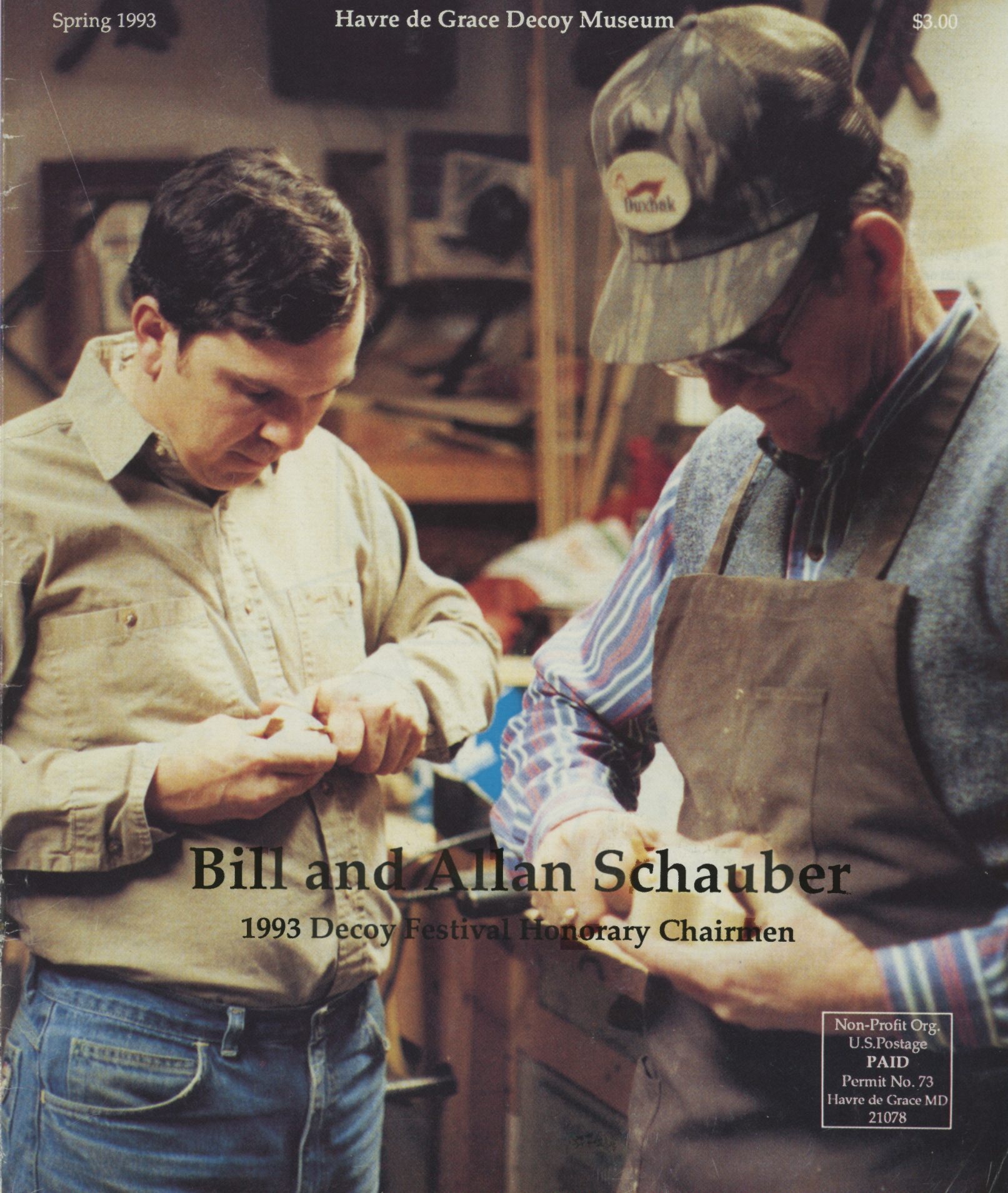


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Spring 1993

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

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Bill and Allan Schaubert

1993 Decoy Festival Honorary Chairmen

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Attention decoy art collectors!

Three New Prints for 1993

Canvasbacks of the Chesapeake

Valerie Lloyd has completed in intricate detail **Canvasbacks of the Chesapeake**. This drawing depicts 43 Canvasbacks created by the old decoy masters of the Chesapeake Bay. This also completes a series of six which include the following:

Geese-SOLD OUT

Swans

Wood Ducks

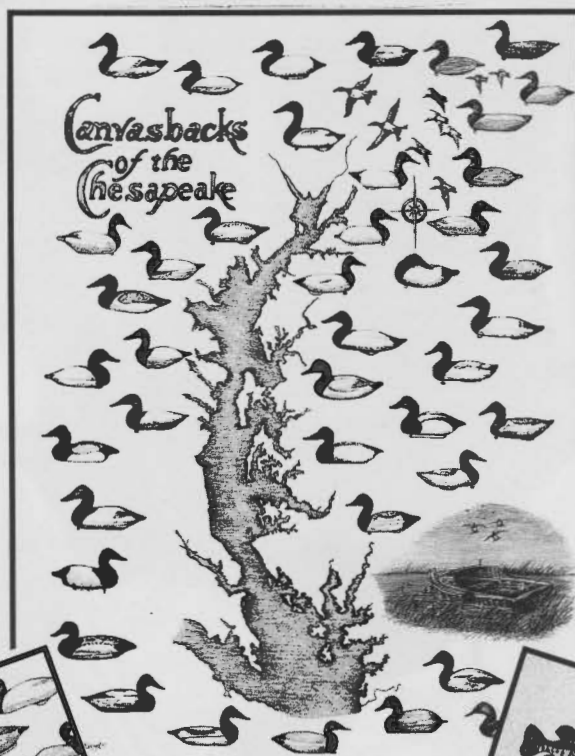
Red Heads

Blue Bills

Due to the overwhelming response for the Canvasback print, guaranteed customers must place their order no later than May 15, 1993.

L/E 250

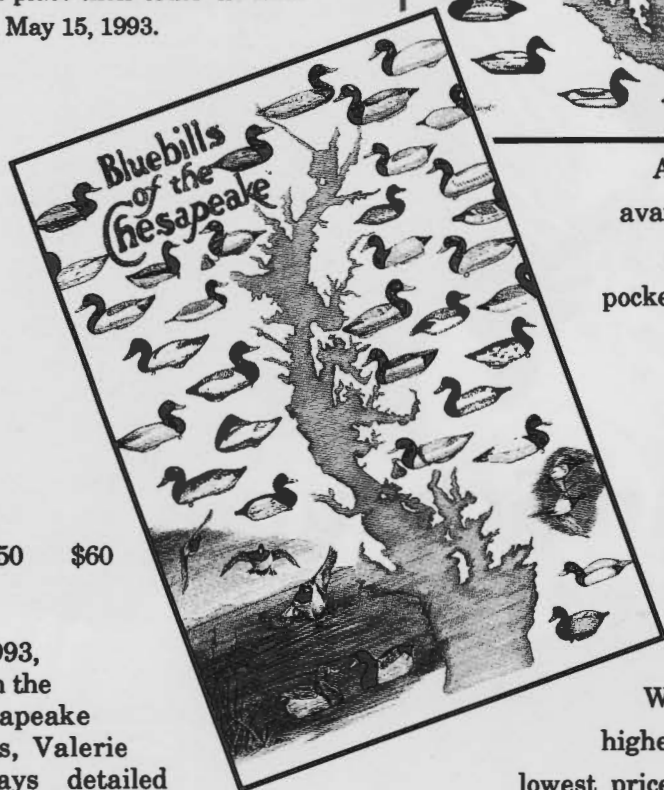
\$60



L/E 50

\$100

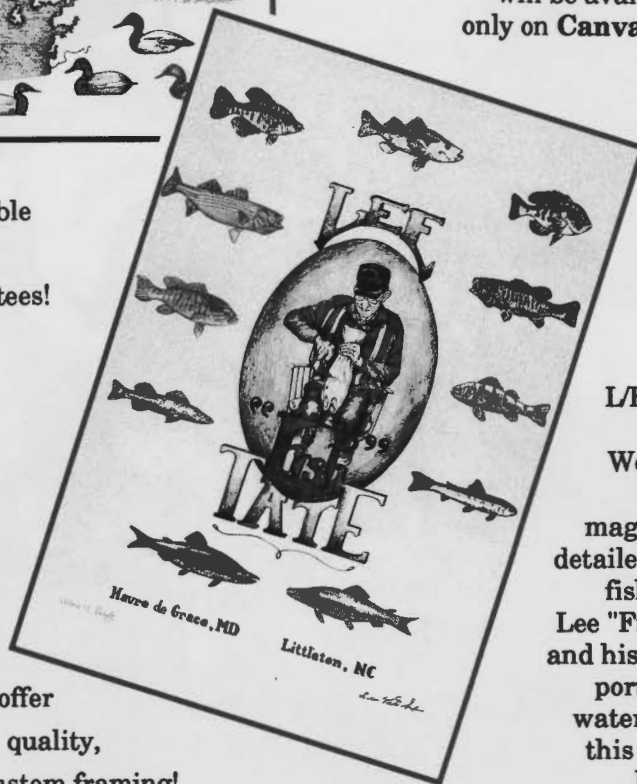
A tribute to
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L/E 250 \$60

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series, Valerie
displays detailed
Blue Bill decoys
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on
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Havre de Grace Decoy Museum



can•vas•back (kan'ves bak'), *n., pl. -backs*, (esp. collectively) - back. 1. A north American wild duck, the male of which has a whitish back and a reddish-brown head and neck. 2. A style of decoy made famous by carvers of the Susquehanna Flats region. 3. A quarterly publication of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.

