

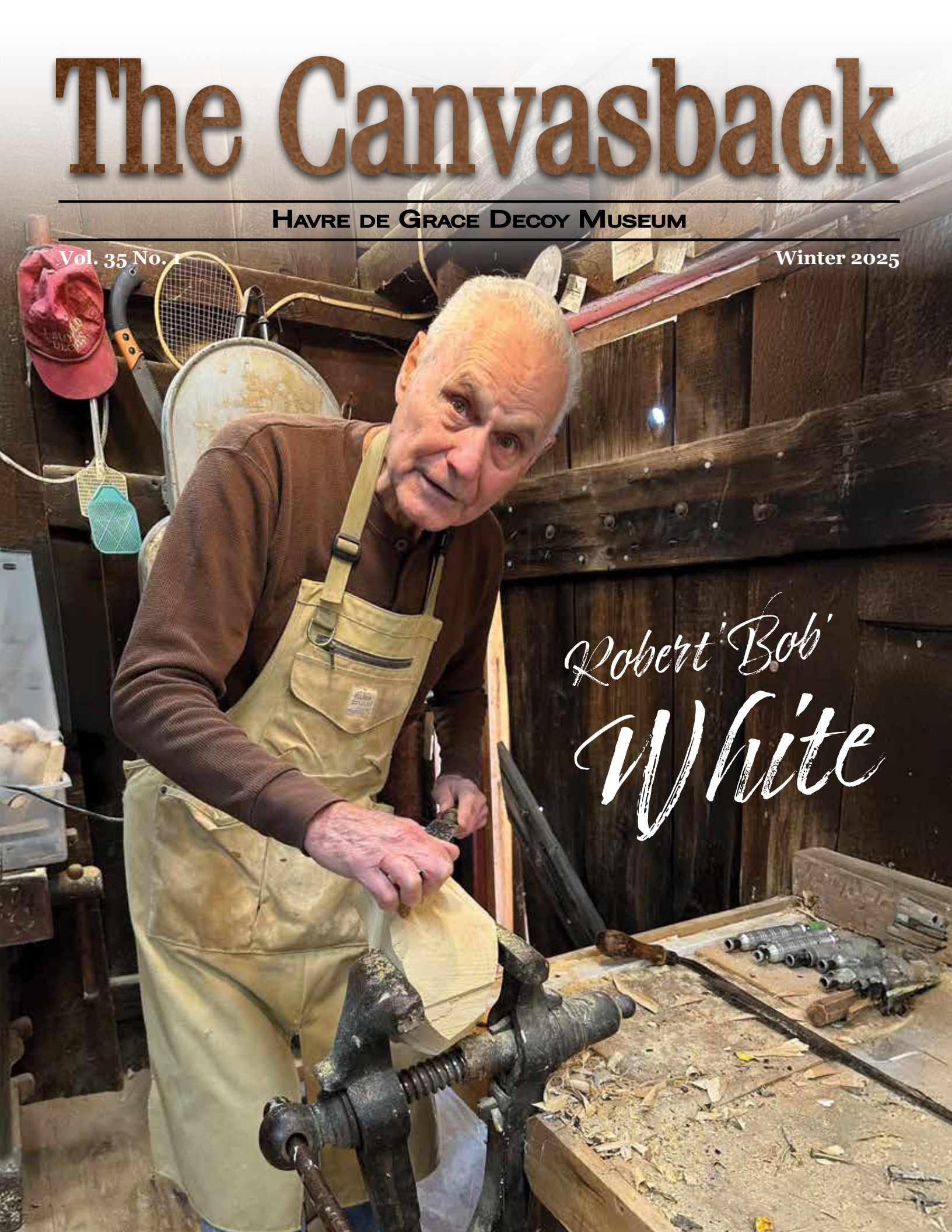
The Canvasback

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM

Vol. 35 No. 1

Winter 2025

*Robert 'Bob'
White*





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can•vas•back

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

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

THE MUSEUM WAS INCORPORATED IN 1981 AS A 501(c)(3) TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATION TO COLLECT, DOCUMENT, PRESERVE, AND INTERPRET WATERFOWL DECOYS AS A UNIQUE FORM OF FOLK ART.

