaper was a highly effective tool in Johnstown's recovery, yet refrained from sensationalism.

Patty Wharton-Michael holds a Ph.D. from Penn State, and has presented her 1889 flood research to a national audience at an annual conference of the Association of Education in Journalism & Mass Communication Education.

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