

The Canvasback

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM

Winter 2013
Vol. 22 No. 1

\$7.00



Ben Dye's Historic Oldsquaws

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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.



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Well we made it.



We survived the “End of the World” scenario. The Mayans somehow got it wrong and we saw the “Duck Drop” as we moved on into 2013 (see page 15). We anticipate a wonderful

year here at the Museum.

Aside from the usual routine of the day to day operation, we change things up from time to time not just to see if you are paying attention but to enhance your experience. The Museum has received high marks with the Jim Pierce exhibit and the Ed “Pop” Sampson display is a trip down memory lane for those who were fortunate enough to know Ed. The display of “Letters to Bob McGaw” is a feast for the eyes. To be able to view actual correspondence to and from Mr. and Mrs. McGaw is a treat for those who enjoy viewing history first hand.

We were fortunate to receive that generous donation from John and Phyllis Pusey’s son Joel B. Pusey. The Pusey family members were classic waterfowlers in the truest sense of the word. I never visited them without leaving with a great story of what the Susquehanna Flats once was. Donations like these letters and Mrs. McGaw’s opera glasses are treasures for all to visit. That exhibit is a focal point in the Library and is situated near a beautiful decorative Eastern Blue Bird carved by master carver Barb Wachter. Barb is not only a very humble and talented carver, he is a strong advocate for the Museum.

As we head through winter and into spring the anticipation for what is sure to be one of the biggest and most successful shows in the decoy world lies ahead of us in May. On May 3, 4, and 5 the 32nd Annual Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival will be held in Havre de Grace. It will truly be a celebration of not just the bicentennial of the War of 1812 in Havre de Grace but of what is taking shape as a tremendous gathering of decoy and art lovers alike. If you don’t get to the Museum before then we will look forward to seeing you in May.

—C. John Sullivan

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The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is funded by an operating grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive. Funding for the Maryland State Arts Council is also provided by the National Endowment for the arts, a federal agency.

The Museum was incorporated in 1981 as a 501(c)(3) 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. Contributions made to the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum Tax may be deductible.



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From the President

Dear Museum Member,

The winter issue of *The Canvasback* straddles the old year and the new—a time to look back and to look forward. I am grateful for the support of our volunteers and members who have generously donated time, money, and gifts in kind. They are the life blood of the Decoy Museum. Also, thanks to each of you who responded to the Annual Appeal with donations. And we continue to work to attract new members and to keep our loyal membership base engaged. Please look out for your renewal reminder.



Photo by Leo Heppner

The Canvasback is one of the finest publications for a small non-profit museum and the primary point of contact with our membership. But the great expense is also a tempting target for budget cutting. Ed and Jane Zimmer have generously stepped up to sponsor *The Canvasback* for 2013. This is a very special gift to every member, so please join me in thanking Ed and Jane.

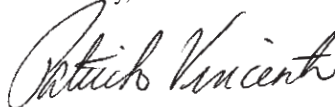
As I write this, we have just concluded the 6th Annual Susquehanna Flats Vintage Hunting and Fishing Collectibles Show. This joint fundraiser was very well-attended and benefits both the Decoy Museum and the Level VFC. Many thanks to Jeannie Vincenti, Chuck and Lynn Usilton, and the volunteers who made it a success.

C. John Sullivan is stepping down from the day-to-day responsibilities as our Director of Operations but will continue his long, close, and valued association with the Museum as a volunteer consultant. We are very fortunate to have John. He is among our most loyal supporters and greatest resources with his vast knowledge of decoys and his skills as a writer and storyteller. I thank John for his efforts on our behalf and for very significant contributions too varied and numerous to list in this short space.

The two biggest events of the year for the Museum are the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment dinner on March 8 and the 32nd Annual Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival on May 3-5, 2013. Please mark your calendar and join us for these important and exciting events. We rely on the Endowment as the primary source of funding for growing our collection of decoys and artifacts related to waterfowling, so help the Endowment help the Museum. The Festival draws exhibitors from all over the country and is fun for all ages. This year the Festival weekend coincides with a parade, re-enactments, and other events associated with the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial commemoration of the devastating 1813 British attack on Havre de Grace. Admission is free to all—thanks to Mayor Wayne Dougherty, the Havre de Grace City Council, and the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission.

I don't need to remind you of the challenges these times present to all of us, and I can't pretend that the Museum is unaffected, but we are meeting our challenges head-on. Your continued support will keep us strong. Thanks for all you do!

Sincerely,



Pat Vincenti

The 20th Annual R. Madison Mitchell ENDOWMENT TRUST BANQUET



Friday, March 8, 2013 at the
Bayou Restaurant

Route 40, Havre de Grace, Maryland

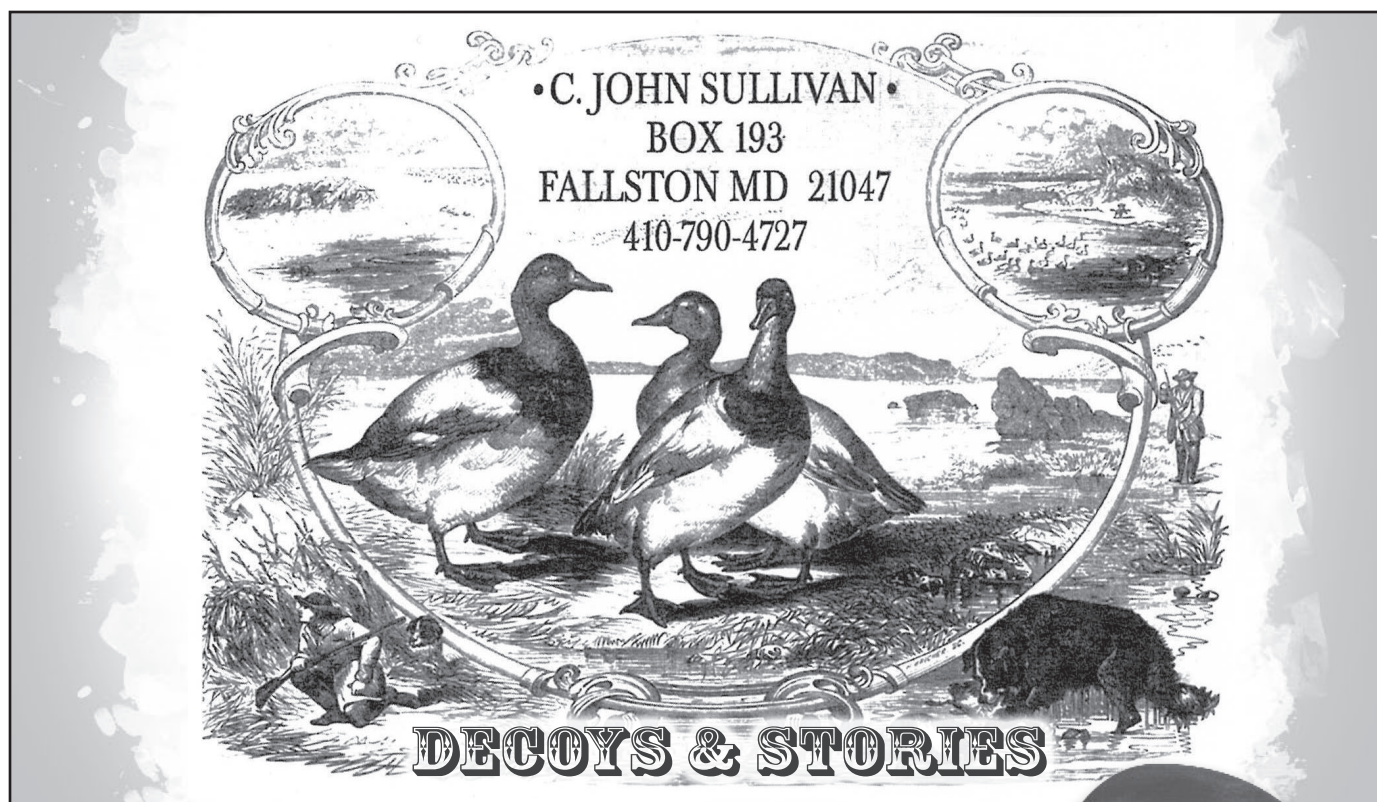
**Cocktails at 6:00pm • Dinner at 7:00pm
Program at 8:00pm**



