

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A CELEBRATION OF LIBERTY TO TAKE PLACE OVER MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

PHILADELPHIA, PA (May 8, 2009) – This Memorial Day weekend, visitors to the National Constitution Center can join in a celebration of liberty during workshops, musical performances, and a special dedication ceremony for the **Pennsylvania Liberty Tree**. The festivities will begin at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 23, 2009, with the dedication of the Liberty Tree on the 6th Street lawn of the Center by **Dr. Peter A. Lillback**, President of The Providence Forum, and **Dr. Steve Frank**, Vice President of Education and Exhibits for the National Constitution Center. The celebration will continue through Monday, May 25, 2009, when visitors will have the chance to experience fun-filled shows and craft activities to excite the patriot in everyone.

The idea for the Liberty Tree began in Boston before the American Revolution, when the Sons of Liberty chose a great elm tree on Boston Common as their clandestine meeting place for secret planning of anti-British action. Protests against the Stamp Act and planning for the Boston Tea Party took place under that Liberty Tree's branches. Soon after, a Liberty Tree was chosen in each of the original 13 colonies for the same purpose. Planted in 1646, the original Liberty Tree stood for 129 years until the British burned it down in 1775. The last of the original Liberty Trees, a tulip poplar, which stood on the grounds of St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, fell in 1999 after being fatally damaged by Hurricane Floyd. In order for the legacy of the American Liberty Tree to live on, seeds were harvested from the Maryland Liberty Tree to propagate 13 new Liberty Trees, thus preserving the living legacy of America's enduring freedoms. Visitors to the Constitution Center can learn more about Liberty Trees during the "History of the Liberty Tree Show," which will take place daily from Saturday through Monday at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

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On Saturday from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., representatives from American Forests will display a Taylor guitar made from the wood of a Liberty Tree. They will also share information about the importance of planting trees in the community to positively affect the environment.

In addition, visitors can explore their creative sides during a special woodcarving workshop with craftsman Gene Landon on Saturday from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Landon's work can be seen in the Liberty Tree Eagle, which is on display in the Center's lobby, on long-term loan from The Providence Forum. The Eagle was carved from three pieces of wood from the Maryland Liberty Tree, and has been on display at the Center since 2006.

Following the woodcarving class, visitors can enjoy a bell-ringing performance by the Main Line Ringers at 2:00 p.m. in the Grand Hall Lobby.

Throughout the weekend, visitors can enjoy a special presentation, "How America Remembers," about the history of our nation's most interesting memorials and how they contribute to popular memory. Shows will take place daily from Saturday through Monday at 12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. Craft activities will also take place daily from Saturday through Monday from 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

About Dr. Peter A. Lillback and The Providence Forum

Dr. Peter A. Lillback is President of The Providence Forum, a non-profit organization committed to preserve, defend, and advance the faith and values of our nation's founding. As part of The Providence Forum's Liberty Tree Wood Project, the organization purchased all the wood from the Maryland Liberty Tree to commission unique items and artifacts commemorating the Liberty Tree legacy. Lillback is a nationally bestselling author, most recently of the children's book, *Lessons on Liberty – A Primer for Young Patriots*. Lillback's books are available in the National Constitution Center's bookstore.

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ADD TWO/MEMORIAL DAY 2009

About the National Constitution Center

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising". The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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