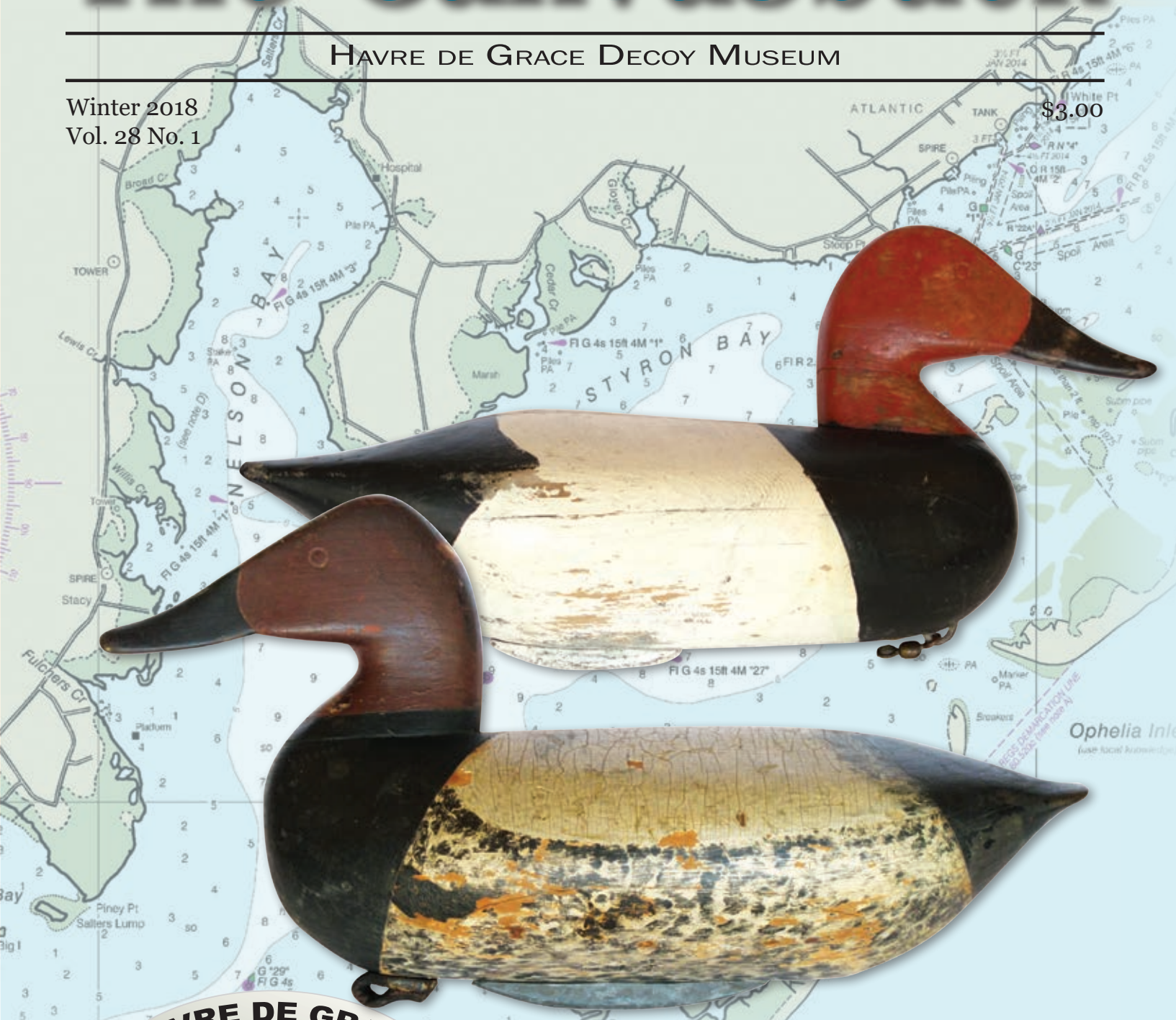


The Canvasback

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM

Winter 2018
Vol. 28 No. 1

\$3.00



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FUNDED IN PART BY



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

Chad Tragakis explains why these two Carteret County canvasbacks would not look out of place in a rig on the Susquehanna Flats: top, an Andrew Mason (1889-1960), circa 1940s in old over-paint and a Mitchell Fulcher (1869-1950), early 1930s, Holly style in original paint. Both are from the collection of Kroghie Andresen.

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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*A wooden goldfinch hatching,
by J. Noble Mentzer*



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From the President...

Dear Museum Member:

As I write this, Christmas is still a few days off, the Decoy Museum has been very creatively decorated by the staff, and we have had lots of positive feedback from our many visitors. The Candlelight Tour on December 9th was especially fun with the winter's first snowfall coming down hard all evening long as Len Burcham and Josh Blanchette provided carving demonstrations.



Kerri and Matt Kneisley orchestrated two additional fall events that were very successful – the Carve and Candy open house for kids at Halloween and the Museum's 31st anniversary on November 5th. Looking ahead, the 11th annual Susquehanna Flats Vintage Hunting & Fishing Collectibles Show, which has grown each year, will be on Saturday, January 27th at the Level Volunteer Fire Company hall. The big fundraiser is the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust banquet on Friday, March 9th. The banquet – now in its 25th year – is a primary source of funds for the Endowment Trust, which Mr. Mitchell established to aid the Museum. Stay tuned for a kids' Easter event on March 31st.

Preparations for the 37th annual Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival are keeping us busy. As always, it will be on the first weekend of May. This year's honorary chairmen will be two longtime friends and supporters of the Museum: John Hostetter and Noble Mentzer who are featured in these pages. We have a large display of Noble's work in the Carvers' Gallery that is a "must see".

Steve Smith arranged for the loan of a large collection of decoys from Core Sound in Carteret County, North Carolina – also a "must see". This is the cover story for this issue and is a fascinating tale.

The Fall Raffle and the Annual Appeal were both successful and will help fund the new initiatives we are planning for events and education. Josh Blanchette has been bringing lots of Scouts in for carving classes. When the weather warms up we will resume our weekend guest carvers in the refurbished Mitchell shop.

We are steadily increasing our facility rentals, which has been a very effective way to bring new visitors into the Museum. It is fun to watch the amazed looks on their faces when they say, "I had no idea this was here!" Those visitors leave and talk about their experience. If you are planning a celebration for family and friends or an offsite meeting for your business, think about the Carvers' Gallery. Please find ways to introduce your friends and family to the Museum and encourage them to participate. If you have a business, please advertise in *The Canvasback* as a business member.

Please mark your calendar and come! The Level show on Saturday, January 27th, the Endowment Trust banquet on Friday, March 9th, the kids' Easter event on Saturday, March 31st, and the Decoy Festival the weekend of May 4th – 6th.

I hope you and your families have enjoyed a wonderful few months with Thanksgiving, Christmas, and other holidays that you may celebrate during this season. Thanks for your support of the Decoy Museum. You make it all possible.

Sincerely,

Pat Vincenti



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- Carver profiles
- Features on carving regions, fish decoys, and sporting art
- Complete auction coverage
- Classified sections for buying, selling, and trading
- National calendar of all decoy shows
- Full-color photographs of over 80 decoys

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R. Madison Mitchell was not only one of the most prominent 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 37th year.



**Photography by
Terri Shepke-Heppner**

The 25th Annual R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust Banquet

Friday, March 9, 2018 at the
Bayou Restaurant
Route 40, Havre de Grace, Maryland

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

*The banquet is always an early sell-out,
so make your plans soon!*

The 2018 R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust banquet promises to be another great evening to meet and greet other Museum supporters, decoy makers, decoy collectors, and waterfowlers.

Lou and Terry Ward always serve an excellent dinner that is preceded by a cocktail mingle with lots of tempting finger food. The silent auction, live auction, and raffles give all supporters a chance to add something special to their collections while at the same time having a wonderful and memorable evening and contributing to a cause dear to everyone's heart.

The Endowment Trust is vital to the future of the Decoy Museum, so please join us on Friday, March 9th and make the banquet another successful fundraiser for both the Endowment Trust and the Museum.

Tickets are \$55.00 per person

and are available at the Decoy Museum & Vincenti Decoys, by calling 410.734.6238, or visiting www.RMadisonMitchell.com

The R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust, a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation, was established by Mr. Mitchell before his death in 1993 to provide a permanent, long-range source of funding for 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 to support the Museum's mission. He thought that would take about seven years – but it only took three – and the Trust has now raised over \$1 million. Mr. Mitchell would be enormously gratified by the success of his modest ambition.



