

The Canvasback

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM

Spring 2017
Vol. 27 No. 2

\$3.00

36TH ANNUAL

Decoy & Wildlife *Art Festival*



MAY 5-7 • 2017

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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 may be tax deductible.

FUNDED IN PART BY

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



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.

ON THE COVER

This issue of *The Canvasback* is the annual celebration of the **Havre de Grace Decoy & Wildlife Festival**, now in its 36th year.

The cover depicts a pair of green-winged teal that were made by this year's Honorary Chairman, Bill Hickson from Cordova in Talbot County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Find out more about Bill and the 2017 Decoy Festival in these pages.



can•vas•back

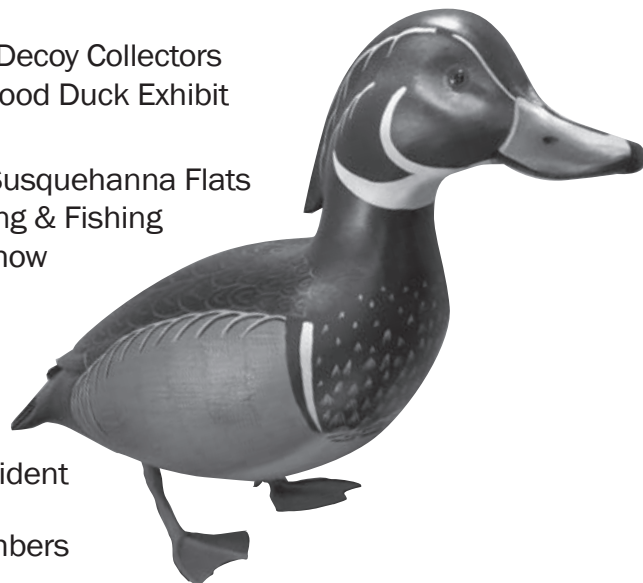
(kan'ves bak'), n., pl. -backs, (esp. collectively) — back.

1. a north american wild duck, the male of which has a whitish back and a reddish-brown head and neck.
2. a style of decoy made famous by carvers of the Susquehanna Flats region.
3. a quarterly publication of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.

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From the President...

Dear Museum Member:

The 36th annual Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival – on May 5th, 6th, and 7th– is upon us, and our team has been busy for months. Our Honorary Chairman this year is Bill Hickson from Cordova on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Bill is a retired Talbot County farmer who turned his aptitude for whittling into a truly remarkable talent for producing lifelike waterfowl and other birds. The Decoy Festival is our key fundraiser, but it also brings a lot of visitor traffic – and tourist dollars – into Harford County. Special thanks to Mayor Bill Martin, the Havre de Grace City Council, and the Harford County Public School System for their support.



We received the sad news in January and February of the passing of two dear friends, Jeanne and Warren Hiss. Jeanne discovered a love and talent for waterfowl art and grew to be a respected carver and painter. Both were passionate and tireless volunteers who contributed their time and effort generously and helped us in more ways than I can recite in this limited space.

The 10th annual Susquehanna Flats Vintage Hunting & Fishing Collectibles Show on January 28th at the Level Volunteer Fire Company set another record in terms of both exhibitors and visitors. A big “Thanks” to the volunteers from both the Level VFC and the Decoy Museum. We also celebrated the Decoy Museum’s 30th anniversary all during that day with an open house and an evening gala to express our gratitude to our members, contributors, community leaders, volunteers, and other supporters.

The 24th annual R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust Banquet on Friday, March 10th was another sell-out with both old and new faces among our loyal supporters. The banquet is the primary source of funds for the Trust, which perpetuates Mr. Mitchell’s vision for the Decoy Museum by aiding in the acquisition, interpretation, and preservation of decoys and related waterfowl artifacts.

Grants from the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust and the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority provided funding for three new exhibit cases in the Carvers’ Gallery that will be used for temporary exhibits of important carvings on loan from key supporters. The first collections to fill these cases have been brought to us by the extraordinary loans of Jim and Deb Allen, Dave and Jeanne Campbell, Dr. Mort Kramer, and C. John Sullivan, Jr. In late January, the Potomac Decoy Collector’s Association brought us a collection of over 60 incredible wood ducks. Don’t miss these awesome exhibits.

We are also preparing the application to renew Harford County’s annual tourism-related grant that has been so beneficial. County Executive Barry Glassman has been a huge supporter of our efforts to take the Decoy Museum to a new level. We are very grateful for everything our supporters do for us. The spring raffle has some great items, so don’t forget to buy your tickets before May 7th. I look forward to seeing you and our visitors at the Decoy Festival on May 5th, 6th, and 7th.

Sincerely,

Pat Vincenti



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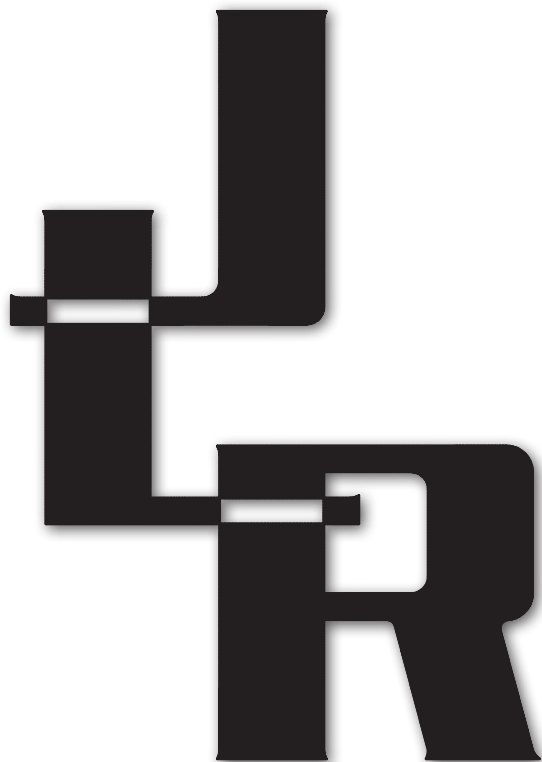
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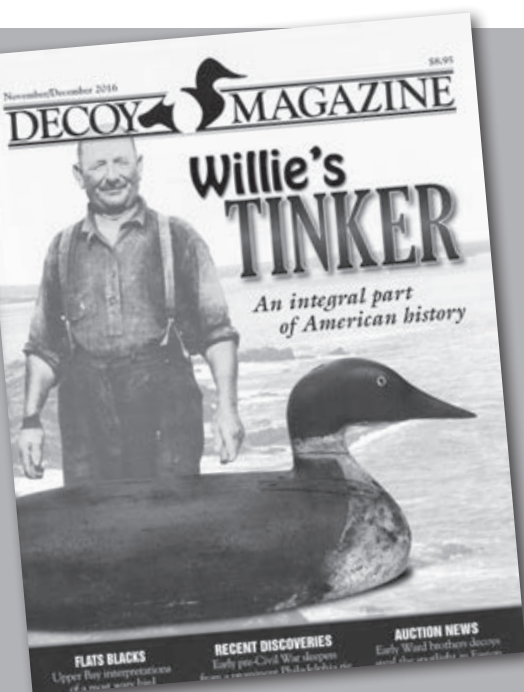
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DECOY MAGAZINE

