

# *The Canvasback*

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM

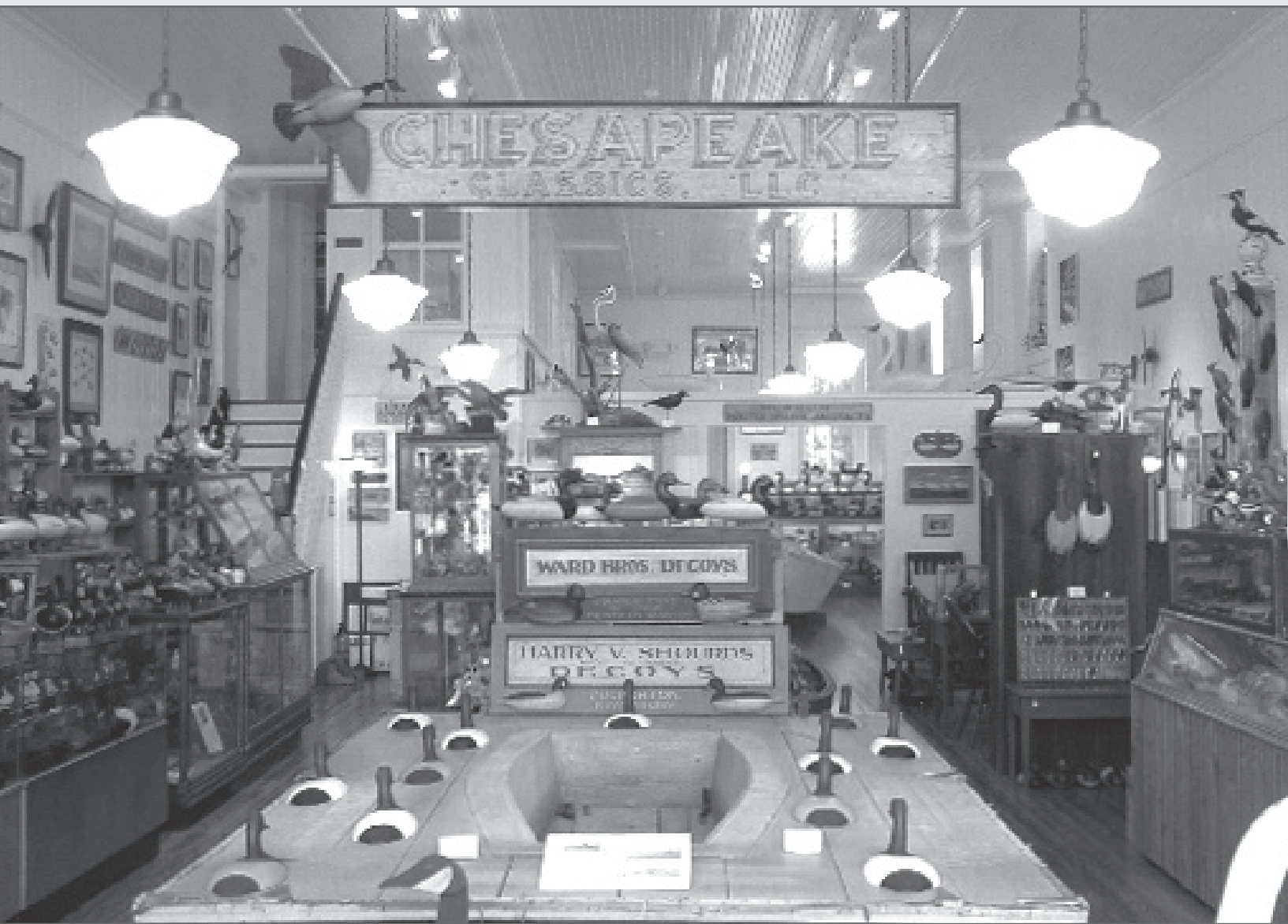
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**can•vas•back** (kan'ves bak'), *n., pl. -backs*, (esp. collectively) - **back**. **1.** A north American wild duck, the male of which has a whitish back and a reddish-brown head and neck. **2.** A style of decoy made famous by carvers of the Susquehanna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

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## ON THE COVER



Visitors enjoy the many items at the 2009 Duck Fair.