Downsizing? Changing your collection?



If you have decoys, wildlife art, and waterfowling memorabilia packed away in closets, attics, garages, and basements that you just do not know what to do with — please consider donating these items to the Museum.

The Decoy Museum can turn your unwanted items into much-needed operating revenue. In-kind gifts will be gratefully received by the Museum and will help preserve history for generations to come.



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We will be happy to make any necessary arrangements.

You may be able to take a tax deduction for the charitable donation. IRS regulations prohibit us from appraising donated items.

Got time to spare... time to share?

Get involved with the Decoy Museum.

We are grateful for the generous support of our volunteers.

What do you like to do?

Can you lead tours, explain decoy making and the history of the Flats, present programs for school children, greet visitors at the information desk, assist in the museum store, help our curator on special projects, provide carving demonstrations, plan events, maintain IT systems, do exhibit signage and creative work, assist with fundraising and membership, organize chaos?



Contact the Decoy Museum Today to Join the Flock

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AMERICA'S LONGEST RUNNING DECOY SHOW CELEBRATES GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

By Chad Tragakis

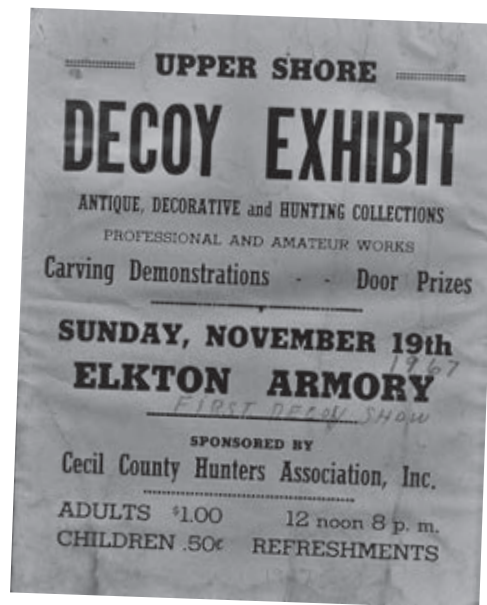
Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, wealthy hunters from up and down the east coast would flock to the small Maryland town of North East each fall, attracted by the great sport shooting that the region's migratory waterfowl afforded. Today, it is the decoys once used in that pursuit that spur the annual migration. Visitors to the 50th annual Upper Shore Decoy Show on October 20 and 21 were greeted with picture perfect weather all weekend – warm temperatures and blue skies, and the convenient location in the North East Fire Hall was spacious, well-lit and offered plenty of parking.

Billing itself as the nation's longest continually running decoy show, it is one of two principal fundraisers for the Upper Bay Museum, one of the vital institutions preserving the culture and traditions of the Chesapeake's rich decoy, maritime and waterman's history. The show saw great attendance on Friday and steady traffic throughout Saturday. Early reports are that the show had its best attendance in some time and yielded more for the museum than in several recent years.

The show traces its origins to the Cecil County Hunters Association, an early group of local waterfowling and decoy enthusiasts who sponsored a group exhibit at the Elkton Armory on Sunday, November 19, 1967. That inaugural show included special exhibits by some of the hobby's collecting pioneers including Nelson and Margaret McCall, Norris Pratt, Bob Coleman, Davison Hawthorne, Allen Purner and Amos Waterfield, as well as displays by numerous then-living legends including: Madison Mitchell (accompanied by Jim Pierce and Capt. Harry Jobs), Jim Currier, Paul Gibson, Charlie Joiner and Horace Graham. Featured among the many attractions were the complete sinkbox rig of Perry K. Barnes, the sinkbox made and used by Stratford, Connecticut's Charles

"Shang" Wheeler, the bushwhacking rig owned by Jack Fuddy, which contained a sneakboat made by James T. Holly, a railbird boat and a punt gun skiff.

In the years that followed, the group's name was changed to the Cecil Harford Hunters Association to reflect its members and leaders from across the river, and the annual show moved to different locations before settling on the North East Fire Hall near the center of town. In 1975 the same group founded the Upper Bay Museum. Since 1983, the museum has been housed in the century old commercial fish house once owned by the H. L. Harvey Company on Walnut Street in North East Community Park.



The 50th anniversary show organizers had a brilliant idea to reprint copies of the original show publicity poster and make them available as special free souvenirs for all attendees. It proved to be an especially popular keepsake.

A unique moment at the show came when decoy maker and local historian Jim Pierce caught up with Don Comegys, a dedicated collector and keeper of local decoy lore. Both were there at the first show and then again 50 years later. It was fascinating to hear them recount the details of

that first gathering and compare and contrast the many decades of shows since.

Pierce with his son Charlie, was one of many contemporary carvers to exhibit, which also included Bill Veasey, Bryon Bodt, John Day, Shannon Dimmig, Jeff Spencer, Ed Wallace and Dick and Linda Robinson. Pat Vincenti, Chuck Usilton, Marshall Purner, Steve and Bill Dorrell, Rod Schwarm and Jim Lockard were among those offering antique decoys for sale.

Among the many dealer tables filled with row upon row of vintage Upper Chesapeake Bay decoys, which were primarily canvasbacks, one locally historic group stood out. Collector Darrell Hagar displayed some 65 decoys that hadn't seen the light of day for nearly 60 years. These decoys had been in George Lockard's personal rig, were inherited by his son-in-law Phillip Reynolds, Sr. and then passed to grandson Phillip Reynolds, Jr., who requested they be offered for sale. The rig contained cans made by Lockard as well as a variety of other Susquehanna Flats makers including Holly, Graham, Heverin, Fletcher, Currier and Pearson. It must have been an incredible sight to see the full rig in action floating on the picturesque Cara Cove on Elk Neck, where Lockard most frequently gunned.

Comegys organized an extensive exhibit of classic decoys by most of the important and influential Upper Bay makers, and many notable but lesser known carvers. He also contributed a personal memoir to the show booklet, of growing up in a waterfowling family, his connections to several local decoy makers and reflections of attending the first Upper Shore Decoy Show in 1967. Upper Bay Museum president Rick Bouchelle organized a comprehensive exhibit of classic Canada goose decoys by most of the major makers from the Susquehanna Flats.

Upper Bay Museum curator Jack Manning coordinated two special displays just outside the main hall of both a working sinkbox outfit and a complete bushwhack rig. The sinkbox belonged to Elk Neck gunner Phillip “Dick” Richards, and the bushwhack boat, found in a Chesapeake City barn, was made by Frank Murphy. These well-researched and well-presented exhibits were truly historic and extremely popular with show attendees. While time consuming to transport and set up, they provided important context for those new to decoys and Chesapeake Bay waterfowling history. For longtime collectors, they were a joy to behold up close.

A benefit auction held Friday evening included a wide variety of antique and contemporary decoys, prints and sporting art, books, boat models, calls and other hunting artifacts. Top lots included a pair of redheads from Madison Mitchell’s shop (\$315), a Mitchell canvasback drake (\$290), a Charlie Joiner canvasback drake (\$255), a William Heverin canvasback drake (\$250), and a full sized swan by Bill Streaker (\$210). Overall, the auction raised nearly \$3,000 for the museum.

An opening night reception and auction preview party provided a delightful and casual opportunity to socialize with old friends and make new ones. The catered hors d’oeuvres and fresh shucked oysters were delicious and a wide variety of beer, wine and other drinks were available.

On Saturday, a decoy contest was held attracting a variety of entries in three categories. Jack Manning, Larry Ortt and Chad Tragakis served as judges. Taking first place in the Best Old Cecil County Canvasback category was an outstanding and early pair of high heads by Charlestown’s Wally Algard, brought by Mike DeMond. Darrell Hagar won the Best Old Upper Bay Working Decoy category with a handsome canvasback drake by Ed Pearson of Havre de Grace. Mike DeMond captured another blue ribbon in the Best Contemporary or Decorative Decoy category with a beautiful pair of redheads by Howard “Ducky” Foreaker of North East.

A variety of carving demonstrations, kids’ activities and fundraising raffles were held throughout the day on Saturday. Food vendors and an ongoing bake sale hosted by the North East Fire Company’s Ladies’ Auxiliary kept vendors, exhibitors and attendees well-nourished and in good spirits.

Fittingly, the descendants of many of the Upper Chesapeake’s most storied decoy makers attended the show. These included relatives of John “Daddy” Holly and sons Jim, William and John, Jr., George and Henry Lockard, Henry Davis, Ralph Murphy, Jim Currier, Evans McKinney, Allen Purner and Charlie Borden.

