

The Canvasback

Fall 2001
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Hayre de Grace Decoy Museum

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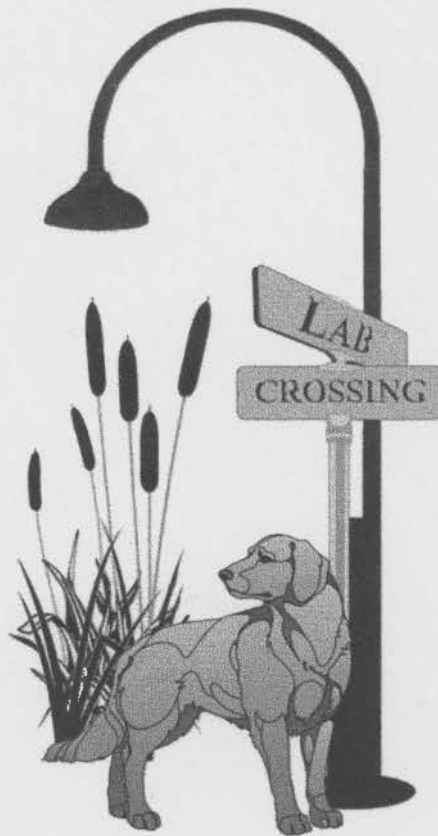
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can•vas•back (kan'ves bak'), *n., pl. -backs*, (esp. collectively) - **back**. 1. A north American wild duck, the male of which has a whitish back and a reddish-brown head and neck. 2. A style of decoy made famous by carvers of the Susquehanna Flats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

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ON THE COVER

This year's museum decoy on the banks of the Susquehanna River. Photo by Heidi Schnakenberg

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Greetings Members,

It is with wonderful anticipation that I look forward to working for you at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. The museum is a jewel, sitting there on the banks of the Susquehanna Flats overlooking the Chesapeake Bay. From a personal perspective, the museum addresses some of my favorite interests including the rich culture and heritage of people working on the Chesapeake Bay and surrounding waterways, the beautiful art form of a "tool," and the history and ecology of the bay region itself.

As your new Executive Director, I bring to you over 25 years of professional museum experience and degrees from Frostburg State College and George Washington University. In addition to my professional and academic credentials, I will share with you a willingness to learn new skills and an enthusiasm towards undertaking the immediate tasks of enhancing the museum's marketing strategies, capital improvements plans and endowment fund while maintaining the high quality of professional standards set with your recent AAM accreditation.

With family and friends nearby (particularly those I haven't met and have just met) I look forward to relocating to Maryland and making Havre de Grace my home. Please know that I work with an open door policy and look forward to meeting you and exchanging ideas and information about the museum and the area in general.

Sincerely,

Debra Pence

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*From
the
President*



Dear Museum Member,

The structural damage to our building has been corrected. The gift shop has been rebuilt and renovated. Hopefully now, we can restart working on our Strategic Plan for the growth of our museum.

Only because of the generosity of our membership, County Executive James M. Harkins, Havre de Grace Mayor David Craig and our county and city governments, are we able to announce these accomplishments.

Our county delegation in Annapolis has shown concern and a real interest in our situation. Delegate Mary Dulaney James has visited the construction site. She is presenting our problem to the State. We are hopeful of being granted funds to help us pay for this major project.

I would like to thank the entire Jobes family for helping us make our Duck Fair a success again. Our staff, though short handed, along with the volunteers worked hard to ensure a great event.

We now have a new Executive Director, Ms. Debra Pence. She is a well-educated and experienced administrator who will help solidify our staff. She will help our museum to grow and prosper. I am sure she will be able to rely on the continued strong support of our membership.

I see stability and only good happenings for the museum in the foreseeable future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "John A. Carriere" with a stylized flourish at the end. Below the signature, the name "John A. Carriere, M.D." is printed.

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 decoys as this art form applies to the social and economic life of the upper Chesapeake Bay region.

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Alvin Meekins

A Look at this Master of the Merganser Decoy and His Hoopers Island Home

By
Chad Tragakis



Alvin Meekins as a young waterman. This c. 1940s photograph was probably taken at a travelling carnival in Cambridge. Courtesy of Frances Meekins.

Hoopers Island, Maryland is one of those rare natural places on earth presenting a study in unlikely contrast. It is at once breathtakingly beautiful and at the same time flatly desolate. Teeming with abundant wildlife and nature's busy activity, it is devoid in many parts of any human inhabitants. Under bright warm skies, it has been compared to Eden. But in a violent storm, it sees nature at her most treacherous. In recent years, there has evolved

another strange and fascinating duality. It is a community made up of generations who have tirelessly worked the water, land, and rich tidal marsh that surrounds it, and more recently, those who come simply to enjoy them. It is an island seemingly isolated from the rest of the world – yet connected instantly to the entire planet via satellite and internet. Still, the pace of life remains slower here in this quaint corner of Dorchester County, and things are generally simpler. Swift or sudden changes are frowned upon. All this has left the ancient Chesapeake Bay community much the way it was, in some ways, 50 or 100 years ago.

One thing that has not changed in the last few hundred years, however, is the island's bounty of wildlife and abundance of waterfowl – notably among them, the red-breasted merganser. Locals call them "salt water pheasants," "spring pheasant," "wadgetts," "hairy heads," or simply "pheasants." For centuries, Hoopers Island men with surnames like Ruark, Tolley, Mills, Aaron, Lewis, Creighton, Travers, Simmons, Dean, Phillips, and Parks have hunted pheasants for the table. And many of these men tried their hand at making the decoys needed to lure these attractive and colorful birds within gunning range. To be sure, many of these were quickly and carelessly fashioned resulting in somewhat crude and unimaginative decoys. They were, after all, merely tools.

But that said, there were Hoopers Island makers who created effective and stylistic decoys that went a step further. Cleanly carved, yes. Simply painted, yes. But whereas the shortcomings of other Hoopers Island decoys made them crude, the merits of these birds made them masterfully folkly. One maker whose decoys certainly fit this description has come to be synonymous with Hoopers Island merganser decoys. His notoriety was due in large part to fortunate timing. For he made and used decoys – like Madison Mitchell to his north and the Ward Brothers to his south – at that crossroads in time when a hunter's tool became a collector's prize. For over 40 years, his birds have been held up as prime examples of Hoopers Island decoys and the proud standard by which others are judged. He was a hardworking and well-liked man who spent his entire life living off the bounty of the Bay. His name was Alvin Meekins.

Historical records put immigrants with the Meekins name in America as early as the 1650s and in Dorchester County by the end of the 17th century. Of English and Welsh descent, the Meekins clan have been a part of Hoopers Island practically since Henry Hooper is believed to have settled it. So integral were the Meekins to developing the early community, that a section of the island (Meekins Neck) and its adjacent road still bear the family name. Hoopers Island remains one of America's earliest

settlements and properties here claim some of the nation's oldest land grants. Legend suggests that settlers traded blankets to local Nanticoke Indians in exchange for the land.

A Captain John Meekins is among the first with that surname encountered in early waterfowling lore (circa late 19th century). He was a notable hunter and, while genealogical records are not conclusive, may in fact be Alvin's grandfather. Alvin's father, also named John Meekins, was a well-known Hoopers Island boat-builder. He was known around the island as "Johnny Baker," but unfortunately, there is no one left to explain the origins or meaning of this nickname. John and his wife Lillian had four sons: Alvin, Dewey, Hilbert, Hommy and one daughter, Adelle. Alvin was born on September 30, 1918.

While at one time, almost the entire Meekins family called Hoopers Island home, today, Alvin's nephew Leeman Travers, Jr. is his only close relative still living there. Lee is a lifelong Hoopers Islander, who, like his uncle, made nearly his entire livelihood from the bounty of the Bay. He has worked crabbing, tonging oysters, and as a truck driver hauling seafood and produce across the country. His friend Lessie Coulbourne is also a lifelong Hoopers Islander, and both share vivid recollections of life here, long since past. They live within sight of the picturesque Hooper Island Light, not far from where Alvin called home more than 50 years ago. Lee and Lessie explain that Hoopers Island (also called Hooper's or Hooper Island) is actually three distinct pieces of land (sometimes referred to as First Island, Second Island and Third Island or, in terms of Upper, Middle and Lower). The chain stretches about ten miles in length between the Honga River and the Chesapeake Bay and is about half a mile across at its widest point. The first island contains the villages of Honga and Fishing Creek. The village of Hoopersville is located in the middle of the second island. Applegarth was the name of the settlement on the third and is still how locals refer to the lower island. Most residents of Applegarth left during the First World War, never to return. The "great storm of 1933" washed the bridge to Applegarth away, leaving the island accessible only by boat and deserted save for the occasional hunter.

To this day, there is a strong sense of community on Hoopers Island – stronger than most. Nearly everybody knows everybody else – or knows of them through friends or relatives, and few people bother to lock their doors at night. If a neighbor runs out of milk or flour, it's not uncommon to run across the street to borrow some, saving the 40-minute round trip to the closest store. This sense of living, working, struggling and celebrating together was stronger still in Alvin's day. It made life in a place like

Hoopers Island bearable. In some ways, it seems idyllic, but to be sure, life on Hoopers Island was often challenging.

There were few paved roads on the island until the 1940s-1950s, and major infrastructure improvements (including reinforced bridges) did not occur until much later. Instead, roads were made of gravel and oyster shells and bridges were sometimes perilous. Running water was rare and electricity scarce on parts of the island – even up into the 1940s. Families used kerosene lamps, oil-burning stoves, and iceboxes for refrigeration. Lee vividly recalls the old foot-pedal operated Sears & Roebuck washing machine his grandmother used, with an air-cooled motor. Mosquitoes also presented a constant challenge to Hoopers Islanders. To help deter them, it was common to burn bits of cloth in metal cans or small buckets. These would be placed near doorways where the smoke would help keep the insects at bay.

