

The Canvasback

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM

Winter 2014
Vol. 24 No. 1

\$7.00



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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.



— In Memoriam —

EDWARD LEWIS FUNK III

March 15, 1943–January 19, 2014

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*Maryland State Arts Council •
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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.



As this issue was being finalized, we received the sad news that Decoy Museum Board member and Investment Committee chairman Ed Funk had died. Ed was welcomed to the Board of Directors in March of 2013 and had made a very positive impact.

Ed was an eager and devoted supporter of the Museum. An avid duck hunter, he brought to the

table many years of valuable waterfowling experience. He had spent his career in investment management, first with Ferris Baker Watts and later with its successor RBC Wealth Management, which provided additional financial expertise to the Board. As chairman of the Investment Committee, Ed took the initiative to restructure and improve the yield on the Museum's endowments and other investments. His fundraising efforts generated substantial and meaningful contributions toward the cost of reconstructing the second-floor deck.

Ed was also active member of the Perry Hall United Methodist Church, the Tall Cedars of Lebanon, and the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons where he was a member of the Boumi Shriner Gun Club.

We will miss Ed, his wise counsel, and his boundless enthusiasm. Our hearts go out to his wife Susan, daughters Amy (and husband Jason) and Cathlene (and husband Todd), as well as his four beloved grandchildren.

On the Cover: This pintail hen is typical of the Swan Island Club decoys. Particularly noteworthy: the glass eyes survive, the remaining paint is original, the extra-wide lower body is uncommon, and the brands show the transfer of ownership among club members. Also pictured is Captain Alexander Harris Penny (1843-1905), the first manager of the Swan Island Club (1875-1900).

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EDITOR

James W. Carroll, Jr.

CONTRIBUTORS

Bonnie Castillo
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C. John Sullivan, Jr.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Leo Heppner
Terri Shepke-Heppner
Elementary Design by Watson

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From the President



Photo by Leo Heppner

Dear Museum Member,

It is hard to believe that the 33rd Annual Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival is less than three months away—on the first weekend of May. Congratulations to Bobby Jobs who will be the 2014 Honorary Chairman. Preparations are in full swing, and we are looking forward to a great turnout this year. We are always grateful for the support of Mayor Wayne Dougherty and the Havre de Grace City Council.

The two big events of the first quarter of the year are always the Susquehanna Flats Vintage Hunting & Fishing Collectibles Show that was held at the Level Volunteer Fire Company on Saturday, January 25th and the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust Banquet coming up on Friday, March 14th at the Bayou Restaurant.

This was the seventh year for the Level show, which has been growing nicely. Exhibitors from six states filled 100 tables with vintage hunting and fishing collectibles. It was another fun and excellent day, and if you were there I hope you found something to add to your collection. "Thank you" to everyone at the Level VFC, Chuck and Lynn Usilton, and my wife and partner Jeannie for the time and effort that went into this successful joint event.

It is important to remember why the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust was established and Mr. Mitchell's vision for the Decoy Museum. Although the Trust is independent of the Museum, its sole mission is to aid the Decoy Museum's acquisition, interpretation, and preservation of decoys and related waterfowl artifacts. The Trust has also been a reliable "safety net" for us in other special and unique circumstances such as the 1st floor "What is a Decoy?" exhibit, the building stabilization project, the elevator installation, and the 2nd floor deck restoration.

The primary source of funds for the Trust is the annual Endowment Trust banquet. The Board members of the Trust and other volunteers are currently working on plans for the 21st annual banquet. It is a fun time for all and a great opportunity to meet and greet other Museum supporters, decoy collectors, and waterfowlers.

On the subject of fundraising, the fall raffle was a great success, and we are currently getting both the spring raffle and the Decoy Festival auction organized. Please give us a call if you have a decoy or other piece of waterfowl art to donate to the auction.

We have been very persistent in encouraging our members to renew and upgrade. I cannot overstress the importance of membership participation. Your checks are always great to receive, but please be active, attend our events, introduce your friends and family, and remember the Museum and the Trust when you have items to donate. And please consider including us in your estate plans.

The Annual Appeal this year has been very fruitful. Charter and Life members, please keep in mind that producing and mailing *The Canvasback* (four times each year since 1992) is a major expense for the Museum. You have been very loyal and generous supporters since the earliest days of the Museum, and the Annual Appeal is an excellent way to continue your financial support—even a small amount helps to defray the cost of getting *The Canvasback* to your mailbox.

We are here for you and because of you. We can't do anything without you. You keep us strong, and we appreciate your loyalty. Save the dates: Endowment Trust banquet on March 14th and the Decoy Festival the first weekend in May. Please attend and show your support. Thanks, and see you there!

Sincerely,

Pat Vincenti

33rd 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 2nd, 3rd, & 4th 2014

Friday: 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Saturday: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Sunday: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

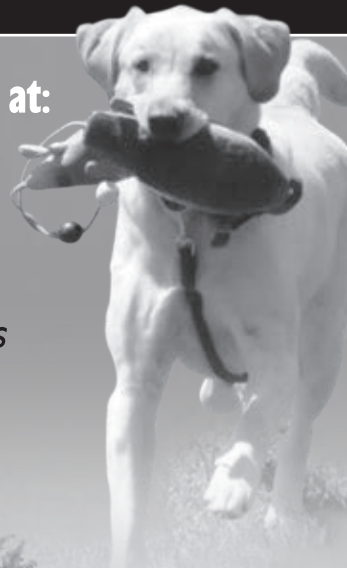
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Activities will be held at:

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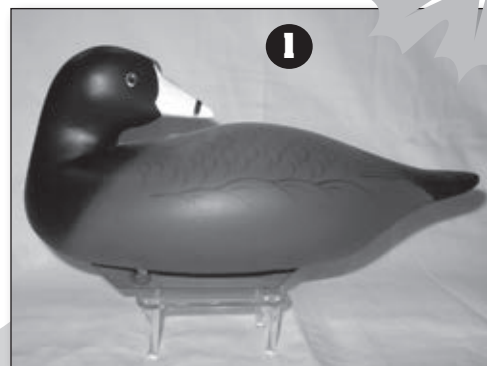
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Fall Raffle 2013 RESULTS



1. Charles Bryan Coot — *Won by E. Kenneth Finkenbinder, Baltimore, MD*
2. Tom Humberstone Pair of Canvasbacks — *Won by Diane Burkentine, Newark DE*
3. Charles Jobes Golden Eye — *Won by Rosemary Evans, Havre de Grace, MD.*
4. Chesapeake Bay Decoys and the Men who Made & Used Them, plus the Paul Shertz Print of Charlie Bryan Wigeons — *Won by Mary Reynolds, Joppa MD*
5. Jeff Coats Cork Teal — *Won by P. Lloyd Sheets, Smyrna DE*



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J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest 2014 COMPETITION

The 12th annual J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest will be held on Saturday, May 3rd at the Middle School Gym in conjunction with the 2014 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. A blue ribbon will be awarded for each of the following ten competition category winners, and the 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.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Best William Heverin diving duck | 6. Best Leonard Pryor—any species |
| 2. Best Madison Mitchell diving duck | 7. Best Ward Bros. pair |
| 3. Best Henry or George Lockard decoy—any species | 8. Best Ira Hudson decoy |
| 4. Best Jobes Family Decoy—age requirement waived | 9. Best Delaware River or Jersey Coast decoy |
| 5. Best Dick Simpers canvasback | 10. Best Unknown |

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. Competition issues will be resolved at the sole discretion of the contest chairman and/or the chief judge.

