

The Canvasback

Summer 1998
Vol. 7, No. 3

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

\$3



Ernie Mills

Georgia Decoys on My Mind

Wilfred Bush

A Man of the River

1998 Duck Fair Schedule

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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.

CONTENTS

- 9 Ernie Mills**
Georgia Decoys on My Mind
by Arlene Grace
- 17 Wilfred Bush**
A Man of the River
by James W. Turek
- 21 Havre de Grace Decoy Museum**
2nd Annual Sporting Clays Shoot
by Michael Affleck
- 23 Museum News**
- 24 1998 Decoy Wildlife Art, & Sportsman Festival**
Carving Competition Winners
Compiled by Warner Taylor
- 28 Exhibit Update**
by Kim Martin

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 From the President
- 8 Book Review
- 22 Calendar of Events
- 30 Weekend Carvers
- 30 Classified Ads

ON THE COVER

Carver Ernie Mills, from Georgia, hand chops a decoy body. Photo courtesy of Ernie Mills.



FROM THE EDITOR

Everyone knows that I like to start this section by promoting the museum's new website. You can reach the website at www.decoymuseum.com. In our virtual gift shop, you can find some of the many wonderful items that we carry in our gift shop. The gift shop committee searches far and wide to bring our visitors a variety of decoy and waterfowl related items. This site is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, so click on and visit us online! You can't ask for better service.

The feature article in this issue, the article by Arlene Grace focuses on decoy carver Ernie Mills. Ernie makes wonderful decoys in his own individual style. I refer to Ernie as the museum's "Southern representative." In Georgia, and wherever else he happens to be, Ernie tells everyone about the Decoy Museum and encourages them to visit and become members. I know several people that have become involved because Ernie told them about the museum. I love to hear that because the best recommendations always come from a friend or an acquaintance. Many thanks to Ernie and all of you that spread the good word about the Decoy Museum. It is truly an invaluable service to the museum.

I would like to highlight the Decoy Museum's financial accomplishments over the last few months. In the fall of 1997, we began meeting, preparing documents, and filling out grant applications to organizations in request of funds for the Decoy Museum. Much hard work and many months later the results are in. The following organizations have awarded funds to the museum: Harford County, the State of Maryland, the city of Havre de Grace, Harford County Cultural Advisory Board, and the Maryland State Arts Council. Many thanks to all those who supported the museum with their votes and voices.

Mary Jo Murphy

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The Canvasback

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*From
the
President*



Dear Museum Member,

If you have not been to our Decoy Museum recently, you are in for a treat when you come. The R.M. Mitchell shop is open and there are several new exhibits to see. Constant changes in our exhibits make frequent visits worthwhile.

Our Fifth Annual Yard Sale was held July 18. Besides being very successful, everyone who participated seemed to enjoy themselves very much. We thank everyone who helped and/or donated merchandise to be sold. Remember us next year when cleaning out your garage or basement. The 2nd Annual Clay Shoot held August 1 was bigger and better than ever. Our next major function is the 11th Annual Duck Fair to be held Saturday and Sunday, September 12th and 13th on the Museum's lawn and Bayou Condominium grounds. Mark your calendar so you will not miss this free fun-filled event.

The past year has been very good to the museum in obtaining and being awarded grants. Donors include the Maryland State Arts Council as well as the city, county, and state governments.

Everyone should have received a self nominating ballot for this years' election to the Board of Directors of the Decoy Museum. Please consider filling out a ballot if you feel you have a talent that would help improve this working Board.

John A. Carriere
John A. Carriere, M.D.
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.



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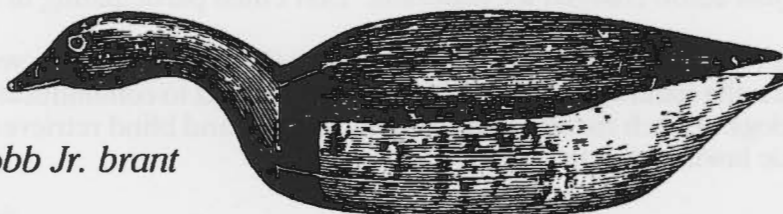
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11th Annual Duck Fair

Honorary Chairman-Vernon Bryant

Saturday September 12, 1998

- 8:30 am Calling Seminar
- 9:00 am **DUCK FAIR OPENS**
Children's Activities
Bake Sale Open
Free Raffle Registration
- 9:30 am Calling Championships
- 10:00 am 1st Silent Auction Begins
Battery & Punt Gun Firings
- 10:50 am Intro. Honorary Chair
- 11:00 am Honorary Chair Head
Whittling
Live Auction Registration
- 12:00 pm 1st Silent Auction Ends
- 1:00 pm Battery & Punt Gun Firings
2nd Silent Auction Begins
- 2:00 pm Live Auction Begins
- 3:00 pm Live Auction Ends
2nd Silent Auction Ends
- 3:50 pm Drawing of Free Raffle
- 4:00 pm Battery & Punt Gun Firings

Sunday September 13, 1998

- 10:00 am **Duck Fair Opens**
Children's Activities
Decoy Painting Tent
Bake Sale Opens
Free Raffle Registration
1st Silent Auction Begins
- 11:00 am Open Head Whittling
- 12:00 pm Retriever Demonstration
1st Silent Auction Ends
- 1:00 pm Retriever Demonstration
2nd Silent Auction Begins
- 2:00 pm Retriever Demonstration
- 3:00 pm Retriever Demonstration
2nd Silent Auction Ends
- 3:10 pm Drawing of Free Raffle
- 4:00 pm **11th Annual
Duck Fair
Closes**

Saturday Event Highlights

THE UPPER CHESAPEAKE BAY GOOSE CLASSIC & SUSQUEHANNA FLATS REGIONAL DUCK CLASSIC :

Starting with a free calling seminar at 8:30 a.m. Watch as duck and goose callers compete for a slot at the national calling competition. This event begins at 9:30 p.m. on the Museum's side lawn.

LIVE AUCTION : Join us under the big tent for a live auction. Preview Starts at 10:00 a.m., bidder registration is from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Auction runs from 2:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m.

HONORARY CHAIR DECOY HEAD WHITTling : This is a great opportunity to catch a glimpse of the fine art of decoy carving. Observe our Honorary Chairpeople as they address carving challenges, exchange stories, and quickly whittle out duck heads.

Sunday Event Highlights

THE DECOY PAINTING TENT : Join the spirit of the Duck Fair by painting a miniature mallard or canvasback drake to take home with you. Originally set up for our younger visitors, this activity attracts decoy lovers of all ages. Just \$5.00 charged for materials. Don't miss participating in this event under the big tent.

RETRIEVER DEMONSTRATIONS : Members of the Maryland Retriever Club will introduce you to every hunter's best friend. Learn the hand signals and whistles that are used to communicate between the hunter and their hard working dogs. Watch the dogs demonstrate marked and blind retrieves. Demonstrations held on the Museum's side lawn and in the water.

1998 Duck Fair Honorary Chairman: Vernon Bryant



The Duck Fair Committee is pleased to announce Vernon Bryant as the Duck Fair's 1998 Honorary Chairman. At the age of eleven Vernon taught himself to carve. Nine years ago he began to sell his decoys, working in shop that he had created at his father's carpentry business. Since 1995, Vernon has been carving full time, leaving his twenty year carpentry profession behind him.

Vernon's unique decoys are hand-chopped, although portions are turned on a duplicating lathe. He has many original products such as his pancake decoys, the "yellow duck", and his decorative display skiffs. Vernon enjoys carving all species of working decoys, finishing them with either a traditional or an antiqued appearance. Decoys are not his only interest, he also enjoys designing and constructing boats, like his punt gun skiff.

Aside from exhibiting at the fair, you can also catch Vernon firing the punt gun throughout the day on Saturday. So, while browsing through the exhibitions at the fair, be sure to visit Vernon Bryant and see for yourself why he was chosen as the Duck Fair's Honorary Chairman.

CHINCOTEAGUE CARVERS AND THEIR DECOYS

By Barry and Velma Berkey

Reviewed by

Bill Smart

Chincoteague Island, which is off the coast of Virginia, is rich in waterfowling history and has been one of the most important hunting areas along the Atlantic Flyway. This region, inhabited by hard working folks who make their living off of the water year round, is home to legendary watermen and carvers. Their decoys were highly functional, made from 'the art of necessity' and used 'tools of guides.' While not as prolific as some of the major hunting regions on the East Coast, there decoys were heavily used and are prized by decoy collectors today.

Barry and Velma Berkey researched the decoys and lives of the old time Chincoteague carvers through interviews with their descendants. The experienced co-authors, having published five books previously, interweaved the historical research and photographs in with very useful information to identify Chincoteague decoys. Key sections of this publication include the turn of the century carvers, contemporary carvers, and a section on regional characteristics of the Chincoteague decoys.

