

34TH ANNUAL HAVRE DE GRACE

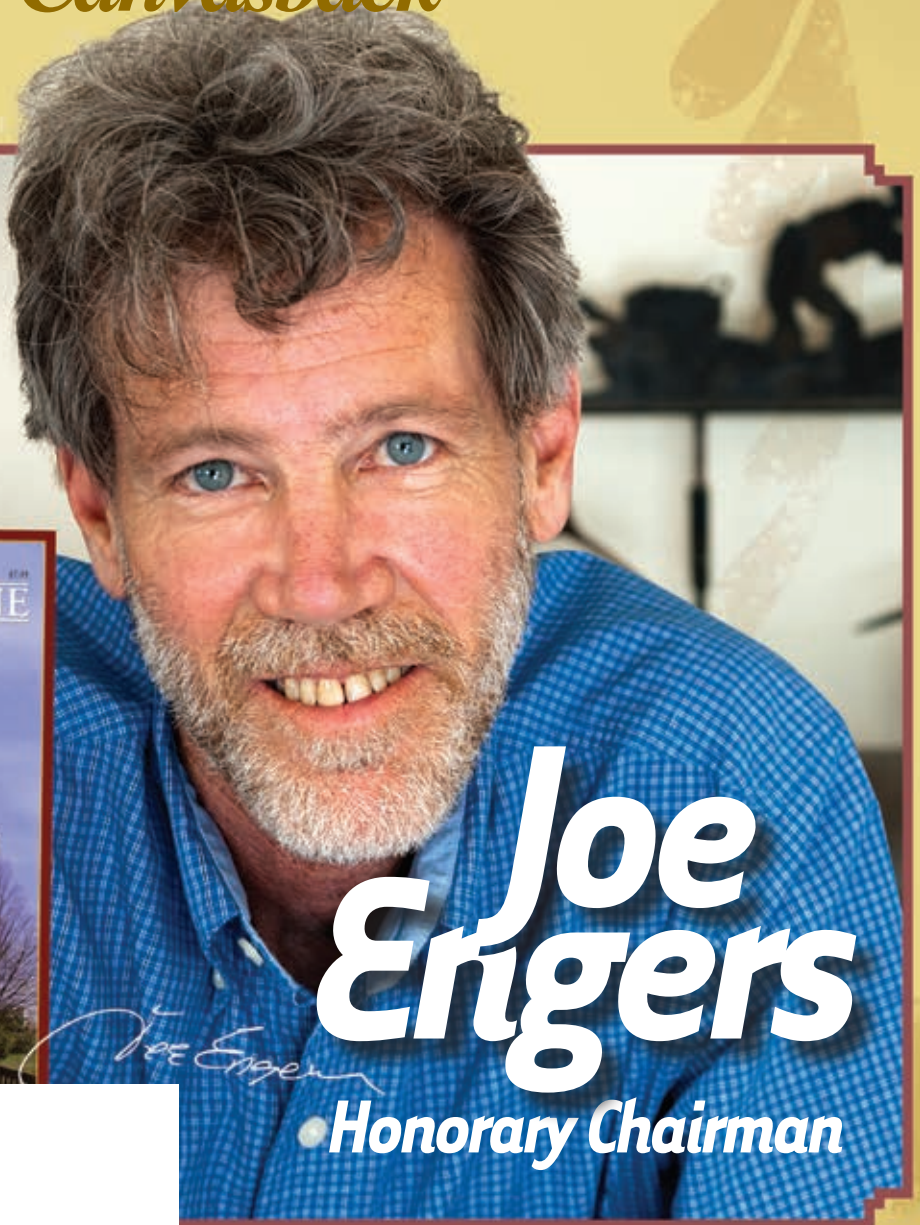
Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM

Spring 2015
Vol. 25 No. 2

The Canvasback

\$10.00



Joe Engers

Joe Engers
● Honorary Chairman



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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.



Thank You

To Our 2015 FESTIVAL SPONSORS

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FUNDED IN PART BY

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

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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ON THE COVER

Joe Engers, Honorary Chairman of the 2015 Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival "...*bought a magazine, and it transformed him into one of America's most noted decoy personalities.*" Since the autumn of 1979, Joe's *Decoy Magazine* has led the way in promoting the joys of decoy collecting and providing new enthusiasts with a comfort zone. We take great pride in recognizing Joe's very significant contributions to the decoy world and his unwavering support of the Decoy Museum. Read Chad Tragakis' article beginning on page 14 to learn more about Joe and *Decoy Magazine*.

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DECOY MUSEUM, INC.**

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From the President

Dear Museum Member,

Another brutal winter is just ending. The grandkids love it, but I am happy to see it go. Where is global warming when you need it? Thankfully, spring and the Havre de Grace Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival are on the horizon and getting closer by the day.



Photo by Leo Heppner

All of the final preparations are falling into place, as you will see in this our special spring issue of *The Canvasback* that is always dedicated to the Decoy Festival. We have a terrific team of dedicated staff, volunteers, and Directors who make the Decoy Festival a special weekend for everyone. One big change is that we decided not to have the live auction this year. Economic conditions over the past several years have just not supported bidders at a level that kept everyone happy.

We had a great night for the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust banquet on Friday, March 6th. Heavy snow Wednesday night and all day Thursday had us worried, but the Bayou Restaurant was packed with 250 loyal supporters who came from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia to make it a memorable event. One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation by the Harford County Council

and County Executive Barry Glassman of a Harford County Living Treasure award to Madelyn Mitchell Shank and R. Madison Mitchell, Jr.

The Museum was also the grateful recipient of a generous \$4,230 cash donation from Delta Waterfowl and three very special gifts conveyed to the Museum by the Endowment: a Charles Perdew Mallard Drake from Mike and Trudy Boxer, a pair of miniature Bob McGaw canvasbacks from Lawrason Sayre, and an 18th century powder horn from Katherine Johnson. The Endowment is vital to the future of the Museum, so thanks to everyone who contributed, attended, or otherwise helped make the banquet another successful fundraiser for both the Endowment and the Museum.

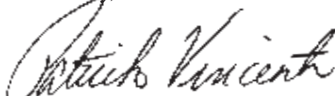
We have a couple of new exhibits that you should make an opportunity to come and see. C. John Sullivan, Jr. has put on display a large number of his Canada geese—both full-size and miniatures. The Potomac Decoy Collectors Association has exchanged their collection of teal for a fantastic collection of little buffleheads. These wonderful decoys are now up in the Carver's Gallery.

We are currently preparing an application for a special new grant from the Harford County Office of Economic Development and the Economic Development Advisory Board supporting the County's tourism-related resources and promoting Harford County as a premier tourism destination through Visit Harford! Inc., a destination marketing organization.

We welcomed two new members to the Museum's Board: Matt Kneisley from Lancaster County and Steve Smith from Aberdeen. Many of you know Matt or remember his late father Ron from their devotion to Delta Waterfowl—great supporters of the Museum. Steve is a long-time waterfowler and decoy collector who recently retired as Deputy Chief of the Aberdeen Police Department and now serves on the Aberdeen City Council. Their knowledge and experience give us valuable resources, and we welcome them both to the table.

Thanks to each of you—our loyal members, volunteers, and other supporters. We appreciate the things you do. I look forward to seeing you and our visitors at the Decoy Festival on May 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

Sincerely,



Pat Vincenti

PROGRAM

May 1, 2 & 3

2015 Honorary Chairman
Joe Engers

Locations



*Havre de Grace Decoy
Museum, Giles Street*



*Havre de Grace Middle
School, Lewis Street*



*Havre de Grace Activity
Center, Lewis Street*



DECOY FESTIVAL ADMISSION

**\$10 for the
ENTIRE
WEEKEND**

Friday, Saturday and Sunday!

*Children 12 and under free
with an adult.*

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, MAY 1ST

6:00 – 9:00 pm Carvers, Exhibitors,
and Vendors —



see posted schedules)

6:00 – 8:00 pm Carving Competition
Registration —



SATURDAY, MAY 2ND

9:00 am – 5:00 pm Carvers, Exhibitors, and
Vendors —



see posted schedules)

10:00 am Old Decoy Contest
Registration opens —



STAGE

10:00 am – 3:00 pm Raptors —



10:00 am – 12:00 pm Silent Auctions —



HALLWAY by front
admission entrance

10:30 am until complete Atlantic Flyway Classic
Carving Competition
Judging —





SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- Decorative L/S Floating Division
- Decorative L/S Non-Floating Division
- Decorative Miniature Division
- Whitey Frank Decorative Slick Division
- Decorative L/S Fish Division
- Youth Gunning Division
- Gunning Decoy Division
- Shorebird Division

Noon – 1:00 pm Old Decoy Contest —



STAGE

Noon & 2:00 pm Retriever Dog Demonstrations —



FRONT FIELD
facing Revolution Street

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm Silent Auctions —



across from front
admission desk facing
Revolution Street

1:00 pm Gunning Rig Division —



GROUNDS

SUNDAY, MAY 3RD

10:00 am – 4:00 pm Carvers, Exhibitors, and Vendors —



see posted schedules)