The evening program will include a lottery drawing, option to purchase one of twenty-five decoys. In addition, there will be a live auction with the opportunity to bid on many other special items.



Tickets are \$50.00 per person and are available at the Decoy Museum, Vincenti Decoys, or by calling (410) 734-6238 or see www.RMadisonMitchell.com. All proceeds benefit the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum for the purchase of artifacts, decoys representing all levels of decoy makers, and other appropriate projects.



Call for DECOYS DONATIONS NEEDED



The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum has been very fortunate to have the strong support of its members during these times of great financial challenge, and we thank you for your donations, dues, Gift Shop purchases, volunteer effort, and other support. Another very important contribution you can make is... **decoys!**

Downsizing? Changing your collection? Many of us have decoys, other wild-life art, and waterfowling memorabilia packed away in closets, attics, garages, and basements that the Museum can turn into much-needed operating revenue.

Please take a look around and consider what is surplus to your needs. These in-

kind gifts will be gratefully received by the Museum and may also enable you to take a tax deduction for the charitable donation.

Your donations may be brought to the Museum any day of the week, or call the staff at 410-939-3739 and we will work something out with you. ■

Please note: IRS regulations prohibit the Museum, as benefactor of the gift, to appraise donated items. The value must be determined by an independent source at the time of the donation.

Decoy Reunions & HISTORY

by C. John Sullivan

In the mid 1970's, Ted Harmon, the principal of Decoys Unlimited, was buying rigs of decoys in the northern states. He would keep what he considered the best and use local antique shops as an outlet for the others. Quite by chance, Kenneth Delong, decoy carver and restorer par excellence, happened into an antique shop in Massachusetts and spotted an early decoy wearing the paint of a blackduck. He purchased the decoy for the modest sum of \$15.00 and returned to his workshop, where he commenced removing the black paint.

Under the dull black paint, he discovered the original paint of an oldsquaw hen. After a few conversations and photos sent to waterfowling historian Henry A. Fleckenstein, Jr., it was determined that the oldsquaw was carved by Benjamin Dye. Dye carved decoys from at least



*From left to right:
Decoy #1, oldsquaw hen;
Decoy #2, oldsquaw drake;
Decoy #3, oldsquaw hen.*

1860 until near the end of his life. His carvings exhibit the style most typical of the Cecil County side of the Susquehanna Flats.

Fast forward to the 1980s and travel to Chicago to the room-to-room buy, sell and swap event at the Pheasant Run Resort before the Guyette and Schmidt decoy auction. While searching the inventory of Stephen O'Brien, not yet of Copley Fine Art Auction, decoy historian Michael Keating and his good friend, decoy and antique auctioneer Richard Oliver spotted a nicely formed blackduck resting on the floor of Stephen's room. Michael and Richard quickly decided that they needed to buy that bird.

The following week, the decoy was shipped to Ken Delong to have the black paint removed. Delong was surprised to find the paint of another oldsquaw. This time, however, the paint pattern was exactly the reverse of the bird that he had restored 10 years earlier. Both of those birds were eventually sold at auction.

Now some 30 years later I visit my good friend Robert N. Hockaday, Jr., at his home in St. Michaels, Maryland. It was the first day of the buy, sell and swap event held before the November Guyette and Schmidt auction. We spent the day doing our usual routine looking at stuff



Director of Operations C. John Sullivan holds two of the three prized 19th century Ben Dye oldsquaw decoys.

Ben Dye was born in Mercer County, New Jersey. By 1860, he and his wife and daughter had moved to Perry Point near Perryville in Cecil County, Maryland. In 1884, Benjamin Dye was living in Havre de Grace. He passed away at the age of 63 on March 24 of 1895 on Washington Street in Havre de Grace at the home of his son William.

and more stuff. In the evening, when Bob and I returned to his home, he showed me a decoy sitting on his dining room table. I have purchased some wonderful items from Bob over the years. Usually when Bob brings an item into the house it is off limits, but times change and I expressed enough interest in the old blackduck for Bob to take notice and realize that I really wanted the decoy. It went home with me after the Easton Waterfowl Festival.

Within moments of arriving home, I searched my decoy catalogs from years past and there was the rigmate to my newest acquisition. After removing the paint, I found my new decoy to be a near perfect match to the decoy discovered up north by Ken DeLong. I took my oldsquaw to Maryland's Eastern Shore for a "decoy roundtable" with Henry Fleckenstein and Jeff Pelayo. Much



Decoy #1 was discovered in a Massachusetts antique shop by Ken DeLong in 1976. His restoration revealed a Ben Dye oldsquaw hen under the blackduck paint.



Decoy #1 displays the distinctive lead weight affixed with cut nails.

to my surprise, Jeff was the agent for the #2 oldsquaw that was found by Michael and Richard at Pheasant Run. That decoy had spent over 10 years in a bank vault in Easton, Maryland. As

Continues on page 10

"Florida and the Game Water-Birds of the Atlantic Coast and the Lakes of the United States with a Full Account of the Sporting along our Seashores and Inland Waters, and Remarks on Breech-Loaders and Hammerless Guns"
by Robert Barnwell Roosevelt. Orange Judd Company, New York, 1884.

OLD WIFE

South Southerly, Old Squaw, Long-Tailed Duck. *Fuligula Glacialis*, Linn.

Specific Character. Length of bill, from the termination of the frontlet feathers to the point, one inch and one-sixteenth—the upper mandible rounded; the sides very thin; the bill rather deeply serrated, and furnished with a long nail; tail feathers acute. In the male, the middle pair of tail feathers are extended about four inches beyond the next longest, which character is wanting with the female. Adult male with the bill black at the base; interior to the nostril reddish-orange, with a dusky line margining the nail; fore part of the head white, the same color passing over the head down the hind neck on the back; eyes dark red; cheeks and loreal dusky-white, with a few touches of yellowish-brown; a black patch on the sides of the neck terminating in reddish-brown; fore neck white; breast brownish-black, terminating in an oval form on the abdomen—the latter white; flanks bluish-white; primaries dark brown; secondaries lighter

brown, their converts black; a semicircular band of black on the fore part of the black; the outer two tail feathers white—the rest marked with brown, excepting the fore acuminate feathers, which are blackish-brown, the middle pair extending several inches beyond the other. Female without the long scapulars or elongated tail feathers; bill dusky-green; head dark, grayish-brown—a patch of grayish-white on the sides of the neck; crown blackish; upper parts dark grayish-brown; lower parts white. Length of male from the point of the bill to the end of the elongated tail feathers twenty-three inches; wing eight inches and five-eighths. Female about six inches less in length.

