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PHILADELPHIA'S TOP NEWS AND EVENTS FOR 2008

Openings:

- **Please Touch Museum and Centennial District** – In fall of 2008, the children's museum's new location in Fairmount Park's **Memorial Hall**—a National Historic Landmark built in 1876 for the Centennial Exhibition—will boast three times more space for exhibitions and programs. Just outside the museum, kids and adults will also delight in riding the meticulously restored 1924 Dentzel Carousel. (215) 963-0667, www.pleasetouchmuseum.org
- **President's House** – Within close view of **Independence Hall** and the **Liberty Bell Center**, the *President's House Commemorative Site*, to be erected in 2009, will mark the location of the nation's former Executive Mansion and honor the people who lived and worked there, among them at least nine enslaved people of African descent held by President George Washington from 1790 to 1797. www.phila.gov/presidentshouse

History:

- **NEW: Flag Festival** – Besides the annual Flag Day ceremony held at the **Betsy Ross House**, this year's inaugural citywide festival will include a street fair, flag displays, music, food and crafts. June 13-15, 2008. (215) 629-4026, www.onceuponanation.org
- **Sunoco Welcome America!** – This annual week-long party throughout the city celebrates the nation's birthday like only Philadelphia can. June 28-July 6, 2008. (215) 683-2200, www.americasbirthday.com
- **NEW: Quest for Freedom** – Visitors can immerse themselves in the story of the Underground Railroad by touring Philadelphia's *Quest for Freedom* sites. Just steps away from the **Liberty Bell Center** and **Independence Hall**, these sites and their heroic tales illustrate Philadelphia's pivotal role in the anti-slavery movement. www.gophila.com/questforfreedom
- **Historic Philadelphia** – It's just one square mile, but the area between Front and 7th Streets and Race and Spruce Streets encompasses different and dynamic neighborhoods, all jam packed with restaurants, galleries, shops and attractions. Throughout Historic Philadelphia, America's most historic sites stand side-by-side with the energy of a 21st-century city. www.gophila.com/historicphiladelphia
- **Once Upon A Nation** – Once Upon A Nation's 13 one-of-a-kind storytelling benches throughout Historic Philadelphia and four benches at **Valley Forge National Historical Park** come to life once again starting Memorial Day weekend. Specially trained storytellers delight and entertain with stories about our nation's history in the places where they actually happened. New for 2008, Once Upon A Nation introduces storytelling at the **Free Quaker Meeting House** and **Signer's Garden** in Historic Philadelphia and **Varnum's Quarters** at Valley Forge, along with 30 brand new stories. through Labor Day weekend. (215) 629-4026, www.onceuponanation.org

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- **Franklin Square** – This spring, two of Philadelphia’s beloved horse heroes—Smarty Jones and Afleet Alex—will permanently join the other animals on the *Philadelphia Park Liberty Carousel* in the refurbished original square in the heart of Historic Philadelphia. Also, new and delicious food options will tempt any park-goer’s tastes. Carousel, Mini Golf and concessions reopen in April. (215) 629-4026, www.onceuponanation.org

Food & Drink:

- **NEW: Philly Beer Week** – Beer lovers will flock to Philadelphia for the city’s first *Beer Week*. The lineup of events will include a tutored tasting at the **University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology**, a cask ale festival, the Brewer’s Plate dinner and a tribute dinner. There will also be nightly beer dinners, tastings and meet-the-brewer events at area restaurants. March 7-16, 2008. www.phillybeerweek.org
- **BYOBs** – It’s now easier than ever to find the perfect bring-your-own-bottle (BYOB) restaurant to satisfy any mood and taste. An interactive directory and map invites hungry diners to search by neighborhood and cuisine and even maps the nearest state-run liquor store where just the right bottle awaits. www.gophila.com/byobmap

Museum Exhibitions & Happenings:

- **NEW: Philadelphia Museum of Art Expansion** – The **Philadelphia Museum of Art’s** new Ruth and Raymond G. Perelman Building marks a grand new era for the museum’s vast costume and textile collection, as well as modern and contemporary design and photographs. (215) 763-8100, www.philamuseum.org
- **James A. Michener Art Museum** – A \$10 million expansion and renovation program at this Bucks County museum—set to begin in fall 2008—will be implemented in two phases. The first phase will include a new wing complete with a 5,000 square-foot upper level gallery for major nationally touring exhibitions, while the second phase includes the erection of an event pavilion, which will cover the patio area of the Patricia D. Pfundt Sculpture Garden with glass. (215) 340-9800, www.michenermuseum.org
- **Mercer Museum** – In the midst of a \$10 million fundraising campaign for the first phase of a renovation program, the **Mercer Museum** has plans for a 10,000-square-foot expansion to include a 3,500-square-foot exhibition gallery; a 1,500-square foot gallery to accommodate interactive exhibitions and programs; enhanced visitor services and amenities; and an expanded parking lot. (215) 345-0210, www.mercermuseum.org
- **Jerry Pinkney: Aesop’s Fables and Other Tails** – This **Brandywine River Museum** exhibition features award-winning illustrator Jerry Pinkney’s original works, including his delightful and skillful portrayals of animals from *The Tortoise and the Hare* and *The Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing*. Through March 9, 2008. (610) 388-2700, www.brandywinemuseum.org
- **Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination** – This 10,000-square-foot innovation exhibition at **The Franklin Institute** explores the fantasy technologies depicted in the movie and the real science behind them. February 9-May 4, 2008. (215) 448-1200, www.fi.edu
- **Frida Kahlo** – Organized in celebration of the centenary of the artist’s birth, this exhibition of more than 40 paintings at the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**, the only East Coast venue for the show, focuses on Kahlo’s extraordinary self-portraits, portraits and still-life paintings. February 20-May 18, 2008. (215) 763-8100, www.philamuseum.org

-more-

Page 3/Top Stories For 2008

- **Surviving: The Body of Evidence** – This interactive exhibition, which explores the process of evolution and its profound effect on humans, makes its world premiere at the **University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology**. April 19-November 30, 2008. (215) 898-4000, www.museum.upenn.edu
- **Real Pirates: The Untold Story of the Whdah** – This exhibition at **The Franklin Institute** tells the compelling true tale of a real pirate ship that started out as a slave ship in 1715. May 24-November 2, 2008. (215) 448-1200, www.fi.edu
- **Bloomsday** – The **Rosenbach Museum & Library** commemorates the day on which novel hero Leopold Bloom made his “odyssey” through Dublin in *Ulysses* with a week-long festival of programs. June 16-20, 2008. (215) 732-1600, www.rosenbach.org
- **American Contemporary Masters** – This exhibition at the **Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts** will include 50-75 works from both their own collection and the Bank of America collection. Some of the influential artists featured include Bartlett, Close, DeKooning, Francis, Golub, Johns, Kruger, LeWitt, Lichtenstein, Mangold, Pearlstein, Stella and Warhol. June 28-September 21, 2008. (215) 972-7600, www.pafa.org

Performing Arts, Music & Festivals:

- **Pioneer Awards** – The Rhythm & Blues Foundation, based in Philadelphia, gives Pioneer Awards to musical artists of the 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s. Past recipients include Koko Taylor, Clarence “Frogman” Henry, The Dixie Cups, The Supremes, Dionne Warwick, The Del-Vikings, George Clinton, Otis Redding, Johnny Nash, Jackie Wilson and Marvin Gaye. Details for the 2008 ceremony to be announced. (215) 568-1080, www.rhythm-n-blues.org
- **The Jazz Club at Longwood** – This new series of jazz performances in an exotic orchard paradise at **Longwood Gardens** features three unforgettable concerts, including the glamorous jazz ingénue Sophie Milman, the bold and trendy Turtle Island Quartet and jazz saxophonist extraordinaire Kenny Garrett. January 31, February 21, March 13, 2008. (610) 388-1000, www.longwoodgardens.org
- **Philadelphia Flower Show** – Themed *Jazz It Up* for 2008, this year’s gardening celebration features world-class horticulture and landscape design, entertainment and more than 150 vendors at the **Pennsylvania Convention Center**. March 2-9, 2008. (215) 988-8800, www.theflowershow.com
- **Carnival of Animals** – The Pennsylvania Ballet’s season comes to a fabulous finish at the **Academy of Music** with the company premiere of this critically acclaimed story of a young boy who spends the night in New York’s Museum of Natural History. June 6-14, 2008. (215) 893-1999, www.paballet.org
- **Odunde African-American Festival Weekend** – In celebration of the Yoruba New Year, this weekend begins with a spiritual procession to the Schuylkill River and ends with a lively street fair, including musical performances, food, vendors, crafts and more. June 2008. (215) 732-8510
- **Friday Night Concert Series** – Every Friday night in June, July and August, **Penn’s Landing** hosts free gospel, R&B or jazz concerts. June-August 2008. (215) 922-2FUN, www.pennslandingcorp.com