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ON THE COVER

Bill and Allan Schaubert at work in Bill's workshop in Chestertown, MD. For more on the Schauberts, see page 16.

FROM THE EDITOR

This issue reflects a very busy time for everyone involved with the museum as we are all preparing for the 12th Annual Decoy Festival.

Recently, I have had several museum members ask me why they receive multiple copies of *The Canvasback* per household. If your family members are all individual members of the Decoy Museum, each of you is listed in our computerized membership program. We run our mailing labels for all bulk mailings through this program. Some of our families like receiving as many issues as they do, others of you have requested that only one issue be sent per household. Unfortunately, we do not have the means to sort through our 1200+ mailing list and individually pull out groups or individuals who would only like to receive one copy. So we can only err on the side of making sure that all museum members and subscribers receive each issue of *The Canvasback* that they are entitled to. At some point in the future, perhaps we can update our computer program and have more advanced sorting capabilities. Until then, enjoy your issues, or pass one along to a friend who might be interested in the Decoy Museum! For more information on our bulk mailing process, check out the Volunteer Spotlight!

The Summer issue will be devoted to R. Madison Mitchell, and I am looking for stories, anecdotes, quotes, and photographs of Madison. If you have something that you would like to include, or if you would like to write about Madison, please contact me by June 1st. Thank you!

Karen Marshall

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*From
the
President*



Dear Museum Member,

I hope everyone is getting ready for this year's Havre de Grace Decoy Festival! The 12th Annual Festival features Bill and Allan Schaub as Honorary Chairmen. Father and son produce beautiful birds in the tradition of Speed Joiner, highlighted by their paint patterns which have a blend and depth of color which simply marvels me. The Schaubers have made a special effort to create three different collections (Bill- full size, Allan- half-size and miniatures) for the Festival auctions, providing collectors with a great opportunity to acquire examples of their stylish work.

I am glad that the Schaubers selected the Old Squaw as the symbol of their work because it is such an unusual looking bird, and is one that is rarely seen as a decoy or in life floating out in the "Flats." To me, this is very symbolic of the thousands of birds that used to come to Havre de Grace during the heydays of gunning. Those birds are now virtually gone, but we still have their memory preserved in decoys made by carvers like Madison Mitchell or Bill Schaub. Their decoys serve as a reminder of our unique folk art heritage and, unfortunately our changing environment.

As you probably noticed in the last issue of *The Canvasback*, the museum has named Louis Frisino as the First Honorary Artist for this year's Festival. Frisino is a truly special artist who captures waterfowl with such realism that he was the perfect artist to paint "Gunning the Flats." Once again, this image is a strong reminder of the days which made Havre de Grace the "Decoy Capital of the World."

Traditions are so important, providing all of us with a greater understanding of the past. The Decoy Festival is a special event that continues these artistic traditions for all of us to share. I am proud to be a part of the Festival and I look forward to seeing you there.

Allen J. Fair
President, Board of Directors

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Volunteer Carver of the Year Award

Butch and Mary Carol Larrimore were very surprised to be the first recipients of the Volunteer Carver of the Year Award. The Larrimores remarked "the museum is a great asset in preserving the true art of decoy carving. We are so happy to have a share in helping it to grow and widen...not only in the pleasure it gives carvers but the knowledge it imparts to the person who comes to visit."

Congratulations to Butch and Mary Carol!



*Butch and Mary Carol Larrimore.
Photo by Ralph Broth.*

Volunteers Bring Museum Mail To You

Ever wonder how *The Canvasback* and other bulk mailings reach you? Preparing a mailing to reach all Decoy Museum members and *Canvasback* subscribers takes time and a lot of team work! Any xeroxing or collating and stapling of materials must be finished, then the labels must be printed out from our computer program and affixed, then each piece must be sorted according to zip code, counted, bundled, labeled, and carried to the post office. At the post office, a properly sorted bulk mail is fairly easy to send out and it reaches you more quickly thanks to the efforts of the many members of the Decoy Museum Bulk Mailing Teams!

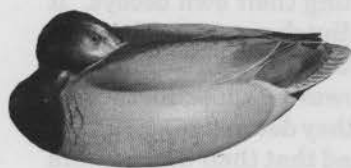
*Volunteers such as Lori Pierce and George and Evelyn Scheulen prepare the Decoy Museum's bulk mailings.
Photo by Karen Marshall.*



Canvasback Book Review

DECOYS

by
Linda and Gene Kangas



Linda and Gene Kangas have contributed a number of decoy books and articles to those who share their interests. DECOYS, their most recent work, is a unique book in that it draws together regional surveys of decoys. Provided are extensive chapters concerning decoy evolution, historical influence of transportation and penmanship upon decoys, care/maintenance, and value. As always with any decoy publication, there is a multitude of decoy pictures (including a small section of fish decoys). In addition to chapters covering decorative and miniature decoys, there are over 200 pages of waterfowl decoy pictures.

It seems that most of the current books about decoys, focus on regional works of art. With the vast regional differences in species, hunting techniques, environment, and huge number of carvers, this microscopic approach is quite appropriate. Kangas' DECOYS is an informative and all encompassing North American survey, not unlike books by Joel Barber, William Mackey, or Adele Earnest.

The first seven chapters share the results of extensive research. The idea of North American decoys originating as early as 10,000 years ago makes for fascinating reading, as does the evolution of hunting techniques and the advancement of transportation technology. The growth of the American railroad system afforded the "sports" an opportunity to frequent nearby and distant hunting locations (often bringing along their personal regional decoys to gun over). Many of these trips were taken as a result of railroad advertisements aimed at the "sports." The railroad also enhanced the market gunner's profession by providing speed in shipment and refrigeration of the highly prized waterfowl.

As for decoys themselves, the Kangas' provide an interesting chapter which suggests the influence of Spencerian Calligraphy (Platt Rogers Spencer, Sr. 1800-1864) upon decoy painting. To help the decoy collector who seeks advice regarding decoy care and maintenance, DECOYS provides the recommendations of four professional museum conservators on this subject. They discuss the affects of humidity, temperature, surface preservation, and handling. Are you still using linseed oil on your wooden birds?...DON'T!!!

The value chapter does not directly deal with specific dollar amounts, but rather the market fluctuation as a function of fashion and regional interest (as opposed to historical or artistic importance). In this chapter, I found the following most appropriate, "Decoys made for ducks usually have little monetary value while decoys carved for people are almost always priced higher."

DECOYS has one of the most unusual but thought provoking sections I've ever read in a decoy book. It's entitled "Caveat Emptor" (Let the buyer beware). Like anyone who has collected decoys, I too have brought into my flock a bird that turned out to be something other than what I thought. This section covers degrees of originality, repairs, painting, reproductions and yes, even fakes!

The opening chapters of DECOYS are all superb reading. Moreover, there is real enjoyment in viewing the extensive photos of quality old North American birds. Sixteen chapters, one each devoted to a specific species and additional sections devoted to factory decoys and uncommon species are included.

If the decoy collector or enthusiast is interested in the "whole decoy picture" and nice in-depth regional essays, then DECOYS is an excellent book to add to your library.

DECOYS is 335 pages and was published in 1992 by Collector Books, a division of Schroeder Publishing Co., Inc., and is available at the Decoy Museum Store for \$24.95.

Reviewed by
Bill Smart

Butch and Mary Carol Larrimore

1993 Volunteer Carvers of the Year

Butch and Mary Carol Larrimore love volunteering at the Decoy Museum. They both believe that the museum is a tremendous asset to the waterfowl world because people are so amazed by the beauty and implied meaning of decoys. The Larrimores feel that this amazement heightens a visitor's realization of the Bay's changing environment and by "learning about carving someone might become motivated to help preserve the waterfowl and their environment."

Learning about carving by association is exactly what started the Larrimores' involvement with the museum and creating their own decoys. It all began a little over 10 years ago when a friend gave Butch a pair of old decoys out of a basket. He brought them back home, showed them to his wife and then placed the birds on a table with little thought. However, these birds soon sparked their interest in learning what they were, so, they decided to attend the nearby Havre de Grace Decoy Show. Here they learned that their decoys were made by Madison Mitchell and while there purchased another Mitchell canvasback. Madison even signed it for them. According to Butch "that was it, I was hooked!"

Butch and Mary Carol Larrimore



Butch's interest in decoys continued to grow and while attending another show he met Ray Overturf, who he had grown up with. Showing a desire to learn, Ray offered to teach Butch how to make decorative birds. He decided to do so only if his wife, Mary Carol, would learn with him.

Travelling to Reisterstown once a week, they quickly learned the art of decorative carving. However, instead of making decorative decoys, the Larrimores have found their niche in producing slick gunning birds. They operate like a true team, Butch does all the body carving and cuts out the heads, while Mary Carol whittles the heads and does all of the painting. Although she does not believe that she is an artistic person, Mary Carol's love of waterfowl absorbs her totally in the decoy making process. She works from photographs and mounted birds, which sometimes causes her to produce a dozen or so decoys before "I get what I want" as she strives to make it look like the bird itself. "Hunters who make decoys have a real unfair advantage because they know the birds. I have to do a lot of research before settling on a pattern, for them its automatic" Mary Carol reflects. Nonetheless, the Larrimores together have been able to produce "very nice smoothies" according to Ed Watts, Carvers Appreciation Day Chairman, "which please friends and collectors alike."