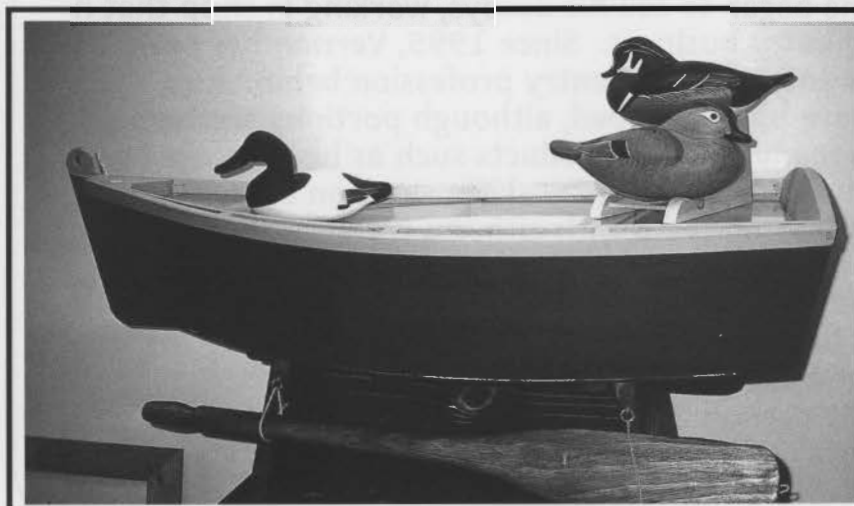
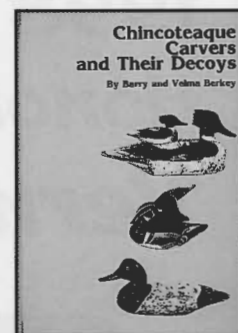
The six chapters devoted to the early carvers I personally enjoyed the most, since the chapters were filled with known bits and pieces about these famous gentlemen. Miles Hancock kept records of his sales, seventeen log books in all. Included are the names of some of his customers who bought wild game. Included in this list was the Maryland Club, Wilmington Club, and Haussner's

Restaurant in Baltimore. Also there were pictures of his 'little tools' (his miniature decoys). Ira Hudson, one of the most prolific carvers of the region was also known for his boat building. Charles Jester, maker of hollow decoys, mostly black ducks, was also an artist. Doug Jester was an avid waterman and a turn of the century market gunner. James Reed, decoy carver and artist, moved from Chincoteague to Washington, DC, where he resided for forty-four years until he returned to the island. Dave 'Umbrella' Watson was also a market gunner and hunting guide.

Chapters devoted to the contemporary carvers mention several carvers who are still active carvers today and include pictures of their earlier work. The last chapter provides regional characteristics to help identify Chincoteague decoys. An interesting point in this last chapter is that the Chincoteague decoys do not have a strong regional trait like you would find in other notable gunning regions (i.e. Upper Bay, Delaware Bay, etc.).

Although a little dated, published in 1981, this book provides wonderful historical data and can be valuable as a ready reference to identify Chincoteague region decoys.

Chincoteague Carvers and Their Decoys, is 102 pages and was published in 1981 by Herff Jones University Publications. It is available at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum gift shop for \$35.00.



Vernon Bryant

Decoys, Guns, & Boats

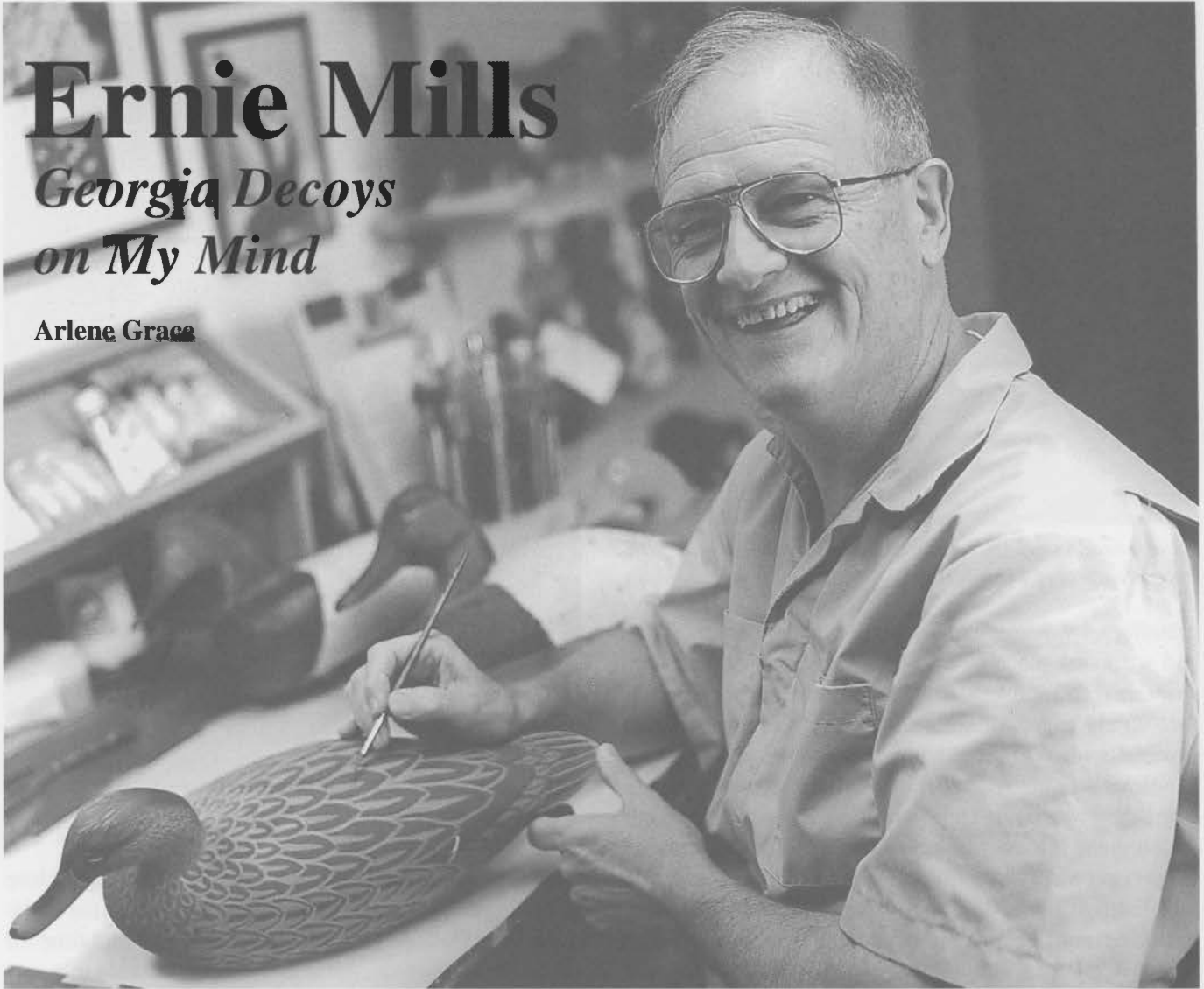
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Ernie Mills

Georgia Decoys on My Mind

Arlene Grace



I was first introduced to Ernie Mills not by a person but by a tree. The tree was the museum's Carvers' Christmas Tree which is decorated during the holidays with duck head carvings donated by the museum's weekend carvers. Though all the ornaments were beautiful, invariably I was drawn to Ernie's carvings. The painting style was very distinct and the detail was true to life. I thought Ernie's ornaments would be perfect for identifying ducks and something to pass down to my grandson, so I began ordering them. Ernie's ornaments are definitely collectible and unique and I found the carver to be unique as well.

Ernie was born on April 2, 1934 in Bangor, Pennsylvania. His father was from North Carolina and his mother was from Brooklyn, New York. His father was in the hosiery business and moved frequently from New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, due to his job.

The biggest influences in Ernie's early years were his grandfather and father. His paternal grandfather, a to-

bacco farmer from North Carolina, introduced him to carving by giving him his first knife. In the early 1940s during summer breaks, Ernie shared many pleasant days with his grandfather. While he did carve some decoys, his



*The Olympic Decoy which is now on display at the Museum.
Photo courtesy of Ernie Mills.*



A duck head in progress held in Ernie's modified head vise. Photo courtesy of Ernie Mills.

grandfather was more of a whistler than a carver. They had a special place in an outbuilding that served as a woodshed and smokehouse where Ernie and his grandfather would carve all sorts of marvelous things. Ernie especially liked to carve animals, airplanes and ships.

Ernie's father was more of a fisherman than a hunter. Until they moved to Delaware, they did not have a car which made it harder to hunt. His father had a genuine conservationist's mentality and instilled it in his son. Ernie recalled two rules: don't shoot wood ducks (they were protected) and don't take what you can't use or there won't be any for later. The demise of the rockfish, shad and canvasbacks are at least in part due to this rule being broken.

When Ernie lived with his parents in Delaware, he hunted in the fields outside Bombay Hook Refuge. At that time, they did not use many decoys. Silhouettes for field hunting were the forms most utilized. In the early 1950s, hunting was changing from ducks to geese in Delaware as elsewhere in the region. Ernie and his father made many silhouettes from appliance pallets and packing crates and painted them with latex paint. He regrets that he does not have them now.

Ernie graduated from high school in 1952 and joined the Navy for four years. While living in Elkton, in the early 1950s, he became acquainted with the Susquehanna Flats. During his stay in the Navy, he was stationed nearby at Bainbridge. With his naval training, he was able to find work in flight operations and flight dispatching with various airlines. Unfortunately, the long hours, seven days a week, ten-twelve hour days, and repeated moves



Ernie's cypress chopping block with hatchets. Photo courtesy of Ernie Mills.

were not conducive to carving. In 1971, he moved close to home in Smyrna, Delaware and worked for the Delaware State Police. This job change afforded him time for his favorite pastime, fishing. He was also able to goose and duck hunt with his father after work near Bombay Hook. During this time, Ernie had lots of exposure to area decoy carvers like R. Madison Mitchell and the Ward Brothers. as well as other Lower Bay carvers. Decoy carving was becoming very popular in this region. He spent time in their shops watching how they carved and painted, and although he loved to carve, he did not have the time to devote to it.