This bird is abundant along the coast, but is generally tough and fishy.

soon as I saw the birds together, it was all-consuming, and old squaw #2 was something that I just had to have.

It took several months of negotiation to make that decoy mine. But it happened, and the two birds were reunited after what could well have been 140 years. A year later, I received in the mail a flyer for the summer decoy auction for Guyette, Schmidt, and Deeter, and there was the other oldsquaw, the first one that was discovered by Ken Delong. I added that one to my collection, so now they are together

again, three oldsquaw, a drake, and two hens. Each of these decoys wears everything that came with them when they left Benjamin Dye's workbench, their original paint, their perfectly formed heads, and their original ballast weights.

On the underside of each decoy is an approximately 1-inch-square lead ballast weight. The square pad weights are tapered about their edges, thus displaying a somewhat thicker center. Each of the weights is attached with four cut nails. I have in my collection several Benjamin Dye decoys, but one of the not-so-typical

decoys is a hollow-carved Dye blackduck that wears the identically formed weight. At a series of "decoy roundtables" with the senior decoy historian Henry A. Fleckenstein, Jr., and Jeff Pelayo, we examined the oldsquaws and blackduck, and none of us could think of a similar ballast weight on any decoys carved in the Upper Chesapeake region. This ballast weight form more closely resembles the style used on the Delaware River or New Jersey shore.

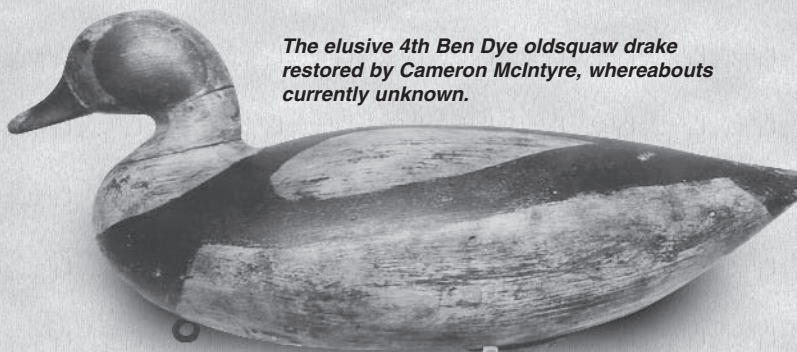
Lead weight of Ben Dye hollow-carved blackduck.



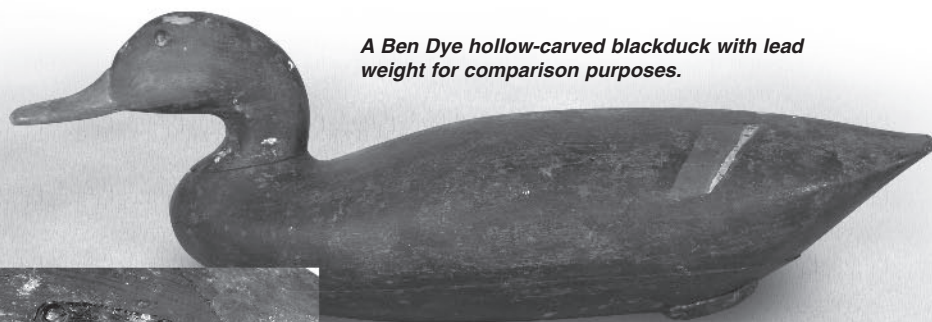
Decoy #3 was acquired in recent years, and restoration by the author revealed a Ben Dye oldsquaw hen under the blackduck paint.



The elusive 4th Ben Dye oldsquaw drake restored by Cameron McIntyre, whereabouts currently unknown.



A Ben Dye hollow-carved blackduck with lead weight for comparison purposes.



Decoy #2 was found in the 1980's at the Pheasant Run Resort. Restoration by Ken Delong again revealed a Ben Dye oldsquaw drake under the blackduck paint.



Decoy #2 also displays the distinctive Ben Dye lead weight.

When Ken DeLong was removing the black overpaint from the bodies to reveal the strong original paint of an oldsquaw, he had determined that the two paint patterns were executed to depict the oldsquaw in different stages of plumage. The obvious was not determined until decades later. Dye had created the reversed paint patterns of a hen and drake. To distinguish between the sexes, he went another step further and carved the tail of the drake bird into a blunt point. When the drake carving is compared closely to a mounted specimen, the powerful similarity between the duck and the carving is striking. The pointed tail of the drake decoy, although not lengthy, still subtly mimics the bird in nature. Dye merely suggested the long tail of the species by a hint of the tail. He thus achieved a sturdy, practical, and effective oldsquaw drake. The hen decoys exhibit a nicely formed paddle tail much like other species of Dye decoys.

It is easy to draw the conclusion that the oldsquaws were a special order to Dye. These decoys traveled out of the Upper Bay region to some shore on the Atlantic coast where oldsquaws frequented. Interestingly, in none of the Upper Chesapeake Bay gunning club journals that I have scoured in researching the history of Maryland gunning clubs have I found a single entry mentioning the shooting of oldsquaw. These clubs include Carroll's Island, Eildon Ducking Club, Marshy Point, Seneca, Thomas Point, and Miller's Island. Between

January 10, 1927, and November 8, 1929, thirty-five oldsquaw were shot at the Dorchester County's Bishop's Head Club. Members of that club vacillated in calling the birds oldsquaw and south southerly. For comparison's sake, on January 10, 1927, when the temperature was 27 degrees, the wind was out of the northeast and the weather was fair, members recorded shooting 102 blackheads, 3 redheads, 54 canvasbacks, 1 blackduck, and 4 oldsquaw.

I often wonder if these old decoys could converse and reflect upon where they came from, where they have been, how they were used, and what brought this reunion about, what would they

think? Do I think it makes a difference to the three of them? I wonder, but to me it makes all the difference in the world. All decoy collectors know how delightful it is to look at a group of shore birds together. Collectors imagine how they would have looked stuck in the sand of a beautiful beach. Collectors spend years trying to find matched pairs, a drake and a hen from the same maker from the same timeframe. But for me to see these three wonderful oldsquaw carved by Captain Benjamin Dye resting on top of a blanket chest

in my living room is a beautiful sight. This is as good as it gets for me. There is one other known oldsquaw drake that eludes me. It was sold at the Guyette and Schmidt auction in November of 1999. That decoy had been expertly restored by Cameron McIntyre for Michael Keating, a decoy historian from Trappe, Maryland. I fear now that if that old bird became available would it balance out my oldsquaw display or crowd the top of that blanket chest? ■

A special thank you to Decoy Roundtable members: Henry A. Fleckenstein Jr., Jeffrey T Pelayo, and Michael Keating. Decoy restoration experts, Ken DeLong and Cameron McIntyre also provided information.

WHY WAS THE OLDSQUAW RE-NAMED LONG-TAILED DUCK?

The following report from the American Ornithologists' Union Committee on Classification and Nomenclature was cited verbatim from: American Ornithologists' Union. 200. Forty-second supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union *Checklist of North American Birds*. Auk 117:847-858.

