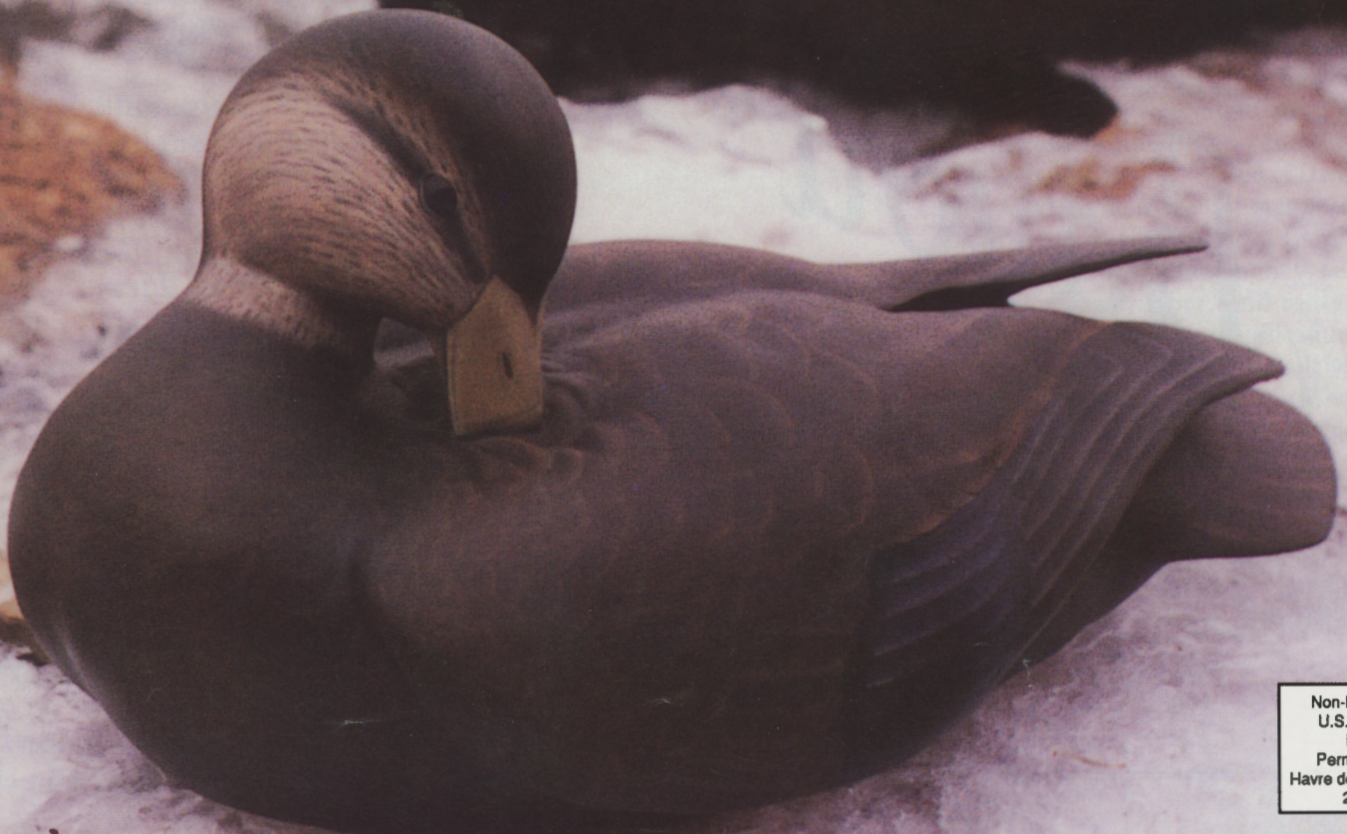


The Canvasback

Winter 1996
Vol. 5, No. 1

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

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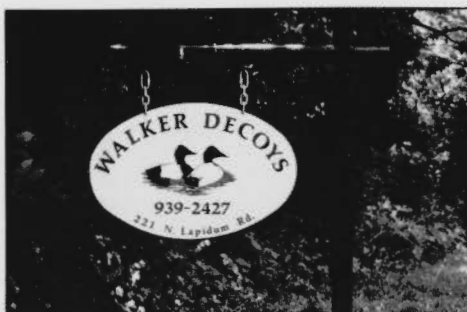
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| Gadwall | \$50 ea |
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| Mallards | \$40 ea |
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| Species | Price |
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| Common Mergansers | \$130pr |
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| Swan -Flat Bottom | \$350ea |
| Swan -With Keel | \$400ea |
| Wood Ducks | \$350pr |
| Canada Goose | \$80 ea |
| Loons | \$60 ea |
| Pigeons | \$35 ea |
| Doves | \$35 ea |

| Oversize | Price |
|-------------|---------|
| Canvasbacks | \$50 ea |
| Red Heads | \$50 ea |
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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

This preening black duck on the shore of the Chesapeake Bay was made by Young Carver of the Year, Michael Affleck. Photo by Mary Jo Moses.

FROM THE EDITOR

This will be an important year for the Decoy Museum. 1996 is the tenth year that the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum has been open, and it is the fifteenth year that the museum has put on the Annual Decoy Festival. In these ten years, the museum has grown externally with improvements and additions to the original building. Internally, the museum has expanded its exhibits and collection. Membership, attendance, and staff have all increased. In the next issue of *The Canvasback*, a photo history of the museum will be included. The Decoy Museum started out crawling but now is walking at a pretty fast pace.

What I think is most remarkable about the Decoy Museum, is the growth that it has been able to make in a relatively short period of time. With all of this growth, the museum has remained a private, non-profit museum which has not had to rely on government support. Fund raisers have been conducted by the membership, Board of Directors, and staff. Most important, all of this progress would not be possible without the time, money, supplies, artifacts, labor, and materials, donated by many individuals and organizations. We thank you for supporting us and being involved these first ten years . . . we look forward to the next ten.

Mary Jo Moses

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1996**

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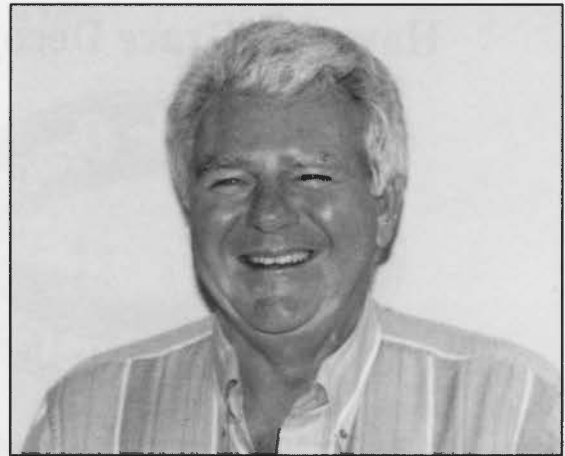
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*From
the
President*



Dear Museum Member,

1996 will be a year that the Decoy Museum takes another giant step towards achieving several major long range goals which were established in 1992. Our successes during the past year, notably improvements to Madison Mitchell's shop and the Gunning the Flats exhibit, have set the stage for upcoming exhibit and facility enhancements.

Perhaps our most important project will be the installation of an elevator. This will not only enable the museum to comply with American Disability Act Standards for handicapped accessibility, but will also enhance access to the museum's upper level. This access will allow more visitors to view the Honorary Chairman exhibits which will be installed in this area. Carvers like Roger Urie, Bob Litzenberg, and Harry Shourds will be featured in these new displays. Part and parcel with these improvements will be the fabrication of Phases 1 and 2 of the "What is a Decoy?" exhibit gallery. This is an exhibit that will place into context the true meaning of decoys, tracing their evolution from working harvesting tools into some of the beautiful "mantle sitting" birds of today. "What is a Decoy?" will be a powerful expression of this changing art form.

All of these improvements, will of course entail greater expenditures. The recent Capital Campaign with the Maritime Museum will provide almost \$25,000 for the elevator project, yet more is required to meet our goals. Your past support has ensured the museum's success to date. I hope that all of our friends will help the museum take its next giant step towards fulfilling our dreams of obtaining American Association of Museums accreditation.

Allen J. Fair
President, Board of Directors

Tax deductible contributions can be made to the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. The museum was incorporated in 1981 as a non-profit organization which exists to document and interpret waterfowl as this art form applies to the social and economic life of the upper Chesapeake Bay region.

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

Membership Application

Membership in the Museum offers you significant benefits not available to the general public. Each member receives four issues of *The Canvasback* magazine free of charge. Additionally, members gain free entry to the museum, notification of Museum events and a 10% discount in the Museum's Gift Shop.

Name: _____

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Decoy Museum Notes

Volunteers of the Year George & Evelyn Scheulen

George and Evelyn Scheulen were presented with the 1995 Volunteers of the Year Award for their years of valuable service to the museum. Not only has this charming couple been regular supporters at special events such as the Decoy Festival and Duck Fair, but they have also consistently aided staff with the large bulk mailings that the museum sends out. It is hard to find volunteers who are so good at selling raffle tickets and who can also remain so cheerful while labeling *The Canvasback*. We are lucky to have the Scheulens and want to thank them for all of the hard work they have done to help the museum grow and prosper.

RIGHT: Evelyn and George accept their award from Museum director Mary Jo Moses. Photo by H. Miles.



Board Member News

The Board of Directors for the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum has undergone several changes. Due to pressure on her schedule, long time member Judy Silverstein opted not to run for another term on the board. She will be sorely missed by the rest of the board have come to rely on her legal expertise and common sense. The museum welcomes new Board Members, Dave Walker and Mike Affleck. Both men are very talented local carvers. Mike is this year's featured young carver, and Dave was featured in 1994. The museum expects great things from both Dave and Mike, and you can count on seeing donations of their fine work in future fund raisers.

Raffle Winners

These are the winners of the Candlelight Tour Sale Raffle that was drawn December 10, 1995.