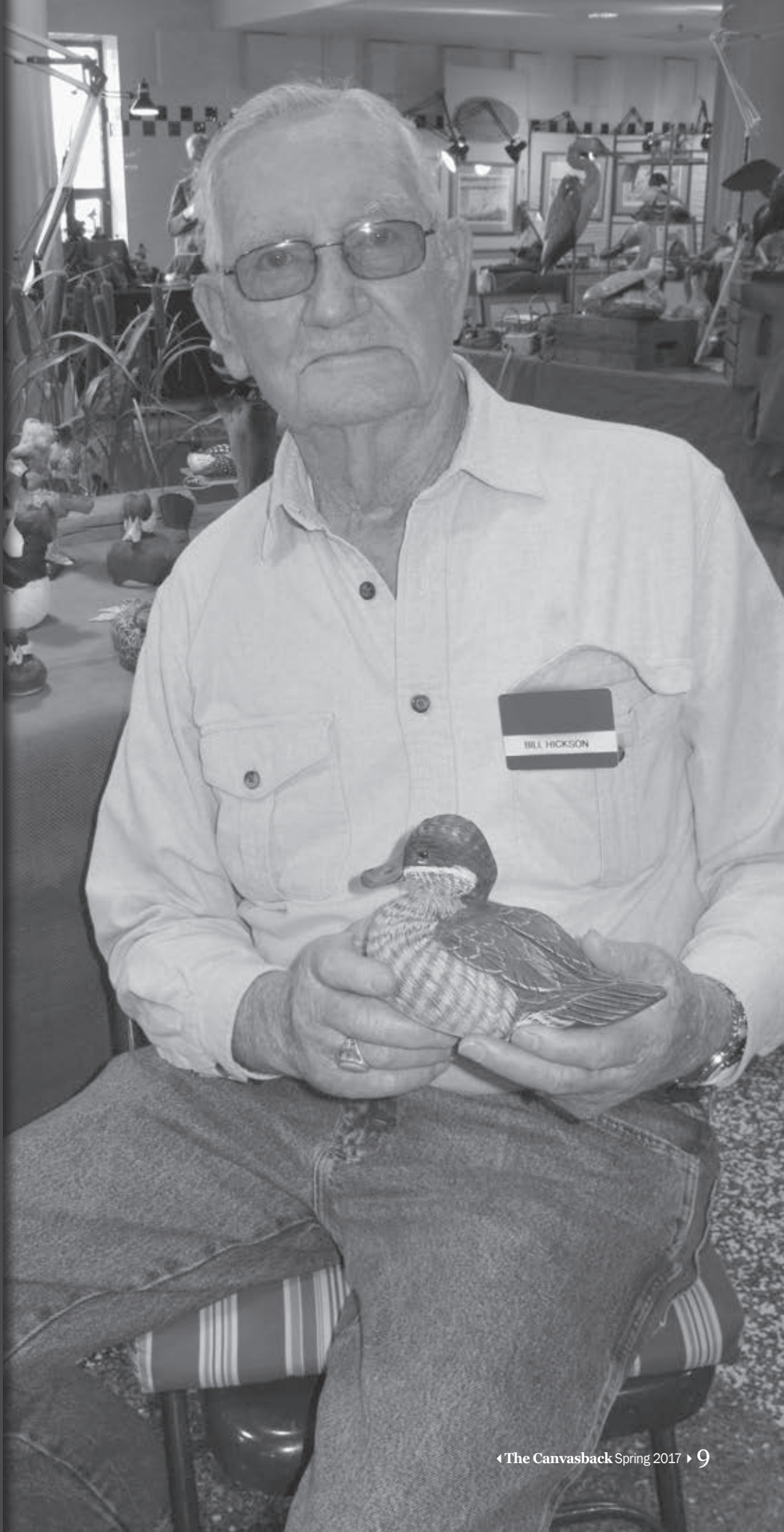
- Carver profiles
- Features on carving regions, fish decoys, and sporting art
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- National calendar of all decoy shows
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BILL HICKSON

HONORARY CHAIRMAN
OF THE 36TH ANNUAL
HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY
& WILDLIFE ART FESTIVAL



Bill Hickson is a retired farmer from tiny Cordova (population 592) in Talbot County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland where his family has been for generations. Bill has always lived within 10 miles of the farm where he was born and raised, and he describes himself and his family as “Eastern Shoremen from way back”. Like so many carvers, he grew up hunting.

Bill was a dairy farmer with his father in his early years. Except for 10 years working for the giant agribusiness Southern States Cooperative, he has farmed most of his life. About 50 years ago, Bill acquired the 120-acre farm where in 1971 he and his late wife Kitty built the comfortable home where he now lives. The farm boasts four ponds that have become too shallow to support the ample fish populations of previous years, but they still draw waterfowl.

Bill says that he “always liked to mess with wood”. Daughter Patti Keller adds with a laugh that he was “constantly whittling something.” About forty years ago, Bill decided to try his hand at carving birds and began with instruction from Ed and Esther Burns in nearby St. Michaels, Maryland. He was joined in those classes by Patti’s husband, Roger, who now carves gunning decoys.

Bill still has his first effort – a tiny bufflehead that he attributes more to the efforts of Ed and Esther than his own. Nevertheless, it sits proudly on a shelf in his home some four decades later.

Bill attended the Burns’ classes for a year until he decided he had learned enough to carve independently and began to set his own course in the world of wildfowl art. Except for those classes, Bill is self-taught and developed his own style of carving and painting based on techniques that he observed in the work of other carvers at shows and what he learned from bird and wildlife art books. The combination gave him the incentive to try different things.