FUNDED IN PART BY



The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council (msac.org)



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ON THE COVER

Bob White, Tullytown, PA, uses a rasp to shape a decoy body in his decoy shop. Bob has been making decoys in the Delaware River style for 72 years. An exhibit of Bob White decoys are on display at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum through mid-June 2025.

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2 All correspondence should be sent as above.

From the President...

One of my major initiatives since becoming President in 2019 has been to partner with other organizations that share common goals with the Decoy Museum. The Museum has had relationships with some of these organizations in the past, but it became very clear that in order to sustain and grow the Museum we had to increase our number of partners.



The Museum has had interactions with waterfowl conservation organizations such as Ducks Unlimited and Delta Waterfowl in the past, but in recent years we have formalized those relationships. Delta Waterfowl (Susquehanna Flats Chapter) is now the official partner for our annual Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival. Ducks Unlimited (Queen Anne's and Talbot County Chapters) has co-sponsored a Clay Shoot fundraiser with the Museum for the last two years. Ducks Unlimited National has chosen the Decoy Museum to be the destination of an excursion during their upcoming National Convention being held in Baltimore in May 2025.

Regional decoy collectors groups have existed for a number years. It has been our mission to raise the Museum's profile within these regional groups and solicit their expertise in helping us present scholarly exhibits, providing an opportunity for the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum to provide regional offerings in addition to the history and decoy folk art of the local area. Special thanks to Potomac Decoy Collectors Association (PDCA), Delmarva Decoy Collectors Association (DDCA), New Jersey Decoy Collectors Association (NJDCA), Upper Bay Decoy Collectors Club (UBDCC), Delaware Valley Decoy Collectors Association (DVEDCA), and East Coast Decoy Collectors (ECDC) for being willing partners in our mission.

In addition to the decoy collectors throughout our region, we have recently partnered with Guyette & Deeter, a prominent auction house that specializes in sporting art and collectibles. Through that partnership, we are able to host the fabulous collection of Ted & Judy Harmon from Barnstable, MA. This exhibit has lured numerous decoy aficionados.

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum has embarked on arguably the most ambitious project in its nearly forty-year history, namely a 12,000 square foot museum expansion that will allow for the preservation of the R. Madison Mitchell decoy shop and its incorporation into the interior of the new facility. The project will enable the Museum to better take advantage of current and future technological advances to make our programming more interactive and immersive. With the untimely closing of the Ward Museum in Salisbury, MD, the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum has an opportunity to position itself as a regional or super-regional museum dedicated to the preservation of the cultural heritage of waterfowling and the folk art of decoy making. The project has cleared the hurdle of the Havre de Grace Planning Commission and is entering the fundraising phase. It will be absolutely imperative that the Museum continue with our current partners and forge new relationships with additional partners in order to achieve our goal. Our history is worth preserving and we intend to make every effort to be successful. We hope that you are willing to accompany us on this journey.

Rodney Dean Schwarm

Rodney Dean Schwarm (Rod) passed away peacefully on September 30, 2024 at age 76. Rod was born to Pauline and Laurence Schwarm on March 26, 1948 in Larned, Kansas. Rod grew up on a beautiful 300 acre farm in Greensburg, Kansas with his two brothers Larry and David Schwarm. Rod learned the value of hard work very early helping his father harvest hay and vegetables; caring for over 400 sheep, horses, cows, and various different birds; and helping build structures or perform maintenance around the farm. Rod also helped his mother in the kitchen learning how to bake pies and cakes; can jellies; and cook comforting homemade country food with ingredients straight from the farm. As Rod grew he formed a love of baking and animals as well as becoming a master wood craftsmen.

