



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Chicago Maritime Tradition Continues "Blessing of the Fleet" Opens Chicago Boating Season

**Chicago's Maritime Day and "Blessing of the Fleet" Ceremony
Set for 11 a.m., Friday, May 18, 2012 at Navy Pier®**

Chicago - The Propeller Club, the International Ship Master's Association, Chicago Lodge #3 and Navy Pier will once again join forces to mark "Maritime Day" and the beginning of Chicago's boating season with the annual maritime tradition: **"The Blessing of the Fleet."**

This year's ceremony is set for **11 a.m., Friday, May 18**, by the "Captain on the Helm" statue, just south of Dock Street, at Navy Pier.

The **"Blessing of the Fleet"** is a centuries old observance that officially opens the boating season. This year, about a dozen boats will gather for the traditional blessing, including law enforcement boats, United States Coast Guard ships, and vessels representing Chicago's popular tour boat community. Special V.I.P guests will include a number of Navy veterans of the Vietnam War, the Korean War and World War II, some of whom trained at Navy Pier or on the Great Lakes.

May 18 Event Schedule:

11 a.m.: Prayer and Blessing of the Wreath at "Captain on the Helm" Statue at Navy Pier

11:15 a.m.: Board *Shoreline Sightseeing's* "Star of Chicago" boat for **"Blessing of the Fleet"**

11:30 a.m.: **"Blessing of the Fleet,"** including water display by Chicago Fire Dept. Fireboat

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About The Propeller Club of the United States:

The Propeller Club of the United States was founded in 1927 to promote a strong American Merchant Marine on the Oceans, the Great Lakes and the Inland Waterways.

About the International Ship Master's Association:

The International Ship Master's Association, Chicago Lodge #3 functions as the representative of all Great Lakes mariners in many important ways, informing and educating on issues of vital concern to mariners. The Association plays a cooperative role with Transport Canada, the U.S. Coast Guard and various other maritime organizations and associations.