



WALK THE PLANK

Privateers & Pirates Fest at Tuckerton Seaport celebrates the Shore's swashbuckling history

By **SUSAN BLOOM**
For NJ Press Media

Ever wonder what life was like for a pirate? That experience is closer than you may think, with the first Privateers and Pirates Fest taking place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday at Tuckerton Seaport.

Filled with pirate-related demonstrations, artifacts and activities, visitors of all ages will enjoy an interactive and in-depth look at the history and lifestyle of these seafaring swashbucklers.

"Many people don't know that there's a real tie-in to pirate history in our area," said Tim Hart, deputy director of Tuckerton Seaport. "Barnegat was actually a major port in the 1600 to 1800s, and many legendary captains we've all heard about — including Blackbeard and Captain Kidd — all ended up in Ocean County."

For Tuckerton Seaport, raising awareness about New Jersey's colorful pirate heritage was the goal behind this inaugural event and potential annual tradition.

"The day's activities will begin at 10 a.m. with a pirate meet-and-greet and photo opportunity with our

Valhalla Pirates," said Jaclyn Stewart, director of the Tuckerton Seaport branch of the Jersey Shore Folklife Center.

"Throughout the day, visitors can participate in our Tools of the Bloody Trade workshop or enjoy performances such as our Scurby Mutineers fight show, whip show and cannon demonstration, and Pirate Pistol Duello pistol show," Stewart said. "There also will be a pirate's pub sing-along with the Sea Shanties and the opportunity to purchase eye patches, swords and other pirate paraphernalia at our pirate's market."

Visitors will have access to "Patriot Pirates," an exhibit on display at the Tuckerton Seaport Visitor's Center that details the history of privateers from the Revolutionary War.

Visitors can dress up as pirates and climb aboard the exhibit's pirate ship.

While pirates are loosely defined as anyone who robs at sea, privateers were pirates who worked for the government.

"During the Revolutionary War, privateers had what was called a Letter of Marque — essentially a permission slip from the government authorizing them to capture British ships along the East

Coast, including areas such as Tuckerton Seaport," Hart said.

He described privateers as "a wild and bawdy bunch."

Other family activities available that day will include balloon twisting, face painting and access to boat tours of Tuckerton Creek for a nominal fee. Pirate grub will be available for purchase or visitors can have lunch at on-site restaurant ScoJo's.

"People love and are fascinated by pirates," Stewart said. "We hope the Privateers and Pirates Fest will help immerse visitors in everything pirate and offer insight into their history and life of plunder."

Tuckerton Seaport and Baymen's Museum are at 120 W. Main St. in Tuckerton. Event admission is \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$3 for children and free for members and children 5 and younger. Visitors who come dressed as pirates will receive a \$2 discount on their admission.

Event admission includes a self-guided tour of the seaport's 13 buildings, which feature maritime activities and exhibits. For more information, call Tuckerton Seaport at 609-296-8868 or visit www.tuckertonseaport.org.

CoverStory
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The Valhalla Pirates will be at Tuckerton Seaport on Saturday for Privateers & Pirates Fest.
(PHOTOS: COURTESY TUCKERTON SEAPORT)