10:30 am River Gunning Competition Division —



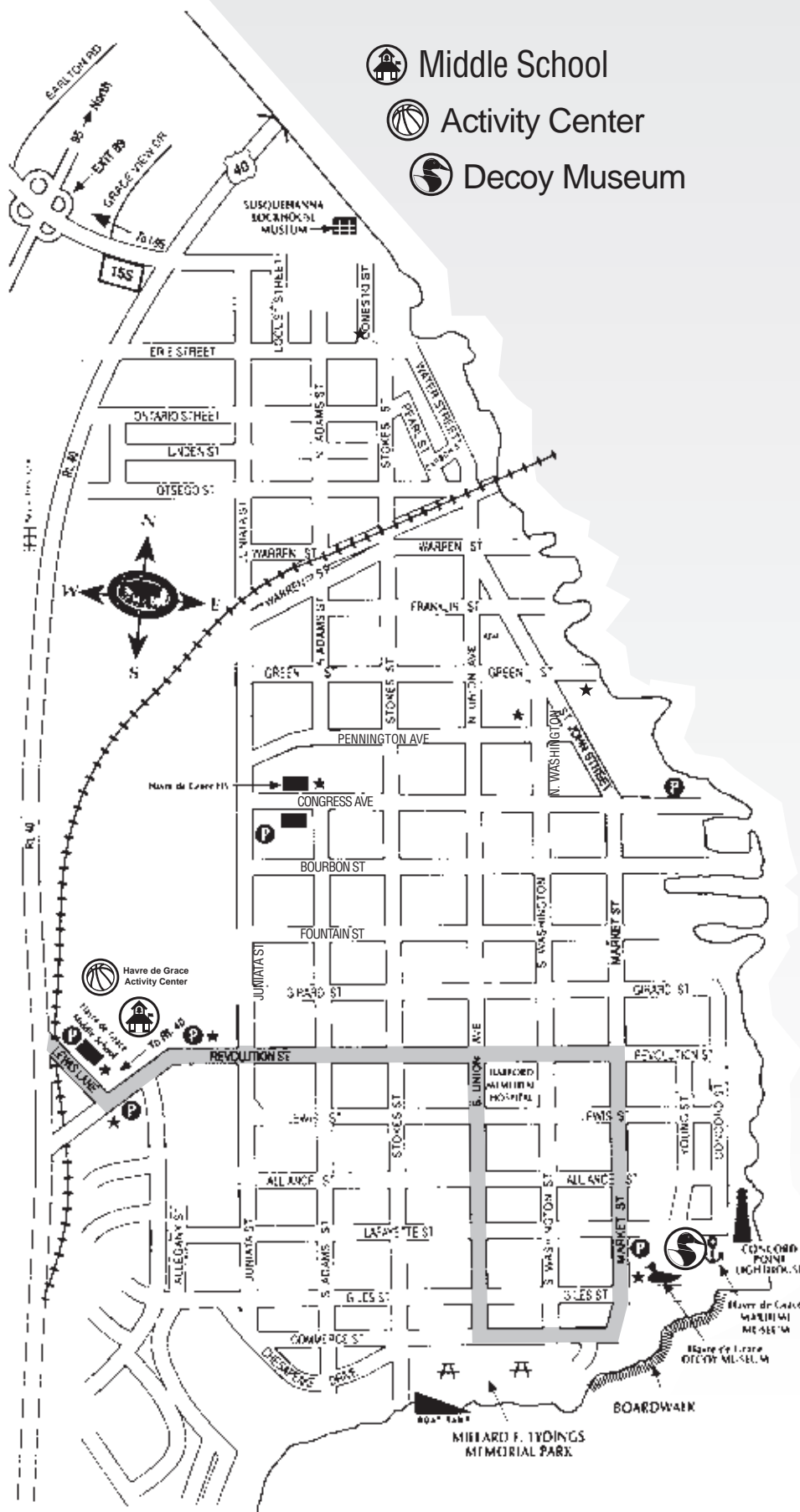
GROUNDS

3:30 pm Festival Raffle Drawing —



LOBBY

4:00 pm Festival Closes



DIRECTIONS TO THE DECOY MUSEUM

From I-95: Use Exit 89 and follow MD Rt. 155 east (toward Havre de Grace) about 3 miles.

To the Middle School:

Stay in right lane under the railroad bridge and bear right. Continue past the cemetery to the traffic light, and bear right onto US Route 40. At next traffic light, turn left onto Lewis Lane. Continue over the railroad bridge, and the Middle School is on the left.

To the Decoy Museum:

Stay in left lane under the railroad bridge. Turn right onto Juniata St. at the end. At second traffic light, turn left onto Revolution St. Go to the next traffic light and turn right onto Union Ave. Go to the end of Union Ave. and turn left onto Commerce St. Follow Commerce St. around the bend (name changes to Market St.) to Giles Street. The Decoy Museum is on the right, and you may use the on-street parking.

From US Rt. 40: Turn east onto Lewis Lane at the traffic light (right if northbound, left if southbound).

To the Middle School:

Continue over the railroad bridge, and the Middle School is on the left.

To the Decoy Museum:

Continue past the Middle School to the end of Lewis Lane and turn left onto Revolution St. Go to the second traffic light and turn right onto Union Ave. Then follow the directions (above) from I-95 to the Decoy Museum.

J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest

2015 COMPETITION

The 13th annual J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest will be held on Saturday, May 2nd at the Middle School Gym in conjunction with the 2015 Havre de Grace Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival.

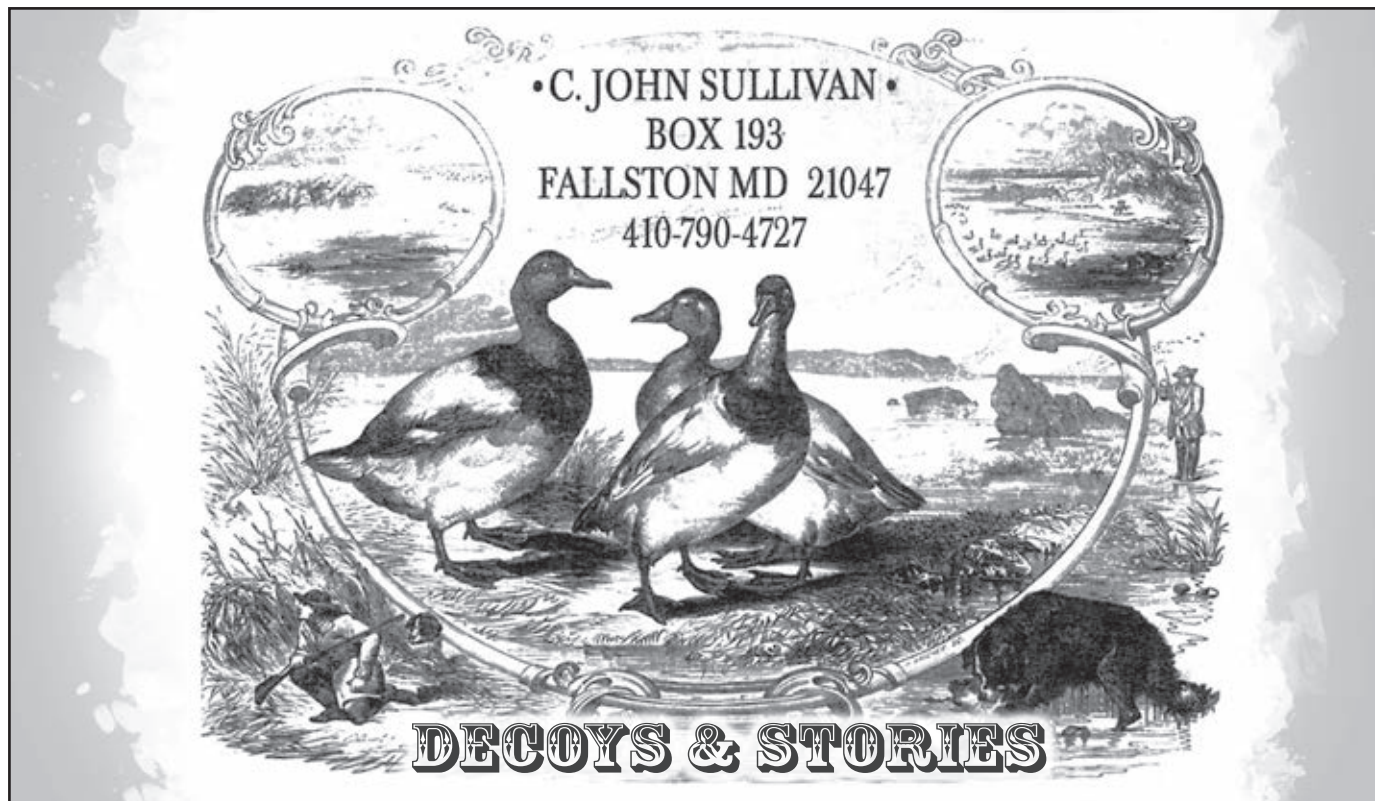
Entries will be accepted at the stage area from 10:00 a.m. until judging at noon. Joe Engers, Editor and Publisher of *Decoy Magazine* as well as the Festival's 2015 Honorary Chairman, will head up a three-member judge's panel. A blue ribbon will be awarded for each of the following ten competition category winners, and the panel will select a Best-in-Show winner.

Winners are requested to display their decoys and ribbons at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum for the three months following the Festival.

1. Best Upper Bay Hi-head
2. Best Upper Bay Matched Pair
3. Best Upper Bay Canvasback— with old known market gunner, gunning yacht, or gun club brand
4. Best Jim Holly Puddle Duck
5. Best Wood Wing Duck
6. Best Eastern Shore Redhead
7. Best Delaware River Pintail or Mallard
8. Best Doug Jester Duck Decoy
9. Best Back Bay VA/NC Diving Duck
10. Best Unknown

Rules: Last year's winning birds are ineligible for entry, regardless of category. There are 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 their 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. Once the judges have made their selections, at approximately 1:00 p.m. the public will be invited to view the roped-off and secure tables. 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).