Bill Hickson





Bill and Kitty decided in 1990 that carving could provide an income stream sufficient to permit him to retire at the age of 62 when Kitty was 60. They were blessed with the opportunity to travel around the US and Canada to decoy and wildlife art shows for nearly ten years before Kitty became ill and passed away in 1999.

Bill admits to hunting over plastic decoys and has never carved gunning birds – “always decorative.” He has turned out some real masterpieces, including “lots of miniatures.”

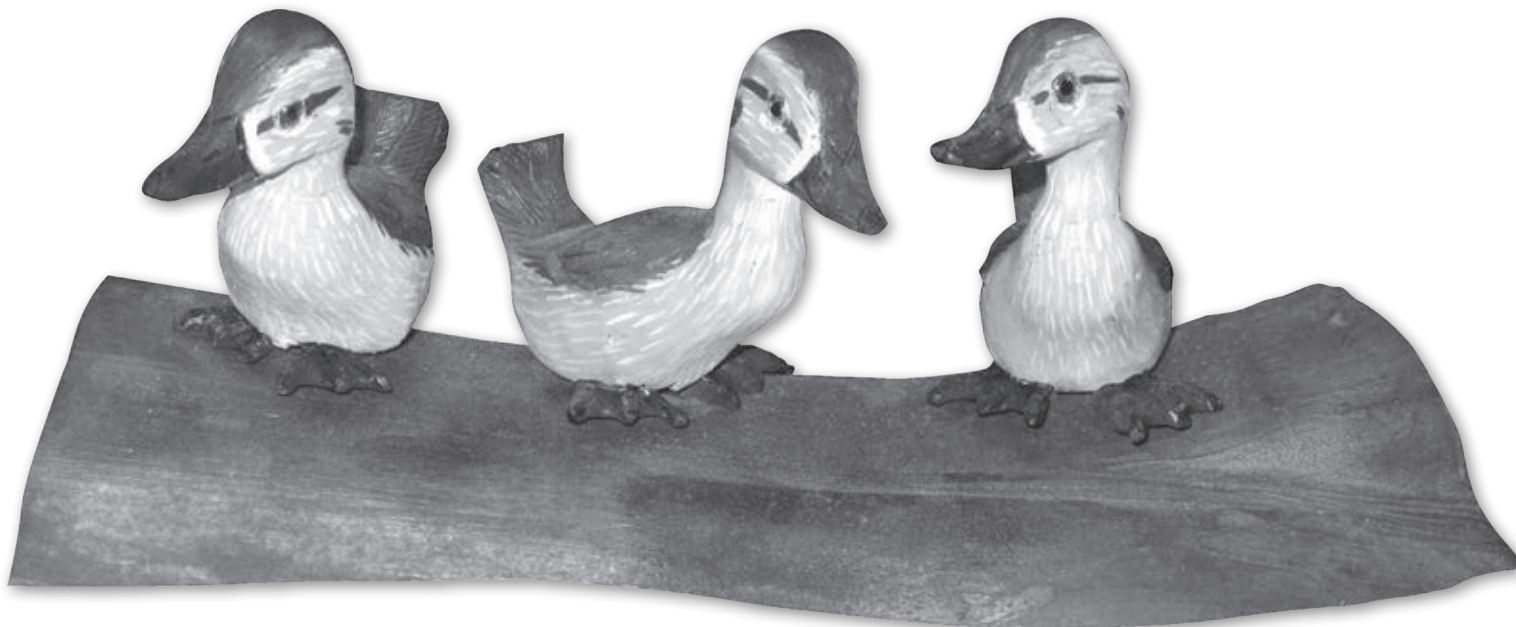
Like so many carvers, Bill prefers to work with white cedar but also uses some tupelo. He says white cedar is easier to carve with a knife, whereas tupelo is “more of a machine-type wood.” Bill never uses a spokeshave or draw knife. He first shapes a block of wood with a band saw, then reduces it with a knife, and refines it with a Foredom tool. Feathering and other final details are added with a wood burner.

Bill has one shop for carving and another one-room cottage where he has abundant natural light for quiet dust-free painting. He does not use patterns for the paint but uses pictures from books if he needs a guide. He says, “I just start out. I put on a base coat and go from there.”

Bill doesn't seal the wood before painting, thereby allowing the base coat to soak into the wood better. He then adds layers of color over the base coat. Bill works in acrylic paint and applies it by hand – no airbrush. He never uses a palette but instead mixes all of his paints on the bird to achieve the desired effect. He often uses a dry brush technique to get a more realistic appearance.

Speaking of realism, Bill also carves and paints beautiful individual feathers that can be made into pins and tie bars.

Bill also takes special orders and carves what collectors request. A collector at



the Easton show in November asked him to make a kiwi! In addition to the US, he has sold to collectors in Canada, Mexico, England, Germany, France, and Australia.

At one time, he had carvings on display in the lobby of the famed Tidewater Inn in nearby Easton, Maryland and sold many carvings that way. A couple from Kempsey, New South Wales, Australia (population 10,374 and sister-city of Easton) was staying at the Tidewater Inn and bought one of Bill's Canada geese to take back to Australia. To ensure its safe passage, they bought an extra seat on the airplane for it!

Income from the sale of his carvings has been Bill's "play money" for collecting, traveling, and other enjoyments. He has an extensive collection of waterfowl art and decoys by other carvers, and he is especially fond of collecting green-winged teal.

Bill has attended the Easton Waterfowl Festival for 36 years and the Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival since its inception in 1981. He had already been carving for over a year before that. He usually has adequate sales at the shows, and he works to

replace what he sells. He has done many miniatures, which are always popular and sell readily. Bill says he has sold over 1,000 of his very special miniature ducklings.

Bill says that the number-one question people ask is, "How long did it take to do that?" His answer is that "it takes as long as it takes", meaning that he generally works irregularly and does it when he wants. He is usually working on several pieces in parallel and rarely works on any particular carving from beginning to end. Plus, as any farmer knows, priorities are established more by the season and the weather rather than by what is waiting on the workshop table.

Asked about his favorite duck to carve, Bill doesn't hesitate for a moment – "green-winged teal" – and he points to the pair that adorn this year's Decoy Festival poster and the cover of this issue of *The Canvasback*. Ruddy ducks run a close second to the green-wings.

