

# *The Canvasback*

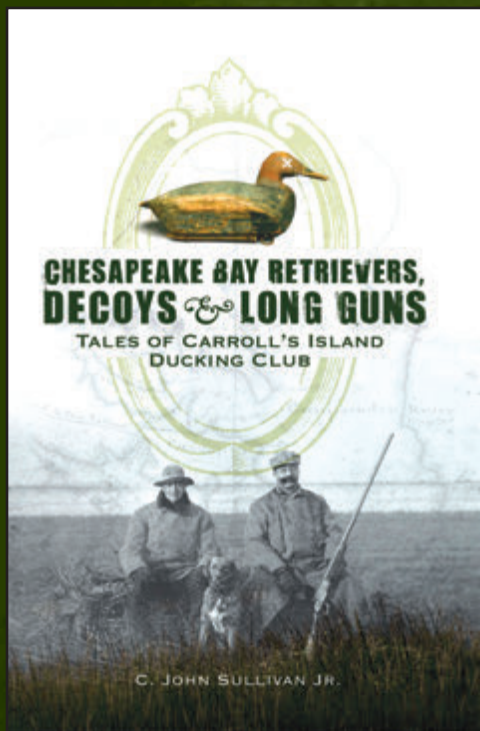
HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM

Winter 2008  
Vol. 17 No. 1

\$4.00

JAMES L. TRIMBLE'S  
PRISONER OF WAR

# DECOYS



## ALSO INSIDE

**C. John Sullivan's  
Chesapeake Bay Retrievers,  
Decoys & Long Guns**

*Tales of Carroll's Island Ducking Club*

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## CAN YOU HELP?

# LIVE AUCTION ITEMS NEEDED FOR DECOY & WILDLIFE ART FESTIVAL

Auction items are needed for the live auction  
to take place at the **2008 Decoy and Wildlife  
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The Festival Committee is accepting con-  
signments of quality decoys up to 100 lots.  
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buyer and 10% from the seller.

*Please drop off any items you have for the auction  
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All proceeds will benefit the  
Havre de Grace Museum.



*Please  
contact us if  
you have any  
questions.*

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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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German POWs made decoys similar to these while interned at Georgetown, Delaware. C. John Sullivan's new book *Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Decoys & Long Guns*.



## FROM THE EDITOR



This issue of the *Canvasback* should be a clear indication that the Museum is alive and well and working for your interest in the wonderful world of carving, collecting, and/or observing waterfowl decoys.

As you might expect, this issue of the magazine addresses some things old and some things new. Things new to check out are the introduction of the C. John Sullivan Endowment Fund, which is being set up for the financial benefit our museum. One of the other new endeavors includes an announcement of the release of John Sullivan's newest book, *Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Decoys & Long Guns: Tales of Carroll's Island Ducking Club*. Still another item on the "new" front is a review of the First Annual Susquehanna Flats Vintage Hunting and Fishing Collectors Show whose proceeds benefited both the Level Volunteer Fire Company and the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. New, too, is the first in a series of columns by John Sullivan entitled the **Collector's Corner**.

On the "old" side of the ledger (that which we are all about) is a fascinating article about the German POWs and what they did during their WWII internment in the U.S.—particularly in Sussex County Delaware. Don't skip a word of that fascinating article.

On behalf of myself and the other volunteers and staff of the Museum, let me strongly encourage you to join us at the upcoming **Havre de Grace Decoy Museum's Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival**. Bryon Bodt is this year's Honorary Chairman and there is something about him in here, too.

Look for me at the **Festival** and give me some good ideas for future issues of the *Canvasback*.



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**www.decoymuseum.com**

# From the President

---

Dear Museum Member,

The New Year 2008 is here and the Staff, Board of Directors and the Volunteers want to wish everyone a happy and prosperous year.

Everything seems to slow down after the holidays, but we are busy making plans for the 2008 Decoy Festival. The Festival committee (headed by Pat Vincenti) works very hard to make each decoy show bigger and better than the year before.



There is a new event scheduled for 2008. We will have our 1st Annual Golf Tournament to be held at Ruggles Golf Course located on the Aberdeen Proving Grounds. This will be a great opportunity to get your golfing friends together for a round of golf and help support the Decoy Museum at the same time. How about a new car? A par 3 hole will be selected and golfers attending the tournament will have a shot at a hole in one to win a new car. May 9, 2008 will be a good day to get together and enjoy a day of golf with some friends at the tournament.

I think it is worth mentioning again that this Summer 2008 we will be starting carving classes at the Decoy Museum. George Stram, a noted carver and teacher will be instructing the class.

Harford Community College and the Decoy Museum have joined together for these classes. Classes will be held Monday mornings from 9am – noon, a fee for cut outs will be charged. Registration for classes is through the Harford Community college.

The members of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum are so very important to us. We encourage each of you to sign up a relative, friend, neighbor or co-worker to the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.

There is still time to make a tax deductible donation to the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. Thank you for your continued support.

Take time to visit our Museum.

Sincerely,

Ed Watts

*Funded in Part By:*

Maryland State Arts Council • City of Havre De Grace • Harford County

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.

# C. John Sullivan, Jr., *Endowment Fund*

by John V. Quarstein

When C. John Sullivan, Jr. considered writing his newest book, **Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Decoys and Long Guns: Tales of Carroll's Island Ducking Club**, he asked me if I could help him find a publisher and if he could publish the volume in conjunction with the Decoy Museum. I was overwhelmed with this opportunity. Of course, I jumped at the offering knowing that John's outstanding scholarship and longstanding support for the Decoy Museum would achieve several important museum goals.

**W**e immediately began to talk about the book's purpose and topic, what publisher should produce it, how the volume could initiate a museum publication program, and what to do about the proceeds. As I arranged for The History Press of Charleston, South Carolina to publish the book, I edited John's wonderful text. We simultaneously put together a proposal to present to the Decoy Museum's Board of Directors. The Board had previously reviewed the need to create a publications program. C. John Sullivan's book seemed to be tailor made to fulfill this goal. Concurrent with the decision to start the Publications Program with Sullivan's book, the Board considered how to best utilize the book's proceeds. John graciously offered to donate his royalties into an endowment as the Board voted to establish such a fund. Victory was at hand! In a matter of weeks, the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum had taken a valuable step forward. Its first book by a leading decoy scholar was in process and scheduled for release by May 2008.

While publishing a book like *Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Decoys & Long Guns* is quite an endeavor, the creation of an endowment has given this process even greater value. At the project's onset, John Sullivan pledged to donate his royalties. After some discussion, the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum Board of Directors voted to establish the C. John Sullivan, Jr. Endowment Fund to further the Museum's presentation, interpretation and documentation of the history of Chesapeake Bay decoys.