The Committee was petitioned by a group of biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska to change the English name of *Clangula hyemalis* from Oldsquaw to Long-tailed Duck, the name used for the species outside of North America. The basis for the petition was that the species is declining in numbers in Alaska, and conservation management plans require the help and cooperation of Native Americans. The biologists were concerned that the name Oldsquaw would offend the Native Americans. Requests to change the name had

been made to the Committee in past years by some who consider the word "squaw" to be offensive. The Committee declines to consider political correctness alone in changing long-standing English names of birds but is willing in this instance to adopt an alternative name that is in use in much of the world. Change English name of *Clangula hyemalis* from Oldsquaw to Long-tailed Duck to conform with English usage in other parts of the world. Change Notes to read: Formerly known as Oldsquaw in North America.

32nd Annual Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival HONORARY CHAIRMAN **JOHN MEREDITH**

John Meredith is the 2013 Honorary Chairman for The Decoy Museum's 32nd Annual Havre de Grace Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival to be held on May 3rd, 4th, and 5th at the Havre de Grace Middle School.

John was born in Toddsville, Maryland and began collecting decoys when as a kid. He began working as a waterman, later moved to Still Pond, worked as a truck driver, and finally became a full time carver.

Like many carvers, he began making decoys out of necessity because it was too expensive to buy new ones. He would find old ones floating on the shore or make them out of whatever materials were available. John has made decoys out of cork, white cedar, and tupelo gum. He used to hand chop, but began using machines to make his decoys.

John greatly admired Charles Joiner's decoys but did not meet Mr. Joiner until 1984 when John was chosen to make a Green Wing Teal for Ducks Unlimited. Mr. Joiner gave John pointers while carving the teal but cautioned him that, "I don't want you to paint it to look like my paint job." And he didn't.

John's carvings are prized pieces in many collections. In the next issue of The Canvasback fellow decoy carver and artist Bill Veasey will discuss John's enthusiasm and passion for carving and collecting decoys and the respect he has earned in the decoy world. ■



(Source: "Upper Chesapeake Bay Decoys & Their Makers" by Dave & Joan Hagan).

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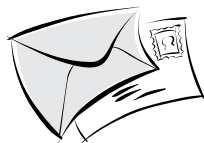


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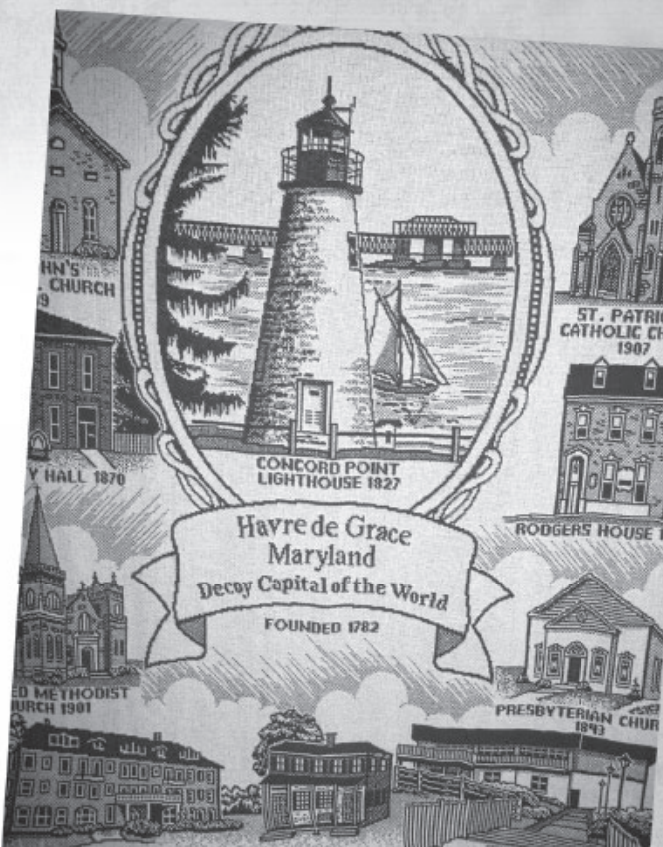
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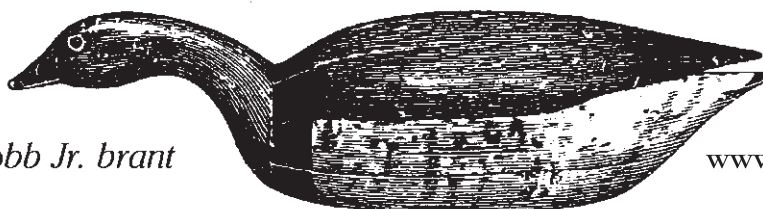
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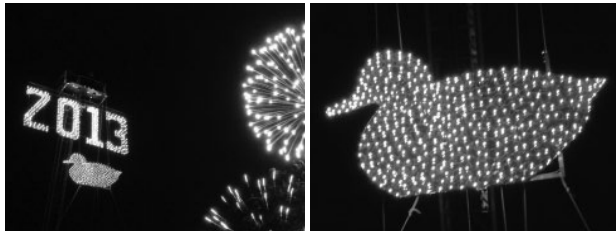
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DUCK DROP¹²

*Our firefighters
did it again!*



Havre de Grace is all about ducks, and dropping an artificial duck has been a New Year's tradition here since 1999.

Two years ago, the duck was red, white and blue for the 10-year anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks, and the duck kept its patriotic colors last year in recognition of the burning of Havre de Grace by the British during the War of 1812.

In a new twist, the 2012 Havre de Grace New Year's Eve Duck Drop at the Havre de Grace Middle School was dedicated to breast cancer awareness. The duck was illuminated in bright pink lights and dropped at midnight from a Susquehanna Hose Company ladder truck to ring in 2013.

All donations as well as the proceeds from the sales of t-shirts, sodas and cookies went to support Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Maryland.

The Susquehanna Hose Company coordinated the annual New Year's Duck Drop, and the Havre de Grace Recreation Committee lined up fireworks to ring in the new year for the 13th time since this tradition began in 1999. It is a reminder of the heritage of Havre de Grace as *The Decoy Capital of the World!* ■

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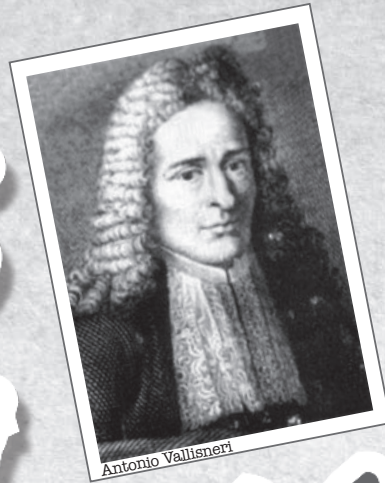