In 1978, when a good job opportunity with Hawaiian Airlines arose, Ernie moved to Georgia where he remains today. In 1980, however, the company left and so did the job. Half jokingly, he told his wife that he might as well do something he liked and carve for a living. He devoted much of his time to carving, mostly decorative birds and fish but he also maintained a part time job in Macon at a local airport. He started taking finished pieces to work where he did a brisk business. Orders began coming in so quickly that he left his job to carve full time and has been doing so ever since.



Ernie setting up his demonstration area at the 1996 Olympics. Photo courtesy of Ernie Mills.

Ducks Unlimited became a close ally. He was approached early in his carving career by DU of Georgia to create carvings for a fund-raiser at one of their dinners. Subsequently, he was requested by other Georgia DU chapters to carve as well. With the carving requests came dinner invitations which precipitated numerous connections and orders which meant carving many birds! Because of DU, he was able to meet people who had a keen interest in ducks, hunting and conservation. Without these contacts, he would not have been able to carve full time. In addition, DU gave him the opportunity to become a "Life Sponsor," an honor he greatly appreciates.

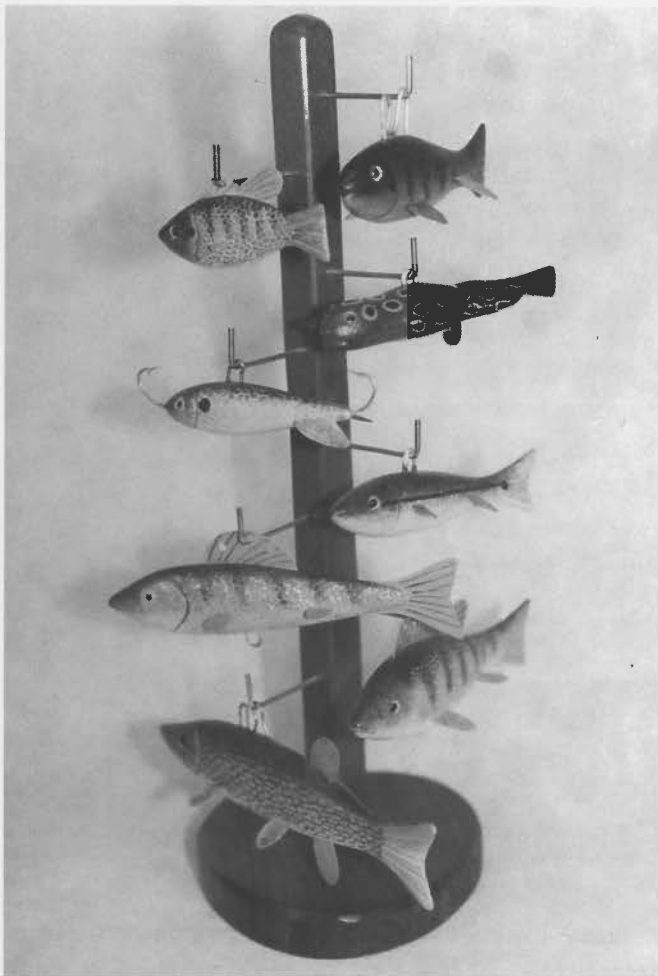
The DU connection brought him to the attention of the Harford County R. M. Mitchell chapter. Through this chapter, he became involved with the Decoy Museum as a member. He later became a weekend carver by way of Dottie Wise (yes, even as a long distance carver). Those DU ties sure do stretch a long way.

For the first four to five years of his full-time carving career, the bulk of his work consisted of doing decorative carvings: birds, ducks, fish, and various wildlife. His wood of choice was tupelo which was quite plentiful. He took a carving class from Bill Veasey who gave a three day class in South Carolina in 1982, but that was the extent of his formal carving training. He decided it was important

to create his own style, sometimes not an option with decoratives. At that time, he made very few gunning decoys. People wanted decoratives, so that is what he made. Ernie points out that there are only a few decorative carvers in Georgia; one of the best known being Jim White of Cairo, Georgia. Jim's brother, Bob White, is a decoy maker from Pennsylvania.

In 1983, he was contacted by the University of Georgia to teach carving classes, where he taught four classes a year until 1986. When he moved to Perry, Georgia in 1985, he was able to build a shop that was big enough to teach his own classes. He taught these classes mostly decoratives like bluebirds and peregrine falcons until a couple of years ago when scheduling and other demands on his time made him give up teaching.

In 1987, he tired of making decoratives and started doing decoys almost exclusively to sell. Though the Georgia area was not conducive to duck hunting, there was quite a bit of interest in his work. Ernie says that historically, wood ducks (marsh ducks) are the ducks of Georgia and quail hunting is very popular. There is not much water, except for Lake Seminole which has great hunting and a large portion of his service grade decoys are used there. When he first started making decoys, almost forty-five percent were gunned over.



A display of some of Ernie's fishing lures. Photo courtesy of Ernie Mills.

In 1990, he started to sense a change in the decoy market. Folk Art collectors were replacing the resolute old guard of decoy collectors. Georgia has a thriving folk art community well endowed by patrons and government. Ernie pointed out that the highest price paid for a working decoy, a shorebird, was by a folk art collector, not a decoy collector.

Because of the folk art movement, he was contacted by a student doing a year end project from Georgia State University. His professor, Dr. John Burrison, a world renowned folk art specialist, had told the student that there were no known Georgia decoy makers, living or dead. Dr. Burrison was so sure of this that he pledged \$100 if he could find one. The student took out ads in papers and farm journals, but to no avail. Someone consequently told him to check with DU and they directed him to Ernie. The student came down and spent the day at his shop, talking and taking pictures. Through this student, Ernie met Dr. Burrison and was asked to speak and demonstrate at several classes about decoy making. Later, Dr. Burrison received a grant through the Atlanta History Center to

display a portion of his extensive folk art collection, and he asked Ernie to make three working decoys, one pair of wood ducks and a ringneck for this permanent collection. The display now encompasses over 500 pieces and Ernie's decoys are proudly displayed in what he jokingly calls "the carpetbagger section".

Ernie's decoys, though Georgian in origin, do show off their Chesapeake roots. He typifies the style as Lower Chesapeake Bay which exhibit a wide, flat bottomed body. He says, "That's the way I was shown, so that's the way I do them." This style has served him well with his Georgia hunting clientele. He is also an imitator of the early decoy carvers in the fact that he is a hand-chopper, a carving technique as rare these days as decoys in Georgia. He does not employ lathe turned bodies or production style painting. Though he was thoroughly familiar with the round bottomed Upper Bay style birds, his experience was more in the area that called for a flat-bottomed decoy. He feels that the Upper Bay carvers made nice efficient birds, but they were too similar in appearance, not allowing for enough individual interpretation. Because the majority are production style birds, literally thousands can be turned out in a year. Ernie figures that at his peak of carving a few years ago, he was only turning out about 150 birds. He takes great pride in creating his own patterns, hand chopping and painting style. Though he knows it is a much slower process, he never wants to be so hurried that it interferes with the pleasure of carving.

He makes two grades of working decoys, premium and service. Both utilize the same patterns and wood (cypress or white pine), but construction and painting differ. Keels are placed on the bottom of both grades.



A sample of Ernie's decorative works, a woodcock, ring-neck pheasant, and a quail. Photo courtesy of Ernie Mills.

Upon request, a flat piece of lead is used for balance.

The premium grade bodies are made from two pieces of wood (2" to 2 1/2" thick) glued together to form a block. This block is cut out and shaped by hand. Premium decoys have stipple painting, cut in primary back feather groups, cut-in edge side pockets, and tail feathers. The head carving is more detailed with a carved-in nail. The primary difference between the two grades is the stipple effect painting. The appearance is reminiscent of the Ward Brothers and Crisfield area style. He puts on white paint with an old paint brush to make it stand up. Then the primary color is put on over that and wiped through for a pebble finish. This technique especially cuts down on the shine. Lead paint is not used today as in earlier years, acrylics are applied instead. The use of a thick acrylic paste achieves the stippling effect and more precise painting is done on the premium grade decoys. It takes about four to six hours to paint a premium bird.

The service grade decoy is also made from two pieces of wood for the bodies. Instead of gluing, he screws them together with wood screws. The bodies are taken down by hatchet, shaped by knife, and then sanded. When this is done, the pieces are taken apart and the wood is drilled out from both halves with a Fostner bit. This cuts down on the weight and creates a hollow decoy. The head is then carved and attached with glue and a wood screw through the inside of the body. The joint between the body and head is filled with putty. Both halves are then joined together with waterproof glue and nailed with small finishing nails. After applying a primer coat, he paints on two to three coats of paint. A typical flat style with oil based paints is used instead of stippling with acrylic paints as in the premium decoys. Feather painting is then applied maintaining a smooth bodied decoy. No wings, or feather groups are cut in. No nails are cut in on the head's bill. He keeps them simple and traditional for use as gunning decoys. For service grade birds, he generally will work on six to twelve decoys at a time, but the painting still takes him about two hours a bird. He utilized cypress butts for wood for service grade decoys from 1987 until 1996 when he could no longer get them. Traditionally, cypress is not a good carving wood, too grainy and heavy. However, the advantage of the cypress butts (stump wood) is that the wood worked similar to white cedar, but did not crack like the cedar. He has not done service grade decoys for almost two years, but finally located a large source of white pine. He plans to begin working on them soon.