The Endowment was named in honor of C. John Sullivan, Jr. As he agreed to donate all of the royalties from his new book. He also secured numerous cash contributions for the fund since the critical goal is to secure \$25,000 before allocating any interest

for other publication needs. An Endowment Committee has been organized (3 members: John Sullivan and two Board Members) to oversee fund management as well as the use of interest income. Appropriate expenditures of the fund's revenues include, but are not limited to, printing, art production, purchase of photographic rights, book promotions, author honorariums, research costs, and distribution costs. Annual publication costs such as *The Canvasback* will eventually be covered by the Endowment as well as publication development costs for volumes like *Homerun Baker's Decoy Rig and Gunning the Flats*.

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is very fortunate to have supporters like C. John Sullivan who give their time and expertise to improve our museum.

This endowment brings the Decoy Museum another step closer to becoming the leading decoy museum in the nation.

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**WE SIMULTANEOUSLY  
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A PROPOSAL TO  
PRESENT TO THE  
DECOY MUSEUM'S  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS.**

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS** now for the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum's annual Sporting Clay Shoot to be held on Sunday, May 25, 2008 at 9am at Pintail Point in Queenstown, Maryland.

It may be Memorial Day weekend, but Pintail Point would be a wonderful way to spend the day. The shooting course is along the Wye River. The air conditioned club house has a great view, nice gift shop and a friendly atmosphere. Visit their website at [www.THERIVERPLANTATION.com](http://www.THERIVERPLANTATION.com) for directions and further information about their other facilities.

Registration begins at 9am and the last shooter is allowed on the course at noon. Registration is \$75 and includes lunch. You can register that day or pre-register by calling the Museum and requesting a form. Contact the Museum by calling 410-939-3739 or email [decoymuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:decoymuseum@yahoo.com).



## CARVERS!

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*27th Annual*  
**Decoy & Wildlife**  
**Art Festival's**  
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# FIRST ANNUAL SUSQUEHANNA FLATS VINTAGE HUNTING AND FISHING COLLECTORS SHOW



by C. John Sullivan

The First Annual SVHC show was held Saturday, February 9, 2008 at the Level Firehouse. I have been attending shows like this for over 40 years now and can speak from experience in stating that show organizers, Patrick Vincenti and Chuck Usilton, along with their wives Jeannie and Lynn did a superb job in putting this show together. Dealer set up was Friday evening allowing sellers enough time to ready themselves for the "Early Buyers" entrance at 8:00 am on Saturday. There were 72 tables and 55 dealers of interesting merchandise available to the collectors of most anything considered vintage hunting and fishing. A variety of antique shotguns, rifles, Kentuckys, game bags, powder horns and cans, vintage ammunition, loading tools, game calls, nautical items, fishing rods and reels, magazines, books, decoys and oyster collectibles was available to the steady crowd of over 600. Dealers and those attending claimed the show a success to all. Of particular interest to many was one dealer who offered a Havre de Grace Lottery

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## THERE WERE 55 DEALERS WITH 72 TABLES OF INTERESTING MERCHANDISE

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ticket from 1817. The ancient document described the City of Havre de Grace as a port of entry which rivaled the City of Baltimore for its access and available markets. Another dealer displayed a collection of well over 100 hundred Civil War era shotgun loading devices that piqued the interest of many. Decoys from the Mid-Atlantic as well as early factory examples were offered.

I would rate this new show as one of the best vintage sporting collector's venues that I have ever attended. It is certainly one well worthwhile attending next year. Finally in addition to the great offerings at the show the majorettes of the



Level Volunteer Fire Company did one terrific job of preparing both breakfast and lunch for the crowd. Proceeds from the admission were split between two very worthwhile organizations the Level Volunteer Fire Company and the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.



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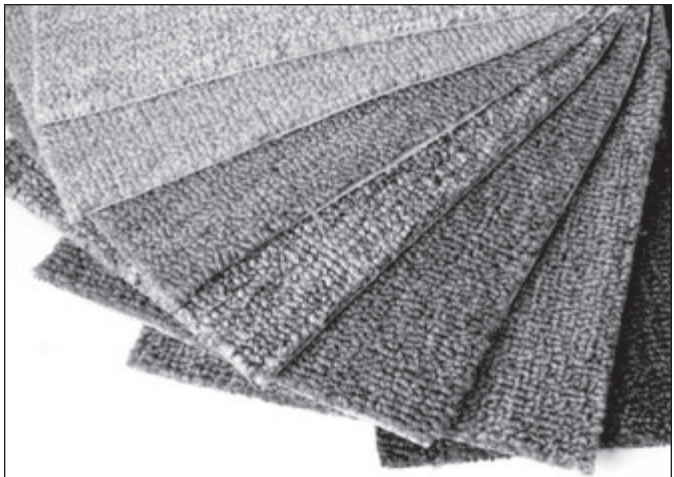
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# Bryon Bodt

2008 CHAIRMAN



Bryon grew up in Harford County, Maryland and currently lives in Churchville.

His enthusiasm for decoy carving was sparked by his father's interest in antique decoys and hunting in the Havre de Grace area. Bryon's style is patterned after the classic working decoys produced by carvers such as R. Madison Mitchell, Paul Gibson, Charlie Bryan, and Bob McGaw. The traditional working birds (gunning decoys) are characterized by their flat paint, absence of raised feathers, and presence of ballast weights and anchor rings.

Bryon began carving a few duck heads in 1977. In the early 1980's he spent three years in apprenticeship under Jim (Jimmy) Pierce, a renowned Havre de Grace decoy maker. Now Bryon produces in his own style, birds native to the Atlantic flyway. He carves the hen and drake of about 16 species of ducks. The Canada goose, snow goose, blue goose, and swan are the larger species that he makes.

Bryon is featured in the book "Upper Chesapeake Bay Decoys And Their Makers" by Hagan & Hagan. Bryon's decoys have been shown in the Havre de Grace Decoy Festival, the Waterfowl Show at the Harford Day School, The Chestertown Wildlife Show, The Upper Shore Decoy Show, The Easton Waterfowl Show and other show in Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Bryon has been involved with many organizations that work to promote and protect the environment. His involvement includes the Izaak Walton League, Ducks Unlimited, the Otter Point Creek Alliance, and the Chesapeake Bay Estuarine Research Reserve in Maryland. Bryon was honored in 1994 by the Decoy Museum as Carver of the Year for his work with the school groups.

We are pleased to have Bryon Bodt as our 2008 Honorary Festival Chairman.

## THANK YOU

We wish to thank the following businesses and individuals who made the Anniversary Dinner a success.