For the past few years, as the nation’s longest running show moved closer and closer to its



(L-R) Delaware collector/vendor Darrell Hagar, Decoy Museum president Pat Vincenti, Maryland collector Larry Ortt and Maryland collector Rob Knight sharing a light moment discussing the “Ducky” Foreaker wing duck being held by Knight.

50th, expectations for this golden anniversary seemed to run increasingly higher. Thanks to an energized museum leadership team ably led by Rick and Lori Bouchelle, a thoughtful and proactive show steering committee, and an army of dedicated volunteers who support this event year after year, those high expectations were met. It was indeed a special show and a fitting celebration of a major milestone for the broader decoy collecting community.

Maintaining many of the local traditions and community focus that make this show unique, the Upper Shore Decoy Show is a special gathering that harkens back to the shows of old. If you’ve been, you know. If you haven’t, make plans now to celebrate the first of the show’s *next* 50 years and enjoy all that the Upper Bay region and the quaint village of North East have to offer.

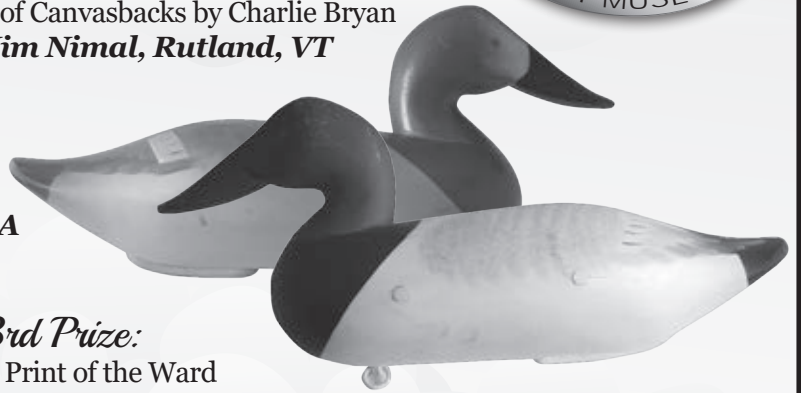


Fall 2017 Raffle Results



1st Prize:
\$500 Cash
Len Rugiel,
Rochester, PA

2nd Prize:
A Pair of Canvasbacks by Charlie Bryan
Jim Nimal, Rutland, VT



3rd Prize:
Framed Print of the Ward
Brothers
Gary Storke, Elkton, MD



4th Prize:
Black Duck by Bob Jobes
Pat Walston
Havre de Grace, MD



Spring 2018 Raffle

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First Prize:
\$500 Cash



Third Prize:
Harford County
Canvasbacks Print



Fourth Prize:
Scaup Drake
by Harry Jobes

Second Prize:
Red-breasted Merganser Pair
by Jim Pierce



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MARYLAND BIRDS

WITH A SOUTHERN ACCENT

The Decoys of Carteret County

By Chad Tragakis

**Redhead Hen (1920s) by
Mitchell Fulcher (1869-1950);
Original paint**

As Roy Bull was driving home to Virginia from his most recent collecting trip through Stacy, North Carolina, he knew he had just purchased a honey of a bird from Cartie Fulcher. It certainly was something special, but it wasn't what he thought.

It was the mid-1960s and at this time, Leroy Downes "Roy" Bull (1911-1982), a farmer, seafood dealer and pioneering decoy collector from Townsend, a community on Virginia's eastern shore, was still able to find classic decoys in outstanding original condition directly from the source. He had a discerning eye for good southern birds and rarely had to pay more than a few dollars for any of them. Over three decades, he assembled one of the finest and most important collections of regional decoys in the country.

The bluebill he had just obtained was handsome – long and sleek with flowing lines, a pert head, crisp bill carving, and soft, feathery wing detail across the back. Probably made around 1900, or a little earlier, it featured an early rectangular strip lead ballast weight and unusual double rigging for the attachment of two lines, with rings and staples in both the front and rear of the bird's underside.

Cartie told Bull that the bird was made and used by his father, Mitchell Fulcher. It looked a bit more fluid and refined than some of the other Fulchers in his collection, but Bull fell in love with the decoy and it found a place of honor on his shelves with his other Fulcher and Carteret County birds.

It turns out that Cartie was half right. The decoy was indeed part of his father's rig, but it was made by James T. Holly (1849-1935) of Havre de Grace, Maryland. It had been brought down to Core Sound by a wealthy northern "sport" gunner. Research by Carolina collectors Neal Conoley, Doily Fulcher, Kroghie Andresen and Jack Dudley, among others, established that while Fulcher did not make this decoy, he was heavily inspired and directly influenced by the Jim Holly decoys that were brought south by northern hunters.

From the mid-19th century up through the middle of the 20th century, during waterfowling's "golden age," literally thousands of Upper Chesapeake Bay decoys were brought to the coastal gunning regions of North Carolina. The railroad provided an easy, efficient and cost-effective means of transporting all the equipment wealthy hunters and gunning clubs needed, including the huge decoy rigs or "stands" as they were called locally, required for sinkbox shooting.

When examining Fulcher's sturdy and beautiful lures, the Holly influence is immediate and obvious. Fulcher used many Holly decoys in his own gunning rig, including canvasbacks, redheads, bluebills and Canada geese. Most, but not all of the birds in Fulcher's rig, were marked on the bottom with his initials, "MF." Naturally, these would be repainted and re-headed when



Kroghie Andresen

All of the old gunning decoys on these pages are from the collection of Kroghie Andresen. We are grateful to Kroghie, Doily Fulcher, the Carolina Decoy Collectors Association, and the Core Sound Decoy Carvers Guild for this spectacular collection of Carteret County decoys that is now on display in the Carvers' Gallery.

Kroghie owns and operates Andresen Advisory, LLC, a decoy appraisal and buying/selling advisory firm based in Charlotte, NC. An avid hunter and the outdoorsman since his teens in eastern North Carolina, his passion for hunting has grown and flourished over the years. Kroghie's first decoy was a gift from his wife Ross in 1979 to decorate the den in their Raleigh home. That inauspicious start has led to a very specialized collection of over 1,300 decoys from Back Bay, Virginia, and North Carolina and also to the publication of several books to record the history of the decoys and their carvers, including *Gunnin' Birds*, *ArtDuckO*, *Mitchell Fulcher: Master Decoy Carver*, and *Shorebird Decoys of North Carolina*.

Kroghie says that, "Preserving the heritage of the North Carolina Outer Banks and Back Bay area is a large part of my motivation. These decoy carvers quietly elevated life as a waterman and hunter to a folk-art form that endures through the drastic changes we've seen in the Outer Banks and its wildlife over the years."

Old Gunning Decoys



Canvasback Drake (early 1930s) by Mitchell Fulcher (1869-1950);
Original paint; Holly style



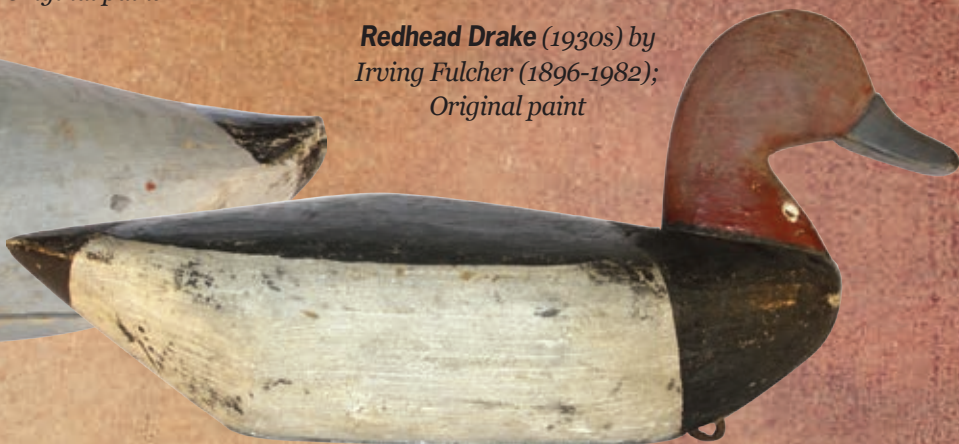
Redhead Drake (early 1930s) by Mitchell
Fulcher (1869-1950); Old over-paint