Growing up, Alvin never attended school and like many of his peers, never learned to read or write. Formal education was hard to come by on the island at that time. He began a life of hard work at an early age and, as Hoopers Island was essentially a seafood town, this included fishing, crabbing, tonging oysters, seine hauling, and performing odd jobs for the local crab picking houses and processing plants. He was a young man when the Depression hit, and it hit his small island community particularly hard.

During World War II, when he was about 25, Alvin was hired part-time by Russell Hall's Seafood, one of the large crab "pickin' houses" on the island. A young lady working there full-time named Frances Lewis caught his fancy and Alvin was instantly smitten. While courting her, Alvin offered assistance to her father, who was building a new home at the time. By the time the house was complete, Alvin and Frances were engaged to be married. Frances, who lives in nearby Cambridge today, remembers that her father would often tease Alvin claiming that he, "came over here to help build my house, and ended up stealing my daughter!" Alvin and Frances were married in their preacher's Cambridge home, and settled back in the Fishing Creek section of Hoopers Island. The couple lived in a modest two-story wooden home on the banks of a small inlet. Alvin continued working the water and, in season, would go soft-shell crabbing in the lagoon behind his house. The couple had three children, Erma Lee, Helen, and Alvin. "Times were tight," Frances recalls, "you did whatever you could to survive. We lived off the land then . . . fish, crabs, ducks, raised our own vegetables."

Due to its fishy taste, few places in the U.S. find people eating red-breasted merganser, but "living off the land" on Hoopers Island included eating the ubiquitous ducks.

The diet of the “*Mergus serrator*” is almost exclusively fish; they swallow small fish whole underwater and bring larger ones to the surface. The joke goes that eating merganser is akin to a “fish and fowl” dinner. Clearly, these “pheasant” are a far cry from their undisputedly tasty cousins who share their name, but they were plentiful and locals swear they weren’t bad at all. Boiling the meat steadily all day in salt water, as is the custom, helps reduce – but does not completely remove – the fishy flavor.

Other local food sources for islanders around this time were, surprisingly, hawks and “hanners” (the local name for redheaded woodpeckers). While some enjoyed the sport involved in gunning hanners, they were considered a delectable addition to any meal. Hawks on the other hand, provided locals like Alvin with more than just sport or a meal. Each fall, from the 1920s until the 1950s, the Maryland State Conservation Department paid a bounty of 50-cents per hawk head, in an effort to protect small fur-bearers and chickens. Frances recalls that she would occasionally accompany Alvin into the woods and fields on his hawk hunting forays, with young daughter Erma Lee in tow. Once the heads were turned in, the bodies were eaten, which, Lee recalls tastily, were usually accompanied by flour bread, sweet potatoes, and mashed potatoes.

It was around this time that Alvin received his nickname. This is practically a rite of passage on Hoopers Island, where virtually everyone (men, at least) have a clever or ironic moniker by which they are commonly known. These are usually inspired by physical characteristics, personal traits or memorable events involving the individual. And so it was that to friends and family, Alvin would now be known as “Horn Man” or simply, “Horn.” “We used to call him ‘Horn Man,’ that’s what everyone always called him,” Lee remembers, “if you mentioned Alvin, they wouldn’t know Alvin, but ‘Horn Man,’ yeah,



Alvin with daughter Erma Lee on Hoopers Island, c. late 1940s. On occasion, Alvin’s wife Frances and young Erma Lee would accompany him on his hawk hunting forays. Courtesy of Frances Meekins.

everybody knew ‘Horn Man.’ The exact origins of this name are murky, but some locals believe it was a reference to deer hunting, a favorite and regular activity for Alvin. Lee and Frances have no clue, but don’t discount the possibility that it may have a more risqué origin. Some in the decoy collecting community have referred to Alvin as “Gunner.” This was a secondary nickname that he did not adopt until much later in life, and even then, it was only used by some in the collecting community. To friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors, he was and will always be “Horn.”

Lee remembers his uncle fondly as a handsome, clean-shaven man with coal black hair, brown eyes, bright white teeth and an average build. Everyone remembers Alvin as a friendly, good-hearted man – very easy going. He was the kind of guy who would do you a favor if in need, or offer to help out with something without being asked. Lee and Frances remember that Alvin never drank and never smoked, but would occasionally fall into a game of cards. Five-card poker was his game, and bets were typically a nickel or a dime. He wasn’t a very religious man, but he was honest, good natured, and committed to his wife and family. Besides the occasional game of poker, Alvin’s only vice was a bit of profanity. “He had a mouth on him,” Frances recalls. Lee agrees, remembering that, “yeah, he used to do a lot of cussin’.” Typical of many that came of age during the Depression, Alvin was fiscally conservative. “He was tight,” Frances remembers, “unless it was something he wanted. He didn’t like to spend money, but boy, if he wanted a soda, he’d pay a dollar for it.”

For most islanders, walking was a way of life and the primary mode of transportation. But in the early 1950s, that changed for Alvin Meekins. He saved up enough money to buy an old, used Chevrolet. Lee remembers how happy Alvin was “cruisin’ up and down the island.” The problem was, since he couldn’t read or write, getting a driver’s license was next to impossible. Lee chuckles as he sheepishly recounts Alvin’s ever-present resourcefulness in dealing with the license-issuing agent. “Well, I know what he done. He took that man crab cakes, and oysters, and soft shells . . .” Needless to say, Alvin got the license.

It is generally believed that Alvin’s first decoys date from the late 1940s. Certainly, he may have tried his hand at a bird or a rig before this, but by all accounts, he was turning out decoys by the early 1950s. Alvin knew all the local gunners and decoy makers of his day, and is known to have had a particularly close friendship with Clarence Hix Creighton, or “Pap” as he was known. “Pap” was probably the most prominent maker in the area when Alvin was coming up and, along with other area makers of old, can be counted among Alvin’s likeliest influences. Alvin’s



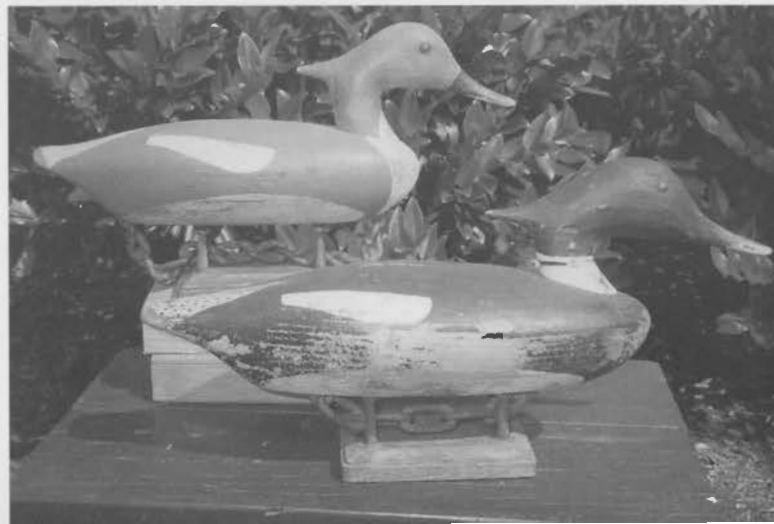
merganser decoys, for which he is best known and which constitute his greatest output, generally follow the “proto-typical” Hoopers Island style: solid, streamlined bodies with flat bottoms, flat breasts, gently rounded sides, and sloping tails. Heads were often carved crisply from thin boards, giving them a sleek, alert look. Many Hoopers Island birds were made on the “oversized” side – some, ridiculously so, and are truly deserving of the local term for such decoys: “fence post pheasants.” While his style varied over the years (and often, from bird to bird), Meekins’ decoys basically fall into one of three different types. First are his long, clean and streamlined birds (in both head and body). His earliest known birds (c. 1950) are of this style, and Church Creek resident and longtime Hoopers Island decoy collector Ronnie Newcomb, feels these represent Alvin’s best work. Most collectors would agree. A second style of Meekins decoy one is likely to encounter are similar to the long, sleek birds described above, but are a bit shorter and exhibit humpbacked bodies. Other collectors feel these sculptural birds (which are known to have been made c. 1960, possibly earlier) represent his best work. A third style often found exhibit rounded but blocky bodies with stubbier, squat heads. Many of his later (c. late 1970s-1980s) decoys fall into this category, and most collectors agree they fall short of his earlier work. It should be noted that it is often difficult to ascertain the true vintage of a Meekins decoy. Again, he made birds for decades; constantly moving within and between essentially the same basic patterns and styles. While outright fakes are not common, some collectors note that the strong demand for a genuine pair of early Meekins birds has prompted some unscrupulous individuals to artificially age his later decoys, and in some cases, to go so far as to create false provenance for them. As with any waterfowl decoy, collectors are encouraged to examine works closely and to purchase from knowledgeable and respected sources.

A nicely matched pair of c. 1950s red-breasted mergansers — Meekins earliest and arguably best style. Note the simple but effective paint patterns, tack eyes, and chain ballast weights on these well-gunned birds. Collection of the author.

After years of service in Virginia, this c. 1950s “flying” red-breasted merganser decoy was retired to decorate an Eastern Shore gunning club. Collection of the author.

As a young, married man, Alvin’s best friend was his brother-in-law, James Lewis. For years, the pair did seemingly everything together: regularly working the water hand-tonging oysters and crabbing. “Tongin’ season” ran from the middle of October until the end of March. Crabbing ran from April until August. This left September free to repair crab pots, take odd jobs at the picking houses (and around town), and to make decoys. Alvin and James would usually hunt together and would often make decoys together as well. Their styles and paint patterns were very similar, Lee recalls, and it is likely that some decoys attributed solely to Alvin were in fact made in part or in whole by James, and vice versa.