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# 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Havre de Grace Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival



**May 2nd, 3rd & 4th, 2008**

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Sunday: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

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# Havre de Grace Decoy Museum's Anniversary Dinner 2007

by Ken Stevenson  
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Those of you who missed our second biggest fundraiser of the year, shame on you! There was an open bar, crab cakes and filet, plus some of the nicest live auction items we have had in years. 131 members were treated to a **Beauty and the Beast** contest. This pageant stopped the crowd in their tracks. I apologize if anyone was offended, but the overall response was very positive, and a sight not many will soon forget. The dinner was made even more exciting with 3 free drawings for a lunch or dinner with a legendary decoy carver. Congratulations to all our winners. I am sure they will have unforgettable times with these carvers.

Jeannie Vincenti, was awarded Volunteer of the Year. Jeannie has quietly over the year worked very hard on a number of

time consuming issues. Jeannie has been selling ads for the *Canvasback* magazine and organized the Exhibitor Breakfast for the Festival. These two things take a great deal of time and persistence. Jeannie makes this look easy and it is not. She was the hands down pick for Volunteer of the Year. The staff and the other volunteers greatly appreciate all that she does.

I do hope we can get many more of our members to support the Anniversary Dinner next year. Please let us know if we can make changes such as the date or the venue, to make it easier for more of our members to come and support the Museum.

*Thank you, again, for supporting our dinner.*

**Committee Chairman: Ken Stevenson**

**Co-chairmen: Paul Howshall,  
John Ingoglia, Capt. Bill Collins**



*Volunteer of the Year Jeannie Vincenti is awarded recognition by Madelyn Shank.*



*Some of the items for auction at this year's Anniversary Dinner.*



*Beauty & the Beast Contest: (left to right) Capt. Bill Collins, John Ingoglia, John Quarstein, Charles Packard, Ed Watts, Ken Stevenson.*





# WORLD WAR II

## Prisoner of War DECOYS

★ AMERICANA WITH A ★  
GERMAN ACCENT

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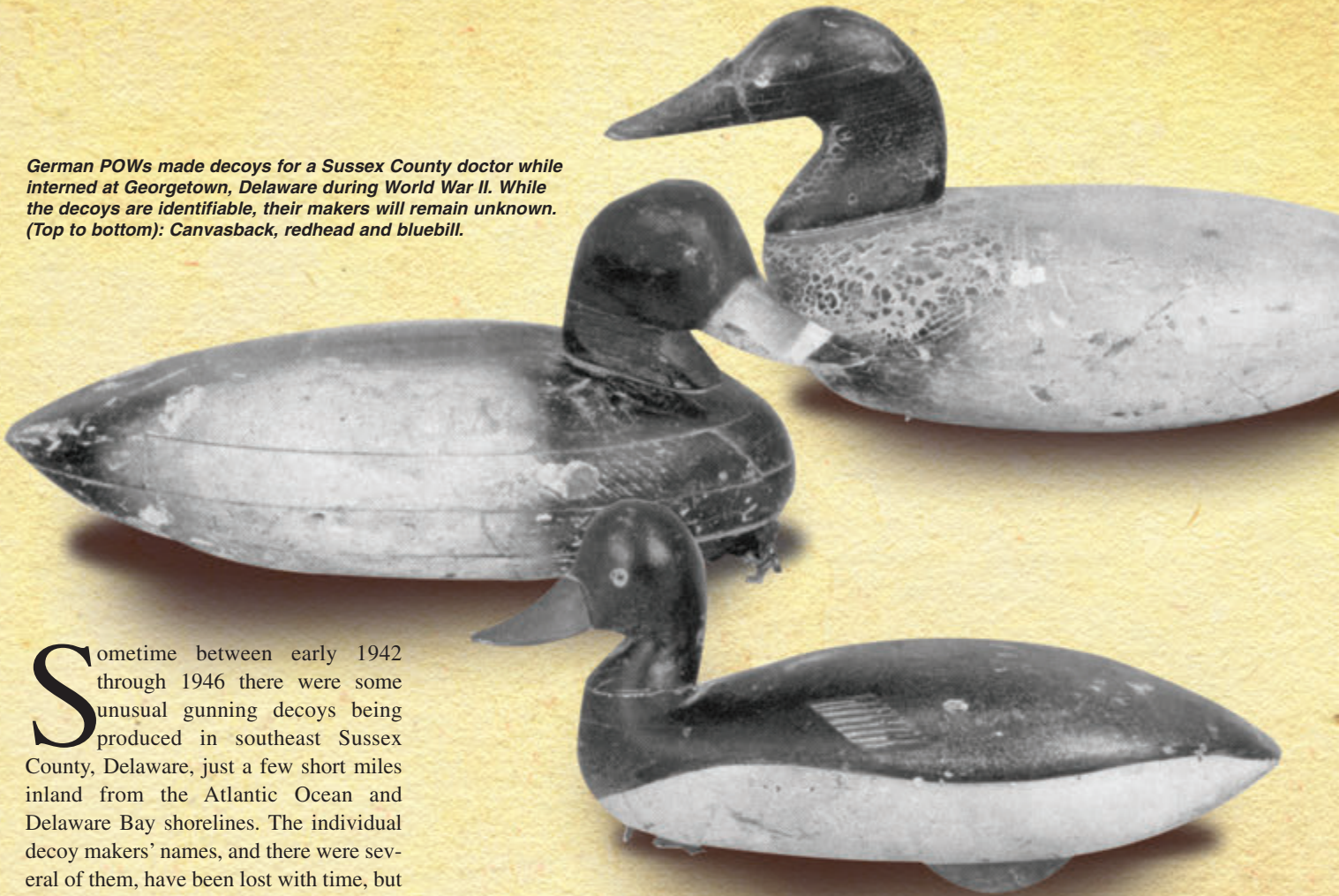
BY JAMES L. TRIMBLE

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**German POWs made decoys for a Sussex County doctor while interned at Georgetown, Delaware during World War II. While the decoys are identifiable, their makers will remain unknown. (Top to bottom): Canvasback, redhead and bluebill.**



Sometime between early 1942 through 1946 there were some unusual gunning decoys being produced in southeast Sussex County, Delaware, just a few short miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean and Delaware Bay shorelines. The individual decoy makers' names, and there were several of them, have been lost with time, but their gunning stools have survived. The makers were World War II prisoners of war interned at Georgetown, Delaware.

From 1942 to 1946 America hosted over 400,000 captured enemy soldiers and officers that were held in more than 500 POW camps throughout the nation. It began in 1942 with the fall of Erwin Rommel's elite Afrika Korps, resulting in Britain turning to her major ally to assist in the interment, as she was already saturated with captured enemy troops.