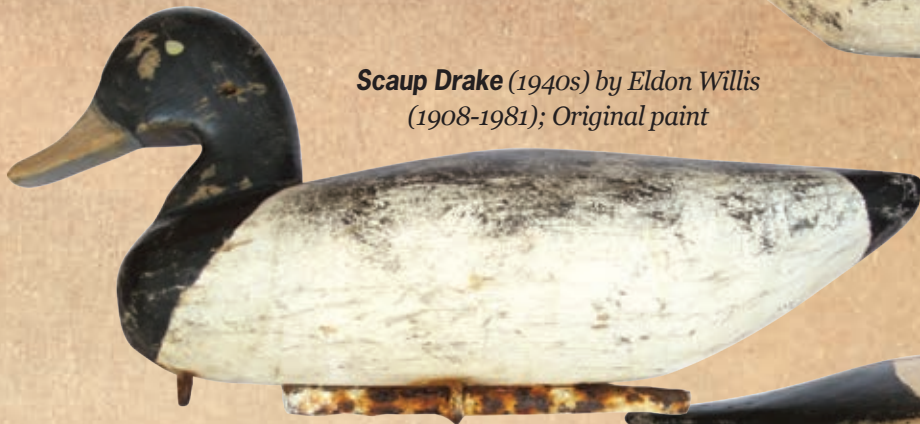
Scaup Pair (1890s) by
Mitchell Fulcher
(1869-1950);
Original paint



Redhead Drake (1930s) by Elmer Salter
(1902-1964); Original paint



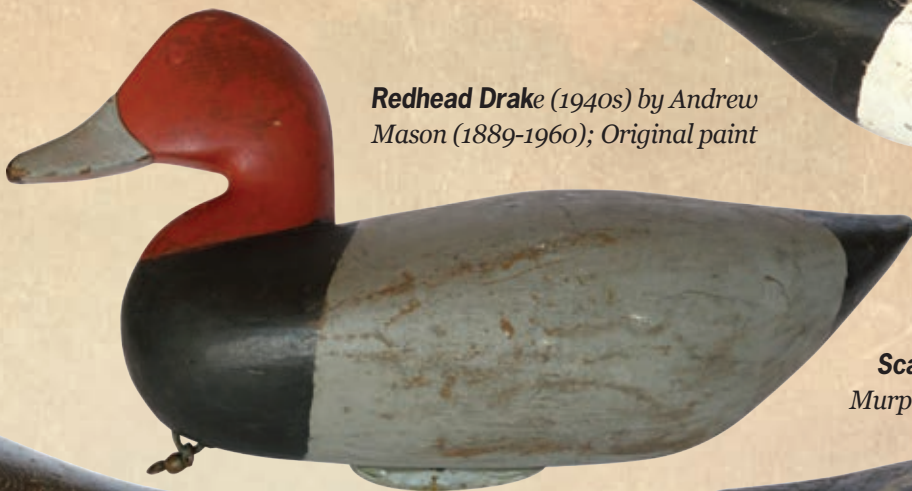
Redhead Drake (1930s) by
Irving Fulcher (1896-1982);
Original paint



Scaup Drake (1940s) by Eldon Willis
(1908-1981); Original paint



Canvasback Drake
(1940s) by Andrew
Mason (1889-1960);
Old over-paint



Redhead Drake (1940s) by Andrew
Mason (1889-1960); Original paint



Scaup Drake (1940s) by Henry
Murphy (1896-1965); Original paint



Pintail Drake (early 1900s) by
Mitchell Fulcher
(1869-1950); Original paint;
from the collection
of Randy Nance

“He made many styles of the various species, particularly pintails, his most revered decoys. Some of the pintails were quite unique and sophisticated for working decoys.” (Dudley, page 80)

needed, and, on occasion, even re-worked and reshaped, resulting in some wonderful Holly-Fulcher marriages that still turn up from time to time today.

The stylish Holly bluebill was one of Bull's favorites, and when he was asked to loan pieces from his collection for an important national decoy exhibition at the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery at the University of Nebraska in 1975, he was delighted to ship it off to the Cornhusker State. The following year, when ornithologist, artist and professor Paul Austin Johnsgard prepared a book to memorialize the exhibit, "The Bird Decoy: An American Art Form," the bluebill was photographed for inclusion, still attributed to Mitchell Fulcher.

Bull's magnificent collection was dispersed at auction in March of 1983, but the bluebill never made it into the sale. Collector and author Henry Fleckenstein, having seen the bird and knowing full well who made it and how significant an example it was, purchased it directly from Bull in the late 1970s. His research confirmed what previous historians had suspected; that this particular bird was part of a small group of approximately 12 Jim Holly bluebills, all but a few of them drakes, used and found in Carteret County, North Carolina. Some early collectors attributed them to William Holly (1847-1925), Jim's older brother and the oldest son of John "Daddy" Holly (1813-1892), but the consensus today is that they were made by Jim. Now wearing the brands of collectors Bull and Fleckenstein, the beautiful and historic decoy stands as a wonderful example of the many Holly and other Susquehanna Flats decoys that migrated south.

The legacy of Upper Chesapeake Bay decoys used in the Carolinas and farther south is just one small piece of the larger story of their use outside of Maryland. As early as the 1850s, the Susquehanna Flats was firmly established as one of America's premier waterfowling destinations. In the decades that followed, the effectiveness, affordability and adaptability of the sturdy, quality decoys being produced there by John "Daddy" Holly, Dick Howlett, John Graham, Ben Dye, the Barnes family and the generation of makers who followed them, became equally famous. The nation's sporting elite purchased countless rigs of Upper Chesapeake Bay decoys, mainly from Havre de Grace, but also from the waterfront villages across the Susquehanna River in Cecil County, and brought them to ducking camps and clubs as far north as New England and as far west as the Great Lakes.

In the American South, Upper Chesapeake Bay decoys by a wide range of makers were brought to and used at gunning clubs, lodges and hunting camps all across the lower eastern shore of Virginia and up and down coastal North Carolina – North Bay and Shipps Bay, to Back Bay and Knotts Island, to Currituck Sound and into Albemarle Sound, and south to Pamlico Sound and Core Sound in the "Down East" region

"Mitchell Fulcher...

...was arguably North Carolina's most artistic and talented carver. Exemplifying his artistry, he rarely carved two stands of decoys alike. His imagination and focus manifest in differing styles, paint, and head patterns. He studied decoys from members of the Carteret Gun and Rod Club or simply the decoys he found adrift on Core Sound from other parts of the country. Northern carvers developed and handed down decoys that inspired him with new carving styles. The decoys that strongly influenced Mitchell were the Holly family decoys from Maryland, the Mason Factory decoys from Detroit, and decoys from New Jersey and the Delaware River area.

"A perfectionist, like Mitchell, would strive to carve the finest decoys that he possibly could make, so reproducing styles from other regions was natural for him. In Carteret County, only Mitchell Fulcher could accurately carve reproductions of the northern - made decoys brought to North Carolina by adventurous sportsmen. The same carving quality and differing styles appear in many species he carved, especially the blackheads, which show at least six different styles."

"On August 27, 1950, after finishing his lunch, Mitchell arose from the table, took a few steps and fell dead. One of the most unique characters to live in Carteret County of our time passed on. One of his fishing companions, Leckler Lewis, ... said of him ... 'He had a few close friends and no enemies.'" (per Andresen and Dudley, page 4).



"Like many artistic and talented people, Mitchell was somewhat eccentric. Replying to inquiries about Mitchell, acquaintances generally exhibit strong facial expressions, responding, "He was a character!" He was surely not just another nice guy who worked the water and made decoys. Many remember a furious temper, sometimes accompanied by violent actions. Though highly regarded by many, most refer to him as an intense waterman and decoy carver." (Dudley, page 79)

Carteret County & Core Sound

"The waters of Carteret County were one of the major hunting areas on the Outer Banks of North Carolina during the so-called "golden era," from around 1870 to 1950. Prior to then, the local people sustained their livelihood from farming, fishing and hunting, in about the same manner as the early white settlers. But shortly after the Civil War, the era of the sport hunter came of age. Many northerners came down to hunt waterfowl and hunting clubs sprang up all along the coast.

The redhead was king of Core Sound. The Canada goose and his cousin, the American brant, were the regal birds of Pamlico Sound and the shores of Ocracoke Island and Portsmouth Island. The sportsmen and clubs created new opportunities and jobs for the local people. Club caretakers, boat builders, hunting guides and decoy makers were able to supplement their incomes by providing professional services for the sportsman. In other areas of North Carolina, northern sportsmen were referred to as "sports," but in Carteret County they were always called "hunters."