- 1st prize of the Beretta shotgun
George Deibel, Havre de Grace, MD
- 2nd prize of the fly fishing rod and reel
S. R. Smith, Middletown, DE
- 3rd prize of the Jim Pierce canvasback decoy
John Campbell, Havre de Grace, MD

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6th Annual Carvers Appreciation Day

For this year's Carvers Appreciation Day, Harry Shourds II will be the Museum's guest speaker for the evening. Harry Shourds is the 1996 Honorary Chairman for the Decoy, Wildlife Art, & Sportsmen Festival on May 3, 4, & 5, 1996. A Harry Shourds' brant has been chosen as the Festival bird. The museum is pleased to have this third generation New Jersey carver speak at this evening event. Following Harry Shourds talk, there will be an auction with Norm and Carol Hunter presiding. Various donated decoys will be for auction. This event will be held on February 24, 1996 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on the second floor of the Decoy Museum.

Refreshments will be served.



Guests check out the auction table at Carvers Appreciation Day. Photo by H. Miles.

New Staff Connie Daub

Our newest staff member is Connie Daub. Connie has been living in Havre de Grace, since moving from California, six years ago, where she was in the Air Force reserves. She has an AA in Mass Communications and Public Relations from Harford Community College, as well as undergraduate course work in anthropology from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. Connie is manning the front desk and is working as a museum assistant. Next time you visit, be sure to introduce yourself to Connie.



Connie Daub at the front desk. Photo by M. Moses.

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Book Review

Gun Clubs and Decoys of Back Bay and Currituck Sound

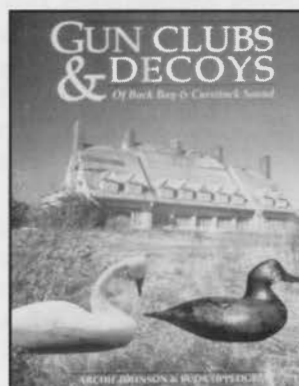
By Archie Johnson and Bud Coppedge

Reviewed by
Bill Smart

Sometimes when I read a book about waterfowling or decoys, I am left with a feeling that there should have been more history, information, or photographs included to complete the work. When I reviewed this particular book, I was not left with such a void. The ten years of research by the authors were thorough and articulated in such a manner that the reader finds great satisfaction. Mr. Johnson is a well-known waterfowl photographer whose work has appeared in numerous local and national publications, waterfowl shows, and museums. Mr. Coppedge is a long-time hunter, decoy carver, and enthusiast of the history of waterfowl hunting. Their joint effort has produced a wonderful publication which weaves photographs, history, facts, and a touch of local tales into four chapters of enjoyable reading.

The book's introduction traces the history of waterfowling from Europe to America and the migration of the gunning club concept from Long Island down the Atlantic Coast. The authors also discuss the various types of gunning clubs, five in all, and provide a map of the Back Bay and Currituck Sound with the locations of some thirty-eight clubs. They estimate that there were at least one hundred clubs in the area running some one hundred miles along the Virginia and North Carolina coasts.

Each chapter is devoted to one of the four major regions; the Virginia Outer Banks, Mainland side of Back Bay, Currituck Outer Banks, and the Currituck Mainland. These chapters include great pictures of the clubs, hunting scenes, the hunters, and the folks who ran the clubs. Photo essays provide us with the feel of the times and an appreciation of the contribution of the ordinary people who supported the clubs as caretakers, guides, boat builders, cooks, and decoy makers. Also included are biographies of the market gunners and decoy makers along with excellent pictures of the unique Virginia and North Carolina decoys.

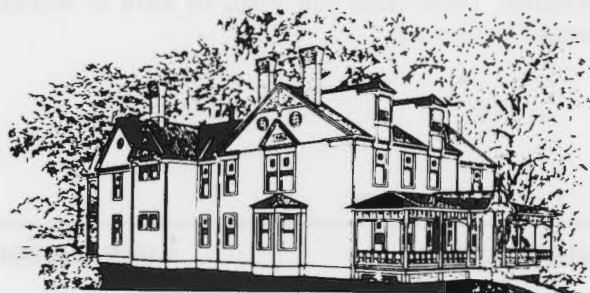


I would recommend, without reservation, the addition of this superb book to your reading, research, or historical libraries as we ride out the remaining Winter.

Gun Clubs and Decoys of Back Bay and Currituck Sound is 224 pages and was published by CurBac Press, Virginia Beach, Virginia in 1991. This book is available at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum for \$40.

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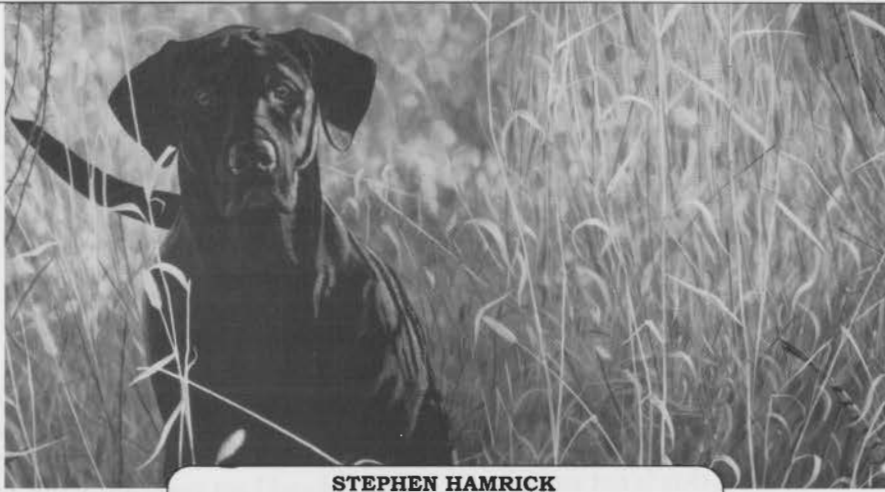
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Few artists have captured the hunting dog's concentration and focused anticipation with such skill as Stephen Hamrick. When asked about his portrayals of this instinctive spirit the artist simply responds, "You have to paint what you know." A lifelong hunter, Mr. Hamrick understands the hunting dog's innate sense of purpose and special relationship to his master. This unique bonding is beautifully portrayed in the artist's newest release whose title, "Always Alert", speaks eloquently for the subject.



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YOUNG CARVER PROFILE

Mike Affleck

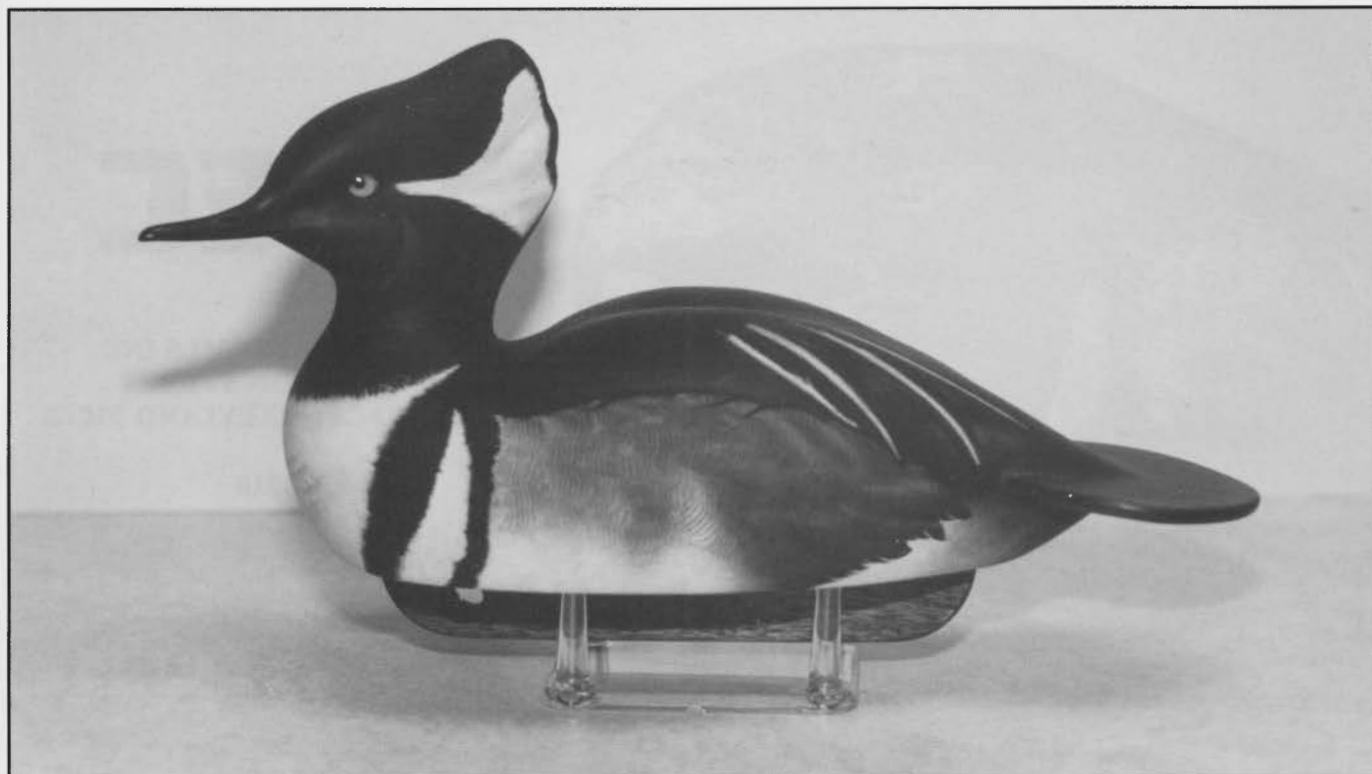
Karla Mattsson

Mike Affleck's life revolves around his great love for hunting. His friends, hobbies, and charities are all derived from that grand passion. Considering Mike was born in Havre de Grace in 1960, this is not surprising. By the time he was fifteen, he was hunting off of Turners Creek in Kent County with Charles Robbins, his eighth grade teacher and author of R. Madison Mitchell: His Life and Decoys. Mr. Robbins and his son educated young Mike on decoy history and aesthetics. "He would drag his Mitchell collection into class and pass them around the room and talk about gunning." Currently Mike hunts locally with Fred Gillotte, another talented young carver, and Scott Titus, champion duck caller.

"We were down at this one farm. It's a good farm, but some parts of it have a really soft bottom. You have to move constantly or you'll be stuck. It's not too bad for someone like me, but Mr. Scott is about a foot shorter and you can fit you and me and Scott in his waders. We were putting the birds out one afternoon, Fred and I were doing all the work. 'Where the hell is Scott at?