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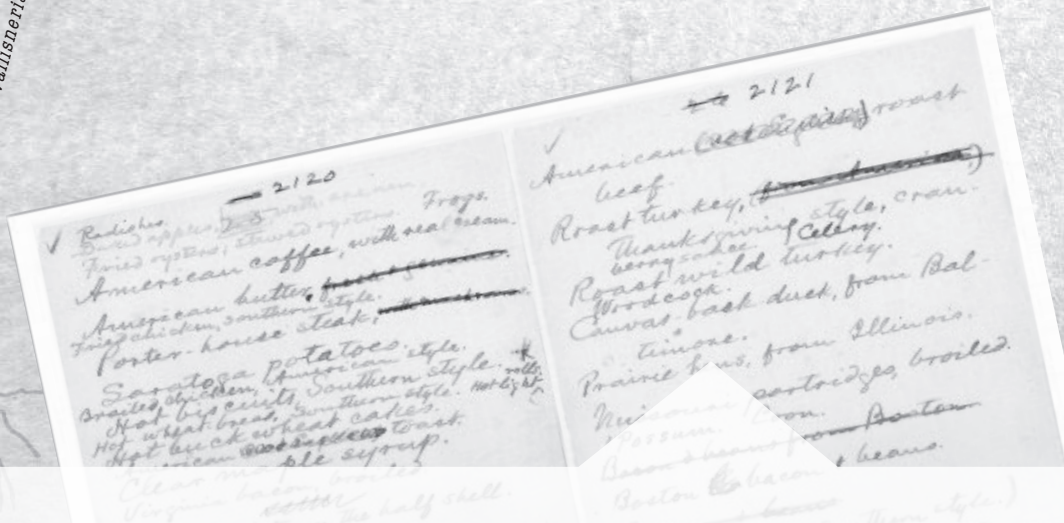
What's in a Name?



Antonio Vallisneri

Remarkable Connections
by James W. Carroll, Jr.

Vallisneria spiralis



"In 1879, a homesick Mark Twain sat in an Italian hotel room and wrote a long fantasy menu of all his favorite American foods. The menu began as a joke, with Twain describing the 80-dish spread as a 'modest, private affair' that he wanted all to himself... Along with hot biscuits, broiled chicken and stewed tomatoes, Twain wanted turtle soup, possum, and canvasback ducks fattened by Chesapeake Bay wild celery."

—Andrew Behrs (Twain's Feast)

Standing on the newly-renovated deck of the Decoy Museum, one has a spectacular view for many miles across the Susquehanna Flats to Maryland's Eastern Shore.



The name of seventeenth century Italian naturalist and medical scientist Antonio Vallisneri (1661-1730) is not a name that pops into your mind when you visit the Decoy Museum, but it is a name that repeats here in subtle ways.

"The Flats", which start within 100 yards of our front door, are the twenty square miles of shallows that are both the delta of the Susquehanna River and the head of the Chesapeake Bay, the nation's largest estuary. This legendary hunting ground once abounded in wild celery and other submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and was renowned for its profusion in waterfowl. Scientists gave wild celery the taxonomic name *Vallisneria americana* in honor of the scientist.

This plant is very important to the lifecycle of the canvasback duck. Its abundance lured half the entire North American population of canvasbacks to overwinter on the Bay as recently as the 1950's.

Canvasbacks are the largest diving ducks in North America. As most of their time along their long migratory routes is spent flying instead of feeding during the autumn months, they need to stock up on energy in the form of body fat. The winter buds of wild celery are high in carbohydrates, which are more easily stored as fats, and represent one of the major food sources that canvasbacks have used to increase body fat for both the migration and the winter.

Continues on page 18



THE CANVAS-BACK PRE-EMINENT

No Other Bird Fit to be Compared with
Him as a Gastronomic Delicacy—
How He Should Be Served.

From The Philadelphia Times.

There are many who hold to the opinion, and this is the time of year in which they voice it most enthusiastically, that this country would do a wise and patriotic thing if it would remove the bald headed eagle from his present perch as the National bird, and install in his place the canvas-back duck, the noblest and best not only of the fowls of the air, but of the water as well. In the list of royal gastronomic delicacies he stands pre-eminent. The male bird cannot be surpassed in beauty by any feathered dandy that ever ruffled plumage. No bird has a nobler or more graceful carriage. Not to have eaten of its partially cooked flesh is not to have fully lived.

The annual slaughter of the canvas-back began Nov. 1, and henceforth until cold weather wanes the crack of the breech-loader on the shores of Chesapeake Bay will announce his doom. All Summer these birds have been breeding in the far northern fur countries, whence in great flocks they have for more than a month been trailing their flight to the bays and estuaries of the Atlantic. North America is their only abiding place. Gourmets generally hear of them as being shot on the Chesapeake, but they are found in the shooting season along the Atlantic coast as far south as Texas. They have infrequently been brought to earth on Long Island and at Squan Beach and Barnegat and Egg Harbor. Chicago sportsmen have found them on Lake Michigan. Many fall victims to the crack of the breech-loader of the sportsman.

The New York Times

Published: November 30, 1895

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CANVAS-BACKS FOR BISMARCK.
From the Philadelphia Inquirer, Oct. 4.

A game dealer on Walnut-street has two interesting telegrams on file. One is dated Berlin, Germany, and is signed by Prince Bismarck. It is not a state document, but a carefully worded order for 12 pairs of canvas-back ducks. This is only one of many orders that have been received from the German Chancellor. Alongside of Bismarck's order is another from Wilkie Collins, the English novelist. He has been sending orders to this city regularly for several years past, and it is asserted that during the time he was composing "The Woman in White" he dined exclusively on New-Jersey snipe. The dealer has many prominent customers in this country, including a member of the Cabinet, two United States Senators, and several members of the National House of Representatives. Near-by patrons include A. J. Drexel, George W. Childs, ex-Gov. Leon Abbott, and Judges Willson and Arnold.

The New York Times

Published: October 5, 1888

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Baltic clams and other invertebrates are a secondary food source, but tests have clearly shown that canvasbacks fed a diet of wild celery will gain body mass more quickly and in subsequent famine or non-feeding conditions will lose body mass more slowly than those fed a diet of invertebrates. Importantly, a canvasback expends much less energy foraging for wild celery than for invertebrates.

So wild celery is by far the better autumn and winter food, and there is a direct correlation between wild celery abundance and the canvasback population. In fact, the two species are so tightly linked that the canvasback was given the taxonomic name *Aythya valisineria* (with a spelling variation from the wild celery) in honor of its favorite food.

Not surprisingly, it is the diet of wild celery that gourmets, gourmands, and other “foodies” have for centuries regarded as the source of the succulence of the meat of the canvasback, which commanded a high price and was exported to Europe in the 19th century for the tables of notables such as Queen Victoria and Prince Bismarck.



A GOOD SEASON FOR GAME.
DUCKS, SORA, AND GEESE WILL BE
PLENTIFUL THIS FALL.

BALTIMORE, Aug. 16.—The gunning in Maryland and Virginia this Fall promises to be the best that has been known for ten years. The mild Winter was easy on all game, and the Spring was unusually favorable for breeding. News from the mountains and from points down the bay and along the coast is unanimous in reporting the most favorable conditions. Last year the season was not good, and the ducking was usually so fine at the head of the Chesapeake was almost a failure, especially in respect to canvas-backs. This year, however, there were no ice gorges or floods in the Susquehanna, and the flats at the mouth of the river were not damaged. They are now covered by a splendid luxuriance of water cress, upon which the ducks feed and which gives to them their peculiar delicacy.

As far as local indications go it will be a great time for ducks—provided always, of course, that the ducks reach the Susquehanna flats in safety from their British homes up North. The trouble about the sport is, that all the good shooting points are owned by private clubs and it costs a small fortune for an outsider to get near a canvas-back.