But Bill also voices a common lament: The market is mature, shows are getting smaller, carvers are finding it increasingly difficult to sell what they make, and many can't afford to keep going to shows. The

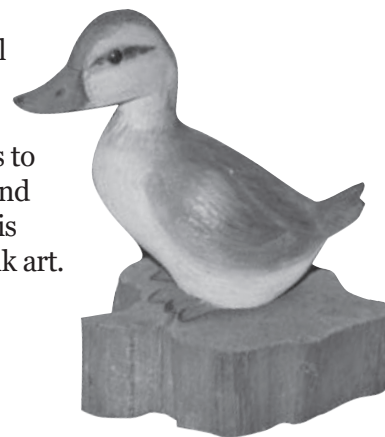
avid decoy collectors of decades ago are graying and downsizing. Hunters are increasingly using factory decoys.

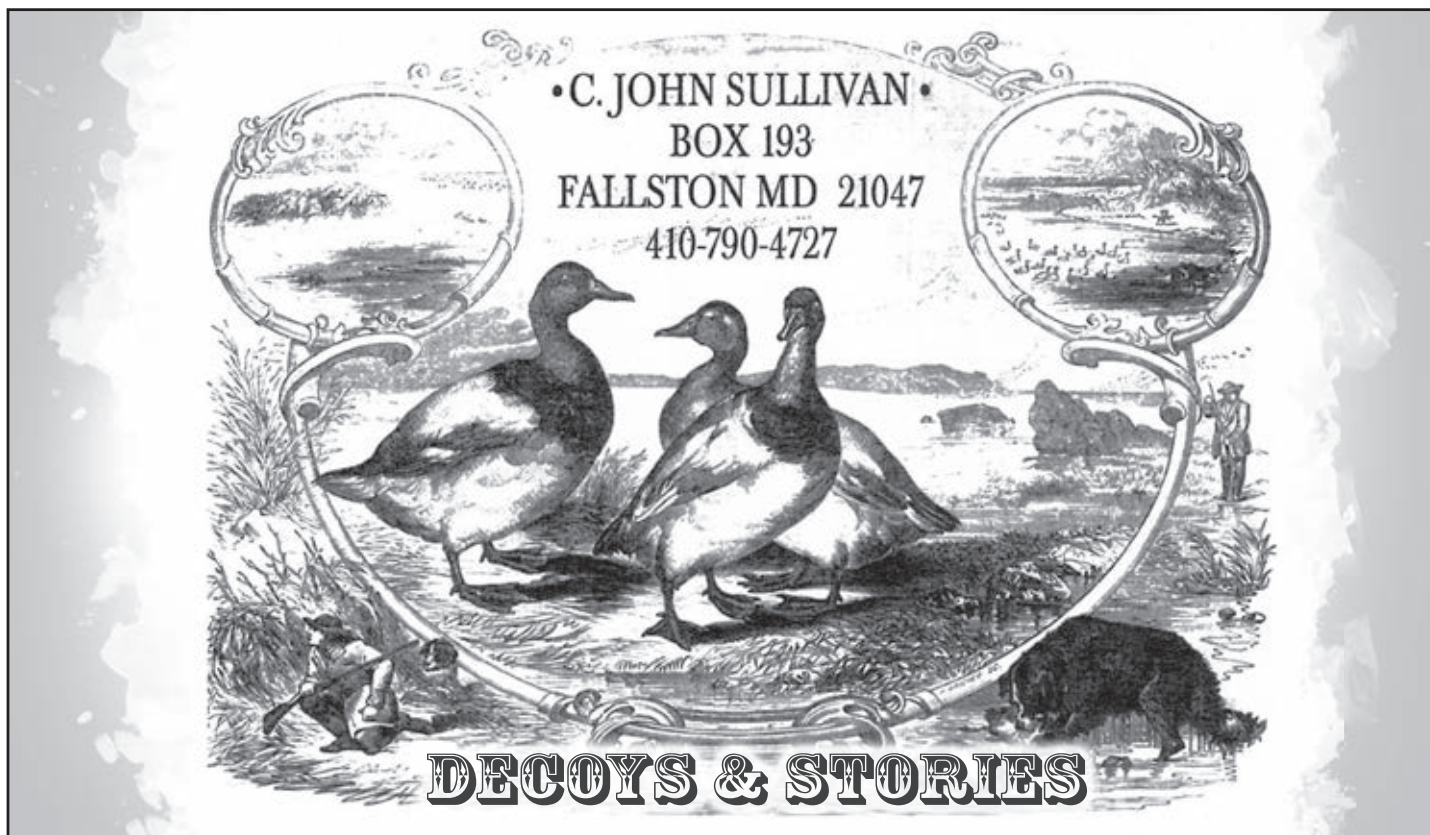
The awareness of and admiration for decoy folk art has moderated over the past few decades, but we must strive to ensure the preservation and continuation of the traditions of waterfowling, the history of our communities, our local culture, and this unique folk art that they have spawned.

The Decoy Museum can tell the story in the past tense. In recognizing talented artists such as Bill Hickson and the works of others at the Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival we also help to tell the story in the present tense.

And by telling the story, we all come together to renew and preserve for future generations a rhythm and harmony with the past.

We thank Bill for his very substantial contributions to influencing and advancing this important folk art.





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Havre de Grace, Maryland
 1901 - 1993

1983

Paul Gibson
Havre de Grace, Maryland
 1902 - 1985

1984

Charles Bryan
Middle River, Maryland
 1920 - 2008

1985

No Honorary Chairman

1986

Robert "Bob" Litzenberg
Elkton, Maryland
 1910 - 1997

1987

Charles "Speed" Joiner, Jr.
 1921 - 2015

1988

Captain Harry Jobes
Aberdeen, Maryland
 Born 1936

1989

Captain William E. "Bill" Collins
Centreville, Maryland
 Born 1949

1990

Captain Roger Urie
Rock Hall, Maryland
 1933 - 2002

1991

James Pierce
Havre de Grace, Maryland
 Born 1934

1992

James A. "Jim" Currier
Havre de Grace, Maryland
 1886 - 1971

1993

Bill Schaubert
Chestertown, Maryland
 Born 1938

Allan Schaubert
Chestertown, Maryland
 Born 1957

1994

Robert F. McGaw, Jr.
Havre de Grace, Maryland
 1879 - 1958

1995

J. Evans McKinney
Elkton, Maryland
 1913 - 2000

1996

Harry V. Shourds, II
Linwood, New Jersey
 Born 1929

1997

Ronald Rue
Cambridge, Maryland
 1931 - 2005

1998

Lem Ward
Crisfield, Maryland
 1896 - 1984

Steve Ward
Crisfield, Maryland
 1895 - 1976

1999

Oliver "Tutsy" Lawson
Crisfield, Maryland
 Born 1938



1982 - 2016

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)