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# From the President

---

Dear Museum Member,

What happened since the summer issue? Our Golf Tournament was rained out for the 2nd year in a row. It was held on October 23, 2009.



The Duck Fair was held on a cloudy and dreary day with it raining near the end of the day. Because of the weather it was slow and not as well attended as in the past.

There will be some changes in our displays soon. C. John Sullivan has stepped up to help the Museum with the curator's duties. We are very lucky to have someone of John's stature helping the Decoy Museum.

I want to thank everyone who has supported the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum over the last four (4) years. They are too numerous to mention. It is my hope they will continue to support our next president as they have me. Thank you very much and I will see you around the Decoy Museum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ed Watts'.

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.



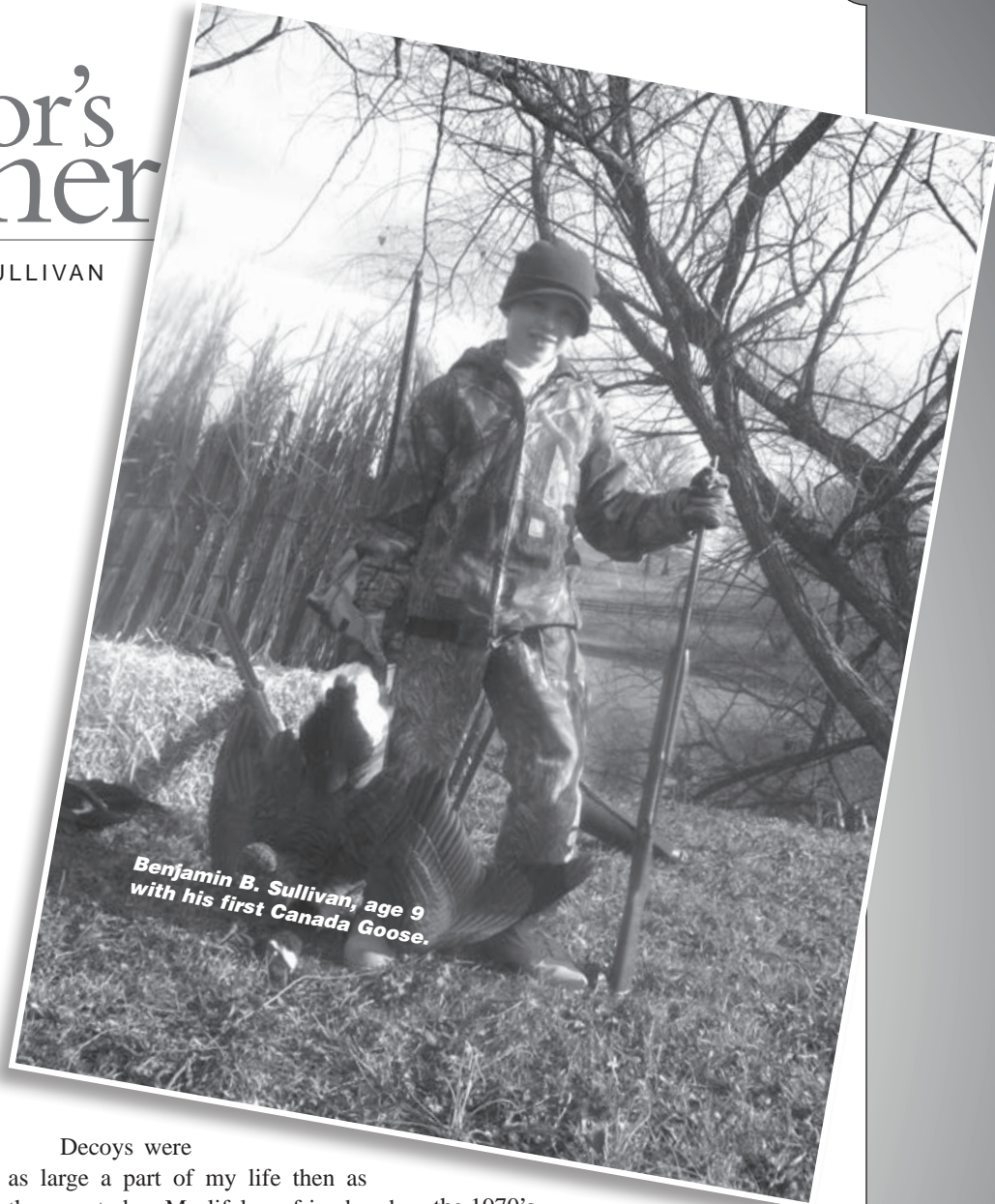
# Collector's corner

BY C. JOHN SULLIVAN

## Life with Decoys



Growing up with a few decoys in my childhood home embedded a different view-point on home décor in my young mind. Decoys have always been a part of my life. Decoys were in my family's home, the homes of my aunts and uncles, grandparents, and cousins. My very first decoy became a focal point in my room by the time I was 12. By my eighteenth birthday, I did minor restoration work on the old Ben Dye redhead that I viewed each day in my room. That decoy has stayed close to me ever since. For one reason or another, my parents gradually changed the cowboy motif of my bedroom to a waterfowling theme, and my childhood trashcan was replaced with a flying waterfowl-patterned can. From that very first decoy and those that graced the hearth by the living room fireplace and the bookshelves, my collection grew. As I moved from house to house, decoys have always been prominently displayed. I remember a moment during a committee meeting of my Bel Air High School 15th reunion group, sitting in our family room at Bon Air with shelves of decoys surrounding us, when my old high school friend and classmate Dr. Richard P. Streett said to the group "I wonder if John has any interests or hobbies he would like to tell us about?"