Lee remembers that Alvin loved making decoys outside his Hoopers Island home. He would usually do the rough work in his yard and the finish work while sitting on his porch. Lee enjoyed watching his uncle craft a small rig of merganser decoys. He started by using a pencil to draw them out, then roughly chopped out the bodies with an old hatchet. He then used a wood rasp to form the clean lines on his decoy bodies, and a trusty Barlow jack-knife to carve heads, sharpening it every ten to fifteen minutes. Nearly all of Alvin’s merganser heads feature single crests, though he did craft a few triple (and likely double) crested heads in his later years. Lee remembers that once in a while, due to their somewhat delicate nature, his merganser heads would break during carving. Understandably, this irked Alvin, but he rarely got upset over it – or anything for that matter. At times, he would complete a whole decoy – body, head, paint, and ballast – start to finish. More often though, as Lee recalls, he would work in a sort of assembly-line fashion – carving several bodies, several heads, and then painting and ballasting a handful of decoys at the same time. Alvin mixed his own paint colors and, like most Hoopers Island makers at the time, used regular, everyday house-paint. Most of Alvin’s decoys are found with tack eyes, but some of his later birds





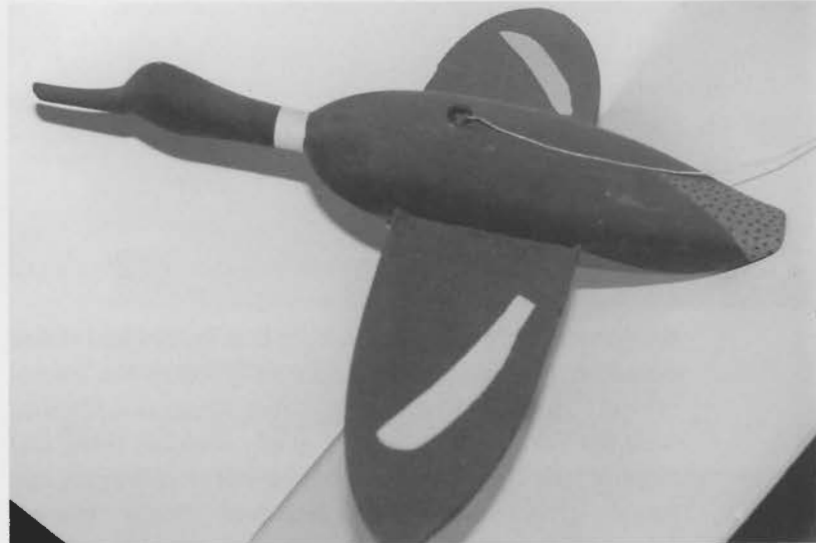
A nice selection of Meekins' later, c. 1980s waterfowl decoys. This photo was taken in front of the shed behind Alvin's Cambridge home. Courtesy of Frances Meekins.

exhibit painted eyes.

As resourceful as they came, Alvin used whatever wood he could get his hands on. In the early days, this included a lot of driftwood. Lee remembers that Alvin once carved several birds from an old boat mast. Later, Alvin purchased wood at the local Spicer's Mill. He used primarily pine and occasionally cedar.

Aside from their typical "fence post" look, Hoopers Island decoys are famous for the craziest and most unexpected ballast weights on all the Bay. Large bolts, iron spikes, rusty horse shoes, oyster rakes, old skates, boat scuppers (and other nautical hardware), parts of plows, springs, oar lock sockets, wrenches, pipe fittings, and bicycle parts have all been found on the bottoms of Hoopers Island decoys. Alvin's birds were no exception and while most do employ chain links (and some lead strip weights), many are known to feature more outlandish attachments. If small chain links were used, Alvin would usually attach both ends evenly to the bottom of the bird, so that the middle section hung down. If a thick chain was used, it usually only contained a few links, and was affixed on one end only, typically to the bottom center of the decoy.

Eddie Dean, a lifelong Hoopers Islander and longtime collector of local birds fondly remembers Meekins and his decoys. "He was an interesting man," he recalls, "always a jolly person, always had time to talk to you about what he was working on." Eddie, whose father Jesse Dean ran the Swan Island Gunning Club in Hoopersville for over 20 years, remembers that Alvin, like most island men, made his own birds because he couldn't afford any others. "He made a simple but effective bird," Eddie says, admiring Meekins' work. Lee notes that Alvin, like many other is-



Top view of a "flying" Meekins red-breasted merganser. While this example dates from the mid-1980s, the styling varies little from the flyers Alvin made in the 1950s and 60s. Collection of Tommy Phillips.

land carvers, would occasionally make his decoys with far less care than usual, "so that if a game warden came along, you could just leave em'." Frances also remembers that, over the years, Alvin lost many a decoy to theft (and possibly, confiscation) by leaving them in his skiff on the bank.

Tommy Phillips, another lifelong Hoopers Islander and grandson of market hunter Charlie Phillips, has fond recollections of Alvin Meekins. "I'd see him regularly at the local auctions and sales," Tommy remembers, "he loved to go to the Thursday night sales . . . he never missed it!" Over the years, Tommy built a fine collection of Alvin's later work – often trading him factory decoys, which Alvin enjoyed collecting, or bartering repair services for birds. Tommy recalls that, in the last years, Alvin's son would occasionally assist his father by painting a bird or two.

Alvin's early output was primarily red-breasted mergansers. Other species known from this period include "butterballs" (drake buffleheads), "dippers" (hen buffleheads), canvasbacks, bluebills, a few common (or American) mergansers, and a handful of loon decoys (perhaps 6 or 10). In his later years, he is known to have made red-breasted mergansers, "s'now" (hooded mergansers), buffleheads, goldeneyes, canvasbacks, geese, brant, loon, and swan. Lee also remembers seeing a few mallards, bluebills, redheads, and at least one wood duck. He crafted a few

A handsome pair of c. 1980s red-breasted mergansers (hen is a sleeper). While a bit blockier overall, note how similar these are to the pair he made decades earlier. Collection of Eddie Dean.



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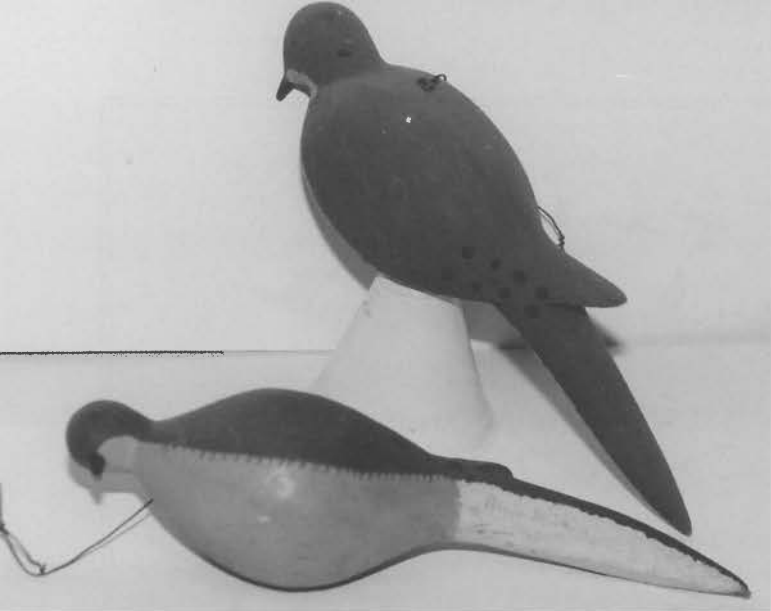
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Pair of working dove decoys c. mid-1980s. Collection of Tommy Phillips.

miniatures and carved a number shorebird decoys in the later years as well. Eddie Dean remembers that Alvin made “a little bit of everything” in the late 1970s and early 80s.

Over the years, Alvin made a small number (perhaps 10 or 12) of “flying” mergansers affixed with painted canvas wings on metal frames. While at least a few of these decoys are believed to date from the 1950s, collector Ronnie Newcomb commissioned a matched pair from Meekins years later. “He didn’t like to make them,” Ronnie recalls, “because he had to get his wife to sew the canvas wings.” In the early days, these “flying” decoys would occasionally be hung from stakes and placed over merganser floaters to add an extra touch of realism to a rig. Most, however, invariably ended up as lawn ornaments or decorative accents. Ronnie remembers well Alvin’s regular forays back to his beloved Hoopers Island to hunt and crab. “You’ll never see another man like him,” Ronnie says admiringly.

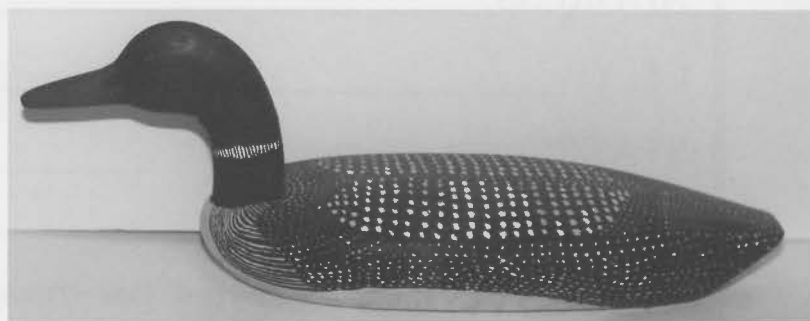
While Alvin Meekins is known to have made many decoys (possibly more than most Hoopers Island makers), some collectors feel he did not make – and physically, could not have made – all of the many hundreds of birds (primarily mergansers) with which he is seemingly credited. There may be a few explanations for this. First, countless local gunners and watermen have tried their hand at fashioning a few birds at one time or another (and again, merganser rigs of six or ten birds were not uncommon). Nearly all of these makers carved in the same “prototypical” Hoopers Island style, and some are thought to have copied Alvin’s widely known and effective style (again, influenced by “Pap” Creighton). Second, since there is such strong similarity between makers’ styles on and

Common loon decoy c. mid 1980s. Collection of Tommy Phillips.

around Hoopers Island, over the years, local hunters, antique dealers and collectors may have mistakenly attributed their “unknown” Hoopers Island birds to the most notable local maker they knew. His ranging styles, varying degrees of proficiency and care, and lengthy period of production may all have helped to facilitate this. Finally, some collectors believe that a number of the earlier (circa 1940s-1950s) decoys attributed to Alvin (chiefly mergansers), are actually the work of his boat-building father, John. This is certainly a possibility, but there is no evidence to support it.