On the average, every duck shot by an amateur at the head of the Chesapeake Bay represents an outlay of \$25. This is the conservative estimate of one of the oldest gunners of the State.

The New York Times

Published: August 17, 1890
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CANVAS-BACK DUCKS.

From the Baltimore Sun, Jan. 20.

Though many persons annually enjoy the sport of shooting canvas-back ducks, the joy of Maryland sportsmen and the pride of Baltimore epicures, few have probably thought of the Summer houses of the ducks, where the vacancies in their numbers caused by the industry of Winter fowlers are filled by young birds. The ducks are found along the Atlantic coast as far north as Canada, but they migrate in the greatest numbers in the Fall to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, where they find their favorite food, the *valunena*, or wild celery, a fresh water plant, whose roots they feed upon, and which gives them the juiciness and peculiar flavor which distinguishes them from other ducks and atones for their comparative lack of bright plumage. They follow Winter down the Atlantic coast, and remain in the Chesapeake waters during the Winter months. When the Spring opening occurs they wing their way across the country in a northwestward direction, and spend the Summer months breeding and raising their young in the neighborhood of the cool waters of the upper Rocky Mountain system, and in all the far-tude. There alone can their eggs be obtained. A well known restaurateur of this city conceived the idea of raising canvas-back ducks in Baltimore. He procured two crippled birds—a male and female—but his experiments were unsuccessful, as the birds pined for the cool air of the British American forests.

The New York Times

Published: January 21, 1887
Copyright © The New York Times

CANVASBACK DUCKS.

THOUSANDS KILLED ON THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER—HOW SLAUGHTERED.
From the Baltimore American, Nov. 3.

Tuesday was the first day for duck shooting on the Susquehanna under the Maryland law. The season begins Nov. 1 and lasts till April 1, but shooting can be done only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The Fall season for blue-wing teals starts Aug. 15 and lasts till Oct. 1, during which no license is required. Within these limits black ducks, a few sprigstalls and baldpates are shot; but it is no such sport as is enjoyed during the regular season. The ducking fields on the Susquehanna River are known and talked about all over the United States where sportsmen live, and are probably the finest in the world. Ducks are found in abundance in other tributaries of the Chesapeake, in Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds, in North Carolina, and in many other bodies of water, but they have no such flavor as the canvas-back, black and blue heads that feed on the flats at the mouth of the Susquehanna River. The flavor is due to the peculiar diet upon which they feed. This is the wild celery. The ducking fields of the Susquehanna are sharply limited by the nature of the soil and the growth of the vegetation.

The New York Times
 Published: November 6, 1887
 Copyright © The New York Times



Sadly, wild celery and other SAV in the Bay have been virtually eliminated since the 1960's by pollution and re-suspended sediment. Over the same period there has been a steep decline in the staggering numbers of canvasbacks and other migratory waterfowl that had historically been drawn here to the Flats.

The canvasback sustained many a household through the bleak winter months in past centuries when you didn't eat if you didn't hunt. In much the same way that wild celery attracted the canvasbacks to the Bay, decoys attracted the canvasbacks to the hunter and were an essential part of the successful waterfowl harvests.

The natural abundance of canvasbacks supported a strong demand by waterfowlers for its decoy counterpart, and it is the most common of all locally-made species. This majestic bird is a fitting symbol for the Decoy Museum as a focal point for the cultural landscape that it helped to define. ■



THE CANVAS-BACK CLUB.

A Project Under Consideration by
 Well-Known Sportsmen.

Another unique club is on the tapis. It will be called "The Canvas-back Club," and its members will consist of the best-known American sportsmen.

The canvas-back duck is the gastronome's favorite fowl. Nothing so crowns a feast. Senator Cameron once paid \$16 a pair for all that a Havre de Grace dealer had, in a time of scarcity, to grace a dinner he was giving in Washington. Prince Bismarck, until his recent failing health, had a consignment of canvas-backs sent to him from Havre de Grace every year. Princess Eulalie, after returning to Spain from this country in the Columbian celebration year, ordered several consignments sent to her in Madrid. Queen Victoria has served them at State dinners, and the Prince of Wales is always pleased to receive a gift of them. To the epicure's imagination they convey the most comfortable and exhilarating ideas. The canvas-back is far more distinctly American than the emblematic eagle. There is no fowl as yet described in any portion of the world, except perhaps the pochard of England, that resembles it. The pochard is smaller, however, and weighs one-third less, and the delicacy of its flesh is not so exquisite as the canvas-back.

The New York Times
 Published: November 18, 1896
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26th Anniversary Annual Dinner



A well-attended Annual Dinner on Saturday, November 3rd celebrated the 26th anniversary of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.

- The evening began with cocktails and the usual magnificent buffet catered by MacGregor's Restaurant.
- The social hour brought many old friends back together through their common bonds in waterfowling and decoys.
- The 2012 auction was especially lively, in large measure due to the generous donation of Michael and Trudy Boxer of Brooklyn, New York (see page 23 for more).
- The Sampson family joined us to officially unveil the new exhibit of Ed "Pop" Sampson's homemade duplicating lathe for miniature bodies.

- The Pierce family unveiled another treasured gift—the latest of the Museum's elaborate exhibits honoring renowned local carvers. In this newest exhibit, a wax version of Jim Pierce sits in his shop surrounded by brushes, paint, and a wide assortment of his timeless and highly-crafted creations.
- The evening finished with a birthday cake, followed by a rush to the Gift Shop for some Christmas gift ideas and to settle with Financial Officer Mindy Elledge for those fortunate enough to acquire a treasure or two in the auction.

We wandered out of the Museum into an autumn chill with more than one wistful and knowing glance out over the dead-calm Susquehanna Flats where gunning and decoys all began centuries ago.



MUSEUM NEWS



FISCAL YEAR 2012 DONORS

Our sincerest thanks to all who have donated to the museum over the past year. Your generosity helps us to make everything possible, we could not do this without you. Thank you!

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Thanks to Michael and Trudy Boxer
Brooklyn, New York

On October 23, 2012, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Boxer delivered to the Museum a very generous donation of nearly 40 decoys from their collection. The collection included pristine examples by many noted carvers. Works by Oliver Lawson, R. Madison Mitchell, Jim Currier, Paul Gibson, William Veasey, and A. J. Birdsall were included. This donation provided the enthusiastic gathering at this year's Anniversary Reception with a broad choice of select items for the event's auction (see Museum News). Additionally, many decoys from the Boxer Collection were sold in the Gift Shop throughout the Christmas season. The Museum is most thankful to Mr. and Mrs. Boxer for this wonderful donation. In each issue of "The Canvasback" magazine (see p. 7), we ask for our readers and membership to consider donating decoys which are no longer the focus of their collection. If you have changed the direction of your "keepers" or are in the midst of downsizing please consider us as the recipient of your excess decoys. I can assure you, as I did the Boxer family, that your donations will not be ignored. Your donations will be converted to funds to maintain our collection and help us to fulfill the Mission and Goals of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. A most sincere "Thank You!" goes out to the Boxers and to all of our other dedicated donors.

C. John Sullivan
Director of Operations

32nd Annual HAVRE DE GRACE Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival

Make sure you mark your calendar

and join us for another exciting event with many decoy & wildlife artists, carving competitions, hunting and fishing suppliers/dealers/guide service, live and silent auctions, food and more...