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- **PECO Multicultural Series** – These summer festivals at **Penn’s Landing** celebrate the diverse ethnic heritages—from Portuguese and Islamic to Russian and Irish—that make Philadelphia unique. June-September 2008. (215) 922-2FUN, www.pennslandingcorp.com
- **The Color Purple** – This stirring musical at the **Academy of Music** is based on Alice Walker’s award-winning novel, which tells the story of a woman named Celie who finds her voice in the world. June 17-July 13, 2008. (215) 893-1999, www.kimmelcenter.org
- **POPPED! Festival** – This three-day outdoor festival features local and national musicians from different genres. In addition to providing great entertainment, this second annual event also promotes sustainability by going green. June 20-22, 2008. www.poppedphiladelphia.org
- **West Oak Lane Jazz and Arts Festival** – The 5th annual event includes three days of free, non-stop music with more than 65 bands on four outdoor stages, along with fun activities for the family. June 20-22, 2008. www.westoaklanefestival.com
- **A Little Something for Everyone** – The **Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts** and the **Academy of Music** serve as the homes to eight performing arts organizations, including The Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Ballet, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, American Theater Arts for Youth, PHILADANCO, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society and Peter Nero and the Philly Pops®. (215) 893-1999, www.kimmelcenter.org

Gay-friendly Philly:

- **Equality Forum** – This year’s week-long festival, honoring Governor Bill Richardson, celebrates the cultural and political legacy of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community with more than 50 events by 75 regional, national and international organizations. April 28-May 4, 2008. (215) 732-3378, www.equalityforum.com
- **LGBT Pride Parade and Festival** – This year’s annual *LGBT Pride Parade and Festival* takes place during International Gay and Lesbian Pride Month. June 8, 2008. (215) 875-9288, www.phillypride.org
- **Gay and Lesbian Theatre Festival** – Venues throughout the city host new plays, musicals and revues by or about members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community during this 5th annual festival. June 12-28, 2008. (215) 627-6483, www.philagaylesbiantheatrefest.org
- **Gay and Lesbian Tourism: The Essential Guide for Marketers** – Jeff Guaracino, vice president of communications for GPTMC, published the first how-to book on gay tourism marketing in 2007. www.gayandlesbianmarketing.com

Sports:

- **Philadelphia International Championship** – Cyclists compete against each other and climb the steep Manayunk “wall” during this annual event. June 11, 2008. www.procyclingtour.com
- **U.S. Olympic Team Trials** – The spirit of the people, the renewed vibrancy of the city and the deep spirit of patriotism will be a perfect backdrop for the selection of the U.S. gymnastics team at the **Wachovia Center**. June 19-22, 2008. www.comcast-spectacor.com

- **Philadelphia Insurance Triathlon** – Participants run, bike and swim through the trails of **Fairmount Park** and the slow-moving waters of the Schuylkill River. June 20-22, 2008. (215) 517-4989, www.phillytri.com

-more-

Page 5/Top Stories For 2008

Anniversaries:

- **Rhythm & Blues Foundation Anniversary** – In 2008, the **Rhythm & Blues Foundation** celebrates its 20th anniversary. It is the only independent organization solely dedicated to the historical and cultural preservation of R&B music. (215) 568-1080, www.rhythm-n-blues.org
- **Mother's Day** – This year's Mother's Day celebration marks the 100th anniversary of the holiday's first official observation. Anna Jarvis, an adopted daughter of Philadelphia, lobbied for the observance in honor of her mother. An historical marker at Market and Juniper Streets commemorates the efforts of the Philadelphia resident. John Wannamaker was an early supporter of Mother's Day.
- **Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial** – In 2009, Philadelphia's Civil War sites will mark the bicentennial of President Lincoln's birth on February 12, 1809.
- **Edgar Allan Poe Bicentennial and Halloween** – Fans of the literary genius can mark the bicentennial of Poe's birthday (January 19, 1809) in 2009 by visiting his one-time home, the **Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site**, at 5th and Spring Garden Streets. True thrill-seekers can celebrate the Halloween season at **Eastern State Penitentiary** for a spooky haunted house inside an abandoned prison. Poe, (215) 597-8780, www.nps.gov/edal; Eastern State, (215) 236-3300, www.easternstate.org
- **Philadelphia Zoo Anniversary** – The nation's first zoo celebrates the 150th anniversary of the opening its gates in 2009. Animal lovers can take advantage of a special joint ticket with **Adventure Aquarium** and **Ride the Ducks** in the summer of 2009. (215) 243-1100, www.philadelphiazoo.org
- **Philadanco Anniversary** – The Philadelphia Dance Company, Philadanco, will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2010. The Philadelphia-based modern contemporary dance company tours nationally and internationally. (215) 387-8200, www.philadanco.org