Ernie concentrates much effort and time into carving the heads. Heads are made of basswood and clamped into a modified head vise, side panel altered to keep jaws from moving from side to side. Instead of a draw knife, he uses

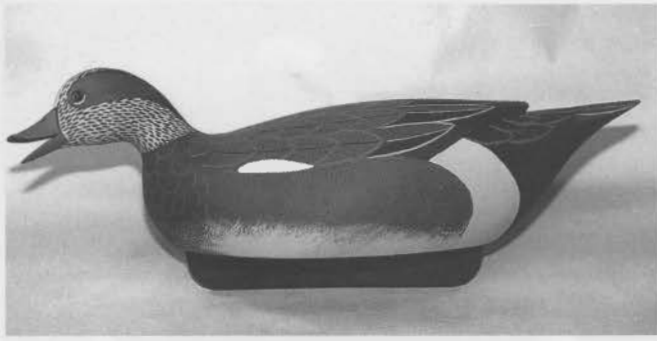


Ernie and friend (a four foot long slat goose decoy). Photo courtesy of Ernie Mills.

a fish tail chisel with the vise to complete about sixty percent of the head. He finishes shaping and detail with a hand knife. He concentrates more detail into the head than most carvers. He likes to carve in eye troughs, bills, and special features. Ernie figures he can bandsaw, chop, shape and sand a body in only thirty minutes. Conversely, he may work from 1 1/2 to 2 hours on a head. This shows not only the importance he places on carving the heads but also how much he enjoys it.

Along with his decoys, as a diversion, he carves roothead shorebirds, fish decoys and duck head ornaments. The roothead decoys are made primarily from oak and pecan, the head, bill and neck are all one piece. The bodies are made from scraps of wood, generally cypress or pine. They are left unpainted and then stained and rubbed with linseed oil. A stick is inserted in the bottom of the body and put on a base. These are very popular because of the natural wood grain. Roothead decoys are one of the earliest forms of shorebird decoys.

Ernie has been making fish decoys most of his life, but now does them during his quiet time in the evenings. In his early days, Ernie carved his own fish lures and painted them silver and red. Silver paint was acquired from old paint of his father's and the red from 'borrowed,' red fingernail polish belonging to his mother. At one time, he made full-size decorative fish carvings, but no more. Whereas the decoys are set patterns, he can be as creative as he wants to be with his fishing lures. He does not need special lighting to work on them as he does with his decoys. They are made from scrap-wood, generally preferring to use basswood from his decoy heads, as it is easy to carve. Though he makes many different shapes and styles, he has recently focused on ice-fishing lures. They have become very popular from the Folk Art aspect because there certainly is no ice fishing in Georgia!



Service grade widgeon decoy. Photo courtesy of Ernie Mills.

Ernie has no favorite bird to carve, but he does admit his favorite is the ever popular canvasback which he features in his logo. However, many of his requests have been for woodducks and bob white quail, which are Georgia staples. These species have presented a challenge. The wood ducks are a very complicated duck to paint due to the many colors and hues and the quails have feathers that are individually patterned. He came up with a technique using washes to do the quail. Otherwise, the painting looked too severe. He figures he has carved about 150 quails, but adds he does not want to do more.

As with all carvers, he is always trying to better his painting. He is very content with his painting style (especially his signature stippling technique), but feels that "you never reach that point where you feel that you can't improve it."

Ernie feels that the most important element to remember is to enjoy what you do. You will always be your own worst critic, so do what you like. The one reason he enjoys carving so much is because all of his work is from "scratch". Since he does the work in the traditional manner, he also has the gratification of reaching back in time and becoming part of that elite carving fellowship.

Though Ernie misses this area, especially the fishing and family, he does not miss the way it has become so over developed. The advantages in Georgia are many, including no snow in the winter and a slower way of life. After the stress-filled years in air dispatch, it took him a long time to get into a less-hurried pace. Now he declares that he has no headaches or stomach problems and doesn't even wear a watch; he is his own boss and loves it.

Some of Ernie's most important accomplishments have been in recent years. He was contacted by the Southern Arts Federation for the Smithsonian one year before the 1996 Summer Olympics, and was selected from a field of about 150 to be one of twelve folk artists to demonstrate. It was a great event with over 100,000 people a day. He especially liked the interest showed by the kids, who on some days, were lined up 200 to 300 at a

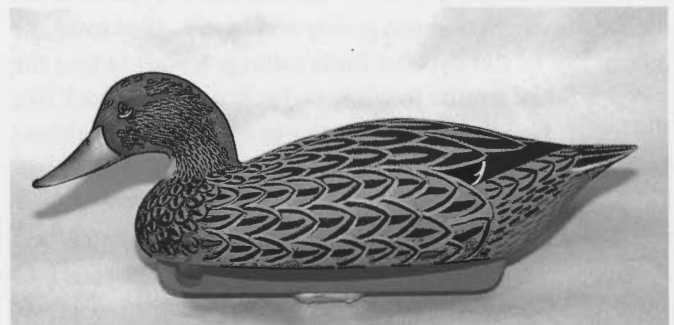
time. The kids took turns helping Ernie make a decoy and then signed the bottom of the decoy. One of those decoys he made with many signatures from the Olympics, has now been graciously donated to our Museum and is on display. Through the Olympic experience, he has been invited to come in a year or two to Washington, DC, when the Southern Region is represented in the premier Folk Art Festival on the Mall. He also has had a video tape made for the Atlanta Museum by a full production video crew from Washington, DC, that makes videos for the Smithsonian.

He has likewise been able to demonstrate at the Universities of South Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, and Georgia. Last year he started teaching two classes at the John C. Campbell Folk Art School, world renown for its Appalachian folk art origin in the 1920s. For the past nine to ten years, he has been chairman of a carving competition near his home which in many ways, rivals this region's World Competition, but is open exclusively to Georgia carvers. Additionally, he has received a grant from the Georgia Arts Council for an apprentice. Ernie is continuing the history of passing on the carving tradition.

His biggest honor to date has been to be nominated for the National Heritage Folk Award. There are ten categories and he has been selected for the woodworking division. This is a critical opportunity to further one's reputation and to receive national recognition, not to mention a \$10,000 award. The Georgia Arts Council and the Folk Art groups are extremely serious about traditional crafts and are more than willing to invest in its sustenance and continuation.

Ernie Mills seems to be living the good life in Georgia. No matter what future awards await him, he can be well satisfied that he has done something not many people get the opportunity to do. He has brought the legacy of decoy making in its original and truest form to an area.

Ernie lives with his wife Jeannette and son William in Perry, Georgia. One daughter, Joann lives nearby. Another daughter, Debra, lives in Smyrna, Delaware.



Premium grade mallard hen. Photo courtesy of Ernie Mills.

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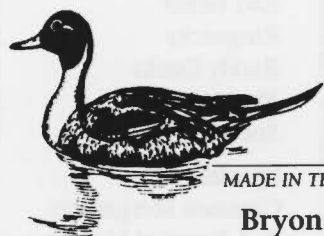
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Common Mergansers	\$130pr
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Hooded Mergansers	\$150pr
Swan -Flat Bottom	\$350ea
Swan -With Keel	\$400ea
1/2 Swan	\$75 ea
Wood Ducks	\$350pr
Canada Goose	\$80 ea

Wilfred Bush

A Man of the River

James W. Turek

Wilfred Bush with a 1953 mallard. Part of his personal hunting rig. Photo from the Turek family collection.

If circumstance would lead a man to carve decoys then the life of Wilfred Bush serves as an ideal example. It would be enough to have been born and raised on the waters of the Mississippi and the Illinois rivers, for they were the epicenter of waterfowling during the halcyon years earlier this century. Add to his profile he is a second generation carver. Yet, if that wasn't enough Wilfred's father, when not earning a living as a commercial fisherman, was a market gunner. With all of these influences, Wilfred was destined from birth to become a carver.

Born January 19, 1920, to Issac and Bertha Bush, Wilfred Joseph Bush was delivered on a cabin boat in Dallas City, Illinois on the Mississippi River. He was raised in a boat that was constructed by his father as an extension of his commercial fishing interest. The family was originally from Pekin, but when the local fishery crashed the family moved to Dallas City hoping for a better life.

In 1922, the family moved back to their hometown port of Pekin on the Illinois River mainly because his father was homesick. Wilfred recounts the move must have been quite an adventure as the scow had "to be tugged up the Mississippi through a series of locks and up through the Illinois River." The whole journey took about a month.



Pekin is a quaint Norman Rockwell-like river town. Wilfred remembers the inspiring number of waterfowl rafting along the river. In particular, "bluebill and ring-necks . . . by the thousands, that extended from one side of the shore to the other." Historically, the area is known for some of the finest hunting in this part of the country. Perhaps this is why so many waterfowlers have heard of Pekin, at least in passing. The town is home to many well-known duck and goose call manufacturers, one such as the P.S. Olt Company.

About 1930, his father opened and ran the local fish market. In doing so, the Bush family solidified their dependency on the river. Selling fish to other families who were hard hit by the Depression however, was not a lucrative endeavor. Though, there was an up side to this life. Living in such proximity to the water during his formative years helped Wilfred foster a unique relationship with the river.