2001

Charles Nelson Barnard

Havre de Grace, Maryland

1876 - 1958

2002

Patrick Vincenti

Churchville, Maryland

Born 1954

2003

Ned Mayne

Vienna, Maryland

Born 1954

2004

Grayson Chesser

Jenkins Bridge, Virginia

Born 1947

2005

Jim Britton

Reedville, Virginia

Born 1934

2006

George Williams

Dover, Delaware

Born 1942

2007

Joseph Coudon of H

Perryville, Maryland

1860 - 1947

2008

Bryon Bodt

Churchville, Maryland

Born 1963

2009

Bill Veasey

Elkton, Maryland

Born 1932

2010

Dave Walker

Havre de Grace, Maryland

Born 1958

2011

Thomas Humberstone

Skaneateles, New York

Born 1946

2012

Rob Leslie

Turnersville, New Jersey

Born 1947

Allen J. Fair

Havre de Grace, Maryland

Born 1934

2013

John Meredith

Worton, Maryland

Born 1946

2014

Bob Jobes

Havre de Grace, Maryland

Born 1959

2015

Joe Engers

Lewes, Delaware

Born 1953

2016

Daniel & Jonathan Irons

Queenstown, Maryland

Born 2002 & 2004

Shannon Dimmig

Elkton, Maryland



Festival Exhibitors

Richard Ayres
MS 149

Don Bell
MS 036

Josh Blanchette
Blanchette Decoys
MS 098

Bryon Bodt
Bryon Bodt Decoys LLC
MS 061, 065, 066

Jim Britton
Jim Briton Decoys
MS 170, 171

Vernon Bryant
Vernon Bryant Decoys
MS 011, 012

Lloyd Cargile
MS 068

Nelia Cheney
Round Hill Art
MS 103, 104

Capt. Bill Collins
Cat. Bill Collins Decoys
MS 005,006

C. Jason Connellee
Connellee Calls
AC: outside

Bill & Pauline Cordrey
MS 017

John Day
John Day Decoys
MS 034

Laura DeNardo
Laura DeNardo Studios
MS 021

Shannon Dimmig
Fine Carvings by Shannon
MS 191

Steve Dorrell
Wye River Antiques
MS 090, 091

Joe Engers
Decoy Magazine
MS 037, 042

Joyce Gagen
Art Ala Carte
MS 177, 178

Robert E. Hayes
MS 181

Bill Hickson
Wildfowl Carvings
MS 064

Jeremy Houser
Old Working Decoys
MS 007

Bob & Debbie Jobs
MS 092, 093

Charles Jobs
MS 101, 102

Joey Jobs
MS 085, 086

Anne C Johnston
Foxhall Design Company
MS 147, 148

Walter Jones
Flyways Decoys
MS 055, 056, 057

Matt Kneisley
MS 088, 089

Leela Korn
Riley Mica Designs
MS 096

Mort Kramer
MS 159, 160

Oliver Lawson
MS 003, 004

Rob Leslie
MS 182, 183

John Meredith
MS 062, 063

Richard Metzger
MS 020

Richard Moretz
Moretz Decoys
MS 081, 082



MS = Middle School
AC = Activity Center



Festival Exhibitors

Harry T. Morrison
H.T. Morrison Wildlife Art
MS 180

Ron Orlando
Wildlife Art Studio
MS 023, 024

Charlie Packard
MS 051, 052

Chris & Joe Pagano
Walnut Street Studio
MS 138

Jim Pierce
Pierce's Decoys
MS 166, 167

Ellis C Porter
MS 187

Karen C Pruitt
MS 184, 185

Marshall Purner
MS 049, 050

Tom Reed
American Sporting Classics
MS 041

Jeff Richenbach
Upper Bay Museum
MS 164, 165

Dick Robinson
MS 058, 059

Beverly & Phil Ryser
Birdwing Studios
MS 079, 083, 084

Bill Schaubert
MS 153

Allan Schaubert
MS 152

Manfred K. Schell
MS 173

Mike Smyser
Mike Smyser Decoys
MS 139, 140

David Sproates Sr
MS 018

Al Stickney
A. B Frost Collector
MS 174, 175

Dot Suit
MS 110

C. John Sullivan
C. John Sullivan Historic Decoys
MS 067, 072

Mary Ellen Terziu
M. E. Designs
MS 172

Mary Lou Troutman
Mary Lou Troutman Art: Cozy Cupboard
MS 141, 142

Chuck Usilton
C & L Antiques
MS 094

Patrick Vincenti
Vincenti Decoys
MS 038, 039, 040, 043, 044, 045, 046, 047, 048

Brian Walker
Chesterfield Craft Shop
MS 199, 200

David Walker
Walker Decoy's
MS 013, 014, 015

Ed Wallace
Wildfowl Carving by Ed Wallace
MS 060

Karin Wallin
The Windfall Studio
MS 197, 198

Bill Watson
Sons of the Confederate Veterans
MS: outside back

Chris Worch
MS: stage right





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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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**Our members are a very
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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, and a subscription to *The Canvasback* magazine, invitations to special events, and discounts in the Gift Shop.

Not a member? Join Now! — Already a member? Tell a Friend!
Go to DecoyMuseum.com or call us at 410.939.3739



J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest

The 15th annual J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest will be held on Saturday, May 6th at the Middle School Gym in conjunction with the 2017 Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival. Joe Engers, Editor and Publisher of Decoy Magazine will head up a three-member judge's panel. Entries will be accepted at the stage area from 10:00 a.m. until judging commences at noon. 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. A blue ribbon will be awarded for each of the following ten category winners, and the judges will also select a best-in-show winner. Winners will be requested to display their decoys and ribbons at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum for three-months following the Festival.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1 Best Taylor Boyd | 6 Best Eastern Shore (non-Ward) Diving Duck |
| 2 Best Jim Currier | 7 Best Ward Bros. Puddle Duck |
| 3 Best Cecil County Bluebill | 8 Best Virginia Goose |
| 4 Best Harford County Bluebill | 9 Best Shorebird |
| 5 Best Rock Hall Puddle Duck | 10 Best Unknown |



Rules:

There is a competition ban, regardless of category, on last year's winning birds. Participants must make their best efforts 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. There will be no restrictions as to those who can participate or number of categories entered; however, each decoy will be limited to only one competition category and participants are restricted to no more than three birds per category. Competition issues will be resolved at the sole discretion of the competition chairman and/or competition chief judge. Any questions, please contact contest chairman **Jim Trimble at 703-768-7264 or potomacduck@cox.net**

Spring 2017 Raffle

A chance to win ONE of four valuable prizes. Four tickets will be drawn.

