



# The Schooner

A PRODUCTION of OP SAIL CONNECTICUT

## The Connecticut Schooner Festival is Coming

The organizers of the hugely popular OpSail 2012 have set their sights on a new maritime celebration, The Connecticut Schooner Festival, that will take place at Mystic Seaport and in the historic city of New London, Sept. 11-15.

"The success of OpSail2012 caused us to get right back to work and put on an event that will focus on the significant maritime heritage we have in Connecticut," said John Johnson, the event chairman.

"The highlight of this festival will be a race off Ocean Beach Park but the ships will be available to visit and some will be taking out passengers. Throughout history, the schooner has played an important role as working vessels, defenders of our freedom during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, and in many cases today serve as educational platforms for students. We want to draw attention to that with these magnificent ships."

The organizing committee is in the early stages of developing a robust series of activities that will include an education program for Connecticut students at Mystic Seaport, music on the New London waterfront, a major historical pageant staged by the Flock Theatre, a giant sand sculpture, a chowder challenge featuring New London's many fine restaurants and even a lighted boat parade. Other activities are in the works as well.

The group, OpSail Connecticut, is committed to the Connecticut Schooner Festival through 2017. It will become a part of the proud tradition of such schooner festivals that include those in Gloucester, the Provincetown and the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race.

With Capt. John Eginton at the helm, the 110-foot Mystic Whaler, a popular boat that sails the waters of New England and beyond from her homeport of New London, will lead the schooner fleet as it transits from Mystic Seaport to New London on Friday, September 13th.



Getting the good news

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy is shown here with Schooner Fest Chair John Johnson, left, and Kevin Cavanagh, the vice chair. The two briefed the governor on the upcoming festival when they met recently in New London.

## Why a Schooner Festival?

We want to celebrate Connecticut's rich maritime history and honor the role of schooners in it. Through dockside education programs, we want to introduce a new generation of young sailors to the sea.

We want to support the Mystic Seaport's ambitious plans to sail the Charles W. Morgan next year. The Morgan, a national treasure, is the world's last wooden whale ship and the oldest American commercial vessel still in existence. It is designated a National Historic Landmark.



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