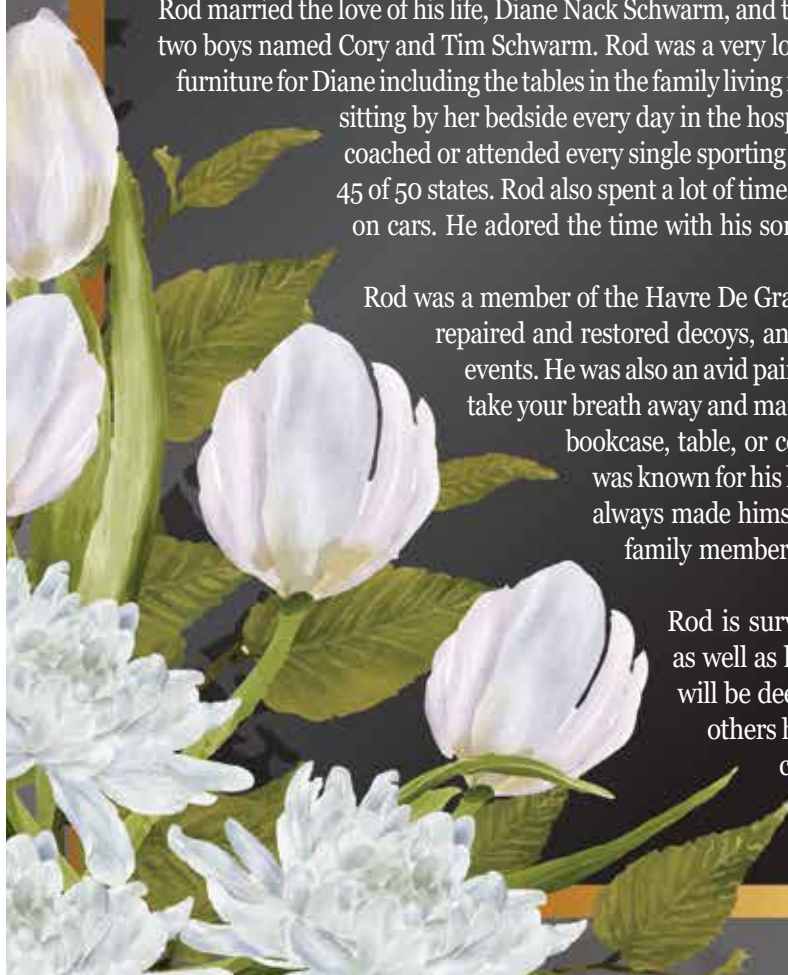


Rod joined the US Marines in 1966. While serving he earned the National Defense Service Medal; Vietnamese Service Medal; Combat Action Ribbon; Purple Heart Medal; Vietnamese Campaign Medal; Presidential Unit Citation M-14 Rifles Marksman; and Good Conduct Medal. After Rod's service in the US Marines he spent time camping with his dog Ginger who stole his heart and you never saw Rod without Ginger by his side. Later, with a bachelor's degree in biology, Rod worked for the Department of the Army in the US Army Corps of Engineers for over 20 years.

Rod married the love of his life, Diane Nack Schwarm, and they were married for 33 years. Together they had two boys named Cory and Tim Schwarm. Rod was a very loving husband and father. Rod handcrafted wood furniture for Diane including the tables in the family living room and was devoted to her every need including sitting by her bedside every day in the hospital during her multiple battles with cancer. Rod coached or attended every single sporting event for his two boys and took them camping to 45 of 50 states. Rod also spent a lot of time teaching Tim how to paint and Cory how to work on cars. He adored the time with his sons and was always there when they needed him.

Rod was a member of the Havre De Grace Decoy Museum. He hand carved new decoys, repaired and restored decoys, and could be frequently found at decoy shows and events. He was also an avid painter and carpenter. His landscape portraits would take your breath away and many of Rod's family members have a rocking chair, bookcase, table, or corner cabinet that was handcrafted by him. Rod was known for his kindness to others and was the type of person that always made himself available to help a fellow neighbor, friend, or family member. No matter what they needed Rod found a way.