Another cottage industry that flourished was the commercial hunting lodge, converting many private homes into accommodations for the sportsman. The entire family worked together providing bed, board, and guiding services. Many life-long, genuine friendships were kindled between the hunting guides and sportsmen.

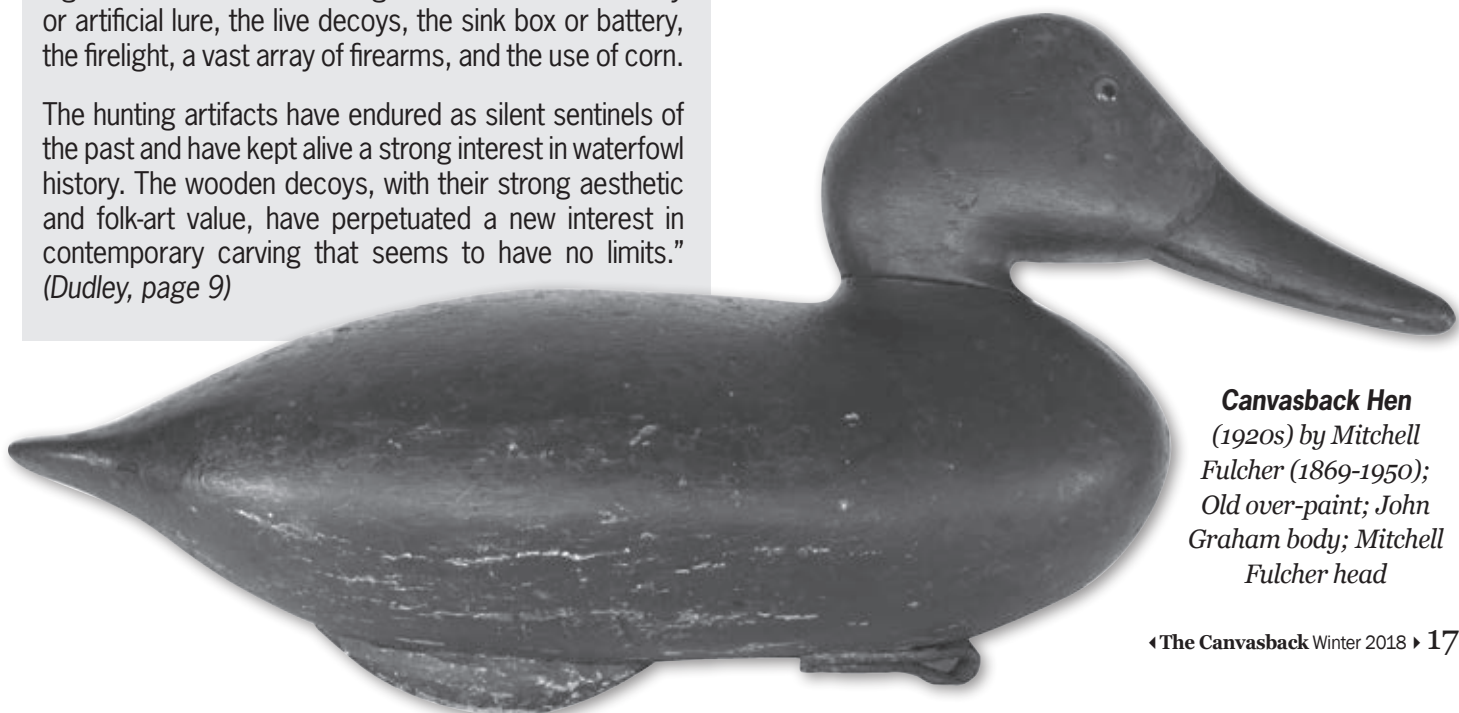
A hunting activity that paralleled early sport gunning was market hunting. Local people commercially hunted fowl and shipped them in barrels to markets in other areas where eager restaurateurs and consumers awaited the tasty delicacies. With the big demand for waterfowl, ingenious methods for hunting were devised – the decoy or artificial lure, the live decoys, the sink box or battery, the firelight, a vast array of firearms, and the use of corn.

The hunting artifacts have endured as silent sentinels of the past and have kept alive a strong interest in waterfowl history. The wooden decoys, with their strong aesthetic and folk-art value, have perpetuated a new interest in contemporary carving that seems to have no limits." (Dudley, page 9)

of the state. Most were divers – redheads, bluebills and canvasbacks, but examples of other species, including Canada geese and puddle ducks, such as pintails and widgeon, have also been found there. The brackish water in many parts of Carolina's estuaries helped preserve the original paint on some of the Chesapeake Bay decoys used in the state, making them important examples for today's collectors.

Entire rigs, consisting of hundreds of Upper Bay decoys each, were transported by rail from one gunning region to another as the "sports" made their own migration south in pursuit of the ducks, and then back again. In other instances, a wealthy hunter from another city or state would purchase a rig locally for use on the Susquehanna Flats, and arrange to keep it stored with a guide or property manager living nearby in Harford or Cecil County, rather than having it shipped to and from the Flats each season. For the huge rigs used in sinkbox shooting, and the large rigs used later in bushwhacking, this was simply the most practical means of rig maintenance and management. Later, as gunning in the Upper Chesapeake Bay waned, many of these same hunters and clubs arranged to have their entire outfits shipped by rail to wherever they would next be traveling to shoot, or simply where the gunning was better. Often, this meant down to Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

Decoys were shipped in for a number of reasons: because they were proven to be effective, sometimes because they were simply preferred by their owners or his guides, and also to replace or supplement what was available locally, which could vary greatly in terms of both quality and quantity. Because of this, it was common to see Holly family and other Upper Chesapeake Bay decoys riding side by side with locally made Carolina lures, as well as those made by Elmer Crowell, Lem Ackerly, Harry Shourds and the Mason factory, among many, many others.



Canvasback Hen
(1920s) by Mitchell
Fulcher (1869-1950);
Old over-paint; John
Graham body; Mitchell
Fulcher head

Clubhouse Decoys

from the collection of Doily Fulcher



Scaup drake from Mitchell Fulcher hunting stand; bottom is initialed "MF"; James Holly body; James Holly head (Mitchell Fulcher eyes); Mitchell Fulcher paint

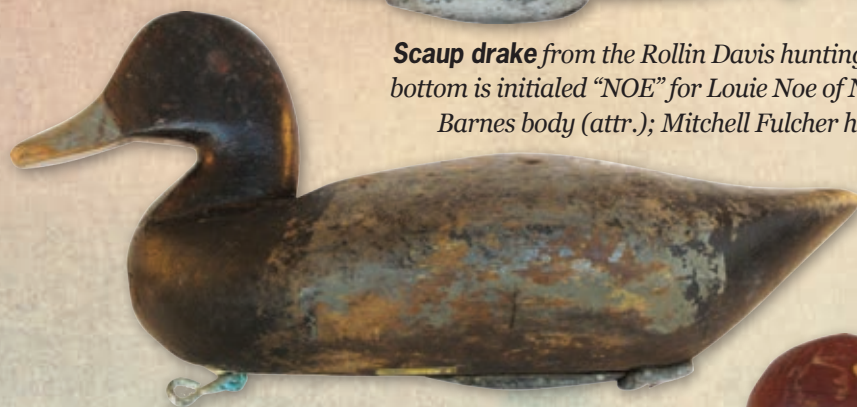


Pintail hen from William Henry Fulcher hunting stand; bottom is initialed "WHF"; James Holly body; Mitchell Fulcher head

Scaup drake from the family's hunting stand; bottom is initialed with family's cattle brand; James Holly body; Alvah Fulcher head



Scaup drake from the Rollin Davis hunting stand; bottom is initialed "NOE" for Louie Noe of NJ; Sam Barnes body (attr.); Mitchell Fulcher head



Redhead drake from Henry Murphy hunting stand; bottom is initialed "HM"; James Holly body; Henry Murphy head



A Holly or...

The Yankees of the Carteret Gun and Rod Club would usually leave their decoys in the water for the season at stake blinds owned by the club. The Davis and Stacy [North Carolina] shoremen would find these decoys after they broke loose from their anchors, and they referred to them as the "clubhouse decoys". Most of the clubhouse decoys were by James Holly of Havre de Grace, Maryland.