In Alvin’s day, the arrival of migrating mergansers in Hoopers Island (around March and April) was greeted joyously by local gunners. It must be noted, however, that by this time, hunting season had been closed for months. Lee remembers the stake blinds that Alvin and James used on the shoreline, made from old grain sacks. “We’d set blinds up anywhere, mostly early in the morning,” Lee remembers, “like three or four in the morning . . . set ‘em on the banks, wait ‘til daybreak . . . and make sure there were no game wardens around,” he recalls, laughing. Lee remembers that in those days, seasons and bag limits were regularly skirted. Push skiffs were used to move from island to island, and to navigate through the marshy coves, lagoons and inlets. The stake blind was completely portable, thus making this type of quick-in/quick-out gunning possible. Alvin and James also hunted from offshore blinds, built on stilts in the watery marsh of Hoopers Island’s many inlets.

“We’d put out about ten or twelve decoys,” Lee remembers when gunning with his uncle, “that was plenty, ‘cause in them days, there wasn’t many hunters. Sometimes he’d put more out . . .” Lee notes that Alvin would occasionally mix species to imitate nature when setting decoys, putting canvasbacks out a little further than the mergansers. It is also worth noting here, as many hunters point out, that mergansers usually decoy to any species. Lee remembers that Alvin would bring a rig of decoys he made and James would bring his birds, creating a sort of friendly rivalry between the two to see whose would work better. When asked which of his uncle’s decoys he thinks were most effective, Lee diplomatically responds, “well, I



didn't do much shootin' – I was basically the retriever," he laughs, noting that Alvin never owned a dog. Lee recalls that Alvin did own two shotguns, but would usually only hunt with one at a time. While one of these guns was contemporary, the other was a bona fide antique. Still, even into the 1950s Alvin was regularly using his 12 gauge double barrel Winchester (with hammers!) dating from the 1800s. Alvin was always sure to cover his guns with an old grass sack to keep the salt water off of them.

Since the days of the Honga Indians, hunting has been integral to life on Hoopers Island. The rich abundance and variety of game animals and waterfowl have provided sustenance for its people and good sport for locals and visitors alike. This abundance is not without limit, however, and sadly, for well over a century, illegal hunting, poaching and other destructive practices have been prevalent on and around Hoopers Island. As honest and good-natured as he was, Alvin was not immune to the lure of illicit and illegal waterfowling. He would occasionally shoot birds over-limit and out of season. When hunting mergansers out of season, Lee remembers that Alvin usually wouldn't shoot more than three or four at a time. "He didn't want to have to get rid of so many pheasant if the warden came," Lee explains, for a few birds could be easily disposed of. In his youth, Alvin is known to have shot cranes and other protected birds for practice. In the 1950s, he was also known to have used two boats when seine hauling – use of one was the legal limit. But while he would regularly skirt limits and regulations, he was never known to have experienced a run-in with the law. "Oh he was scared of the game warden alright," Lee recalls, ruefully, "he didn't want to pay the fines." Ironically, when he moved to Cambridge, Alvin's next door neighbor for many years was a federal game warden. The two became fast friends and their conversations would invariably turn to waterfowl and gunning.

Made up primarily of wealthy sportsmen, the Wroten's Island Gun Club – located just off Hoopers Island – played a small but memorable role in Alvin's life. While he is not believed to have served as a guide there, Alvin was occasionally employed to do odd jobs at the private club. It is not known if Wroten's Island ever used local decoys, but they did own Bob McGaw canvasbacks and Charles Birch

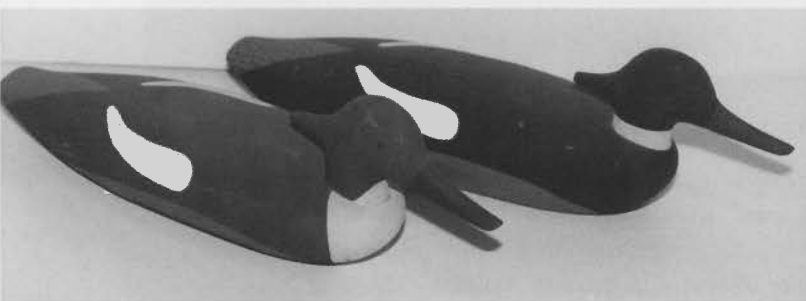
geese. Lee remembers that each spring, he would earn extra money by helping his uncles Alvin and James pick the small crop of asparagus grown on the grounds of the club. "We'd pick it, pack it, ship it in crates, take the boat over there and get it and unload it," he remembers. Frances remembers hearing rumors of more than just hunting over at Wroten's Island. "I heard that these men had women down there for a good time, and I said, 'well, what's he doin' down there then?'" So I ran down there to check up on him and, boy I felt like a fool . . . it was just a bunch of old men," she recalls laughing.

In the early 1950s, Alvin and Frances moved their young family to Cambridge. Many island families were moving to the mainland around this time, prompted by better jobs, and at least in part, by the conveniences and benefits Cambridge afforded. Frances recalls that for her and Alvin, the move was primarily to give their three children a chance at a better life and increased educational opportunities. Having weathered one storm too many, the condition of the Meekins family home also aided in the decision to move. Upon arrival in Cambridge, Alvin and Frances rented an apartment in town, moving into a two story home on Robbins Street about eight months later.

The draw of Hoopers Island is great for native and visitor alike, and Alvin and his family went "home" nearly every chance they could. "We used to go back down there quite a bit," Frances recalls, "almost every weekend – usually on Sunday." The extended family would gather at Frances' mother's house in Fishing Creek, the regular weekly meeting place for her brood. Alvin took full advantage of these weekly jaunts back to the island to hunt and fish. Frances relates one memorable fishing excursion in a boat off the Island. "Once when we went back to go fishing, I carried this little rod that I held – but he just had a piece of string on a stick. Well, we just kept on catching 'em and catching 'em . . . and before we knew it, we had drifted out about 50 feet," she recalls, laughing.

Shortly after settling in Cambridge, Alvin found work at Todd Seafoods, Inc., a local wholesale outfit that also operated a small carry-out business. Founded in 1948 by Jennings Todd, the business was only a few years old when Alvin started work there. Jennings' son Mike, who ran the business until it closed about ten years ago, remembers Alvin as a popular and well-known fellow who had countless friends. It turned out to be a very wise decision to hire Alvin to run the carry-out side of the business. "He was really an ambassador for Todd Seafoods," Mike recalls, "he had lots of loyal customers who used to drive up to the carry-out and park in front. Sometimes they'd talk

Sturdy and streamlined pair of c. 1980s "fence post pheasants." Collection of Tommy Phillips.



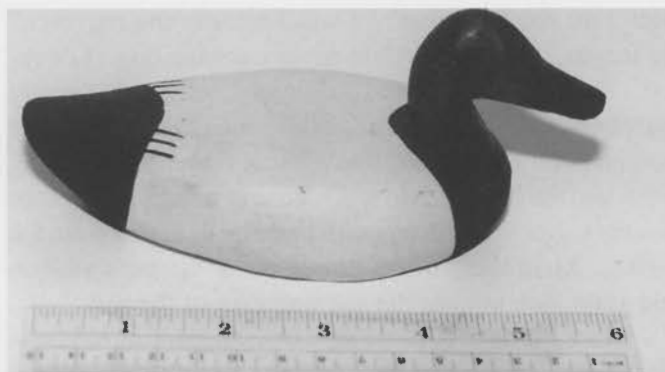
with him for five or ten minutes, sometimes an hour. He had a way with people . . . people liked him.” Mike recalls one particularly memorable and long-lasting friendship Alvin made with a wealthy, educated gentleman farmer. While this man and Alvin came from two vastly different worlds, they were both sons of Dorchester County who found a lifetime of common interests to sit and talk about, often for an hour or more.

Alvin loved to talk about ducks and decoys and gunning with his customers. He would occasionally bring his decoys to work, Mike remembers, but he doesn’t recall him ever selling any there. In the early 1980s, Alvin carved one of the only sandpiper decoys he is known to have made and gave it to Mike. Mike remembers seeing one other shorebird decoy, which Alvin may have given as a gift to his wealthy farmer friend.

For a time, Frances also worked at Todd Seafoods picking crabs. A typical day for Alvin, Mike explains, involved arriving at work by mid-morning to cull the day’s shipment of crabs. He’d steam about eight or ten bushels before handing that job over to an assistant. Alvin would then deliver the many regular and phoned-in local orders he had to fill. His business was roughly half phone-in and half walk-in, Mike remembers. After his deliveries and after lunch, he’d return to his post and would stay open until 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. Alvin loved his days at Todd Seafoods and this was his working life for years.

When he wasn’t working or making decoys, Alvin could often be found in the shop of well-known Cambridge taxidermist, Harald Hall. Hall, the son of famed market gunner and shopkeeper Elmer Hall, was another “local legend” and quickly became one of Alvin’s best friends.