FESTIVAL 2015

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photos by Leo Heppner and Terri Shepke-Heppner


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FESTIVAL 2015

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Havre de Grace Activity Center, Lewis Street



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023, 024

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CHRONICLER COLLECTOR CARETAKER

JOE ENGERS AND THE LASTING LEGACY OF *DECOR MAGAZINE*

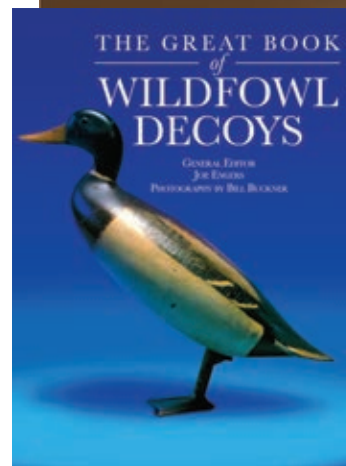
By Chad Tragakis

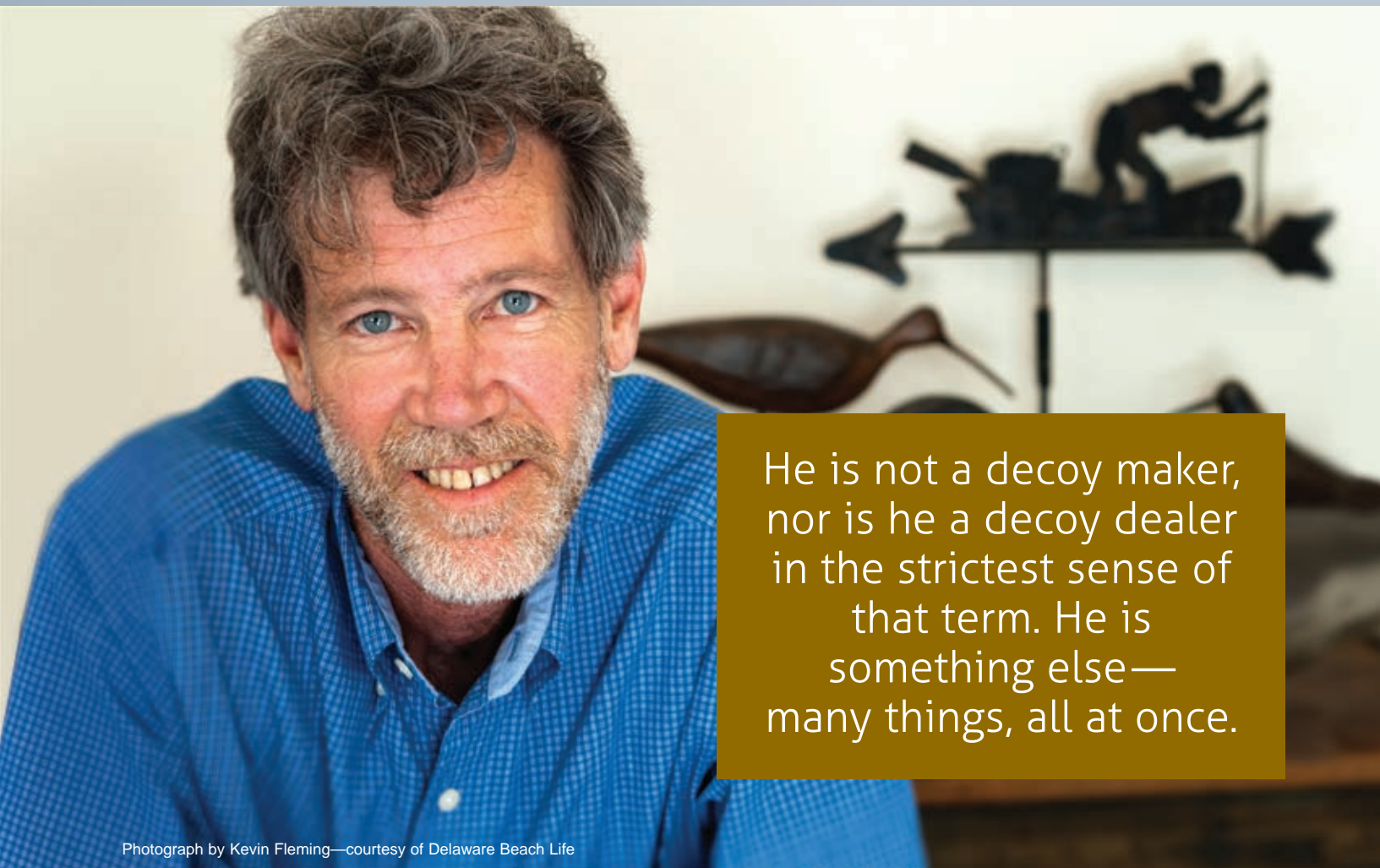


At a recent decoy show in Maryland, in a room filled with talented carvers, longtime dealers and the collectors who patronize them, one man sits quietly but confidently behind his table.

It is a scene repeated at shows all across the country, held all throughout the year. He is not a decoy maker, nor is he a decoy dealer in the strictest sense of that term. He is something else—many things, all at once. But the story of how he came to sit so naturally among all these thousands of wooden ducks, and to interact so seamlessly with people of every stripe—millionaires and working-class heroes, hedge fund managers and hotel managers, twenty-somethings and nonagenarians—is fascinating and surprising to say the least. For his was a most unusual journey and one that, in so many ways, was completely unexpected.

Joseph Francis Engers was born on October 20, 1953 in Baltimore, the oldest of five boys and a girl. He grew up there, attending a Catholic high school in the city,





He is not a decoy maker, nor is he a decoy dealer in the strictest sense of that term. He is something else—many things, all at once.

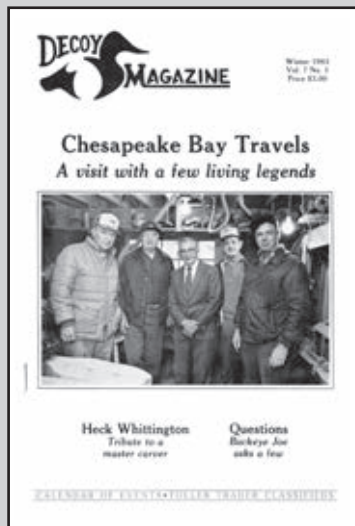
Photograph by Kevin Fleming—courtesy of Delaware Beach Life



A treasured specimen from Joe's collection: a sleeping canvasback hen by R. Madison Mitchell circa 1930s.

and developing a love for his local sports teams. He graduated from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County earning a Bachelor's Degree in American Studies with an emphasis on American History. Little did he know at the time just how relevant and useful that degree would one day be to his chosen profession.

When he graduated from college Joe, as family and friends call him, was working at a local bakery, a job he started while still in high school. It was a good job and he enjoyed the flexibility, but he soon realized that he didn't want a career that required working through the night, all night, every night. So, after seven years he tendered his resignation to the great disappointment of his boss. While



LEFT: The cover of the winter 1983 issue featured Havre de Grace carvers Capt. Harry Jobes, Paul Gibson, R. Madison Mitchell, Clarence "Titbird" Bauer, and Jim Pierce.

RIGHT: The cover of the March/April 2007 issue featured the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.



still working at the bakery, Joe bought a decent camera and began pursuing photography as a hobby. One of his brothers ran the local Little League baseball program and through that connection, he began taking team photos. Not long after, one of the coaches asked if Joe would help him produce a league newsletter, with action photos and recaps of the games. The pair, along with another friend, eventually started a monthly paper called The

Catonsville Sports Leader, which marked Joe's first foray into publishing. A local newspaper soon hired all three to run the sports department for two of their growing publications.

In 1978, two entrepreneurs were starting a weekly entertainment tabloid in Ocean City, Maryland called *Oceana Magazine*. They visited the paper Joe worked for to learn how to do layout and production. He must have made a great

impression on them, because within a year of their meeting, Joe was invited to join their staff as photo editor. He relocated to Ocean City just before the summer season, a move many people would love, but for Joe, it was all business. He was never a fan of the beach, but the publishers promised him an equity stake if the business was successful, which was all the motivation he needed.

The paper's editor was a young man named Jeff Williams, who Joe had never met before, but seeing as they shared responsibility for editorial content, they developed a solid working relationship and soon became fast friends. One day that summer, Jeff received a telephone call from his step-father, decoy-maker Captain Harry Jobes, who told him about a decoy newsletter called *Decoy World*, that was coming up for sale. Its publisher, Clarke Reed, no longer wanted to put it out, and was actively seeking a buyer. Captain Harry asked Jeff if he was interested and Jeff, in turn, asked Joe if he would help. Joe figured there would be no harm in taking on another publishing business venture, and he readily accepted the opportunity. He remembers that his first question to Jeff was, "What exactly is a decoy?"

Joe was soon immersed in all things decoys, and he quickly came to appreciate the variety, quality and historical significance of the carvings he was encountering. Joe and Jeff published their first issue in the Fall of 1979 and they exhibited that year at the Easton Waterfowl Festival. They placed a small stack of the current issue and a pad of subscription forms on Captain Harry's table. It wasn't much of a display, but it was a start. Over the weekend, Joe got a crash course in newsletter marketing and subscriber relations, carefully cataloging all the feedback he was hearing. He had a lot of ideas swimming around in his head, but one important suggestion he made was that they should change the name. And so, with the Winter 1980 issue, *Decoy Magazine* was officially born.

Joe and Jeff eventually bought out their other partners in their original newspaper venture, and so with that business providing a steady income, he didn't actively travel to decoy shows too far away to pro-



L TO R: Phil Ryser, Chad Tragakis, and Joe Engers hold some prized decoys from the J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest judging at the 2014 Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival.

mote his new magazine. Instead, he used this time to learn more about decoys and more about making sure he could produce and get a new issue in the mail each quarter. Much to their good fortune, pioneer collector Bill Purnell lived close by in Ocean City (Jeff had worked for him at his hotel when he was younger), and that connection led to frequent invitations to his home to study and photograph decoys, and it led to useful introductions to other notable collectors and collections. As Joe remembers, their connection to Bill sure helped fill a lot of pages in those first few years. He also says that he's always been appreciative of Harry Jobes and his late wife Helen (Jeff's mother), who not only made it all possible with that initial phone call to Jeff, but who were also very supportive in many ways during the early years.

Growing up, Joe would spend his summers working at a horse farm with his grandparents just 10 miles outside of Havre de Grace, the decoy capital of the world. And he vividly remembers seeing the seemingly endless flocks of geese making their way north and south on their annual spring and fall migrations. But he never knew anything about this fascinating aspect of American folk art. He continued to learn and his appreciation for the history of decoys and their strong connection to his home state continued to grow. Then, in 1983, Jackson Parker began contributing regular auction reports to the magazine, providing an important perspective on the economics and dynamics of the decoy market. This aspect of the decoy world fascinated Joe and gave him yet another dimension to study, analyze and address through the magazine.