Questions? Please contact contest chairman Jim Trimble (703-768-7264 or potomacduck@cox.net).



Live Auction!

Saturday
May 3, 2014

*During the 33rd Annual
Havre de Grace Decoy and
Wildlife Art Festival*

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.

Items Wanted!

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

BEFORE March 1, 2014, 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.

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1ST PRIZE ↑

**Miniature Mallards (pair)
by the 2014 Decoy Festival
Honorary Chairman, Capt.
Bob Jobes**



← 2ND PRIZE

**Wood Ducks (pair) by Dave
Walker**



← 3RD PRIZE

**Mallard Hen by
Patrick Vincenti**



← 4TH PRIZE

**Canvasback Drake
by John Clark**

5TH PRIZE →
**Valerie Lloyd print
of "Decoys by Jim
Pierce" signed by
Valerie and Jim**



Winners drawn at 3:30 pm. Sunday, May 4th, 2014, during the
33rd Annual Havre de Grace Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival at the Havre de Grace Middle School.

Tickets are \$5.00 each, six for \$25.00, or ten for \$40.00

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

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

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MEET THIS YEAR'S
HONORARY CHAIR

BOB JOBES

BY JAMES W. CARROLL, JR.

The Board of Directors of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum has announced Bob Jobes as its 2014 Honorary Chairman of the 33rd annual Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Arts Festival, which will be held on the first weekend in May, 2014. Bob Jobes is not only a gifted and respected carver but also the quintessential Havre de Grace waterman whose life and livelihood are defined by the Bay.

continued on page 14



"It is so known through the length and breadth of its watershed. The Bay. There is no possible confusion with any other body of water, no need for more precise description. It is, after all, the continent's largest estuary. Its waters are rich...Its shorelines cradled our first settlements. It is the Chesapeake."

—William Warner; *"Beautiful Swimmers: Waterman, Crabs and the Chesapeake Bay"*

"Waterman" is not a common term outside of the Chesapeake Bay area, and it encompasses all of the ways that one can make a living off of the bounty of the Bay. The life of a waterman is defined by the changing seasons, the vagaries of the weather, government regulations, and the abundance or scarcity of crabs, oysters, fish, and waterfowl.

Nothing reveals this better than a visit to the carving shop behind Bob and Debbie's house. It is by any measure chaotic and cluttered with fish tags, fishing nets, crab pots, shotguns, woodworking machines, paint, brushes, baskets of heads and bodies, finished decoys, and more. Wood chips and sawdust are everywhere. But on a bitter winter afternoon with a dog on your lap, another at your feet, and a fire going in the woodstove, it feels timeless.

Bob started out in R. Madison Mitchell's shop on Washington Street, as so many Havre de Grace carvers did. Hunting had instilled in Bob an appreciation for the beauty of ducks and geese, and the challenge of decoy making offered the satisfaction of creating that same beauty in wood.

Young carvers learned the elements of decoy creation from the bottom up, so he started priming unpainted decoys. One of Bob's favorites in his early years of carving was making miniature decoys. But the market at that time was more interested in full size decoys, primarily for gunning but also as collectibles.

Collecting this distinctive folk art has now moved upmarket with collectors—and, increasingly, women collectors—looking for more finely-rendered decorative decoys and often constrained by space limitations. Accordingly, Bob has shifted his focus back to miniature decoys.



Asked for a decoy that he felt particularly fond of as a representation of his skill as a carver—and to be the symbol of the 2014 Decoy Festival—Bob selected a pair of miniature preening hooded mergansers that he recently made for his wife, Debbie.

We will take a closer look at Bob in the Festival issue of *The Canvasback*. ■



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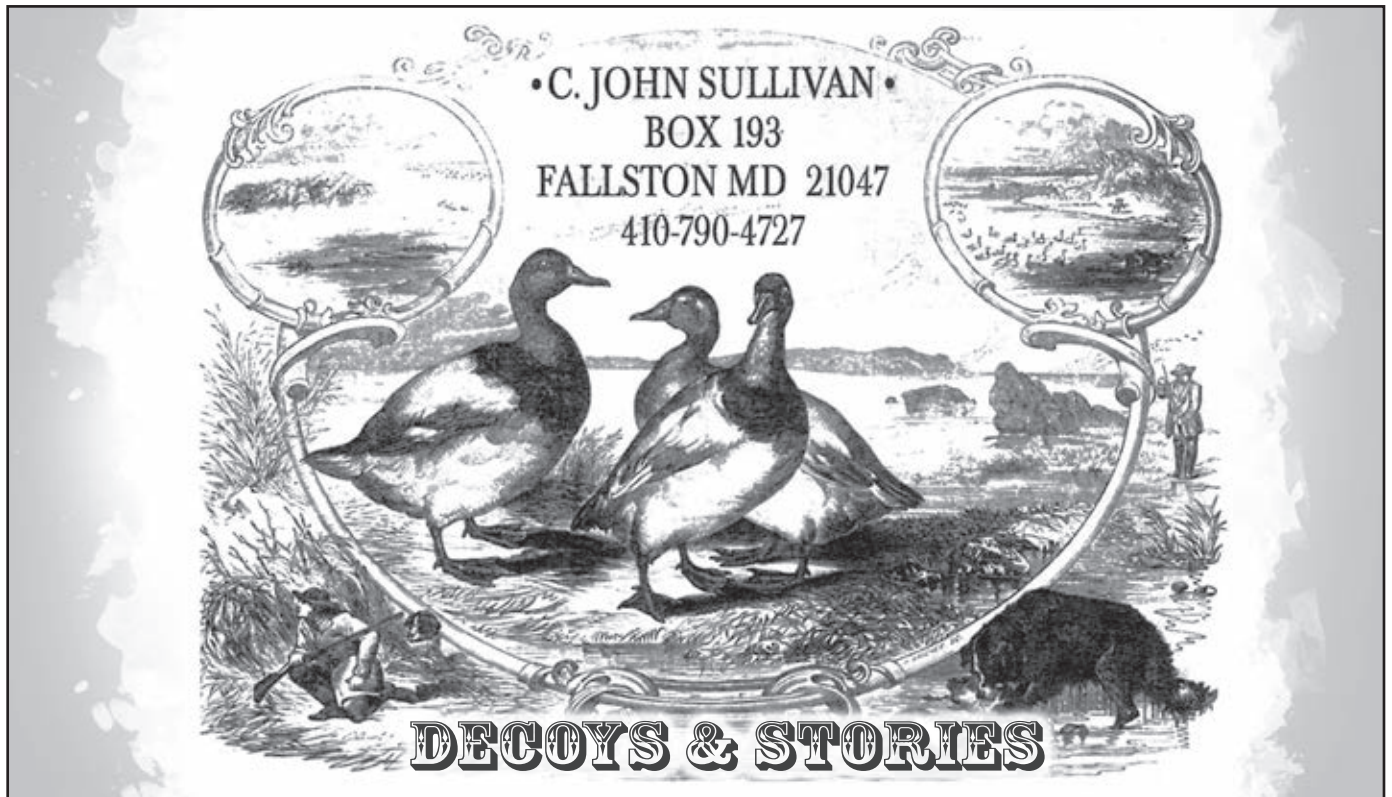
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Early Swan Island decoy with brands representing the names of members who owned it.



