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**PHILADELPHIA'S TALL SHIP *GAZELA*
& TUGBOAT *JUPITER* CELEBRATE
Annual Dinner and Volunteer Awards Ceremony**

Philadelphia, PA (January 14, 2008) -- The volunteers of the only two historic vessels in Philadelphia still sailing, the tall ship *Gazela* and the tugboat *Jupiter*, will hold their annual dinner on January 25, 2008. Known as the Philadelphia Ship Preservation Guild, these volunteers put in over 23,000 hours last year in maintaining these maritime treasures, labor worth over \$270,000!

Through the auspices of the Guild, Philadelphia has one of the most accessible tall ship sailing programs in the country. Volunteers from all walks of life, many with no previous tall ship experience, not only maintain the vintage *Gazela*, a wooden, three-masted barkentine that dates back to 1883, but sail her, visiting ports along the eastern seaboard as Philadelphia's tall ship and maritime ambassador. Also representing the city is the 1902 tugboat *Jupiter*, which was built in Philadelphia at the Neafie and Levy shipyard. In addition to port visits, both vessels participate in local events such as Penn's Landing's Summer Sail and Safe Boating Day.

While the Guild volunteers enjoy the physical nature of hauling lines and sailing the vessels to various ports, they are also committed to strengthening Philadelphia's maritime heritage by offering classes in traditional seamanship. A variety of classes were offered in 2007, from knot tying to working with an adze (a traditional ship building tool). Volunteers also produce and staff every special event involving the ships, such as the annual "Haunted Ship" that takes place each October -- a family-friendly haunted tour during Halloween weekend complete with roving pirates! On top of all

of the ships' volunteer crew, the organization boasts a committed, hands-on Board of Directors and volunteer office staff that keep the organization running smoothly.

The Annual Dinner and Volunteer Awards Ceremony for the Guild will be held this year on Friday, January 25th at 7:00 pm at The Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College. The evening serves as a reflection of 2007 and will begin with dinner and conclude with an awards ceremony and a rousing video montage – a documentary of the past year hosted by outgoing president, Ed Stemmler. Among this year's awards will be the William Wikoff Smith Award, named after the late philanthropist/adventurer who brought *Gazela* to Philadelphia in 1971.

"While everyone enjoys watching tall ships, they have no idea of the hours it takes to maintain these vessels. Our annual dinner is dedicated to the tireless volunteers who keep *Gazela* and *Jupiter* sailing", said the Guild's new president, Eric Lorgus, who himself started with the Guild as a volunteer. "The first day I showed up, they put me to work on the forge" recalls Lorgus, "and in no time I was hammering away like an old-time blacksmith. I think most of our volunteers find themselves doing things they had never dreamed of, including climbing the yards of our old square-rigger."

For additional information on the Annual Dinner, call (215) 238-0280 or visit www.gazela.org. The Philadelphia Ship Preservation Guild is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, sailing, and sharing of its historic vessels.