One of his first memories of waterfowl comes from when he was about age six. When most young boys were playing with the family dog, he was calling his brother's semi-tame mallards. He would take his dad's old hard rubber duck call, go to a window and make quacking sounds. When mallards inevitably came to the house boat he would run to the opposite side then call again. Sure enough, they would follow. Around and around the house boat he would call and the ducks would follow.

Wilfred was introduced to hunting, like most boys, by his father. However, his first duck taken was with his Uncle Wilbur. The two did not use a wooden decoy rig since they were hunting over live decoys. Throughout Wilfred's gunning career he estimates that he gunned upwards of 5,000 to 6,000 ducks and geese, mostly mallards. His obsession, however, is with blackducks. "If I had a chance to shoot a flock of fifty other birds or one blackduck, I would shoot at the blackduck."

Through his gunning career, Wilfred has used only a few choice guns. After graduating from the single 20, the name of the manufacturer he does not remember, he moved to a Remington model 11 in 16 gauge, which was

a stepped-down version of what his father used to commercially gun with for the Chicago market decades earlier. From there, he entered the 12 twelve gauge fraternity, again choosing a Remington, this time a model 48. To finish out the collection he opted for the ever-popular 870. Never happy with the 870, after he jammed his finger in the bolt assembly, it was permanently retired only after a few outings. He went back to his old faithful, the 48. Wilfred was never much for the larger 10 gauge. He feels they do not "give the birds a chance." And besides, "(I) could kill everything with a 12 that a 10 could."

Wilfred is a second generation carver. Long before his father crafted the second cabin boat, he exhibited his talent with wood by carving a rig of three dozen mallards for his personal use. As best as Wilfred can recollect, the decoys were carved around 1900. His father hunted over live decoys, also because live birds are superior to any decoy. The practice was outlawed in 1934.

Carving was also an interest for his older brother, Kenneth. His carving was limited for the most part to miniature decoys made for his children as Christmas presents. The first Wilfred Bush decoys were also miniatures, borrowed from his brother's basic carving stock. At this

time he was twelve years old, growing up during the Depression years. He and his family, as Wilfred describes, were "living the rough life" as commercial fishermen. During these years the family ate mostly fish. His mom would often remark with an analogy, "one day we eat chicken the next day the feathers." Like most Depression era families, they had to make do with what they had. Since hunting and fishing were integral parts of his life, decoy carving came naturally. Like countless young men of the era he could not afford to buy decoys, so what they could not buy, they made.

Throughout his carving career, he would go on to make in excess of 25,000 pairs of miniatures and countless half-size and full-size gunners. All were crafted from his original patterns. Even the earliest birds were mere adaptations of his father's and brother's patterns. From



A pair of full size mallards. The only full-size decoy in the author's collection. The drake is dated 1988 and is from one of the last batches of full size decoys before the stroke. The hen is dated 1997. Photo from the Turek family collection.

time to time there would be a flying pintail or mallard thrown into the mix to illustrate his talent. He has made only six large swans for his children, especially his daughter who is one of his most avid collectors.

Drafted during the Second World War, he was sent to Europe and served in the 7th Army, then under the command of General George S. Patton. In the service time allowed for him to carve only a few (micro) miniatures. In 1942, he married his sweetheart Erma Gabrill and after the war returned to his job with the Chicago Northwestern Railroad. Not long after being home he "felt the bug to start whittling again."

By 1953 carving was back in full swing. That year he decided to add half-size birds to the production, he made all sizes of birds and about nineteen different species. Wilfred continued unchanged in style and form for several decades until 1992 when he had a stroke. The remnants of the stroke left Wilfred somewhat disabled. But persevering, Wilfred continues with the assistance of Michael Charles, his nephew, to produce a limited number of birds each year. Wilfred does all the carving and Michael helps with the painting.

Wilfred's style and materials have been consistent over the years. The body of a Bush decoy carries the classic Illinois River flat bottom and wide body with a tapered tail. There is some resemblance to Charles Perdew and Ignatius Stachowiak in his body and paint, but, Wilfred's head style is uniquely his own. The eye and cheek area exaggerated out, as opposed to the more traditional flush or the contemporary puffy cheek (with the eyes contouring the valley). However, most of the half-size and all miniatures carry an orthodox head style.

Regarding wood, Wilfred prefers ponderosa and white pine. Bodies are of two piece, hollow construction. Heads are attached to the upper laminate of the body with a screw from the body through to the head. Wilfred has never used cork on any of his birds and with reason. Hollow bodies, according to Wilfred, sufficiently lighten each decoy enough so that he can "carry a (rig) from the house to the boat and to the river." His favorite spot is called Havana, south of Pekin, only a few miles from home. It was "an easy row . . . down river . . . bad going home against the river. These were (the days) before we had outboards."

His decoys are painted in the classical Illinois River tradition. Wilfred, like many old-timers, would prefer lead based paint. Since lead paint is unavailable he uses both oil and latex, often uses Sherwin-Williams house paint. He uses a base that he has tinted at the local store, but "They usually don't come out exactly like I want," he says, "so I have to doctor the tint. In the end it all works

out."

When rigging his gunning decoys, Wilfred attaches a brass screw which the anchor line is attached. This rigging has been highly successful as he has only lost about two decoys during his gunning career. This record is astonishing when you take in to account the Illinois River can move with considerable fury during a winter storm and a well laden tug and barge can play havoc in close proximity to a gunning rig.

Wilfred recounts the waters of the Illinois lifted many a decoy from their owners' rigs and pulled them down river. His brother and gunning partners had assembled a rig of over 200 birds, "not three or four from the same make." Times changed. The old family cabin boat and fish market was removed from the waterfront in 1980. His wife and brother passed away, gunning, sadly, has ended too, as the mind is willing but the body just doesn't wish to cooperate. But Wilfred chugs along, a little slower now albeit with bad eyes and legs. He still carves miniatures. Wilfred refers to decoy making not as carving but as "whittling," perhaps since his main tool is a rusty old pocket knife.

I am thankful to have had the opportunity to become acquainted with Wilfred. Men of his caliber are rare finds, like the old decoys they have produced. He is always a gentleman and willing to take the time to answer all questions, but each time in a given conversation I inevitably refer to him as sir a plea is made, "Don't call me sir call me Willie."

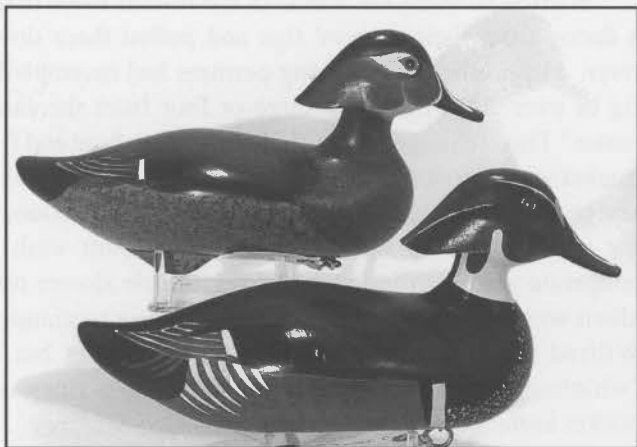


Wilfred and his gunning partner on one of his last hunts before his 1992 stroke. Photo from the Bush collection.

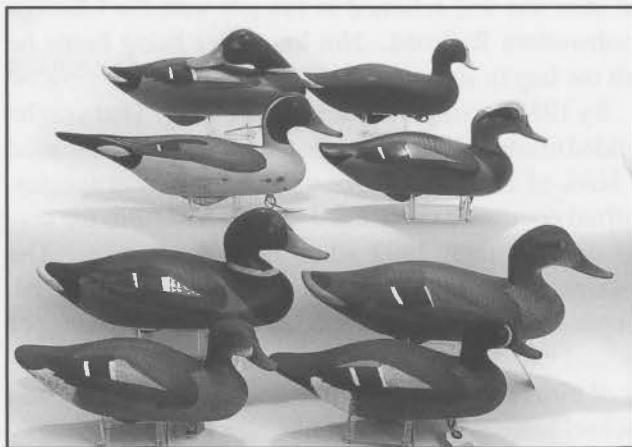
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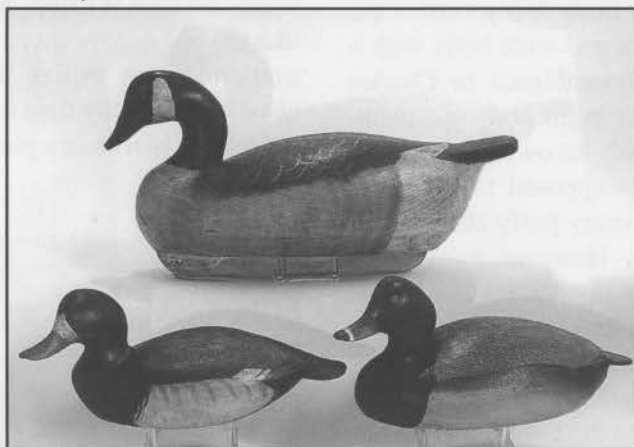
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Preview: Sat. Oct. 10th 11am-3pm, Sun. Oct. 11th 8am-10am

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Tailgating and boardwalk free of charge to everyone. Food catered by Havens and Hampton.