In 1985, after being rebuffed several times, a large firm, Chesapeake Publishing, made Joe and his business partners an offer to buy their small newspaper, *Oceana*—it was an offer too good to refuse. Joe was hired back to serve as publisher for the next two years during the transition, but for the first time in a long time, he had a chance to pause and reflect on what he wanted to do next. It was at this point that he took a long, hard look at the little quarterly magazine he was publishing on decoys. Was there a future in it? Could he grow it into a viable

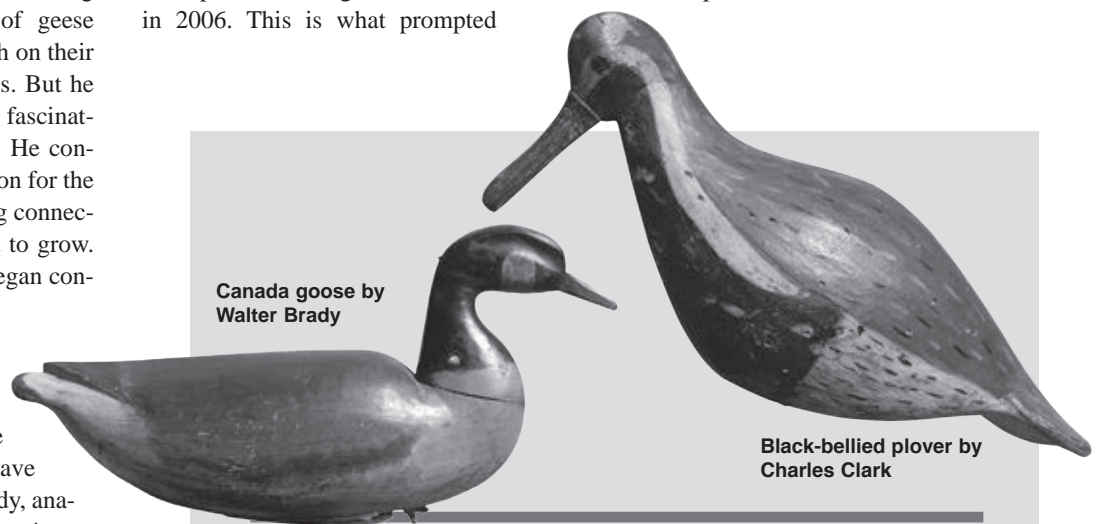
business? Would there be interest and more subscribers? After some research and deliberation, he decided the answer to these questions was a resounding “yes!”

His first realization was that if *Decoy Magazine* was to become a true magazine serving the needs and interests of the growing market of collectors, it would need to be published in a larger format, with an expanded page count and with more color. He also realized he would need to get out and promote it, far and wide, and begin attending decoy shows across the country. In 1986, he took the first steps in this exciting but unknown new direction. There were now 16 pages of color in the 48 page magazine. Looking back, he admits there was a lot of uncertainty—he was headed for uncharted territory.

By this time, Jeff had established other business interests and Joe bought out his share of *Decoy Magazine*. One of Jeff's ventures was a jewelry store in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, which Joe helped him open and manage until it closed in 2006. This is what prompted

Joe's move to nearby Lewes, Delaware in 1988, where he still lives today.

Just a few months before his move to Lewes, Joe received a call from publishers in New York City who were putting together a coffee table book on decoys. They hoped that the publisher of *Decoy Magazine* could help them acquire photos of quality decoys from all the major hunting regions of the country. He did more than that, spending the better part of 1988 traveling the country, sometimes alone and sometimes with a photographer, taking pictures of some of the top collections in the world. Joe was named General Editor of the project, which of course was the acclaimed *Great Book of Wildfowl Decoys*. When the book was released in 1989, it gave *Decoy Magazine* an enhanced reputation and greater status in the decoy collecting world. Most importantly, it gave Joe an opportunity to meet many of the nation's top collectors, and an opportunity to recruit some of the top writers as contributors to the



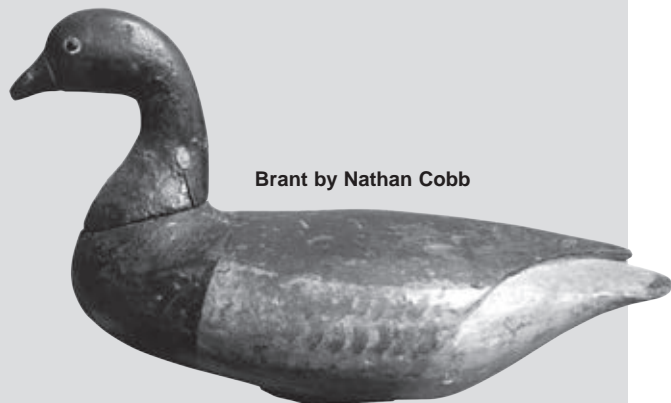
Canada goose by
Walter Brady

Black-bellied plover by
Charles Clark

Joe was soon immersed in all things decoys, and he quickly came to appreciate the variety, quality and historical significance of the carvings he was encountering.



Yellowlegs by Charles Sumner Bunn



Brant by Nathan Cobb



Preening eider hen by Gus Wilson

“Joe bought a magazine, and it transformed him into one of America’s most noted decoy personalities.”

magazine, many of whom still contribute articles to this day.

Thinking back to the very first story he submitted, Joe’s friend and long-time *Decoy Magazine* contributor Jim Trimble remembers that, “At that point in time, there was no internet with e-mail attachment submissions or digital photos. Stories were prepared in manuscript form and were mailed in for acceptance. Photos were hard copy photos, and I was assured by Joe that it was not a problem as he was also a photographer. We met the summer of 1987 for the photo shoot in his makeshift office above a Fenwick Island, Delaware hardware store. As I unpacked boxes of decoys, he calmly walked over to his desk, and knocked a roll of brown paper off his desk, that was taped to the table, and unrolled to the floor. He explained that this was the backdrop as he set up a pair of umbrella lights.”

The experience of working on the *Great Book of Wildfowl Decoys* gave Joe the confidence to move into book publishing, alongside publication of the magazine.

To date, *Decoy Magazine* has published a wide array of original and re-issued books, including *Decoys of the Susquehanna Flats*, *Chesapeake Bay Decoys*, *Mason Decoys*, *Canvas Decoys of North America*, *Carteret Waterfowl Heritage*, *Chance*, *Ira D. Hudson and Family*, *Lloyd J. Tyler*, *Wildfowler Decoys*, and *The Stevens Brothers*. The latest book, on Maumee Bay, Ohio decoys, has just gone to press.

With so much exposure to decoys, including a chance to handle some of

the finest examples in the world, it was probably only a matter of time before Joe became the dedicated and passionate collector he is today. With the sale of his newspaper in 1986, he finally had a bit of money to work with and decided to start buying some quality decoys. He had dozens of birds by this time, but as he jokes, nothing that he would admit to owning today.

By 1988, he began to focus on what are now the two favorite parts of his collection—Chesapeake Bay area decoys and East Coast shorebirds. Mort Hanson’s Virginia shorebird collection was to be sold at auction in October of that year. Joe was eager to leave that sale with a prize, but time after time, he came up short. Bill Purnell saw Joe bidding unsucces-

fully and the next day, he brought a box of choice shorebirds to the sale for Joe to examine—he bought one of them, a Cobb Island curlew that he still owns today. But he acquired his favorite shorebird about a year later, and it was just by sheer luck. Joe was checking into the Atlantic Budget Inn in Easton on his way to setting up at the Waterfowl Festival. As he was unlocking the motel door, dealer Steve O’Brien walked out of the room next door carrying a shopping bag. Joe inquired about its contents and it contained some shorebird consignments that Steve had just received. The first bird out of the bag was a big, fat black-bellied plover by Charles Clark in perfect original paint. Joe was delighted to add it to his growing collection, where it remains a centerpiece.

Other favorites that he's acquired over the years include a Canada goose by Walter Brady, a black duck by Robert Freirich, a Nathan Cobb brant, a Gus Wilson preening eider hen, a Charles Sumner Bunn yellowlegs, and an early sleeping canvasback hen by Madison Mitchell. What makes them special to Joe is that each bird has a memorable story that accompanies their purchase. His most recent acquisition is a redhead drake by James Best of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, which was in the collection of his late friend Ed Johnston. The connection to Ed makes it a very special bird to Joe.

When Joe and Jeff initially acquired *Decoy World*, there were two file card boxes with the names and addresses of fewer than 200 previous subscribers. "We had yet to receive a check from any of them," Joe remembers. But with a lot of effort, in less than ten years, subscribership had grown to nearly 900. Circulation peaked in the early 2000s at about 2,800 copies. Today, they distribute about 2,500 per issue, which includes subscribers in every state, Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

Having been on the decoy circuit full time for more than 25 years now, attending shows in all parts of the country as well as Canada, Joe has been able to meet thousands of collectors. He's personally shaken hands with more of his subscribers than probably any other publisher in the world, something that Joe is very proud of. The best part of all, however, is that he's made more friends than he could begin to add up. For Joe, the decoy community has truly become an extended family.

At many shows, Joe often sets up with his long-time friend, collector and broker Dick McIntyre, who vividly remembers the day he first met Joe more than three decades ago. "In 1981, Bobby Richardson, Henry Fleckenstein, and I were returning from a Bourne auction in New England. Unloading our vehicle in Henry's driveway, Joe drove up and introduced himself as the new publisher of *Decoy World*, a magazine he had just purchased from Clarke Reed. In our ensuing 20 minute conversation, it was pretty clear that Joe didn't know anything about decoys! 34 years year," jokes Dick, "Joe is beginning to catch on. Today, he travels to more organized decoy shows, auctions, and club functions than any collector since Bill Mackey died. Joe bought a magazine, and it transformed him into one of America's most noted decoy personalities."

Friend and longtime *Decoy Magazine* contributor Donna Tonelli says that, "working with Joe has always been a pleasure, and I have developed a great respect for all he has done to support the decoy collecting fraternity. I've lost count of how many decoy shows and auctions he attends each year where he

BY C. JOHN SULLIVAN, JR.

MEMORIES OF *Decoy Magazine*

Looking back to a time before *Decoy Magazine*, I knew Clarke Reed when he was publishing his magazine, *Decoy World*. Clarke and Henry Fleckenstein sponsored a decoy show in Baltimore in 1974. It was called "The First Annual Greater Baltimore Decoy Collectors, Wildlife Art, and Gunners Show." It was to be just a few short years later that Clarke decided to sell his magazine.



John Sullivan (left) and Joe Engers at a show in 1991

The terms and conditions of the sale have been somewhat clouded over the years. Joe Engers and Jeff Williams were partners in the transaction. Jeff was Captain Harry Jobes' stepson. It was Harry who had heard that *Decoy World* was up for sale. The transaction was not for cash but for a group of Captain Harry's full size swan decoys. The details of how many swan were called for and

over what period of time they were to be made available have been lost over time. But ultimately the transaction was completed, and as they say the rest is history.

Joe Engers' accomplishments as the editor and publisher of *Decoy Magazine* are well known. *Decoy Magazine* is the bi-monthly epistle to followers of the wooden fowl. I know on a personal level it is the one periodical that I look forward to receiving in my post office box. Many times upon opening my box, I will walk out of the post office, climb into my vehicle, and read the entire issue before leaving the parking lot.