The Larrimores produce about 100 decoys per year, creating swans, pintails, bluebills, canvasbacks and wood ducks in various sizes. They try to

By John V. Quarstein

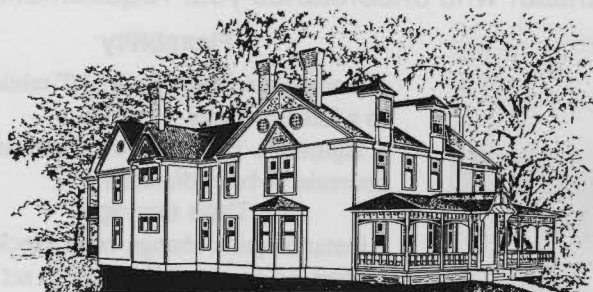
add new species every year and it is usually the bird selected by the Decoy Festival's Honorary Chairman. The Schaubers' Old Squaw caused Mary Carol a little trouble because she feels it is a "sneaky" bird due to its constantly changing pattern of browns, grays, and whites. It took her 6 weeks to decide upon her paint scheme "it was the last thing I thought of at night and the mount was one of the first things I would see in the morning" as Mary Carol keeps all the mounts she is studying on top of her refrigerator. They relish unveiling their new species at the Festival as "it was where our love of decoy making began."

The Decoy Festival was also the first show where they ever exhibited their work ("what are we doing here" Mary Carol told Butch back in 1987). However, since then the Larrimores have made Havre de Grace their decoy home as Butch believes that everyone "makes them feel so welcome and that friendliness only continues as we continue to grow and learn."

The Larrimores received the "Volunteer Carvers of the Year" award for being more than just decoy makers. They spend many weekends at the museum as guest carvers which, according to Mary Carol is just a simple pleasure: "I find nothing more peaceful than sitting up stairs looking out on the Flats and working. Maybe I am a little selfish because I get more done at the museum than I do at home." Butch also helps out with various exhibit projects, such as the Harry Barnes Sink Box restoration. Both Butch and Mary Carol remain steadfast in their support for the Decoy Museum and they strive to help the museum as much as possible in every way that they can. The Larrimores are like so many other carvers who have given of themselves to further the museum's education opportunities. It is this type of generosity and spirit that helps to make the Decoy Museum such a success.

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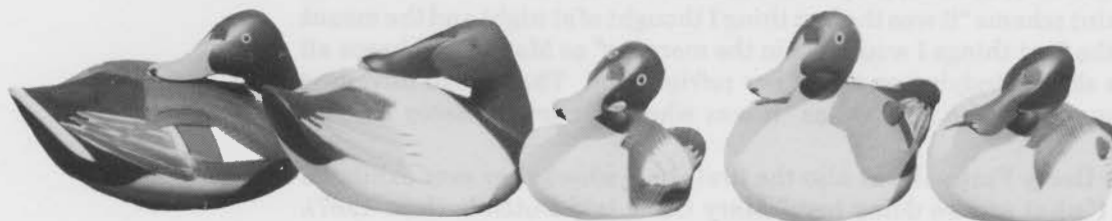


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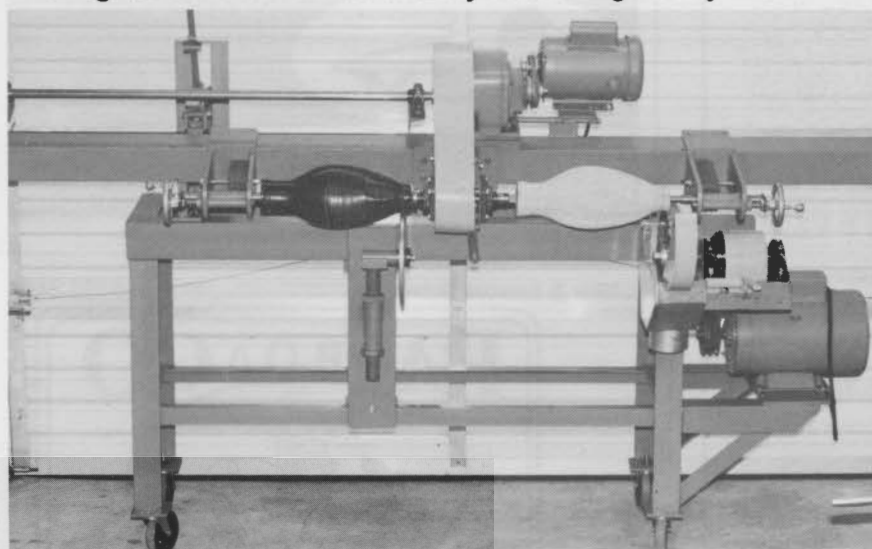
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Black Head	\$40 ea	Coots	\$40 ea	Brant	\$50 ea
Red Head	\$40 ea	Bald Pates	\$40 ea	Canada Goose	\$80 ea
Bufflehead	\$40 ea	Common Mergansers	\$130 pr	Loons	\$60 ea
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Blue Wing Teal	\$40 ea	Gadwall	\$50 ea	Swan With Keel	\$400 ea
Oversize Decoys		Decoy Lamps			
Canvasback	\$50 ea	1/2 size Swan Lamp	\$120 ea		
Red Head	\$50 ea	3/4 size Swan Lamp	\$125 ea		
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12th Annual Havre de Grace Decoy Festival

When you think of May in Havre de Grace, you think of the Decoy Festival. Now in it's twelfth year, many of you are seasoned festival participants. This year's show is extremely exciting for me since it is my first year as Festival Chairman. The entire Festival committee has been working very hard to make our 12th Annual Festival a huge success.

By Clovis Bolin

May 7th, 8th, and 9th 1993

Admission: 1 Day \$5.00 3 Day Pass \$8.00

Children under 12 are free

Exhibitors located at the Havre de Grace High School Gymnasium, the Middle School Auditorium, and this year for the first time, at the Decoy Museum.

Friday:

The Decoy Museum, the Havre de Grace Middle School Auditorium, and High School Gymnasium will be open to the public from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Saturday:

Festival hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the Auction begins at 5:30 p.m. in the High School. A special Exhibitors Reception and Buffet is planned from 8 to 11 p.m. at the Havre de Grace Community Center. Tickets are still available to the public, call 939-3739 to get yours today!

Schedule

- 11:30 a.m.- Gunning Stool Floating Contest and Decorative Contest, High School Gym.
- 11:30 a.m.- Postal Service Stamp Cancelling, Middle School to 1 p.m.
- 11:30 a.m.- Past Honorary Chairmen Autograph Session: Charlie Bryan (1984), Bob Litzenburg (1986), Charlie Joiner (1987), Capt. Harry Jobs (1988), Bill Collins (1989), Roger Urie (1990), Jim Pierce (1991), Bill and Allan Schaubert (1993), Middle School.
- 1 p.m.- Punt Gun Firing, Decoy Museum.
- 5:30 p.m. - Auction, High School Auditorium.
- 8 - 11 p.m.- Exhibitor's Reception and Buffet, Community Center.

Sunday:

Festival hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Schedule

- 10:30 a.m.- Youth Division Decoy Making Competition, High School.
- 11 a.m.- Gunning Rig Competition, Decoy Museum.
- 11:30 a.m.- Postal Service Stamp Cancelling, Middle School to 1 p.m.



- 11:30 a.m.- Past Honorary Chairmen Autograph Session: Charlie Bryan (1984), Bob Litzenburg (1986), Charlie Joiner (1987), Capt. Harry Jobs (1988), Bill Collins (1989), Roger Urie (1990), Jim Pierce (1991), Bill and Allan Schaubert (1993), Middle School.
- 12 Noon- Slick Decoy Contest, High School.
- 12:30 p.m.- Decorative Canvasback Contest, High School.
- 1 p.m.- Head Whittling Contest, Middle School.
- 1 p.m.- Upper Chesapeake Bay Duck and Goose Calling Contest, High School.
- 3 p.m.- Painting Contest Judging, Middle School.

Plenty of refreshments will be offered by Canvasback Caterers at the High School and Middle School.

Decoy Festival Booklets will be available!

There will be plenty of parking at the Decoy Museum, Key Operations parking lot on Revolution Street, and numerous other locations around town - be sure to look for Decoy Festival parking signs and our shuttle service will offer you a hassle free way of moving around for all of the Festival activities!