Scott, what are you doing?' We turn around and Scott is getting lower and lower in the water. He said, 'Guys, come here. I think I'm stuck. I'm going down.' By the time Fred and I got over to him the water was going into his waders. We pulled him and pulled him and tugging, finally we pulled as hard as we could. All of a sudden the mud went 'Buuurp!' and Mr. Scott comes up out of the mud."

Duck hunting naturally lead Mike to decoy carving. Artistic by nature, Mike decided to carve replacements for his gunning rig when the styrofoam decoys began to deteriorate in 1982. He recalled, "After about a half morning in the water they would start to list and lean, taking on water." Mike taught himself to carve decoys. He studied art at the Maryland Institute of Art for a couple of years, before switching to business. He emulated the classics by the Ward Brothers, Elmer Crowell, Shang Wheeler and Charlie Joiner. Mike showed his first decoy to Jimmy Pierce, who really liked it and could even tell what species it was supposed to be. A few years later Mike began painting with Charlie



Hooded merganser drake by Mike Affleck. Photo by M. Moses.

Bryan, with whom he also hunts.

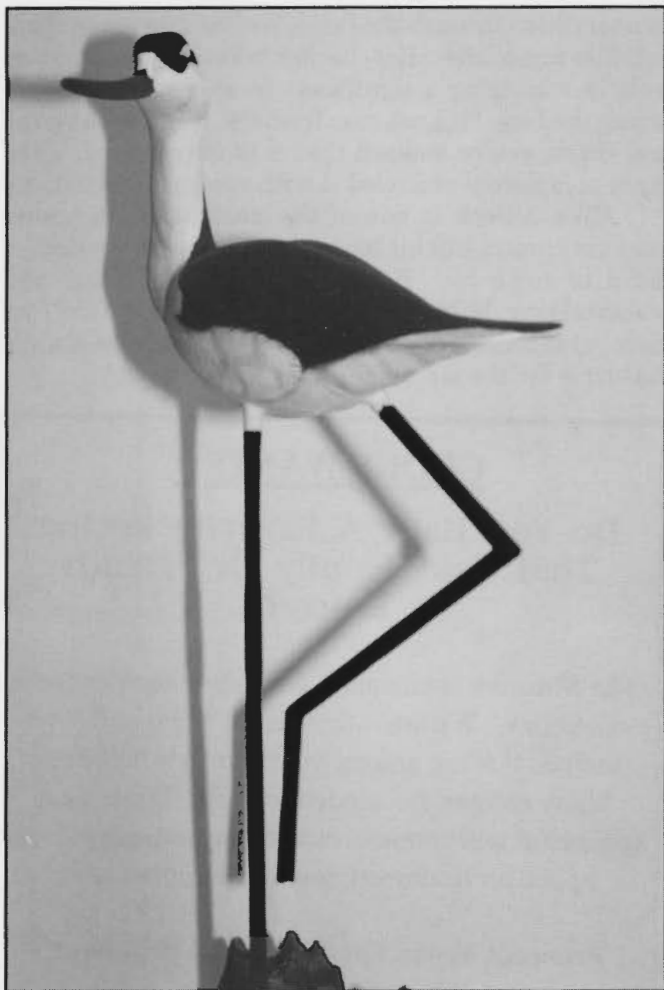
"Charlie Bryan thinks we're kooks because we won't shoot mallards. We had eight of his wood ducks sitting out in our rig and it was the first time he ever shot wood ducks with us. We had ducks all around us like bumble bees and we would not shoot. He said, 'What's the matter with you boys? There's ducks all over. Why don't you shoot 'em?' We're like, 'Nah, they're just stupid mallards. Let them go and wait for the wood ducks to show up.' We finally did get the wood ducks when they came in."

His decoy collection echoes his list of role models. He predominantly collects Charlie Bryan's work, but also picks up the occasional Ward or Joiner bird. A true collector at heart, Mike also specializes in shotguns and fine wines, but doesn't use them together.

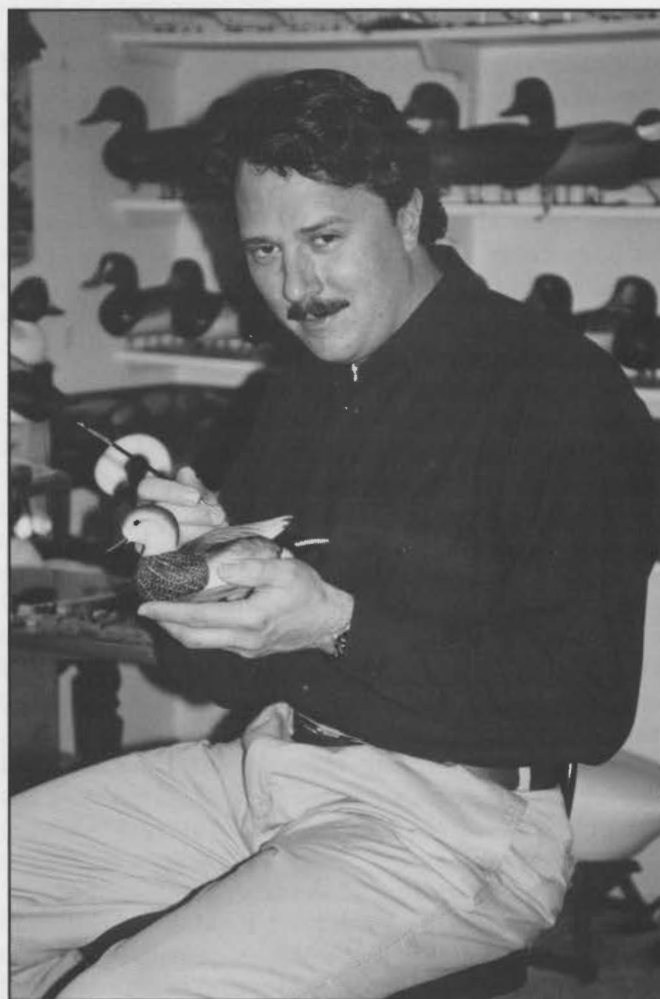
Mike uses a variety of woods and cork for carving his decoys, but uses only a few traditional tools. He does not indulge in feather burning, claiming it is both too time consuming and beyond his skills. He sticks to gunning style decoys and produces a few competition grade pieces every year. He focuses on accurate anatomy



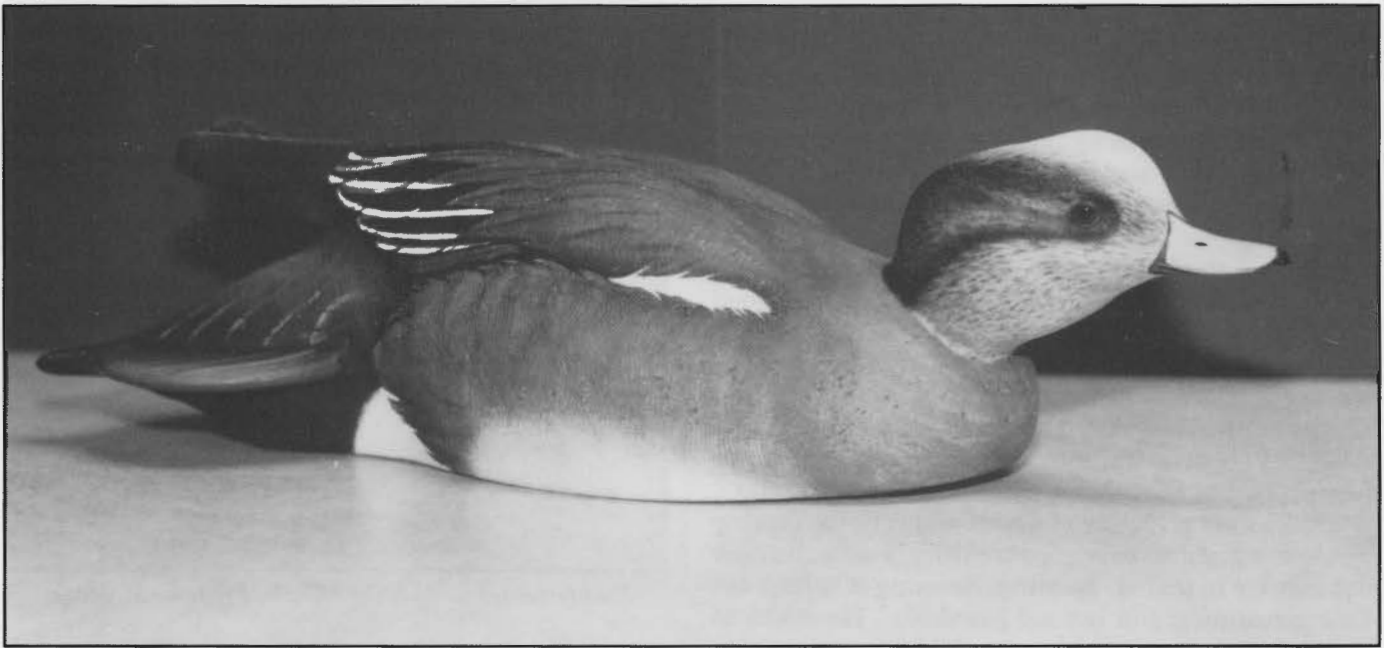
Ruddy-turnstone by Mike Affleck. Photo by M. Moses.



Black-necked stilt by Mike Affleck. Photo by M. Moses.



Michael Affleck pauses while painting. Photo from M. Affleck collection.



Widgeon drake by Mike Affleck. Photo by M. Moses.

and natural poses. Mike wants to capture a sense of movement in the decoy. His art background really shows in the painting. His birds have a delicate subtlety of form and color that few carvers can match, but he is never content with the final product, always seeing where he could have done something a little different with the decoy. His main goal in carving is winning the Ward World Championship shooting rig contest. The first year he entered "I knew I was in trouble because mine were stylized, and theirs were an accurate reproduction of the real bird."