The devastating category 4 "Outer Banks hurricane" of 1933 destroyed all the gunning club lodges, boat houses and decoy sheds on Core Sound. Boats, decoys, and personal belongings went adrift and were scattered in the marsh. The locals were the first out in the marshes looking for their own boats and decoys. They consequently found thousands of duck and goose decoys made by northern carvers that belonged to the gun clubs.

After a legal confrontation between the locals and club owners, marine salvage laws allowed locals to keep these newly found decoys. They had already knocked off the original heads, attached their own, put their initials in the bottom, and added them to their personal stands. The modest decoys stands belonging to the locals suddenly more than doubled in a very short period of time with the addition of the clubhouse decoys.

The northern gun clubs never recovered from the devastation of this massive hurricane and most were reorganized with North Carolina ownership. This unexpected increase in the size of the decoy stands in the Core Sound area created a period for about ten years where very few new decoys were carved in Carteret County. The addition of the clubhouse decoys was more than enough to satisfy their commercial duck hunting guiding businesses.

a Fulcher?

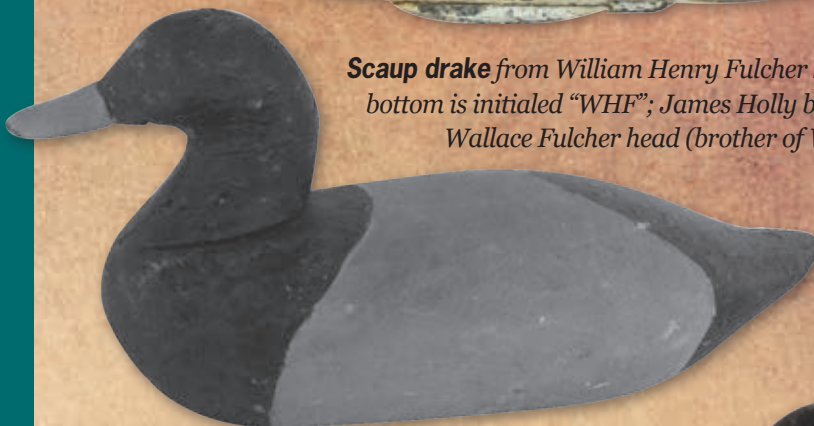
Mitchell Fulcher was one of these watermen who went looking for his own decoys and found a large number of James Holly decoys. Since he often guided at the Carteret Gun and Rod Club he probably went to this area first. When his son Carty inherited the family decoy stand it was noted that almost half of his decoys were clubhouse decoys with Holly and other Maryland carver's bodies. Since Mitchell was so good at reproducing the exact shape of the Holly heads, it was almost impossible to determine if it was his head or Holly's. This was particularly true when he added his paint application.

For the modern decoy collector, it created a nightmare in trying to determine which Mitchell Fulcher decoys were clubhouse decoys. The book *Mitchell Fulcher – Master Decoy Carver* illustrates how the problem was solved with the use of x-rays, revealing the different nail patterns in Fulcher's and Holly's decoys. (per Kroghie Andresen and Doily Earl Fulcher)

Scaup drake from Irving Fulcher hunting stand; bottom is initialed "IF"; James Holly body; Irving Fulcher head; Irving Fulcher paint



Scaup drake from William Henry Fulcher hunting stand; bottom is initialed "WHF"; James Holly body; Charles Wallace Fulcher head (brother of WHF)



Scaup drake from Eldon Willis and Elmer Salter hunting stand; no initials; James Holly body; Eldon Willis head; Eldon Willis and Elmer Salter paint

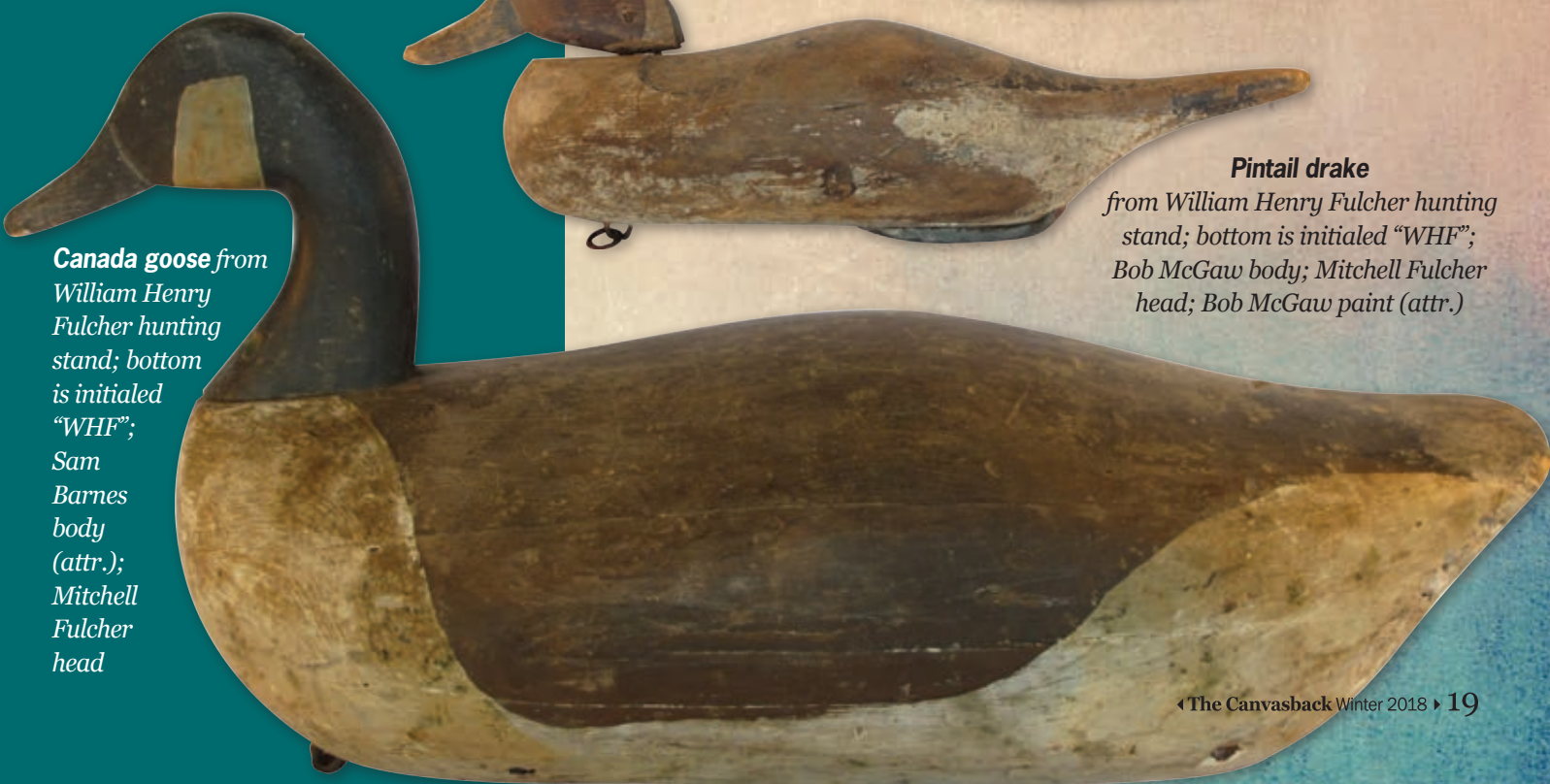


Pintail drake

from William Henry Fulcher hunting stand; bottom is initialed "WHF"; Bob McGaw body; Mitchell Fulcher head; Bob McGaw paint (attr.)



Canada goose from William Henry Fulcher hunting stand; bottom is initialed "WHF"; Sam Barnes body (attr.); Mitchell Fulcher head




Based on the numbers found in collections today, the vast majority of Susquehanna Flats decoys used in North Carolina seem to have been made by Jim Holly. Other examples of Upper Bay decoys used there that have been documented by collectors include those by John Graham, John “Daddy” Holly, birds attributed to and likely made by his other sons, William and John, Jr., Dick Howlett, Sam Barnes, Bob McGaw, Ben Dye, Henry and George Lockard, and Paul Gibson, among others.

Many northern sports, most from New York, gunned over Holly family decoys at various places on Currituck Sound in northeastern North Carolina. Their names or initials are found on the bottoms of many Jim Holly and other Upper Bay decoys that have surfaced in the region.