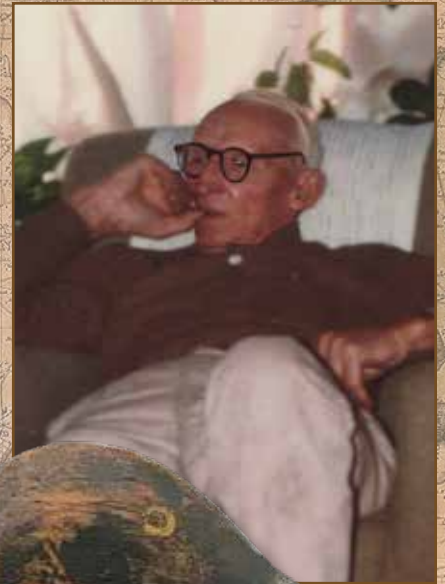
Rod is survived by his two sons Cory and Tim Schwarm as well as his two brothers Larry and David Schwarm. He will be deeply missed by his family and friends as well as others he touched throughout his life. His kindness will carry through for generations and he will hold a place in the hearts of many.



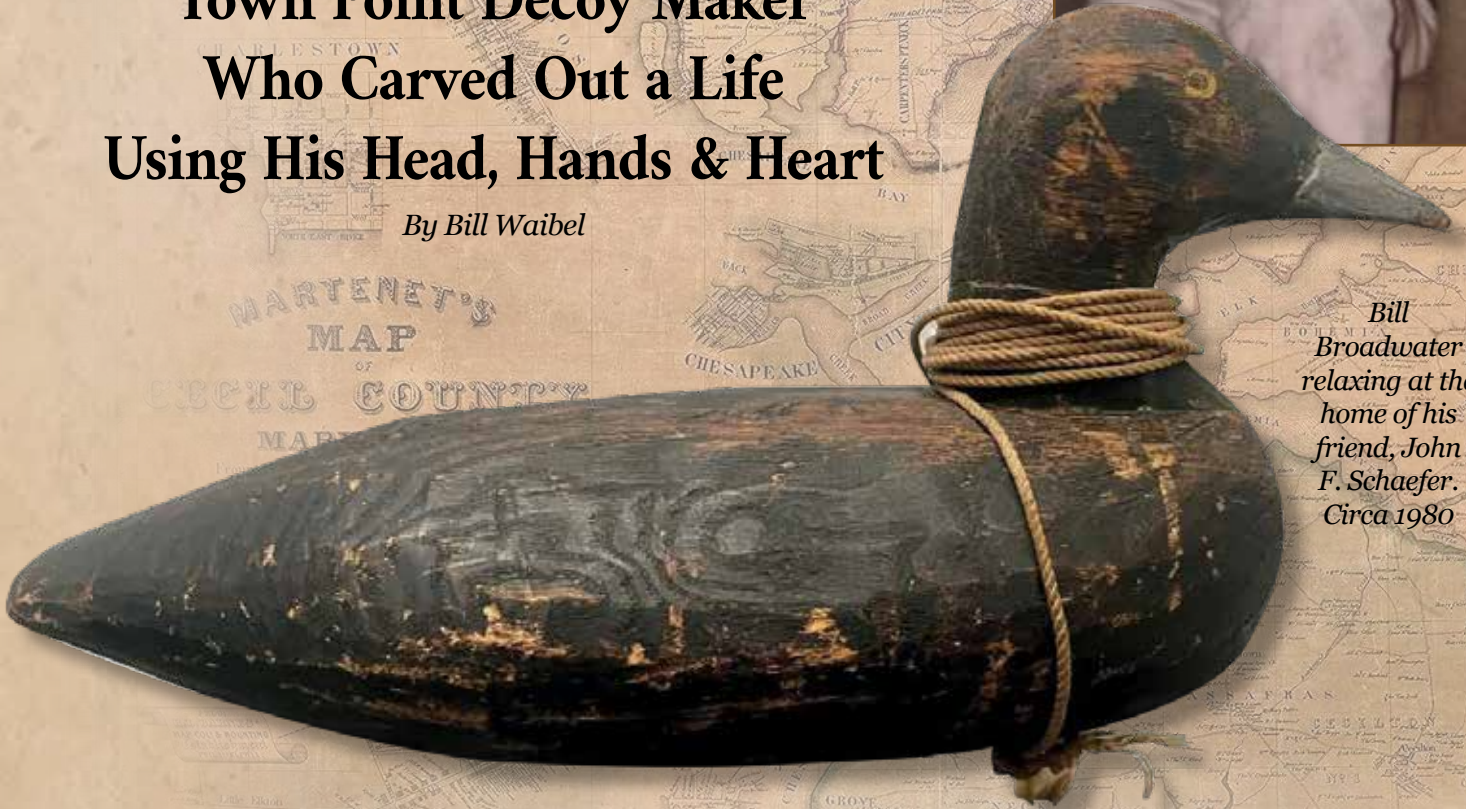
Cap'n William "Bill" Broadwater

**Town Point Decoy Maker
Who Carved Out a Life
Using His Head, Hands & Heart**

By Bill Waibel



*Bill
Broadwater
relaxing at the
home of his
friend, John
F. Schaefer.
Circa 1980*



*The only Broadwater coot that has been found. This bird wears the 'JAB' brand and has an inletted head.
From the collection of Brian Kirby*

If decoy collectors were asked to name three makers from Cecil County, Maryland, the list would vary but many familiar names would rank among the responses. Answers would range from John B. Graham to George Washington Barnes, Will Heverin and, of course, Ben Dye. There would be more; Wally Algard, the Lockard Brothers, Leonard Pryor, and Henry Davis, among others. One maker from the southern end of the county would likely not make the cut. This article will give a snapshot look at William Wagner "Bill" Broadwater from Town Point Neck.

Town Point Neck is situated just south of Chesapeake City and is bordered on the north and west by the Elk River and Back Creek, while the Bohemia River makes up its southern boundary. Arguably the most picturesque part of Cecil County, this area boasts large fields of corn, soybeans and wheat and thick, mature forests containing oak, maple, pine, holly and a host of other flora common along the Atlantic Coastal Plain. This truly is “The Land of Pleasant Living” and a drive through the area especially in October or May will provide a most pleasant experience for the sightseer.