Most of the species he carves are birds found locally, and ones that he likes to hunt. "I don't do any of what I consider trash ducks, the scoters, or oldsquaws or those sorts. If I don't shoot them, I'm not going to carve them." Out of the forty or so decoys that Mike carves a year, only a few widgeons and gadwalls make it into his own rig. Many of the others are donated to local organizations such as the grateful Havre de Grace Decoy Museum, where Mike was recently appointed onto the Board of Directors. He has been assisting veteran board members, Warner Taylor and Ed Watts, with the decoy carving competitions that are held during the Museum's annual festival. This year the competition received International Waterfowl Carving Association sanctioning, which they hope will bring in more carvers from around the country.

The local Ducks Unlimited R. Madison Mitchell chapter also benefits from Mike's generosity. He is currently co-chairman of the steering committee, and will be chairman next year. His donated decoys have raised money for Ducks Unlimited's wetlands conservation programs. He is also an active supporter of local

conservation through the Isaak Walton League on their wildlife committee. His chapter takes a very hands on role in managing a significant fresh water estuarine along the Bay. "It's not user friendly... but once you're out there, you're amazed that it is still around. They have completely encircled it with roads and housing."

Mike Affleck is one of the most talented young carvers around, but his busy schedule makes his decoys hard to come by. Between working, hunting, and volunteering, Mike only produces a fraction of the fine decoys his collectors would like. Fortunately, he always has time for the Decoy Museum fund raisers!

COOKS WANTED

**Do You Have A Favorite Recipe
That Your Family Or Friends
Enjoy?**

The Museum is currently compiling recipes for a cookbook. We are interested in Tried and True recipes that are among your family's favorites.

Many recipes are needed to make this project successful and submissions for any category, from appetizer to dessert, would be appreciated.

**Proceeds From The Cookbook Will Benefit
The Decoy Museum.**

"No Ducks"

Arlene Grace

It is important right from the start to make a clarification. I am not a decoy expert, bird expert, or any other kind of expert. I have, though, noticed in my two and a half years of working at the Decoy Museum a certain evidence. We have a rich waterfowling history well documented at our museum, but what about the present state of waterfowl carving? With the decline of hunting as a necessity, more lightweight alternative materials are used for decoys, and with the limited range of collecting gunning birds, carving has been changing from a utilitarian product to a dramatic life-like art form.

There have been for many years been two schools of thought on waterfowl carving; gunning and decorative, and there is no reason that both cannot be appreciated for their art form. It is important to know that the majority of our visitors outside of diehard collectors, are looking for more decorative birds. Even many carvers who have kept with the traditional gunning birds have branched out to more decorative pieces, simply because the public is wanting this type of work. I doubt that many of the contemporary carvers toss their decoys in the water; more likely they are placed gingerly on a shelf. This is alright. It should not be either/or. After all, if we do not get enjoyment from it, what good is it?

Barb Wachter is a local decorative carver whose career can be described by the phrase, "No ducks." Barb was born in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania and is a retired Colonel in the Army National Guard. He, like many other contemporary carvers began decoy carving as an outgrowth of his love for woodworking. He took up woodworking of crafts and furniture around 1980. He exhibited at many craft shows and also made furniture for his personal use.

Attending the Decoy Museum's Decoy Festival in-



Work in progress. Light areas have been "stoned," the dark areas have been burned in. Photo by A. Grace.



Barb with some of his feathered friends. Photo by A. Grace.

spired him to consider carving birds. He was particularly drawn to the decorative decoys and especially enjoyed the detail work on the birds.

Through mutual friends, he was directed to a local carver, Noble Mentzer, who was instrumental in getting Barb started in carving. The only request that Barb made was, "no ducks." He wanted to try something different from the status quo. Songbirds really attracted him, so he started carving those. Noble taught him various decorative carving techniques. When he felt that he had taught Barb all he could, Noble recommended that he take carving classes.

In 1991, Barb started taking classes with Jan Calvert, a well known local carver and teacher. Jan was very influential in helping Barb create a painting technique. The first bird that Barb made in a carving class, a black-capped chickadee, won a blue ribbon at the Maryland State Fair in 1991.

At about the same time, Barb purchased a kiln to dry wood. Good wood was increasingly hard to find for his furniture and carving projects, and he found that other local carvers also had a difficult time getting wood for their projects. The kiln has the capacity to dry 400 board feet of lumber. This allowed Barb to have a variety of woods on hand, in order to make unique bases and plaques for distinctive presentations of his birds. The kiln was a good investment because he sell enough wood to other carvers to pay for his hobby.

In subsequent years, Barb developed additional skills and learned better techniques to improve his bird creations. He continued to take classes with Jan Calvert for about one and a half years, including those she taught at the Decoy Museum. After she left the area in 1993, he continued to work on his own. However, he was not quite satisfied with his painting and wanted to learn how to use an airbrush. This desire was satisfied when he started taking carving classes with Jeff Moore. Jeff has been teaching since the Fall of 1994 at the Decoy Museum and he specializes in airbrushing.

Under Jeff's tutelage, Barb has developed a new

painting technique which he feels is vastly improving the results of his work. With the traditional decorative painting style, many layers of paint are needed to achieve proper color. Thin layers of "wash" coats are applied; sometimes four or five coats are needed before a color begins to appear. Then, many more coats are applied, perhaps a dozen or more depending on the color that is required. This process is repeated for each color area. With the use of acrylic paints which dry very quickly, it does not allow much time to blend colors together. To get the most natural effects of adjoining colors, specialized brushes are needed and have to be mastered to achieve the desired results. Minute details are very exacting and require a lot of skill.

Barb now primarily uses airbrushing for his carved birds and is very enthusiastic about this new skill. Airbrushing is incredibly fast and can be utilized even by novices after a few lessons. First the base coat is applied by brush. The airbrush is then used to highlight or blend areas of color. Airbrushing is almost required to create the soft feathering effect on birds because it melds colors to perfection and makes quick work of fine detailing. Brushes are used at a minimally, mostly for feather splits and cup feathering. For beginning or frustrated carvers, airbrushing can add to their motivation and confidence because their work will be finished more quickly and the results will be more professional. For the more advanced carvers, airbrushing opens up a whole new world of expression, and allowing them to expand their painting skills.

Barb also employs a technique called "stoning" a bird. For this technique, various stone attachments on a micro-torque tool are used to achieve detail work on the head and breasts. This method gives the bird a textured appearance without burning individual feathers. He also highlights feather groups on the breast and underside areas with lumps and bumps to give a more puffy, natural expression. This technique is particularly effective with, for example, a bright, solid-colored



Barb's black-capped chickadee that won first place at the 1991 Maryland State Fair. Photo by A. Grace.



A male and female cardinal, note the lumpy chests and undersides. Photo by A. Grace.

bird like a gold finch or cardinal. He does detail work on the primary and secondary feathers, as well as the tail feathers. Airbrushing lends itself well to covering these large areas, highlighting the 'lumps and bumps' and enhancing the finer aspects of burning.

Barb prefers tupelo wood in making his songbirds because it softens the effect of the finished work and conforms better to his "stoning" technique.

Barb concedes that the hardest part of carving is the head, especially the beak. Songbirds are so different, even within a species, that subtle distinctions can be a considerable challenge. All beak treatments appear to attach differently to the face. This is where good pictures and bird studies are essential.

To keep things fresh, Barb likes to keep two or three projects going at once rotating his time between the various works in process. Due to the small size of most songbirds, almost all the detail work requires a magnifier. Barb prefers a head visor type magnifier, although he does employ a large, lighted, clamp-on type which attaches to his work desk.

In his future projects, Barb will be concentrating on birds of prey and flying birds. Creating the illusion of flight in wood is one of his goals. Inspired from a magazine cover, he has made one of an eastern bluebird, and has generously donated this impressive work to our museum. He has also finished a few birds of prey; a kestrel was on display at the museum that has won several prizes in recent competitions. He is especially looking forward to carving an eagle. In addition, Barb is an active museum member, one of the Weekend Carvers for the museum, a diligent student in museum carving classes and an exhibitor at museum sponsored shows. Some of his suggestions have initiated improvements in our carving classes which I am sure will be appreciated by present and future students. With carvers like Barb Wachter, we will be able to keep the carving tradition, old and new, duck and non-duck, alive and well in Havre de Grace.



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The Waterfowl Paradise of Chincoteague

John Quarstein

It was my first trip back to Chincoteague since 1961, when I went there with my grandfather in search of some Tom's Cove oysters. My memories of that childhood excursion were rapidly heightened as I drove across the long causeway, over endless marshes dissected by creeks and guts called Mosquito or Black Narrows, and then into the town of Chincoteague itself. Pleasant as these thoughts were, I was soon to realize that I was in a waterfowl paradise when I crossed the "new" bridge onto Assateague Island, home to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and thousands of wildfowl.

When I neared the beach which has made Chincoteague so popular, I quickly learned what the refuge was all about. I had the marvelous opportunity to look out across a sound filled with over fifty mute swans feeding, preening, and coddling their cygnets. A fat cormorant dove for its meal and then rambled across the water to find another feeding spot. This scene's importance was made very clear when I then gazed towards Tom's Cove where a solitary old blind sat crumbling into the waves. The view was enthralling and reflective of Chincoteague's heritage and future.

Nationally known for its ponies thanks to Marguerite Henry's book, *Misty of Chincoteague* and the annual pony penning, the name Chincoteague has two meanings: the refuge and the island community. The Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge is actually on the beautiful barrier island of Assateague. Its key



Carver and outlaw gunner, Cork McGee outside his shop, Chincoteague, Virginia. Photo by J. Quarstein.

location within the Atlantic Flyway makes it an important stopping area for dozens of waterfowl species during the spring and fall migration seasons. The refuge was established in 1943 under the authority of the Migratory Conservation Act, because of the recognition given to southern Assateague Island's value as an important habitat for wintering greater snow geese. Purchased through funds generated by the sale of Duck Stamps, the refuge contains 13,682 acres of beach dune, marsh and forest habitats. The refuge also comprises several barrier islands other than Assateague, including the Morris Island group, Assawoman, Metampkin, Cedar Islands, and Wildcat Marsh on Chincoteague. It is one of 500 refuges maintained by the National Wildlife System.

Effective wetland management has greatly broadened the refuge's importance for migratory wildfowl. Canada geese, gadwall, black duck, northern shoveler, ruddy duck, and a host of other species thrive on over 2,000 acres of fresh and brackish water impoundments located throughout the refuge. These impoundments are also frequented by numerous other birds such as the glossy ibis, black-crowned night heron and snowy egret, as well as various rail species. There are several rookeries on different marsh islands in Chincoteague Bay and the refuge management plan fosters the nesting of many endangered wildfowl.