*Benjamin B. Sullivan, age 9  
with his first Canada Goose.*

Decoys were as large a part of my life then as they are today. My lifelong friend and decoy mentor, Henry A. Fleckenstein, Jr., always kept a split oak basket of old working decoys next to his favorite reading chair. He would reach down, pick up first one and then the next for examination and study, making conscientious comparisons of paint, form, and other characteristics. I recall asking him about this practice. What he was doing was making mental notes of decoys in his collection to judge other birds that he had just previewed in someone else's home, rig, auction, or antique shop. In

the 1970's when Barbara, Johnny, and I would stay with Henry on the Eastern Shore, there were decoys everywhere—on the nightstand in our bedroom, on the bookshelves and blanket chests in the living room, even under the beds. When Patrick Vincenti visited my home a number of years ago and saw for the first time my decoys and what an integral part of my life they formed, he told me that over the years he and many others thought I pursued this passion merely to make a quick dollar,

## Collector's corner

to buy a decoy and then resell it as quickly as possible to make a profit. Not so. While some others see decoys as an investment, I see them as a part of my life, a passion. When my ten-year-old grandson, Benjamin, asked me recently "what do you like better, Big, the old working decoys, the ones that have been gunned over, or the pretty ones that have never been used," I know that this passion will live on, that perhaps someday his own collection, which today can be counted on two hands, will grow. As Alan Elkin of Advanced Business Systems says, "We love what we do. It is what defines us. We live and breathe this stuff. It is not just the tagline for our commercials, it's our culture." And so it is with our collection. It is what we do. It defines who we are—we live it. ■

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

### *General Membership Meeting*

April 11, 2010

The General Membership Meeting will be held April 11, 2010. Make plans to join us. This is your chance to learn how the Museum has been doing during these tough economic times, see what the future plans are, and offer your suggestions and ideas. Member input and involvement is essential to the Museum's success.

