

PRESS RELEASE

For more information contact
Shelley Johansson
Johnstown Area Heritage Association
P. O. Box 1889
Johnstown, PA 15907
814-539-1889 x 308
sjohansson@jaha.org
www.jaha.org

PERFORMERS WITH TIES TO JOHNSTOWN COME HOME TO THE FOLKFEST

This year, the AmeriServ Financial Johnstown FolkFest always includes some local bands – in 2004, area favorites Grinning Mob and Jazz In Your Face will play. But this year the festival also serves as a homecoming for Little Buddy, also known as Mark Kormanik, and Tim Wetmiller, a member of Hot Club Sandwich.

Kormanik is a native of Conemaugh, Pennsylvania, where his grandfather worked in the steel mills for 30 years. FolkFest will mark the first time the blues guitarist has played in Johnstown since 1980.

“I’ve been going to FolkFest for a lot of years, and I used to say to myself, ‘I want to do this,’” Kormanik said. “My father lives in Johnstown, as does 90 percent of my family. The FolkFest is by far the biggest show on my schedule, emotionally.”

Kormanik is a 1979 graduate of Conemaugh Valley High School, and his class will celebrate its 25th reunion during FolkFest.

“My songs are about intangibles, like pride, courage, and honor – I got these things from growing up in Johnstown,” said Kormanik, who is currently based in the Philadelphia area. “The older I get, the more I appreciate my upbringing.”

Little Buddy will play on Friday, September 3 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and on Saturday, September 4 from 12:30-2:30 p.m. Both performances will be presented on the Atlantic Broadband stage.

Tim Wetmiller, the violin player for Hot Club Sandwich, moved to Johnstown with his family at age four, and showed an interest in music early in life.

“Tim taught himself to play piano in first grade, because his dad and I told him he was too young for lessons,” remembered his mother, Christine Richey of

Southmont. “We quickly asked Harriet Miller to be his piano teacher before he learned everything all wrong, and then he began violin lessons in fourth grade.”

Hot Club Sandwich is based on the West Coast, but three of the band’s six members have Pennsylvania connections. Wetmiller founded the band in 2000 with guitarist Greg Ruby, a native of Uniontown, in Olympia, Washington. In addition, swing mandolin player Matt Sircely is from Westmoreland County.

“We played the FolkFest two years ago, and it’s always nice to come home to perform,” Wetmiller said. “I still come home to visit a few times a year, particularly at Christmas.”

Today, Wetmiller lives in Seattle and studies southwestern Mexican music with Juan Reynoso and other well-known violinists. In addition to his work with Hot Club Sandwich, he performs with Paul Anastasio and the Fire of the Tierra Caliente, Billet-Deux, Los Calentanos, and Lonesome Lester.

Hot Club Sandwich will perform at FolkFest three times: on the AmeriServ Financial Stage on Friday, Sept. 3 from 8:00-10:00 p.m.; and on the Atlantic Broadband Stage on Saturday, Sept. 4 from 3:30-5:30, and Sunday from 3:00-5:00 p.m.

The AmeriServ Financial Johnstown FolkFest is a free music festival presented annually over Labor Day weekend by the Johnstown Area Heritage Association. This year, 21 performers will present more than 77 hours of free entertainment at a new festival park near Johnstown’s downtown. Major sponsors of the FolkFest include Dodge, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and Atlantic Broadband. For complete descriptions of all FolkFest performers, as well as stage schedules, a map of the festival park, parking information and more, visit the JAHA Web site at www.jaha.org, or www.johnstownfolkfest.org.

###