Carver and outlaw gunner, Delbert 'Cigar' Daisey in his shop, Chincoteague, Virginia. Photo by J. Quarstein.

The Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge has served a significant role in the protection of endangered species. A peregrine falcon hacking tower was erected in 1980 and has supported a pair of peregrines every year since 1982. Hundreds of these birds use the refuge to feed and rest during their migration. Several other significant endangered species utilize the refuge including bald eagles.

The refuge is more than just an inviolate bird sanctuary. It is also home to an abundance of flora and fauna including various wildlife species ranging from the endangered Delmarva fox squirrel to the famous Chincoteague ponies. It also serves a major environmental function by preserving the barrier island of Assateague which, in turn, helps protect the mainland from storm waves and fosters the formation of marshes and estuaries along Chincoteague Bay.

This tremendous resource is managed and interpreted by the refuge's staff of twenty-three full-time employees and over forty volunteers. Environmental education programs are presented to a wide variety of age groups providing in depth hands-on learning activities which stress conservation and other themes. Interpretative trails and walks have been designed to provide structured movement through woodlands, dunes and marsh, enabling visitors to learn and appreciate this barrier island's natural treasures.

Public use of the refuge was limited until 1963 when a bridge connecting Chincoteague with Assateague was constructed. The bridge opened the door to the seashore world of natural treasures found on Assateague to 1.4 million people each year. Beach usage for swimming, surf fishing and camping is maintained by the National Park Service, while naturalist activities such as birding are managed by the National Wildlife Service.

The bridge also had a tremendous impact on the island community of Chincoteague, transforming it from a quaint village into one of the major tourist destinations on the Eastern Shore. The thirty-seven mile long barrier island of Assateague has always had a profound influence on the smaller island. During the 18th century it provided shipwrecks for salvage, while in the 20th century it brings in the tourists which has prompted a boom in shops, restaurants, and hotels. Yet the town still retains much of its flavor from its days as an oystering center. Old shell roads and the town's architectural features are keys to the wealth gleaned from the oyster beds.

Chincoteague is also famous for its decoy making heritage, based on the sport and outlaw gunning that featured so prominently in the island's past. Market hunting was an important livelihood for Chincoteague villagers. Ducking was "just like oystering," decoy maker and former outlaw gunner Delbert "Cigar" Daisey

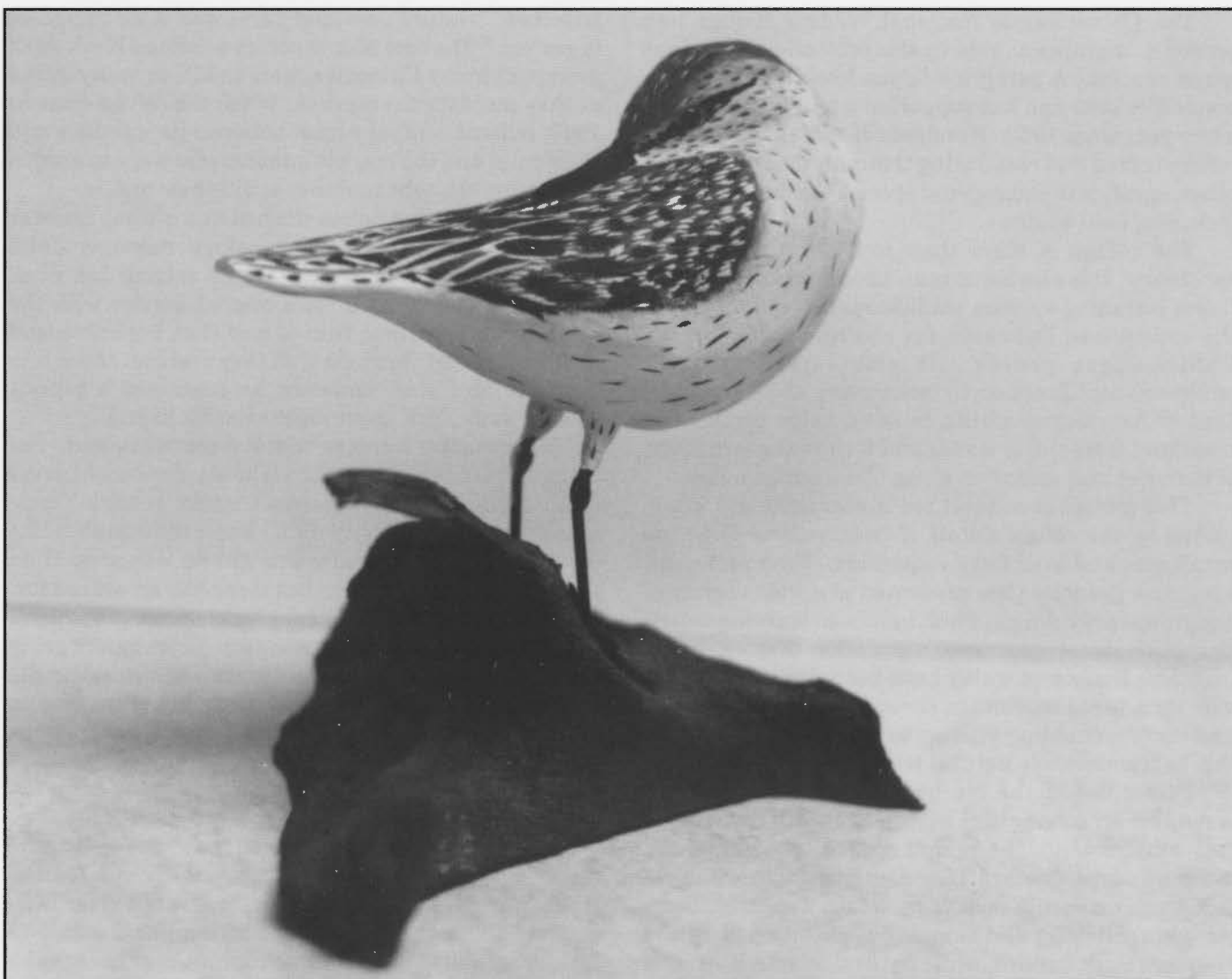
reflected. "Nature provided ducks and it was up to us to get 'em." The lure of as much as a dollar a black duck prompted many Chincoteaguers to kill as many ducks as they could for the market. When the refuge came in 1943, instant conflict arose between its wardens and their rules and the market hunters who were so used to harvesting the vast marshes to fill their orders.

These opposing forces clashed in a vicious manner one evening in 1946 when refuge manager John Burkalew surprised Walter Clark setting his duck traps. Clark, just back from combat service with the Marines on Iwo Jima, turned and shot Burkalew and left him for dead. Burkalew's heavy overcoat saved him from the bird shot, however, he sustained a serious wound, and Clark spent eight months in jail.

Most outlaw hunters never resorted to such violence, but many still boast that the wardens could never catch them. "They just weren't smart enough," commented Bob Booth, "they didn't know the marshes like we did." Cigar Daisey also thought he was wiser than the wardens, not smarter, but more like an old red fox. He would often wait in honeysuckle near a warden's house to make sure the warden was home before going hunting. Sometimes he would just show himself in the other end of the marsh away from his traps just to confuse the wardens. "The tougher the law got, the easier it was to sell 'em because your competition dropped out," Cigar noted, "and with as many as eleven or so wardens chasing you, it made it kind of fun."

"Most people got caught when they were selling the ducks," he recalled, "you had to watch out for the travelling salesmen." Fancy clothes were a clear indicator to Cigar that "he's like a damn game warden." Daisey actually earned his nickname Cigar because he accidentally dropped a few of his King Edward cigars next to a refuge banding trap he robbed one night. The wardens did catch up to Cigar one day, "they had a floatplane which landed nearby while I was fixin' traps." Daisey temporarily escaped by turning tight circles in his boat and, as Cigar recounted, "the plane couldn't turn that sharp so it flipped over and stood on its nose in the mud." The wardens later arrested him at the town dock, but Cigar slyly noted that, "it cost me a \$75 fine and them a broken airplane."

The mainstays of market hunting were night gunning and duck trapping. By the 1940's, gunning was limited to the pre-dawn and post-sunset minutes when there was just enough light to silhouette the ducks against the sky while the hunter was clothed in darkness hidden in the marsh grass. "We'd shoot 'em until you couldn't see 'em anymore but we'd keep firing at the sound of their wings beating the air," recalled Cigar Daisey. Gunners would typically use only a few decoys but also some corn "to sweeten up the place." According to Booth who would gun in the morning before school,



Sandpiper by Cork McGee. Photo by M. Moses.

"you could cut holes in bunches of black ducks just by laying down in the marsh and waiting for the ducks to come get their breakfast." Daisey even took ducks with him to school and sold them to his teachers.

Duck trapping was the most popular method of supplying the market demand. Cigar Daisey preferred trapping over shooting because "you didn't make any noise, and you didn't disturb the ducks. You could go in there and trap a couple hundred and tomorrow morning they'd be right back again." Daisey started trapping ducks in 1939 and stopped around 1960, but during those years he estimates that he caught over 35,000 birds. Trapping ducks was the best method of supplying the market, "you got a pretty duck to sell, no broken wings or bruises from shot." "When you caught 'em live you could always let 'em loose if a warden came by, but I didn't have to do that and I'd hated like hell to turn any loose."

Outlaw hunting was over by the early 1960's, just as the refuge began attracting more and more people. Old outlaw gunners like Cigar Daisey and Cork McGee then turned their hands to making decoys. They continued a tradition that began earlier in the century by noteworthy carvers like Ira Hudson, Dave "Umbrella" Watson, Miles Hancock, and Doug and Charles Jester. Ira Hudson is perhaps the finest and most prolific of past Chincoteague area carvers. He set the standard by which many other makers are now measured. Hudson's decoys were made primarily of white cedar or pine, although occasionally other woods were used and were carved either solid or hollow bodied. He produced several different versions of each species he made which typifies his versatility and artistic vision. Ira Hudson was also a talented boat builder, yet to the detailed, carved features found on his decoys are indeed true tributes to his woodworking skills. Ira Hudson



Bluebill by Arthur Leonard. Photo by M. Moses.

produced ever changing decoys enhanced by a curved neck, raised wing or unusual posture; he simply refused duplication despite making over 25,000 decoys. Terrapin rancher Miles Hancock established another vein of the Chincoteague style, a simpler carving and painting style which has its own enduring qualities. All of these early carvers created beautiful working decoys and wonderfully fresh miniatures which marvel collectors and provide an artistic spirit for today's Chincoteague decoy makers.