# THANK YOU DUCK FAIR VOLUNTEERS

*Thank you to all the many  
Duck Fair Volunteers.*

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event without you!*

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# Nesting Success through Predator Management

By Joel Brice

*Delta Waterfowl's Director of  
Conservation Programs*



**Y**ou might not realize it, but duck hunting and duck production have a great deal in common. Conventional wisdom says that if you purchase a piece of land, keep the grass and wetlands intact, it will magically produce ducks for duck hunters.

Conventional wisdom also says there are certain ingredients—from scouting to proper decoy placement to wise calling—that make up a successful duck hunt.

Still, the best laid plans—for bringing home a limit of birds or producing ducks on private ground—don't always jive with conventional wisdom.

The reality is more complicated. In fact, producing ducks is complicated.

Really complicated.

Here's the reality: Not all land is for-sale in duck country. Indeed, the idea that we can “buy it all” to meet that all-important “habitat threshold” to produce enough ducks for hunters isn't likely to happen.

That's where Delta Waterfowl's never-say-die attitude to produce more ducks for duck hunters comes into play. That's where Delta Waterfowl's creative solutions come into play. Case in point: predator management, a duck-production tool that Delta has been studying since the early 1990s.

The basic premise behind predator management is that some predators (espe-

cially skunks, fox and raccoons) have a stranglehold on duck production in large portions of the all-important prairie breeding grounds, particularly the so-called duck factory of prairie Canada.

Delta Waterfowl is managing predators (through lethal removal and in targeted areas) during the duck-nesting season, in an attempt to restore a balance between ducks and their predators. In the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) over the last several decades, abundant grass has been replaced with more and more cropland, creating a fragmented landscape in which egg-eating predators thrive.

Sprinkle in a depressed fur market (and the continued mass exodus of trappers),





*Rob Olson, Delta Waterfowl's President and Jim Fisher (Delta Waterfowl's Director of Conservation Policies) standing in front of a large statue of a Canvasback located in Minnedosa, Canada... the nesting grounds of the Canvasback.*

and you have a recipe for poor duck production. In a predator-reduced environment, the hope is that nesting ducks will once again hatch and fledge their young at population-expanding rates.

Delta Waterfowl recently initiated a long-term study in the aspen-parkland region of southwest Manitoba. The hope: improve diving-duck recruitment through predator management.

Traditionally, this region was home to tremendous breeding populations of canvasback, lesser scaup (bluebills) and red-heads. In particular, both canvasback and lesser scaup populations have fallen well below their historical populations.

Although the exact reason for this decline has not been identified, most researchers believe the problem stems from a lack of production—and not from factors outside of the breeding season. In other words, predators are likely taking a big bite out of the population, just like they have with mallards in the area. In fact, from 2002–2004, only 2.2 percent of ground-nesting mallards successfully hatched a nest. What's more, in two of those years, nest success was below one percent!!

In the next few years, Delta Waterfowl will be hiring professional trappers to remove mammalian predators from targeted areas of this historically diving duck-

rich region of Canada. With a “level playing field,” the hope is for nest-success rates to climb and for historically high breeding populations of canvasback and lesser scaup to be restored on these test sites.

Which, of course, would be great news for diving-duck hunters in parts of the Atlantic Flyway and beyond. ■

An avid waterfowler, **Joel Brice** has worked for Delta Waterfowl for eight years. He can be reached at [jbrice@deltawaterfowl.org](mailto:jbrice@deltawaterfowl.org). For more information about Delta Waterfowl: [www.deltawaterfowl.org](http://www.deltawaterfowl.org).



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Drawing will be held 7pm on December 13, 2009.  
at the Decoy Museum. For tickets call **410-939-3739**.

# Duck Fair

## REVIEW

BY MARGARET JONES  
*Photos by Leo Heppner and Steve Martinek*

This year, the day before the Duck Fair started with torrential rains and continued with periods of drizzle and mist. The rain came down hard enough that our Golf Tournament scheduled for Ruggles Golf Course was cancelled. The rain was not letting up, but all the news stations and weather broadcasts promised clearing and nice weather for Saturday. The Duck Fair Committee waited to see what would happen. Finally by early evening, the mist and rain ended, a light breeze began and the decision was made to hold the Duck Fair as scheduled.