Tickets are \$5.00 each • 6 for \$25.00 • 10 for \$40.00

First Prize:
\$500 Cash



Third Prize:
Northern Pintail Drake
by R. Madison Mitchell



Second Prize:
Canada Goose
by R. Madison Mitchell



Fourth Prize:
American Coot by Charlie Bryan



Drawing May 7th. For tickets call **410.939.3739**
or email information@DecoyMuseum.com (additional tickets will be available at the Museum)

Festival Program


Admission
\$10

Honorary Chairman

Bill Hickson from Cordova, Maryland

Locations:

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum 
Giles Street

Havre de Grace Middle School 
Lewis Street

Havre de Grace Activity Center 
Lewis Street



Friday, May 5th

6:00 – 9:00 pm
Carvers, Exhibitors, & Vendors   
(see posted schedules)

6:00 – 8:00 pm
Carving Competition Registration 


Just \$10.00 for the entire weekend!
Children under 12 free with a paying adult!


Saturday, May 6th

8:00 am – 10:00 am
Carving Competition Registration 
Carving Competition River
Gunning Events Registration 

9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Carvers, Exhibitors, & Vendors   
(see posted schedules)

9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Calling Competition (sanctioned) 

10:00 am
Old Decoy Contest
Registration opens  STAGE

10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Raptors 
Near rear admission entrance facing
the Activity Center


5th, 6th, & 7th May



10:00 am – 12:00 pm


Silent Auctions..... 
Hallway by front admission entrance
facing Revolution Street

10:30 am until complete

Atlantic Flyway Classic
Carving Competition Judging..... 

- ◆ 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

10:30 am until complete

Atlantic Flyways Classic.....  GROUND
Carving Competition Judging

- ◆ River Gunning Decoy Division
- ◆ Ed Watts Gunning Rig Division
- ◆ Tandem, Single, Pairs Competition

12:00pm & 2:00pm

Retriever Dog
Demonstrations.....  GROUND

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Old Decoy Contest.....  STAGE

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm


Silent Auctions..... 
Hallway by front admission entrance
facing Revolution Street

Sunday, May 7th

10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Carvers, Exhibitors, & Vendors   
(see posted schedules)

3:30 pm

Festival Raffle Drawing..... 
Lobby front admission facing
Revolution Street

4:00 pm

Festival Closes



Museum News

From the Desk of...

Welcome Spring! This of course means that we are busy preparing for our 36th Annual Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival, and I look forward to seeing many of you!

I am awed by the incredible first quarter we have had here at the Museum. January 28th was a day of celebration commemorating a significant milestone - our 30th Anniversary.



During the day, we were visited by 160 guests, some long-time friends and some new. That evening, 170+ members and friends joined us for a reception which included scrumptious food and drink, many commendations and fond remembrances, and an exhibit unveiling. Thank you to all our sponsors and to all who helped make this such a momentous occasion!

And speaking of a new exhibit – we are proud to display, in our brand-new display cases, an extraordinary collection of New Jersey/Delaware River decoys thanks to the generous loans of Jim and Deb Allen, Dave and Jeanne Campbell, Dr. Mort Kramer and C. John Sullivan, Jr. Sadly, this exhibit is temporary and will be leaving us shortly after this year's Festival, so please make plans to visit us soon and appreciate it!

In February, we unveiled our new website – a long overdue “refresh” which showcases all of the many wonderful things the Decoy Museum has to offer and includes expanded capabilities for memberships, online sales and donations (see side article). Special thanks to Scott Moody for his amazing work!

Also in February, we learned that we were voted “Best Museum of 2016” by the readers of Harford Magazine. We are humbled to have received such a distinguished award and strive daily to retain this title!

On a more personal level, I am honored to be attending the Harford Leadership Academy this spring – meeting lots of new friends and growing to serve not only this Museum, but the community.

Best,

Kerri

Kerri Kneisley, Executive Director

Current Exhibits @ the Museum

- The Potomac Decoy Collectors Assoc. has brought us a stunning collection of colorful and elegant wood ducks now on display in the Carvers' Gallery.



- Two new displays near the front door of Susquehanna Flats wing ducks and miniature carvings by Captain Jimmy Wright of Massey Md. courtesy of C. John Sullivan, Jr.

- John Collier's collection of Bill Gibian's carvings.



- The extraordinary pair of “Daddy” Holly canvasbacks, a gift from the Michael family.

- A traditional tule decoy in the centuries-old “Lovelock style” by Paiute decoy maker Joe Allen.



- The “Gunning the Flats” exhibit
- The “What is a Decoy?” exhibit

- “Pop” Sampson's homemade duplicating lathe for making miniature decoy bodies

- Coudon Teal carved in the 1930s, a gift from Pat Doherty.



- 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.

- The Home Run Baker rig and bushwhack boat.

- Our new display cases have an extraordinary collection of New Jersey/Delaware River decoys thanks to the generous loans of Jim and Deb Allen, Dave and Jeanne Campbell, Dr. Mort Kramer and C. John Sullivan, Jr. that will be leaving in May.



Thank You

to Our 30th Anniversary Sponsors

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Museum News



We have a new website!

The Decoy Museum's new website is now up and running. This is not just a tweak here and there. It is a completely new "look and feel" with additional functionality such as a feature for online payments and a complete archive of all past issues of The Canvasback. The Gift Shop will come online soon. The home page has a link to the "Decoy Cam" that the city installed on the deck and looks over the Flats and straight down the Bay.

We are really excited about this complete top to bottom revision of one of our principal faces to the great big world out there in cyberspace. Facebook.com/DecoyMuseum remains a great way to stay up to date with our most current information.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to wildlife photographer, web designer, and longtime volunteer Scott Moody for his artistry and extraordinary efforts.

Please check out the new website at DecoyMuseum.com. While you are at it, take a look at Scott's artistry at his own website: LabradorDesign.com. One of Scott's photos graces the cover of the March/April issue of Ducks Unlimited Magazine.

Follow us at DecoyMuseum.com & [Facebook.com/DecoyMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/DecoyMuseum).

Jeanne Blanch Hiss (May 23, 1928 - January 6, 2017) **Warren Sothoron Hiss** (January 20, 1925 - February 3, 2017)

We are very sad to report the deaths of two very special friends, Jeanne and Warren Hiss, who were passionate and longtime supporters of the Decoy Museum. Married 70 years, they were also devoted to each other.