May 3rd, 4th & 5th, 2013

Friday: 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Saturday: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Sunday: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

★ *Live Auction* ★

Admission

Admission is **FREE** this year thanks to Mayor Wayne Dougherty, the Havre de Grace City Council, and the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission.

Call for more information

410-939-3739

info@decoyfestival.com

or visit us online

www.decoyfestival.com

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM
215 Giles Street • Havre de Grace, MD 21078

Activities will be held at:

Havre de Grace
Middle School
401 Lewis Lane

Decoy Museum
Market & Giles Streets

Havre de Grace
Activity Center
401 Lewis Lane
(behind Middle School)



Please be aware

the Havre de Grace Bicentennial Commemoration of the War of 1812 will be held the same weekend as the Festival. Book your room early and plan accordingly.

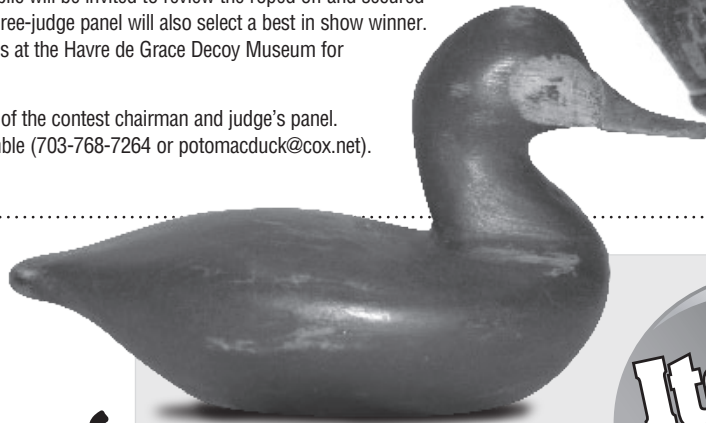
J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest 2013 COMPETITION

The 11th annual J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest will be held on Saturday, May 4th at the Middle School Gym in conjunction with the 2013 Havre de Grace Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival. Entries will be accepted at the stage area from 10:00 a.m. until judging at noon. Joe Engers, Editor and Publisher of Decoy Magazine, will head up a three-member judge's panel, and a blue ribbon will be awarded for each of the following ten competition category winners.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Best Upper Bay Goose | 7. Best "Oldest" Wooden Decoy from the Mid-Atlantic Region |
| 2. Best Ben or Joe Dye Decoy | 8. Best Virginia Bluebill |
| 3. Best Jim Currier Canvasback | 9. Best Delaware River Black Duck |
| 4. Best John Graham/Family Decoy | 10. Best Unknown |
| 5. Best Holly Family Decoy | |
| 6. Best Hooper's Island Merganser | |

Rules: Last year's winning birds are ineligible for entry, regardless of category. 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 and each decoy will be limited to one category only. Participants must make a good faith effort to ensure that all decoy entries were made prior to 1950. Matched pairs entered in other than a Matched Pair category will be considered as one entry. Competition decoys will be kept in a highly visible roped-off secure area and will not be handled by the public. At approximately 1:00p.m., the public will be invited to review the roped off and secured tables once the judges have made their selections. The three-judge panel will also select a best in show winner. Winners are requested to display their decoys and ribbons at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum for three months.

Competition issues will be resolved at the sole discretion of the contest chairman and judge's panel. Any questions, please contact contest chairman Jim Trimble (703-768-7264 or potomacduck@cox.net).



Live Auction!

**Saturday
May 4, 2013**

*During the 32nd Annual
Havre de Grace Decoy and
Wildlife Art Festival*

**Items
Wanted!**

Please contact the Museum ASAP if you have decoys that you would like to sell or donate to the Museum for inclusion in the live auction.

We will continue to take consignments and donations for the auction until we have reached the 100 lot limit.

BEFORE March 15, 2013, your item can be photographed and included in the Festival issue of the *Canvasback* magazine. **AFTER** that date your item will be listed on the AMENDED list that will be made available as soon as the 100 lots are filled.

The commission rate will be 10% from the buyer and 25% from the seller. All proceeds will benefit the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.

If you have any questions or have an item to consign or donate to the auction, please call us at 410-939-3739 or email festival@decoymuseum.com.

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2011 — JUNE 30, 2012

MISSION

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum exists to collect, document, preserve and interpret waterfowl decoys as this art form applies to the heritage of the Chesapeake Bay. Within this context, the Museum will strive to study styles of decoys, seeking to understand the decoys' artistic and social values and to pass on this heritage to our future generations. The Museum will also educate, present, and document the influence that the surrounding environment, the Susquehanna Flats, and the Chesapeake Bay has had on decoy history.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

TOTAL ASSETS \$1,211,436

Includes cash, investments, inventory, land and leasehold improvements, furniture and equipment, accumulated depreciation, and the value of the Museum collection.

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL \$1,211,436

TOTAL LIABILITIES: \$25,305

Includes line of credit, accrued expenses, and sales tax payable.

TOTAL CAPITAL: \$1,186,131

Includes unrestricted net assets, restricted net assets, and net income.

ENDOWMENT FUND BALANCES

Bryan/Joiner \$48,571
C. J. Sullivan \$18,772

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Earned Revenue \$120,246
Contributed \$35,983
Grant Revenue \$45,630
Investment \$1,155

TOTAL REVENUE \$203,014

EXPENSES

Program \$87,909
General & Administration \$134,590

TOTAL EXPENSES \$222,499

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS (\$19,485)

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

ATTENDANCE

Total Paid: 7,649
Total Free: 2,533

TOTAL 10,182

Total School Children: 1,840
Number of Groups: 8
Number of Other Groups: 15
Classes/Workshops: 95

MEMBERSHIP 868

EXHIBITIONS & CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Permanent Exhibitions: 4
Temporary Exhibitions: 7
Classes/Workshops: 17

PUBLICATIONS (*The Canvasback*) 4

Spring Raffle '13



1ST PRIZE ←

Mallard Drake by R. Madison Mitchell signed 1972

to benefit the
Havre de Grace
Decoy Museum

*Be sure to purchase
your tickets early and
encourage your family and
friends to do the same.*



← **2ND PRIZE**

Black Swan by Jimmy Pierce, signed



← **3RD PRIZE**

Carved Hummingbird Necklace by Jeanne Hiss



4TH PRIZE →

Curlew by Unknown Carver

5TH PRIZE →

Cork Mallard Pair by Julie Gilbert, signed, ca. 2005



Drawings will take place at 3:30 pm. Sunday, May 5th, 2013, during the 32nd Annual Havre de Grace Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival at the Havre de Grace Middle School.