For Carteret County collectors, however, perhaps none of the “imported” Chesapeake Bay decoys were as significant or have had as lasting an impact on Carolina’s decoy-

making and waterfowling legacy as those first Jim Holly decoys that inspired and influenced Mitchell Fulcher. And, there is irony in the fact that it was Bull’s misidentified Holly bluebill—and the national visibility it received—that helped bring the Fulcher name to the attention of the decoy collecting community. Long a favorite with Carolina collectors and historians who recognize the craftsmanship in his carving and the uniqueness of his style, Fulcher (1869-1950) worked from the 1890s up through the 1930s. A prolific perfectionist, he is considered by many to be one of the state’s most talented and artistic decoy carvers.

When it came to decoy-making, Fulcher was keenly observant, imaginative, inventive and resourceful, seeing promise and purpose in everything around him. Fulcher adopted, assimilated and adapted the Upper Chesapeake Bay style for his own decoys, and as it was acculturated, proven to be effective and popularized, this in turn influenced the Carteret County style for generations to come.



Brant (early 1900s) by Mitchell Fulcher (1869-1950); Original paint; Holly style

References:

Andresen, Kroghie and Dudley, Jack, *Mitchell Fulcher: Master Decoy Carver*. Carolina Decoy Collectors Association, 2011.

Dudley, Jack. *Carteret Waterfowl Heritage*. Decoy Magazine, 1993.



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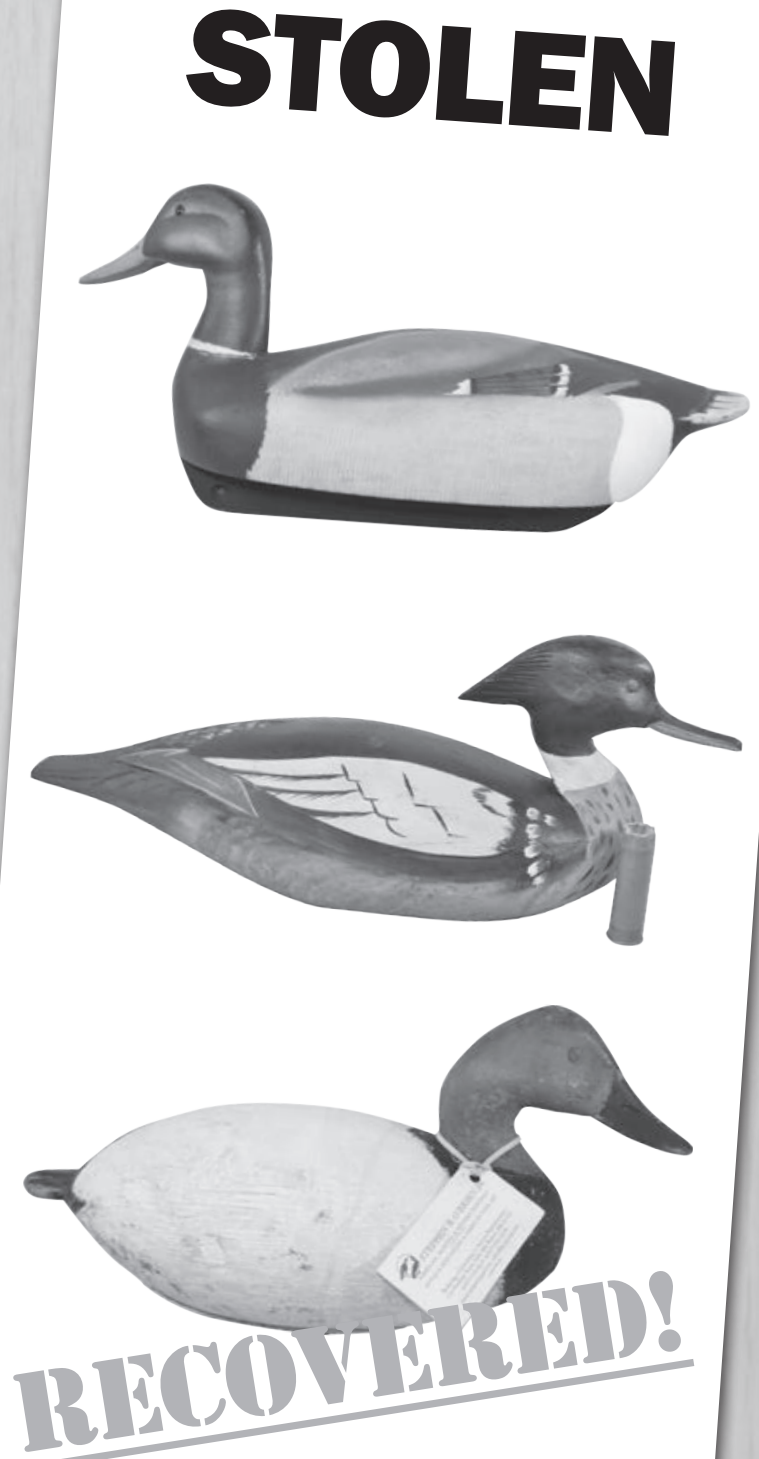


An Unfortunate Incident with a Happy Ending

During the 50th Annual Upper Shore Decoy Show in North East, Md. in October, Jim Trimble was dismayed to awaken on Saturday morning and discover that his car window had been smashed and three prized decoys had been stolen. Jim immediately issued a “be on the lookout” to the decoy-collecting community via email and social media. The timely and targeted BOLO worked. Jim finishes this tale of woe and its happy ending:

“My three duck decoys reported stolen on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2017 to the Maryland State Police, thanks to social media and our decoy collecting community, were returned safely and intact. The stolen birds, the result of a late-night smash (window) & grab at a North East, Maryland motel parking lot, included an original paint Ken Harris mallard with stamp, a signed original paint Davidson Hawthorne merganser, and an Ira Hudson football body canvasback with banjo fluted tail and a Stephen O’Brien business card identification tag. The morning of Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2017, I received a call from the older purchaser of my three decoys. He had unwittingly purchased the birds at a New Castle, Delaware farmers/flea market. When the birds were later shown to his decoy-collecting neighbor/friend, he was advised that the birds had been stolen, citing the said birds’ photos and descriptions posted on the Upper Bay Museum’s Facebook page. The purchaser, who has no online presence, called me immediately, was straightforward about returning the birds to their rightful owner, and was reimbursed for his money spent. Again, a big thank you to the Upper Bay Museum and the “eyes open” decoy-collecting community who expressed empathy and went to some effort to help and assist in the return of these decoys. It is much appreciated.”

Editor’s note: *Jim Trimble is a well-known decoy collector, a writer/historian of waterfowling history, a member of the Potomac Decoy Collectors’ Association, and a long-time friend and supporter of the Decoy Museum.*



J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest

The 16th annual J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest will be held on Saturday, May 5th at the Middle School Gym in conjunction with the 2018 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 Upper Bay Teal or Ruddy | 6 Best Delaware River |
| 2 Best John Graham | 7 Best Mid Bay/Eastern Shore Diving Duck |
| 3 Best Holly Family | 8 Best Virginia Puddle Duck |
| 4 Best Art Boxleitner Decoy | 9 Best Non-Factory Shorebird |
| 5 Best Susquehanna "Up River" | 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 (waived for Best Art Boxleitner Decoy). 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**

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Museum News

From the Desk of...

I trust that everyone had a joyous holiday season! Here at the Museum, we very much enjoy creating a festive environment and assisting our visitors in selecting the perfect gifts for their loved ones. We had great fun sharing our “ducky” holiday spirit in



the Annual Havre de Grace Christmas parade. Our participation in the Annual Havre de Grace Candlelight Tour, which was a true Winter Wonderland this year thanks to snow on December 9h, was a success. And for the second year in a row, we implemented a successful “12 Days of Christmas” social media campaign, designed to spotlight many of our unique Museum Store items. Speaking of our store, I have received several inquiries about an online option... please stay tuned, it will be coming soon; but in the interim, feel free to call us and we are happy to send photos and then ship your purchases!

Fall was very busy here at the Museum. In addition to student and adult tour groups, multiple rentals of our 2nd floor Carvers' Gallery, and of course, visitors from around the globe, we added or expanded upon existing programs. We held twelve Whittling Chip classes, educating 103 cub scouts on knife safety. We created a new field trip experience for elementary aged children, including species identification, which is ready to roll out in Spring 2018. We held a successful new family Halloween event, Carve & Candy, which will most certainly be repeated in 2018. In fact, we were inspired to create a similar theme event for Easter, which will be held on March 31st! Finally, we brought back, on a small scale, an auction fundraiser in connection with our Anniversary celebration. This too will return in 2018 on a larger scale.

