QUIRKY, NERDY & CREEPY FUN AWAIT IN PHILADELPHIA
Beyond The Region’s Best-Known Attractions Lurk Fantastically Wacky Finds:
Preserved Brains, Live Bugs, Old Trees & New Science

PHILADELPHIA, March 1, 2018 – Beneath the surface of the eminently historic, emergently hip, eternally proud Philadelphia region, a trove of fantastic weirdness thrives. Visitors can satisfy cravings for quirky, nerdy, creepy and otherwise out-there interests via the country’s largest pizza memorabilia collection (Pizza Brain); oldest hospital, replete with surgical amphitheater (Pennsylvania Hospital); picnic-friendly urban cemetery (Laurel Hill Cemetery); oldest gingko tree (Bartram’s Garden); and only brick-and-mortar homage to the Philadelphia Mummers (Mummers Museum), to name a few.

Here’s a look at some of the all-American city’s wonderfully odd attractions—336 years in the making.

The Human Body:

- **Drexel University College of Medicine** – Human nervous system dissection. Near the bookstore entrance on Drexel’s Queen Lane (East Falls) campus, what appears to be string art in the shape of a person is actually a dissected nervous system. Harriet Cole, an African-American woman who reportedly worked at the college, left her body to science in 1888. The medical school’s foremost anatomy professor at the time spent five months dissecting and reconstructing Cole. Nearby, millions of resource materials document the history of women in medicine and homeopathy at the college’s Legacy Center, open Monday-Friday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; appointment requested. 2900 W. Queen Lane, (215) 991-8340, drexel.edu/medicine

- **Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Weaver III Historical Dental Museum** – Terrifying dentists’ tools. It’s worth letting one’s mouth go agape at the antique (and slightly horrifying) drills, chairs, X-ray machines, furnaces, photographs, pearl-handled tools and recreated Victorian office at this minute yet powerful museum, a repository of more than 150 years of dentistry in America. 3223 N. Broad Street, (215) 707-2799, temple.edu/dentistry

- **Mütter Museum of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia** – Historic medical oddities. The Mütter displays thousands of items spanning the medical realm, from deformed and diseased body parts to the death cast of “Siamese twins” Chang and Eng to pieces of Albert Einstein’s gloriously nerdy brain. Filled with some impossible-to-believe specimens, the collections are still used today to advance medical science. 19 S. 22nd Street, (215) 560-8564, muttermuseum.org

- **Pennsylvania Hospital** – 19th-century amphitheater, seven-inch tumor. As they peer into the operating amphitheater of the first chartered hospital in the nation, visitors are reminded that early 19th-century surgeries were performed in front of an audience, with no electricity, no sterile technique and a choice of rum, opium or a “tap on the head with a mallet” for anesthesia. A seven-inch tumor removed during one such procedure by Dr. Philip Syng Physick is on view in the Historic Library. Guided tours are available by appointment Monday through Friday. 800 Spruce Street, (215) 829-5434, uphs.upenn.edu/paharc

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Flora & Fauna:

- **The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University** – Dino fossils, 18 million specimens. It’s easy to see why biologists at The Academy of Natural Sciences have risen to the forefront of ecological and biodiversity research: They draw from a plant- and animal-specimen collection that’s 18 million strong. Absolutely anyone can get lost ogling historic animal dioramas and live walking stick insects, exploring Dinosaur Hall and walking through the tropical live butterfly exhibit. 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, (215) 299-1000, ansp.org

- **Bartram’s Garden** – Oldest ginkgo tree, kayaks to borrow. Naturalist John Bartram contributed immensely to the catalogue and preservation of native plant life, as seen at his 45-acre homestead on the banks of the Schuylkill River. Botany and outdoor enthusiasts can view historic trees, including the oldest *Ginkgo biloba* in North America, and take advantage of a recreational trail and free kayaking on the Schuylkill River every Saturday from April to October. 5400 Lindbergh Boulevard, (215) 729-5281, bartramsgarden.org

- **Chanticleer** – Live plants, live painters. April through October, this 35-acre Main Line pleasure garden inspires artists, home gardeners—and seekers of relaxation. Known for imaginative plantings, the evolving, whimsical landscape features 5,000 plants, themed gardens, two original buildings, a creek and pond, a nearly mile-long trail and real, live painters working al fresco, Wednesdays through Sundays. 786 Church Road, Wayne, (610) 687-4163, chanticleergarden.org

- **Philadelphia Insectarium and Butterfly Pavilion** – Bugs and butterflies galore. The most diverse arthropod zoo on the East Coast proves there’s nothing people won’t collect. Those who prefer flying creatures to crawling ones can step into the 7,000-square-foot tropical pavilion, home to thousands of fluttering butterflies representing 60 species. 8046 Frankford Avenue, (215) 335-9500, phillybutterflypavilion.com

