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**Pawtucket arts festival celebrates the past, present and future
- by Donald Grebien**

September 16, 2022 - Rhode Island



Donald Grebien

The city of Pawtucket is buzzing with so much activity going on; the completion of the \$47 million Pawtucket-Central Falls Transit Hub, the development of the \$44 million Dexter St. Commons, the construction of a new public safety center, the continuation of construction at Tidewater Landing that will transform Pawtucket's Riverfront, and a new, combined high school that will go in front of voters in November.

That being said, these developments are not all that makes Pawtucket such a great community to live and work in.

Now in its 24th year, the Arts Festival began on September 9-18. After COVID-19 affected our past few annual festivals, we are extremely excited to see the full Pawtucket Arts Festival return to highlight all of the amazing arts represented in our community.

The Pawtucket Arts Festival celebrates the city's creative and cultural life by presenting vibrant arts events to Pawtucket residents and visitors to the Blackstone River Valley over 10 days, including dance, music, theater, film, visual and folk-traditional arts that evoke the city's historic legacy and diverse communities.

The festival is highlighted by the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra as they perform their legendary "Pops in the Park" free concert at Slater Memorial Park on September 17th. Presented by the Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance, 2022s concert marks the 20th performance by the philharmonic since its festival debut in 2003.

The Saturday evening performance will be followed by a spectacular fireworks presentation presented by Bristol County Savings Bank at dusk and preceded with a commemoration of the 45th anniversary of the historic Pawtucket Beach Boys concert that drew over 40,000 people in 1977.

The philharmonic performance and much more will take place at the Slater Park Fall Festival presented by its new sponsor Coastal Credit Union. The fall festival is a celebration of art and culture set on the grounds of historic Slater Memorial Park. The festival's open-air market, opening at 11 a.m., highlights over 100 crafters, artisans and creators of original handmade items. The surrounding areas are filled with fun, food and entertainment for the whole family, including face painting, crafts and entertainment for the kids, including family fun day presented by Collette Travel, which features activities, rides and games completely free of charge and a brand-new event, "pizza-palooza!" where area pizzerias compete for best Pawtucket pie! The festival will conclude with The Pawtucket Times "best of" award show.

September 16th will feature exciting events throughout the city including interactive crafting, exhibits and live performances highlighting not only New England's tremendous arts talent but the many beautiful locations featured within the Blackstone Valley.

All events are listed on our website at www.PawtucketArtsFestival.org. The 2022 Pawtucket Arts

Festival is presented by the City of Pawtucket, The Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance, Coastal Credit Union and The Pawtucket Times.

Donald Grebien is the mayor of the city of Pawtucket, R.I.

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