There are well over thirty decoy makers presently practicing their carving and painting skills in the Chincoteague area, creating a wide range of decoy styles and sizes. Carver Reggie Birch believes that there never has been a true Chincoteague style, each maker just produces their own vision of a bird. "That's what makes them so unique and special," he reflected. This individualistic approach is reinforced, in Bob Booth's opinion, by the fact that "most of these decoys are truly hand made, generally the only power tools that we used are a bandsaw and a foredom tool for sanding and a few details. I've only gone to using power because I'm old and arthritic."

The decoys that are being made around Chincoteague today offer a wide range of styles. Song birds and other wildfowl decoratives are created with

great beauty by carvers like Greg Daisey, while traditional carvers like Cork McGee have transformed their skills at making functional working stools into pristine carvings of beautiful shorebirds. The list goes on filled with names like Jimmy Bowden, Delmas Taylor, Charles Fish, and Arthur Leonard, to name just a few. Jimmy Bowden chops out pintails that are somewhat reminiscent of Miles Hancock, and Bob Booth enjoys replicating Hudson's yellowlegs and other classic birds, while



Decorative carver, Greg Daisey. Chincoteague, Maryland. Photo by J. Quarstein.

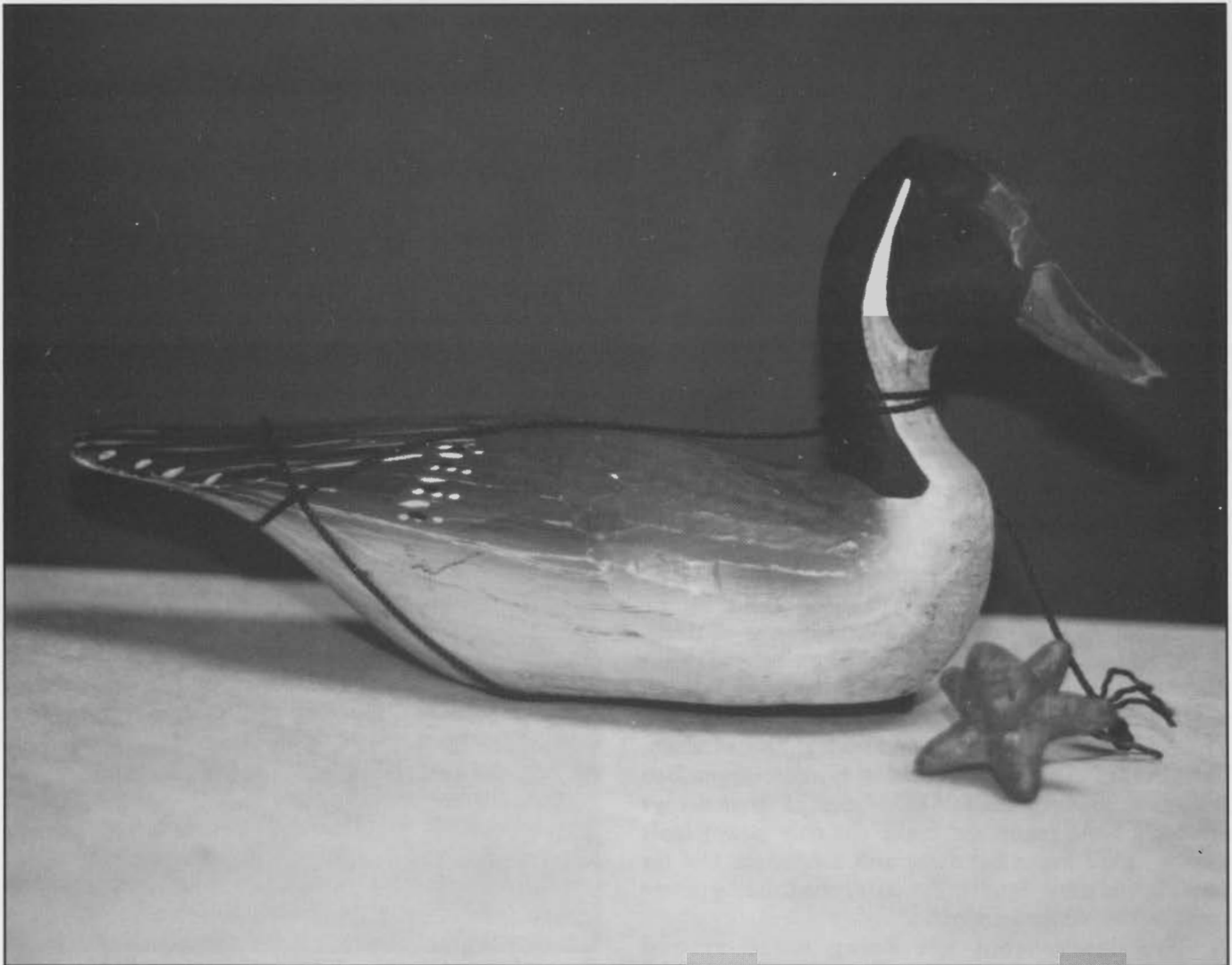
Reggie Birch fuses the artistic meaning and flavor of some classic designs in his creations.

Cigar Daisey is the dean of the modern Chincoteague carving scene. When you sit in his shop on Piney Island overlooking the marshes along Assateague Channel and watch him intently work on another decoy, you can feel a wondrous combination of the artistic, hunting, and wildfowl traditions that make Chincoteague such a special place.

The days are gone when there were so many birds and oysters around Chincoteague that it seemed wrong not to harvest them to the fullest. The wholesale slaughter of wildfowl by outlaw gunners and the decline of habitat brought the need for the refuge which has in turn, changed the entire Chincoteague community. The tourists flocking to the beaches of Assateague, or to see the ponies and piping plovers, have brought a tremendous economic boom during the last thirty years. It has also fostered the continuation of Chincoteague's

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is indebted to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge for its loan of over 100 decoys, shotguns and gunning accoutrements for the museum's "What is a Decoy?" and "Gunning the Flats" exhibits. This relationship has resulted in the Decoy Museum providing technical assistance to enhance the refuge's management of its extensive decoy, firearm and boat collection.

The refuge's collection comprises well over 1,000 unique artifacts, most of which were donated in the late 1960's by D. Harry Walsh. Other donors include William H. Purnell, Jr., William Mackey, Jr., and Vernon Berg. Many confiscated items were transferred to the refuge from the Department of the Interior. The refuge hopes one day to include a portion of this collection in an interpretative center; however, until then, the collections management project being supported by the Decoy Museum will insure that this marvelous collection is preserved and documented.



Pintail by Jimmy Bowden. Photo by M. Moses.



Yellowlegs by Bob Booth.

decoy traditions, a heritage begun by Ira Hudson, Doug Jester, and Umbrella Watson and practiced today in the same independent fashion by carvers like Cigar Daisey and so many others.

It is somewhat odd to think about the outlaw gunners, deep in the marsh, setting their traps in bygone years, when you hear decorative decoy carver and gunning guide, Greg Daisey's reflections about a recent hunt on a gut right off the refuge. On a foggy morning Greg had the men all nicely situated in a cedar

blind, but these sports put their guns down and spent the whole morning just watching ponies feed in a nearby marsh. Ducks were pitching into the decoys, but the hunters refused to fire, afraid they would scare the horses. This is what Chincoteague is all about: the beauty of wildfowl, fauna and animals that live on this barrier island now in harmony with the individualistic community spirit. History, nature, people and art combine to make Chincoteague a seashore wonderland.

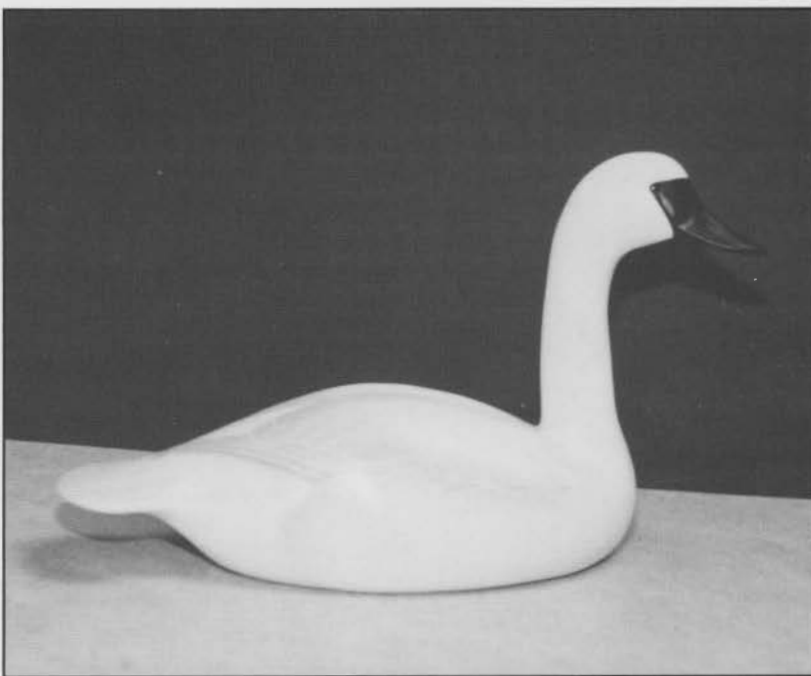
R. Madison Mitchell

Endowment Third Annual Dinner

The R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Fund will host its Third Annual Dinner on March 15, 1996, at the Bayou Restaurant on Route 40 in Havre de Grace. The evening will begin with cocktails at 6:00 pm, followed by dinner at 7:00 pm.

The guest speaker will be Charles Lee Robbins, author of R. Madison Mitchell. His Life and Decoys. Chuck will present an interesting slide lecture "Making Decoys - The Mitchell Way" which will be a step-by-step study of Madison's decoy carving techniques.