- **Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College** – Native education. This Quaker-founded liberal arts college planted its mostly native, 350-acre gardens to be purposely delightful, accessible—and educational. Garden lovers can take self-guided or regularly scheduled guided tours or simply wander at their leisure through the rose garden, holly collection, woodlands and pinetum (arboretum for conifers). 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore, (610) 328-8025, scottarboretum.org

- **Shofuso Japanese House and Garden** – With a teahouse with a no-shoes rule. The site of the continent’s first Japanese garden as created for the 1876 Centennial Exhibition today includes a traditional 17th century-style house—a 1953 postwar gift from Japan to the U.S.—and a 1.2 acre Japanese pond and garden by landscape designer Tansai Sano. Wednesday through Sunday from April through October, guests explore pond side, feed koi, roam the house and tearoom—no shoes, yes socks—and partake in monthly tea ceremony. Lansdowne & Horticultural Drives, (215) 878-5097, japanesehouse.org

- **Wagner Free Institute of Science** – Natural Victoriana. This opened-in-1865 National Historical Landmark offers a view of a Victorian-era science museum. The 100,000 specimens include mounted birds and mammals, insects, fossils, skeletons, rocks, one of the oldest mineral collections in the country and the earliest-discovered American saber-toothed tiger skull, found during an 1886 expedition. 1700 W. Montgomery Avenue, (215) 763-6529, wagnerfreeinstitute.org

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Science Heavyweights:

- **The Franklin Institute** – Organs, galaxies, electricity and more.
  Gears, pulleys and power sources; a human-powered light bulb, a hair-raising static activity and Ben Franklin’s Lightning Rod; the *Space Command* exhibition and the Fels Planetarium; and a walk-through heart and crawl-through brain cells are just some of the science-y reasons this museum is the busiest one in the tri-state area. 222 N. 20th Street, (215) 448-1200, fi.edu

- **Science History Institute** – Vintage arsenic, microscope sets, world-changing discoveries.
  How are plastics made? How are crayons colored? How can scientists measure oxygen on Mars? This free Old City spot—formerly the Chemical Heritage Foundation—reveals the weird, wonderful world of matter and materials. 315 Chestnut Street, (215) 925-2222, sciencehistory.org

Books:

- **Amalgam** – Proud-to-be-geek comic book store.
  With a diversity of comics, games and figurines, this geek-proud comic shop hosts Anime Wednesdays, Nerdy By Nature open-mic nights, author events, TV marathons and movie screenings—and serves coffee and baked goods to keep the fun going. Amalgam is also the first comic book store on the East Coast owned by an African-American woman, Ariell Johnson. Along with 2578 Frankford Avenue, (215) 427-3300, amalgamphilly.com

- **Free Library of Philadelphia’s Parkway Central Library** – Poe, Dickens, Potter and more.
  The Rare Book Department offers “History of the Book” tours six days a week at 11 a.m., as well as an ongoing exhibition of its collections of Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Dickens, Beatrix Potter and medieval manuscripts. 1901 Vine Street, (215) 686-5416, freelibrary.org

- **The Rosenbach** – *Ulysses, Dracula* and *Alice’s Adventures*
  Bookworms find hundreds of thousands of pages—including rare volumes, manuscripts and decorative and fine art at this residence-turned-library. Treasures from the founders’ collection include the only surviving copy of Benjamin Franklin’s first *Poor Richard Almanack*, the manuscript of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the papers of poet Marianne Moore, Bram Stoker’s notes for *Dracula* and Lewis Carroll’s own copy of the first edition of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. 2008-2010 Delancey Place, (215) 732-1600, rosenbach.org

Oddball Collections:

- **American Treasure Tour** – Old shoes. Old music makers. Lots of clowns.
  Next to Valley Forge Park, 100,000 square feet and two floors of 20th-century Americana fills an old B.F. Goodrich tire factory—the ultimate collector’s collection. The Music Room displays approximately 300,000 pieces of music, plus 150 nickelodeons, automated music, and music boxes. A tram takes visitors on a tour of the Toy Box, which includes miniatures, a giant Sony Walkman, animated displays, a giant popsicle stick castle, the Philadelphia Warwick’s old chandelier, lots of clowns, endless Christmas decorations, dollhouses and trinkets galore. This one must be seen to be believed. Open Thursday-Sunday. One American Treasure Way, 422 Business Complex, Oaks, (866) 970-8687, americantreasuretour.com