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*Unlike other Chesapeake Bay decoys, the plans called for the bodies to be made from three or four board lamination with the centerboard(s) hollowed out.*

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The U.S. was caught unprepared for such a large influx of Hitler's troops. History records a time of great wariness, skeptical citizens, and a tense government as the military prepared to receive the German soldiers.

Most prisoners of war arrived at Hoboken, New Jersey where they were interrogated, processed and assigned to one of the newly established POW camps—transportation was by rail or by road. America's industrial might and vast farm fields stunned most prisoners as they traveled to camps across the land. Nazi propaganda had assured them that America was in ruins.

The captured German soldier adapted quickly to the humane treatment, good food, medical attention, recreation facilities, and generally good sanitary conditions of each military-style barrack camp. It didn't take long, especially with knowledge of short supply at home and poor soldiering conditions on the Eastern Front, before some started to refer to their prison camps as "der goldener Kaefig" or the golden cage.

Many willing prisoners were put to work for small prison wages, filling the fields and factories once worked by Americans who were now fighting overseas. German prisoners stuffed olives in Texas, picked fruit in California, harvested cabbage in Massachusetts and, ironically, packed Kosher meat in New Jersey. With time, the fear of this prison population subsided. Even the complaints by some, that we shouldn't treat them benevolently while our own soldiers were dying overseas, were heard less. The local citizenry had come to appreciate the economic windfall that the camps sometimes provided. In some cases they doubled the populations of the small towns where some were situated.

Wariness was a big factor for the farm communities and seaside resorts sprinkled along Delaware's Atlantic Ocean and Delaware Bay shoreline. The German



***Observation towers were erected along the Atlantic coastline to search for U-boats.***

U-boats, laying in wait off the Delaware Capes, were wreaking havoc on the U.S. merchant oil tankers plying their way up the Atlantic Coast, rounding Cape Henlopen, and heading up the Delaware Bay to the oil refinery at Marcus Hook. During the war years, black oil smoke on the daytime horizon and ship fires at night were all too common, often followed by floating debris and oil washing ashore.

Stories abound of small fishing boats and small civil air patrol planes reporting U-boat sightings. And the local population was further reminded of the war effort when the military erected and occupied numerous tall silo-shaped concrete gun emplacement observation towers along their shoreline and patrolled the beaches with trained dogs, all in anticipation of enemy landings. The towers were a part of an Atlantic coastal defense fortification system that came under the command of the newly constructed Fort Miles, just south of Lewes, on Cape Henlopen, at the mouth of the Delaware Bay.

Fort Miles also oversaw numerous German prisoner of war "detachment

camps" that included the nearby Sussex County communities of Bridgeville, Bethany Beach, Lewes and Georgetown. The Georgetown POW camp was located two to three miles southwest of town on government forested lands that had been established and improved as a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in 1933. The guarded wire compound contained four or five dorm-style barracks plus a mess/canteen hall and workshop. The compound enclosure was approximately 200 by 300 yards and was occupied by 80 to 100 prisoners.

The German prisoners assigned to the Georgetown camp worked primarily on local farms, in canneries or in local plants that were part of the mushrooming broiler chicken industry. As the season changed, many worked as migrant workers, picking a rotation of strawberries, tomatoes, corn and/or a variety of other crops. Rosalie Walls, a volunteer at the Georgetown Historical Society tells that due to "war-time gas rationing, it was not unusual for an army truck or bus with POW's on board to pick the kids up thumbing their way to school." As friendships developed, many locals doted on their German workers, treating them with a variety of baked goods, candy, personal effects and cigarettes—even mending their clothes. "It adopted them," Walls says. The workers responded in kind. A talented POW painted a large mural of a peasant farm scene on the wall of a local hatchery; it survived for many years after the war.

Dan Brown, a knowledgeable decoy collector and carver, and a curator at the Ward Museum in Salisbury, Maryland, wrote an article on prisoner of war decoys for Hal Sorenson's Decoy Collectors Guide in 1977. He later wrote a piece for the Ward Museum's Wildlife Art publication in conjunction with a display of these unique wooden decoys at the Museum. Brown was visiting with "Curley" Calhoun, a hunter from Sussex County, and stumbled upon some unfamiliar decoys that were a part of the larger rig. Calhoun explained that German POW's interred at the Georgetown camp made them during the war years.





Calhoun's hunting partner was a local physician, Dr. Aubrey Smoot, who served the POW camp when needed. One evening the camp commander, while dining with Smoot, mentioned that his biggest problem was keeping the prisoners busy and out of mischief. Without hesitation the doctor, an avid waterfowler, responded with a solution—make decoys!

It was agreed that the doctor would supply the white cedar, the paint and the necessary reference books. Apparently the good doctor liked diving ducks, as the only known species credited to their hand are canvasbacks, redheads and bluebills. Unlike other Chesapeake Bay decoys, the plans called for the bodies to be made from three or four board lamination with the centerboard(s) hollowed out. The head is attached by dowel and the eyes are either painted or tack. A poured weight and leather strap were attached. The paint patterns are simple and basic. It is obvious that many hands participated in the construction of these birds. When the war ended, the Georgetown POW's, along with all the war prisoners, were returned to Germany via troop transport ships.

Smoot and Calhoun used the birds for many years along the tidal waters of Delaware's Indian River and Indian River Bay. From time to time these hunters must have thought about the uniqueness of their decoys: made by Europeans who were prisoners during wartime, retained in this country under military guard. They had now been repatriated to their foreign country where decoys were all but non-existent.

Several of these decoys were sold at a recent Sussex County estate auction. On one, the nails had given way to rust, and the laminate boards were easily separated. I examined each board carefully, looking for a name, initial, soldier graffiti—maybe a swastika silently applied in protest. No marks were present. Each of the bluebill decoys sold to an American folk art collector who doubtfully knew of its unique history. They are likely sold or traded as American artifacts, easily blending into the Americana landscape.

Several years ago a former German POW who became a member of the German Parliament told *Smithsonian*



*German POWs at an American internment camp.*

*Magazine*, "Thanks to my experience in Kansas and Oklahoma, I am an expert at harvesting broom corn and killing rattlesnakes!" Dan Brown's article reflected on the uniqueness of those times when he concluded "somewhere in Germany is a grandfather, telling his grandchildren of his wartime POW experiences in America. Experiences that perhaps include picking strawberries, tomatoes, and corn in Delaware on rotation basis, and of making wooden duck decoys for the doctor who cared for him so many years ago."