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum 2nd Annual Sporting Clays Shoot

This year's event took place at Alexander's Sporting Farm, in Gales, Maryland. This year's shoot showed an increased attendance of 16% over last year's event. The participants were great, with several past honorary chairmen joining in the shoot. The weather was fantastic and the Alexander family, as always, were very accommodating. Results: HOA - Tony Mille, Score: 50, Prize: Beretta 390; Ladies Class - Mai Manning, Score: 44, Prize: \$100.00; Door Prize Winner: Charlie Joiner, Prize: Beretta 390.



Mike Affleck congratulates Tony Miller, HOA, with trophy and Beretta AL390.



Volunteer, Mike Veasey, auctioned a total of \$1,400 for the museum.



Miss Amelia Miller & father, Kevin, choose the door prize winners.



Dave Walker gives lessons at the (5) stand.

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CALENDAR

September

12-13

11th Annual Duck Fair. Free admission. Held outside on the Decoy Museum's lawn and the grounds of the Bayou Condominiums. Duck and Goose Calling Contest, exhibitors, head whittling, battery gun firing, carving demonstrations, food, artists, retriever demonstrations, and kid's decoy painting. Call (410) 939-3739 for more information.

26

R. Madison Mitchell Chapter Annual Ducks Unlimited Dinner. Full dinner with complimentary 1 1/2 hour open bar. Starts at 6pm followed by dinner at 7:30pm and concluding with an auction at 8:30pm. Contact Patty Jobs at (410) 939-3005 evenings.

Invitation to

The R. Madison Mitchell Chapter Annual Ducks Unlimited Dinner September 26, 1998

This dinner offers the discriminating decoy collector some of the finest offerings available from the northern and middle Chesapeake Bay areas. Each year unique and first of species are donated by carvers such as Charlie Joiner, Oliver Lawson, Charlie Bryan, Jim and Charlie Pierce, the entire Jobs family; Capt. Harry, Charles, Joey and Bobby, Ron Laber, David Walker, Steve Lay, Johnny Clark Bryon Bodt, Dan Carson, and Michael Affleck.

Come and spend the evening with us and all of the carvers mentioned above, at the Bayou Restaurant, Havre de Grace, MD on September 26, 1998. In addition to the beautiful carvings, the guest of honor will be Julius Wall, President of Ducks Unlimited. Mr. Wall will be presenting a special award to Charlie Joiner from Ducks Unlimited National Headquarters. A full dinner with complimentary 1 1/2 hours open bar is included. The evening will begin at 6:00 pm, followed by dinner at 7:30 and concluding with our auction at 8:30 pm. Tickets are \$50.00 per person and \$ 90.00 per couple and are limited for this event. Seating arrangements are available in groups of (4), (6), (8) and (10).

Checks are to be made payable to the R. Madison Mitchell Chapter, Ducks Unlimited Chapter. Please mail all requests to our Ticket Chairperson before September 15, 1998.

Ms. Patty Jobs, 855 Otsego Street Havre de Grace, MD 21078
(410) 939-3005 (evenings)

October

2-4

Mid America Waterfowl Expo. Held at the Peoria Civic Center, Peoria, IL. A premier waterfowl expo featuring wildlife art, decoy carvers, sculptures, collectors, and call makers. For more information: Dept. of Natural Resources, Attn: Ron Allen, 524 S. Second St., Room 530, Springfield, IL 62701. (217) 785-9371.

2-4

Chesapeake Wildfowl Expo - Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art. Held on the grounds of the Ward Museum in Salisbury, MD. This weekend features a Buy-Sell-Trade with East Coast Decoy Collectors, opening of the "Cobb's Island Decoy" exhibit, auction, shooting stool competition, and retriever demonstrations. Also opening of the new Potomac River exhibits. For more info: Jane Rollins, 909 South Schumaker Drive, Salisbury, MD 21804. (410) 742-4988 ext. 106.

11

Annual Fall Decoy Auction sponsored by Frank & Frank Sporting Collectibles to be held at the Taylor Pavilion in Belmar, New Jersey. Contact Frank & Frank, 422 Lakewood-Farmingdale Rd., Howell, NJ 07731. (732) 938-2988.

17-18

Upper Shore Decoy Show - Upper Bay Museum. Held in the North East Middle School in North East, MD. Contact: The Upper Bay Museum, P.O. Box 275 North East, MD 21901 or 410-287-2675.

November

7

Decoy Museum's Anniversary Dinner. Held at the Bayou Restaurant. Dinner and an auction. Call (410) 939-3739 for ticket information.

Museum News

Carving Classes

Early in 1998, the Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Harford County, Don Mathis, the Principal of the Havre de Grace Middle School, Steve Williams, and Director of the Decoy Museum, Mary Jo Murphy teamed up to provide after school carving classes for the members of the Boys and Girls Club in Havre de Grace. Decoy carver Vernon Bryant agreed to take on the challenge of teaching a ten week carving class to ten members of the Boys and Girls Club. Once a week the students were bussed over to the Decoy Museum's carving classroom for three hour classes. In the first ten week class, Vernon taught the students how to carve a working canvasback. The last day of the class they floated the decoys in the water outside the museum. The second class was condensed to five weeks and the students carved ruddy ducks. These classes were made possible with the support of Mr. John Topfer with the Harford County Family System. Recently, the Harford County Cultural Advisory Board has approved a grant to continue these classes in the fall. If you are interested in volunteering or if your company would like to support this program, please call Mary Jo Murphy at (410) 939-3739.



The first class floats their canvasback decoys under the boardwalk. Photo by Vernon Bryant.

"Honoring the Masters"

The Honorary Chairmen for the 1998 Decoy Wildlife Art & Sportsman Festival were Lem and Steve Ward, the brothers from Crisfield, Maryland. In order to honor Lem and Steve, the Festival committee decided to hold a competition called, "Honoring the Masters." Carvers would create a decoy of their choice, in the style and manner of the Ward Brothers. In April, three men that personally knew the Ward Brothers well, Dr. Mort Kramer, Oliver Lawson, and Ronald Rue, judged the entries. The first place winner of the "Honoring the Masters" competition was a mallard hen carved by Mike Affleck. Second place

went to a redhead decoy carved by Charlie Bryan, and third place was awarded to Charlie Prinz's drake mallard. All of the entries were then sold at the Saturday evening auction during the Festival. Thank you to all of the carvers that entered, the judges, and congratulations to the winners.



Mike Affleck with his winning decoy. Photo by M.J. Murphy.

Library Dedication

It's official. The museum's library is now the Melvin L. Conrad Research Library — in honor of its generous benefactor. The dedication took place on June 17, 1998 when the Board of Directors and museum staff gathered to honor Melvin for his contributions to the library, and to present him with a token of appreciation.

Melvin's contribution consisted of over 200 volumes and periodicals on decoy collecting, carving, waterfowling, hunting dogs, and guns. The pristine collection came from Melvin's personal library, for which he meticulously selected each volume.

Patrons are encouraged to utilize this valuable museum resource for conducting research on decoy carvers, identifying decoys, or learning more about the history of waterfowling. The library's holdings may be viewed Monday through Friday by appointment.



Library Dedication: Melvin Conrad, left, and Dr. John Carriere, right, photo by M.J. Murphy.

1998 Decoy, Wildlife Art, & Sportsman Festival

Carving Competition Winners

Compiled by Warner Taylor

DECORATIVE LIFE SIZE FLOATING OPEN CLASS

1st Best of Marsh
George Stram
Mallard Drake
1634 Honeysuckle Drive
Forest Hill, MD 21050

2nd Best of Marsh
Thomas Jenkins
Pintail Drake
1899 Berne Drive
Coatesville, PA 19320

3rd Best of Marsh
Allen Lopez
Black Duck Drake
1802 Queen Ann Drive
Chester, MD 21619

1st Best of Diving
Fred Cassetta, Jr.
Red Brested Merganser Hen
P.O. Box 748
Hammonton, NJ 08037

2nd Best of Diving
John Day
Buffelhead Drake
P.O. Box 508
Cecilton, MD 21913

3rd Best of Diving
Thomas Ritchie
Goldeneye Drake
RD 2, Box 210
Meshoppen, PA 18630

1st Best of Confidence
Thomas Ritchie
Canada Goose Drake
RD 2, Box 210
Meshoppen, PA 18630

1st Best of Show Open Class
Fred Cassetta, Jr.
Red Brested Merganser Hen
P.O. Box 748
Hammonton, NJ 08037

2nd Best of Show Open Class
George Stram
Mallard Drake
1634 Honeysuckle Drive
Forest Hill, MD 21050

3rd Best of Show Open Class
Thomas Jenkins
Pintail Drake
1899 Berne Drive
Coatesville, PA 19320

DECORATIVE LIFE SIZE FLOATING INTERMEDIATE

1st Best of Marsh
William Gore
Mallard Drake
1526 Marco Drive
Pasadena, MD 21122



Exhibitor Tim Timmons works on a decoy during the show. Photo by Leo Heppner.

