



Ancient Order of Hibernians Saint Patrick's Day Parade



Dogtown Irish Festival

The Irish Are Back and They Are Coming to Dogtown on March 17!

When the organizers of the Ancient Order of Hibernians Saint Patrick's Day Parade and the Dogtown Irish Festival shut down both events just six days before the celebration of Saint Patrick's Day in 2020, they pledged they would be back bigger and better than ever.

Well after two years of COVID restrictions and shutdowns, the organizers of both events say they are ready to make good on their promises this coming March 17.

At 11:00 AM, the 37th Ancient Order of Hibernians Parade will step off once again to delight the green clad masses that annually line the streets of Dogtown on the feast of Saint Patrick.

Also, the 3rd Annual Dogtown Irish Festival also will return, with plenty of fun, food, music and many new attractions for the enjoyment of all ages.

The Hibernian Parade

The annual parade, sponsored the Ancient Order of Hibernians, was created in 1984 to highlight the many contributions of the Irish people to America. This year's parade will contain over 90

units featuring floats highlighting Irish dancing, music and salutes to Irish history and culture. Like traditional parades held in the Emerald Isle on Saint Patrick's feast day, a good portion of St. Louis' Irish American community will be marching as clans under their family crests and banners.

The Irish Festival

The Dogtown Irish Festival, a joint effort of Dogtown United, a non-profit led by community and businesses leaders, and the Hibernians was launched in 2018. The festival begins at 9:00 a.m. The festival will feature food and drinks from numerous vendors. The purpose of the festival is to highlight the unique spirit and celebrated history of the Dogtown neighborhood. One new aspect of this year's Irish Festival is that the festival area will be divided into multiple "zones."

"Irish Cultural Zone"

Anchoring the South leg of the festival area will be the "Irish Cultural Zone, sponsored by Guinness," at Saint James the Greater Parish, 1360 Tamm Ave.

Once again one of the best places in St. Louis to truly "get your Irish on" will be at the Saint James the Greater 45th Annual Saint Patrick's Day celebration. The parish has been the "cultural heart" of the Dogtown neighborhood for over 160 years. The first pastor, and many that followed, were actually Irishmen from "the old sod," which helped establish both the "Irish" identity of the parish and the surrounding neighborhood.

The parish actually kicks off the Saint Patrick's Day festivities the night before, on March 16, with a special mass on the Saint Patrick's Day eve, at the historic Saint James the Greater church, located at 6401 Wade Ave. Fr. Richard Quirk, pastor of Saint James, will celebrate the mass to celebrate the venerable Irish saint.

Following mass, there will be a special ceremony, sponsored by Guinness, in the St. James Parish Center to officially "kick off" St. Patrick's Day in Dogtown with the tapping of the "first keg" and pouring of a Guinness Stout as the "first beer" of the holiday celebration. There will be live Irish music by the group Red Headed Strangers, and the "first serving" of the St. James' famous Corned Beef and Cabbage dinners.

The next day, March 17, the Parish Center opens at 8:00 AM where you can start your day with an “Irish” coffee and later indulge yourself with one of the parish’s famous Corned Beef and Cabbage dinners, served from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. In addition there will be live Irish entertainment from 12:00 – 6:00 PM, featuring the Irish Airs and the dancers from Meghan Torno School of Irish Dance. St. James will have multiple beverage and food stands open outside before, and during the parade. The St. James Bud Light Tent will open at 8 AM with a DJ until 4 PM. All proceeds from the event will go to St. James.

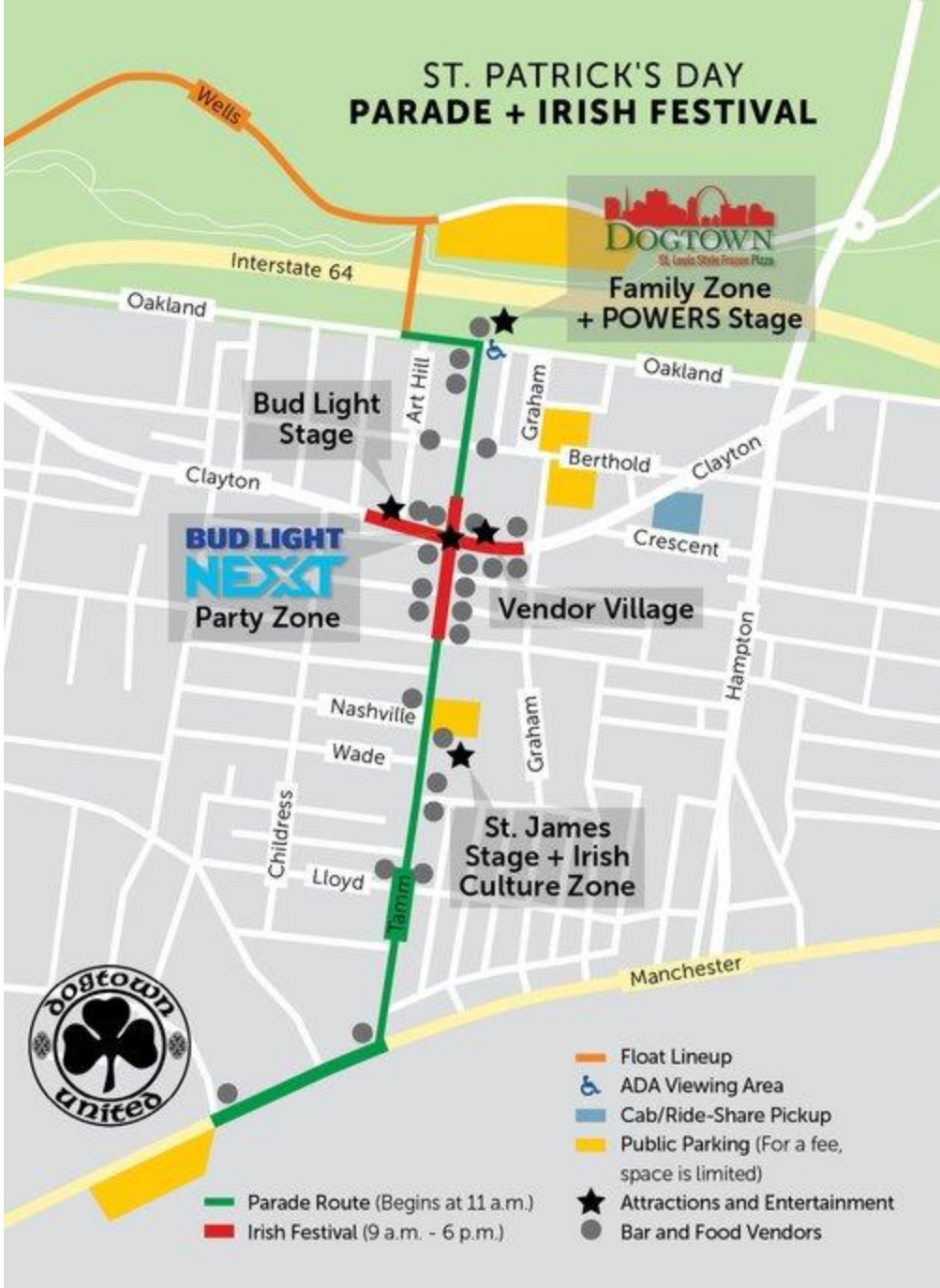
“Dogtown Family Zone” & “Vendor Area”