I have been fortunate to have worked with Joe on numerous articles and on my own Collector's Profile article. Working along with Joe as he edits and refines others' words is an example of his dedication to our passion. The professionalism and dignity of the magazine have brought a new level of respect to those of us who are passionate about our hobby.

I join with the thousands of subscribers and followers of *Decoy Magazine* in congratulating Joe Engers on his tremendous accomplishments and now this honor of being named Honorary Chairman of this—the 34th anniversary of the **Havre de Grace Decoy Museum's Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival**.

actively participates with show tables and room-to-room trading. His unbiased coverage in his editorials may have ruffled some feathers because he is not afraid to provide accurate coverage of any show or to give a voice to his readership. In a sense he has become a barometer of the decoy market.”

His late friend and longtime magazine contributor Jackson Parker was the first person who offered Joe advice on collecting, directing his attention to antique decoys and “schooling” him during the initial auction previews he attended. “Pick up and look at every one, he told me, and that’s how you’ll learn. He also counseled me about the importance of original paint and condition. When I once commented that I was attracted to Hurley Conklin decoys, he suggested they were ‘decorator decoys.’ He believed it was best to collect decoys from the ‘Golden Age’ of waterfowling, as they have historical as well as aesthetic value.”

That early advice stuck with Joe, whose approach to collecting is to buy good examples of decoys that you like. It is advice he readily shares with new collectors today. “Don’t buy something that you have to make an excuse for,” he says. “If it’s a good decoy and you put it under your arm and walk around a decoy show, someone will ask if it’s for sale. That’s what you want to buy. I’ve never considered buying decoys as spending money. It’s like buying a savings bond. I can point to it and say here’s the money and sell it if I need to get it back. Taking a two-week ski trip to Utah is spending money. Buying a new pickup truck is spending money. And that’s the advice I give new collectors—no matter what price range they find comfortable.”

Perhaps not surprisingly though, Joe also encourages every new collector to become a true student of decoys. “This way,” he explains, “they don’t have to rely entirely on the kindness of strangers, or other collectors. Subscribe to *Decoy Magazine*, buy books and back issues

that serve your area of interest, read and study the auction catalogs—and nowadays, you don’t even have to buy them any more because they’re all available on the Internet. Go to shows and auctions. Pick up the decoys and actually look at them and ask questions. At the shows, you can converse with knowledgeable dealers, most of whom want to work with educated collectors. The auction previews are incredible opportunities—you get to handle decoys from all price ranges, and begin to get an understanding of value. Once you’ve looked at and studied three dozen Ira Hudson black ducks, you start to get an

the Sotheby’s auction of Jim McCleery’s collection in New York City. We attended the terrific seminars that preceded the sale, were among a small group of collectors who were invited to attend the family banquet the night before the auction in Sotheby’s private ballroom, and we got to watch them sell \$11 million worth of decoys during the two-day sale.” One of Joe’s greatest decoy disappointments, however, occurred during that same January 2000 sale, when in spite of bidding as much as the cost of a European luxury sedan, he was unsuccessful in adding the incredible Gus Wilson eider

with the mussel in its mouth to his collection. “But man, was it exciting!” he remembers with a grin.

The constant travel can be tough at times, but Joe understands that his attendance at shows is one of the most important aspects of the job. It’s important to promote the magazine to potential new subscribers, but there is also the aspect of what he refers to as “missionary work”—promoting the joys

of decoy collecting and providing new enthusiasts with a comfort zone. Getting into decoys, like any collectible field, can be overwhelming, so he’s happy to help new collectors navigate the hobby and realize that they really can do it. However, perhaps the most important part of participating in shows is that it allows Joe to share a real-time, first-hand report, account and analysis of the decoy market, both through the economic and social aspects of the hobby. As the magazine of record for the decoy collecting community, *Decoy Magazine* is the only publication that provides that, and Joe takes great pride in his personal involvement, not just as a publisher but also as a collector.

Running what is largely a one-person show, there are lots of balls that Joe must constantly juggle, many ongoing pressures and challenges, and some parts of

“I have developed a great respect for all he has done to support the decoy collecting fraternity... In a sense he has become a barometer of the decoy market.”

understanding of the good ones. If you get a chance to visit with other collectors, don’t pass up the opportunity. Never be embarrassed to ask for advice. And most of all, be patient and enjoy the journey, after all, a hobby is supposed to be fun.”

Joe’s friend and longtime *Decoy Magazine* contributor Allen Linkhorst agrees, saying:

“If you are a collector, acquiring vintage or contemporary decoys is indeed a thrill. But, that thrill is greatly enhanced when you can read about how your decoy was made, information on the carver, and where your decoy was used for hunting. Joe’s contribution to decoy collecting and the stories he publishes are keeping the tradition alive.”

When asked to share one of the most exciting events he was able to witness on behalf of the magazine, Joe says that “by far, it was the opportunity to attend

the business he wishes he could avoid altogether. “What I really do enjoy is editing a good manuscript,” he says. As Jim Trimble puts it, “the hardest part for any writer, after doing all the research, is to balance the ‘who, what, when, where, why and how’ of the story with creative flair and submit it all in a proper form. Joe wears two hats—besides publisher, he is also editor, tweaking the storyline for grammar, without rewriting the story, and cutting for fit. In my experience, it has always been a good natured back and forth of editorial changes, with an accord always struck. The reward for me and for all of Joe’s regular contributors has been seeing stories that we researched and wrote come alive in *Decoy Magazine*.”

Joe wholeheartedly agrees, pointing to the “many successful collaborations we’ve had that have resulted in some of the best articles that we’ve published. Some that come to mind include the recent article on A.B. Vance of Philadelphia, identifying the maker of the ‘Mr. X’ decoys, and the one on Charles Sumner Bunn. We’ve also had some terrific cover stories on Chesapeake Bay decoys. And for 35 years, we’ve yet to run out of topics to write about, so the challenge is to keep that success rate going forward.” Joe believes that the real mission of the magazine is to help keep the interest in decoys alive. “It’s incredibly satisfying when you open up an envelope with a renewal check inside, accompanied by a note that expresses, ‘We love the magazine,’ or ‘Keep up the good work.’ It’s humbling to know how much pleasure the magazine has provided to so many people.”

Looking ahead, Joe thinks that it’s hard to make predictions about the future of the decoy market. “There’s always the fear that new collectors won’t pick up where we left off,” he says, “but I don’t doubt that their desirability as great examples of

American folk sculpture will continue for future generations. People do worry that as some of the great collections hit the auction block—and some great ones will in the next ten years—that there won’t be enough new collectors to absorb them and



There is also the aspect of what he refers to as “missionary work”—promoting the joys of decoy collecting and providing new enthusiasts with a comfort zone.

that the prices could fall. My response, as a collector, is that’s not the worst thing in the world as I’ll be able to afford better birds. And so far as what they’re worth when I punch my ticket, that’s not my concern as I will have enjoyed them tremendously over the years and they will have given me joy on a daily basis. It’s hard to ask for much more than that.”

Looking back, Joe can think of a lot of things he might have done differently, but having come into decoys almost by accident, and without any expectation that they would actually become the focus of his lifelong career, he has absolutely no

regrets. “The first ten years I was practically groping to get my feet firmly on the ground and comprehend just what this hobby was all about,” he explains. “But I’ll never regret the decision to try and make decoys my business. They’ve been very good to me and I feel very appreciative that they have been such a large part of my life. I’d be happy to do it all over again.”

Joe is a conscientious caretaker of the decoys in his collection, but more than that, he is a leading steward of our hobby, a custodian of its legacy and a caretaker for its future. Through Joe’s vision, hundreds of cover stories have clarified, corrected and expanded upon previously published research. Hundreds more features, many uncovering never before published information, have vastly improved and increased the scholarship and available literature. In this regard, having led the chronicling of America’s waterfowling past for the last 35 years, Joe Engers has had arguably as great an impact on our hobby as Joel Barber or Bill Mackey. His name belongs in the company of these two men, and alongside Hal Sorenson, Adele Earnest and George Starr.

“I don’t know that any of my individual accomplishments would be considered great,” he says humbly, “but I’m proud of what we’ve been able to accomplish, especially over such a long period of time, which is sometimes hard for me to even imagine.” Joe tries hard to avoid the limelight, and regardless of how well they are deserved, honors and profiles make him uncomfortable. He is happy to talk publicly and at great length about the importance of decoys and their rightful place in American history and folk art whenever asked, but he is just as happy to advance our hobby from behind the scenes. He is quietly impactful, unassuming but influential—a singular enthusiast with an infectious optimism, and a far reaching and wide ranging presence. And he’s still got a lot more to do. ■



HONORARY CHAIRMEN

We've supplied some... see how many other signatures you can get at the Festival!



1982

R. Madison Mitchell

Havre de Grace, Maryland

1901-1993

R. Madison Mitchell

R. Madison Mitchell was one of the most renowned and prolific decoy makers ever known. Steve Ward, another celebrated carver, described Mr. Mitchell as making "the best canvasback decoy on the Chesapeake Bay." Waterfowl historians estimate that Mr. Mitchell made over 100,000 finely crafted decoys. Mr. Mitchell left a large footprint in terms of his surviving decoys, the Decoy Museum, the R. Madison Endowment Trust, the Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival, and the countless decoy makers who learned the "Mitchell style" in his shop. With the assistance of an old duplicating lathe, R. Madison Mitchell changed forever the design and production of Upper Chesapeake Bay decoys. He, more so than anybody else, made Havre de Grace "The Decoy Capital of the World".



1983

Paul Gibson

Havre de Grace, Maryland

1902-1985

Paul Gibson

"Carving decoys here is like the water; it's almost the same as your religion. It's what you were brought up in. It's how you were raised." This is how the second Honorary Chairman of the Festival described the relationship between Havre de Grace residents and decoys. All of his decoys were hand-made until he bought Mr. Mitchell's old lathe. Gibson's sturdy decoys have chunky features and heads of white pine. He carved in the "Havre de Grace style", but the bodies and tails of his birds are thicker than usual and have shorter necks. Gibson could carve any species, but was locally famous for his swans.