The Swan Island Decoys

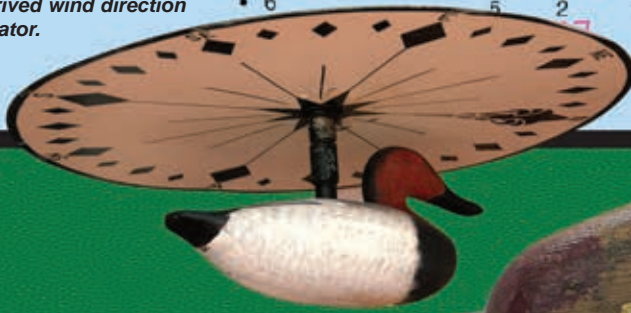
BY C. JOHN SULLIVAN, JR.

In 1992 the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art opened its doors welcoming visitors into their brand new museum building. I had visited the budding museum many times before when the collection was housed inside a building on the campus of Salisbury State College.

The new museum provided much needed space for the growing collection. Upon entering the new building guests are treated to a walk down a historic nature trail.

With the sounds of water lapping upon a shore, waterfowl and marsh birds can be heard in the distance. Displays of the earliest days of waterfowling are visible on either side of the rustic trail in realistic dioramas.

This circa 1880 Holly canvasback has been repurposed as a cleverly contrived wind direction indicator.



Captain Alexander Harris Penny—the first manager of the Swan Island Club.



This old widgeon shows the distinctive flat bottom and broad hips.



There is one display that captivated me on my very first visit. It included my first book, *Waterfowling: The Upper Chesapeake Legacy*, opened to display pages. Immediately to the left of my book is an illustration of the Susquehanna Flats gunning scow, *Reckless*. That delightful drawing was done by my dear friend and waterfowling mentor, Henry A. Fleckenstein, Jr. A decoy wearing the brand “Reckless” is adjacent to the illustration. Displayed close by is a Holly canvasback decoy branded “Carroll’s Island.” I might describe the contents of this case as “a few of my favorite things.”

To the right of my book and close to the Holly decoy is another branded decoy. This decoy wears several brands, E. Dexter, J. C. Carter, T.B.W., and E. Flagg. These brands represent

the names of members of the Swan Island Club. This historic gunning club dates back to 1872. Looking down on the exhibit from his photograph is Captain Alexander Harris Penny, the first manager of the Club. Swan Island is located on the Currituck Sound in North Carolina, about two miles southeast of Knotts Island. In 2012, I was contacted in by the current Club president and asked to write a history of the Club. Swan Island is the oldest surviving club in the region, and it functions today much as it did 100 years ago.

The decoy displayed at the Ward Museum was carved at Amityville on Long Island, New York by the carver Sam Smith. Correct attribution to early decoys is problematic especially when the decoys were carved in one area and used many hundred miles from their

origin. Almost 20 years ago, Archie Johnson, noted collector and author, wrote an article for a Ward Museum publication entitled “The Mysterious Decoys of Swan Island.” He noted in his article that members of the Wade family of Knott’s Island, who had worked in various positions at the Club, thought that the decoys “probably were made by someone on Long Island, but they have never seen or heard of any decoys quite like these.”

Several authorities can now be credited with the Sam Smith attribution; among them are the late collector and waterfowling historian Bud Ward from Long Island, collectors and authors Archie Johnson and Bud Copedge from Virginia Beach, contemporary carver Cameron McIntyre, and noted collector and author Kroghie Andresen.

The origins of the Club can be traced to a group of New England sportsmen, predominantly Bostonians, who were headed south to Florida for fishing and were driven by a storm into shore at Swan Island. Their yacht ran aground, and the men found the sport there so good that they decided to stay, converting their grounded yacht into the first clubhouse. Eventually they purchased the island and then for-

What Inspires People to Collect?

Collecting is generally a positive experience. Whether it is to satisfy a sense of aesthetics, to give one a sense of connectedness to the past, or for more complex needs, the rewards are primarily emotional rather than monetary.

Decoys are lures, first and foremost. So go with that allure and collect what you like—what pulls at you for reasons you may not be able to define. Collect what you can afford and what you will take pleasure in seeing on your shelf or mantle. Do all that, and you will never tire of it or regret an acquisition.

In another of John Sullivan's fascinating and meticulously researched historical tales of waterfowling and decoys, he explores a legendary 19th century hunting club and its unusual decoys.

The origins, history, and style of the Swan Island decoys have pulled at John and inspired him to add yet another dimension to his collection.

mally founded the Club. They brought hundreds of the Smith decoys with them and gunned over them for many decades. The multiple brands represent the transfer of membership and hence ownership of the decoys. Over the course of many years most of the decoys left the island, and the remaining decoys were divided among the new membership in 1967.

The decoys are unique when compared to most decoys from the Curruck area. They have flat bottoms and very broad hips. A defined raised rib runs from the middle of the back to the tail. The tail is relatively short yet defined, ending in a point. Some examples still wear their early glass eyes.

An interesting story about these decoys from 1955 survives. The late collector Bill Mackey was searching for decoys on Knotts Island. Mackey had local waterfowler Tilford Wade "bird dogging" for decoys on the island. When Wade showed him the Swan Island decoys, Mackey

became quite interested in the glass eyes of the decoys. Wade told the tale of Mackey taking his pocket knife out and inserting the blade to the area surrounding the glass eye. Upon removing it, he discovered that the eye was in fact a shoe button.

