



Irish Fair of Minnesota Comes to Saint Paul's Harriet Island August 12-14, 2011
The Tossers and Seanchai & the Unity Squad Rock the Stage Friday Night
High Kings, Altan and Katie McMahon Perform Saturday-Sunday

Saint Paul, MN (June 27, 2011) The 33rd Annual Irish Fair of Minnesota, the largest **FREE** Irish celebration in the upper Midwest, will be held at Saint Paul's Harriet Island Regional Park Friday through Sunday, August 12-14. **The FREE fair**, which draws over 100,000 visitors, will run Friday from 3 – 11 pm, Saturday 10 am to 11 pm and Sunday from 9 am to 7 pm.

Musical headliners this year include High Kings, Altan, Katie McMahon, Seanchai and the Unity Squad and The Tossers, which will rock the island both Friday and Saturday nights. *The Tossers*, who will make their first appearance at Irish Fair, have distinct Irish punk rock roots and have shared the stage with the legendary Pogues, Popes, Dropkick Murphy and Flogging Molly. Combining traditional instruments of mandolin, fiddle, tin whistle and banjo with amphetamine fueled guitar, bass and drums, the *Tossers* play with a furious edge that teeters between rage and raucousness. www.thetossers.com

Seanchai and the Unity Squad will also take the stage Friday night. A cross between punk-funk and celtic hip hop, this band's lyrics mix age-old history and today's mind-bending events into the same line of musical poetry, touching and capturing listeners' souls. www.seanshai.com

High Kings, voted Ireland's Folk Band of the year, thrilled the crowds with their first appearance at Irish Fair in 2010. This band of balladeers will perform Saturday and Sunday in the tradition of The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. www.thehighkings.com.

On Sunday, Irish Fair will welcome *Altan*, a traditional Irish band, which has moved audiences in their native Donegal to Tokyo to Seattle, playing a mix of sensitive, Irish ballads and lively jigs and reels www.altan.ie. *Katie McMahon*, of Riverdance fame, will mesmerize the Sunday crowds with her soaring soprano voice and melodic harp. www.katiemcmahon.com.

In addition, more than 40 bands and performers from throughout Minnesota will perform. Irish Fair will also feature food, drink, dance, cultural workshops, sporting events and contests and children's events. Here's a look at the festival lineup:

What's New in 2011

Fair Experience Enhancement Ticketing Options

Although Irish Fair remains FREE, there are a couple of ways to enhance your Fair experience and support Irish Fair with individual or group ticketing options:

Pub Experience Tickets – elevated deck for great sight lines to Cara Pubs Main Stage to enhance your fair experience. Food and beverages are included. One day passes are \$100, weekend passes are \$250. Buy tickets at www.irishfair.com

Private Party Area for groups up to 100 people. Great for organizations, corporate parties or a family meeting place. Private party area can be rented in four hour time blocks and includes customized food and beverage menus for the entire group. The tent is located near the main stage. Call to inquire about availability 952-474-7411.

Battle of the Pubs Cook off – Local pubs battle over whose fare is the best. There will be samples of food, beverages and live entertainment by the Wild Colonial Bhoys who will be releasing their new CD. Thursday, 7-10 pm in the Pub Tent. Tickets \$10-20. Call 952-474-7411 or visit www.irishfair.com.

FREE Bike Corrals at Harriet Island. Also a Group Bike Ride from Merlins Rest on Lake Street to Harriet Island Saturday departing at 9:30 am.

GREEN Initiative—Cooking oil used at Irish Fair will be turned into biodiesel fuel, right here in Minnesota. Recycling receptacles will be placed throughout the festival grounds.

Irish Fair Contests: To nurture the competitive Irish Spirit, Irish Fair has more contests than ever. For contest rules and registration, visit www.irishfair.com and follow the links.

Fitzgerald Cup: Fitzgerald Cup Piping Contest (in honor of Tim “Fitz” Fitzgerald) will be held inside the Crossroads Pub Tent on Saturday, at 6 pm.

Irish Got Talent Contest: River Stage, Friday from 3-5:30 pm. \$250 cash prize.

Run with the Celts: 10-K (NEW!) Saturday at 9 am, 5-K at 9:10 am and 1-K Family Run/Walk at 8:30 am. Proceeds benefit Irish Fair Legacy Fund.

Best Legs in a Kilt: Gentlemen, don those kilts! Gateway Stage, Sat. 4:30 pm

Pub Quiz of Irish Trivia: Pub Tent: Sat. and Sun. afternoons

Irish Soda Bread Contest: Bring in your best version of this traditional Irish treat by Tuesday, Aug 9 at 4 pm. See website for specific rules.

Ireland in Black & White Photo Contest: Submit your favorite Irish photos

Cooking Demonstrations by Cork’s Irish Pub, Gateway Stage, Sunday, 12 pm

Dance: Irish dancing exhibitions will be held at the dance tent throughout the weekend. The Mississippi Riverdance, featuring dozens dancers from the area’s top dance schools will be held Friday at 7:30 pm. Free step dance lessons ranging from céilí and reels, to set dances, will be held in the Crossroads Pub tent.

Sports: Gaelic football, rugby and hurling matches will be held at Croagh Park field.

Culture: The Irish culture and heritage area will include workshops on Gaelic language, genealogy, Irish instruments and Cultural Chats on the north patio of the Pavilion.

Kids: The *Irish on Grand Children’s Area* is always a popular stop for young and old alike. Miniature golf, Dogs of Ireland, shepherding demos, songs, games, storytelling and children’s dance lessons will keep kids entertained throughout the weekend.

Food, Drink, Merchandise: Dozens of vendors, artisans and travel vendors will exhibit at the Crossroads Pub Tent and Marketplace, which will feature jewelry, porcelain,

clothing, CDs, sheet music, books and just about all things Irish. Guests can also enjoy Irish fare from local pubs and restaurants as well as beer, ale and stout from Guinness and Finnegan's and wines from Cannon River Winery.

Sunday morning Mass will be celebrated at 9 am by Archbishop John Neinstedt at the Cara Irish Pubs Stage providing great views of the river and Saint Paul Cathedral.

Hours: Irish Fair of Minnesota will run Aug 12-14, Friday from 3-11 pm, Saturday from 10 am to 11 pm and Sunday from 9 am to 7 pm. For information call 952-474-4711 or visit www.irishfair.com.

Irish Fair of Minnesota is sponsored by: Cara Irish Pubs, Guinness, Harp, Finnegan's, Wayzata Investment Partners, Jameson, Cannon River Winery, Cork's Irish Pub, Ireland in Black and White, The Running Room, Keegan's Irish Pub, Irish on Grand, Cities 97, VitaMN and Holiday Inn. Grants provided by Minnesota State Art Board, City of St Paul Star Grant, Culture Ireland and Minnesota Irish Cultural Center.

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