2nd Best of Marsh
Robert Bull
Mallard Drake
1573 Cottage Lane
Towson, MD 21286

3rd Best of Marsh
Robert Bull
Blue Wing Teal Drake
1573 Cottage Lane
Towson, MD 21286

1st Best of Diving
Dale Heitkamp
Goldeneye Drake
17 N Atwood Road
Bel Air, MD 21014

2nd Best of Diving
Walt Bram
Redhead Hen
221 Fairway Drive
Washington, NC

3rd Best of Diving
Tom Caveuto
Ruddy Duck Drake
431 Berns House Avenue
Hammonton, NJ 08037

1st Best of Confidence
Arnold Arnister
Snow Goose
690 Major's Path
South Hampton, NY 11968

2nd Best of Confidence
Richard Watkins
Brant Drake
5721 York Road
New Oxford, PA 17350

1st Best of Show Intermediate
William Gore
Mallard Drake
1526 Marco Drive
Pasadena, MD 21122

2nd Best of Show Intermediate
Dale Heitkamp
Goldeneye Drake
17 N Atwood Road
Bel Air, MD 21014

3rd Best of Show Intermediate
Walt Bram
Redhead Hen
221 Fairway Drive
Washington, NC

DECORATIVE LIFE SIZE FLOATING NOVICE CLASS

1st Best of Marsh
Kenny Rice
Wood Duck Drake
2212 Picket Street
Hopewell, VA 23806

2nd Best of Marsh
Mark Stewart
Black Duck
126 Front Street
West Fairview, PA 17025

3rd Best of Marsh
Dave Mason
Pintail Drake
3000 Sheffield Court
Fallston, MD 21047

1st Best of Diving
Kenny Rice
Redhead Drake

2212 Picket Street
Hopewell, VA 23806

2nd Best of Diving
John Bartkowski
Goldeneye Drake
2208 Queensbury Drive
Fallston, MD 21047

3rd Best of Diving
Don Castelow
Canvasback Drake
163 Crystal Lake Road
West Union, WV 26456

1st Best of Confidence
John Hockett
Canada Goose
6826 Littlewood Court
Eldersburg, MD 21784

2nd Best of Confidence
Frank Dagostin
716 Linwood Avenue
Bel Air, MD 21014

1st Best of Show Novice
Kenny Rice
Redhead Drake
2212 Picket Street
Hopewell, VA 23806

2nd Best of Show Novice
Kenny Rice
Wood Duck Drake
2212 Picket Street
Hopewell, VA 23806

3rd Best of Show Novice
John Bartkowski
Goldeneye Drake
2208 Queensbury Drive
Fallston, MD 21047

DECORATIVE MINIATURE OPEN CLASS

1st Best of Show Open
Jim Hazley
Snowy Owl
1841 Wheatland Avenue
Lancaster, PA 17603

2nd Best of Show Open
Robert Clark
Mallard Drake
1111 Overlook Drive
Coatesville, PA 19320

3rd Best of Show Open
Eddie Sheezum
Green Heron
P.O. Box 213
Hillsboro, MD 21641

DECORATIVE MINIATURE INTERMEDIATE CLASS

1st Best of Show Intermediate
Catherine Emory
Ruddy Duck Pr. Drake & Hen
126 Wills Road
Centreville, MD 21617

2nd Best of Show Intermediate
Charlotte Dutton
Buffelhead
4353 Port Tabacco Road
Nonjemoy, MD 20662

3rd Best of Show Intermediate
Ted Alderman
Avocet
P.O. Box 212
Pomery, PA 19367



The floating tank at the competition. Photo by Leo Heppner.

DECORATIVE MINIATURE NOVICE CLASS

1st Best of Show Novice
Edward Skiedrna
Mallard Pr. Drake & Hen
61 Foxwell Bend Road
Glen Burnie, MD 21061

2nd Best of Show Novice
Jack Kelly
Mallard Drake
311 Municipal Drive
Shorndale, PA 13972

3rd Best of Show Novice
Helen Callendar
Blue Heron
142 Post Road
Aberdeen, MD 21001

DECORATIVE FULL SIZE NON-FLOATING CLASS

1st Best of Show Open
Jim Hazeley
Least Tern Pr.
1841 Wheatland Avenue
Lancaster, PA 17603

2nd Best of Show Open
Jim Hazeley

Green Back Heron
1841 Wheatland Avenue
Lancaster, PA 17603

3rd Best of Show Open
Jim Hazeley
Golden Crown Kinglet
1841 Wheatland Avenue
Lancaster, PA 17603

1st Best of Show Intermediate
Charles Dutton
Eastern Blue Bird Pr.
4353 Port Tabacco Road
Nonjemoy, MD 20662

2nd Best of Show Intermediate
Catherine Emory
Ruddy Duck Pr. Drake & Hen
126 Wills Road
Centreville, MD 21617

3rd Best of Show Intermediate
J. Freeman Wright
Ring-billed Gulls
115 Old Philadelphia Road
Aberdeen, MD 21001

DECORATIVE FULL SIZE NON-FLOATING NOVICE

1st Best of Show Novice
David Welsh

Ring Neck Pheasant
572 Buttonwood Farm Road
Noresville, PA 17551

2nd Best of Show Novice
Helen Callendar
Downy Woodpecker
142 Post Road
Aberdeen, MD 21001

3rd Best of Show Novice
Marsha Webb
Old Squaw Drake
4141 Quail Way
Havre de Grace, MD

DECORATIVE SLICKS

Marsh Ducks

1st Best of Marsh
Mark Strohman
Pintail Hen
16 Hidden Cove Court
Middle River, MD 21220

2nd Best of Marsh
Mark Costilow
Gadwall Drake
206 Lincoln Street
Amherst, OH 44001

3rd Best of Marsh
Mark Costilow
Blue Wing Teal
206 Lincoln Street
Amherst, OH 44001

1st Best of Diving
Mark Strohman
Common Eider Drake
16 Hidden Cove Court
Middle River, MD 21220

2nd Best of Diving
Charles Prinz
Old Squaw Drake
458 Blueridge Drive
Dayton, OH 45414

3rd Best of Diving
Tom Rogers
Red Breasted Merganser Hen
Route 18, Box 11AA
Snow Hill, NC 28580



Competition entry of ring-billed gulls by Jay Freeman Wright. Photo by Mr. Wright.



A young contestant in the head whittling contest. Photo by Leo Heppner.

Slicks

1st Best of Confidence
Charles Prinz
Ross Goose
458 Blueridge Drive
Dayton, OH 45414

2nd Best of Confidence
Gary Bryan
Grebe
5560 Wood Side Drive
Nashport, OH 43830

3rd Best of Confidence
Gary Bryan
Grebe
5560 Wood Side Drive
Nashport, OH 43830

Best of Show

1st Best of Show
Mark Strohman
Gadwell Drake
16 Hidden Cove Court
Middle River, MD 21220

2nd Best of Show
Mark Costilow
Gadwell Drake
206 Lincoln Street
Amherst, OH 44001

3rd Best of Show
Charles Prinz
Ross Goose
458 Blueridge Drive
Dayton, OH 45414

FISH COMPETITION

Fresh Water Fish

1st
Joseph Coppock Sr.
Brook Trout
731 Claire Road
Philadelphia, PA 19128

2nd Fresh Water
Edwin Gaupp Rf.
Small Mouth Bass
260 N. Mannheim Avenue
Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215

3rd Fresh Water
Edward Darwin
5314 Holden Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21214

Salt Water Fish

1st
Ed Itter
Angel Fish
8098 Ventor Road
Pasadena, MD 21122

2nd
Edward Darwin
5314 Holden Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21214

3rd
Joseph Coppock Sr.
731 Claire Road
Philadelphia, PA 19128

Interpretive Fish

1st
Ed Itter
Whale
8098 Ventor Road
Pasadena, MD 21122

2nd
Charlotte Dutton
Manta Ray

4353 Port Tobacco Road
Najamory, MD 20062

3rd
Ron Roscissewski
Sperm Whale
428 Lakeside Drive
North East, MD 21901

Best of Show Fish

1st Best of Show
Joseph Coppock Sr.
Brook Trout
731 Claire Road
Philadelphia, PA 19128

2nd Best of Show
Edwin Gaupp Rf.
Small Mouth Bass
260 N. Mannheim Avenue
Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215

3rd Best of Show
Ed Itter
Reef Fish (Angel)
8098 Ventor Road
Pasadena, MD 21122

HEAD WHITTling CONTEST

1st
Joey Jobes

2nd
Charles Jobes

3rd
Dan Carson

PAINTING CONTEST

1st
Mary Carol Larrimore

2nd
Ed Itter

3rd
Les Worrell

YOUTH CARVING CONTEST

1st
Gary Pongracz

Exhibit Update

NATIVE AMERICAN TULE DECOY

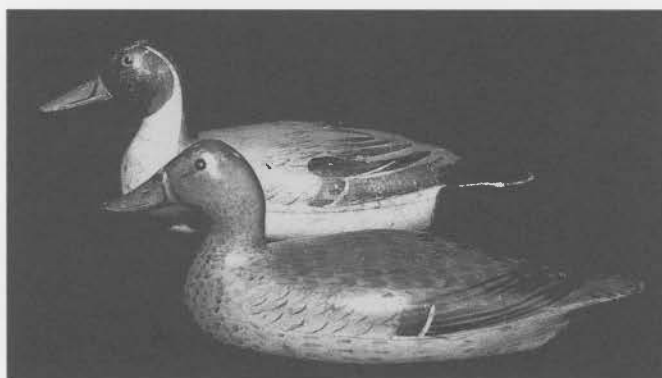
A native American tule decoy has recently been added to the museum's "What Is A Decoy?" exhibit. The contemporary tule decoy was made by Joey Allen from Fallon, Nevada. Joey is a descendant of the Northern Paiute Indian tribe; the same tribe who made the infamous bird skin-covered & plain tule decoys discovered by archeologists in Lovelock Cave, Nevada. The decoys were a very important discovery, as they were tangible evidence that decoys were used in North America over 1,000 years ago. Joey's decoy is made in the same tradition as his ancestors', and the museum is very pleased to have his decoy on display. Thanks go to Ernie Mills for arranging the donation.



