

**\*\*\* NEWS RELEASE \*\*\***

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## **Adams County Irish Festival Hits the Stage July 15**

Full day of Irish music & fun benefits local hunger relief efforts

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania – July 3, 2017

The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Adams County Irish Festival returns to Moose Park of Gettysburg on Saturday July 15. Offering fun for the whole family, the festival will run from 10 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. and will showcase all things Irish – music, food, dancing, merchandise and more.

Since 2001, the shady grounds of Moose Park have been home to Adams County's only Irish Festival. After a successful event last summer, the hours for this year's celebration of Irish culture and heritage have been extended to accommodate an additional musical act and to allow more time to visit the various vendors of Irish merchandise, crafts, and a variety of Irish and other foods in addition to soft drinks and adult beverages. Also on hand will be the Potomac Valley Irish Wolfhound Club who will return with their gentle giants.

Another nice turnout is anticipated for this year's festival as organizers have once again assembled an impressive entertainment line-up featuring the original *Riverdance*'s button accordion master John Whelan plus several popular regional musical groups, an Irish dance school and some special children's shows.

Whelan, a seven-time All-Ireland Champion accordionist, returns for his third appearance at the Adams County Irish Festival. Raised in England by Irish parents, Whelan was immersed in traditional Irish music at a young age. He moved to America in 1980 and soon began performing with *Riverdance* fiddler Eileen Ivers in what became one of the most popular Irish duos of the decade. Whelan also performed in the original Broadway production of *Riverdance*. In America, Whelan was exposed to other types of music and he expanded the boundaries of Celtic music through collaborative projects with artists from the country and world music scenes. In the late 90s, the John Whelan Band thrilled audiences in America and Europe, and the Irish Echo named Whelan Traditionalist of the Year in 1998. Whelan has recorded over a dozen albums. In addition to success as an instrumentalist, composer and arranger, Whelan has made appearances on television and in film, and produced the Celtic rock band Black Thorn in 2001. Accompanying Whelan will be the talented young siblings Haley and Dylan Richardson of New Jersey. Having learned to play at a very young age, Haley is an accomplished fiddle player and was 2013 All-Ireland Champion in two under-12 fiddle categories. She has shared the stage with many well-known names in Irish music and regularly plays with John Whelan who recorded and produced her debut album, *Heart on a String* which included musical backing from her older

brother Dylan who plays guitar, banjo and bouzouki. Dylan also began music lessons at a young age starting with traditional guitar but changed his focus to Irish-style backing when he decided to accompany his sister in a local talent show in 2008. He quickly became proficient and as his interest in folk music grew, he taught himself bouzouki and banjo and is also an accomplished player of those instruments.

Also making their third festival appearance is The Kilmaine Saints from Harrisburg. This six-piece, high-energy band is renowned for bagpipes and modern versions of traditional Irish songs. Originally formed by members of a Pipe & Drum band as a side project around St. Patrick's Day, the band took off and a debut album was released in 2010. Fronted by County Mayo native Brendan Power, the band also includes Mike McNaughton (drums), Liz Mallin (fiddle), Billy Brown (bouzouki, bagpipes, tin whistle, mandolin), Jon Heller (bass, bagpipes) and Rich Lipski (guitar). The band's fifth album, *Whiskey Blues and Faded Tattoos* will be released just prior to the festival.

Collectively known as The Brayzen Heads, Shane Farrell and David Gilmore return for their second consecutive appearance at the festival. The duo, from England and Ireland respectively, has been performing live since 2000 and has performed over 4,000 shows throughout Europe, Asia, Australia and the US. From 2000 - 2011, Farrell and Gilmore played a nightly residency at the notorious Shamrock Bar in Spain. Since 2012, they have been playing and residing in the US. The Brayzen Heads have just finished a 3-year residency at Raglan Road Irish Pub, Walt Disney World, Florida where they played to audiences 7 nights a week. They are now traveling around the US and Canada sharing their style of Irish music.