Alvin never really stopped making decoys, but he approached his avocation with renewed vigor in the late 1970s, re-tooling the small out-building behind his Cambridge home for decoy production. “He would come home from work and go straight out to the shed,” Frances recalls, noting that it was almost a therapeutic outlet for Alvin. In his later years, Alvin used an electric saw to cut his patterns. Other than that, however, the remainder of the work was done by hand; hatchet, wood rasp, and Barlow jackknife. Before he passed away, Alvin’s father in law, Fulton Lewis, would occasionally assist in making decoys, primarily carving heads. Some collectors remember that a neighbor may also have helped Alvin cut out bodies. Frances recalls that Alvin made a few miniatures from time to time, but gave them all away. She remembers that, over the years, he gave many dozens of decoys away to friends, neighbors, and grateful collectors. In the 1970s and early 1980s, he began attending decoy shows and sales and selling his birds locally. He would occasionally consign his decoys for sale in local auctions. Alvin



Miniature canvasback c. mid 1980s. Alvin made a few miniatures over the years, primarily in the 1970s and 80s. Collection of Tommy Phillips.

is also known to have traded his decoys for those by other local makers and collectors. Frances and Lee agree that he was proud of his ability to create decoys that were sought after by collectors. “If someone said to him, ‘I’ll give you ten dollars for that,’ I think it would sort of drive him to do more . . . to do better,” Frances recalls. Alvin’s last decoys date from about the mid 1980s.

In about 1990, when declining health prevented him from giving his job at Todd Seafoods 100-percent, Alvin – saddened but proud – gave Mike his notice. It was around this time that he suffered from a series of mini-strokes. Alvin died on June 20, 1992. He was 73. He is buried in Green Lawn Cemetery on Washington Street in Cambridge.

Today, Alvin Meekins’ place in the annals of Chesapeake Bay waterfowling history is secure. But it is larger than the sturdy and colorful decoys he made and left behind. For, while they remain one of Hoopers Island’s many contributions to posterity and folk art, the happy and vivid memories so many people hold of this kind, hardworking and life-loving man, are his true legacy.



“Pop” with grandson Jonathan in Alvin’s Cambridge home. Alvin made decoys for nearly 40 years – his last birds date from around the time this photo was taken, c. mid 1980s. Courtesy of Jonathan Meekins.

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Summer issue omissions

Last issue, we neglected to mention the winners of the Head Whittling contest at the Festival. Charles Pierce won first place, Joey Jobes second place and third place was given to a young lady whose name was not passed along to us. If anyone knows who she is, please call the museum, as her ribbon is waiting!

Also, we apologize for not recognizing the efforts of Jack Manning during the Festival. Jack was kind enough to bring in some of his antique boats for our guests to see. The display was on the Middle School stage throughout the show.

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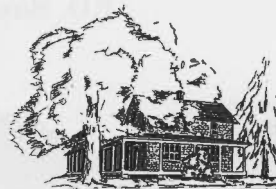
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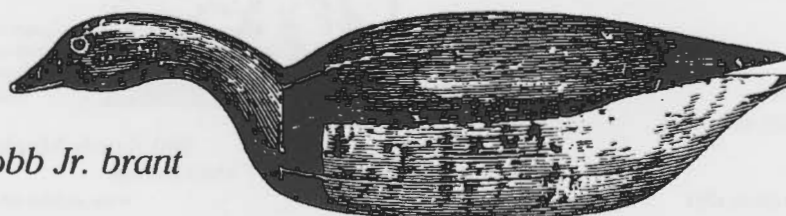
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Nathan Cobb Jr. brant

Duck Fair Review

**Text and photos by
Kay Morrison**

The Decoy Museum hosted its 14th annual Duck Fair on September 8 & 9 this year. This relaxing outdoor event is eagerly anticipated by both our exhibitors and the public. Even though the Fair is a much smaller event than the Festival, it still requires a great deal of planning and preparation. Bill Pyle was the event chairman and he worked with the staff to make sure the event would be a success for everyone.

As always, Patrick Vincenti and John Ingoglia greeted the exhibitors as they arrived before daylight. Bolstered by free donuts and coffee, the forty-seven artists began setting up their displays. Soon Grumpy's Grill, Ltd. was serving their famous breakfast sandwiches and other items were added to the menu as the morning progressed. Clovis and Ramona Bolen kept the lemonade flowing. When Elly Coale and Carolyn Hargis opened the Bake Sale, their booth was also a very popular spot. There were so many wonderful donations of baked goods this year — thanks to all who donated!

Everything was in place by 9:00 a.m. as the first visitors arrived. I guess it is just practice, but it never ceases to amaze me how quickly and efficiently our exhibitors can get their booths set up and have everything displayed so well. Thanks go to all of our exhibitors for their cooperation and professionalism.

The Honorary Chairmen this year were the Jobes Family. During the introductions by Allen Fair, Capt Harry, Cap'n Bob, Charles and Joey were presented with plaques

Duck Fair Honorary Chairmen: The Jobes Family. L to R: Charles, Cap'n Bob, Cap't Harry, and Joey.

in honor of the occasion. Throughout the weekend, the Jobes' visited with our guests and added some excitement from time to time! The family crafted beautiful swans, complete with certificates and brands, especially for the Fair. Lucky buyers took the birds home along with a special poster of the family. The family donated \$1000 from the sale of the swans to the Decoy Museum. It bears mentioning that the Jobes wives and several of the children are very involved in the making of their decoys as well, making it truly a family endeavor.

After the introductions, the Honorary Chairmen Head Whittling contest took place. This year, we were honored to have Ron Rue, Jim Pierce, Joe Cook, Ned Mayne, Harry Shourds, Vernon Bryant and all four of the Jobes' in the contest. This is always a time of storytelling and teasing among the participants, but this year something happened called "The Deal." What happened has been explained to me several times by different witnesses. Let's just say that Capt. Harry and Jim Pierce started it, and in the end, the museum was one of the winners!

During the morning, we were fortunate to have the



Ed Watts, John Ingoglia, and Charlie Bryan stop to visit for a few minutes. Mr. Bryan spent both Saturday and Sunday painting the museum red-heads.





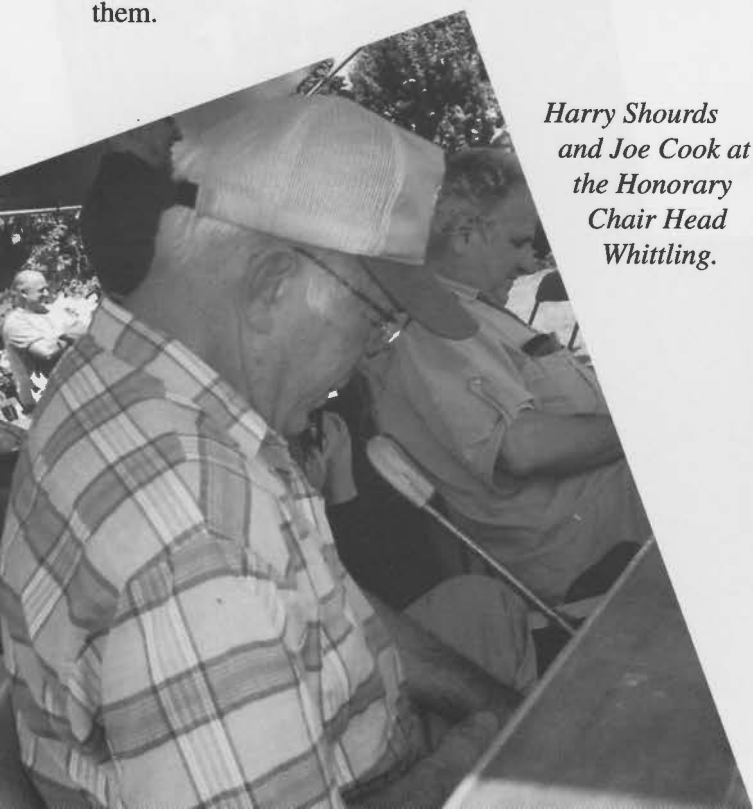
Scottie Lay and Madelyn Shank encourage bids from Cap't Harry Jobs and a visitor at the Silent Auction.



Exhibitor Ned Mayne relaxing at his booth.

presentation "Scales and Tales." Rob Dyke, from the DNR, brought several owls, snakes, turtles and other animals that had been injured. The program uses these animals to teach safety and responsibility in dealing with precious wildlife. The program was very well received by both children and adults.

GeorgAnn Pabst single-handedly solicited local businesses for donations to our Silent Auctions. She was able to collect enough donations for us to have two auctions each day. Many thanks to Georgie for her efforts! GeorgAnn, Scottie Lay, Angela Davis and Andrew Speer helped Madelyn Shank with the auctions along with staff. A list of merchants and exhibitors who made donations is included in this issue and we are very grateful to all of them.



Harry Shourds and Joe Cook at the Honorary Chair Head Whittling.

Norm Hunter volunteered his time and talent as auctioneer for our Live Auction on Saturday afternoon. He was assisted by Brenda D. Guldenzopf, Ed Watts, Kevin Peel, John Elledge and Allen Fair. Among the auction items were several very generous donations. Mr. Charles Bryan made a high head canvasback pair with a stand and Joe Cook donated three of his fishing lures. Heads made by Harry Shourds and Ned Mayne during the Head Whittling Contest were also added to the auction.

Each of the Honorary Chairmen donated work made for this auction. Joey Jobs made a beautiful snow goose, Charles Jobs gave a miniature canvasback pair, Capt. Harry donated a harlequin pair, and Cap'n Bob made a decorative high head canvasback pair.

In addition, the Jobs Family made a beautiful plaque with miniatures carved by the family. Allen Fair was the highest bidder on this item. He then donated this one of a kind piece to the museum. The museum is most appreciative of the generosity shown by all of these actions.