**Authors Footnote:** *Decoy Magazine* is located in Lewes, Delaware, just a few miles north of the old Fort Miles location at the mouth of Delaware Bay. The fort, equipped with concrete bunkers and large 12-inch guns, was strategically placed at Cape Henlopen to protect industries vital to the war effort, located at the top of Delaware Bay. The gun emplacement observation towers are still there and have become a part of Delaware's sea-shore beach scenery. The local wariness was justified at war's end, when German U-boat U-858, laying off the Delaware Capes, surfaced and surrendered, before

being towed to the Fort Miles' waterfront pier. On board were foodstuffs that included local Lewes dairy and bread products. The Sussex conservation District office now occupies the old Georgetown POW site. One of the compound barracks has survived. It was moved from the site to Georgetown where it now serves as a church hall. Large POW oil on canvas paintings that for years decorated the old Georgetown High School are now part of a collection at the Georgetown Historical Society. From time to time, local beach papers have run articles about vacationing visitors returning to the area, visitors who many years ago were being hosted under different and unique war time circumstances.

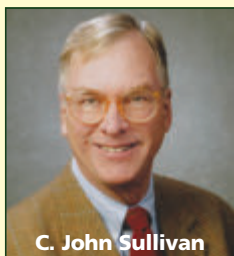
Thanks to Rosalie Walls at the Georgetown Historical Society along with Jim Marvel, Layton Johnson, Bill Henderson and Charles Marvel (all of Sussex County) and Dan Brown of the Ward Museum for their assistance. If you have additional information on Prisoner of War decoys from your area, contact the author at [Potomacduck@aol.com](mailto:Potomacduck@aol.com).

## BOOK REVIEW

by John V. Quarstein

# CHESAPEAKE BAY RETRIEVERS DECOYS AND LONG GUNS

*Tales of Carroll's Island Ducking Club*

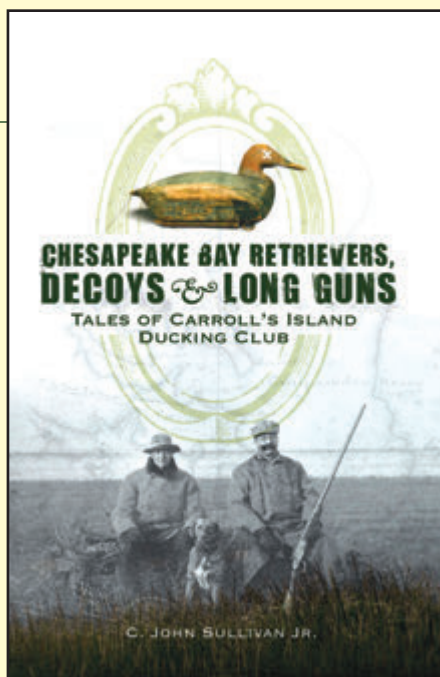


C. John Sullivan

Carroll's Island is one of many places along the Chesapeake Bay where vibrant stories of dogs,

decoys, guns and waterfowl resonate up from the shoreline. The tales from Carroll's Island Ducking Club, which was founded in the late nineteenth century, offer meaningful insights about Maryland's waterfowling heritage. In this warm, informative book, C. John Sullivan,

Jr., one of the nation's leading decoy collectors and scholars, documents the development of the Chesapeake Bay retriever and how gunners once devised decoy and new firearms to reap the bay's bounty. Sullivan's newest book, his first produced for the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum, is an intimate look at the sportsmen and the dogs who hunted with them. Although Carroll's Island Ducking Club would eventually disappear, its legacy can still be seen today in the role the members played in establishing the Chesapeake Bay retriever as Maryland's state dog.



The release of Sullivan's new book in late April 2008, initiates the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum's publication program. The Museum plans to present a new book every year featuring the Susquehanna Flats' decoy and gunning heritage. Volumes are planned about Jim Pierce, Home Run Baker and His Decoys, and local gunning lore. These books will achieve several museum goals; thereby increasing the Decoy Museum's awareness, scholarship, reputation, and rev-

enues. The Museum needs to broaden its income simultaneously with expanding its educational offerings. Films and books, emanating from the Decoy Museum's new Publication Program, will achieve this objective in a powerful manner.

C. John Sullivan, Jr.'s *Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Decoys and Long Guns* is a marvelous first edition for the Decoy Museum. The book is a constant reflection of the bygone days of ducking on the Upper Chesapeake Bay when guns were long, decoys hand chopped, and gunners enjoyed the great sport.

You can get your signed and numbered, limited edition copy of C. John Sullivan's book by calling Joanne at (410) 939-3739 to reserve your copy.



# Collector's corner

BY C. JOHN SULLIVAN



*The author's first decoy, a Benjamin Dye of Charlestown, Cecil County redhead drake, circa 1850.*

This will be my first column of the Collector's Corner series. I was approached by the Museum to author this series following the publication of my article entitled "Collecting Decoys and Stories." Writing the story is one thing; selecting the artifact or decoy is not that easy a task. Do I write about my first decoy or do I write about my favorite decoy? Since my decoys are all favorites I have made the decision to tell the story of my first decoy. I have talked and written about this decoy many times and will continue to do so. It is as much a part of me as anything in my collection.

My father was working for Harford County in 1948. His coworker was Grayson Hopkins from Aberdeen. Grayson was a waterfowler from the "good old days", a sinkbox gunner and a live decoy hunter (both of these gunning methods were outlawed in 1934). During their days of working together, Grayson presented my father a gift of two of the decoys from his once extensive rig; the decoys rested on the brick fireplace hearth in my family's living room.

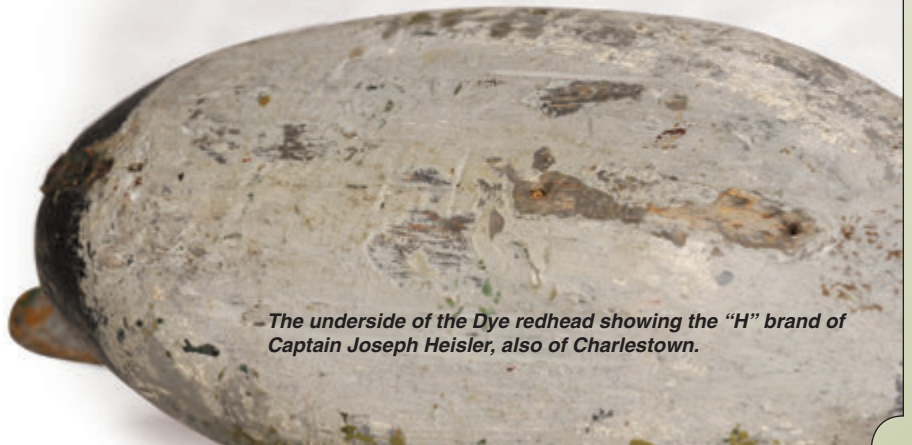
I was attracted to these two ducks at an early age and was discovered moving them about the house from time to time. It was at about age 8 or 9 that my maternal grandparents decided to give me my very own decoy. At my young age it made no difference to me what species it was, what age it was and I had no interest in where it was made or by whom it was made. All that I really

cared about was that it was my very own and I could do what I wanted to with it. At some point in my youth, on a mild summer day when my father was painting the shutters on our home that wonderful shutter green, I decided it would be wise to paint that old decoy green. It would then compliment the green of my cowboy motif wallpaper and the light green paint on the radiator in my bedroom.