Looking forward to a prosperous 2018,

Kerri

Current Exhibits @ the Museum

- **Our new display cases in the Carvers' Gallery now contain an exhibit of rare Carteret County and Core Sound, North Carolina decoys, courtesy of Kroghie Andresen and the Carolina Decoys Collectors Association.** (See page 13)

- **A new display of breathtaking decorative carvings from the personal collection of master carver and 2018 Festival honoree J. Noble Mentzer.**



- **A unique collection of North American songbird carvings donated by John Hostetter, Jr. in memory of his parents, John Sr. and Edith Hostetter**

- The Potomac Decoy Collectors Assoc. stunning collection of nearly seven-dozen colorful and elegant wood ducks in the Carvers' Gallery.

- John Collier's collection of Bill Gibian carvings with three breathtaking new additions – a full size swan and a pair each of mallards and wigeons rising.



- The Home Run Baker rig and bushwhack boat.

- A teal carved in the 1930s by Joseph Coudon of H, a gift from Pat Doherty.

- A beautiful decorative eastern blue bird carved by master carver Barb Wachter

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



- A lifelike rockfish (striped bass) carved by master carver Lee Tate, Sr.

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



Carve & Candy



Despite heavy rain on Sunday, October 29th that scotched the fire pits and marshmallow roast, sixty-four children and their parents (and in some cases, grandparents, too!) visited the Decoy Museum and the R. Madison Mitchell shop for our inaugural Carve & Candy event. Each of the Museum's three galleries was decorated in a different Halloween theme, and board members/carvers distributed candy to the costumed children. Out at the shop, the lines were literally wrapped around the building, with children patiently waiting to design their pumpkins for carving and to paint a silhouette in the shape of a duck, pumpkin, ghost, or bat. While waiting, the children played a sunken rubber duckie game for additional goodies. It was an evening of spectacular fun and it WILL be back, bigger and better, in 2018!

31ST ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday, November 5th, the Museum celebrated its 31st Anniversary with a Gala/Auction Fundraiser, held in the 2nd floor Carvers' Gallery. Forty-two individuals joined us for scrumptious fare prepared by Chefs Mac and Tony, a fifteen-item live auction of rare decoys and prints called by auctioneer Lynne Zink, a ten-item silent auction of decoys, a mystery duck game and a lottery duck game. Of note, the majority of the silent auction items were carved by "novice" carvers who had volunteered in the R. Madison Mitchell shop over the summer, and all proceeds from that portion of the evening have been designated for the continuing restoration of the shop. This too was a fantastic affair which will return in 2018!

We are extremely grateful for the many staff, volunteers and donors who made both of these events possible! THANK YOU

ARTHUR WILLIAM BOXLEITNER, JR.



We were sad to learn of the death of Art Boxleitner of Willow Street, PA on Friday, December 1, 2017. Art was 81 and one of our dearest friends and supporters. He found a calling in art when he was in high school, and it was at that time in his life that he was also introduced to duck hunting, according to Jim Trimble who wrote a wonderful cover story about Art in the winter 2010 issue of *The Canvasback*. It is well worth re-reading.

After serving our country in the Marine Corps, Art returned to Lancaster County and became a renowned artist and sign painter. His artistic passions later led him to carving and painting decoys to fill out his own gunning rig. But as his talents grew he began to create more finely-rendered decoys that were destined for the mantelpiece rather than the Susquehanna River. Art developed a wide following among collectors and reputation as a talented folk artist whose creations sold throughout the world.

Art was a life member of the Decoy Museum where his work is front and center. He painted the signs in the second floor Carvers' Gallery and made the wonderful sign – a great work of art in itself – that is the first thing you see when turning onto Giles Street at the Museum entrance.

To Barbara, their children, and Art's extended family, we want you to know that we share your loss. Art will not be forgotten here at Decoy Museum.



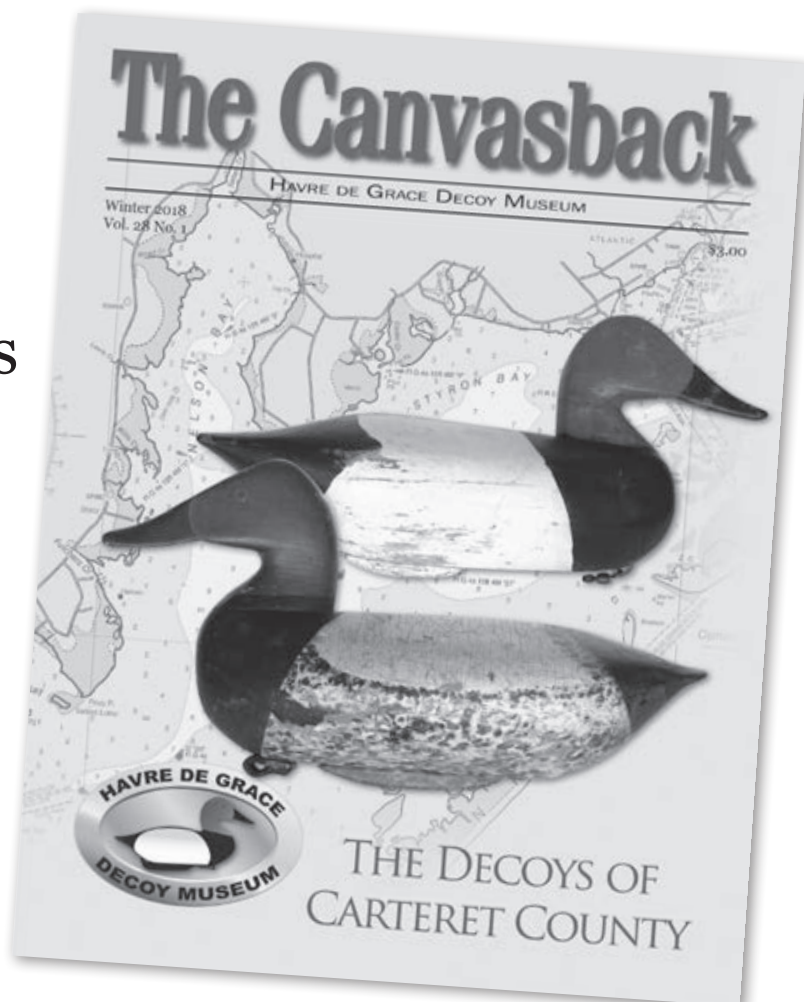


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- A subscription to **The Canvasback**
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- Complementary admission tickets to the Decoy Museum
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Thank you and welcome to the following members and 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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This year the
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pays tribute
to two of our
most steadfast
supporters as
honorary co-
chairmen of the
Decoy Festival.



Noble Mentzer is an active carver and mentor at the age of 90. Wondering what to do upon his retirement from the Aberdeen Proving Ground, he first considered knitting, which was the favorite pastime of his late wife, his beloved Dorothy. But his brother-in-law invited him to tag along to a carving class, and he found a new calling.

Noble carves very realistic decorative birds of all kinds. He loves to instruct and mentor new carvers – adults and children alike. He has rarely sold a carving or charged for a lesson. Typically, he carves only three of a kind – one for his son, one for his daughter, and one to keep for himself. Recently Noble very generously contributed his entire collection of wonderful carvings to the Decoy Museum, where we have them proudly on display in the Carvers' Gallery.

John Hostetter has grown a successful insurance agency in Aberdeen over the past 40 years. Very community minded, John served on the Board of the Decoy Museum for many years. He has always been an avid supporter. Recently John also made a very significant donation of North American songbird carvings in memory of his parents, John and Edith Hostetter. They too are proudly on display in the Carvers' Gallery.

We will take a closer look Noble and John in the spring issue of ***The Canvasback***.

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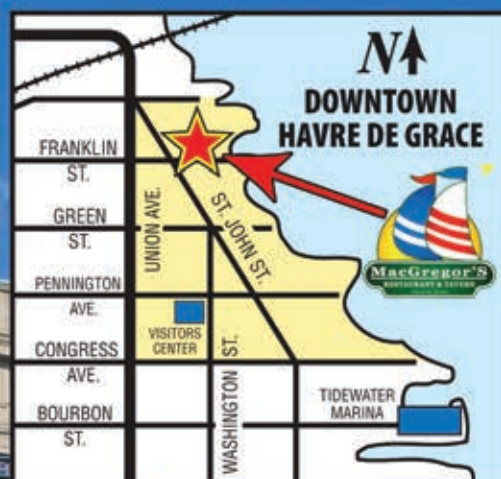
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