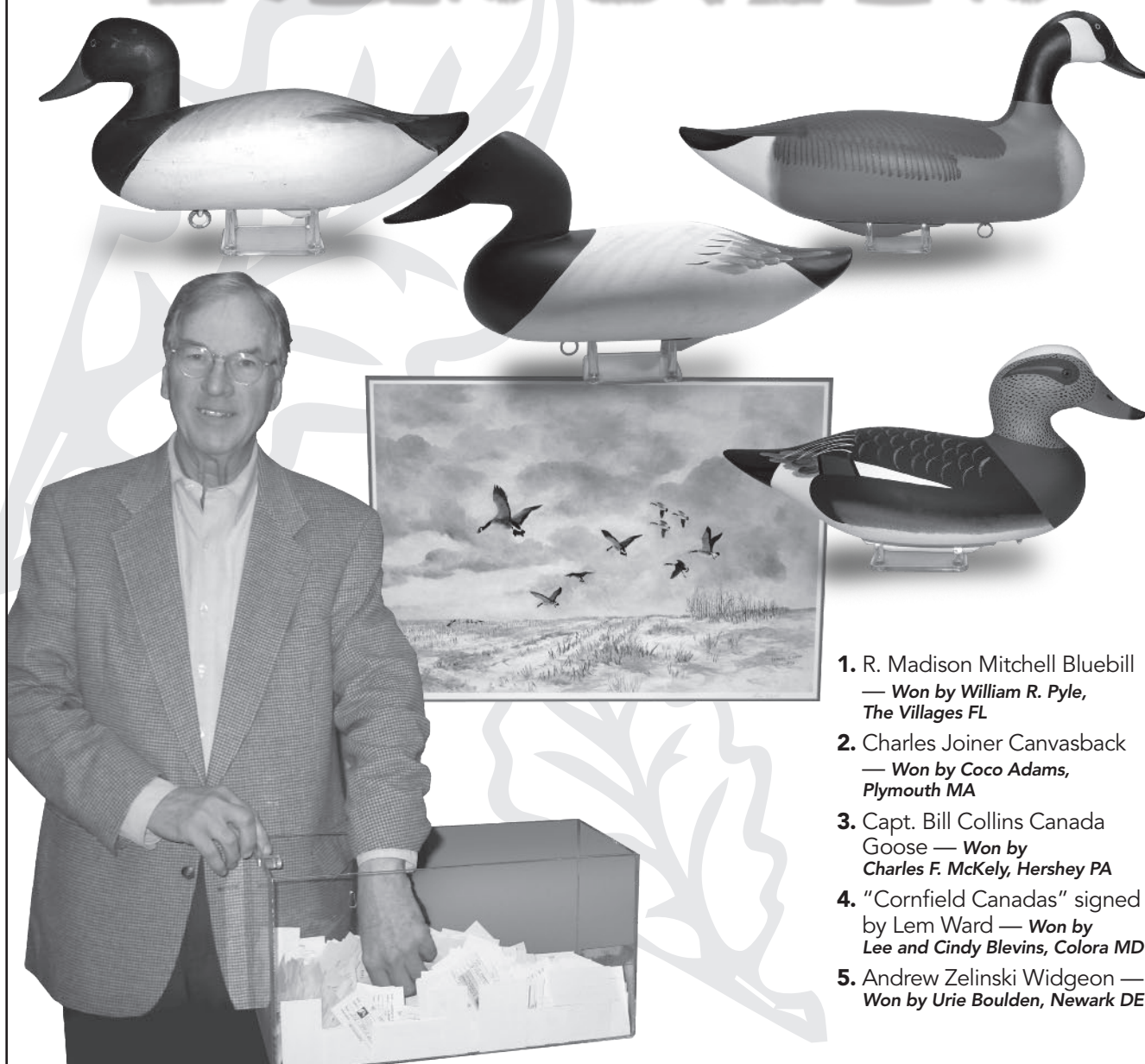
Tickets are \$5.00 each, 6 for \$25.00 or 10 for \$40

TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE MUSEUM AND HAVE BEEN MAILED TO MEMBERS.

For more information, please call the Museum at 410-939-3739

www.decoymuseum.com

Fall Raffle 2012 RESULTS



1. R. Madison Mitchell Bluebill
— Won by William R. Pyle,
The Villages FL
2. Charles Joiner Canvasback
— Won by Coco Adams,
Plymouth MA
3. Capt. Bill Collins Canada
Goose — Won by
Charles F. McKely, Hershey PA
4. "Cornfield Canadas" signed
by Lem Ward — Won by
Lee and Cindy Blevins, Colora MD
5. Andrew Zelinski Widgeon —
Won by Urie Boulden, Newark DE

Flock to the Shop

Be sure to check out the Gift Shop for some of our top sellers!

New hoodies and colorful hats with the embroidered logo have been flying off the racks, and colorful new tee shirts are popular in any season. For these cold winter days and even the chilly nights of spring, our throws featured on page 14 are good for cocooning in front of the fire or TV.



Remember, as a member of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum you receive a **10% discount** on all but a few select items.

DECOY MUSEUM
Gift Shop
Located inside the HdG Decoy Museum



WELCOME MUSEUM MEMBERS

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

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS 11/01/2012 THROUGH 12/31/2012

COCO ADAMS

ANDREW AMAN, JR.

CHARLES & NADINE ANDERSON

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The Canvasback NEWS

newsletter@decoymuseum.com



VINCENTI DECOYS



www.vincentidecoys.com

Store – Jeannie

353 Pennington Ave.
Havre de Grace, MD 21078

410-734-7709

Decoy Shop – Pat

303 West Lane
Churchville, MD 21028

410-734-6238

Lyons Pharmacy

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Gifts • Candles • Sovenirs • Home Decor

410-939-4545

328 St. John Street
Havre de Grace, MD 21078

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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



Highlights of the Decoy Museum's Current Exhibits

The new Jim Pierce display \ A homemade duplicating lathe for making miniature decoy bodies donated by "Pop" Sampson \ "Letters to Bob McGaw "from Joel B. Pusey \ A beautiful decorative Eastern Blue Bird carved by master carver Barb Wachter \ The magnificent Michael bequest: an extraordinary pair of "Daddy" Holly canvasbacks \ "Tools of the Market Gunner" exhibit featuring a number of punt and battery guns, on loan from the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust \ Potomac Decoy Collector's Association Exhibit \ An exhibit of Factory Decoys, donated by Dr. M. Kramer \ A beautiful decorative canvasback family made by master carver J. Noble Mentzer



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.



MARCH 8, 2013	APRIL 14TH
20th Annual R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust Banquet. <i>See page 6 for details.</i>	WOMEN'S 5K BY THE BAY 8am. A woman only 5K race for runners and walkers of all ages and abilities. The race is benefiting Habitat for Humanity. 410-399-9948 Email: gusandsuerun@comcast.net
MARCH 30, 2013	MAY 3-5, 2013
Havre de Grace Easter Egg Hunt Tydings Park. Held the Saturday before Easter at NOON PROMPT. Kids, bring a basket or a bag to gather plastic eggs filled with prizes or special eggs telling you how to claim a larger prize. Ages 11 and under can meet the BUNNY. Parents, bring your cameras for great photo opportuni	32nd Annual Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival. Mark your calendar and join us for another exciting event! See page 24 for details. Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial. On May 3, 1813, British forces under the command of Rear Admiral George Cockburn burned the city of Havre de Grace to the ground for flying the United States flag. Join us in citywide events as we remember, 200 years later.
APRIL 12 & 13, 2013	
East Coast Decoy Collectors 16th annual Buy-Sell-Swap at the St. Michaels Motor Inn (Best Western) St. Michaels, MD (410-745-3333) Public Welcome – Free Decoy Appraisals. See also page 6. For more information contact John Clayton 410-745-2955 john@njdecoys.com or Jim Trimble 703-768-7264 potomac-duck@cox.net	



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