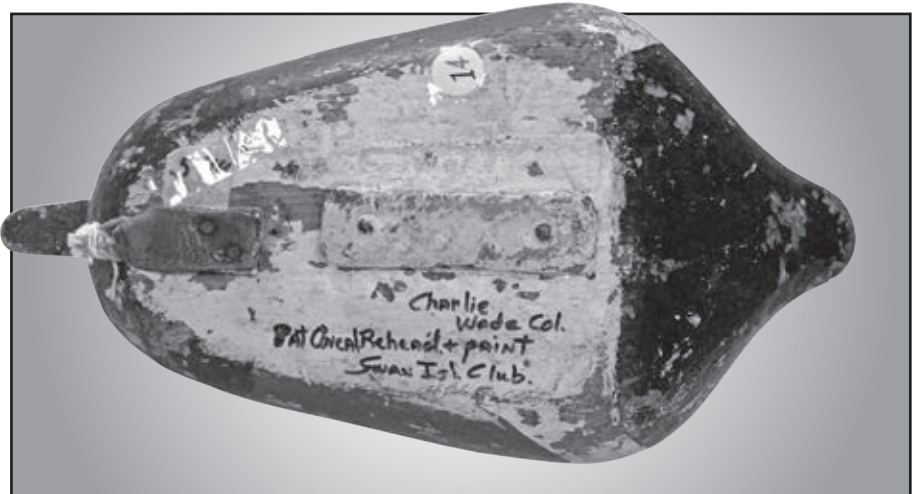
Most examples are branded with the original owner's name. Unlike most branded decoys, multiple brands appear on many of the Smith decoys. The brands provide a chain of ownership as the decoys passed from one member's rig to the next. A few examples remain in several collections with traces of original paint. As with rigs from the Susquehanna Flats, the decoys were repaired and repainted from season to season. The fresh paint typically followed the original paint patterns and the carvers of the replaced heads attempted to mimic the Sam Smith heads as closely as possible.

We are very fortunate that an original photograph from the 1880s survives that



This well-preserved widgeon shows a barely discernable "SIC" brand stamped into the lead weight.

Swan Island widgeon from the collection of Charlie Wade clearly shows the distinctive broad hips. These decoys are attributed to Long Island carver Sam Smith.



shows a Swan Island guide and club member in a skiff with a decoy rig piled between the two men. The broad hips of the decoys are evident in the image. Another image includes a rig of decoys surrounding one of the members in his "swan boat." This boat was constructed in a fashion similar to a sinkbox. Attached to the swan boat were several large swan decoys. Visible in the swan boat photographs are two unusual swan decoys, one is a preener, the other has a curved reaching neck. These examples are reminiscent of the decoys carved in Chincoteague by the renowned carver, Ira Hudson.

Live decoys were also in use at Swan Island. A surviving photograph clearly shows a pen filled with blackducks, mallards, Canada geese and one lone swan.

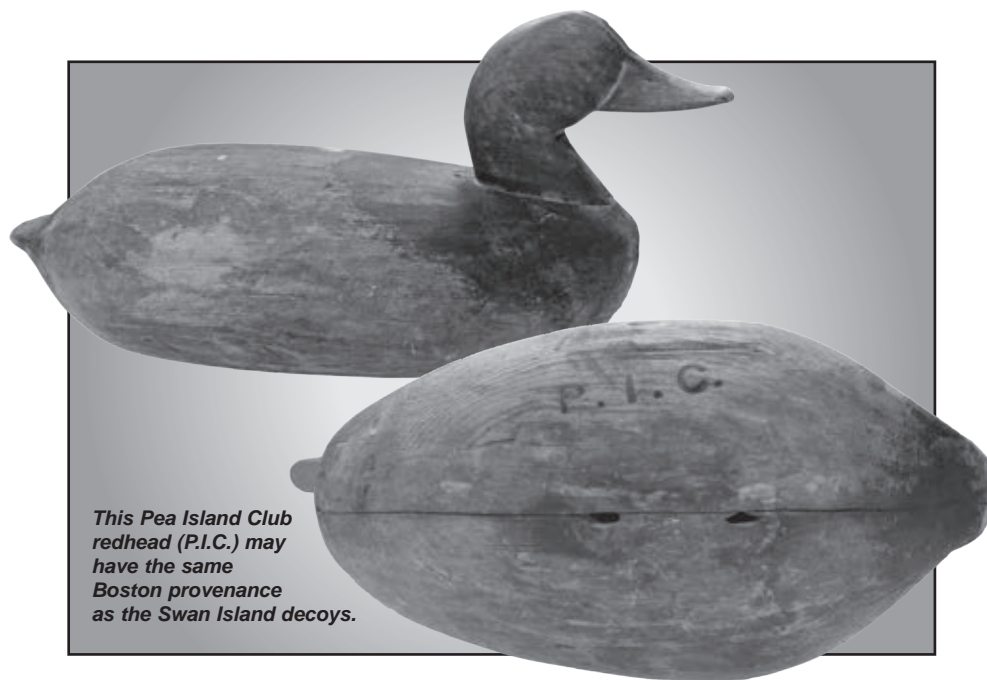
In addition to the Sam Smith decoys, other decoy makers were represented in the Swan Island rig. The rig included decoys by Elmer Crowell, Lee Dudley, Joe Lincoln, Ivy Stevens, various factory decoys including examples from the Mason factory, and decoys by local carvers from the Knott's Island area. One of my personal favorites resides in a private collection across the Currituck Sound on Knott's Island; it is a canvasback from Charlestown, Maryland carved by John B. Graham. J. Olney Norris of Baltimore was a member of the Swan Island Club as well as a member of the Carroll's Island Ducking Club at the same time. He was most certainly the member who took the Charlestown, Maryland decoys south with him to Swan Island.

old repaint, it is mounted to an iron shaft which extends from atop the roof through the ceiling to the clubroom. Above the roof top is a wind directional arrow attached to the rod which extends through the house into the back of the decoy. Painted on the ceiling is a large compass. As the wind blows, the bill of the decoy points to the direction from which it is blowing. That old decoy has served a much different roll in its long life than its kin who were used to lure their feathered counterparts.

Having observed many collectors over the years, it has always been a curiosity to me when in the midst of their collecting they seem to change direction. I knew one collector who had built an impressive collection of Delaware River blackduck decoys. Once that collection was displayed and exhibited at various decoy events, it was sold and disbursed among other collectors. Soon thereafter the collector changed direction and focused on Chesapeake Bay decoys.

My own collection remains primarily focused on the Chesapeake region and tends to grow exponentially. Over the years, however, I have added decoys from other regions. I have some North Carolina decoys used by members of the Pea Island Club and branded with the club brand, "PIC." These decoys may have their northern connection like the Swan Island decoys; the first club caretaker came south from Boston with club members and is considered the carver of these decoys.

Now honored by being invited to study and write the history of the Swan Island Club, I find myself inspired to extend my collection horizon and start a collection of decoys used at this great place. But the question crosses my mind: Will I want more than just a few examples? I fear that may be the case. It is difficult for me to have only a few of the things that I like, especially when I know where they were used and who used them. ■



**This Pea Island Club
redhead (P.I.C.) may
have the same
Boston provenance
as the Swan Island decoys.**

That swan is the first evidence that I have discovered that clearly indicates that live birds were used to lure the majestic white fowl. In 1937 the renowned artist Frank W. Benson visited Swan Island and produced a famous etching, *Boats at Swan Island*. The etching depicts three sailing sharpies in the water; the closest boat holds two gunners, a retriever and what is obviously a group of decoys adjacent to the group. The clubhouse can be seen in the distance while hundreds of fowl dot the sky.

