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More information: Dave Fooks, 610-683-1537; email fooks@kutztown.edu

FAMILY FUN WITH A PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH FLAVOR AT THE 2005 KUTZTOWN FESTIVAL

Editors: In 2005 the Kutztown Festival carries on the 56-year tradition of celebrating the colorful heritage of German settlers who came to the region two centuries ago and became known as the "Pennsylvania Dutch." The nine-day celebration in Kutztown is one of the oldest ongoing folklife festivals in the United States. More than 120,000 visitors regularly attend the Festival each year.

Pennsylvania Dutch folklore and traditions, music, dancing, quilts, crafts, children's activities, food and more will highlight the 2005 Kutztown Festival July 2 to July 10 at the fairgrounds in Kutztown, PA.

"This is a festival that emphasizes traditions in America that date back at least 200 years, and at the same time provides a full day of fun and entertainment for visitors of all ages," according to Festival Executive Director Dave Fooks.

Festival Folk Art

Every day during the Festival, there will be demonstrations of traditional crafts by 200 of America's most respected folk artists and craftsmen.

Folk art and crafts demonstrations range from pottery making, metal, and wood carving to fine furniture, dower chests and Bible boxes. The myriad of Pennsylvania Dutch and Early American crafts includes clothing, weavings, brooms, scherenschnitte (cut paper art), fraktur, folk instruments, hex signs, sundials, beeswax candles and figures and much more.

Among the craftsmen returning to the 2005 Festival are Ivan Hoyt, Johnny and Eric Claypoole, and Bill Schuster – America's last remaining hex sign painters – who will demonstrate the art form that is seen on countless barns in the Kutztown area. Johnny Claypoole was featured in Charles Kuralt's famous "On The Road" book and television series. Also at the Festival will be world-renowned

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folk artists Ned Foltz and Lester Breininger who share with visitors the techniques and mastery of their Pennsylvania German redware.

Largest Quilt Sales Event in America

A favorite spot for visitors is the huge Festival quilt barn where they take in the visual excitement of almost 2,500 beautiful, locally handmade quilts and wall hangings. The show is now the largest quilt sales event in the nation, and last year one quilt sold for a record-setting \$8,400.

These colorful one-of-a-kind creations represent the very best of the traditional Pennsylvania Dutch quilting craft, as well as countless hours of devoted work by people in the region. Judges will choose the top 100 quilts. Top honors will then go to 24 quilts and of these 4 will be judged best of the show. The quilt auction takes place on the second Saturday of the Festival and attracts large numbers of bidders from all over the Middle Atlantic region and beyond. Prize-winning quilts will remain on display the remaining days of the Festival.

Music, Music, Music...

More music, more fiddling, more singing and more dancing will be part of the festival.

Again in 2005, an instrumental and vocal ensemble from the Rhineland-Pfalz region of Germany will provide toe-tapping, traditional style music throughout the week for Festival audiences. Vocals will be in the Rhineland dialect, which is closely related to the Pennsylvania German or “Pennsylvania Dutch” dialect spoken in eastern Pennsylvania.

Two strolling Pennsylvania Dutch bands entertain throughout the fairgrounds, and Lester Miller and The Country Folks fill the air with fiddling, foot-stomping music and jigging and hoe-down dancing. Miller also leads a “square dancing free-for-all” Wednesday and Friday evenings, inviting visitors to join in. Both acclaimed folk singer Ray Owen and the celebrated Blue Mountain

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Gospel Express are returning to the Festival this year. The beautiful sounds of an a cappella choir, modeled from the Ephrata Cloister, will perform centuries-old music of the Mennonite community.

Living History, Kids' Activities, and More

Color the Festival red, white and blue for the 4th of July. Independence Day celebrations have been part of the folklife festivals in Kutztown for over 55 years. The traditional parade includes nearly all of the Festival's craftsmen, entertainers and presenters, two brass bands, and a color guard with the American as well as the historic Pennsylvania German flags. Following the parade, 4th of July ceremonies will take place at the main stage and Dr. Theodore Yensch will give the Independence Day oration

Story telling and living history events help to make this a true folklife festival. There are seminars on Pennsylvania Dutch traditions, religion, music, meal preparation, clothing, folk medicine, and family life. Mennonite meeting house services are presented daily. Cow milking, sheep shearing, wool carding, spinning, weaving and dyeing, soap making, candle making, blacksmithing, and furniture making are featured. An old-fashion 4-square kitchen and medicinal herb garden, and exhibits of antique farming equipment bring the region's fascinating farm heritage to life. Informal seminars depict the traditional "Mountain Mary" who shares stories about folk medicines and healing.

Kids love the story times and puppet animals in the Children's Barnyard Theatre. For a real feel of country life, there are pony rides, "mule-powered" flying swings from the 1800's (the only ride of its kind left in America), a hay maze, magic acts, and cake walks. Noah's Ark farm family zoo gives everyone a chance to pet piglets, calves, lambs, bunnies and other friendly critters. The clang of a school bell calls children and adults to "classes" in the 19th century-style one-room schoolhouse.

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Since children ages 12 and under are admitted free with an adult, a family can share a full day of entertainment for less than the cost of a family outing at a movie.

“Country Fun” For Everyone

Although country auctions have been part of the Festival for many years, there is a new twist. In addition to the daily auctions of antiques and collectables, there will be a stage presentation that authentically recreates an auction in late 19th century rural eastern Pennsylvania. The auction will be complete with mules, horse traders, and peddlers, and with items of the period ranging from farm equipment to household items.

Plenty of PA Dutch Food

Mouth-watering food abounds at a true Pennsylvania Dutch celebration. Festival-goers feast on all-you-can eat, home-style meals prepared and served by local churches, savor traditional ox roast or chicken dinners, and enjoy delicacies such as home-made corn pie and the unique Kutztown Dutch Fries. Funnel cakes, strawberry shortcake, shoofly pie, hot waffles, and ice cream sundaes round out what can be an almost-nonstop eating event.

Again in 2005, authentic Pennsylvania Dutch meals prepared by local cooks from recipes handed down in their families for generations will be prepared in the “summer kitchen.” The meals are served country style to a Pennsylvania Dutch “family” of Festival participants attired in period costume.

Goodies to go are available in the Farmers’ Market, with jellies, preserves, relishes, home made breads and desserts, smoked meats and cheeses and farm fresh produce in abundance and ready to take home. A distinctive Neighborhood House is the setting for a collection of authentic late 19th-early 20th century farm and town spoke-wheel wagons. Nearby, volunteers from local Pennsylvania

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German heritage groups provide information and answer questions on “Dutch” customs and traditions. Interested persons are invited to carry on a conversation in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect.

Admission Same As In '04/ Free Parking / Free Shuttle

Admission prices remain the same this year as in 2004. Free parking is available in the Festival parking lots and a free shuttle service will be available. Admission prices are adults, \$10; seniors, \$9; children 12 and under, free.

The Festival is a partnership of the Kutztown University Foundation, Inc. and the Kutztown Fair Association, Inc., in cooperation with two-dozen community organizations and nearly 400 volunteers. The spacious, well-manicured Kutztown Fairgrounds has paved walkways, indoor and outdoor exhibit areas, and plenty of parking for personal and recreational vehicles and motor coaches. Kutztown, Pennsylvania is easily accessible from PA Route 222, midway between Reading and Allentown.

For additional information on the 2005 Festival, visit the Festival website at <http://www.kutztownfestival.com>

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