Saturday morning was cloudy and the sun tried to peek through the clouds as people began to arrive. In addition to the carvers and artists there were a number of commercial hunting outfitters and suppliers participating this year. The

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The noise and commotion drew the attention of people strolling along the promenade. Many people then came to the fair to join in the activities.

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Goose and Duck Calling contest, sponsored by the Upper Chesapeake Chapter of Delta Waterfowl returned and a large number of contestants entered. Many of the calling contestants wandered down to the promenade and practiced calling geese and ducks into the area. The Delta Dogs demonstrated their retriever dog's athletic abilities. Some of the dogs and their owners went below the promenade and had the dogs go into the water. The



**Mike Smyser (on right) being presented his plaque as Duck Fair Honorary Chairman for 2009 by John Ingoglia, Duck Fair Chairman.**



noise and commotion drew the attention of people strolling along the promenade. Many people then came to the fair to join in the activities.

The silent auction, bake sale and children's activities were well attended.

Debbie Butcher supervised this year's duck decoy painting with adults and children painting resin mallards. A lot of laughing and carrying on could be heard from their direction. The finished projects were well done. Thanks Debbie!

The promised clearing never happened and a steady drizzle started late in the

afternoon and the crowd thinned quickly. Despite the lack of sun, people who attended the fair enjoyed themselves.

John Ingoglia and George Wooden, Duck Fair Co-Chairmen, would like to thank everyone who made the Duck Fair a success. Special thanks to Mike Smyser for agreeing to be this year's Honorary Duck Fair Chairman, the Upper Chesapeake Chapter of Delta Waterfowl, Delta Dogs, Exhibitors and all the volunteers, who made the day happen. The Duck Fair would not have been successful without their help. ■





# 2009 Duck Fair







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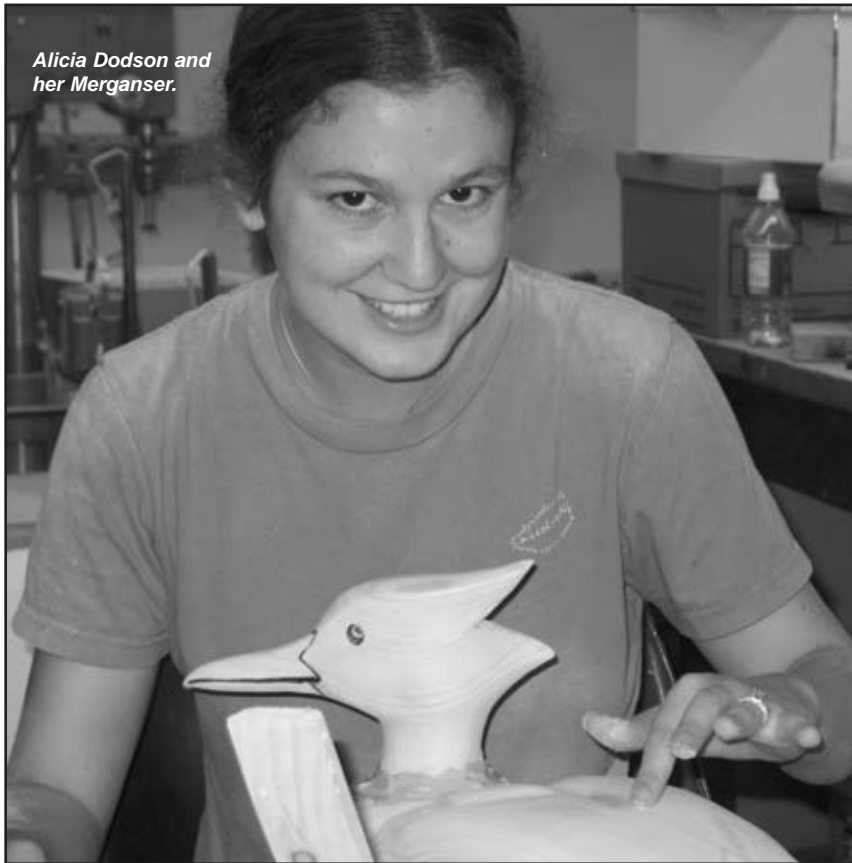
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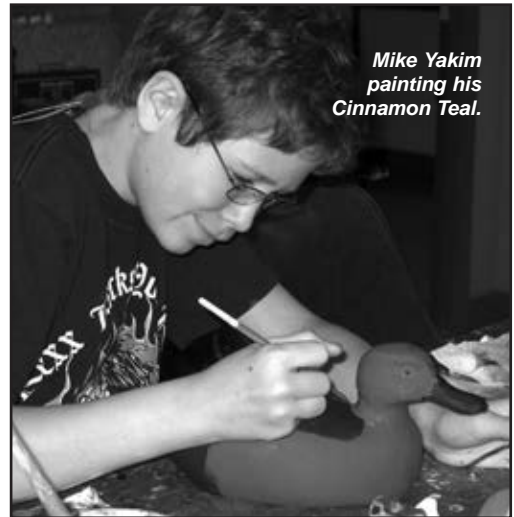
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Alicia Dodson and her Merganser.