The Maryland Green Marble Company was still opened and operating in the town of Cardiff in the northern end of our county and my father knew well the owner operator of the quarry. We had several pieces of that beautiful polished marble in the house. A shiny piece of it came to my bedroom, rested on the radiator and became the perch for that newly painted decoy to reside upon. That decoy was in my mind the focal point of my room. Its beautiful dark green paint certainly complimented everything in that space.

It was to take another 10 years for the realization to come to me that

removing that paint would probably be a wise move on my part. I was out of high school when covering the cowboy wallpaper and returning the decoy to its true colors became my focus. Decoy restoration has never been my strong suit but removing the shutter paint was successfully completed leaving the original redhead paint strong and intact. My handiwork also revealed the letter "H" carved on the underside of the decoy. I was to wonder for years as to whom the carver had been and what the letter H on the underside of the decoy stood for. Time and research was to reveal to me that the carver of that old decoy was Benjamin Dye of Charlestown in Cecil County and the H indicated that the decoy had at one time been a member of Captain Jess Heisler's sinkbox rig. That old decoy was carved circa 1850 and remains with me today, still a focal point in my collection.



*The underside of the Dye redhead showing the "H" brand of Captain Joseph Heisler, also of Charlestown.*

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## The Duck Dropped

**I**n 2000, local Havre de Grace business owner and City Councilman Richard Tome began a New Year's Eve tradition, the "Duck Drop."

Since 2000, Richard had a local carver supply a pattern for a duck that would be cut out of 4' X 6' plywood and covered with a mylar wrap and covered in colored Christmas lights.

The duck was then "dropped" from the volunteer fire department's hook and ladder truck to bring in the New Year and a fireworks display immediately followed.

In 2006, the fire department's ladder truck was in for repairs and the duck was instead mounted on the top of the Huber Corporation building and was lighted with much ceremony.

Richard retired and in 2007/08 there was no one to coordinate the "Duck Drop." This created a great deal of dismay amongst the resident's of Havre de Grace and Harford County.

The local newspapers were filled with editorials and articles regarding the "Duck Drop" and why it wasn't going to happen. Some people equated the "Duck Drop" to the Times Square ball and what would the New Year be without it?

Local carver and Havre de Grace Decoy Museum volunteer Jeanne Hiss, who made the 2005 duck and it was again used for the 2006 New Year, was contacted by the volunteer fire department three days before New Year's Eve.

She and her husband Warren would help with the "Duck Drop." The fire department went looking for the duck and brought it to the firehouse.

Museum volunteers, Jeanne & Warren Hiss and Henry & Gerry Krotee met with the fire department and with mutual cooperation, the decoy was repaired, the lights were wired and the burnt out lights replaced.



Word quickly got out the "Duck would Drop."

The phone at the Museum was ringing off the hook with people asking if it was true.

Flyers began appearing around town and the fire departments put the word out on their information kiosks.

It is funny how some simple traditions become so very important and how if we let them slide by the wayside so many can become disappointed.

Through the efforts of the Susquehanna Hose Company and the Decoy Museum volunteers, a new tradition was saved.

There was a very large crowd in town that night to watch the duck drop and the fireworks.

Who knows if the crowd would have been as large without the duck? Somehow I doubt it.

Special thanks to Warren, Jeanne, Henry and Gerry for their time in making repairs and especially to the Susquehanna Hose Company for coming to the rescue again.



*Museum Volunteers Henry Krotee, Gerry Krotee and Jeanne Hiss are testing and replacing lights.*



*The duck is finished.*



## Decoy Museum Sponsors Girl Scout Troop

**T**his fall the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum agreed to sponsor Cadette Girl Scout Troop 4111. The troop originally met at the local high school, but due to changes in policies, they were looking for a new meeting place. By allowing the troop to meet twice a month in the Museum's board room, 11 girls are able to pursue their scouting program.

Many of the girls have completed stage one of a three part award recognition program. As Junior Girl Scouts, 7 scouts completed their Bronze Award. The Bronze Award is one of three leadership and community service programs. The Bronze Award requires 15 hours of planning and leading a community service project. Projects included: redecorating and providing supplies for a foster care program visitation room; volunteering to work with Kindergartners at Havre de Grace Elementary School who needed extra help learning their sight words; presenting poison awareness classes at Level's Fire Safety Camp; and conducting a Brownie Girl Scout "Wearable Art" Try-it Badge program for 200 girls 6-9 years of age.



**BACK ROW LEFT TO RIGHT:** \*Emily Caron, \*Maddie Larrimore, \*Shelby Fillinger, \*Jillian Larrimore, \*Amy Kling. **FRONT ROW:** \*Morgan Jones, \*Abby Blessing, Sarah McCoy, \*Anna Weislewski, Jordan Horrocks. *Not shown Colleen Hipkins. \*denotes Bronze Award recipients*

The girls are currently working on requirements for the Silver Award and eventually the Gold Award, which is the equivalent to the Eagle Scout. The troop is planning a number of service projects for the Museum and will be assisting with the Festival, Duck Fair and other summer time programs.

Welcome to the girls of Cadette Troop 4111!

## Traveling Exhibit Goes to Fire Island National Seashore

**T**he Museum was contacted by Irene Rosen, Interpretive Ranger Specialist for Fire Island National Seashore. Ranger Rosen asked for our assistance in putting together a decoy exhibit for one of their Visitor Centers.

A small exhibit, consisting of Flyway information and some local decoys was picked up by Ranger Rosen and is now on display in the Wilderness Visitor Center at Smith Point. The Wilderness Visitor Center is the only one of four visitor centers open during the winter and is the check in point for visitors who wish to drive on the beach.

The exhibit has been well received and was originally only to be in place until the first of February, but due to the amount of visitation; Ranger Rosen has asked to extend the loan until the end of March when the beach driving is closed.

If you have a chance to visit Fire Island National Seashore, stop in and have a look around.





