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JAHA announces FolkFest lineup

***Jimmy Sturr, Seven Nations and
Chubby Carrier & the Bayou Swamp Band to headline***

Johnstown FolkFest 2004 will feature one of the nation's best-known polka artists, a favorite Celtic band from previous FolkFests, and the return of zydeco.

"It's a terrific lineup for our first year in the new festival park," said Ron Carnevali, FolkFest chair. "We think it's a great mix of old favorites, and new and exciting bands."

"Polka king" Jimmy Sturr and His Orchestra will play on Friday night of FolkFest. Sturr has won 14 Grammy Awards, and has more consecutive Grammy nominations (18) than any musical artist in history. He has been featured on "Saturday Night Live," and on CBS, CNN, Fox, NBC, ABC and TNN. He has sold out New York's Carnegie Hall seven times, played the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville and has recorded with a wide variety of artists, including Willie Nelson, the Oak Ridge Boys and Boots Randolph.

Members of Seven Nations played FolkFest in 1996 as Clan Na Gael. The group combines electric guitar, bagpipes and fiddles for a mix of traditional and Celtic rock. An opening act for groups as diverse as the Violent Femmes, the Black Crowes, Jethro Tull and Cracker, Seven Nations also played at the opening ceremonies of the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics in 2002. Critics have called them "arguably the best independent band in

America.” Features on the band have aired on National Public Radio, PBS and CNN.

Zydeco music is back by popular demand with the return of Chubby Carrier and the Bayou Swamp Band, who first played FolkFest in 1994. Carrier, a third-generation zydeco artist, is known for his high-energy live shows and has recorded five CDs with the Bayou Swamp Band. As one critic wrote, “This is truly a new level of ‘swamp funk’ that is going to start rising from the mists of the bayous and taking the country by insidious invasion.... Dancing is mandatory.”

The Johnstown FolkFest began in 1990 when JAHA persuaded the National Folk Festival to come to Johnstown. The National Folk Festival stayed for two additional years before moving on to another American city, at which point JAHA began to produce the event as the Johnstown FolkFest. The festival has since grown to attract more than 120,000 visitors annually.

The Johnstown Area Heritage Association is a non-profit, membership-based organization dedicated to preserving and showcasing Johnstown’s unique history to the nation through high-quality educational, cultural and recreational experiences. In addition to the Johnstown Flood Museum and the Frank & Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center, JAHA produces the FolkFest, a 3-day free music and food festival held annually over Labor Day weekend; flood commemoration events; a spring lecture series; and a wide variety of additional cultural programming. JAHA plans to open the Wagner-Ritter House and Garden in 2004, and a Children’s Discovery Center will open in 2005.

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