Mike Yakim painting his Cinnamon Teal.



Kicking the dust up at the Chesapeake Challenge.

## Chesapeake Challenge Carving Classes Held This Summer

story and photos by Margaret Jones

**A**s many of you are aware, decoy carving is becoming a "lost art." Most of us are so caught up in our own schedules and getting the kids to where they need to be that we have failed to schedule time for ourselves. Many times after a visitor has seen the Museum or has spoken to the guest carver they will often say things like "I wish I had time to learn how to do this" or "I used to

watch my grandfather whittle things out of wood when I was a kid."

The Chesapeake Challenge was issued to introduce as many people as possible to decoy carving. Bill Veasey took up the challenge and introduced 12 people to carving.

Over the summer, Bill taught two carving classes. One class was for children 9 to 16 years-old and one was an adult class. Twelve people signed



Kyle Kenney and Bill Veasey.



*Brandon Woods and Tyler Martinek.*

up and created some wonderful decoys. As part of the Challenge everyone who participated will have their decoys entered in several carving competitions.

Bill Veasey did a tremendous job this summer, not only holding classes here at the Decoy Museum, but at his shop and other locations. He personally saw to it that over 100 people were introduced to

carving decoys and most of those were young adults. Decoy carving is a traditional art form passed down. Not many young people are aware of the history of decoy carving nor the history of hunting with a hand made decoy. Thanks to Bill, 100 people were introduced to the art of decoy making. ■

## Carving Classes on Monday Evenings

Harford Community College and the Decoy Museum have partnered to hold carving classes this fall as part of the non-credit course schedule.

Monday nights from 7-9pm students will learn how to carve decoys from George Stram. Classes are being held in the Decoy Museum's carving room located in the basement of the Museum. George, a long-time supporter of the Museum and a carving instructor, has been teaching

carving as a non-credit course for Harford Community College for many years. Class registration is handled through the Community College. If you are interested in attending future classes, please contact the college and ask for a schedule of non-credit classes.

The Museum is looking forward to a continued partnership and introducing more people to the joys of carving! ■



*Alicia Dodson and her finished Merganser.*



*Working hard at the adult carving class.*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

*New Dates  
Announced  
for the  
2010 Decoy  
Festival.*

April 30th,  
May 1 & 2, 2010

**DON'T MISS  
THESE EVENTS!**

# Museum Members

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

---

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Adolph O House "Reds"	Scott Krieger	

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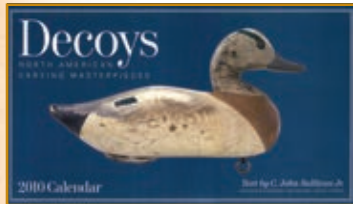
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Decoys 2010 calendar