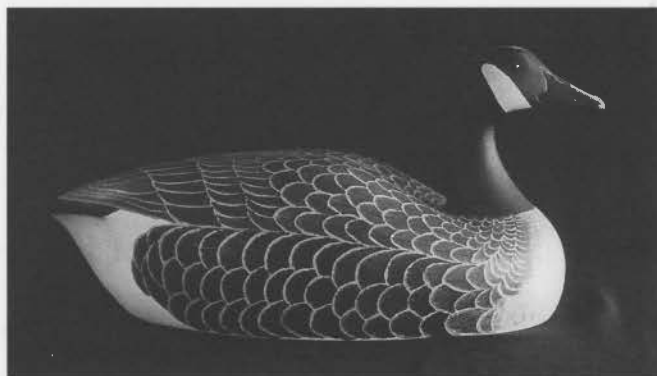
Tule duck decoy by Joey Allen, Fallon, Nevada, photo by M.J. Murphy.

ILLINOIS RIVER DECOYS

The museum is currently exhibiting a collection of



Pair of pintail decoys by G. Bert Graves of Oglesby, Illinois. On loan from Melvin Conrad, photo by M.J. Murphy.



Canada goose decoy by Hector Whittington from Peoria, Illinois. On loan from Larry Lambert, photo by M.J. Murphy.

decoys from the Illinois River. The exhibit includes decoys made by such legends as Charles H. Perdew, G. Bert Graves, Robert A. Elliston, and Hector Whittington. This fascinating look at an important waterfowling region is being made possible through loans from Larry Lambert of Virginia Beach, Virginia and Melvin Conrad of Colorado, Maryland.

With its rich waterfowling heritage, the Illinois River has been home to many prolific decoy carvers. The sleek working decoys of this region are prized by collectors throughout North America, and the carving legends of this region continue to inspire the work of others. Don't just take our word for it, stop by the museum and see for yourself. The fine craftsmanship of the Illinois River decoy makers will be on display through December 1998.

WILFRED BUSH DECOYS

In keeping with the theme of decoys from the Illinois River Region, a collection of Wilfred Bush decoys and miniature carvings will be on exhibit through August 1998. Wilfred, who hails from Pekin, Illinois, has been carving in the Illinois River tradition for over 60 years.

For a more in-depth look at this talented Illinois River carver and his decoys, please refer to the article on Wilfred Bush featured in this issue of *The Canvasback*. Artifacts for this exhibit are on loan from the personal collections of Wilfred Bush and James Turek.

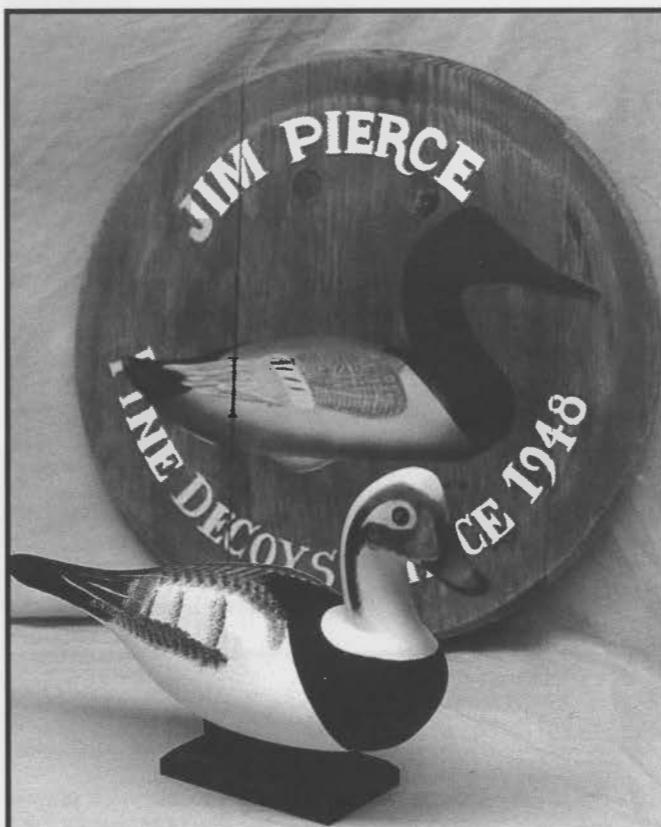
CORRECTION

The last issue of *The Canvasback* published a wrong phone number of Mergler Electric Company. The correct telephone number is (410) 939-3880

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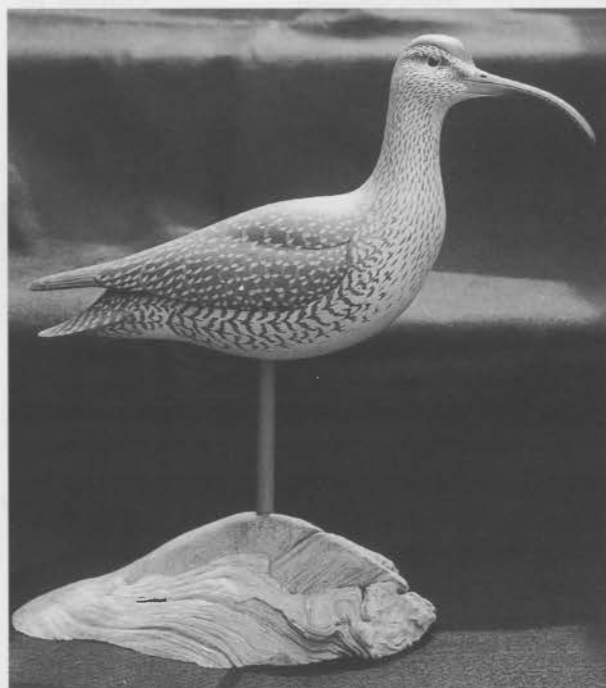


PIERCE'S DECOYS

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Havre de Grace, MD 21078 (410) 939-2272

INTRODUCING
THE 17TH ANNUAL DECOY
Wildlife Art, & Sportsman Festival's
HONORARY CHAIRMAN:

OLIVER LAWSON



It is with great honor that the
1999 Decoy, Wildlife Art, & Sportsman
Festival Committee and the Havre
de Grace Decoy Museum announces
Oliver Lawson
as the festival's honorary chairman.
The Decoy Museum will be exhibiting
works by Mr. Lawson during the festival.
The Decoy Festival will be held on
May 7, 8, & 9, 1999.
Admission: \$5.00 per day, or \$8.00 for a
weekend pass.

For more information contact the Havre de Grace Decoy
Museum, P.O. Box 878, 215 Giles Street, Havre de Grace,
MD 21078. Phone: (410) 939-3739, Fax (410) 939-3775

Weekend Carving Demonstrations at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

September 5, Harold Goodman
September 6, Barb Wachter

October 4, OPEN

September 12, Charlie Bryan
September 13, Charlie Bryan

DUCK FAIR

September 19, Mike Gleason
September 20, OPEN
September 26, OPEN
September 27, OPEN

October 10, Charlie Bryan
October 11, Charlie Bryan
CHARLIE BRYAN WEEKEND

October 17, OPEN
October 18, John Ingoglia
October 24, OPEN
October 25, Dick and Linda Robinson

October 3, OPEN

November 1, Mike Gleason

If you are interested in being a weekend carver on any of the OPEN dates, please contact Pat Vincenti at 410-734-6238. Thanks!

www.decoymuseum.com

CLASSIFIED

For our members we offer free classified ads to buy, sell, and trade decoys or related objects. Please keep ads under 15 words. For non-members, the cost is \$5.00 for 15 words. Mail your classified ads to: Decoy Museum, P.O. Box 878, Havre de Grace, MD 21078.

FOR SALE: Full size, Havre de Grace style swan bodies. Western Cedar. \$35-\$50 each. Call Parkers' Decoys (717) 284-3273.

WANTED: Old waterfowling & shorebird hunting photos. Duck, goose, and swan neck and leg bands. Old duck hunting books. Dean Dashner, 349 S. Green Rd., Neenah, WI 54954 or call (920) 725-4350.

FOR SALE: R. Madison Mitchell collection for sale. All ornamental decoys "Christmas Birds." Call Bakers Decoys (410) 586-4670.

WANTED: Decoy or body with Reckless Brand. Call Dan at (410) 586-2378.

WANTED: Daniel Baker III Goose full-size decoy 1990. Call Matt at (410) 257-1053.

BUYING: Any decoys, including miniatures, pictures, photos, and memorabilia of Douglas Jester (1876-1961) of Chincoteague, Virginia. Call Fitz Godwin at (703) 528-9800 or write to 26C Auburn Ct., Alexandria, Virginia 22305. All is of interest for purchasing, especially of Mr. Jester's carving decoys or any of his boats.



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of the
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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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Annual Membership Level:

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Individual: \$20 _____
Family: \$35 _____
Business: \$100 _____
Life Member: \$500 _____

Please mail this form with your check or money order to:
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