Following the lecture, the endowment will offer a special sale of one-of-a-kind decoys produced by two of Madison's students and past Decoy Festival Honorary Chairmen Charlie "Speed" Joiner and Jimmy Pierce. Charlie has made twenty-five half-size swan miniatures which will be available for \$500.00 each. Jimmy will provide twenty-five half-size black duck miniatures and they will be sold for \$200.00 apiece. Five of Jimmy's black ducks are unusual sleepers. These birds will only be available to dinner attendees and each decoy will have a certificate of authenticity. Both of these carvers have donated their work to help the endowment continue its rapid growth. "It needs to keep growing," Jimmy Pierce commented, "The endowment is a great thing for the Decoy Museum and the more it grows, the better the museum will be."



Swan by Charlie Joiner. Photo by M. Moses.

In less than three years of existence, the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Fund has raised and invested over \$42,000 in order to provide the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum with a permanent, yearly income for the preservation and interpretation of America's decoy making heritage. The endowment is a tribute to Madison's teaching and decoy making skills, as well as his wish to see the Decoy Museum become the best museum of its kind. Please join us on March 15 to hear Chuck Robbins talk, to share friendship, and perhaps to acquire a unique decoy or two made by two of Madison Mitchell's finest students.

Tickets will be available at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum for \$25.00 or can be obtained by contacting Endowment Board Member Madelyn Shank at (410) 939-3947.

Shorebirds of Chincoteague: Outlaws and the Piping Plover

John V. Quarstein

Many different types of wildfowl travel to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge each year, but some of the most intriguing and threatened are shorebirds. Assateague Island is a perfect stopover for these interesting birds who use this barrier island for resting, breeding, nesting, and feeding during their long migrations. Shorebirds are unique in their migratory patterns: At a few irreplaceable locations along their routes they concentrate in large numbers, sometimes the entire population of a species.

Stopover sites like Assateague are extremely important. Several shorebird species have declined due to the loss of shoreline habitat. Shorebirds simply must have certain feeding and resting places to find food to fuel their extraordinary migrations. Many shorebirds undertake migrations up to 20,000 miles. Their flights

may last seventy hours, sometimes passing over an entire ocean. Assateague's well preserved long shoreline makes it a perfect shorebird habitat which has made the refuge one of the nation's top five shorebird migration staging areas east of the Rocky Mountains and has been designated an International Reserve by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network.

Assateague has not always been such a safe haven for shorebirds. The Chincoteague area and Virginia's barrier islands were a mecca for hunters seeking these birds both for table and market. Shorebirds decoyed easily, often to clam shells or lumps of mud on sticks as well as to more elaborate tin or wooden decoys. Often being killed hundreds at a time, several species nearly became extinct until protected by Federal law in 1918. Yet shorebirds remained a popular target for



Carver and outlaw gunner, Bob Booth. Photo by J. Quarstein.



Plover by Reggie Birch. Photo by M. Moses.

Chincoteague hunters through the 1930's, many of these birds being illegally shipped off to markets open at the Church Street freight dock. The hotels in Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore were clamoring for more birds than hunters could kill.

Present day decoy maker and former outlaw gunner Bob Booth of Modest Town, Virginia, vividly remembers his father's shorebird hunting. Booth's father believed that a shotgun "wasn't very selective, especially when a couple of hundred birds pitch into you.

You killed what you needed." He gunned shorebirds constantly year round. Using an eight gauge double barrel muzzleloader, he would cross the marsh and dunes onto Assateague's beach and set out his stool of thirty to thirty-five decoys. According to Booth, these were simple, very functional Cobb and Hudson style models with "nails 'banged' through the head" for bills. The older Booth ingeniously transported all his decoys on foot by boring a hole through their side and "carried'em strung around his waist, laced out so not to break off

any bills." When he arrived at his desired location, he used any stick he could find to lay out his decoys on the mud flats. Using his own voice to call the birds to his rig, Booth would sit and wait until they "thickened up real good." His double barrel would then "do its work in two swinging blasts" on the separate bunches of birds which were surrounding the decoys. Once the smoke had cleared, Booth would add some of the dead birds to his stool by propping them up with sticks. After killing all he could carry in two burlap potato bags, he then returned home. Some of the birds would feed the Booth family that evening and the others would be shipped off the next day to the big city restaurants.

Even though today most shorebirds are protected from outlaw hunters like Booth, they face an even greater threat of devastating habitat losses. Perhaps the greatest example of shorebird species decline is that of the piping plover which is a shorebird that is striving to survive, thanks, in part, to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

The piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) is similar to both the semipalmated plover and the smaller snowy plover. Yet with a closer look, especially during breeding season, the piping plover's distinctive black band across its forehead and breast stands out. Its bill changes from an orange base with black tip to solid black during the winter when this bird's black bands disappear. This six to eight-inch bird has gray upper parts which contrast with its white under parts, forehead and throat. Piping plovers have dull orange feet and legs, yet one constant, distinguishing feature is its dark eyes that stand out from its pale face.

These plovers gained their name from their sweet, yet plaintive, "peep" or "peep-lo" whistle. Piping plovers move about sandy beaches, sand bars and mud flats in compact groups. They run across the sand in short bursts, stopping to look around with a quick motion then bobbing their heads to peck the soil for a meal of either worms, crustaceans, small mollusks, insects, and fly larvae. They take to flight somewhat reluctantly; they are swift, yet erratic, flyers. When in flight, the piping plover's white rump and wing bars are a very distinctive feature helping to identify this bird that is often difficult to observe when aligned against a sandy background.

Piping plovers winter along the Atlantic coast from North Carolina south and also on the Gulf Coast. They breed along the Atlantic coast south to Virginia and from Central Canada to the Great Lakes region. These plovers make their pebble and shell-lined nests along indentations in the sand and produce four finely spotted grayish brown eggs. Incubation takes thirty days and the young are usually fledged within thirty-five days. Piping plovers nest in small colonies and are very protective of their territory. Intruders are warned with

a sharp "piping" call. Even though they are naturally well camouflaged, adults will often feign an injury to draw attention away from the nest.

The piping plover is a threatened species and has been protected since January 1986 under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. The rapid expansion of Atlantic coast summer resorts has destroyed many of this plover's nesting sites which has made Chincoteague Refuge especially important to its survival. Chincoteague's Tom's Cove Hook has become home to one of the largest nesting populations of piping plovers on the Atlantic coast. In 1995, twenty-eight nesting pairs produced twenty-two chicks which fledged. This number has varied in the past ten years from a low of six nesting pairs in 1986 to a high of thirty-eight pairs in 1991. The lower portion of the Hook is now closed to all public use during the nesting season and the creation of nest enclosures has eliminated egg predation by foxes and fishcrows. Once the nesting season is complete, the plovers gather in groups on these undisturbed beaches before beginning their southward migration.

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge is the only site between Forsythe, New Jersey, and Pea Island, North Carolina, where there is extensive shorebird resting areas at high tide. The natural broad sandy beaches of Assateague coupled with the refuge's establishment of back dune impoundments have made Chincoteague home to large concentrations of shorebirds. The piping plover is only one of numerous shorebird species including curlews, godwits, oyster catchers, sandpipers, and willets that still have a mid-Atlantic summer home thanks to the refuge's preservation of Tom's Cove Hook at the southern end of Assateague Island.

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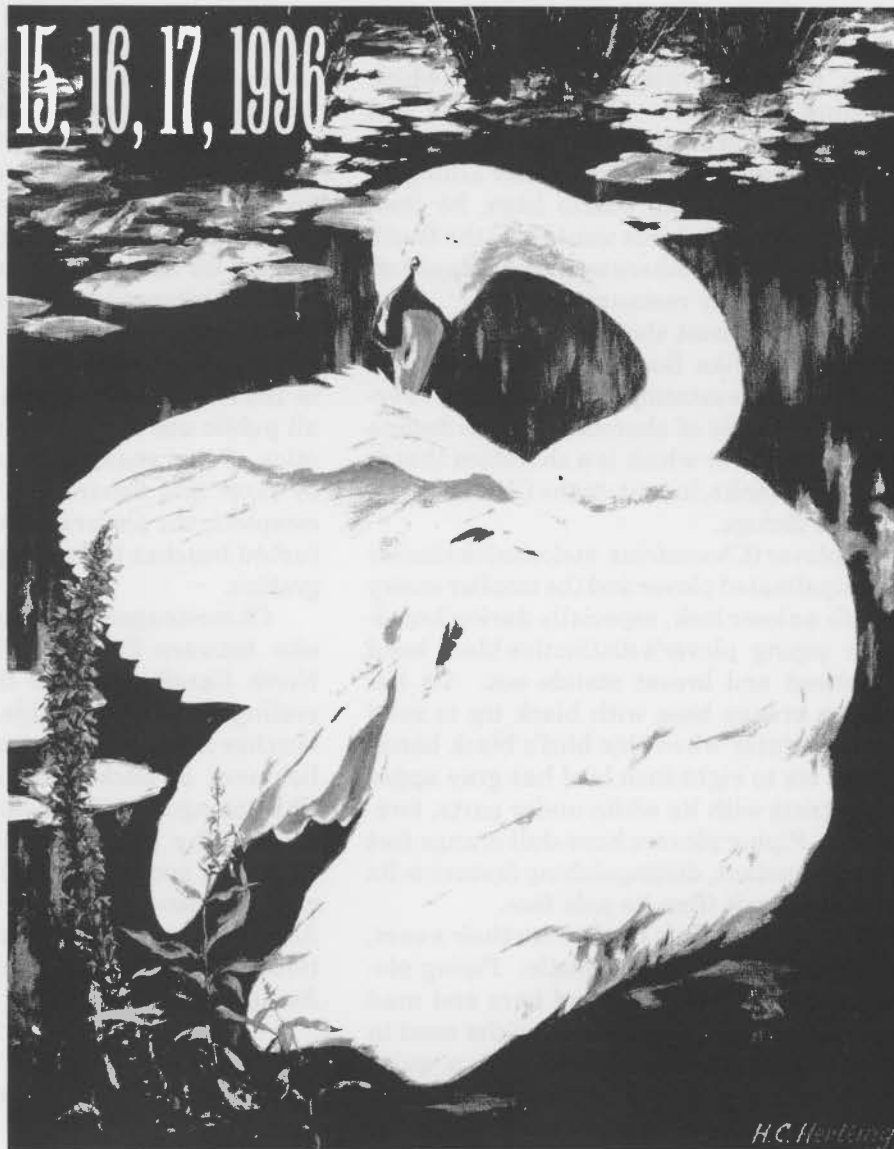
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Selling Decoys on QVC!