## Susquehanna Flats Vintage Hunting & Fishing Collectible Show

**T**he first annual Susquehanna Flats Vintage Hunting & Fishing Collectible Show was held Saturday, February 9 at the Level Volunteer Fire Hall located just west of Havre de Grace. A steady flow of visitors crowded the aisles to browse the 72 tables full of primarily old decoys. There was also an eclectic assortment of antique fishing and oyster stuffs as well as shell boxes, guns, powder tins and books. Upper Chesapeake Bay collectors Pat Vincenti and Chuck Usilton, along with their wives Jeannie and Lynne, were the driving forces behind this inaugural show. Proceeds benefited the fire department as well as the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. There were also door prize drawings, a raffle, and good food served by the volunteer fire fighters. The vendors were primarily Chesapeake Bay with both upper and mid-bay well represented. Show emphasis was on old decoys with tables' void of the numerous new decoys that sometime dominate these shows. Usilton was pleased with the large crowds and with the positive comments from the vendors about the well lit spacious venue. He also advised that the vendors were encouraged to leave their contemporary birds home. The Potomac Decoy Collectors Association was well represented with vendors that included Vincenti, John Collier, Jim & Charles Pierce, Chris & Vivian Worch, Mark Schoenfelder, and Jeff Pelayo. As Joe Engers had conflicting shows, his Decoy Magazine table was manned by Drew Hawkins, Chad Tragakis, and this writer also from the Potomac club. We applaud the show sponsors for their vintage artifact efforts. Vincenti and Usilton are seasoned collectors from the upper bay region and their inaugural show with over 600 in paid attendance delivered the goods to the vintage waterfowl collector. ~ Jim Trimble



Vendors Chris Worch and Charles Pierce

## Annual Membership Meeting

SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2008—HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM'S

In order to insure member involvement and participation in the current operation and future direction of the Decoy Museum, your Board of Directors has created a new format for our annual membership meeting. All members are requested and encouraged to attend this session. Your participation and input is extremely important to the continued success of the Museum and its mission.

In addition to the formal meeting agenda outlined below, the Museum will be open to members only from 2 PM with tours, demonstration, silent auction, presentation of awards,

autograph sessions, and free decoy appraisals. Immediately following the meeting, a buffet and cocktails will be available.

### Formal Meeting Agenda 3:30 PM

Feature Keynote Speaker, President's Report, Financial Report, Short and Long Range Plans, Schedule for Upcoming Events, By-Laws Update, and Member Input.

### Special Member Only Offer

A limited number of signed limited edition prints from the Museum's archives will be available for sale to members only.

# Museum Members

**Thank you to the following members and businesses that recently renewed their membership. Your continued support and contributions are essential to the overall success of the Decoy Museum:**

---

Carol Abrams	Pat & Jerry Whited	James Murphy	John Harris Jr
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Mary Lou Southall	Ron Moffatt	James Stewart Greto	
	Jeff Moore		

## members

You can help promote the Decoy Museum by sending the name and contact information of your local newspaper to *The Canvasback*. With this information we can reach out and send our news releases to the papers in your area! Please mail this information to the Decoy Museum, 215 Giles St., Havre de Grace, MD 21078, Margaret Jones or email to [decoymuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:decoymuseum@yahoo.com).





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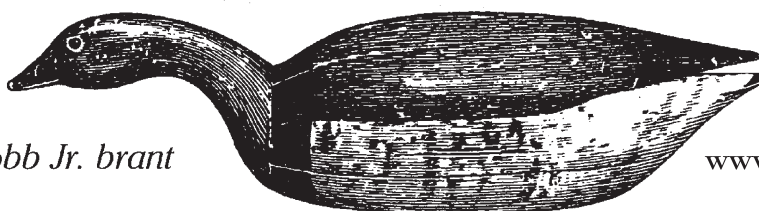
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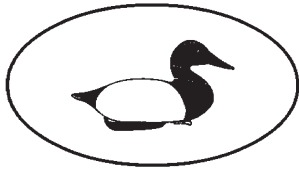
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# Susquehanna Decoys

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## Have You Got What it Takes to be a Volunteer?

*Do you have a few hours a week you could give to the museum?  
How about a few hours a year for the Festival or the Duck Fair?  
Do you enjoy early morning bird walks and would you like to  
share your knowledge with others? If you have the time, we have  
the need.*

The Museum is dedicated to offering a wide variety of activities to its members and to the public. We are looking for volunteers who would like to assist with leading adult group tours, and/or answer phones. Can you help with large mailings or assist with special events like the Festival and Duck Fair? We would like to expand our activities and programs, but we need your help.

Volunteers are a great asset to any organization. We would love to have you come aboard.

### **Contact Joanne Calder or Margaret Jones**

at the Museum 410-939-3739 or email us at [decoymuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:decoymuseum@yahoo.com)  
to see how you can become a part of our volunteer staff.



**Elly Coale**  
Volunteer



# Calendar of Events

## The Ward Foundation Education Series

Call the Ward Foundation for a complete listing of this year's seminars, classes and workshops, programs and exhibits. Call Salisbury University Education Department at (410) 742-4988 ext. 110 or visit their website at [www.wardmuseum.org](http://www.wardmuseum.org)

## The Decoy Museum's Exhibits

*Potomac Decoy Collector's Association Redhead exhibit, second floor gallery*  
*The Magnificent Michael Bequest, An extraordinary pair of "Daddy" Holly canvasbacks*

## Tour Reservations

Book your tours early. Talk to your children's or grandchildren's teachers now about signing up for educational programs and tours of the Decoy Museum. Harford County school system classes are free and we have several different tours to offer different age or grade levels. Programs for scouts and home schooled children are also available.