The Neck provided a young man with sporting ambitions a fertile field to pursue waterfowl and small game. With the rivers bordering this area, it is easy to imagine the opportunities for waterfowl hunting, or “gunning” to use the proper bay country vernacular. Canvasbacks, redheads, blackheads (greater and lesser scaup) were the species of ducks that garnered full attention from local gunners. Additionally, black ducks, coot, mallards, teal and Canada geese were also sought, albeit, to a lesser degree. Rabbits, squirrel, and bobwhite quail were also plentiful and provided additional sustenance and sport for the locals who knew their way around the fields and woods and could handle a shotgun.

Decoy making, the true American folk art, has been practiced in Cecil County since the 1840s, and earlier. Men chopped decoy bodies and whittled heads in most waterfront hamlets throughout the Bay country. As mentioned earlier, many achieved notoriety while others remained obscure. Fortunately, enough information has surfaced to solidify

into the annals of decoy making lore the work of Broadwater. Broadwater was born April 2, 1896, to William, Sr., and Alisha Frazer Smith, in the Town Point community of Cecil County. His father was born in New Jersey (1870) and his mother in Pennsylvania (1872).

Bill’s father and grandfather, Daniel Broadwater, were watermen and fished the Elk, and Bohemia rivers as well as the Upper Chesapeake Bay. Prior to settling in Town Point Neck, Daniel listed his occupation as “fisherman” while living in Philadelphia in 1870. Farming and working the water were the predominant occupations in the rural areas surrounding Chesapeake Bay in the late 1800s through the 1960s. This lifestyle was deeply ingrained in Broadwater, considering his lineage.