Past HONORARY CHAIRMEN



1984

Charles Bryan

Middle River, Maryland

1920–2008

Charles Bryan

Charlie Bryan was born in Baltimore County, Maryland. He took a liking to hunting for ducks and geese and became an avid water fowler on the Susquehanna Flats. At the age of 36, he began to carve decoys and make bird silhouettes. When he first started making decoys, he had never seen anybody do it. He later met Madison Mitchell and eventually made other carving friends in Havre de Grace. Over the next fifty years, Charlie became a skilled and well-known carver in the Havre de Grace style.

1985

No Honorary Chairman



1986

Robert "Bob" Litzenberg

Elkton, Maryland

1910–1997

Robert H. Litzenberg

Bob Litzenberg started with a love of hunting. He was raised four miles from the Elk River near Elkton and began hunting in the Depression era. During his lifetime, he hunted ducks by bushwhacking, from a sinkbox, and from a duck blind. As with most people at that time, he didn't have much money. If he was going to hunt, he needed to make his own decoys. He eventually met and befriended noted carver Will Heverin who hand chopped his own bodies and carved his own heads with a knife. Litzenberg followed suit and never did use a machine to make a decoy.



1987

Charles "Speed" Joiner, Jr.

Chestertown, Maryland

1921–2015

Charlie Joiner

The decoy world lost another master on March 13th, just as this issue of The Canvasback was being finalized. Charlie's nickname of "Speed" is usually attributed to his deft skill at carving and painting; however, he claimed that he inherited it from his father and that its real origin is unknown. Speed began decoy making as a teenager and is regarded as one of the most interesting and important carvers of the Upper Chesapeake Bay. In his own words, "I've carved a few ducks". With over 40,000 working decoys and an unknown number of miniature and half size decoys to his credit, he considered the canvasback to be his carving specialty. Charlie was a long-time friend of legendary carvers R. Madison Mitchell and Steve and Lem Ward whose style of carving and painting inspired his own. Speed has now passed on to join the pantheon of legendary carvers and decoy artists. He was a Charter Member of the Decoy Museum and one of our most devoted supporters from the beginning. We are diminished by Speed's passing, but we were greatly enriched by that part of his life that he shared with us. He will never be forgotten.

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HONORARY CHAIRMEN



1988

Captain Harry Jobes

Aberdeen, Maryland

Born 1936

Born in Havre de Grace, Harry Jobes spent considerable time in the shops of decoy makers Charles Nelson Barnard and Jim Currier. After Barnard died, he worked for Madison Mitchell for 28 years and says he was influenced the most by his painting and carving. Like his fellow carvers, making decoys was an avocation. He spent much of his life working on research vessels and piloting a patrol boat at Aberdeen Proving Ground. He is easily spotted at shows and other events in his signature outfit of Panama hat, suspenders, duck pants, and hand knitted "Captain Jobes" sweaters.



1989

**Captain William E.
"Bill" Collins**

Centreville, Maryland

Born 1949

Born at Perry Point and raised in Perryville, Bill Collins began hunting and repairing decoys at an early age under the encouragement and tutelage of his older brother. Not long after graduating from high school, Madison Mitchell hired him for a job in his funeral home and then informed him that they would be working in the decoy shop between funeral duties. In 1981, Collins bought the Mitchell shop and opened it as Upper Chesapeake Bay Decoys. In 1987, Collins sold Mitchell's lathe, machine tools, and fixtures to the Decoy Museum, and the shop was reconstructed on the Museum property.



1990

Captain Roger Urie

Rock Hall, Maryland

1933-2002



At thirteen, Roger Urie began painting and making decoy bodies and heads for Captain John Glen, his next-door neighbor. His father, Captain Jess Urie, also started to make decoys, and Roger showed him how to mix colors. They used Glen's patterns initially and later designed their own with a flat bottom. In 1955, Roger built "a decoy machine", and all the bodies were turned on the lathe after that. In 1967, the Uries started to make miniature decoys. Urie decoys were all signed by Captain Jess Urie until his death in 1978. Following that, Roger made only miniature decoys.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

FESTIVAL 2015

EXHIBITORS



Havre de Grace Middle School, Lewis Street



Havre de Grace Activity Center, Lewis Street

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110

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173

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144

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 jsullivans@verizon.net



067, 072

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum *Spring Raffle* 2015

First Prize:

\$500

Second Prize:

Pair of Miniature
Canvasbacks by Charles
"Speed" Joiner



Third Prize:
Common Merganser
Drake by Jim Pierce



Fourth Prize:
Ring-necked Drake
by John Meredith



Fifth Prize:
Mallard Drake by
Capt. Harry Jobes

Winners drawn at 3:30p.m.
Sunday May 3rd, during the
34th Annual Havre de Grace
Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival
at the Havre de Grace
Middle School. You do not
need to be present to win.

TICKETS

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- \$40.00 for 10

*Tickets are available at the
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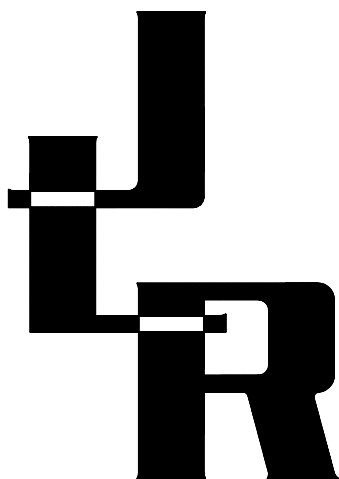


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HONORARY CHAIRMEN



1991

James Pierce

Havre de Grace, Maryland
Born 1934

Jim Pierce was raised two blocks from Paul Gibson's shop, and his grandfather lived next door to Bob McGaw's. He and his friend Harry Jobes visited Madison Mitchell's shop where Jim worked doing "a little bit of everything". He later set up his own shop where he and his son Charlie continue to work and train younger men, as Mitchell trained him. Jim describes his style of carving as the Flats Connection: "The body and head are patterned after a Holly, and I use McGaw and Heverin painting." In 1980, he agreed to help some friends put together a decoy festival in Havre de Grace using the profits to start a decoy museum. The first Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival was held in 1981. When the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum opened in 1986, Jim was named president.



1992

James A. "Jim" Currier

Havre de Grace, Maryland
1886-1971



Jim Currier is one of the most prominent carvers of the Susquehanna Flats, widely known for navigating the Susquehanna Flats in his 40-foot boat to serve the Northern "sports" who came down to hunt canvasbacks. He carved his decoys in a workshop behind his house, working alone. Bodies were hand chopped and finished with a drawknife. Most of his decoys portray low head or contented positions, but with some high-necked canvasbacks. The distinctive heads and feather-like painting set Currier's decoys apart from others. Very few of his decoys are left in the area.



1993

Bill Schauber

Chestertown, Maryland
Born 1938

Allan Schauber

Chestertown, Maryland
Born 1957

The Schaubers are father and son, but they do not make decoys together. They have similar painting styles, but father Bill focuses on full-size decoys while Allan, who grew up watching his father make decoys, produces miniatures and half-sizes. Learning from his father was somewhat complicated by the fact that Allan is left-handed and his father is right-handed. Bill and Allan both claim to be strongly influenced by their mentor Charlie Joiner, and they all three span the transition from working decoys to the "slick" decorative decoys so prized today.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

8th Annual SUSQUEHANNA FLATS *Vintage Hunting & Fishing Collectibles Show*

by Jim Trimble

This show kicks-off the new year of multiple decoy shows for the mid-Atlantic waterfowl collector. It was held January 24th at the Level VFC's fire hall located just outside the waterfront community of Havre de Grace, Maryland. Show proceeds benefitted the fire company and the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. Table count was up from years past with approximately 100 tables filled with vintage hunting and oyster/fishing stuffs that greeted approximately 600 paying visitors who passed through the front door. Raffle item winners were announced periodically throughout the day. Year after year, this show always seems to face a weather event and this year was no different with

the eager collector facing slippery roads and slush conditions. Show organizers Pat Vincenti and Chuck Usilton are seasoned decoy collectors, who, along with their respective wives, run a good show with emphasis on vintage. Vincenti also serves as president of the

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. Vincenti and Usilton also worked as vendors with nice offerings of old upper Chesapeake Bay decoys.

The venue is large, well lit and with plenty of passage way for the large crowd that browsed, chatted and purchased as they worked their way through the numerous rows of tables. A large contingent of the Potomac Decoy Collectors' group attended as they were meeting late that afternoon at the museum to shut down their teal display, and open their new bufflehead display of approximately 60 dippers, comprised of both vintage and contemporary birds.

Carver/historian Jim Pierce along with son Charles displayed a good mix of old Chesapeake Bay canvasbacks from a variety of makers; all of them pre-sold for delivery at the show. The affable senior Pierce is always a favorite go-to individual to opine and discuss upper Chesapeake Bay



Maryland vendor/collector John Sullivan holding one of his decoys from the C.A. Post rig.

waterfowling history....and from time to time, it looked like he was holding court with small crowds of collectors interested in what he had to say. Zeb & son Josh Barfield were on hand with displays of decoys for their forthcoming Sportsman auction to be held February 27/28, on Virginia's Eastern

Shore. We were pleased to see Maryland collector John Collier return as a vendor this year, and as usual, his table did not disappoint. Waterfowl historian, collector and book author John Sullivan displayed four of five flat-bottomed canvasbacks, some with keels, some flat-bottomed wing ducks, from the Post rig. C.A. Post was a wealthy New Yorker from the turn of two-centuries back, who was an original member of the upper bay's Spesutia Island Rod & Gun Club. For the most part, show vendors were pleased with the buying crowd. Many/most of these same vendors will participate in the East Coast Decoy Collector's forthcoming April 10 & 11 show. ■

Maryland collector Rob Knight found a large wooden wall hanger with finely painted mallards by early Pennsylvania wildlife artist George Wilmer Reinbold.

Maryland collectors/vendors (l to r) Chuck Usilton, Charles Pierce and Pennsylvania collector/vendor Jeremy Houser.



Maryland collector Art Oertel talking ducks with Maryland collector/vendor Pat Vincenti.



Maryland collector/vendor John Collier, besides old Chesapeake ducks, had a nice assortment of contemporary shorebirds.



Virginia vendor/collector Randy Futty with a table full of Maryland decoys. Futty, the grandson of an early Cecil County market gunner, returns to this show each year.



HONORARY CHAIRMEN

1994

Robert F. McGaw, Jr.