*A standard Bushwhack
boat 18 ft. long.*

The Bushwhack Boat

Used at the Head of Chesapeake Bay, She Is an
Interesting Variant of the Flat-bottomed Type

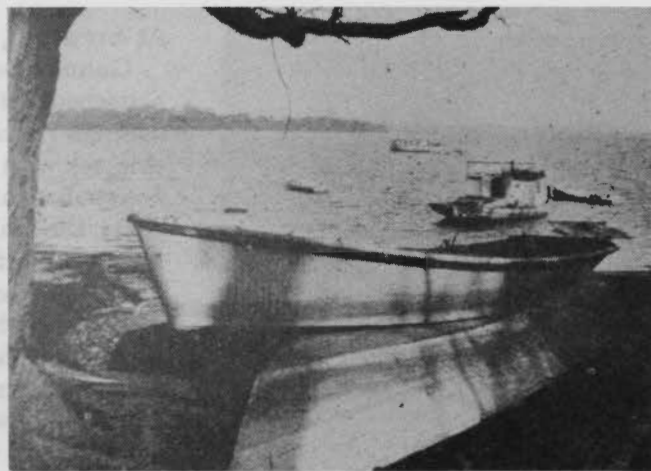
The Susquehanna River, flowing for centuries into the very upper end of the Chesapeake Bay just below the present highway and railroad bridges at Havre de Grace, MD, has built a submerged delta roughly six miles in diameter and covering an area of some thirty square miles. It is better known as the Susquehanna Flats. The thin sheet of water covering it varies in depth from six to eight feet to less than a foot at mean low water. During extreme low tides, such as are caused by winter gales from the Northwest, great areas of the bottom are exposed. A buoyed channel, allowing a draught of twelve feet, extends in a northwesterly and southeasterly direction west of the center of it to the mouth of the Susquehanna. Other channels and drains, some as deep as twenty feet, extend around the shores and project into it.

In summer the head of the Bay is a beautiful body of water. When viewed from its lower end, at the gas buoy off Locust Point on Spesutie Island, it resembles a mountain lake. To the west, north, and northeast, the four hundred foot hills of Harford and Cecil Counties form a background for the banks, which are mostly high and wooded, while to the east, Bull Mountain and Maulden's Mountain, both tree clad for their 300 feet of height, descend in some places quite abruptly to the water. Turkey Point, at the end of this peninsula, with its eroded yellow cliffs and its lighthouse, is a picture. Land at Turkey Point and climb the steps to the top. The panorama from the light is well worth the climb. It is probably the best in the Bay, as so much is included in it. To the east lies Elk River and the upper counties of the eastern Shore, Cecil and Kent; to the south the Bay stretches off to the horizon beyond Poole's Island, 20 miles down; to the southwest lies the Aberdeen Proving Ground reservation screened by Spesutie Island, and to the west lie the flats just described.

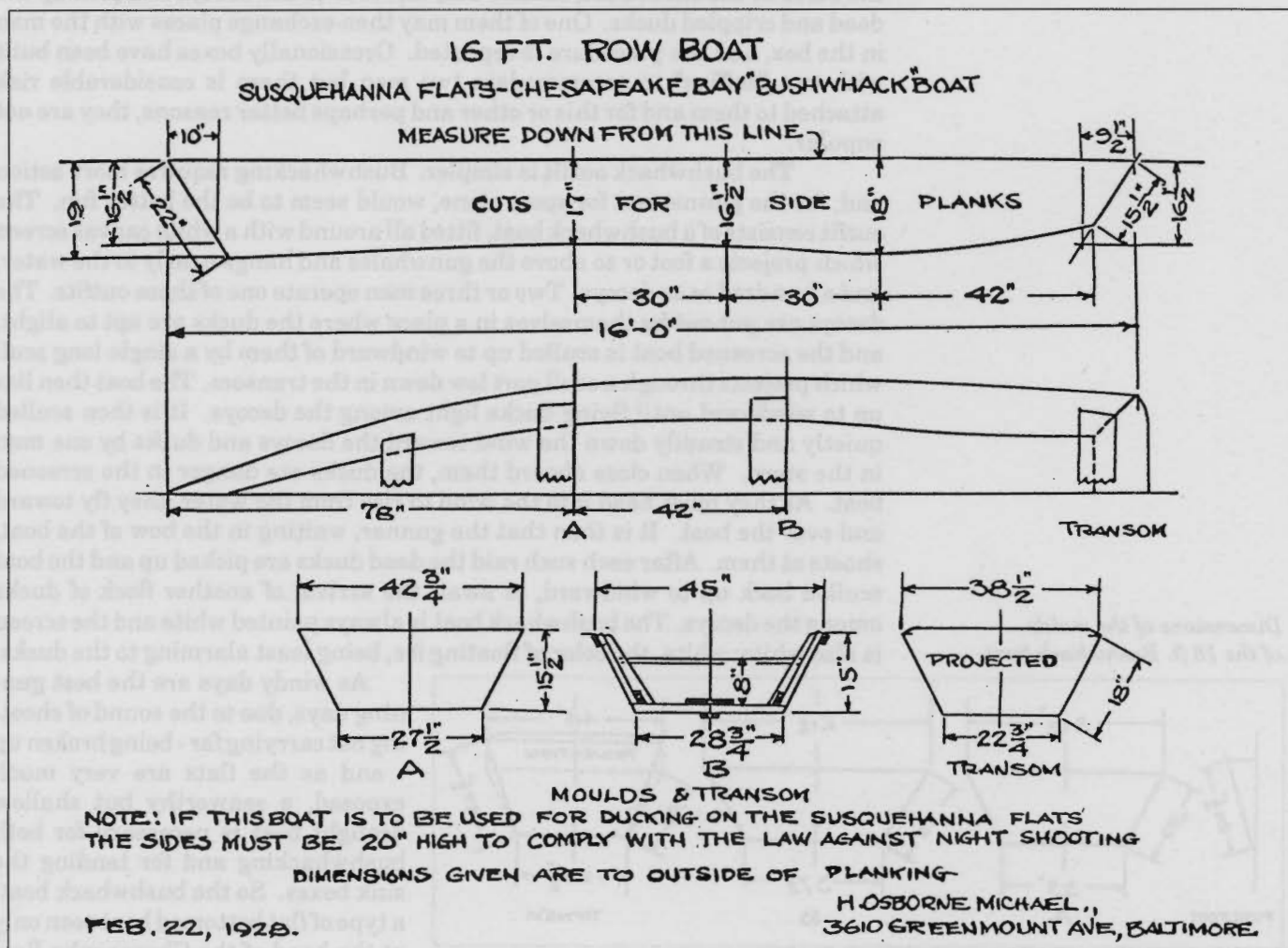
By H. Osborne Michael
Illustrations by the Author

To return to the subject; the flats produce much marine vegetation, from unsightly algae to acres of water lilies, and principally, from the sportman's viewpoint, wild celery. Each fall hundreds of thousands of wild ducks of all varieties, including a large proportion of canvasbacks, come to make their winter home on the Flats, feeding on the celery. It naturally follows that, the ducks feeding there, and ducks being good to eat and profitable to sell - even if it is against the law - man has devised ways to hunt and kill them. To soliloquize a bit, it's strange that men too honest to slip a coin or two from the collection plate in church on Sunday, or even to pass a three-day-old transfer on an unsuspecting streetcar conductor, will consider it almost an obligation to break all the game laws with which they are familiar.

Wild ducks are hunted in two ways on the Susquehanna Flats; from sink boxes and from the bushwhack boat. Shooting from blinds is practiced only in the nearby creeks and rivers and occasionally along the shores, but in a comparatively negligible way, sink box shooting and bushwhacking being more productive and requiring no property rights. The origin of the word, "bushwhacking" is obscure. No one locally can explain its adaptation to this method of duck shooting, and none of the present generation of gunners seem the least bit worried about it. They all know what is meant by it, and they let it go at that.



The 16-footer built by the author.





An 18 footer. Note the "scull hole" in the stern, now covered up.

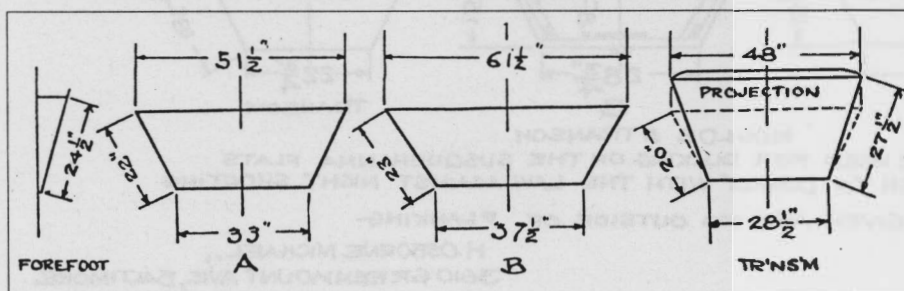
At any event, bushes do not enter into it.

Gunning outfits vary greatly, from the expensive shoal draught motor houseboats of wealthy sportsmen to the homely rigs of the local boys. An average rig consists of a cabin motor boat of some sort, usually an old skipjack with mast and sails removed (a large and ungainly house having been substituted for them), and a motor installed; one or more bushwhack boats; the sink box itself; and several hundred decoys. The sink box is a man-sized coffin-shaped box, open at the top and its upper edges let into a platform about six feet wide and ten feet long. Hinged to the edges of this platform are light canvas covered wings which serve to make the platform larger and which rise and fall with any waves which may be running. The sink box is anchored on a likely "berth" and is weighted down with the gunner (all wrapped in sheepskins and blankets), and with cast iron decoys, until the platform floats flush with the water. Several hundred wooden decoys are then placed around to the box to resemble a flock of ducks on the water, and the gunner is left to his own resources by his partners or attendants who row off to the cabin boat anchored some distance off.