By 1910, Broadwater was 14 years old and still living with his parents and four siblings in the village of Port Herman. Education was important to William Sr. and Alicia, as all the children could read and write and attended school. According to Bill’s granddaughter, Lynn Mahaffy, Ph.D., he completed 8th grade and was extremely gifted with his hands and quite mechanically inclined. Broadwater had the ability to manufacture anything he needed, an invaluable attribute at the time.

It is likely that he was helping his father fish the Elk River at this point. Many Port Herman neighbors were also engaged in this line of work. Pound nets were nets strung between posts driven into the bottom and still are commonly used on the Chesapeake Bay and surrounding rivers. Herring, shad,



Trio of canvasbacks in original paint illustrating the variance of form in Broadwater’s work. The roughly finished surface is an indicator of some of Bill’s earlier (1920s) work. The paint scheme is relatively attractive and shows an intimate knowledge of the canvasback’s plumage. From the Tim Cole collection.



Canvasback drake, branded 'JAB' made in the mid 1940s and used on Demi-John Island. Repainted by Charlie Joiner in the 1950s. This model is a bit more refined than Broadwater's earlier work and even has carved wings, likely done with a small gouge.

rockfish and perch were the commonly caught species and were sold locally to buyers who would ship to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, D.C. via railroad or boat. The Upper Chesapeake Bay and surrounding rivers were healthy and bountiful at that point in history and a good living could be had for those who worked hard and had an intimate knowledge of the fish and their movements.

Since fishing slowed during the winter months, many fishermen also gunned waterfowl for the market, using the same buyers the fish went to. Others shot enough to feed their families during the lean, winter months. No evidence has been found to determine whether Broadwater gunned for the market, but that is certainly a possibility. This period (1910s) is likely when young Bill started gunning in earnest.

Later in the decade the clouds of war were brewing in Europe and by May 1917, Bill had enlisted in the National Guard. By July, Broadwater was activated for service in the United States Army and sent to a Pioneer Infantry Unit as an individual replacement. He departed for Europe on September 6, 1918, just prior to the Meuse-Argonne Offensive which was the last major Allied campaign of the Great War. There is evidence to suggest that Broadwater served in an evacuation hospital and later, a camp hospital. Bill departed France on June 29, 1919, from the port of St. Nazaire on, appropriately enough, the USS Susquehanna. He was honorably discharged as a Private First Class on July 22, 1919. I cannot help but wonder how the war affected Broadwater as he undoubtedly saw horrific sights in the hospitals where he was stationed.

Broadwater was still living on Town Point Road with his parents and three of his sisters in 1920. He was 23 years old and trying to settle into the civilian life after the trials and trauma of serving in France. In addition to fishing, Bill was working as a laborer on the farm now owned by his father. This vocation was likely therapeutic since Bill was no stranger to plain, hard work and loved being outdoors. Broadwater started to chop out decoys during the 20s, for his own use. He would not have had the disposable income to buy decoys from the commercial makers such as Pryor or Standley Evans, and besides, he could experience the satisfaction of making his own rig and gunning over it.

During the early part of the decade, Broadwater courted a young Elkton girl named Helen Greagson. Helen was four years younger and worked in a textile mill, operating a shearing machine. The couple married and were later blessed with their only child, Ruth, on December 3, 1924. Bill was still working on farms and fishing, and Helen was raising their daughter at home.