In October of 1995, the national home shopping program, QVC, featured items made in Maryland. An "antique" mallard decoy, made by the Jobes family. Captain Harry Jobes and his three sons, Bob, Charles, and Joey, was one of the items featured. They worked together for weeks before the show to complete the order of 600 decoys. When the day arrived the mallard decoys sold out within minutes! QVC has asked for more to fill the rest of the orders taken that day. What a way to sell decoys!



Charlie Jobes checking out one of the many mallards. Photo by M. Moses.

BELOW: Bob and Joey Jobes at work. Photo by M. Moses.



Captain Harry Jobes painting away. Photo by M. Moses.



EXHIBIT UPDATE

Lawsons on Loan

Between February and April the museum will be displaying a large collection of miniature decoys by Oliver Lawson, a Crisfield carver who worked under the Ward Brothers. His style is strongly influenced by the Wards, and is highly valued in its own right.

New Case for Bryan

To make room for "What is a Decoy" Charlie Bryan's Honorary Chairman collection has been moved to the second floor. A new plexiglass case has been built to permanently house his figure and decoys. To defray costs, Charlie Bryan has generously donated a set of swans to be raffled off by the museum. This is a great chance to acquire some beautiful, rare decoys and help the museum as well. Later this winter, Bob Litzenberg's collection will be joining Charlie's on the second floor. If you haven't been up to the second floor in a while, be sure to take a look at the newest additions.

"What is a Decoy?"

Thanks to the generosity of the Easton Waterfowl Festival, the introduction to "What is a Decoy?" has been completed. This exhibit is also indebted to many other individuals and institutions for their loans and donations, including shorebirds from the Missouri Department of Conservation and Charles Seidel, resident carver for the Virginia Marine Science Center. The exhibit's conclusion which contrasts contemporary working decoys with decorative carvings will be built by early spring. We are still taking donations for this case, so if you want your state represented send in your local decoy now!

William Furness great horned owl on loan from Charles and Maurine Seidel. Photo by M. Moses.



Charlie Bryan case on the second floor. Photo by M. Moses.



Bluebird made and donated by Barb Wachter. Photo by M. Moses.

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Weekend Carving Demonstrations at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| February 3, February 4-25, | Jack Simperts Carvers' Holiday | March 30, March 31, | Jack Simperts John Ingoglia |
| March 2, | Butch and Mary Carol Larrimore | April 6, April 7, | Ken Clodfelter Vernon Bryant |
| March 3, March 9, March 10, March 16, | Bryon Bodt Ken Clodfelter Barb Wachter Dick and Linda Robinson | April 13, April 14, April 20, April 21, April 27, | Bill Schaubert Art Boxleitner Bryon Bodt Bill Weaver Butch and Mary Carol Larrimore |
| March 17, March 23, March 24, | Joe Cook Mike Dedekind Nick Birster | April 28, | Bill Meyers |

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

If you are interested in any open dates or would like to become a weekend carver for future dates, please leave a message for Arlene at (410) 939-3739 during museum hours.

Auction News

Anniversary Dinner Auction, November 4, 1995

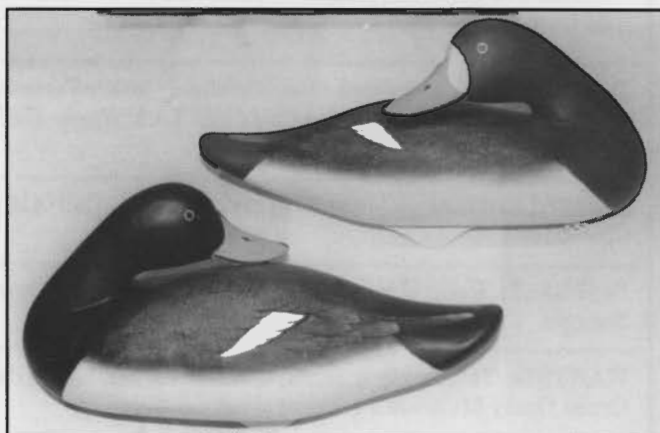
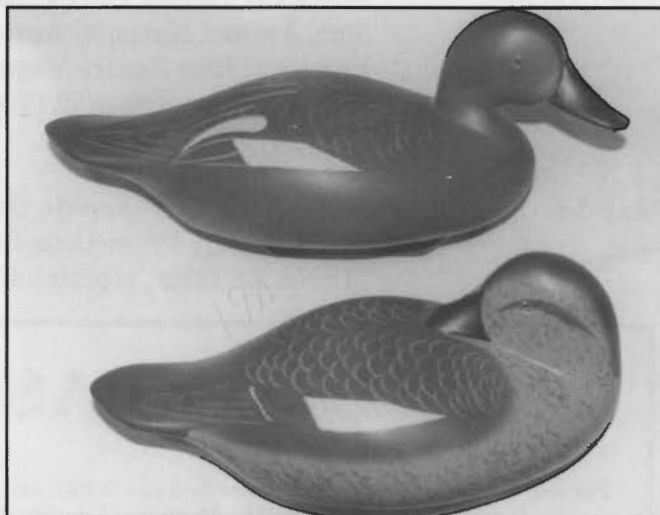
Sharp bidders were able to get some great bargains for Christmas presents at this year's Anniversary Dinner. The auction had an even mix of quality contemporary decoys and great two-dimensional art. Being a decoy crowd, the flat art was seriously undervalued, to the joy of many bidders in attendance. Thirty three items were auctioned off, most donated by area carvers, merchants and Decoy Museum board members. Thanks to their generosity, the museum raised \$2,779 for general operating expenses. The next small auction will be held at the Carver's Appreciation Day on February 24 and is open to the public.

| Description (Catalogue #/Bidder #) | Price |
|---|-------|
| Charlie Bryan pr. cinnamon teal (19A/9) | \$500 |
| Charlie Joiner pr. sleeping scaup (13A/4) | \$450 |
| Mike Affleck pr. 1/2 size canvasbacks (24/17) | \$275 |
| Dan Carson mini standing swan (21/1) | \$205 |
| Bill Schaubert mini redhead drake (17A/35) | \$150 |

Be sure to put the Decoy Festival Auction on your calendar. It will be Saturday May 4, 1996 at 6:00 p. m. in the Havre de Grace High School Auditorium, the preview will begin at noon. The auction will feature Harry Shourds' Honorary Chairman Collection. If you are interested in receiving an advanced list, send a dollar with your address to the Decoy Museum and it will be mailed to you in mid-April. Consignments will be taken until April 1. If you are interested in consigning decoys to the auction, please call Karla at (410) 939-3739.

ABOVE RIGHT: Pair of Charlie Bryan cinnamon teal. Photo by H. Miles.

RIGHT: Pair of Charlie Joiner sleeping scaup. Photo by H. Miles.



1996 Calendar of Events

February 17-18

16th Annual Waterfowl Show and Sale

The annual event features work from approximately 70 artists, carvers, and collectors from the mid-Atlantic region.

Located at Harford Day School, Bel Air, MD. (410) 838-4848.

February 24

Carvers Appreciation Day

Reception starts at 6:30 p.m. Guest speaker is Harry Shourds. Decoy Auction follows. Held at the Decoy Museum. (410) 939-3739.

March 15-17

1996 Delaware Wildlife Art Exhibition & Sale

Georgetown, Delaware. Call (302) 855-1607 for information.

April 28-29

Midwest Decoy Collectors Decoy Show

30th Annual National Antique Decoy and Sporting Collectibles Show

Pheasant Run Resort Mega Center, St. Charles, Illinois. For more information call Gene Konopasek at (708) 639-9392.

May 3-5

15th Annual Havre de Grace Decoy, Wildlife Art & Sportsman Festival

Sponsored by Pepsi-Cola, Sentman Distributors, WXCY, Cello, J.M. Huber, MBNA America, Hechler & Koch, Mitchell-Smith Funeral Home, Cytec.

CLASSIFIED

For our members we offer free classified ads to buy, sell, and trade decoys or related objects. Please keep it under 15 words. For non-members, it will be \$5.00 for 15 words. Mail your classified ads to: Decoy Museum, P.O. Box A, Havre de Grace, MD 21078.

Decoys, including flickers from Crisfield, MD. Various species carved by the famous Cap't Bill Zack Ward. Call C.J. Sullivan (410) 879-1850

Anyone interested in model boat classes, please call the Decoy Museum to be put on the mailing list.

FOR SALE: Madison Mitchell decoy collection. Call (410) 939-4310

FOR SALE: Old wooden decoys. For list send S.A.S.E. to John Freimuth, 12123 S. 71st Avenue, Palo Heights, IL 60463. (708) 361-4343 (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

FOR SALE: Federal and State Duck Stamps and Turkey Stamps. Call (410) 392-5519

WANTED: Donations of a decoy you carved. Call Karla at the museum. (410) 939-2831.

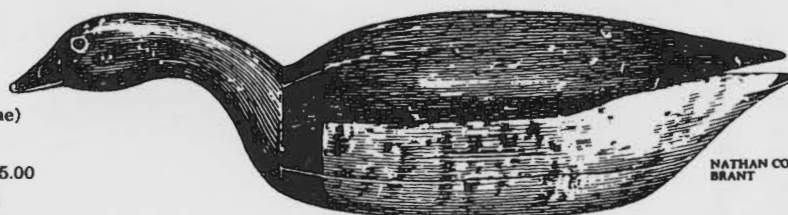
WANTED: Taxidermy mounts, donated for the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum's carving class.

WANTED: Volunteers for the Havre de Grace Decoy Festival, May 3, 4, 5. Call (410) 939-3739.

DECOY MAGAZINE

☒ Profiles of classic and contemporary carvers
 ☒ Overviews of the various carving regions
 ☒ Articles on fish decoys, sporting art and fishing tackle
 ☒ Complete and timely auction coverage
 ☒ Portfolios from outstanding private and museum collections
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