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# Calendar of Events

## The Ward Foundation Education Series

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## The Decoy Museum's Exhibits

*Potomac Decoy Collector's Association Mallard exhibit, second floor gallery*  
*An exhibit of Factory Decoys, donated by Dr. M. Kramer, 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>NOVEMBER 6TH</b></p> <p><b>FIRST FRIDAYS</b> sponsored by HdG Main Street, Inc. 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm. A fun-filled evening in beautiful downtown Havre de Grace. (no music due to cold temperatures) For more information contact: Havre de Grace Main Street, Inc., Bill Price at 410-939-1811 or email: <a href="mailto:hdgmainstreet@verizon.net">hdgmainstreet@verizon.net</a>. Visit their website: <a href="http://www.mainstreethdg.org">http://www.mainstreethdg.org</a>.</p>	<p><b>NOVEMBER 14TH — 15TH</b></p> <p><b>Havre de Grace Maritime Museum Presents: Founder's Day and Native Lifeways Weekend.</b> Sat. 10–5pm, Sun. 6–9pm. 20% off Native American themed items in Museum Store. On Saturday, Nov. 14th, members &amp; volunteers will have a potluck dinner and award recognition. Not a member? Join today! Admission for the Museum required. For more information contact: Ann Persson at 410-939-4800 or email: <a href="mailto:museum@comcast.net">museum@comcast.net</a>. Please visit their website: <a href="http://www.hdgmaritimemuseum.org">www.hdgmaritimemuseum.org</a></p>
<p><b>NOVEMBER 7TH — 8TH</b></p> <p><b>Susquehanna Lockhouse Museum.</b> Sat. 11–5, Sun. 10–3. Come visit the pirates in their camps, watch the attacks on the "town", witness the hangings, be a pirate. Admission is: Adults \$3.00, Ages 5–12 \$1.00, Under 5 Free. For more information contact: Gary Wasielewski at 410-939-5780 or mail: <a href="mailto:director@lockhousemuseum.org">director@lockhousemuseum.org</a>. Visit their website: <a href="http://www.lockhousemuseum.org">http://www.lockhousemuseum.org</a>.</p>	<p><b>NOVEMBER 21ST</b></p> <p><b>Havre de Grace Maritime Museum Presents: Open Hearth Cooking.</b> 1–5pm. Join the staffs of the Maritime Museum and Steppingstone Museum for our third annual Thanksgiving Open House. Open hearth cooking demonstrations showcase colonial recipes, food samples, recipes, and children's activities. Admission is \$3.50 adults, members &amp; kids under 8 FREE. For more information contact: Ann Persson at 410-939-4800 or email: <a href="mailto:museum@comcast.net">museum@comcast.net</a>. Visit their website: <a href="http://www.hdgmaritimemuseum.org">www.hdgmaritimemuseum.org</a>.</p>
<p><b>NOVEMBER 7TH</b></p> <p><b>All Maryland Reptile Show.</b> 9:00am–3:00 pm. Come see a wonderful selection of reptiles at the Havre de Grace Community Center located at 100 Lagaret Lane in HdG. Admission is: \$7.00 Adults, \$3.00 Children 2–6. For more information call 717-432-5807 or visit their website: <a href="http://www.mdreptilefarm.com/shows/md/allmd/asp">www.mdreptilefarm.com/shows/md/allmd/asp</a>.</p>	<p><b>NOVEMBER 25TH</b></p> <p><b>Susquehanna Ministerium: Thanksgiving Eve Ecumenical Worship.</b> 7pm. St. John Episcopal Church located at Union &amp; Congress Avenues. For more information contact: Ray Astor at 410-939-2464.</p>
<p><b>NOVEMBER 11TH</b></p> <p><b>American Legion Presents: Veterans' Day Observances.</b> 11:00 am. Come join us in recognition of our veterans at Tydings Park. This event is a long-standing tradition among Americans nationwide. For more information contact: HdG American Legion or call: 410-939-0234.</p>	<p><b>DECEMBER 5TH — 6TH</b></p> <p><b>Steppingstone Farm Museum: Christmas Open House.</b> 12–4pm. Tours of the historic farmhouse decorated for the holidays, Christmas music, cookies and cider, museum store open for holiday shopping. Admission is FREE. For more information contact: Linda M. Noll at 410-939-2299 or 888-419-1762 or email: <a href="mailto:steppingstonemuseum@msn.com">steppingstonemuseum@msn.com</a>. Visit their website: <a href="http://www.steppingstonemuseum.org">http://www.steppingstonemuseum.org</a>.</p>
<p><b>NOVEMBER 14TH</b></p> <p><b>Guided Nature and Historical Walk of the North Park Trail.</b> 10am. Free to public. Approximately one hour. Meet at the Lock House of the Susquehanna Museum. For more information contact: Susquehanna Lockhouse Museum at 410-939-5780 or email: <a href="mailto:director@lockhousemuseum.org">director@lockhousemuseum.org</a>. Visit their website: <a href="http://www.lockhousemuseum.org">http://www.lockhousemuseum.org</a></p>	<p><b>DECEMBER 4TH</b></p> <p><b>FIRST FRIDAYS</b> sponsored by HdG Main Street, Inc. 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm. A fun-filled evening in beautiful downtown Havre de Grace. (no music due to cold temperatures.) For more information contact: Havre de Grace Main Street, Inc., Bill Price at 410-939-1811 or email: <a href="mailto:hdgmainstreet@verizon.net">hdgmainstreet@verizon.net</a>. Visit their website: <a href="http://www.mainstreethdg.org">http://www.mainstreethdg.org</a>.</p>





