

CHOPTANK HERITAGE SKIPJACK 2014 RACE

Dorchester Skipjack Committee
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Capt. Wade Murphy, Jr., at helm, second from right, won last year's race with his skipjack *Rebecca T. Ruark*. Boat level sponsors receive recognition with a banner on participating skipjacks.



More Skipjacks Means More Support Needed For Race

Good news about the potential for more skipjacks participating in this year's Choptank Heritage Skipjack Race means volunteers are scrambling to find sponsors and donors to support the event. "We're committed to keeping this race alive," said Lou Hyman, race chairman for the Dorchester Skipjack Committee, whose volunteers coordinate the race. "We can't do that without the help of businesses and individuals in our community and throughout the Eastern Shore."

The race will be held on the Choptank River off Cambridge on Saturday, September 27. With the Deal Island Labor Day Skipjack Race, it is one of only two skipjack races still held on the Chesapeake Bay.

The race usually has six or eight boats participating, since some of the Deal Island boats are unable to make the run up the Bay. This year, however, there may be as many as a dozen or more skipjacks competing in Cambridge.

Several boats that have been out of commission or under restoration in recent years are likely to attend. The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's newly restored *Rosie Parks* is expected to compete. Deal Island's *Kathryn* and *Helen Virginia* both are anticipated to have their restorations finished in time to attend.

The *Dee of St. Marys* expects to make the trip back across the Bay from the Calvert Marine Museum, after making her first appearance at the race last year. Others anticipated include *Hilda M. Willing*, *H. M. Krentz*, *Ida May*, *Lady Helen*, *Lady Katie*, *Nathan of Dorchester*, *Rebecca T. Ruark*, and *Thomas Clyde*, with still more invited.

The sight of so many skipjacks on the Choptank may have older spectators recalling earlier days when working sail vessels filled the Cambridge harbor.

However, all those skipjacks means more sponsors and donors are needed to fund the event. Each participating vessel receives equal show-up money from the sponsorships and donations received. The skipjack *Nathan of Dorchester*, acting as host vessel for the event, donates her portion back to the race to allow larger awards to the other skipjacks.

Annual major sponsors include the Nathan Foundation; the National Bank of Cambridge, which established and continues to sponsor the Choptank Heritage Cup Trophy, on which the winning skipjack and her captain's names are engraved; and Snappers Waterfront Café, where the post-race luncheon, trophy presentation and this year's Captains and Crew Reception take place.

Craig's Drug Store is sponsoring once again both the reception and the race t-shirts. Other early sponsors include Aero Energy, The J.M. Clayton Company and The Talbot Bank.

Additional sponsors and donors are invited to help support the event and the skipjacks. A range of sponsor levels offers various recognition opportunities, from banners on participating boats to program ads and listings.

Activities at Long Wharf, the prime viewing area in Cambridge for the race start and finish, provide additional opportunities for business sponsors to receive recognition.

"This year is an important one for us," said Hyman. "We have been building this event to bring the skipjack heritage back to Cambridge and to attract visitors to share that heritage with them. Now, we have more boats than ever expected for what may be an amazing gathering of skipjacks not seen in Cambridge harbor in years. But we really need the donors and sponsors to make it happen."

Additional details about this year's Choptank Heritage Skipjack Race, along with sponsor and donor forms may be found on the Current Race page of the Skipjack *Nathan's* website, at www.skipjack-nathan.org. Those wishing to discuss sponsorship opportunities may also call Lou Hyman at 410-330-6634 for more information. Sponsorships must be received by late August for full recognition in the skipjack race program.

For more information, to become a race sponsor, donor or volunteer, contact the Dorchester Skipjack Committee at 410-228-7141 or visit its website, www.skipjack-nathan.org.

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[Photos by Cyndy Carrington Miller]

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Some of the competing skipjacks line up at the bulkhead near Snappers Waterfront Café, one of the annual sponsors of the Choptank Heritage Skipjack Race.