Jeanne was a talented waterfowl artist who began carving decoys in 1983 and was recognized as the Honorary Chairman of the 2005 Duck Fair. She said at the time, "I wanted to make one decoy for my brother and sister-in-law who were to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in 1984. I started a year early so I could have one ready by then. I didn't know a chisel from a gouge."

Jeanne retired the following year and became a full-time decoy carver – hardworking and meticulous in her new endeavor. She was soon invited to participate in the Easton Waterfowl

Festival, and we subsequently invited her to come to the Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival where she was a regular for many years. Her full-sized common loon with its chicks is one of our prized collection items.

She and Warren attended shows all across the country, and she won many awards as her skills developed. She also carved species other than ducks, always preferring the most colorful birds such as the ringneck pheasant and the wood duck. Her carvings were so lifelike that some referred to them as "lookalikes", earning the admiration of renowned carvers such as R. Madison Mitchell who once remarked to her, "There's a lot of work in that, girlie."

Warren & Jeanne moved from Reisterstown, Maryland to Havre de Grace in 2000, in

large measure to be close to the Decoy Museum, where they were devoted and tireless volunteers for over 14 wonderful years before decamping to Portland, Oregon. They converted the garage in their Havre de Grace condo into a workshop, and Warren would help Jeanne by roughing out wood blanks on a band saw. Jeanne delighted many museum visitors, especially children, by demonstrating the techniques for creating her "lookalikes".

Jeanne once told the story of her first night of carving class in Timonium, Maryland. "The teacher held up a block of wood and said, 'There's a duck in there and we will set it free.' I thought it was wonderful." Well, there was an angel inside each of these two kind and generous people who were our dear friends, and those angels have now been set free. We will miss them so...



The readers of Harford Magazine have voted the Decoy Museum the **"Best Museum of 2016"**. Thanks to all of our staff, members, and other supporters who helped make this possible!



Museum News

Event Anniversary



On Saturday, January 28th, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Decoy Museum. Actually, our birthday was in November, but there is so much that competes with people's time in November and December that we decided to celebrate on the same day as our Susquehanna Flats show at the Level VFC. We knew that lots of longtime friends would be in town that day and everyone would be in a decoy frame of mind.

Our decision proved to be the right one, and we had nearly 350 visitors and guests come through our doors on the 28th. We had an open house all day long with free admission and a nice spread of pastries and refreshments. That evening, we hosted a reception with a scrumptious spread of food and drink by MacGregor's Restaurant. Many community leaders were in attendance, including County Executive Barry Glassman, County Council President "Coach" Slutsky, and former Delegate Bill Cox, who addressed the crowd of celebrants with nostalgic reminders of our long history.

We received many commendations, which we now have proudly on display. Another source of pride was the unveiling of three new display cases made possible by grants from the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust and the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. The inauguration of the new cases was blessed with an awesome temporary exhibit of stunning carvings on loan from Jim and Deb Allen, Jeanne Campbell, Dr. Mort Kramer, and C. John Sullivan, Jr.

Thanks to everyone who made this 30th anniversary another high-water mark for the Decoy Museum!





New Cases

Collector, historian, author, and long-time Decoy Museum supporter C. John Sullivan, Jr. joined with Curator Virginia H. Sanders to open up our three new cases in the second-floor Carvers' Gallery and install their inaugural exhibits.

The cases were manufactured by Maritime Plastics in Annapolis and were made possible by grants from the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust and the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. These new cases match the existing cases and are intended to display important collections and artifacts on loan from Decoy Museum supporters and other museums.

For this inaugural display we were blessed with an awesome temporary exhibit of stunning New Jersey and Delaware River carvings on loan from Jim and Deb Allen, Dave and Jeanne Campbell, Dr. Mort Kramer, and C. John Sullivan, Jr. – full-size Canada geese, some fine little shorebirds, and many other very special carvings and artifacts. These will leave soon after the Decoy Festival, so don't miss this opportunity to see something rare. Thanks to all who made this possible!





Museum News

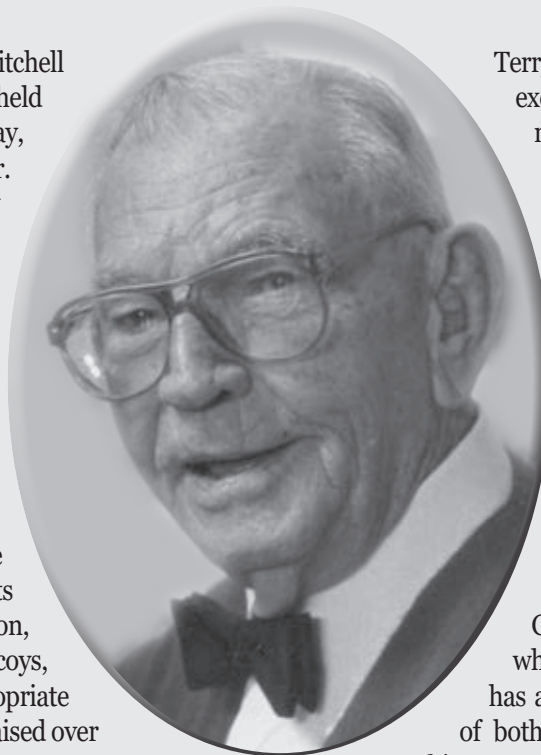


THE 24TH ANNUAL R. MADISON MITCHELL ENDOWMENT TRUST BANQUET

The 2017 R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust banquet was held at the Bayou Restaurant on Friday, March 10th – one day short of Mr. Mitchell's 116th birthday. Legendary decoy maker R. Madison Mitchell was a driving force behind the creation of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum and the Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival, which is now in its 36th year.

Mr. Mitchell established the Endowment Trust, a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation, to provide a permanent, long-range source of support to the Decoy Museum. The Endowment exists solely to aid the Museum's acquisition, interpretation, and preservation of decoys, waterfowl artifacts, and other appropriate projects. To date, the Endowment has raised over \$1 million.

As always, the banquet was sold out with about 270 decoy makers, collectors, waterfowlers, and other supporters from both sides of the Bay and up into Pennsylvania and New Jersey. This great event enables the Endowment Trust and our supporters to renew and strengthen our ties and to have a wonderful and memorable evening in the process. Lou and



Terry Ward and the Bayou staff always serve an excellent dinner that is preceded by a cocktail mingle.

There was a lottery enabling 25 fortunate winners to buy a pair of R. Madison Mitchell canvasback sink box decoys that were cast by Mr. Mitchell but never painted. The painting was recently finished by Pat Vincenti in Mr. Mitchell's style.