<p><b>APRIL 6</b></p> <p><b>DECOY MUSEUM ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING.</b> 2 p.m. Tours, demonstrations, silent auction, autograph sessions, and free decoy appraisals, followed by a membership meeting with a keynote speaker. For more information call 410-939-3739 or e-mail the Museum at <a href="mailto:decoymuseum@yahoo.com">decoymuseum@yahoo.com</a></p>	<p><b>MAY 18</b></p> <p><b>RING JOUSTING TOURNAMENT AT THE STEPPINGSTONE MUSEUM.</b> 12 noon–5 p.m. Come and watch the Maryland State Sport in action — Ring Jousting! Robin Hood Skit; games and crafts for the kids; foods; tours; free parking. For more information contact 410-939-5780</p>
<p><b>APRIL 9</b></p> <p><b>TOPIC TO BE ANNOUNCED.</b> 7 p.m. Ellsworth B. Shank Historical Lecture series. Takes place at the Havre de Grace City Hall. Price: Free to the public. For more information call 410-939-1800 or <a href="http://www.lockhousemuseum.org">www.lockhousemuseum.org</a></p>	<p><b>MAY 24</b></p> <p><b>GUIDED NATURE AND HISTORICAL WALK OF THE NORTH PARK TRAIL.</b> 10 a.m. Approximate duration of one hour. Meet at the Lock House of the Susquehanna Museum. Price: Free to the public. For more information contact <a href="http://www.hdg tourism.com">www.hdg tourism.com</a></p>
<p><b>APRIL 19</b></p> <p><b>SUSQUEHANNA LOCKHOUSE MUSEUM'S TEA WITH MATILDA.</b> Bring your doll and join us for a tea party with honored guest Matilda O'Neill. Price: \$15. For more information contact <a href="http://www.lockhousemuseum.org">www.lockhousemuseum.org</a></p>	<p><b>MAY 25</b></p> <p><b>SPORTING CLAY SHOOT.</b> 9 a.m.–1 p.m. last shooter on course at noon. 75 target, 4 lewis class events. Enjoy a day on the shore shooting sporting clays. All proceeds benefit the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. Please contact museum for more details. Phone: 410-939-3739 or email: <a href="mailto:decoymmuseum@yahoo.com">decoymmuseum@yahoo.com</a></p>
<p><b>APRIL 22</b></p> <p><b>ANNUAL DINNER MEETING.</b> The Susquehanna Museum of Havre de Grace will hold its annual dinner meeting. This is the Official Museum general meeting and members and guests are welcome. For more information contact <a href="http://www.lockhousemuseum.org">www.lockhousemuseum.org</a></p>	<p><b>MAY 30</b></p> <p><b>HARFORD HOSPICE REGATTA.</b> Enjoy a sailboat Regatta, a steak and chicken dinner by Outback Steakhouse, unlimited beer and soda, music, dancing, and a silent auction. Address: 520 Upper Chesapeake Dr. Suite 405, Bel Air, MD, 21014. For more information contact: <a href="mailto:dbt.01@ex.uchs.org">dbt.01@ex.uchs.org</a></p>
<p><b>MAY 2 — MAY 4</b></p> <p><b>27TH ANNUAL DECOY AND WILDLIFE ART FESTIVAL.</b> Fri. 6 p.m.–9 p.m./Sat. 9 a.m.–5 p.m./Sun. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Decoy and Wildlife Artists and carvers. Carving Competitions, antique and contemporary decoys and art for sale. A live auction, silent auctions, demonstrations and children's activities. For more information contact 410-939-3739 or email <a href="mailto:decoymuseum@yahoo.com">decoymuseum@yahoo.com</a></p>	<div data-bbox="820 1440 1461 1932"> <p><b>The Havre de Grace Museum</b>  presents its  <i>12th Annual Sporting Clays Classic</i>  <b>Sunday, May 25, 2008</b>  9:00 am at Pintail Point, Queenstown, MD</p> <p>Registration begins at 9:00 am and the last shooter out at 12 noon.</p> <p>Registration is \$75 and includes lunch. You can register that day or pre-register by filling out the form in the spring issue of <i>Canvasback</i> magazine. Contact the museum for additional information by calling 410-939-3739 or email <a href="mailto:decoymuseum@yahoo.com">decoymuseum@yahoo.com</a>.</p> </div>
<p><b>MAY 3 — MAY 4</b></p> <p><b>RE-ENACTMENT OF THE ATTACK ON HAVRE DE GRACE DURING THE WAR OF 1812.</b> The public is invited to visit the Lock House grounds where the attack will take place and on which the various military units will have their encampments. There will be musket-firing displays, marching and drill, a candlelight tour of the encampment, War of 1812 military hospital and a variety of other historical attractions. For more information contact: <a href="http://www.lockhousemuseum.org">www.lockhousemuseum.org</a></p>	
<p><b>MAY 9</b></p> <p><b>HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM GOLF OUTTING.</b> Spend an afternoon at Ruggles Golf course on the Aberdeen Proving Ground, Great prizes, refreshments and lite fare. Proceeds benefit the museum. For more information call: 410-939-3739 or email <a href="mailto:decoymuseum@yahoo.com">decoymuseum@yahoo.com</a></p>	



# J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest

2008 COMPETITION

The 6th Annual **J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest** to be held in conjunction with the 2008 Havre de Grace Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival will be on Saturday, May 3th in the Middle School Gym. Entries will be accepted at the stage area from 10:00 a.m. until judging at noon. Joe Engers, Editor & Publisher of *Decoy Magazine* will head up a three-member judge's panel. Participants must make a good faith effort to assure that all decoy entries were made prior to 1950. Each decoy will be limited to one category competition only. Matched pairs entered in other than a Matched Pair category will be considered as one entry. There is a competition ban, regardless of category, on last year's winning birds. Competition decoys will be kept in a highly visible roped-off secure area and will not be handled by the public. At approximately 1:00 p.m., the public will be invited to review the roped off and secured tables once the judges have made their selections. A blue ribbon will be awarded for each of the following ten category winners. The three-judge panel will also select a best in show winner. Winners will be requested to display their decoys and ribbons at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum for a three month period.

- |                                                                    |                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Best Cecil County Canvasback decoy                              | 6. Best Mid-Day or Eastern Shore Matched Pair decoys |
| 2. Best George "Wash" Barnes decoy                                 | 7. Best New Jersey Brant decoy                       |
| 3. Best Edwin Pearson decoy                                        | 8. Best Virginia Bluebill decoy                      |
| 4. Best Capt. Harry Jobes decoy (old decoy age requirement waived) | 9. Best Red Head decoy — any area                    |
| 5. Best Upper Bay Miniature decoy                                  | 10. Best unknown decoy                               |

There will be no restrictions as to those who can participate or number of categories entered, however participants are restricted to no more than three birds per category. Competition issues will be resolved at the sole discretion of the competition chairman and/or competition chief judge. Any questions, please contact contest chairman Jim Trimble at 703-768-7264 or [potomacduck@cox.net](mailto:potomacduck@cox.net)

## Havre de Grace Decoy Museum's First Annual Golf Tournament Friday, May 9th, 2008

**Shotgun Start:** 1 p.m.  
*Registration starts at 11 a.m.*

**Registration:** \$400  
*per team of four*

**Prizes:** Many  
*including a chance to win  
a car for a hole-in-one*

**Lunch provided after  
the tournament.**

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For more information call the museum 410-939-3739.



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[www.edwardjones.com](http://www.edwardjones.com)

## UPCOMING EVENTS FOR 2008

**Havre de Grace Decoy Museum  
Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival**  
May 2-3-4

**Havre de Grace Decoy Museum  
Golf Tournament at Ruggles Golf  
Course, Aberdeen, Maryland**  
May 9

**Sporting Clays Classic at  
Pintail Point,  
Queenstown, Maryland**  
May 25

**J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy  
Contest Exhibit**  
June-August

**21st Annual Duck Fair**  
September 6

**22nd Annual Anniversary Dinner**  
November 1

**Candlelight Tour &  
Carver Demonstration**  
December 14



[www.decoymuseum.com](http://www.decoymuseum.com)



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in Meeting  
a Guest  
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for a list of  
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