In the current clubhouse, which was constructed in 1914, a John Holly canvasback drake resides. Carved in Havre de Grace in the 1880s and wearing an



John Sullivan is an author and raconteur, a well-known authority on both decoys and the history of waterfowling, and a consultant to the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. We are indeed fortunate to have him as one of our most dedicated contributors and supporters.

Live Auction

SATURDAY, MAY 3RD

Sponsored by Hostetter Agency, Inc.

Decoys new and old will be available.

Viewing begins at 1:00 pm • Bidder Registration opens 4:00 pm • Auction begins at 5:30 pm



*Capt. Bill Collins Black Duck
1994*



Clarence Bauer mini Green wing Teal



*Full Size Swan by Bob and
Charles Jobs 1995*



*Clarence Tit Bird Bauer
1997 Collection example of
full collection*



*Capt. Bob Jobs 12 of 50
Black Duck 1981*



*Capt. Bob Jobs 40 of 50
Black Duck 1998*



*Original Lillian Lay water
color of Mallards Flying*



*Clarence Bauer mini Blue
Goose pair*



*Clarence Bauer mini
Shovelers*



*Clarence Bauer Mini
Flamingos*



*Patrick Vincenti Sleeper
Blackduck 1996*



*Clarence Bauer mini
Canvasbacks*



*Clarence Bauer mini two
Headed Coot*



*Oldsquaw by Joey Jobs
1998*



*Clarence Bauer mini
Golden Eyes*

The Bushwhack Boat

Used at the Head of Chesapeake Bay, She Is an Interesting Variant of the Flat-bottomed Type

The Sellers family generously donated a Thompson-built bushwhack boat to the Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust at the annual banquet in March of 2013. Also called a sneak boat, it appears to be an unremarkable-looking rowboat at first glance. It begs the questions of what a bushwhack boat is, what makes it noteworthy, and how it was used. Who can better tell the tale than someone who built bushwhack boats and hunted with them before their use was severely limited by Federal regulations in 1935.



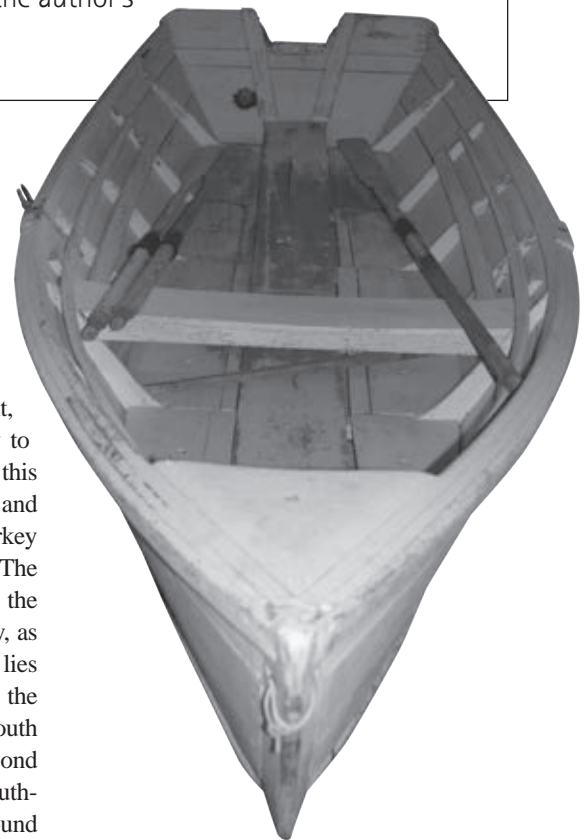
H. Osborne Michael (1890-1974), a waterman and a writer for his entire life, lived in Baltimore City and spent his summers on Swan Creek near Havre de Grace enjoying the Chesapeake Bay. This article was originally published in the April 25, 1928 issue of *MotorBoat* and later in *The Canvasback* with the approval of the author's family.

The Susquehanna River, flowing for centuries into the very upper end of the Chesapeake Bay just below the present highway and railroad bridges at Havre de Grace, Maryland, has built a submerged delta roughly six miles in diameter and covering an area of some thirty square miles. It is better known as the Susquehanna Flats. The thin sheet of water covering it varies in depth from six to eight feet to less than a foot at mean low water. During extreme low tides, such as are caused by winter gales from the Northwest, great areas of the bottom are exposed. A buoyed channel, allowing a draught of twelve feet, extends in a northwesterly and southeasterly direction west of the center of it to the mouth of the Susquehanna. Other channels and drains, some as deep as twenty feet, extend around the shores and project into it.

In summer the head of the Bay is a beautiful body of water. When viewed from its lower end, at the gas buoy off Locust

Point on Spesutie Island, it resembles a mountain lake. To the west, north, and northeast, the 400-foot hills of Harford and Cecil Counties form a background for the banks, which are mostly high and wooded, while to the east, Bull Mountain and Maulden's Mountain, both tree clad for their 300-feet of height, descend in some places quite abruptly to the water. Turkey Point, at the end of this peninsula, with its eroded yellow cliffs and its lighthouse, is a picture. Land at Turkey Point and climb the steps to the top. The panorama from the light is well worth the climb. It is probably the best in the Bay, as so much is included in it. To the east lies Elk River and the upper counties of the eastern Shore, Cecil and Kent; to the south the Bay stretches off to the horizon beyond Poole's Island, 20 miles down; to the southwest lies the Aberdeen Proving Ground reservation screened by Spesutie Island, and to the west lie the Flats just described.