- **Pizza Brain** – World’s largest collection of pizza stuff.
  The world’s first pizza culture museum and eatery boasts the largest collection of pizza-related items in the world, with more than 550 artifacts in rotation, earning it a coveted Guinness World Record. The curated and chronologically organized collection includes a Starship Enterprise pizza cutter, historical advertisements, LPs and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles action figures. 2313 Frankford Avenue, (215) 291-2965, pizzabrain.org

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• **The Stoogeum** – Moe, Larry and Curly memorabilia.  
*Three Stooges* fans relive the hilarity at the headquarters of the 2,000-member fan club and the world’s first center devoted to the lovable characters. The Stoogeum is open every Thursday and other weekdays by appointment for visitors who wish to peruse nearly 100,000 pieces of memorabilia dating back to 1918. 904 Sheble Lane, Ambler, (267) 468-0810, stoogeum.com

**Architectural Marvels:**

• **Eastern State Penitentiary** – Defunct prison with modern viewpoint.  
In the heart of the residential Fairmount neighborhood, an imposing 19th-century stone structure the size of a city block once housed Al Capone and “Slick Willie” Sutton—while trying to rehabilitate them. Visitors can tour death row, the hospital, solitary confinement cells, dining hall, synagogue and award-winning *Prisons Today* exhibit, and then return in the fall when Eastern State transforms into the giant haunt, Terror Behind the Walls. 2027 Fairmount Avenue, (215) 236-3300, easternstate.org

• **Michener Art Museum** – Jailhouse-turned-art museum.  
Permanent and special exhibits of paintings, sculpture and photography are contained within an imposing 100-year-old stone shelter that spent most of its life as the Bucks County prison—and is rumored to be haunted. Expansive galleries and outdoor sculpture bring an almost surreal sense of vibrancy and modernism to the former penitentiary, now named for native Bucks County author James A. Michener. 138 S. Pine Street, Doylestown, (215) 340-9800, michenerartmuseum.org

• **Masonic Temple** – Dizzying display of international architecture.  
Across the street from City Hall, a building that looks like a Norman church on the outside has an inside with a Moorish Oriental Hall that resembles Alhambra, a Gothic Hall that mimics the European Knights Templar halls and more. The National Historic Landmark is home to the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania and offers guided tours of its seven elaborately decorated halls. 1 N. Broad Street, (215) 988-1900, pamasonictemple.org

• **Mercer Museum** – Tool hoarder’s castle.  
Stuffed inside every conceivable nook, cranny and crevice of the six-story concrete castle are 40,000 artifacts chronicling early-American working life. Collected and cataloged by 19th-century archaeologist and tile maker Henry Mercer, finds include a whaleboat, a stagecoach and a Conestoga Wagon—all of which hang from the ceiling. Pine Street & Scout Way, Doylestown, (215) 345-0210, mercermuseum.org

• **Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens** – Street-side mosaic marvel.  
“Magic” (and arresting) aptly describe this 3,000-square-foot art environment spanning half a block. Philly folk artist Isaiah Zagar covered the site with a mosaic labyrinth of mirror, tile and reclaimed materials. 1020 South Street, (215) 732-0390, philadelphiasmagicgardens.org

• **Wharton Esherick Museum** – Crafty wooden houses.  
Pennsylvania barns, German expressionist design and nature’s free-flowing curves inspired this architecturally fascinating National Historic Landmark. The onetime home and studio of the “dean of American craftsmen” shows off Esherick’s curved walls, rooftops, staircases and sinewy hand-carved furniture and sculptures. Visitors experience the museum through by-reservation guided tours. 1520 Horseshoe Trail, Malvern, (610) 644-5822, whartonesherickmuseum.org

• **Whispering Benches** – Alfresco voice transmitter.  
Two people sitting on far ends of the Smith Memorial Arch’s 50-foot stone bench can whisper and hear each other clearly. The memorial commemorates Pennsylvania’s Civil War heroes, even though most people use it to whisper sweet nothings. Avenue of the Republic near the Please Touch Museum®, Fairmount Park, associationforpublicart.org

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**Cars & Helicopters:**
- **American Helicopter Museum and Education Center:** More than three-dozen flyers. Civilian and military helicopters, autogiros, convertiplanes—and the world’s only V-22 Osprey on public display—wow visitors. Films, memoirs, documents and ’copters old and new detail the past, present and future of rotary aircraft. 1220 American Boulevard, West Chester, (610) 436-9600, americanhelicopter.museum
- **Simeone Foundation Automotive Museum:** Dozens of world-class racing cars. Two Bugattis, three Ferraris, two Ford GTs and a Cobra Daytona coupe—just to name a few—are arranged on mock racetracks. On the second and fourth Saturdays of the month, the museum hosts car demonstrations on its 3.5-acre blacktop. Afterwards, guests can see and take selfies with the car up close. 6825 Norwitch Drive, (215) 365-7233, simeonemuseum.org