The sink box being flush with the water is not noticed by passing flocks of ducks, which flying low, are attracted by the decoys, and plan to alight among them. It is then that the gunner, lying in wait in the sink box, sits up and shoots ducks. Upon hearing the shooting the other men in the outfit, waiting around the stove in the cabin boat, tumble out, row over to the decoys and pick up the dead and crippled ducks. One of them may then exchange places with the man in the box, and the procedure is repeated. Occasionally boxes have been built with two "coffins" to accommodate two men but there is considerable risk attached to them and for this or other and perhaps better reasons, they are not popular.

The bushwhack outfit is simpler. Bushwhacking requires more action and, for the gunner out for sport alone, would seem to be the better fun. The outfit consists of a bushwhack boat, fitted all around with a white canvas screen which projects a foot or so above the gunwhales and hangs nearly to the water, and a hundred or so decoys. Two or three men operate one of these outfits. The decoys are put out by themselves in a place where the ducks are apt to alight, and the screened boat is sculled up to windward of them by a single long scull which projects through a scull port low down in the transom. The boat then lies up to windward until flying ducks light among the decoys. It is then sculled quietly and steadily down the wind toward the decoys and ducks by one man in the stern. When close aboard them, the ducks see danger in the screened boat. As they must head into the wind to rise from the water, they fly toward and over the boat. It is then that the gunner, waiting in the bow of the boat, shoots at them. After each such raid the dead ducks are picked up and the boat sculled back up to windward, to await the arrival of another flock of ducks among the decoys. The bushwhack boat is always painted white and the screen is also white; white, the color of floating ice, being least alarming to the ducks.

Dimensions of the molds of the 18 ft. Bushwhack boat.



As windy days are the best gunning days, due to the sound of shooting not carrying far - being broken up - and as the flats are very much exposed, a seaworthy but shallow draught boat is necessary for both bushwhacking and for tending the sink boxes. So the bushwhack boat, a type of flat bottomed boat seen only at the head of the Chesapeake Bay,

has been developed for these purposes. These boats have almost a dory bow; are high sided, with 23° or 30° of flare in the sides; have several inches of fore and aft "rocker" in bottom, so that both ends of the bottom float clear of the water when light; and have a wide raking stern with no deadwood under it. They are usually built in one of two sizes from 18' or 16' lumber. An 18-footer, built of white cedar, will draw about three inches light, and yet will behave herself when drawing a foot, as when loaded with 14 or 15 men, or two or three men and several hundred decoys. They row easily under all conditions, considering of course the draught.

There are rowboats in many localities which resemble these boats somewhat, but a second glance will show the bushwhack boat to have more rake to the bow and stern, more flare to the sides, convex rocker in the bottom - a thing most boat builders seem to abhor - and will accordingly be narrower in the bottom and will both tow and row easier than a straight bottomed boat. Also, the widest section is about three-fifths of the length from the bow, and the stern is wider than that of any other flat boat. They are truly an individual type.

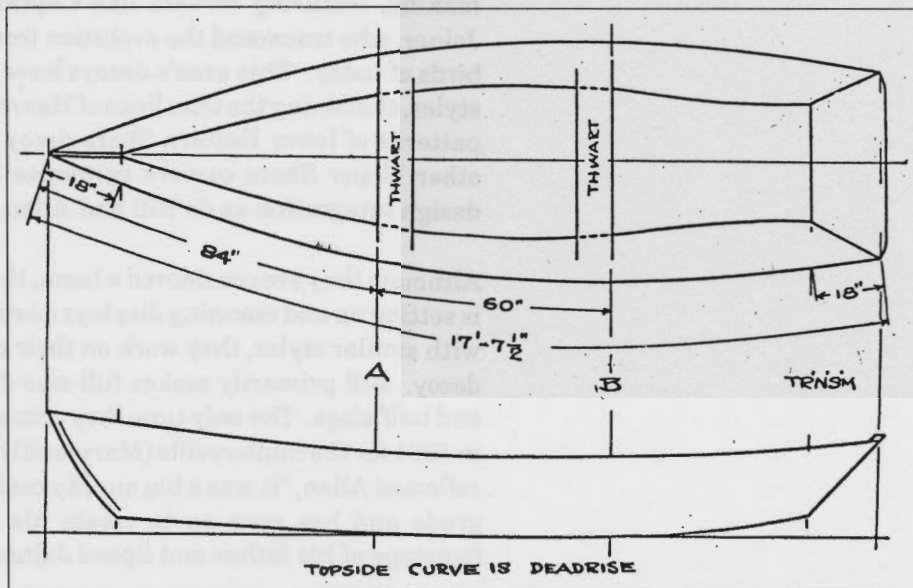
It is puzzling that such "able," husky boats should have been developed in the comparatively sheltered waters of the upper Bay while the only rowboats seen in the lower Bay are low, narrow, straight-sided little flatties, usually crudely built of bull pine. Perhaps it's because the lower Bay is too rough in bad weather to venture into in any sort of rowboat. Similarly, there are no larger boats in the lower Bay as well built, or as seaworthy as the round bottomed, so-called "gilling skiffs" seen in the Upper Bay at Havre de Grace, northeast of Betterton.

The accompanying photographs show an old 18' boat built by the best known of the Havre de Grace boatbuilders, now retired, and a 16' boat built by myself after sketching several successful boats of the type. I put in a straight stem, which was much simpler, but which I now realize detracts somewhat from the boat's appearance. The principal measurements of the larger boat are shown, while there is enough information given on the smaller boat to build from. I have used this smaller boat for two summers as a general utility boat, and even as a dink, as she tows so easily and is so seaworthy.

These boats are usually built of cedar, not with frames and fore and aft bottom planks, and with the bottom nailed crosswise. The framed boats have no chines, although the cross bottomed boats do, and both styles have a keelson. The framed boats have their keelson fastened over the cross floors, and the cross bottomed boats have theirs fastened to the bottom inside, serving as a batten to tie the bottom boards together.

In years past, these boats were often fitted with centerboards and were sailed, and now many have reinforced sterns and are pushed by outboard motors. However, the use of power of any kind on the Flats as part of the actual gunning operations is prohibited by law, this regulation being respected by all.

These boats can be safely recommended without qualification to any one requiring a seaworthy, easily driven rowboat or outboarder.



Plan of the 18 ft. boat. She has a curved stem.

About the Author

H. Osborne Michael (1889-1973), a waterman and a writer for his entire life, lived in Baltimore and spent his summers on Swan Creek (what is now part of Aberdeen Proving Ground) enjoying the Chesapeake Bay. Although he worked for Baltimore Gas and Electric, he found time to write many articles and was published in several different magazines including *The Rudder* and *MotorBoat*. Originally published in the April 25, 1928 issue of *MotorBoat*, we are pleased that the author's heirs have graciously allowed us to reprint this article, for your enjoyment.

Bill and Allan Schauber: 1993 Decoys

By John V. Quarstein

The upper Eastern Shore of Maryland has its own long tradition of decoy making, featuring carvers like Captain Johnny Glen and Charlie "Speed" Joiner, who transcend the evolution from working decoys to the refined "slick" birds of today. This area's decoys have become a mixture of Chesapeake Bay styles, combining the trim lines of Havre de Grace birds with the intricate paint patterns of lower Eastern Shore decoy makers like the Ward brothers. Few other Upper Shore carvers epitomize the final stage of this transition and design integration as do Bill and Allan Schauber of Chestertown.

Although they are considered a team, the most work the Schaubers do together is setting up and manning displays during shows. Beyond being father and son with similar styles, they work on their own, each producing a different type of decoy. Bill primarily makes full-size decoys, while Allan prefers miniatures and half-sizes. The only time they actually have produced decoys together was in 1991 for the Sudlersville (Maryland) Skeet Club. "Dad carved and I painted" reflected Allan, "it was a big quality control test for me." No doubt he made the grade and has gone on to create his own beautiful work following in the footsteps of his father and Speed Joiner.



Both Schaubers credit Speed as being their teacher and mentor. Bill got his start making decoys thanks to Joiner's refusal to sell him a decorative canvasback. He had always been enamored of Speed's work and in 1965 he asked him if he could buy one. Schauber knew that the \$15.00 price was a little much for him, which was confirmed when Charlie told him, "Bill, you can't afford it." When Schauber persisted with the offer of paying Joiner a dollar a week, Charlie told him, "Why don't you make one yourself?"

*Bill Schauber
Photo courtesy of
Karen Marshall*

Decoy Festival Honorary Chairmen

He gave Bill a block of wood and lent him a knife. Once he carved that bird, Speed painted it for him and it remains one of Bill's prized possessions. Schauber began actually producing his own decoys in 1966 as a result of trying to buy some canvasbacks from Speed for gunning. Charlie did not have any available so he took Schauber into his shop and showed him how to make a simple flat-bottomed decoy. Bill and his brother Eddie made 85 cans in 5 days, shooting about 250 birds over those decoys that season. These were the first complete decoys he made and Schauber has gone on to become a leading carver himself, thanks to a little prompting from his friend.

Charlie Joiner remains a major influence on both Schaubers' work. Bill still has the paint patterns that Speed originally gave him and he refers all problems to Joiner, whom he considers "a super star of decoy making." Yet, as "he won't tell me all his secrets," Bill has created his individual style.