Vicky Trainor of Oakdale Retrievers brought her friends and they put on great shows both days! The dogs seem to get every bit as much enjoyment out of these demonstrations as the onlookers do. Tony Hunt was in charge



Rob Dyke of DNR's "Scales and Tales" explains the program to a visitor.



Bob Jobs and John Ingoglia hard at work during the Open Head Whittling Contest on Sunday.

of the demonstrations on Sunday. He asked me to let everyone know how much Oakdale Retrievers enjoyed being here and how much they all appreciate coming to Havre de Grace.

The museum thanks Noble Mentzer for once again putting in a long day at the Decoy Painting tent. He is so patient with the children (and those of us who act as his helpers). Twenty-seven students painted canvasback drakes this year. Thank you, Noble!

Andrew Speer and Ed Watts put together a carving competition for the second year. This is becoming a very popular event at the Fair. The results of the competition are detailed in this issue.

An Open Head Whittling Contest was held on Sunday. All of the contestants had donation jars beside them and when the contest ended, \$70.00 had been donated to the museum. First place went to Charles Jobs, second place to Cap'n Bob Jobs and third place to John Ingoglia. Cap'n Bob generously donated his prize money back to the museum.

Guests were encouraged to sign up for a free raffle each day. Darlene Roberts of Frederick, MD won the Havre de Grace pillow on Saturday. Sunday's winner was Robert Kohn of St. Peters, PA. He received a set of stone coasters. September is membership month and membership chairman, John Ingoglia, carved a pair of miniature canvasbacks as a raffle prize for anyone who signed up over the weekend. Michael Smith of Colora, MD was the lucky winner in that raffle.



R. Madison Mitchell, IV manned the very popular "Duck Pond" game.

Noble Mentzer helps a student start work on her miniature canvasback.

Elly Coale, Carolyn Hargis, and Mert Street handled the Bake Sale all weekend.



Mr. Charlie Bryan was in the Mitchell Shop all weekend painting the Museum Decoy redheads, which will be available at the Anniversary Dinner on November 3, 2001. Every time anyone checked on him, he just smiled that wonderful smile and said how much he was enjoying himself. He certainly made the Fair more enjoyable for the many visitors who had a chance to visit with him and watch him work!

Thank you to everyone who participated in this event. Special thanks to Heidi and Mindy for all of your help. It means a lot to me to work with both of you. It was a very special weekend for all of us here at the museum. Who would have thought that just two days later, the peace and lightness of heart we felt during the Fair would be replaced by such horror for our country and the world. God Bless America.

Duck Fair Volunteers

Bill Pyle	Noreen Pyle
Ed Watts	John Elledge
John Ingoglia	Alyssa McGlothlin
Kevin Peel	Jenna McFadden
Patrick Vincenti	Walter Smith
Mike Affleck	Norm Hunter
Andrew Speer	Elly Coale
Gary Scargable	Carolyn Hargis
Ken Lay	Mert Street
Angela Davis	Ginny Rothwell
Dr. William Brendle	Jay Freeman Wright
GeorgAnn Pabst	Noble Mentzer
Mr. Charlie Bryan	Romaine Morrison
Madelyn M. Shank	Elizabeth Mitchell
Scottie Lay	R. Madison Mitchell IV
Allen Fair	Gail Carriere
Joyce Irwin	Oakdale Retrievers
Bob Meck	



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Mix of Time

Exhibitors who donated to the Silent

Auctions

Bill Meyers
Linda & Wes Bull
Robinson Photography
Bill Hickson

Butch & Mary Carol Larrimore
Warner Taylor
Paul Shertz

Duck Fair Carving Competition Results

Diving

1st place: Bufflehead by Jason Russell
2nd place: Common Merganser by
Allan Fry
3rd place: Scoter by Jeff Coats

Marsh

1st place: Wigeon by Jeff Coats
2nd place: Pintail by Jason Russell
3rd place: Black Duck Scott Frederick

Goose & Confidence

1st place: Swan by Jeff Coats
2nd place: Brant by George Williams
3rd place: Brant by Bill Kell

Best of Show

1st place: Wigeon by Jeff Coats
2nd place: Swan by Jeff Coats
3rd place: Bufflehead by Jason Russell

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum Presents *Redheads*

Last year, the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum began an exciting venture -- the creation of its own line of limited edition decoys! The 2000 Canvasback drakes were such a hit, we've decided to continue the series this year with a redhead drake!

The redheads were produced earlier this year in the museum's Mitchell Shop by a team of well-known area carvers, and Mr. Charlie Bryan has been painting the birds for us! Each bird will be numbered and branded with the museum's own special mark.

The first twenty-five birds from this second edition will be sold by lottery at our Anniversary Dinner on November 3, 2001. Only those in attendance will be eligible to purchase one of the first redheads. Mark your calendars and plan to attend!

***Don't miss this chance to continue your collection of
Museum Decoys while supporting this worthy institution!***



Special Event Wrap-up

5th Annual Sporting Clays

Text and photos by
Kay Morrison.

Alexander's Sporting Farms in Golts, Maryland was the site of the 5th Annual Sporting Clays Event on July 22, 2001. This event grows more popular every year, affording sportsmen and women a chance to engage in competition and improve their skills in a well maintained setting.

This year there were a record 84 shooters. The events included a Lewis Class, Ladies Class, Five Stand and Quail Flush. Kevin Peel was chairman of the event and Ed Watts was co-chair. The work and planning they did went a long way to ensure the event's success.

Joe Carey won out in a shoot off for first place in High Gun Overall. Joe, Jack Concannon and Carl Kilhoffer all had perfect scores of fifty. Mai Manning won the Ladies Class again this year with a score of forty-eight. A score of fifty gave Jack Concannon the High Gun Museum prize. Optional Lewis Class rounds were also held, offering cash prizes to winners.

A Baretta AL391 Urika was offered as an entry prize and was won by Carter Stanton. A raffle was held for a Benelli 31/2"mag 26" rifle. Co-chairman Ed Watts won



Co-chairman, Ed Watts, at the Quail Flush.

the raffle, but he generously donated the gun to be auctioned.

John Ingoglia served as auctioneer in the afternoon. Most of the auction items were donated by friends of the museum. Pierce's Decoys, Vincenti's Decoys, Ed Watts, Bill Schaubert, Charlie Bryan, Walker Decoys, Allan Schaubert and Charlie Joiner all contributed pieces to the



Mr. Charlie Joiner, Dave Walker, and Alan Burdette at the 5th Annual Clay Shoot.



High Overall Winner, Joe Carey with Kevin Peel.

auction. Many thanks to these gentlemen for their donations and their support!

The Decoy Museum is most grateful to Kevin Peel and Ed Watts for their handling of the shoot. The Alexanders do a fine job of providing not only a safe sporting environment but also a wonderful lunch buffet. Special

thanks to Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Towne Barbers, Inc., Mert Street, Dundalk Aluminum Specialties, Tidewater Marine Supply and Chesapeake Rent All for their financial support of the shoot. We already have a booking for next year's shoot - watch for more information in the Spring issue.




Ed Watts displays the miniature goose plaque made and donated by Mr. Charlie Joiner for the auction.




Event chairman, Kevin Peel, returning from a round on the course.

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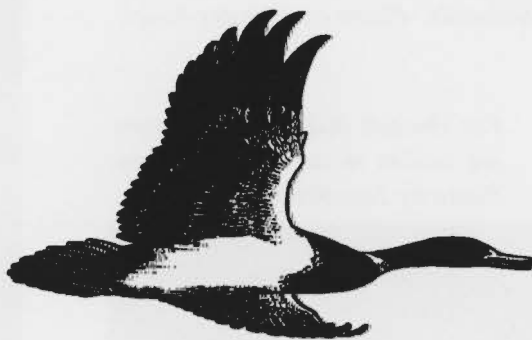


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Masters at work on the redheads

Charles Bryan painting in the Mitchell Shop. Photo by Jennifer Jones.



Bryon Bodt working on museum redheads in his Churchville shop. Photo by K. Morrison.



Joey Jobes sanding redhead body. Photo by Jennifer Jones.

John Ingoglia working on a head for museum redheads. Photo by Jennifer Jones.

Pat Vincenti and Joey Jobes turning bodies in the Mitchell Shop. Photo by Jennifer Jones.



Candlelight Tour, Sale and Carvers Celebration

Sunday, December 9th, 2001

11:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Special Members Only Sale - members receive 25% off all Gift Shop purchases
Decoy carvers exhibiting and offering their work
Wood Duck Raffle drawing at 8:00 p.m.



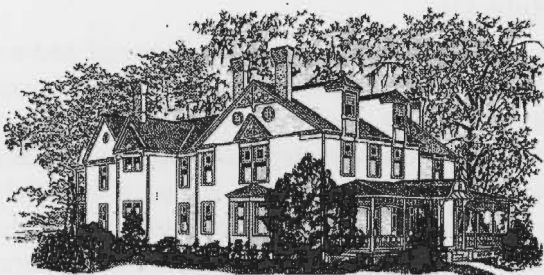
Tickets for the
29th Annual Candlelight Tour of Havre de Grace
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or by phoning Madelyn Shank
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Museum News

Pat Vincenti Chosen as Honorary Chairman

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is pleased to announce that Pat Vincenti will serve as Honorary Chairman of the 21st Annual Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival next May.

Pat is a life-long resident of Harford County. His interest in making decoys goes back to the many days he spent hunting on the Susquehanna Flats. He started out by making his own decoys to hunt over, which soon evolved into making decoys for fellow hunters, as well as collectors.