**Cemeteries & Such:**
- **Laurel Hill Cemetery:** Bucolic graveyard. With a beautiful landscape, magnificent sculpture and sweeping views, this still-active National Historic Landmark welcomes tour-goers, picnickers, joggers and those interested in the gravesites of six Titanic passengers, 40 Civil War generals and notable local names such as Rittenhouse, Elkins, Widener and the late and beloved Phillies announcer Harry Kalas. Self-guided and mobile app tours are free. 3822 Ridge Avenue, (215) 228-8200, thelaurelhillcemetery.org
- **Logan Square:** One of the five original city squares—and a former public execution grounds. The stunning Swann Memorial Fountain centerpiece and surrounding titans of culture—the Barnes Foundation, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the like—believe Logan Circle’s rather morbid past. Originally called Northwest Square, the public space hosted its fair share of public hangings and served as a burial ground. 19th Street & Benjamin Franklin Parkway
- **The Woodlands:** Part pleasure garden, part graveyard. Artist Thomas Eakins, architect Paul Philippe Cret, abolitionist and suffragist Mary Grew and a smattering of Drexels (as in, Drexel University) lie among the 32,000 long-term residents of this National Historic Landmark. The active cemetery invites visitors to walk, bike, run and even snowshoe its 54 acres for free each day. People can also book tours of the Federal-style mansion or enjoy regular events, including star-gazing nights and the annual Go West! Craft Fest. 4000 Woodland Avenue, (215) 386-2181, woodlandsphila.org

**Games:**
- **Barcade:** Watering hole for Ms. Pac-Man and Frogger enthusiasts. Combine a sizable craft beer list with 50 or more 25-cent classic arcade games, and the result is Barcade. Based on locations in Brooklyn and Jersey City, the bar-arcade combo also offers a generous menu and outdoor space—for those who can tear themselves away from Tetris and Donkey Kong. 1114 Frankford Avenue, (215) 634-4400, barcadephiladelphia.com
- **Spin:** Ping-pong bar. The main attraction at this large, mural-clad social club/bar/restaurant: 17 Olympic-sized ping-pong tables that can be reserved in advance or upon arrival. (Those, and a bathtub of ping-pong balls.) Players and spectators also enjoy a live DJ, creative cocktails and shareable food, including flatbreads, wings and sliders. 211 S. 15th Street, (267) 463-4850, philadelphia.wearespin.com

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• **Urban Axes:** Like darts—but with axes. This trendy ax-throwing club in the River Wards is perfect for big groups—or just a couple of ax-curious friends. (Tip: Make a reservation in advance.) A staff pro teaches competitors the basics, so even those who’ve never held an ax feel at ease. Guests bring their own food, beer and wine. 2019 E. Boston Street, (267) 585-AXES, urbanaxes.com

**Miscellaneous Wonders:**

• **Dirty Frank’s Mural** – Notable Franks—on a dive bar. There’s no sign for beloved dive bar Dirty Frank’s, but every local knows to look for the corner mural depicting a collection of similarly named people (and things). On the wall: Ben Franklin, Frankie Avalon, Aretha Franklin, a frankfurter, Frankenstein and Pope Francis. It’s one of the cheekier creations from the esteemed Mural Arts Philadelphia. Dirty Frank’s, 347 S. 13th Street, (215) 732-5010, dirtyfranksbar.com; Mural Arts, (215) 925-3633, muralarts.org

• **Mummers Museum** – Parade showplace. An art deco-inspired building is the official repository for all historical items related to Philadelphia’s New Year’s Day parade. Here, visitors discover the roots of the elaborate, colorful and always memorable Mummers Parade and performance competitions. 1100 S. 2nd Street, (215) 336-3050, mummersmuseum.com

• **Ringing Rocks Park** – Sonorous rocks. Upper Bucks County is one of the few places in the world where rocks struck with objects produce different musical tones, or “pings.” Though there’s a name for this type of rock—sonorous or lithophonic rocks—geologists have never fully explained the reason for their musical aptitude. Ringing Rocks Road, Upper Black Eddy, (215) 348-6114, visitbuckscounty.com

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On Greater Philadelphia’s official visitor website and blog, visitphilly.com and uwishunu.com, visitors can explore things to do, upcoming events, themed itineraries and hotel packages. Compelling photography and videos, interactive maps and detailed visitor information make the sites effective trip-planning tools. Along with Visit Philly social media channels, the online platforms communicate directly with consumers. Travelers can also call and stop into the Independence Visitor Center for additional information and tickets.

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