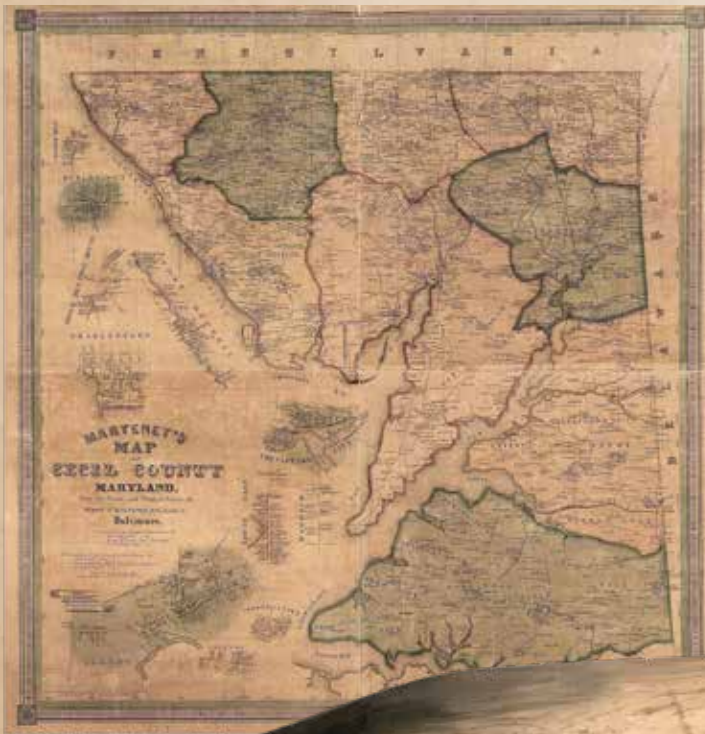
Sometime in the 1930s, Bill started working for RRM Carpenter, Sr, an executive at E.I. du Pont Nemours and Company in Wilmington, Delaware. Carpenter owned several farms in lower Cecil County along the Bohemia River. Bill initially worked as an engineer/mechanic on Carpenter's boats, proving his mettle daily. All the while, Broadwater continued to work the water with the deftness of a river otter. In fact, John Cole who penned, "*Decoys from the Home Run Baker Rig*," allowed, "the acknowledged master waterman of the upper Chesapeake Bay for the last 75 years

of the twentieth century, William Broadwater, Pop, as he was called by his family, could outsmart anything that swam in or on these waters, and he would successfully navigate under any conditions any vessel floating on these waters". Broadwater also carried the title of Cap'n his whole adult life, a handle that is bestowed, not lightly, on a waterman who garners respect from his peers.

By 1940, Bill was 44 years old and listed his employment as an overseer of private land. As caretaker of the Carpenter estate, his multifaceted position would include some farming, repairing whatever needed fixing, dock building, landscaping, chauffeuring, guiding fowl and fish and skippering Carpenter's boats for him. The promotion is indicative that Bill had earned Carpenter's trust. The estate was located where the Bohemia Bay Yacht Harbor presently sits, accessible from Town Point Road. According to his granddaughter, Broadwater built a log cabin that still stands on the property, floating the logs from the Route 213 bridge downriver and hauling them up the bank using nothing but sweat and ingenuity. He was a man that seemingly could do anything. Lynn also relayed that her mother, Ruth, grew up with full run of the Carpenter property and kept a log canoe there. In addition, Bill built his daughter a sailboat that she frequently sailed up and down the Bohemia River. Not everyone can go and build a sailboat from scratch, but Cap'n Bill Broadwater wasn't just anybody.

By 1950, Bill was still working for Carpenter and Ruth was still living with her parents. After graduating from Washington College in Chestertown, Ruth was teaching at North East High School, a job she did not particularly enjoy. Ruth moved to Wilmington shortly thereafter and took a job as a secretary at DuPont.

