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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Screwpile Lighthouse Challenge Brings Pageantry and Tourists to Solomons

Annual Competition Attracts Sailors from the Bay and Beyond

PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – July 10, 2007 – With names like *Gremlin*, *Black Widow*, *Dark Star* and *Blade Runner*, some might think the Southern Maryland Sailing Association's annual Screwpile Lighthouse Challenge involves inviting a coven of shadowy figures to Calvert County. But the names belong to the majestic sailboats that will ply the Patuxent River and Chesapeake Bay during the three-day racing competition, July 22-24, 2007. With billowing spinnakers in rainbow colors and stalwart crews that race for prizes and year-long bragging rights, more than 150 boats will converge on Solomons from home ports around the Bay and the mid-Atlantic.

Now in its 15th year, the Screwpile Lighthouse Challenge not only celebrates the sport of sailboat racing, but it also highlights Solomons as a tourist destination. Herb Reese, one of the event organizers believes the event has a positive economic impact on the tourism and hospitality industries in Calvert County. "The Challenge brings over 1,000 people to the Solomons area from around the world. It is one of the bigger events in the sailing community," he said. "When you calculate the amount of money these people spend on restaurant meals, hotel rooms, marina fees, gift and souvenir purchases, it really adds up."

Dave Gendell, editor of *SpinSheet*, an Annapolis-based sailing magazine, and longtime Screwpile supporter, considers the event one of the most significant among the local sailing community. "Screwpile is important to the sailors because it is the only event that brings together teams from all corners of the mid-Atlantic," he said. "It is the only time of the year crews from the southern Bay, the northern Bay, the Eastern Shore, and the Annapolis area compete in the same event. It is a testing ground and an opportunity for teams to measure themselves against the best of the Bay."

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This year, Calvert Hospice, Hospice of St. Mary's, the Southern Maryland Sailing Foundation, the Rotary International Scholarship Fund, the Southern Maryland Sailing Association and Screwpile will join together to host *Hospice Challenge 2007*. The event, scheduled as part of the weekend's activities, will raise funds to benefit Calvert Hospice and Hospice of St. Mary's.

Hospice Challenge 2007 consists of a dinghy team race, post-race party and Boston Whaler raffle. The dinghy team race will take place on July 21 at 1:45 p.m. on the Patuxent River, off the northern end of the Solomons Island Boardwalk. Teams will maneuver three Flying Juniors, supplied by the Southern Maryland Sailing Foundation, each with a skipper and crew. For more information or to purchase raffle tickets, visit www.calverthospice.org.

L.G. Raley, Event Chairman for the Screwpile Lighthouse Challenge, and a director with the Southern Maryland Sailing Association, appreciates the opportunity the Challenge offers to showcase the Chesapeake Bay, Calvert County and Solomons. "This event provides us with the perfect chance to demonstrate our charm and hospitality to a number of people who like to travel, have disposable incomes, enjoy having fun and appreciate the beauty of the Bay and her surrounding tributaries. It's a chance for us to say 'Welcome, stay a while and come back soon.' And that's what being a good host city is all about."

The Southern Maryland Sailing Association was founded in 1972 and has more than 185 members. The organization offers comprehensive racing, cruising, junior, women's and on-shore activities that allow members to enjoy the sport of sailing through a variety of venues throughout the year. For more information, visit online at www.smsa.com or call 410.326.4364.

For more information on the Screwpile Lighthouse Challenge, visit online at www.screwpile.net.

For more information on tourism in Calvert County, please contact the Calvert County, Maryland Department of Economic Development at 410.535.4583, 800.331.9771 or 301.855.1880, via e-mail info@ecalvert.com or on the Web at www.ecalvert.com.

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