

NEWS

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Downtown Toms River Adds New Arts & Music Festival to Event Schedule

Toms River, NJ ... The Arts and Music scene in Ocean County will be center stage Saturday, May 16 as Downtown Toms River presents its premier Arts & Music Festival. The multi-venue and multi-art event will run from noon to 9:00 p.m. and feature a juried art show, free live musical entertainment, dance exhibitions and more.

What in the past had been Downtown Toms River's Gallery Walk has grown into a festival showcasing a variety of arts, with events and activities taking place throughout the Downtown area, including the kick-off of the Concerts in the Park series. Huddy Park, located on East Water Street, will feature a juried art show from Noon to 5:00 p.m. Twenty four artists will be featured offering oil, water and acrylic paintings, pastels, pottery and ceramics, art glass and stained glass, photography, hand made glass bead jewelry, wire and beaded jewelry, mixed media, spray paint, and block print artists. Exit 82, the Toms River Theatre Company, will also be in Huddy Park at Noon, performing Broadway songs. They will be followed by Audrey Davis, the African Dance Lady, and her ensemble from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. entertaining the crowds with interpretive African dance. Audiences will also enjoy the comedy and music of The Bill & Ron Show, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. From Huddy Park, attendees will want to cross the street and visit the Ocean County Library to view their gallery exhibition from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Three West Water Street businesses are also participating; Erickson's Art Supplies, just west of the Post Office, will feature their art exhibition. Simply Skin will be offering 10-minute chair massages for just \$10, plus you can enter their sweepstakes for a basket of salon products. What's Needling You, located next door to Simply Skin, will be holding Sit and Knit knitting demonstrations and a sweepstakes for a great basket of knitting supplies.

Visitors interested in the history of the area will want to stop at the Ocean County Historical Society, located at 26 Hadley Ave and the Toms River Seaport Society, located at 31 Hooper Ave. The Historical Society will have tours, an exhibit and refreshments from noon to 5:00 p.m. The Toms River Seaport Society will host tours from noon to 4:00 pm.

There will be lots of additional live musical entertainment courtesy of The Music Academy. Dinner on Irons, Bistro 44 and River Market will offer live music with dinner from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. The Victoria on Main Bed and Breakfast will be holding High Tea with music, from 1:30 to 3:00 and 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.

Back at Huddy Park, radio station WJRZ will kick off the Downtown Concerts In The Park series at 5:00 p.m. with music, games and contests. Two bands will be featured on the 16th. White Rabbit will perform from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Yasgur's Farm will take the stage from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Visitors are encouraged to bring a chair to enjoy an evening of music down by the water. The Concerts in the Park Series will continue through August. Rain date for the event is Sunday, May 17th.

Enhancing Downtown Toms River's position as the cultural center of Ocean County is one of the major initiatives in the master plan for Downtown. The Arts & Music Festival is among several special events

throughout the year produced by Downtown Toms River, officially the Toms River Business Improvement District. The non-profit organization was created to encourage economic revitalization and attract area residents to the historic business district of Toms River.

Other Downtown Toms River events include the 20th Annual New Jersey State Chili and Salsa Cook-Off, May 30; the 7th Annual New Jersey State Ice Cream Festival, July 18; the 4th annual Pizza, Pasta, Pastry Festival, September 26 and the Farmers Market on Wednesdays from June 10 through October 28. Concerts in the Park, which will take place down at Huddy Park, continues on June 27, July 25, and August 22.

Anyone interested in volunteering with these events or for more information can call 732-341-8738 or visit www.downtownomsriver.com. A free monthly email newsletter covering Downtown Toms River activities can also be subscribed to at the web site.

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