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THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE PHILLY ON THE FOURTH OF JULY
John Legend, Boyz II Men And The Real Wedding Of Ben Franklin And Betsy Ross
Re-enactors Highlight The Free Nine-Day Festival

PHILADELPHIA, June 9, 2008 – The nation's birthplace is still the best place to celebrate America's birthday. *Sunoco Welcome America!*, Philadelphia's nine-day marathon of Independence Day events, kicks off on Saturday, June 28 and continues through Sunday, July 6, 2008. In between, each day is jam-packed with films, food, dancing, a parade, patriotic ceremonies and free concerts featuring John Legend on Friday, July 4 and Boyz II Men on Saturday, July 5, with fireworks following both concerts. To make the festival even more special this year, the re-enactors who portray Benjamin Franklin and Betsy Ross will be married in a real wedding ceremony on July 3.

July 4 Ceremonies and Festivities:

- **Independence Day Ceremony** – Mayor Michael A. Nutter and other dignitaries will preside over patriotic ceremonies and entertainment honoring America's 232nd birthday. Following a reading of the *Declaration of Independence*, Mayor Nutter will honor the *Best of Class* Philadelphia high school students for their outstanding academic performance. 10:00 a.m. **Independence Hall**, 5th & Chestnut Streets
- **Happy Birthday America** – Around here, it isn't a party until someone breaks out the Tastykakes. Visitors can stop by to celebrate and enjoy a Philadelphia favorite treat. 12:00 noon. **Independence Visitor Center**, 6th & Market Streets, (800) 537-7676, www.independencevisitorcenter.com
- **Let Freedom Ring** – Descendants of those who signed the *Declaration of Independence* will ceremonially tap the Liberty Bell, signaling the start of a nationwide bell ringing. 2:00 p.m. **Liberty Bell Center**, Market Street between 5th & 6th Streets, (215) 597-1785
- **Party on the Parkway** – The action moves to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway for an afternoon of music, entertainment, food and more. 2:00-7:00 p.m. Benjamin Franklin Parkway
- **Southwest Airlines July 4th Parade** – Marching bands, dancers, patriotic figures and floats fill the Parkway in grand Independence Day style. 6:00-8:30 p.m. Benjamin Franklin Parkway
- **Sweet Sounds of Liberty Concert & Fireworks** – Five-time Grammy Award-winner John Legend returns to Philly for an evening of his smooth R&B followed by an elaborate fireworks display. Philly's own Russell Thompkins Jr. and The New Stylistics will open the show with the silky harmonies that defined the Philadelphia Sound. Brilliant pyrotechnics by internationally acclaimed Zambelli Fireworks will light the sky following the concert. 8:30-11:00 p.m. Steps of the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**, 26th Street & the Benjamin Franklin Parkway

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New Events:

- **The Real Wedding of Ben Franklin & Betsy Ross** – In real life, the city’s premier Benjamin Franklin (Ralph Archbold) and Betsy Ross (Linda Wilde) re-enactors fell in love and decided to get married. They’ll tie the knot on July 3. With **Independence Hall** as a backdrop, Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter will officiate over the nuptials with Peter Nero and the Philly POPS providing the wedding march while thousands of festival goers join Ben and Betsy’s family as they celebrate this real-life union. 8:00 p.m. 5th & Chestnut Streets
- **Fiesta on the Parkway** – Latin sensations DLG and N’Klabe headline a day of live music, dance, food, colorful stiltwalkers, giant puppets and more. In addition, the *NBA Nation* tour bus rolls into Philly with interactive games, videos of the 50 greatest NBA plays and other hands-on activities. Meet Latino baseball stars at the *Fiesta de Jonron Tour*, and be there for the *Mas Domino* exhibition. July 3, 2:00-8:30 p.m. Benjamin Franklin Parkway
- **Wednesday Night Out Presented by the Philadelphia International Airport** – More than 15 talented Philly performers will take to the four stages set up along the Avenue of the Arts and in **The Kimmel Center** to show why the city’s arts scene is tops. While all this music, dance, opera, poetry and other performing arts is taking place, visual artists will line the street with their creations. July 2, 6:30-10:30 p.m. S. Broad Street between Locust & Pine Streets
- **Cops and Kids: Turning the Corner** – Festival goers can join Philadelphia police officers from the 22nd and 23rd Districts and neighborhood kids to create large-scale murals. July 2, 3:00 p.m. 22nd & 23rd Police District Building, 17th Street & Montgomery Avenue

Crowd-pleasing Favorites:

- **Waterfront Concert & Fireworks** – Philly’s own hometown music heroes Boyz II Men hit the Pearle Vision Stage for a free, family-friendly concert. Afterwards, the skies over the Delaware River will light up with a spectacular 20-minute fireworks display by Zambelli Fireworks. July 5, concert 6:30 p.m.; fireworks 9:30 p.m. **Great Plaza at Penn’s Landing**, Columbus Boulevard at Chestnut Streets, (215) 629-3200, www.pennslandingcorp.com
- **Taste of Philadelphia** – Now at **Penn’s Landing**, this favorite event means even more hungry visitors can nosh their way through the weekend, sampling the cuisine of some of the city’s finest chefs. July 5-6, 11:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. **Great Plaza at Penn’s Landing**, Columbus Boulevard at Chestnut Streets, (215) 629-3200, www.pennslandingcorp.com
- **Super Scooper All-You-Can-Eat Ice Cream Festival** – Ice cream lovers can feast on as much of their favorite cold, creamy treat as they can consume. All it takes is a \$5 donation to the Joshua Kahan Fund to indulge in ice cream from a large number of favorite brands. July 4, 12:00 noon-6:00 p.m.; July 5, 12:00 noon-9:00 p.m.; July 6, 12:00 noon-6:00 p.m. **Great Plaza at Penn’s Landing**, Columbus Boulevard at Chestnut Streets, (215) 629-3200, www.pennslandingcorp.com
- **Pops on Independence** – Bring a blanket and pack a picnic basket for an alfresco evening concert of rousing patriotic tunes performed by the award-winning Peter Nero & the Philly POPS. July 3, 8:30 p.m. Independence Mall between Market & Chestnut Streets and between 5th & 6th Streets, (215) 629-4026, www.historicphiladelphia.org
- **Strongman Competition** – Strong men and weight lifters from around the U.S. haul concrete cylinders, pull trucks and lift thousands of pounds as they compete for prizes. Among the competitors is Phil Pfister, 2006 winner of the World’s Strongest Man competition and the first American to win that title since 1982. June 28-29, 2:00-6:00 p.m. Benjamin Franklin Parkway, www.americasbirthday.com

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- **Saturday Night Alive** – Sing hallelujah with the Grammy Award-nominated Wilmington Mass Choir and the Sharon Baptist Church Mass Choir. Then stick around for a showing of *First Sunday*. June 28, 6:00 p.m. **Great Plaza at Penn’s Landing**, Columbus Boulevard at Chestnut Streets, (215) 629-3200, www.pennslandingcorp.com
- **Philly @ the Movies** – Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy free flicks:
 - June 28, 9:00 p.m. – *Rocky*, **Philadelphia Museum of Art** steps, 26th Street & the Benjamin Franklin Parkway
 - June 29, 9:00 p.m. – *Happy Feet*, **Battleship New Jersey**, 62 Battleship Place, Camden, NJ
 - June 30, 9:00 p.m. – *12 Monkeys*, Dilworth Plaza at **City Hall**, 15th & Market Streets
 - July 1, 9:00 p.m. – *Shawshank Redemption*, **Eastern State Penitentiary**, 22nd Street & Fairmount Avenue
 - July 2, 2:00 & 4:00 p.m. – *The Bucket List*, **Philadelphia Senior Center**, 509 S. Broad Street
 - July 3, 9:00 p.m. – *Harry Potter & the Order of the Phoenix*, **Northeast Philadelphia Airport**, 9800 Ashton Road at Grant Avenue
 - July 5, 10:30 a.m. & 1:00 p.m. – *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, **The Bridge Cinema de Lux Theatre**, 230 S. 40th Street
- **Go 4th & Learn** – Storytellers, performers and artists keep kids enthralled with their magical tales. Each child receives a goodie bag that includes a book.
 - June 28, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. – Kids play with musical instruments and learn how to scat from the **Please Touch Museum’s** Scat Cat. **World Cafe Live**, 3025 Walnut Street, (215) 222-1400
 - June 29, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon – Kids can romp around, play games and hear professional storytellers. **Franklin Square**, 6th & Race Streets, (215) 592-7273
 - June 30, 10:00 a.m. – If the helicopter that they can climb in doesn’t get kids’ attention, the live entertainment will. Dilworth Plaza at **City Hall**, Market Street between 13th & 15th Streets.
 - July 1, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon – Storytellers give kids the scoop on Ben Franklin while they enjoy the interactive movie *What’s the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?* **Free Library of Philadelphia**, Montgomery Auditorium, 1901 Vine Street, (215) 686-5322
 - July 2, 10:00 a.m. – Explore the world of possibilities with storytelling, crafts and interactive performances. **Abbotsford Community Center**, 3226 McMichael Street
 - July 3, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. – Find out what’s been going on in Philadelphia for the last few centuries. **Atwater Kent Museum**, 15 S. 7th Street, (215) 685-4836

Visitors celebrating America’s birthday in its birthplace can take advantage of the **Philly’s More Summer Fun Hotel Package**, which pairs a two-night hotel stay with a \$50 gift card from American Express. The package is available at more than 30 hotels and is bookable online at www.gophila.com/summerfun.

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For more information about these events and for a look at the full nine-day schedule, visit www.americasbirthday.com.

Sunoco Welcome America! is made possible through the support of our sponsors, including Sunoco, Southwest Airlines, Coca-Cola, WPVI-TV, the City of Philadelphia, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia International Airport, Penn's Landing Corporation and Fairmount Park.

Sunoco Welcome America! is a multi-day festival that celebrates America's birthday in America's birthplace and is produced by *Welcome America, Inc.*

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