

G8 SUMMIT

LANDS ON OUR SHORES



PHOTO BY ROB KAUFMAN

The G8 Summit of world leaders, headed to Sea Island **June 8-10**, is bringing excitement tinged with anxiety to coastal Georgia. To the glamour of an international diplomatic event – and a prime chance to market the region’s charms – add the logistical headaches of too many visitors at one time, and darker fears that demonstrations may get out of hand.

No question, though, the arrival of President Bush, hosting leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United Kingdom, means a multimillion-dollar economic impact for this scenic and historic region, as foreign delegations of thousands descend on Savannah- and Brunswick-area hotels and restaurants.

Plus, an international press corps, based in Savannah and expected to reach 3,000 or more journalists, will give the city a visibility rarely



*The world’s most powerful leaders
are coming to coastal Georgia –
will world-class anxiety
come with them?*

BY BRAD SWOPE

seen since it inspired the 1994 bestselling book, “Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil.”

“This has tremendous potential,” Bob Scanlon, city government’s designated G8 coordinator, said of the summit. “It really puts Savannah on the map as a site that can host a large event, from a tourist standpoint and a business meeting standpoint. It’s an opportunity for Savannah and southeast Georgia to really showcase itself.”

But here’s the anxiety part: will that same international spotlight draw the sorts of anarchic demonstrators who went on vandalism sprees in Seattle and other past gatherings of world leaders? Or will careful planning – and extraordinary security measures – allow protesters to air their agenda in orderly fashion, as they did during a G8 summit in Calgary, Alberta?

A recent, and unscientific, lunch hour poll of Johnson Square found that local residents