The evening's program applauded many supporters who have made important contributions to the Trust and the Museum, including especially those of Rev. George Hipkins and Jeanne and Warren Hiss who recently passed away. Delta Waterfowl has always been a key supporter in many ways of both the Endowment and the Museum, and this year was no exception with a generous \$4,500 donation. The silent auction, live auction, and raffles gave all supporters a chance to go home with something special.

The Endowment is vital to the future of the Decoy Museum, and we are very grateful to Pat and Jeannie Vincenti, the other officers and directors of the Trust, their many volunteers, and all the awesome and loyal supporters who made the banquet another successful fundraiser.



The Woodies Are Here!

The Unmistakable Wood Duck Stunning in Nature, Stunning in Art

The Potomac Decoy Collectors Association has brought us another stunning collection of very important carvings. This time it is colorful and elegant wood ducks, and the Carvers' Gallery is resplendent with scores of these incredible decoys rendered by over 30 different carvers. This is a very special exhibit that you should not miss.

Wood ducks... in the natural world, they are one of the most colorful and beautiful of all waterfowl, and they are equally stunning and captivating when skillfully and artistically reproduced in wood and paint. Their Latin name, *Aix sponsa*, translates loosely to "a duck dressed for a wedding," and the description is most fitting for this sartorially elegant bird. Their common name refers to the species' preference for nesting in the hollows of trees. Ornithologist Arthur Cleveland Bent wrote of them in the 1923 volume of his *Life Histories of Familiar North American Birds*, "What a beautiful creature is this Beau Brummel among birds."

Chad Tragakis has written a fitting tribute to this bird that explores the history of wood duck decoys. Look for it in the summer issue of *The Canvasback*!



"At this moment, when my heart is filled with delight, the rustling of wings comes sweeping through the woods, and anon there shoots overhead a flock of Wood Ducks. Once, twice, three times, have they rapidly swept over the stream, and now, having failed to discover any object of alarm, they all alight on its bosom, and sound a note of invitation to others yet distant."

🦆 John James Audubon, 1835

10th Annual Susquehanna Flats Vintage Hunting & Fishing Collectibles Show

By Jim Trimble

The 10th Annual Vintage Hunting and Fishing Collectibles Show was held January 28th at the Level Volunteer Fire Hall, just outside of Havre de Grace, Maryland. Show sponsors were seasoned decoy collectors Pat Vincenti and Chuck Usilton with show proceeds shared by the host fire hall and the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum, where Vincenti serves as its President. Wives Jeannie Vincenti and Lynn Usilton collected the money, controlled the doors, and ran the give-aways. Mild mid-January sunny weather prevailed with doors opening at 8AM. There was a small admission charge at the door and door-prize winners were announced through-out the day.

This well run show with emphasis on vintage kicks off the new year for the east coast decoy collecting enthusiast. When we arrived at 9AM, parking had over-flowed into surrounding fields and the aisles were sardine packed with show visitors, many toting bagged purchases under-arm. The aisles were hard to navigate in the early morning hours, as like minded collectors worked and gabbed their way through approximately 100 tables, maybe a few more, filled primarily with old decoys. Waterman artifacts, vintage fishing, guns, upland game stuffs, oyster cans and related oyster memorabilia were also in the offering.

Vendor representation was primarily Maryland with large handfuls of vendors from the nearby states of Pennsylvania, Delaware and Virginia; with their table offerings somewhat reflecting the same. Maryland vendor Vernon Bryant, with a nice selection of old gunners, saw his finely replicated punt gun sell early morning. Father/son vendors George and Rob Meekins from Maryland's Eastern Shore, had a nice selection of antique gunning birds, including several stately long-necked canvasbacks by Charles Nelson Barnard. Virginia auctioneer Zeb Barfield was on hand with several tables full of primarily vintage Virginia and Maryland decoys for his forthcoming February 28-29 Sportsman' Auction. The Ward Bros. goose was a crowd pleaser. Maryland vendor/historian John Sullivan displayed a threesome Jim Holly decoy set, with b/w photo backdrop, consisting of an original paint mallard, a long-bodied canvasback in old in-use gunning paint; plus an old goose in fine old swan paint that had been used as a confidence decoy on the Bush River. All three birds were from the late 1800s. Show sponsors Vincenti and Usilton were pleased with the large crowds; as were the vendors who reported good sales.

Saturday was also the 30th anniversary celebration of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum with the Museum offering free admission throughout the day and a cocktail social hour starting at 6PM. At the social hour, President Vincenti welcomed the crowd of approximately 150, who, besides several show vendors and local museum supporters, included community business leaders and area politicians. Vincenti singled out and acknowledged several there for their efforts in bringing the museum to present-day fruition.

The museum was also pleased to introduce three new second floor show cases, with two of them recently filled with Jersey coastal and Delaware River decoys from the collections of Jim & Debbie Allen and Dave & Jeanne Campbell; while the third case contained fine collectible examples from Sullivan's and Dr. Mort Kramer's decoy collections. The museum is in the process of readying another showcase for the forthcoming Potomac River Decoy Collectors' "woodie" or wood duck display.



(left to right) Maryland collector Jon James visiting with show sponsor/vendor Pat Vincenti with a mid-bay John Vickers' swan forefront.



Maryland Eastern Shore vendor Jackie McCarty with a fine fish bobber display



Pennsylvania vendor Fritz and Judy (holding a Jess Urie bluebill) Meck along with granddaughter Angelina

A Room with A View



Host Your Next Event at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum!



**The Carver's Gallery at the Decoy Museum
can accommodate up to 200 people, and the deck
offers one of the best views in Harford County.**



For more information contact the museum 410.939.3739



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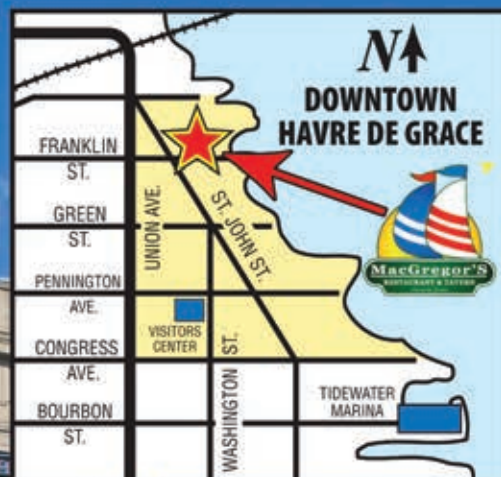
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