Mr. Vincenti credits his decoy making skills to many different carvers. As a young man, he spent a lot of time frequenting the shops of Madison Mitchell, Paul Gibson, Jim Pierce, Clarence "Tit Bird" Bauer and Bill Collins. He learned all he could about the making and painting of decoys from these gentlemen.

Mr. Vincenti continues to work hard for the preservation of waterfowling heritage in the Susquehanna Flats area. He is a board member of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum and serves as Treasurer of the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust. An active member of the Upper Bay Museum, he also supports other organizations such as Ducks Unlimited.

As a result of his desire and skill for making decoys, he, along with his wife Jeannie, has earned a reputation for making quality decoys which are collected nationwide. Pat Vincenti is, indeed, a worthy choice for Honorary Chairman of our Festival.

Membership Update

Each September the museum makes an extra effort to recruit new members. This year, twenty-five people chose to join the museum during September. There were ten individual, seven family and eight student new memberships. The students are all members of the summer Youth Carving Class. We hope all of these new members will enjoy a long and rewarding association with the museum.

Eagle Scout Service Project

Kevin Murray, of BSA Troop 965 from Havre de Grace, Maryland, recently completed his Eagle Scout Service Project here at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. The landscaping project began in mid August and was completed in early September. It has certainly made a wonderful improvement to the entrance of the Decoy Museum!

Kevin, along with fellow boy scouts, friends and fam-

ily removed mulch, tree stumps and dying shrubs. The mulch was replaced, flowers were planted, and a small garden with ornamental grasses was added. Kevin also refurbished four park benches that now look as if they are brand new! We were pleased to aid Kevin in reaching his goal of becoming an Eagle Scout. Congratulations, Kevin!

Youth Carving Class

Twelve teenagers took advantage of the Youth Carving Classes sponsored by Harford County Parks & Recreation this summer. Under the expert guidance of Jeff Moore, the students carved and painted their decoys in the museum's carving workshop. These classes are very popular and one student came all the way from Annapolis to study here. Mike Bowman, Noah Brown, Ezra Countiss, III, Jonathan Fritz, Matthew Fritz, Jonathan Izer, Danielle McReady, Eric McCready, Joy Moultrup, Joshua Peters, Nathan Sturgill and Christian Zurkowski completed the course. The museum is very pleased to be able to offer young carvers this opportunity.



Summer Youth Carving Class. Photo by K. Morrison.

Please Help Us

If you are moving, please send a change of address card directly to the Decoy Museum. That way, we can update our records and assure that you do not miss any mailings. If you are receiving duplicate magazines, please send labels from all copies to the attention of Mindy Elledge and she will correct the duplication. Also, the Post Office will not forward standard mail as our magazine is sent, nor will the magazine be returned to us.

When we were preparing to mail the invitations for the Anniversary dinner, the staff decided to send one invitation per household as a conservation measure. Of course, all members are invited to attend the dinner, and you can make as many reservations as you need for your family and guests. We hope that the membership will support this decision to try and save money, especially during this time of extra expenses the museum is experiencing. Please let us know how you feel about this decision.

HAURE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM 2001 DUCK FAIR AUCTION

Saturday, September 8th, 2:00 pm.

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Price Realized</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Price Realized</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Price Realized</u>	<u>Item</u>
1.	\$7.50	Ironwood Quail by Pedro Ochoo, D.U. #1153, signed.	18.	115.00	Canvasback Hen by Bill Veasey, signed and dated, 1987.	33.	450.00	High head Canvasback Pair with stand, made and donated by Charles Bryan, signed and dated, 2001.
2.	40.00	Antique Brass Canvasback Head Bookends.	19.	Unsold	Swans of the Chesapeake Print # 205/250 by Valerie Lloyd, signed and dated, 1992.	34.	95.00	Pintail Hen, used for many years by the Williams family of guides at Knotts Island, North Carolina, from Bob Biddle, signed and marked.
3.	25.00	Green-winged Teal Hen by Dave Rhodes, signed and dated, 1976.	20.	60.00	Canvasback Hen by Taylor Boyd, repainted and plaque added by R. Madison Mitchell.	35.	60.00	Green-winged Teal Pair by Joey Jobes, signed and dated, 1989.
4.	20.00	Brass Mallard Drake.	21.	225.00	Older High head Canvasback Drake, original paint, by Charlie Bryan, signed.	36.	Unsold	Decoy Makers of the Susquehanna Flats Print # 756/1200 by Paul W. Shertz, signed.
5.	75.00	Antique Cast Iron Blackhead Drake.	22.	175.00	Waterfowl Hunting on the Chesapeake Bay 1850-1950 Print # 50/1500 by Paul W. Shertz, signed and dated, 1981.	37.	80.00	Blue-winged Teal Pair by Bill Collins, signed and dated, 1993.
6.	37.50	Ring-necked Duck Drake by Carl R. Addison, signed and dated 1986.	23.	425.00	Mallard Pair by Charlie Bryan, signed and dated, 1983.	38.	210.00	Bufflehead Pair by Ned Mayne, signed and dated, 1989.
7.	Unsold	Harford County Canvasbacks Print #13/450 by Paul W. Shertz, signed and dated, 1984.	24.	425.00	Canvasback Pair by Paul Gibson, signed and dated, 1983.	39.	70.00	Decorative Hooded Merganser Drake by Bob Biddle, signed and dated, 1972.
8.	35.00	Baldpate Drake by Bob Biddle, signed and dated, 1986.	25.	200.00	Canvasback Drake by R. Madison Mitchell, signed and dated, 1984.	40.	140.00	Green-winged Teal Pair by Jeffrey A. Moore, signed and dated, 1990.
9.	55.00	Shoveler Drake by Hubbert, signed and dated, 1973.	26.	250.00	Brant by R. Madison Mitchell, signed and dated, 1983.	41.	875.00	Ward Bros. - Set of 6 Prints by Jack R. Schroeder and poem by Steve Ward, signed and dated, 1981.
10.	95.00	Pintail Drake by Bill Veasey, signed and dated, 1985.	27.	85.00	Blue-winged Teal Pair by Jim Pierce, signed and dated 1982 & 1983.	42.	65.00	Green-winged Teal Pair by Charles and Bob Jobes, signed and dated, 1989.
11.	45.00	Green-winged Teal Hen by Fred Brown of Pt. Pleasant, New Jersey, signed and dated, 1979.	28.	75.00	Unpainted Swan by Ray Kerr, circa 1980's.	43.	100.00	Green-winged Teal Pair by Jim Pierce, signed.
12.	80.00	Bufflehead Pair by Harry Jobes, signed and dated, 1989.	29.	25.00	Goldeneye Hen, cork, by Jimmy McInteer, signed and dated, 1986.	44.	65.00	Antique-style Green-winged Teal Drake by B. Ogburn, The Boyd's Collection, Ltd. 1982-87, signed.
13.	Unsold	Classic Cecil County Decoys Print #274/450 by Paul W. Shertz, signed and dated, 1997.	30.	160.00	Bufflehead Hen by Robert G. Litzenberg, signed and dated, 1984.	45.	50.00	Snow Goose by Joey Jobes (late addition)
14.	75.00	Bufflehead Pair by Phil Hudson, signed and dated, 1989.	31.	70.00	Green-winged Teal Drake by Allan Schaubert, signed and dated, 1987.	46.	680.00	Green-winged Teal Pair by Charlie Joiner, signed and dated, 1982.
15.	50.00	Bufflehead Pair by J. Seibert, Delaware River Decoy Co., signed and dated, 1989.	32.	200.00	R. Madison Mitchell Shop & Collection Print, remarked 9/50 by Paul W. Shertz, signed and dated, 1977.	47.	425.00	Green-winged Teal Pair by Charles Bryan, signed and dated, 1989.
16.	70.00	Reproduction of 1936 Ward Brothers' Canvasback Drake by Jan Calvert, signed and dated, 1978.				48.	110.00	Green-winged Teal Pair by Capt. Harry Jobes, signed and dated, 1988.
17.	120.00	Redhead Drake by Ned Mayne, signed and dated, 1986.				49.	15.00	Three Fishing Lures.
						50.	90.00	Blue-winged Teal Pair by Capt. Harry Jobes, signed and dated, 1992.
						51.	80.00	Black Duck by Ralph T. Nocerino, signed and dated, 1986.