Allan Schauber grew up watching his father making decoys and gunning together as often as possible. He made his first decoy when he was 14 as a Christmas present for his mother. Allan realized then that making decoys was a "pretty neat thing to do" and would keep him out of trouble with a part-time job that had freedom. He learned by watching his father and by helping out in his shop, but Allan had to develop his own technique because he is left-handed and his father is right-handed. "Anything I tried to show him was totally backwards" commented Bill "so basically he taught himself." Allan credits both Charlie Joiner and his father as important influences on his work, "Taking tidbits from this one and that one" as he continues to improve upon his own style.

The Schaubers make beautiful birds primarily designed for the mantle rather than the water. Bill Schauber quickly will note that the old makers like Captain Jess Urie made practical birds for everyday use which "had to be tough;" our decoys "are retired when the paint is still wet." He believes that the older generation had it harder because "I only have to catch a customer's eye, they had to fool the ducks to achieve success."

Although their creations are rarely used for gunning, Bill and Allan practice carving techniques, completing all the work themselves relying on hand tools such as draw knives and spoke shaves. A band saw and belt sander are their primary power tools, however, Bill Schauber sometimes utilizes a fore-dome tool in completing a bird's details due to the arthritis in his right thumb.

Carving

Unlike many other carvers, Bill Schauber works primarily with sugar pine rather than bass, cedar, or other harder woods. "Pine is not the best to use because it has so much sap in it, but the softer wood makes it easier for me to carve because of the arthritis pain in my hands. To get around the knots and sap, I use Zinger's Ben White Pigment Shellac. It stops the turpentine from coming through and gives a good finish to paint on." Schauber does not believe his carving is "anything special, it's the paint that sets our work apart."

Bill finds creating decoys in this fashion most rewarding as he can look someone "straight in the eye and say: I made this duck."

Speed Joiner calls Bill "fast," but watching Schauber meticulously work on a block of wood reveals his love of carving. He is more focused than quick, proceeding from one step to another in a very efficient manner. This is the most fascinating part of decoy making to Schauber, "Taking the inside of a block of wood that no one has seen before, play with it awhile and it comes up a duck. It reminds me of how the Indians worked making arrowheads."

Allan has recently built his own shop in his backyard where he diligently pursues his craft. He primarily produces miniatures so that he won't infringe on his father's business which "will help establish my own identity." Allan works as a professional fire-fighter at Aberdeen Proving Ground (one of three Honorary Chairmen - Harry Jobs and Paul Gibson - to have worked at Aberdeen) and often times he will have a dozen or more small blocks with him to whittle in the evening while on duty. He does make some half-size birds, but prefers the smaller sizes because "women like to collect smaller items to put on shelves." Allan believes that one of the biggest differences between his and his father's work is that "if you make a mistake with a miniature, you throw it out. With full size decoys, you don't make mistakes you just make a smaller bird."

Painting

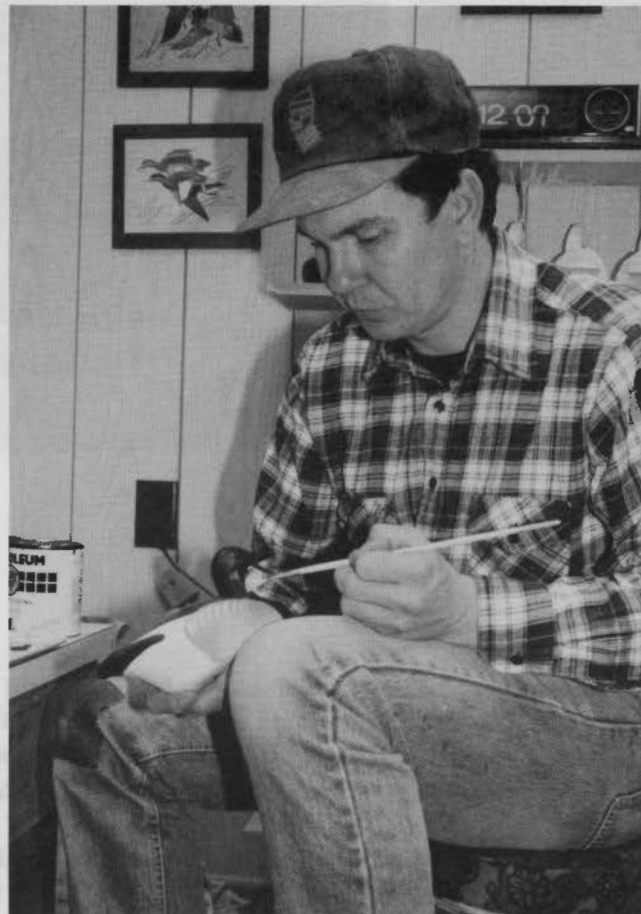
Over 50 years of decoy making combine in the Schaubers' work, which results in a paint style that pleases numerous collectors. "I don't know what makes my paint so different" reflects Bill, "but I guess the secret is the Joiner style. I am always amazed when I watch Charlie paint, I have to fight with it to get the same result." Bill believes that his son Allan, is a better painter than he is, "its his young eyes, you know he has 20/14 vision." Regardless of the reason, most collectors agree that if Allan stays with his painting, he can become a master like Speed Joiner.

One of the most outstanding features of the Schaubers' work is their paint style. They believe that they are simply carrying on the new tradition of decoys begun by the Ward brothers and continued by Speed Joiner. The soft blending of colors from one to another with no abrupt changes gives their decoys a beauty that could almost fly away. "When it walks away, I know I've finally got it right and I'll quit then and there" reflects Bill. Both Schaubers use artist oils on their birds "because you can't get the colors right with anything else" comments Allan. Joiner is their guiding light for their patterns. "I want my birds to resemble his, but not be identical" says Bill as he admits to keeping a collection of Speed's birds in his paint room to inspire him if he "gets into trouble." No bird is finished alike, as they paint from pictures, reflecting upon what they have seen in the wild. Bill concedes that he "never paints the same way twice.

No duck looks exactly alike so neither should my decoys. I paint the way I feel that day because if you don't continually change, you would lose interest and get out of it." Obviously, the Schaubers put a great deal of effort into each bird they produce, the result of which are beautiful decoys that delight collectors with their individuality.

When a collector looks at the Schaubers decoys, they can see many similarities but just as many subtle differences that makes each of their work so desirable. They both make a wide range of species, however, they each like to create their own favorite birds. Bill enjoys making the more unusual birds, such as the Old Squaw or Northern Shoveler, but he probably has made more Wood Ducks than

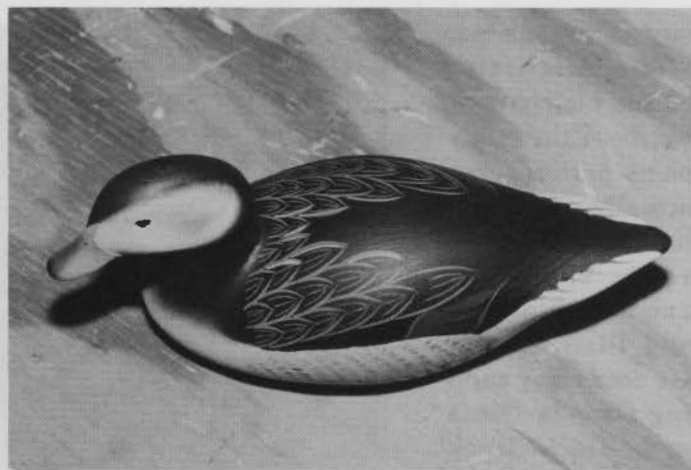
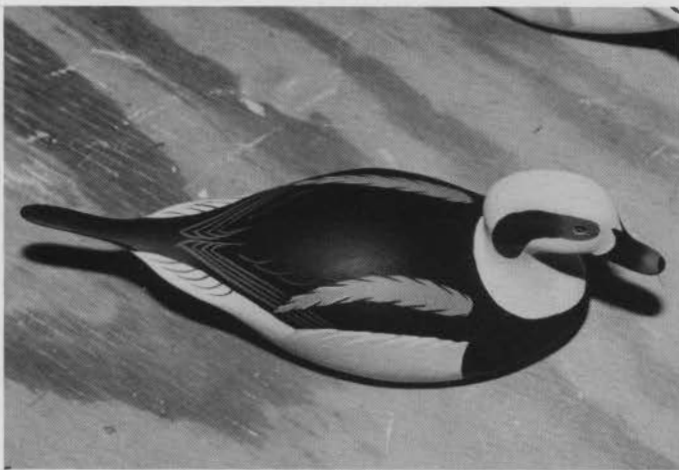
any other species. While Allan also makes his share of woodies ("the gaudy paint patterns are actually easy to do" he admits), his favorite species to paint are Redheads and Black Ducks. He does enjoy carving Canada Goose and Black Duck decoys. Beyond the various species and sizes they individually like to produce, they each have their favorite facet of decoy making. Bill relishes carving, eschewing power tools as much as possible. Allan seems to prefer painting, which he accomplishes in a beautiful manner.



Allan Schaubert.

Like most carvers, the Schaubers enjoy hunting and their gunning experiences help them produce their decoys. Bill notes that "I learned that you always needed to make the birds come to you because a goose would just as soon go out in the middle of a field rather than where you are," Bill recalls. "You got to be smarter than the goose and your decoys play a big part of getting him to you rather than landing anywhere else." The Schaubers are fortunate to be from the Upper Eastern Shore, a popular waterfowling area and their conversations are filled with stories reflecting their love of this sport and the birds themselves. They both wish that the gunning of yesteryear was still available and blame the decline of waterfowl populations on man's greed either through careless development or outlaw gunning.