To return to the subject; the Flats produce

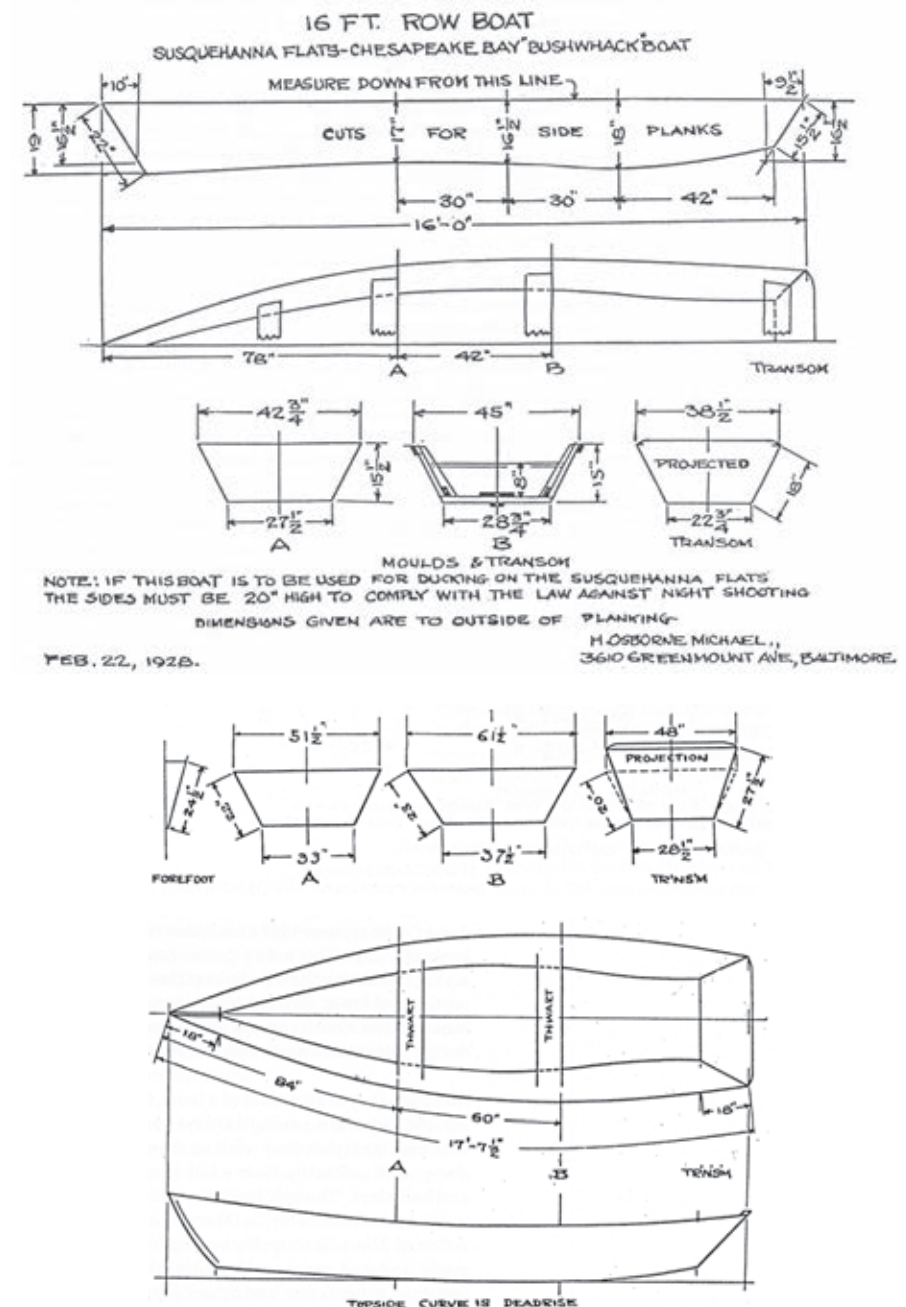


Thompson-built bushwhack boat at the Decoy Museum. Note the flare to the sides, wide raking stern, and the keelson.

much marine vegetation, from unsightly algae to acres of water lilies, and principally, from the sportsman's viewpoint, wild celery. Each fall hundreds of thousands of wild ducks of all varieties, including a large proportion of canvasbacks, come to make their winter home on the Flats, feeding on the celery. It naturally follows that, the ducks feeding there, and ducks being good to eat and profitable to sell – even if it is against the law – man has devised ways to hunt and kill them. To soliloquize a bit, it's strange that men too honest to slip a coin or two from the collection plate in church on Sunday, or even to pass a three-day old transfer on an unsuspecting streetcar conductor, will consider it almost an obligation to break all the game laws with which they are familiar.

Wild ducks are hunted in two ways on the Susquehanna Flats; from sink boxes and from the bushwhack boat. Shooting from blinds is practiced only in the nearby creeks and rivers and occasionally along the shores, but in a comparatively negligible way, sink box shooting and bushwhacking being more productive and requiring no property rights. The origin of the word, "bushwhacking" is obscure. No one locally can explain its adaptation to this method of duck shooting, and none of the present generation of gunners seems the least bit worried about it. They all know what is meant by it, and they let it go at that. At any event, bushes do not enter into it.

Gunning outfits vary greatly, from the expensive shoal draught motor houseboats of wealthy sportsmen to the homely rigs of the local boys. An average rig consists of a cabin motor boat of some sort, usually an old skipjack with mast and sails removed (a large and ungainly house having been substituted for them), and a motor installed; one or more bushwhack boats; the sink box itself; and several hundred decoys. The sink box is a man-sized coffin-shaped box, open at the top and its upper edges let into a platform about six feet wide and ten feet long. Hinged to the edges of this platform are light canvas covered wings which serve to make the platform larger and which rise and fall with any waves which may be running. The sink box is anchored on a likely "berth" and is weighted down with the gunner (all wrapped in sheepskins and blankets), and with cast iron decoys, until the platform



floats flush with the water. Several hundred wooden decoys are then placed around the box to resemble a flock of ducks on the water, and the gunner is left to his own resources by his partners or attendants who row off to the cabin boat anchored some distance off.

The sink box being flush with the water is not noticed by passing flocks of ducks, which flying low are attracted by the decoys and plan to alight among them. It is then that the gunner, lying in wait in the sink box, sits up and shoots ducks. Upon hearing the shooting the other men in the

outfit, waiting around the stove in the cabin boat, tumble out, row over to the decoys and pick up the dead and crippled ducks. One of them may then exchange places with the man in the box, and the procedure is repeated. Occasionally boxes have been built with two "coffins" to accommodate two men but there is considerable risk attached to them and for this or other and perhaps better reasons, they are not popular.

The bushwhack outfit is simpler. Bushwhacking requires more action and, for the gunner out for sport alone, would seem to be the better fun. The outfit con-



Thompson-built bushwhack boat at the Decoy Museum. Note that the bottom is convex with a fore and aft rocker and more rake to the bow and stern than other rowboats.

sists of a bushwhack boat, fitted all around with a white canvas screen which projects a foot or so above the gunwales and hangs nearly to the water, and a hundred or so decoys. Two or three men operate one of these outfits. The decoys are put out by themselves in a place where the ducks are apt to alight, and the screened boat is sculled up to windward of them by a single long scull which projects through a scull port low down in the transom. The boat then lies up to windward until flying ducks light among the decoys. It is then sculled quietly and steadily down the wind toward the decoys and ducks by one man in the stern. When close aboard them, the ducks see danger in the screened boat. As they must head into the wind to rise from the water, they fly toward and over the boat. It is then that the gunner, waiting in the bow of the boat, shoots at them. After each such raid the dead ducks are picked up and the boat sculled back up to windward, to await the arrival of another flock of ducks among the decoys. The bushwhack boat is always painted white and the screen is also white; white, the color of floating ice, being least alarming to the ducks.

As windy days are the best gunning days, due to the sound of shooting not carrying far – being broken up – and as the Flats are very much exposed, a seaworthy but shallow draught boat is necessary for both bushwhacking and for tending the sink boxes. So the bushwhack boat, a type of flat bottomed boat seen only at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, has been developed for these purposes. These boats have almost a dory bow; are high sided, with 23' or 30'

of flare in the sides; have several inches of fore and aft “rocker” in bottom, so that both ends of the bottom float clear of the water when light; and have a wide raking stern with no deadwood under it. They are usually built in one of two sizes from 18' or 16' lumber. An 18-footer, built of white cedar, will draw about three inches light, and yet will behave herself when drawing a foot, as when loaded with 14 or 15 men, or two or three men and several hundred decoys. They row easily under all conditions, considering of course the draught.

