



CHAMBER of COMMERCE
EASTERN CONNECTICUT

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IMPORTANT NEWS FROM THE O'NEILL AND THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center To Host McCourt Cup Tournament

***Croquet Tournament now in its 10th Year Moves Permanently
to the O'Neill – Local Public Invited to Play***

Waterford, CT - On Sunday, July 27, 2008, the O'Neill Theater Center will host the McCourt Cup, founded by renowned Irish-American author Frank McCourt and his brother Malachy McCourt. The spectacular lawns of the O'Neill on the Long Island Sound will provide the backdrop for the croquet tournament. The local public is invited to play, though space is limited, and reservations are necessary. Ticket prices are \$35/person, and include the morning instruction; the opportunity to compete; lunch; and admission to opening remarks by Frank McCourt and a closing song by Malachy McCourt. The day is co-sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut.

The day will begin at 10:30am with instruction for croquet novices; a boxed lunch will be served during Mr. McCourt's talk at 11:30am, and tournament play will begin at approximately 12:45pm. Teams composed of the McCourts, the O'Neill's writers and artists in residence for the National Playwrights Conference, and local guests will compete for the Cup.

The day will conclude at 5:15pm with an optional reading of the 2008 Irish play, *Without You*, by Ursula Rani Sarma of Dublin, which will also conclude the 2008 National Playwrights Conference. Tickets for participants are available at a discount of \$15.

For more information or to purchase tickets, please contact Suzanne Hendrix at 860.443.5378 (ext 217) or at shendrix@theoneill.org.

The McCourt Cup is an invitational doubles tournament overseen by sanctioned officials from the United States Croquet Association (USCA). The tradition was started in 2000 after Mike Gibbons, a member of the USCA Hall of Fame, and his wife, Cynthia, a ranked Croquet Association champion, read Malachy's memoir, "A Monk Swimming," in which he describes his surprising victory in a croquet tournament in Central Park in 1986. For the McCourt Cup, contestants play "golf croquet," in which two-person teams try to be the first to hit their balls through six wickets and against a peg.

The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center advances the American Theater through programs that encourage creative excellence and develop diverse voices and new work. It has been home to more than 1,000 new works for the stage and 2,500 emerging artists since its founding in 1964. Scores of projects developed at the O'Neill have gone on to full productions at other theaters around the world, including Broadway, off-Broadway and major regional theaters, garnering every major award for theatrical excellence. The O'Neill has been honored with a Tony Award, the Jujamcyn Award for Theater Excellence, the National Opera Award and the Arts and Business Council Encore Award. The O'Neill's programs include the National Playwrights Conference, National Music Theater Conference, Puppetry Conference, Cabaret & Performance Conference, National Critics Institute, and the National Theater Institute, which includes semester-long, fully accredited intensive theater-training programs and a six-week accredited summer program, Theatermakers. In addition, the O'Neill owns and operates the Monte Cristo Cottage, a National Historic Landmark and the childhood home of Nobel Prize-winning and four-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, Eugene O'Neill. For more information, please visit the O'Neill website at www.theoneill.org or call 860-443-5378.

About the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut:

The Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut is a collaborative of business and community leaders dedicated to securing and enhancing the economic vitality of eastern Connecticut. The chamber works to create value for its members and the region by providing forums for business networking, leadership development and discussions of issues that affect the region; providing opportunities for members to showcase their products, services and accomplishments; helping small businesses succeed through educational programs; and working to reduce the costs of doing business in Connecticut.

In its efforts to build and promote a strong and sustainable regional economy, the chamber works to increase awareness of the region at the local, state and national levels; acts as "the voice of business" for the region in Connecticut government; advocates for membership diversity; works to enhance hospitality and support for military personnel and their families; and promotes eastern Connecticut as a great place to live, work and play.

For more information about the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, call 860-464-7373 or visit www.chamberECT.com.

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