

For Immediate Release

January 14, 2016

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Sailboat Racing Returns to Norfolk Harborfest® for 40th Anniversary

The largest, longest- running, free maritime festival in the nation

NORFOLK, VA (January 14, 2016) - Norfolk Festevents released details today for the 2016 Norfolk Harborfest® Challenge Regatta. Planned for Thursday, June 9, 2016, this US Sailing Association sanctioned race will be reminiscent of the former Harborfest sail boat races conducted in the 70s and 80s. The race will be part of the 40th Annual Norfolk Harborfest, June 9 – 12, 2016, on the downtown Norfolk, VA waterfront.

The race will be run as an around the buoys day race held in the Hampton Roads starting off Craney Island and finishing off Town Point Park and Waterside in downtown Norfolk. The race is open to sailboats over 20 feet LOA, all PHRF handicap classes, regular spinnaker and non-spinnaker classes as well as cruising classes. The race package includes docking options and a series of dockside social events.

Norfolk Yacht and Country Club will serve as the organizing authority and Principle Race Officer is John McCarthy. Organizers anticipate 50 – 75 racers from around the Bay and beyond to participate in the Challenge.

Volunteer race chairman Preston Carraway is a member of the Norfolk Harborfest 40 Commemoration Committee, former Harborfest Chairman and also participated in earlier Harborfest sailboat races. “The idea to bring back the race was quickly embraced by the local sailing community”, according to Carraway. “We believe this is a most appropriate way to recognize the sailboat racing and cruising community and the importance of their contribution to the growth of Norfolk Harborfest® and the Norfolk waterfront.”

“Events like the Challenge will give our residents and visitors the opportunity to recall and share long- ago memories about the early days of Norfolk Harborfest and the downtown Norfolk waterfront”, explains Norfolk Festevents CEO Karen Scherberger and early Harborfest volunteer. “We hope to use this 40th anniversary to capture and record the important “storytelling” of the last 40 years of our waterfront’s growth and development.”

Interested boaters should visit www.festevents.org/norfolkharborfestchallengeregatta for the official race announcement, information and entry forms. Registration deadline is May 31, 2016.

Taken from a recent interview with Preston Carraway:

“With Norfolk Harborfest’s 40th anniversary approaching in June 2016 it is a time to look back over the years past and celebrate old festival traditions as well as create new ones. One of the old traditions that brought many sailboats to Norfolk’s downtown for the waterfront festival weekend was the Chesapeake Bay Challenge sailboat race. This race was held for over 15 years from the late 1970’s to the mid 1990’s. It started as a challenging overnight race in the Chesapeake Bay beginning and ending off Fort Monroe near the entrance to Hampton Roads. Near its peak in the mid 1980’s over 120 sailboats raced starting Thursday night and finishing up Friday morning just in time to join the Parade of Sail and kick off the gala weekend! The racing sailboats then filled the old Kingfisher Docks, in the area where the battleship Wisconsin now berths, and remained there throughout the festival weekend.

This coming year Norfolk Harborfest 2016 is reinventing this exciting race as the “Norfolk Harborfest Challenge Regatta”. Norfolk Yacht and Country Club will serve as the sponsoring authority for the race making this a sanctioned race by the United States Sailing Association. The race will be held in Hampton Roads starting the morning of Thursday June 9, 2016 and finishing that afternoon right off of Town Point Park and Waterside where spectators can have a front row seat to cheer on the competitors. The next day, the racing fleet will join the visiting tall ships and other invited vessels in the parade of sail to arrive and kick off Norfolk Harborfest 2016 at noon Friday, June 10, 2016.”



Norfolk Festevents, Ltd., based in Norfolk, Virginia, is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating the most dynamic urban waterfront community in America through innovative programming and imaginative uses of its historic waterfront spaces. An extensive 10 month schedule of diverse outdoor cultural events, festivals, concerts, entertainment, holiday programs, tall ship visits, sports and recreation are presented in two popular and welcoming waterfront environments; Town Point Park located in downtown Norfolk on the banks of the Elizabeth River and Ocean View Beach Park situated on the shore line of the Chesapeake Bay. Norfolk Festevents has served as the City of Norfolk’s official event marketing agency since the city’s downtown waterfront revitalization initiatives began in 1982. The organization has garnered international acclaim for its advocacy for public access to waterfronts, outstanding quality programming and development of public spaces, transforming Norfolk into one of the most progressive, fun and livable waterfront communities in the country. Residents, workers, and visitors to Norfolk and the Hampton Roads region are invited to experience all the fun and excitement of the 2015 season!