



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race to Set Sail from Baltimore

Baltimore, MD – A field of more than 50 tall ships will sail across the starting line on October 16 as the 19th annual Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race begins, with the *Pride of Baltimore II* seeking to defeat last year's winner, *Virginia*. Schooners from home ports as far away as the United Kingdom and Alaska, ranging in length from just over 30 feet to more than 170 feet, will compete.

The schooner fleet will once again be racing to save the Bay, with proceeds going to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. The purpose of the race is to promote awareness of the Bay's maritime heritage and to encourage the preservation and improvement of its natural resources.

The race events will begin in Fells Point (Baltimore), Maryland with the annual Dinghy Race FUNdraiser on Sunday, October 12. On Tuesday, October 14 at 7:00 P.M., a free outdoor concert at the Broadway Pier in Fells Point will feature *Schooner Time*, the bluegrass band from the schooner *Martha White*, and regional favorites *Them Eastport Oyster Boys* from Annapolis, Maryland.

On October 16 at 1:00 P.M., the schooners will cross the starting line off Annapolis and finish 127 nautical miles further south at Thimble Shoals off Hampton. They will then proceed to Portsmouth for docking and the awards ceremony on the 18th.

If this year's contest is anything like last October's race, it should be every bit as heart-stopping. Both the *Virginia* and the *Pride* smashed the old course record, with *Virginia*'s tall ship finishing just after midnight in an unheard-of elapsed time of 11 hours and eighteen minutes - more than an hour faster than the previous record. The *Pride*, which had been shadowing the *Virginia* all afternoon and evening, crossed the line just nine minutes later. This year's race will break a tie, since the two schooners finished in reverse order in 2006.

The proceeds of the race are used to support the future preservation of the Bay through youth education programs. All told, the race has donated \$104,600 to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, providing more than 2,000 children with on-water educational experiences.

In addition, Governor of the State of Maryland, Martin J. O'Malley, has proclaimed October as "SCHOONER MONTH" throughout the state of Maryland. This was done to honor and recognize the great tradition that schooners represent as a reminder of our maritime past, a vital link to our economic and education present, and the pledge of stewardship towards historic and ecological preservation for generations to come within the State of Maryland.

The Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race originated as a personal challenge between Captain Lane Briggs' "Tugantine" *Norfolk Rebel* and the *Pride of Baltimore II*. Captain Briggs' commitment to the maritime heritage of the Chesapeake and his love of schooner-rigged sailboats led him to found the race and continues to drive this annual event. As more than 50 schooners participate in the 2008 race, it is important that we remember the legacy that Captain Lane Briggs (1932-2005) bestowed on all of us.

For more information, contact Paul Schaub, Maryland Race Chair (maryland@schoonerrace.org), or Susan Cocke, Virginia Race Chair (virginia@schoonerrace.org), or visit our website at www.schoonerrace.org.

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