Bill has never been an outlaw gunner, however, there have been a couple of occasions when he thought "he might get arrested." Once he was hunting on the Chester River during a very foggy day; a morning when "you could hear the geese running on the water and the flutter of their wings overhead" remembered Schaubert. He saw a partial outline of a bird through the fog and shot. Unfortunately, it was a hen canvasback and he was momentarily expecting to be joined by his nephew Ed, who just happened to be a game warden. He quickly buried the duck and once Ed arrived his dogs went crazy over Bill, probably because of the lingering canvasback scent on his clothes. He spent the rest of the morning fearing that those labs would find that bird and his nephew would arrest him. Five years later, Bill told his nephew about the canvasback to which



Old Squaw hen and drake by Allan Schaubert.

Ed commented "I do my job and if I catch you doing wrong I'll get you!" Bill replied that Ed's father had said that his son "wouldn't arrest family" to which Ed said "I'd arrest him too if I had to." Bill felt relieved that those dogs never found that duck, especially since it had tasted so good.

Bill has worked as a hunting guide and one day he had set up a goose rig for two "sports." They asked him if he would do the calling as they were ready to do the shooting. After 5 beautiful tolls they had only one goose, "Probably the worst shots I ever laid eyes on" remembered Schaubert. By mid-morning the geese had stopped flying and Bill inquired if the men wanted lunch. They declined, commenting that they had something more important to do. When he returned from his meal, Bill almost had a heart attack as the "sports" had re-arranged all the decoys in rows like toy soldiers with an ear of corn in front of each. He quickly had them remove the corn while he adjusted the 150 silhouettes because "if the game warden had seen that we would all still be in jail." Determined to be done with the sports, the next flight that came in "I managed to kill three while they were shooting and they never knew I had even shot my gun. Those two guys were the funniest thing I have ever seen."

Probably Bill's most memorable hunt was the last time he gunned for canvasbacks in 1968 at Camp Tockawoc on the Chesapeake Bay. After laying out over 75 decoys, Bill and 5 other men pulled their boat up on shore at low tide and covered it with brush. The men stood behind the boat in a circle and within a few moments 50 canvas appeared. The birds made one pass and then tried to jump into the decoys. Everyone fired and Bill recounted that it "cut a hole in the bunch that a tractor could drive through." 18 birds were killed in a "volley that was like a punt gun." "It was the most amazing shooting that I can remember" reflected Schaubert.

Allan also enjoys gunning, but he believes that shooting is not the only thing to do while in a blind. "I look at the entire hunting process from an artist's

perspective and as someone who simply likes the outdoors," he reflects as he tells how gunning with his father has been an important factor in his life. His most memorable hunt was with his father, enjoying sharing stories about the good and bad times in hunting while getting their limit. Although Allan, like Bill, claims Charlie Joiner as his mentor, it is his father who is his true advisor, teacher, friend, counselor, and critic. They see each other almost everyday and the conversation usually leads to decoys. Although they work on their own, they think and act in many ways as if they were a team, not just carvers with the same last name.

When you talk with the Schaubers you get a genuine sense of the immense pleasure they derive from making decoys. "I enjoy people enjoying my birds" says Allan. Awards do not interest them, they just enjoy carving - learning new techniques, trying something different but always hoping to please their patrons. Both carvers strive to make a decent bird that is not overpriced, in fact, at some auctions, they become embarrassed by the high prices their work garners. However, making decoys is more than a part-time business to these men, it is an important part of their lives as they each endeavor to create that perfect decoy.

Bill Schauber on the Future of Carving

"I don't know what really makes our decoys so special, I guess I must be a good quality control man because if it pleases me then it looks better. I am not sure it always looks like a duck, but that's what art is, you must please yourself and have fun with it." Obviously, both Schaubers relish their work, each continually striving to improve their interpretation of waterfowl. Bill believes that the future is really good for carvers, "The decoy has now become a decorator item and a status symbol. Collectors are finding old decoys hard to find and when they do, they are priced out of reach. This helps create a wider market for contemporary decoy makers as long as you make a good decoy and don't overprice them."

*"101 Years of Decoy Making,"
Bill Schauber with his pair of
Old Squaws, Charlie "Speed"
Joiner with his Pintail,
and Allan Schauber
with his Old Squaw.*





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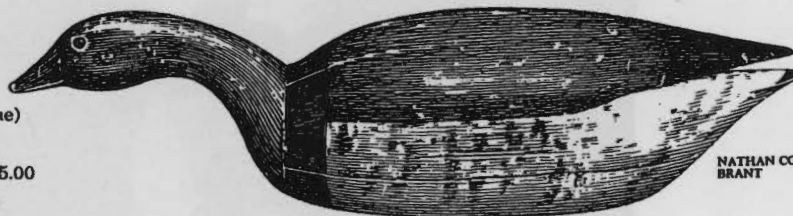
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The Old Squaw

By John V. Quarstein

Bill Schauber, who along with his son Allan, are the 1993 Decoy Festival's Honorary Chairmen. They have selected the unusual Old Squaw as the symbol of their work. Although not a familiar sight on the Susquehanna Flats, Schauber grew to enjoy watching these "neat little birds" while rock fishing on the Chester River each November. He considers them "my bird" as it is a decoy of his own design, "not one I learned from anyone else...and I enjoy making them." Bill utilizes all of his talents in making this beautiful and unique decoy, a bird seldom seen on the Bay or on a collector's shelf.

The Old Squaw (*Clangula hyemalis*) is probably the most numerous of all arctic breeding ducks with a population estimated at over 20 million. It has a circumpolar distribution, breeding from Alaska to Greenland and from Scandinavia to Siberia, migrating as far south as Oregon and the Carolinas.

In Europe and Asia, this duck is commonly referred to as the Long-Tailed Duck, due to the male's long tail streamers. Its American name of Old Squaw derives from the apparent similarity between the bird's summer calls and that of chanting female Indians. Male Old Squaws are very vocal and have an extremely distinguishable call during courtship. The loud, yodeling "ow-ow-owlee-caloo-caloo" is a strange and far-carrying sound which is especially resounding when issued from large flocks. Females utter a variety of low, weak quacking notes.

Old Squaw males are generally boldly patterned, featuring a very dark brown breast throughout the year. The rest of the drake's pattern changes from chiefly white in the winter to primarily blackish-brown in the summer. Females and juveniles have dark upper parts and are white underneath; the hen's head alternating dark smudge colors, growing pale only in autumn. In flight, all Old Squaws show uniformly dark wings.

In summer, Old Squaws can be found mostly on fresh water lakes in tundra areas, where they establish a nest of grass and twigs in hollows or concealed in a bush. Nests are often close together because of the safety offered from predators. Having paired in late winter, the male leaves the

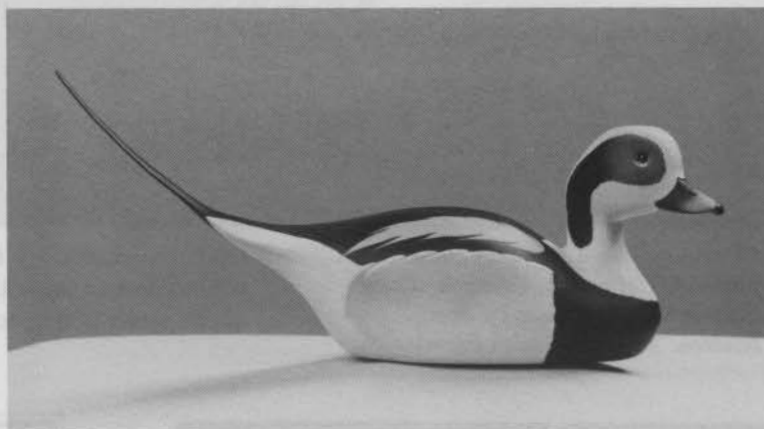


Photo by Ralph Broth

On the paint rack: a row of Bill Schauber's exquisite Old Squaws.





*Old Squaw from the Wild Ducks
Postcard Collection, Voyageur Press,
Stillwater, MN. Photo by Scott
Nielsen. Reprinted with Permission.*

hen shortly after nesting and the female incubates 6-9 pale buff eggs between 24-29 days alone. Upon hatching, the ducklings are quickly led to water and become independent in about 35 days when the hen begins to moult.

During winter, Old Squaws stay mostly far out to sea in large flocks. They are the deepest diving sea duck, having been caught in fishermen's nets as deep as 100 feet. Their dives last for 30 to 60 seconds and both of these factors are probably due to the fact that the Old Squaw is one of the very few diving ducks that travels under water by using its wings rather than its feet. Their food consists of shrimp, small fish, and mollusks.

One of the fastest flying (clocked as high as 73 mph) and deepest diving ducks, the Old Squaw is a beautiful bird which has been re-created by the Schaubers in a pristine fashion. This boldly colored seaduck, with its intriguing tail streamers, is a unique symbol of the work of a special father and son carving team.