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Price</u> <u>Realized</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Price</u> <u>Realized</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Price</u> <u>Realized</u>	<u>Item</u>
52.	245.00	Green-winged Teal Pair by Ned Mayne, signed and dated, 1986.	71.	30.00	Natural Shorebird - Aspen by Earl M. Brinton, signed and dated, 1989.	80.	20.00	Natural Shorebird - Cherry by Earl M. Brinton, signed and dated, 1990.
53.	650.00	Miniature Decoys of the Jobs Family - Plaque	72.	55.00	Miniature Heron on Driftwood by Joan Siebert, signed.	81.	10.00	Natural Shorebird - Coco Bola by Earl M. Brinton, signed and dated, 1996.
54.	290.00	Blue-winged Teal Pair by Ned Mayne, signed and dated, 1991.	73.	75.00	Catfish on Driftwood by M.K. Scheel, signed.	82.	7.50	Natural Shorebird - Coco Bola by Earl M. Brinton, signed and dated, 1992.
55.	20.00	1/2 size Mallard Drake by Charles Jobs, signed and dated, 1990.	74.	Unsold	Canvasback - 1954 - R. Madison Mitchell Print by Frances M. Barteau, signed.	83.	130.00	Decorative Highhead Canvasback Pair by Bob Jobs, issued and dated, 2001
56.	220.00	Blackhead Hen by Paul Gibson, circa 1950's.	75.	120.00	Dove on Driftwood by M.K. Scheel, signed.	84.	20.00	Ned Mayne Duck Head - Past Honorary Chair - Head Whittling Contest 2001
57.	275.00	Canvasback Drake by Holly family, reheaded, circa 1910.	76.	55.00	Plover on Driftwood by M.K. Scheel, signed.	85.	15.00	Harry Shourds Duck Head - Past Honorary Chair - Head Whittling Contest 2001
58.	110.00	Canvasback Hen by R. Madison Mitchell, reheaded with McGaw head, circa 1950's.	77.	30.00	Miniature Avocet by Clay Brintz, signed and dated, 1994.			
59.	110.00	Canvasback Drake: body by John B. Graham, head by R. Madison Mitchell and painted by Clarence "Titbird" Bauer.	78.	25.00	Natural Shorebird - Walnut by Earl M. Brinton, signed and dated, 1991.			
60.	275.00	Blackhead Pair by David Blackiston, signed and dated, 1990.	79.	30.00	Natural Shorebird - Morado Whimbrel by Earl M. Brinton, signed and dated, 1991.			
61.	80.00	1/2 size Redhead Drake Sleeper (Limited Edition 22/25) by Allan Schaubert for R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Fund, signed and dated, 1999.						
62.	275.00	Miniature Pintail Pair by Robert G. Litzenberg, signed and dated, 1995.						
63.	230.00	Miniature Cinnamon Teal Pair by Robert G. Litzenberg, signed and dated, 1996.						
64.	80.00	Miniature Canvasback Pair by Charles Jobs						
65.	20.00	Natural Shorebird - Bocote by Earl M. Brinton, signed and dated, 1995.						
66.	20.00	Natural Shorebird - Buckeye by Earl M. Brinton, signed and dated, 1992.						
67.	110.00	Harlequin Pair by Capt. Harry Jobs dated 2001.						
68.	30.00	Miniature Seagull on Piling Posts by Joan Siebert.						
69.	40.00	Natural Shorebird - Walnut by Earl M. Brinton, signed and dated, 1994.						
70.	25.00	Natural Shorebird by B. Underwood, signed and dated, 1981.						

BOOK REVIEW

DECOY BRANDS

Edited by Robert T. Woollens

Reviewed by Bill Smart

Every decoy enthusiast has asked the same question at some time or another . . . Whose brand is on this decoy? Knowing the answer not only solves the mystery, but also serves to determine the age of the decoy and may add value or historical significance to the decoy. The term brand implies that the decoy has a burned-in brand into the wood. The author includes "brands" that may be carved, painted, or added using metal tags or some other form of identification.

Decoy Brands started as a project for the Potomac Decoy Collectors Association in an effort to provide a single resource for decoy brand identification. In an effort to share brand information data was provided from collectors through-

out the country, decoy auction catalogs, and prominent decoy professionals. Even with this effort to catalog brand information, there are numerous brands that are unknown or not included. However, included in this publication there is a provision for collectors to provide additional brand information for updating the listing in the future.

Decoy Brands is a good start to the decoy identification process. Fellow decoy collectors might be well-served by continuing to provide brand identification information not yet included in this book to Mr. Woollens.

Decoy Brands is a 112 pages and was published by RW Publishing in 2000 and is available at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.

CALENDAR

November

3

15th Annual Havre de Grace Decoy Museum Anniversary Dinner held at the Bayou Restaurant, Havre de Grace, MD 6 p.m. Join members and friends for an entertaining evening celebrating the growth of the museum. The second in the series of Museum Decoys, redheads, will be available by lottery at the dinner. Proceeds directly benefit the Decoy Museum. For more information, call 410-939-3739.

9, 10 & 11

31st Annual Waterfowl Festival Easton, MD. Enjoy a family wildlife art adventure featuring paintings, sculpture, carvings, decoys, duck stamps, photography, crafts, kids activities, demonstrations, music, food & much more! 400 wildlife artists and craftsmen. Visit the web site www.waterfowlfestival.org or call 410-822-4567 for more information.

Through November 25th

The Noyes Museum of Art, one of New Jersey's major art and decoy museums, has extended their current decoy exhibition, From Coast to Coast: Decoys from the Delaware River to the Atlantic Ocean. For more information, please contact The Noyes Museum of Art at 609-652-8848 or visit their website at www.noyesmuseum.org.

December

9

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum Candlelight Tour and Sale and Carver Celebration. Visit the museum and see our unique holiday decorations, including the famous "Duck Head" Christmas tree. Carvers will be exhibiting upstairs, so be sure to look for special holiday gifts. Museum members will receive a 25% discount on all purchases. The Wood Duck Raffle will be drawn at 8:00 p.m. Free admission. Hours are 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.. For more information, call 410-939-3739.

December

Deadline, December 31, 2001. The Maritime committee of the Maryland Historical Society takes pleasure in announcing the establishment of the annual Marion Brewington Essay Prize to encourage research in all aspects of maritime activities in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The \$1000 prize will be awarded for the best manuscript on an aspect of the history of seafaring, fisheries, commerce, warfare, or recreation on the Chesapeake Bay or its tributaries. Contact the Maritime Curator at the Maryland Historical Society, David Beard, at 410-685-3750 for more details.

February

2-3

The 7th Annual East Carolina Wildlife Arts Festival and North Carolina Decoy Carving Championships, Civic Center, Washington, North Carolina. IWCA sanctioned, eleven carving competition divisions with over \$11,000 in prize monies plus ribbons and plaques with juried exhibitors. Southern Classic Duck, Goose and Swan Calling Championships, Sportsmen Center, wildlife art and decoy auction and more. For information, contact the East Carolina Wildfowl Guild, P.O. Box 1713, Washington, NC 27889 or e-mail gossett@coastalnet.com.

16-17

29th Annual California Open to be held at the Al Bahr Shrine Auditorium, 5440 Kearny Mesa Road, San Diego, CA 92111. Show hours are 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday and 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sunday. Highlights of the California Open include world-class wildfowl and fish carving competitions, antique decoys, carving and painting demonstrations, daily auctions and raffles. Public viewing of more than 500 pieces of fine art and wildlife carvings will be exhibited, many offered for sale. Contact Mike Dowell, Show Chairman, at 760-945-8442 or mdowell957@earthlink.net.

To have your event included in this calendar, simply mail us your information. Inclusion in the calendar is free. The deadline for submission for the Winter 2002 issue is January 5, 2002.

Weekend Carving Demonstrations

at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

Sat. Nov. 3	Open	Sat. Dec. 8	Mike Gleason	Sat. Jan. 12	Bob Hess
Sun. Nov. 4	Barb Wachter	Sun. Dec. 9	Frank Muller	Sun. Jan. 13	Joe Cook
Sat. Nov. 10	Joe Cook	Sat. Dec. 15	Barb Wachter	Sat. Jan. 19	Wayne Thayer
Sun. Nov. 11	Steve Lay	Sun. Dec. 16	Art Boxleitner	Sun. Jan. 20	Bill Collins
Sat. Nov. 17	Bob Hess	Sat. Dec. 22	Mike Gleason	Sat. Jan. 26	Mike Gleason
Sun. Nov. 18	Mike Affleck	Sun. Dec. 23	OPEN	Sun. Jan. 27	John Ingoglia
Sat. Nov. 24	John Ingoglia	Sat. Dec. 29	OPEN		
Sun. Nov. 25	Joey Jobes	Sun. Dec. 30	OPEN		
Sat. Dec. 1	Joe Cook	Sat. Jan. 5	OPEN		
Sun. Dec. 2	OPEN	Sun. Jan. 6	Pat Vincenti		

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

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, 215 Giles Street, Havre de Grace, MD 21078.

FOR SALE: Paul Gibson's complete Decoy Collection (eleven pairs plus the swan and goose) with a framed and signed print of the collection. All pieces signed. All in mint condition. Telephone (703) 524-8298 and/or e-mail aberdeene1@aol.com

FOR SALE: *When Ducks Were Plenty* by Ed Muderlak. Duck shooting from Frank Forester's 1840s to William Hazelton's 1920s. 400+ pages, 115 old-time photos and etchings. Limited edition (500) slipcased \$65 post paid. Trade edition \$40 post paid. Old Reliable Publishing, Box 4, Davis, IL 61019.

FOR SALE: White Pine antique full-size swan bodies in Havre de Grace style. Price range \$35-\$50. Call Parker's Decoys at (717) 284-3273.

FOR SALE: 30 Mitchell Decoys auctioned at the First Annual Decoy Festival in 1982. Special Shertz print mounted 6' x 8'. \$20,000 or best offer. (410) 939-4536.

FOR SALE: 8 Jim Beam Duck Stamp Bottles. Flat-bottomed Canada goose by Madison Mitchell, 1978. Decoy Makers of the Susquehanna Flats by Paul Shertz, print 507/1,200, 1977. For information, call Ken Heisey at (717) 867-1545.

WANTED: The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum seeks donations or long-term loans of decoys from the Pacific, Central, and Mississippi Flyways for our new exhibits. Call (410) 939-3739.

FOR SALE: Chesapeake Bay Decoys -- many makers -- call Jim at (703) 768-7264 or potomacduck@aol.com

WANTED: Framed or unframed print of "Canvasbacks Coming In" by Durant Ball. Call Geoff at 610-240-0601.

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| 2nd | Charles Joiner Wood Duck Pair s/d 1986 |
| 3rd | Charles Bryan Wood Duck Pair s/d 1991 |
| 4th | Jim Pierce Wood Duck Pair s/d 1986 |
| 5th | Harry Jobses Wood Duck Pair s/d 1975 |

Drawing Sunday, December 9, 2001 8 p.m. (Candlelight Tour & Sale)

Ticket Cost \$20.00 each

To purchase tickets, visit the Museum or call (410) 939-3739 or (410) 734-7709.

Proceeds to help support the Decoy Museum's emergency stairwell stabilization.

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