Family Zone, sponsored by Dogtown Pizza. The Family Zone will be located on Oakland Avenue, just east of Tamm, nearby Turtle Playground and the new Oakland Playground. The new venue features displays from STL Made, the Magic House, the World Chess Hall of Fame, the Gaelic Athletic Club and more. Traditional Irish music and Irish dance will be featured on the POWERS Insurance stage.

The Family Zone will also feature a “Vendor Area” with many goodies worth your visit, including Stromboli Love, Kernel Cobb kettle corn, Boardwalk Waffles & Ice Cream, Raising Cane’s lemonade, Anna Garcia of Garcia Properties, and more. For a complete list of vendors and attractions, please visit www.dogtownunited.org.

“Bud Light NEXT Party Zone”

The presenting sponsor of the Dogtown Irish Festival is Bud Light. And the heart of the Irish Festival area, at Clayton and Tamm, will be the “Bud Light NEXT Party Zone.” The main festival stage, located at Clayton and Art Hill, will feature live music by Rusty Nail from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. In addition to the numerous Dogtown bars and restaurants in this area, other vendors include the Ancient Order of Hibernians beer booth, Juan Taco or 2, Series Six t-shirts, jewelry and crafts vendors, and more. For a complete list of vendors, please visit www.dogtownunited.org. All outdoor vending in the entire festival area begins at 9:00 AM and closes promptly by 6:00 PM.



End of an Era

One unique aspect of this year’s parade was the recent announcement by organizers that 2022 will mark an end to a long-standing tradition of "Bead Throwing".

“The throwing of beads is a safety concern for the younger children who attend our parade,” said 2022 Parade Chainman Dennis Pogue.

“While the children light up with delight at the prospect of catching beads tossed by the marchers, their anxiousness and little regard for their own safety has always concerned us, and the issue has become more problematic over the years.” he added.

Pogue said other reasons for halting the distribution of beads came about due to requests from the City of St. Louis's Special Event Commission and members of the neighborhood as well.

“To prepare to relaunch the parade and festival this year, organizers of both groups met with representatives of the City of St. Louis and the various neighborhood groups to answer questions and to also hear any concerns,” said Pogue. “One issue that kept coming up were complaints about having every year to clean up beads from the streets, sewers, yards, bushes, trees, roofs and gutters.”

Pogue said the parade committee agreed that in the future parade marchers would no longer be allowed to pass out beads. He did add however that the committee asked for special dispensation for 2022, so marchers could pass out the beads they had purchased for the cancelled 2020 parade and all parties agreed. So this year will mark the end of an era.

Happy to Return

Both parade and festival organizers say they are excited for the return of both events to the streets of Dogtown.

“It will be exciting to once again to see the crowds as we march down Tamm Avenue for our annual parade” said Pogue. “Both the Hibernians and our marchers are really looking forward to once again enjoying this special day in one of Saint Louis’ oldest Irish neighborhoods.”

Dogtown United Irish Festival organizers expressed similar sentiments.

“We think it’s important to resume these celebrations for the both spirit of the Dogtown neighborhood, and the Saint Louis community at large,” said festival organizer Joe Jovanovich, of Dogtown United. “The big day is almost here, and everyone is invited to come to Dogtown to celebrate in a fun, safe way, with a big outdoor event. We can’t wait for March 17 to finally arrive.”

Spending of the Green

In addition to being excited to see a sea of green returning to the streets of Dogtown to celebrate, both event and parade organizers realize importance that crowd and their “spending of the green” will have on the economic health of both the Dogtown neighborhood and the City of St. Louis on March 17.

“It has been a tough two years for the business in this neighborhood, and obviously all of St. Louis for that matter” said Jovanovich. “The return of the St. Patrick’s Day crowds on March 17 will be a real economic “shot in the arm,”- if you will- for both Dogtown and the City.