Hotels:

- **Openings**
 - The 136-room **aloft Philadelphia Airport** hotel will open in August of this year with urban-influenced design, accessible technology, style and a social atmosphere. Guest lofts with nine-foot ceilings and oversized windows create a bright, airy environment.
 - The area around 12th and Arch Streets will look a bit more stylish in 2009 with the addition of the iconic **W Philadelphia Hotel**.
 - In 2010, the upscale, 202-room **Le Méridien** hotel will open just steps from City Hall. The boutique-style hotel will facilitate guests' explorations of the arts, architecture, design, cuisine and fashion in the city.
- **Renovations**
 - The **Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia** recently embarked on an ambitious effort to minimize its environmental impact. Through a series of efficiency and lighting upgrades, the hotel has significantly reduced its overall energy consumption. And leftover food from its award-winning restaurants is recycled at a local composting farm. Some of the compost is then used in the hotel garden and flower beds. (215) 963-9506, www.fourseasons.com/philadelphia

-more-

Page 6/Top Stories For 2008

- The **Radisson Plaza-Warwick Hotel Philadelphia**, a National Historic Landmark in Rittenhouse Square, just completed an extensive renovation. The guest rooms now feature 32" plasma TVs, Sleep Number® Beds and marble-accented bathrooms. The elegantly remodeled lobby is equipped with a modern pod check-in system. (215) 735-6000, www.radisson.com/philadelphia
- **The Westin Philadelphia** turned over one of its guest rooms to local designers and artists to create the hippest room in town. From paintings and custom lighting by local artists to organic soaps and shampoos created locally, every element of the room reflects authentic Philadelphia. www.uwishunu.com
- **Deals**
 - In honor of the *Frida Kahlo* exhibition at the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**, February 20-May 18, 2008, 12 Philadelphia hotels are offering free VIP tickets to the show with reservations. A VIP ticket guarantees admission any day, any time during museum hours. www.philamuseum.org
 - Fans of Chewbacca, R2-D2, Yoda and Luke Skywalker can reserve the *Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination* package at one of 10 participating hotels. The offer includes accommodations at a Center City hotel and two untimed, VIP tickets to *Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination* at **The Franklin Institute**, February 9-May 4, 2008. For a list of participating hotels, visit www.fi.edu.
 - Hockey fanatics can take advantage of special Flyers hotel offers when the home team hosts their Canadian rivals. www.gophila.com/flyers
 - Travelers get the chance to act like locals with a late check out at 3:00 p.m. and exclusive offers for shopping, dining and nightlife with the **Philly Like A Local** hotel package offered by **the Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia**, **the Park Hyatt at the Bellevue**, **the Ritz-Carlton Philadelphia**, **The Rittenhouse Hotel**, **The Hilton Inn at Penn** and **the Loews Philadelphia**. In addition to many other amenities, visitors will now receive *Crossing Broad*, a compilation of Philadelphia music. www.gophila.com

gophila.com:

- **Site** – The region's official visitor Web site, www.gophila.com, is the Philadelphia-bound traveler's best source for information. The site reflects Philadelphia's independent spirit by allowing travelers to explore the region exactly the way they want.
- **Pressroom** – The news cycle is 24/7, and so is GPTMC. For releases, story ideas, high-resolution photos, videos, b-roll, contact information and more from anywhere at anytime, visit www.gophila.com/pressroom.
- **Research** – The Philadelphia region's energy, history and character translates into big numbers. www.gophila.com/research lists the most up-to-date research findings.
- **Hotel Packages and Booking Widget** – www.gophila.com is the best source for finding exclusive hotel offers that are customized for specific types of trips, from outdoorsy to romantic to staying like a local. And the booking widget on the homepage makes it easy to find available hotel rooms. www.gophila.com

- **Photo Gallery** – GPTMC constantly adds new high-resolution photos to its online photo gallery. This winter alone, more than 150 high-resolution pictures have been uploaded. The images are free to download, and the gallery is always open.
www.gophila.com/pressroom
- **HD B-roll** – GPTMC is in the process of shooting new high-definition b-roll that will be available this spring. www.gophila.com/pressroom

The Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation (GPTMC) makes Philadelphia and The Countryside® a premier destination through marketing and image building that increases business and promotes the region's vitality. For more information about travel to Philadelphia, visit www.gophila.com or call the Independence Visitor Center, located in Independence National Historical Park, at (800) 537-7676.

Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos of Greater Philadelphia, visit the photo gallery of www.gophila.com/pressroom.