

Maritime Fest returns to Port this weekend

Written by KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM
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Working ships will help tell story of city's lakefront heritage at annual celebration

Working ships on Lake Michigan will be highlighted during the 13th annual Maritime Heritage Festival in Port Washington this weekend.

While past festivals have featured tall ships, this year's event will revolve around working-class vessels such as tugboats, trawlers, Coast Guard ships and harbor-cruising boats, said Sara Grover, executive director of Port Washington Main Street, which sponsors the event.

"These were the workhorses of the Great Lakes," Grover said. "These are very interesting vessels with stories behind them. We're giving them time to tell their stories."

"When people come, they won't be looking up for the tall sails but straight ahead to the horizon that provided Port Washington with its maritime history."

The festival will run from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday.

Saturday's activities will conclude with fireworks shot off from Coal Dock Park at 9:15 p.m.

The ships that will be open for deck tours during the festival include the Susie Q fishing trawler, a new Coast Guard ship and M/V Halten, a 75-foot-long restored Norwegian rescue service trawler.

The Susie Q, which is making a return to the festival, was part of last year's event, Grover said.

The M/V Halten was built in 1966 and is one of only 13 such vessels in the world.

The Coast Guard's 45-foot-long response boat features design and safety features to aid crews in various missions.

Handcrafted wooden boats will be moored at the festival, and guided harbor tours will be offered aboard the Lakeside Spirit.

"This will provide a historic maritime perspective," Grover said. "They'll have interactive, guided tours, citing the shipwrecks, historic occasions and the old landscape of Port Washington."

The festival will also include the third annual cardboard boat regatta, a competition that has become one of the event's most popular attractions.

Last year, roughly 20 vessels made of corrugated cardboard competed for prizes as well as

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bragging rights by navigating a 175-yard course in the marina.

The regatta will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, with boats built in advance competing Saturday. On Sunday, boats built of materials provided by event organizers on the grounds that morning will race.

Awards will be presented at 4 p.m. each day.

The festival also features land-based activities, including educational speakers, interactive displays, music and children's activities.

Activities aimed at youngsters will include the chance to build mini-sailboats and race them in gutters. Coastie, a Coast Guard robot, will be on hand to talk to children about water safety.

The Department of Natural Resources will have a 22-by-8-foot aquarium with freshwater fish.

There will be maritime crafts and physical activities for children as well.

A variety of food and beverages will be sold in the parking lot behind Duluth Trading Co. Re-enactors will stroll the festival grounds, and there will be an arts and crafts fair in Rotary Park.

Two music stages will also be set up on the festival grounds.

On Friday, Celtic and Irish music will be presented, with The Finn MacCools headlining the Main Stage behind Duluth Trading Co. at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday's lineup is more eclectic, Grover said, with events capped off by a Main Stage performance by Naima Adedepo, who was a season-10 finalist on "American Idol."



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Adedepo, who will perform at 7:45 p.m., is currently touring with her band, singing soulful pop and rhythm-and-blues music.

Sunday's concerts will feature a country theme, including a 4:30 p.m. headline concert by the modern country group Saddlebrook.

But the festival won't be limited to the lakefront grounds.

Wooden model ships from the Weinrich family will be displayed at businesses throughout downtown Port Washington, as well as pictures of anchors. People can pick up a treasure hunt form at the festival's information or ticket booth, find the 17 ships and anchors, then turn in the forms for their chance at a gift certificate to downtown businesses.

Several other drawings will also be held during the festival.

The Port Washington Historical Society will host maritime heritage displays at its Research Center on Franklin Street throughout the festival, and the Light Station on Johnson Street overlooking downtown will be open as well.

For more information on the festival, to register for the cardboard boat regatta or for cruise tickets, call Port Washington Main Street at (262) 268-1132 or visit www.portmaritimefestival.com.