There are rowboats in many localities which resemble these boats somewhat, but a second glance will show the bushwhack boat to have more rake to the bow and stern, more flare to the sides, convex rocker in the bottom – a thing most boat builders seem to abhor – and will accordingly be narrower in the bottom and will both tow and row easier than a straight-bottomed boat. Also, the widest section is about three-fifths of the length from the bow, and the stern is wider than that of any other flat boat. They are truly an individual type.

It is puzzling that such “able,” husky boats should have been developed in the comparatively sheltered waters of the upper Bay while the only rowboats seen in the lower Bay are low, narrow, straight-sided little flatties, usually crudely built of bull pine. Perhaps it's because the lower Bay is too rough in bad weather to venture into in any sort of rowboat. Similarly, there are no larger boats in the lower Bay as well built, or as seaworthy as the round bottomed, so called “gilling skiffs” seen in the upper Bay at Havre de Grace, north of Betterton.

The accompanying pictures show an old 18' boat built by the best known of the Havre de Grace boat builders, now retired, and a 16' boat built by myself after sketching several successful boats of the type. I put in a straight stem, which was much simpler, but which I now realize detracts somewhat from the boat's appearance. The principal measurements of the larger boat are shown, while there is enough information given on the smaller boat to build from. I have used this smaller boat for two summers as a general utility boat, and even as a dink, as she tows so easily and is so seaworthy.

These boats are usually built of cedar, not with frames and fore and aft bottom planks, and with the bottom nailed cross-wise. The framed boats have no chines, although the cross bottomed boats do, and both styles have a keelson. The framed boats have their keelson fastened over the cross floors, and the cross-bottomed boats have theirs fastened to the bottom inside, serving as a batten to tie the bottom boards together.

In years past, these boats were often fitted with centerboards and were sailed, and now many have reinforced sterns and are pushed by outboard motors. However, the use of power of any kind on the Flats as part of the actual gunning operations is prohibited by law, this regulation being respected by all.

These boats can be safely recommended without qualification to any one requiring a seaworthy, easily driven rowboat or outboarder. ■

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2012 — JUNE 30, 2013

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 SUMMARY

TOTAL ASSETS \$1,218,167

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

ENDOWMENT FUND BALANCES

Bryan/Joiner \$48,700

C. J. Sullivan \$18,772

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL \$1,218,167

TOTAL LIABILITIES: \$27,483

Includes accrued expenses, and sales tax payable.

TOTAL CAPITAL: \$1,190,684

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

REVENUE

Earned Revenue \$118,442

Contributed \$53,957

Grant Revenue \$54,980

TOTAL REVENUE \$227,379

EXPENSES

Program \$112,197

General & Administration \$126,560

Fundraising \$12,519

TOTAL EXPENSES* \$251,276

**This report does not reflect disbursements for the 3-year joint grant project with the City of Havre de Grace and other museums for the War of 1812 commemoration. The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum administered a portion of that grant money and therefore paid a portion of the expenses from those funds.*



OPERATING SUMMARY

MEMBERSHIP

Life and Charter	416
Renewing Annually	461
Other	56

TOTAL MEMBERS 933

PERSONNEL

Volunteers

Officers and Directors	16
Administrative Support	6
Program Support	42

Staff

Bonnie Castillo	Membership
Samantha Castillo	Gift Shop
Rebecca Coates	Gift Shop
Mindy Elledge	Finance
Margaret Jones	Events and Education
Amanda Marus	Gift Shop

VISITORS

Paid	3,665
Free	6,325
Total	9,990

Of those:

School Groups	4
School Children	575
Other groups	15
Classes/workshops	8
Attending Classes or Workshops	119

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Permanent Exhibitions	4
Temporary Exhibitions	7

PUBLICATIONS

The Canvasback (<i>Quarterly Magazine</i>)	4 per year
Estimated Distribution	3,932

Fiscal Year 2013 Donors

Our sincerest thanks to all who donated to the Havre de Grace Decoy 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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 Winter Gardens Quality Foods

IN-KIND

Many thanks to the following
 businesses and individuals who
 contributed goods or services
 to the Havre de Grace Decoy
 Museum during the previous
 fiscal year.

John Cole – *Home Run Baker*
books (cost of publishing and
books)

Collette's Service Center –
Relocated cannon to museum for
1812 exhibit

James Dodd – *Decoys for*
Membership Raffle prizes

Jim & Pat Doherty – *16 Classic*
NJ Decoys for unrestricted muse-
um use

Dr. Mark Foley – *books for unre-*
stricted museum use

City of Havre de Grace – *donated*
rent for building

John Ingoglia – *supplies for*
Festival signs

MacGregor's – *discounted cater-*
ing services for receptions

Kate Milutin – *Reproduction Glass*
top coffee table "First Retrieve"

Jerrell L. Sanders, Sr. – *computer,*
printer, and office supplies

Lloyd & Virginia Sanders – *tools*
and auction items

Harry Shourds – *Decoy donated*
for auction

James Trimble – *Decoy donated*
for auction

WXCY – *Free radio ads for the*
Decoy and Wildlife Festival



Museum Members

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

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*We're Ready
for your next
Event.*



For details contact the Museum at
410-939-3739



C. John Sullivan, Jr. made several significant donations to the Decoy Museum in late December.

PICTURED ARE: ►

Christmas Comes to the Museum by Way of a Much-Appreciated Donation

- Three framed large-format Bodine photographs now hanging in the “What is a Decoy” exhibit. These special photographs were acquired by the original owner and reproduced with the permission of Jennifer Bodine, who holds exclusive rights on her father’s photographs.



- A large oak display case that now holds a collection of swans. This display case is 100 years old and was first used as a display piece in a clothing store in Baltimore before being repurposed in a book store.
- Also, a smaller oak case on top of it that now holds several miniature swans.



We are grateful to John, not only for these important and valuable donations but also for his many years of dedication and support for the Decoy Museum. **Thanks, John!**

- Two hand-crafted display cases originally from the old Canvasback Gallery in Easton, Maryland. One case is downstairs and now holds the carved rockfish (striped bass), and the other is in the library that now holds the exhibit of McGaw letters featured in the Fall 2011 issue of *The Canvasback*.

FOLK ART & TRADITION

When thinking about the folk and traditional arts, one automatically thinks of community, or traditions passed down through generations ... art that is remembered and loved, renewed by the living and dead, arts in harmony with our instinct to create ... Folk and traditional arts have the aura of authenticity about them: real art by real people who draw their inspiration, technique and aesthetics from traditions as old as the land, as old as home, as old as a family and community ... The folk arts are part of what make our homes and communities ours. They breathe life into the community dance.

