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**Johnstown Area Heritage
Association to hold annual gala
on Friday, May 16**

***“Adventure Around The World” is the Gala theme;
renovations at the Heritage Discovery Center to be highlighted***

The Johnstown Area Heritage Association is offering an “Adventure Around the World” as its Gala this year. The event will be held Friday, May 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the Frank & Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center.

For the first time, the Gala will be held on various floors of the building, highlighting recent renovations that have been made in preparation for the Johnstown Children’s Museum.

The first two floors of the Heritage Discovery Center have been open since 2001, but in 2007 the second phase of construction began on the remaining three floors of the building. All architectural modifications have now been completed, including the installation of HVAC systems and restrooms on the upper floors. Exhibits for the Johnstown Children’s Museum, which will be located on the third floor, are being constructed out-of-town and will not be installed until June. The fourth floor has been remodeled into an authentic ethnic social club, using a bar and furnishings from Johnstown social clubs that have closed. The fifth floor is now galleries for temporary exhibits.

“We will be featuring Japan in the courtyard, as people come in,” explained Nancy Nagrant, chair of the volunteer JAHA Guild. “The third floor will feature Mexico, and the new ethnic bar on the fourth floor will be Ireland. Dessert and coffee will be served in the new fifth floor galleries, which will be decorated as France.”

Guests will also enjoy the new rooftop terraces that are accessible from the third floor. Other newly-renovated areas of the building, including the three-story Mystery of Steel Theatre, will also be open for guests to tour.

Decorations will be a highlight of the evening. In the Japanese courtyard, guests will be greeted by a sand garden and koi pond. Hanging paper lanterns and banners with Japanese motifs will complete the look. Mexico will be decorated by Kimberly Lee of Bluemark Arte, which specializes in party decorations inspired by the fine arts. A Baja cantina will lead guests into two art rooms – one featuring Mexico’s native arts, and one featuring Mexico’s contemporary art. The final room will feature a colorful fiesta in the plaza major. The fifth floor will be decorated as a French café, with period posters and café tables. Decorations will be complemented by flowering plants, trees and bushes, courtesy of The Flower Barn.

Volunteers from the Nail Soup Theatre Company will be dressed in costumes from the various countries represented, and will help direct guests to the various floors. Irish dancers from Shovlin’s Academy of Irish Dance will be featured in the Irish bar. Later in the evening, dancing music will be provided by Bo Moore’s Downtown Music.

The evening’s roving buffet will highlight the cuisines of the various countries featured. Guests will be offered a complimentary cup of sake and a piece of sushi in the Japanese courtyard. Specialties from Mexico will include a fajita bar, and Ireland’s offerings will include a mashed potato bar. French pastries and coffee with French liqueur will conclude the meal.

The volunteer JAHA Guild is instrumental in producing the event, helping to plan the event’s theme, gather donations for the auctions, and decorate the building. The Guild is a group of volunteers who support JAHA in the production of major events like the Gala and AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest.

The Gala's ever-popular Silent Auction includes a wide variety of items. A weeklong vacation in a luxury condominium in Orlando, Florida, is among the top lots. Others include a weekend getaway package to Chautauqua, N.Y.; eight 50-yard-line tickets to a Notre Dame football game; season tickets to the Pasquerilla Performing Arts Center; and more. Among the wide selection of gift baskets are tickets to professional sporting events, including the Pittsburgh Steelers; handcrafted home decoration items; family outing packages; a framed, autographed poster and CDs from the AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest 2007; and many gift certificates to area restaurants. A preview of some of these items is available on JAHA's Web site at www.jaha.org.

Event sponsors include The Flower Barn and Bluemark Arte. Cost to attend is \$100 per person, or \$750 for a reserved table of eight. Proceeds from the event benefit JAHA programs and museums, including the Johnstown Flood Museum, Heritage Discovery Center, Wagner-Ritter House & Garden, the upcoming Johnstown Children's Museum, and AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest.

Dress is black tie optional. Invitations have been sent to JAHA members and supporters, but everyone is invited to attend. Please RSVP by calling Gwen Hartnett at JAHA, (814) 539-1889, x301. For more about the Gala, including a preview of auction items, visit www.jaha.org. Anyone interested in becoming part of the JAHA Guild should contact Patti Genovese at (814) 539-1889 x309.

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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. JAHA currently owns and operates three museums, the Johnstown Flood Museum, the Frank & Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center, and the Wagner-Ritter House & Garden. In addition, JAHA produces the AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest, a 3-day free music festival held annually over Labor Day weekend; the Johnstown Film & Wine Festival; flood commemoration events; and a wide variety of additional cultural programming. The Johnstown Children's Museum is currently under construction and will be opened in summer 2008. For more information on JAHA programs, museums and events, visit www.jaha.org.