Also returning to the main stage is longtime festival veteran and regional favorite Irishtown Road. Based in McSherrystown, PA, the group is celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> year of performing together and the versatile repertoire of Irishtown Road leans towards traditional Irish songs (some in the Irish language) and traditionally-arranged original work featuring intricate vocal harmonies and instrumental variety. Irishtown Road is comprised of guitarist/fiddler Brian Colgan and sibling Eileen Colgan Bowling (tin whistle) along with Brian's son Jesse (bodhran, percussion), Denny Seitz (banjo), Ben Wenk (bass, mandolin) and piper Rodney Owens. Also, original band member Lynn Colgan Cohen (harp, keyboards) and her husband Henry Cohen (fiddle) will be sitting in with the band at the festival. The band will be featuring their long-awaited third album, *On the One Road* that will be released and available just in time for the festival.

Returning to the line-up after a one-year hiatus is another regional favorite, Across the Pond, a multi-instrumental trio performing their own high-energy arrangements of Irish and Scottish tunes and songs. Based in south-central PA, the group formed in 2010 and consists of Mike Morrison on guitar and vocals, Chuck Krepley on fiddle and Dan Diviney on tin whistle and bodhran. The band plays several dozen gigs a year from Virginia to Canada and has received national and international notoriety for their 2014 debut album, *Kid on the Mountain*.

Rounding out the day's entertainment slate are two Celtic Children's Sets by Pickin' & Grinnin', the husband and wife team of Ted and Susie Tomalewski of Frederick, MD. Additionally, performances of the Coyle School of Irish Dance will be featured during the afternoon.

Admission to the festival is still only \$10, which includes all entertainment and parking. Children age 12 and under are admitted free. The Festival will be held, rain or shine, at the McSherrystown Moose Park of Gettysburg (100 Moose Road, Gettysburg, PA), located in Straban Township north off of US Route 30, approximately 1.5 miles east of the US Route 15 intersection. Visitors are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets.

Major sponsors for the festival are The Garryowen Irish Pub in Gettysburg and the law firm of Axelson, Williamowsky, Bender & Fishman, P.C. in Maryland. The festival is presented by Adams County Division 1 of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) to benefit the Hibernian Hunger Project, a nationwide community service program by the AOH to maintain the traditions of Irish hospitality and generosity by feeding the needy while remembering the multitudes of Irish who died from starvation or who were forced to flee Ireland because of *An Gorta Mor* (“The Great Hunger”) of 1845-1850. Since 2003, Adams County AOH Hibernian Hunger Project efforts have raised over \$6,500 for hunger-relief organizations in the Adams-Hanover area. At this year’s festival, a Hibernian Hunger Project donation of \$500 will be presented to a representative of the South Central Community Action Program’s Adams County Food Pantry.

For additional information on the festival, visit [www.adamscountyirishfestival.org](http://www.adamscountyirishfestival.org).

### **MEDIA COVERAGE INVITED!**

In addition to photo ops with dancers, musical acts, various Irish merchandise vendors, Irish Wolfhounds, there will be a \$500 check presentation by the AOH to a SCCAP Adams County Food Pantry representative on the main stage ~12:40pm.

*Suggested caption/info for accompanying tandem photos (email attachments) in files <john\_whelan.jpg> and <Haley and Dylan.jpg>:*

Seven-time All Ireland Champion master accordionist John Whelan with Haley and Dylan Richardson will be the featured act when the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Adams County Irish Festival returns to the shady grounds of Moose Park east of Gettysburg on Saturday July 15.

*Suggested caption/info for accompanying photo (email attachment) in file <Irishtown Road.jpg>:*

Celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> year of performing, the Adams-Hanover area’s Irishtown Road will be appearing at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Adams County Irish Festival on Saturday July 15 at Moose Park. Their long-awaited third album, *On the One Road*, will be available just in time for the festival.

*Suggested caption/info for accompanying photo (email attachment) in file <ATP.jpg>:*

Across the Pond will be performing at the Adams County Irish Festival when the 17<sup>th</sup> annual edition returns to Moose Park on Saturday July 15.

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