—Jane Alexander
Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts

The 21st Annual R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust Banquet

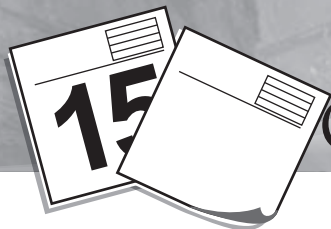
Friday, March 14, 2014 at
the *Bayou Restaurant*

Route 40, Havre de Grace, Maryland

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

The evening program will include two lottery drawings: first, an option to purchase one of 18 redhead drakes (ca. 1950's–1960's) carved and painted by R. Madison Mitchell; and second, an option to purchase one of 10 widgeon drakes (ca. 1960's) also carved and painted by Mr. Mitchell.

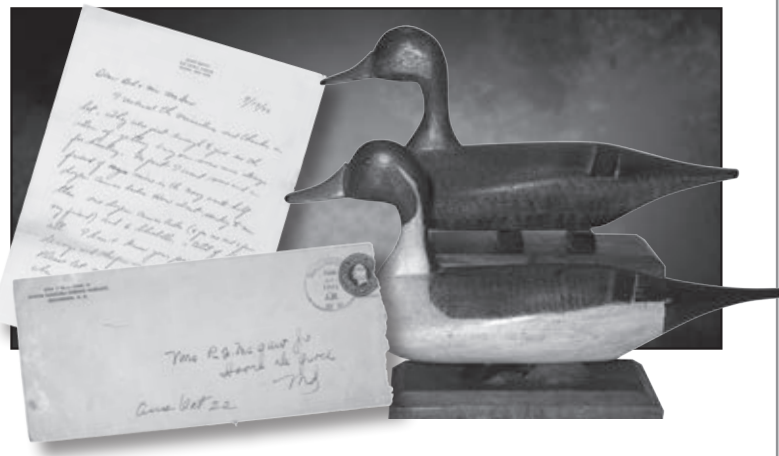
Tickets are \$50.00 per person and are available at the Decoy Museum, Vincenti Decoys, or by calling (410) 734-6238 or see www.RMadisonMitchell.com. Please attend and support the Trust, which exists solely to benefit the Decoy Museum and to aid its acquisition, interpretation, and preservation of decoys, waterfowl artifacts, and other appropriate projects.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CURRENT EXHIBITS

- ▶ THE GILLIS FAMILY'S COLLECTION OF GUNNING AND MINIATURE DECOYS BY SAMUEL TREADWAY BARNES AND HIS SON HERBERT BARNES
- ▶ THE NEW JIM PIERCE DISPLAY
- ▶ THE EXTRAORDINARY PAIR OF "DADDY" HOLLY CANVASBACKS, A GIFT FROM THE MICHAEL FAMILY.
- ▶ "TOOLS OF THE MARKET GUNNER" EXHIBIT FEATURING A NUMBER OF PUNT AND BATTERY GUNS
- ▶ THE "GUNNING THE FLATS"
- ▶ THE "WHAT IS A DECOY?" EXHIBIT
- ▶ POTOMAC DECOY COLLECTOR'S ASSOCIATION EXHIBIT
- ▶ AN EXHIBIT OF FACTORY DECOYS, A GIFT FROM DR. MORT KRAMER
- ▶ "POP" SAMPSON'S HOMEMADE DUPLICATING LATHE FOR MAKING MINIATURE DECOY BODIES
- ▶ "LETTERS TO BOB MCGAW," A GIFT FROM JOEL B. PUSEY



- ▶ A BEAUTIFUL DECORATIVE EASTERN BLUE BIRD CARVED BY MASTER CARVER BARB WACHTER
- ▶ A BEAUTIFUL DECORATIVE CANVASBACK FAMILY MADE BY MASTER CARVER J. NOBLE MENTZER
- ▶ A LIFELIKE ROCKFISH (STRIPED BASS) CARVED BY MASTER CARVER LEE TATE, SR.

Tour Reservations

Talk to your children's or grandchildren's teachers and scout leaders about educational programs and tours of the Decoy Museum. Harford County school system classes are free, and we will also welcome your home schooled children! Tours can be tailored to the curriculum and different age/grade levels. Book your tours early by emailing Margaret Jones at information@decoymuseum.com or by calling (410)-939-3739.

AROUND TOWN

7TH ANNUAL MARDI GRAS PARADE AND FESTIVITIES. Tuesday, March 04, 2014. 6:30pm, line-up at 6:00. Parade down Bouborn Street and Washington Street.

NORTH PARK TRAIL WALK. Saturday, March 15, 2014. 10:00am. Guided nature and historic walk. Meet at the Lock House.

SUSQUEHANNA MUSEUM AT THE LOCK HOUSE ANNUAL RE-OPENING. Saturday, April 12, 2014. 1:00–5:00.

HHS MUSIC DEPARTMENT SPRING CRAFT FAIR. Saturday, April 12, 2014. 9:00–2:00.

HDG RECREATION COMMITTEE'S EASTER EGG HUNT AT TYDINGS PARK. Saturday, April 19, 2014. Noon.

ANNUAL RIVER SWEEP ALONG LOWER SUSQUEHANNA HERITAGE GREENWAY. Saturday, April 26, 2014. 8:30am–1:00. General clean-up along shoreline from Tydings Park to the Lock House.

CITY-WIDE YARD SALE. Saturday, April 26, 2014. 8:00am–4:00pm. Huge, community-wide event. Yard sales, sidewalk sales, and bargains galore.

WOMEN'S 5K BY THE BAY. Sunday, April 27, 2014. 8:00am. Race for women runners and walkers of all ages and abilities.

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY & WILDLIFE ART FESTIVAL. Friday, May 02, 2014. Friday 6:00–9:00, Saturday 9:00–5:00, Sunday 10:00–4:00. See page 6 for details.

WAR OF 1812 COMMEMORATION. Saturday, May 03, 2014. 10:00–5:00. There will be an encampment, demonstrations, and period vendors at the Lock House!

*While you are out and about in town,
come visit the Decoy Museum!*

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

www.hdgtourism.com



The Ward Foundation Education Series

Call the Ward Foundation for a complete listing of seminars, classes and workshops at 410-742-4988 ext 110 or visit their website at www.wardmuseum.org.



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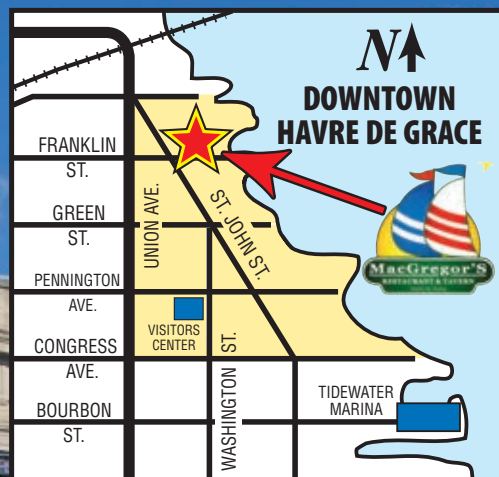
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