Havre de Grace, Maryland
1879–1958



Born on Spesutie Island, Bob McGaw and his wife moved to Havre de Grace in 1919 and set up two decoy shops behind their house. In 1929, he bought an old rifle-stock duplicating lathe and was reputedly the first local carver to use such a machine in the production of decoys. That lathe was later sold to Madison Mitchell and then to Captain Bill Collins who sold it to the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. McGaw's painting style reflects the influences of Sam Barnes and the Holly family and is said by C. John Sullivan to be "among the most realistic to ever float on the Susquehanna Flats."



1995

J. Evans McKinney

Elkton, Maryland
1913–2000



Evans McKinney was a native of Elkton where he began both gunning and decoy collecting in 1927. McKinney met and made friends with master decoy maker Will Heverin. The hours he spent observing his mentor came in very handy, and McKinney decided in 1944 to try his own hand at it. He typically hand chopped his decoys, except for a period in the early fifties when he traded blocks of wood to Madison Mitchell for turned bodies. McKinney put together a collection of over 500 decoys and published his signature book "Decoys of the Susquehanna Flats and Their Makers" in 1987.



1996

Harry V. Shourds, II

Linwood, New Jersey
Born 1929

The first Honorary Chairman from outside Maryland, Shourds is a third generation carver and the grandson of the noted carver Harry V. Shourds (1861-1920) of Tuckerton, New Jersey. He started carving as a teenager in his father's decoy shop observing how it was done by a man who was considered by many to be the finest decoy maker in the New Jersey. Harry carves a classic hollow Barnegat Bay working decoy, like those of his father and grandfather, hand-chopping bodies from western cedar. He also carves several species of shorebirds, some miniatures, and songbirds.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

FESTIVAL 2015

EXHIBITORS



Havre de Grace Middle School, Lewis Street



Havre de Grace Activity Center, Lewis Street

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M. E. Designs

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Walker Decoys

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Stan Zack

Forever Birds

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terizack1@verizon.net



Outside

HONORARY CHAIRMEN



1997

Ronald Rue

Cambridge, Maryland
1931–2005



Ron Rue made his first decoys as a teenager around 1948. His first decorative decoy was a merganser he made in 1953 or 1954. He was so proud of it he took it to Lem and Steve Ward of Crisfield, Maryland, which was the start of an enduring friendship. Their mentoring influenced his carving and painting. He carved most species of shorebirds and waterfowl, all hand chopped. Rue's carvings won many awards in the major East Coast contests, and he passed along his expertise by judging competitions or teaching others how to carve, which he enjoyed for over 30 years.



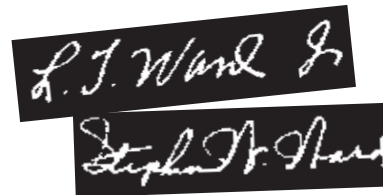
1998

Lem Ward

Crisfield, Maryland
1896–1984

Steve Ward

Crisfield, Maryland
1895–1976



The two Ward brothers, barbers by occupation, are regarded by many as the founders of this folk art form. It is said they produced more than 25,000 decoys and decorative birds. At first, carving decoys was just spare-time handiwork, but word got out and business began to grow. They never advertised except for a sign outside their shop saying "L.T. Ward & Bro.—Wildlife Counterfeiters in Wood." Steve did the carving, and Lem did the painting. The Ward Foundation in Salisbury, formed in their honor to exhibit their work, opened the Ward Museum in 1977. The Museum director at the time said, "Lem and Steve Ward were two of the most important men in American art history."



1999

Oliver "Tutsy" Lawson

Crisfield, Maryland
Born 1938

Tutsy Lawson began making decoys when he was ten or twelve, spending his spare time with his neighbors Lem and Steve Ward watching them carve and paint decoys. By the age of seventeen Lawson was earning good money carving and painting full size and miniature decoys. Tutsy works from nature, reference books, and bird skins. He carves waterfowl, shorebirds, upland game, and songbirds and, on occasion, crabs and other wildlife. His tools include a hatchet, chisels, and knives, but what sets him apart from most of his colleagues is his talent for painting.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37

THE 22ND ANNUAL R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust Banquet



The 2015 R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust banquet was held at the Bayou Restaurant on Friday, March 6th. Heavy snow Wednesday night and all day Thursday had us worried, but the Bayou Restaurant was packed with 250 loyal supporters who came from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia to make it a memorable event.

The Board of the Trust recognized many people for their valuable contributions, not just of money, but also of time and effort. The silent auction, live auction, and raffles drew generous participation, and a fun evening was enjoyed by all to

support a cause dear to everyone's heart.

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation by the Harford County Council and County Executive Barry Glassman of a Harford County Living Treasure award to Mr.

Mitchell's daughter and son, Madelyn Mitchell Shank and R. Madison Mitchell, Jr.

The Museum was also the grateful recipient of a generous \$4,200 cash donation from Delta Waterfowl and three very special gifts conveyed to the

Museum by the Endowment: a Charles Perdew Mallard Drake from Mike and Trudy Boxer, a pair of miniature Bob McGaw canvasbacks from Lawrason Sayre, and an 18th century powder horn from Katherine Johnson.

R. Madison Mitchell was not only one of the most famous and prolific decoy carvers of the past 200 years, he was also a driving force behind the creation of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum and the Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival, now in its 34th year, where he was recognized as the first Honorary Chairman.

He established the Endowment Trust before his death in 1993.





The R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust, a charitable corporation, was established by Mr. Mitchell to provide a permanent, long-range source of support to the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. The Trust exists solely to aid the

Decoy Museum's acquisition, interpretation, and preservation of decoys, waterfowl artifacts, and other appropriate projects. Mr. Mitchell's original goal was to raise \$50,000 in order to begin to give back to the Museum. He thought

that would take about seven years—but it only took three years. To date, the Trust has raised over \$1 million. Mr. Mitchell would be enormously gratified by the support given to his modest ambition.

The Endowment is vital to the future of the Decoy Museum, so thanks to everyone who contributed, attended, or otherwise helped make the banquet another successful fundraiser for both the Endowment and the Museum. ■



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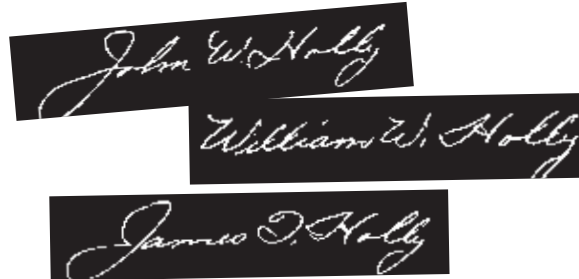
HONORARY CHAIRMEN

2000

The Holly Family

Havre de Grace, Maryland

John "Daddy" Holly (1818-1892);
William W. Holly (1847-1925);
James T. Holly (1849-1935);
and John W. Holly, jr. (1851-1927)



John "Daddy" Holly and his three sons were the innovators of the "Havre de Grace style" and made decoys in the tens of thousands. Daddy was making decoys by the early 1850s, and the Holly men worked closely together producing decoys from then well into the 20th century. Jim was a market gunner and made decoys for his use and for sale to local gunners. He refined his father's style, gaining a national reputation that placed him in the forefront of Upper Chesapeake makers. Chad Tragakis writes, "If Havre de Grace, Maryland, is indeed the 'Decoy Capital of the World', then its 'First Family' would have to be the Hollys."



2001

Charles Nelson Barnard

Havre de Grace, Maryland

1876-1958



Charles Nelson Barnard was taken out of school in the fifth grade to work on his sea-captain father's scow. There is no record of when he began carving, but it is believed that he worked alone on most of his decoys. His production probably consisted of only a few thousand pieces, and his work is in demand among collectors. He most enjoyed making miniature birds, some only an inch and a half long. His best-known works are his high neck canvasbacks. C. John Sullivan says, "Barnard birds achieved (better than any) the true look of a canvasback duck."



2002

Patrick Vincenti

Churchville, Maryland

Born 1954

Pat's family moved from New Jersey to Havre de Grace when he was a baby. In 1975, he went to work part-time in Madison Mitchell's decoy shop and set up his own shop in Churchville a year later. Pat began carving full-time in 1986 and was joined in 1987 by Captain Bill Collins, who described Vincenti as "the best painter of production decoys in the Upper Bay region." He turns out approximately 1200 decoys a year—mostly for collectors. Pat has long been a member of the Board of Directors of both the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum, currently serving as its President, and of the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust, currently serving as its Treasurer.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39



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HONORARY CHAIRMEN



2003

Ned Mayne

Vienna, Maryland

Born 1954

Ned Mayne is known for his decorative decoys, 75% of which are cork. He also has a reputation as a painter – his painting of a pair of black ducks was chosen for the first Delaware duck stamp. Ned began hunting with his father as a child and started carving because of his need for decoys. His interest in environmental issues now causes him to spend a lot of time in Dover, Delaware. Mayne has stopped hunting waterfowl because of steel shot regulations claiming, “It is a crippler of ducks and geese, and it is a sin to shoot them without killing cleanly.”



2004

Grayson Chesser

Jenkins Bridge, Virginia

Born 1947

Grayson Chesser is a carver and collector on Virginia’s Eastern Shore who acquired an interest in decoys at about age 12. He began carving seriously in 1976, and has carved full-time since 1984. Chesser carves hollow decoys designed to look as if they are old and hunted over even though most will never be on the water. He uses machinery to cut out the bodies, but finishes them with hand tools. Chesser has appeared on PBS, has judged Federal Duck Stamp competitions, has had decoy exhibitions at the Smithsonian, and co-authored a book titled “Making Decoys the Century-Old Way”.



2005

Jim Britton

Reedville, Virginia


Born 1934

Jim Britton carves “a hundred or so birds” per year in a workshop separate from his house near Reedville. His flat-bottomed birds are made to look like working decoys, but they are shaped and painted with the detail required for display. Knowing that his birds will most likely never go in the water, he gives more attention to detail and paint since he does not have to spend time on flotation or the placement of weights. Though he prefers diving ducks, Britton also carves “tippers”, herons, egrets, pelicans, and some songbirds.