# Calendar of Events

## DECEMBER 12TH — 13TH

**The Christmas Boutique.** Sat.9–1pm/Sun.12–8pm. Located at the Lockhouse Museum. Historic setting for traditional holiday shopping. Find one-of-a-kind items and fresh greens! Admission Free. For more information contact: Gary Wasielewski at 410-939-4078 or email: [director@lockhousemuseum.org](mailto:director@lockhousemuseum.org). Visit their website: <http://www.lockhousemuseum.org>

## DECEMBER 13TH

**37th Annual Candlelight Tour of Historic Havre de Grace.** 12–8pm. Tour historic homes and buildings. This is the BEST holiday activity in Havre de Grace! There is an admission fee. Tickets sold at the Visitor Center located at 450 Pennington Avenue. For more information contact: Gary Wasielewski at 410-939-5780 or email: [director@lockhousemuseum.org](mailto:director@lockhousemuseum.org). Visit their website: <http://www.lockhousemuseum.org>.

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# 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Candlelight Tour

## December 13, 2009

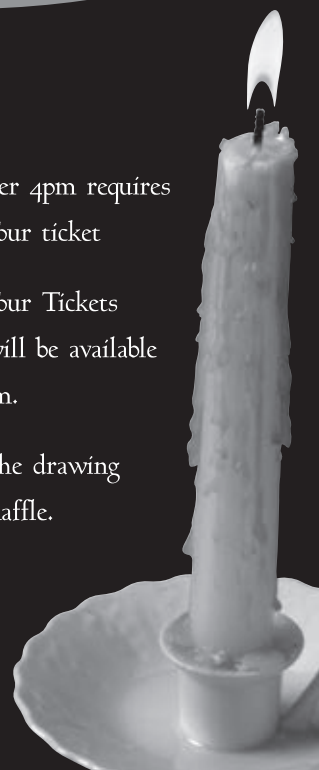
**Museum Hours: Noon – 4 p.m.**  
**Candlelight Tour: 4 p.m. – 8 p.m.**

Call the Decoy Museum at **410-939-3739** for more information.

Admission after 4pm requires  
Candlelight Tour ticket

Candlelight Tour Tickets  
are \$15 and will be available  
at the museum.

7pm will be the drawing  
for the Fall Raffle.





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