PIERCE'S DECOYS

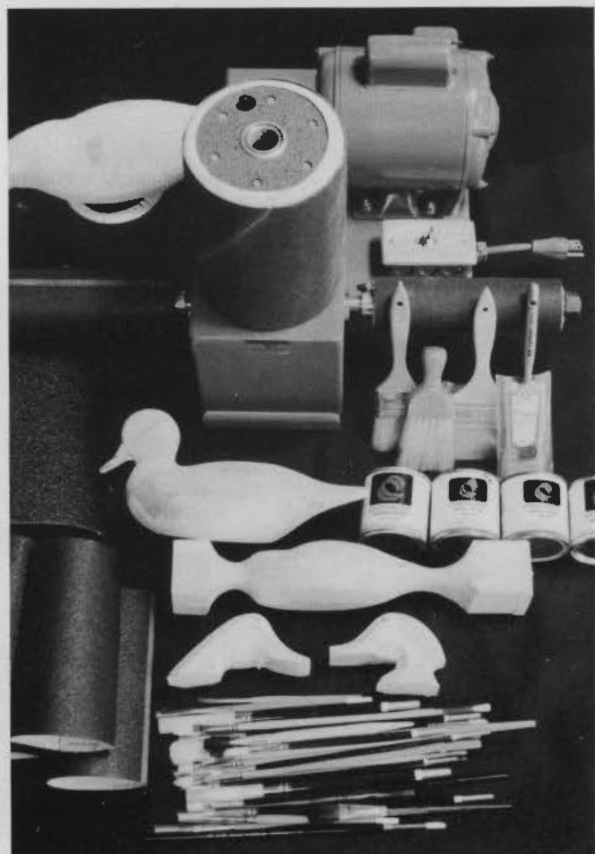
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Visitors From Far Away at the Decoy Museum

Many people are surprised to learn that the Decoy Museum averages visitors from four foreign countries per month! Recently, we have had guests from Australia, Spain, New Zealand, and a theatrical troupe from King Alfred's College, in Winchester, England.

In February, the Decoy Museum had a Museum Assessment Program Survey completed by a professional from the Smithsonian Institution. The survey, conducted through a grant which the museum received, is intended to be a "physical" to identify the strengths and weaknesses of collections management, and to give suggestions on how to improve. This is another step in the process to become accredited by the American Association of Museums and to assist the museum in maintaining professional standards.



Guy Taplin, waterfowl sculptor from Essex, England, and C. John Sullivan, Jr.

2nd Annual Carvers Appreciation Day A Big Success

By Ed Watts, Chair, Carvers Appreciation Day

Over 150 carvers, family members, and friends gathered at the Decoy Museum for a fun evening to celebrate the contributions of the Decoy Museum's volunteer carvers. Bob Biddle of Media, Pennsylvania gave a fascinating and informative presentation. Butch and Mary Carol Larrimore received the 1992 Volunteer Carver of the Year Award, and Mr. and Mrs. Norman Hunter served as auctioneers for the many wonderful items donated by carvers for the auction. Thanks to everyone who made the evening a huge success: the carvers, Bob Biddle, Mr. and Mrs. Hunter, and the Carvers Appreciation Day Committee members.

Special Events Update

Letter To The Editor

My congratulations to you on *The Canvasback* magazine. It was a great upgrading of the newsletter!! I look forward to its' coming each time and enjoy reading it from cover to cover with great interest.

C. Taylor
Menomonee Falls, WI

LOUIS FRISINO

First Artist of the Year
12th Annual Havre de Grace Decoy Festival

The Decoy Museum has named the acclaimed wildlife artist, Louis Frisino as the first Artist of the Year for the 12th Annual Havre de Grace Decoy Festival and has commissioned him to do a special limited edition print, "Gunning the Flats," a vivid image of oldtime canvasback shooting on the Susquehanna Flats, to become available for sale exclusively at the Decoy Museum in late April.

Frisino, a former commercial artist with the News American, graduated with honors from the Maryland Institute of Art, and the Maryland School for the Deaf. Since 1967, he has been producing waterfowl art with unbelievable realism, capturing the essence of various birds on canvas using watercolors, acrylics, and mixed media. Frisino has won numerous waterfowl art contests, more recently the 1986/87 Maryland, 1989 North Carolina, and 1990 West Virginia Duck Stamp Contests. In 1992 his work was selected as one of the top ten Federal Duck Stamp Contest entries.

The Decoy Museum is fortunate to be able to share with its members and patrons this exclusive offering of Mr. Frisino's work. 650 prints will be issued of this remembrance of the old days of duck hunting, with the proceeds benefitting the Decoy Museum's upcoming *Gunning the Flats* exhibit gallery.

The prints will be available in the following quantities and formats, all signed and numbered:

10 Color Remarqued and Medallion	(\$300) SOLD OUT
40 Pencil Remarqued and Medallion	(\$250)
50 Medallion Numbered Prints	(\$150)
550 Numbered and Signed Prints	(\$100)

Order your's today! Hurry before they are all sold out. Contact the museum today to reserve your own "Gunning the Flats" print. Prints should be available by the end of April, 1993. Museum members will receive a 10% discount.

They will be available at the Decoy Festival!



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Education Programs

Contemplating Carving Classes...Looking for Your Suggestions!

The Spring series of carving classes is coming to an end, and plans are being developed to have Youth Summer Carving Classes (Middle and High School age), and to begin several different Fall carving programs including 10-week daytime and evening classes. Additionally, we are looking at Saturday seminars on such topics as: making Goose silhouette decoys, feather burning, painting techniques and tips, and head carving. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please call Ken Moretz at (410) 939-2458(H) or (410) 457-5544(O).

*Ken Blomquist, Carving Class
instructor gives Richard Moretz
some tips on his feather burning.*



Educational Programming Gets a Boost

Three recent acquisitions from the Museum Wish List for the Educational Use Collection are helping with carving demonstrations for student and adult tours. Bryon Bodt donated a worn spoke shave and a dull draw knife for our educational programs, and has created a work table so carvers can come in and work much like they would in their own shop.

*Bryon Bodt with the worktable he
created.*



Weekend Carving Demonstrations at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

May 1,	Charles Bryan	June 13,	Ernie Mills
May 2,	Ernie Mauldin	June 19,	Bob Biddle
May 8,	Annual Decoy Festival	June 20,	Bob Biddle
May 9,	Annual Decoy Festival	June 26,	Steiner Pierce
		June 27,	Nick Birster
May 15,	Capt. Roger Urie	July 3,	Harold Goodman
May 16,	Harold Goodman	July 4,	MUSEUM CLOSED
May 22,	Henry Gonzalez	July 10,	Jean Hiss
May 23,	Jim Pierce	July 11,	Art Boxleitner
May 29,	Ed Watts	July 17,	Ken Clodfelter
May 30,	Steve Lay	July 18,	Ken Clodfelter
		July 24,	Ed Itter
June 5,	David Carroll	July 25,	Charles Jobs
June 6,	Wayne Thayer	July 31,	Linda and Dick Robinson
June 12,	Ernie Mills		



Visit the Decoy Museum this May, June, and July to see demonstrations of contemporary decoy carvers and waterfowl artists. Enjoy this unique opportunity to meet and talk with these wonderful artists.

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Changes to the Board

Recent changes have occurred in the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum's Board of Directors. Two Board members, Ted Miller and Barbara Gilden have resigned. Both Ted and Barbara have given countless hours to the museum and were both very active with many special events. As many of you know, Barb has continued to produce the 1993 Decoy Festival Booklet with zeal and incomparable enthusiasm. Thank you both for all of your hard work on behalf of the museum.

Replacing Ted and Barb are Norman Smith and Dr. John Carriere. Norm Smith of Street, Maryland rejoins the Board of Directors and is anxious to continue his work on behalf of the museum.

Dr. John Carriere of Havre de Grace has recently retired and is pleased to become a member of the Board of Directors. He looks forward to becoming an active member of the Board.

The Canvasback

Authors

Photographs, anecdotes, quotes, stories, etc., about R. Madison Mitchell, Sr. for the Summer 1993 issue.

Education

Old worn carving tools for children to handle during school tours
Lectern
Card table
Folding chairs
Steel storage cabinet
Large easel
Volunteers!

Administration

Office desk
Macintosh LaserWriter or dot matrix printer
Large cork board
Volunteers!

Collections for Gunning the Flats
Hunting clothing: old gunning coat
Old photographs: gunning, decoys, production of decoys,
Old hunting licenses
Decoys
Volunteers!

Operations

Audio (cassette) recording system
PA system
Bubblegum type machines to put corn in for outdoor boardwalk so more ducks and geese will visit us!
Volunteers!

Maintenance

Powerwash
Volunteers!

If you have any of the above and would like to donate an item or service to the museum, please call Karen Marshall at 939-3739.

Museum

Wish

List

Museum Events

- May 5 *Tea on the Flats:* Decoy Museum hosts the Havre de Grace Tourism Commission Afternoon Tea, 2-4 p.m. at the Decoy Museum (2nd floor). Cost is \$5.00, and the proceeds benefit the Decoy Museum and the Tourism Commission
- May 7-9 12th Annual Havre de Grace Decoy Festival
- May 13 *Museum Magic Seminar* continues with *Physical Care of Collections*, pre-registration required, 7:00 p.m., Decoy Museum
- June 10 *Museum Magic Seminar* continues with *Understanding Exhibits*, pre-registration required, 7:00 p.m., Decoy Museum.
- July 17-18 6th Annual Duck Fair, Decoy Museum



Charles and Bob Jobs chat with Delegate Rose Mary Hatem Bonsack at the Decoy Museum's recent Legislative Reception in Annapolis. Photo by Sherry Ramey.

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