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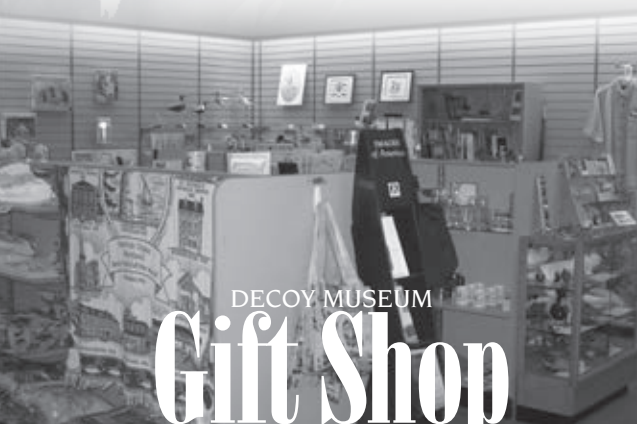

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HONORARY CHAIRMEN



2006

George Williams

Dover, Delaware

Born 1942

George Williams has been making decoys for about 40 years, mostly from shop space in his home. Like so many other decoy makers, he figured it would be cheaper to make his own gunning decoys. The bodies are cork and the heads and tails are cedar. George finds that cork carves faster, sits better in the water, and is easier to repair when it gets shot. He was inspired by Madison Mitchell, Roger Urie, and the Ward Brothers and makes over 150 decoys per year—"pretty much everything in the Atlantic flyway." He encourages younger carvers, preferring to "mentor rather than teach."



2007

Joseph Coudon of H

Perryville, Maryland

1860-1947



Joseph Coudon was a gentleman farmer and truly a renaissance man. He started carving birds and making decoys when he was still in his teens and created some of America's finest waterfowl art. Coudon's solid-body decoys—primarily canvasbacks—were typical of Cecil County style with flat bottoms and squat, undersized, compact bodies that slope gently downward into a broad tail. He made about 300-500 per year. Coudon is also widely accepted as the originator of the Chesapeake Bay-style folding silhouette decoy. They are wonderfully folky and a joy to behold.



2008

Bryon Bodt

Churchville, Maryland

Born 1963

Bryon Bodt began carving decoys as a teenager in 1977 and spent three years in the early 1980s as an apprentice to Havre de Grace decoy maker Jim Pierce. Bryon's present style is also patterned after R. Madison Mitchell, Paul Gibson, Charlie Bryan, and Bob McGaw. He and his father, Bernie, produce over 20 species of ducks, as well as geese, heron, and swans. Bryon is featured in the book "Upper Chesapeake Bay Decoys and Their Makers" and has displayed his decoys at many shows and festivals. His decoys have been selected as part of the Maryland Ducks Unlimited state art package several times.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

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We are grateful for the generous support
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HONORARY CHAIRMEN



2009

Bill Veasey

Elkton, Maryland

Born 1932

Bill Veasey got his start when his brother-in-law, an accomplished artist in his own right, insisted Bill meet the late Pennsylvania carver, Harry Waite. Bill works with students and teaches them the basics of carving a traditional hunting decoy. He has written and published fourteen books about carving and painting, and he has helped other authors get over two hundred additional books published. Exhibiting his unique working and decorative decoys is one of Bill's joys. He says, "The important thing is that we preserve this legacy." Bill currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Decoy Museum.



2010

Dave Walker

Havre de Grace, Maryland

Born 1958

Dave Walker began carving at fourteen. He would ride his bike to Jim Pierce's shop where he did the "dirty work" and learned from the bottom up. Dave also worked at the shop of R. Madison Mitchell and knew all the carvers who came through the doors to work or to talk and share. Dave says that each of the carvers "was a mentor in his own way." Charlie Joiner took Dave under his wing and showed him how to transition from working decoys to decorative decoys. He learned many secrets from Joiner who, in turn, had learned from the Ward Brothers. Dave is a past Director of the Decoy Museum.



2011

Thomas Humberstone

Skaneateles, New York

Born 1946

Tom Humberstone is from an area that is home to many migrating waterfowl. Tom started hunting in 1965 and became an avid waterfowler, collector, and carver. He carves in the style of the St. Lawrence River carvers and has produced many different species since 1975, preferring black ducks and canvasbacks. He was inducted into the NY State Outdoorsman Hall of Fame in 1995 and was honored by NY State Ducks Unlimited as Conservationist of the Year, 2010. He and his wife Betsy are great supporters of the Decoy Museum, the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust, and the Decoy Festivals.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

HONORARY CHAIRMEN



2012

Rob Leslie

Turnersville, New Jersey

Born 1947

Rob Leslie's passion for painting wildlife began in his native Wisconsin as a young boy growing up in a family of duck hunters. He began entering competitions in 1985 and won the Delaware Duck Stamp in 1986. Rob now has about 20 state duck stamps in his portfolio, including four for New Jersey and the first-ever stamp for Idaho. He likes to paint everything related to waterfowl. He says, "I think it is important to paint what you love to paint, not create art to cater to the market." He considers "the Havre de Grace Decoy Show a perfect match for me." We share the feeling!



Allen J. Fair

Havre de Grace, Maryland

Born 1934

Allen Fair is a prominent Havre de Grace entrepreneur who has been collecting for nearly 40 years. He says that you should collect what you like—what strikes your fancy. He has been a key supporter of the Decoy Museum since the earliest days and has been a driving force behind its healthy growth. Allen has served on the Museum Board in several positions, including president. He is dedicated to making Havre de Grace a great place to live, work, and play. Allen has helped to rekindle the pride of residents and to make the city a destination for visitors—The Decoy Capital of the World.



2013

John Meredith

Worton, Maryland

Born 1946

John Meredith is an Eastern Shoreman who has been both carving decoys and guiding hunters for over 50 years. He carved his first decoys when he was twelve. "Carving decoys has always been a part of me," says John. His flat-bottomed style is typical of Eastern Shore carvers, and he names the Ward brothers and Charlie Joiner as key influences. All of his decoys are hand chopped, and he is producing about 400 decoys annually. He also carves miniature decoys. John can be found in his shop in Worton seven days a week doing what he loves—creating gunning and decorative decoys and other wildlife art.



2014

Bob Jobes

Havre de Grace, Maryland

Born 1959

Bob Jobes is the quintessential Havre de Grace waterman and decoy carver. His shop is behind his family's home where his great-grandparents and grandparents once lived. As a kid, Bob helped his father, Capt. Harry, in R. Madison Mitchell's shop with other renowned carvers. He learned the beauty of ducks and geese from hunting, and decoy making challenged him to create that beauty in wood. Bob worked in his father's shop and then began working fulltime for Mr. Mitchell after finishing high school. However, decoy collecting has peaked and moved more upmarket, so in recent years Bob has shifted his focus to miniature decoys. ■

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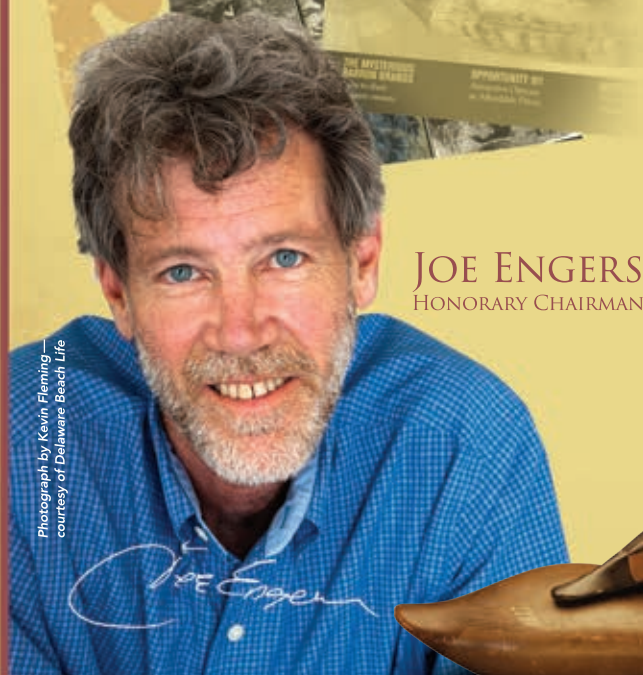
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Artists & Carvers

SATURDAY

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*Carving Competition
Community Groups*

SUNDAY

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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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Help us spread the word and fulfill our mission. A Decoy Museum membership provides financial support for museum exhibits and programming, as well as offering individuals special benefits and opportunities. All members receive a membership card, free admission year round, a subscription to *The Canvasback* magazine, invitations to special events, and discounts in the Gift Shop.



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MUSEUM NEWS

CURRENT EXHIBITS

- ▶ POTOMAC DECOY COLLECTOR'S ASSOCIATION BUFFLEHEAD EXHIBIT
- ▶ THE NEW DISPLAYS OF BOTH FULL-SIZE AND MINIATURE CANADA GEESE FROM THE COLLECTION OF C. JOHN SULLIVAN, JR.
- ▶ 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" EXHIBIT
- ▶ THE "WHAT IS A DECOY?" EXHIBIT
- ▶ AN EXHIBIT OF FACTORY DECOYS, A GIFT FROM DR. MORT KRAMER
- ▶ "POP" SAMPSON'S HOMEMADE DUPLICATING LATHE FOR MAKING MINIATURE DECOY BODIES
- ▶ COUDEN TEAL CARVED IN THE 1930S



- ▶ 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.



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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.

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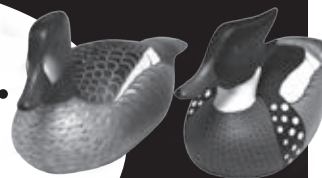
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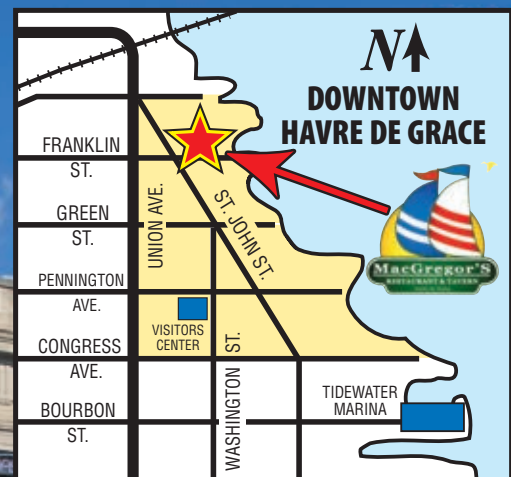
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