Broadwater guided a group of men led by Peter D. Furness (1914-2000) a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps 6th Division during World War II and fought during the invasions of Guadalcanal, Guam, and Okinawa. Pete founded a successful electrical contracting company in New Castle, Delaware. The group owned Demi-John Island on the Chester River, which, like many other small islands in the Chesapeake watershed, has washed away due to rising water levels. The island was four miles downriver from Chestertown, close to the mouth of Southeast Creek. Larry Ortt (b. 1944), of Chesapeake City, gunned the island as a young man as his brother married Furness's granddaughter, Cynthia. Ortt recalls the island had several duck blinds and a cozy club house allowing the members to get away for days at a time, enjoy the camaraderie of fellow gunners and experience some fine shooting with an experienced guide. Fantastic shooting for canvasbacks was experienced by the men from the 30s through late 50s, but their numbers dwindled almost inversely with the increase of the Canada goose population. Being a resourceful guide, Broadwater was able to adapt and became an effective goose caller. Bill made a large rig of canvasback decoys for the club in the early 40s, but they were unfortunately stolen sometime in the late 1950s.



*1920-30
canvasback
showing
Broadwater's
wet on wet
painting
technique that
allowed for
subtle blending*



Whether guiding for Carpenter or Furness, Broadwater was considered a close friend and confidant to these men, despite being not so close on the socioeconomic scale. I expect that there were times these men would have liked to trade places with Broadwater—except for the financial part. Bill was respected as a man’s man and the bond that gunners share can only be understood by those of us fortunate enough to have experienced it. In addition, Broadwater was considered one of the finest wing shooters on the entire Upper Bay. He apparently had some relationship with Frank “Home Run” Baker of Trappe, Maryland. Baker was considered the finest shot on the Lower Bay. One can only imagine these two gentlemen, shoulder to shoulder in a duck blind, methodically picking apart a dart of canvasbacks that made were making their final approach to the decoys.

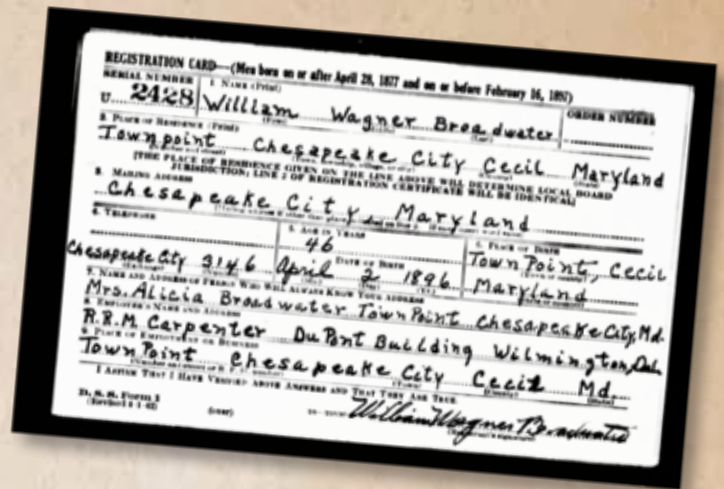
The scarcity of Broadwater decoys can be partially attributed to the Chester River larceny; however, Bill’s production was limited. I found no evidence that Broadwater was making decoys commercially, although he may have made some for sale. If this is the case, it most certainly was the exception and not the rule.

I have handled around a dozen examples over the years, and all have been canvasbacks except for a lone coot. The writer is always on the lookout for a Broadwater redhead or blackhead, but doubts that he made them. A puddle duck or goose would be an exciting discovery but will likely never happen. Most were made from Paulownia, also known, colloquially, as cottonwood due to its light color and weight. This Asian import came to be common as the seed pods were used in the same manner that Styrofoam packing peanuts are used in today’s shipping. When a crate was unpacked at a train station, wagon depot or farm, the paulownia seed pods made their way to ground and started growing and multiplying. This wood was commonly used in decoys from the Eastern Shore of Virginia, particularly Chincoteague, but less so along the Upper Bay.

Cottonwood was easily worked with sharp tools and, when dried properly, is noticeably light in weight. Finding a suitable supply of this wood to make a large rig of decoys would not have presented much of a problem for Broadwater. As a caretaker of large properties and farms, the trees were pretty numerous and, at that time, had little commercial value.

Broadwater decoys were all hand chopped but initially cut out on a bandsaw. After cutting out the basic top-down pattern, he started chopping with a hatchet to get the basic proportions and then further refined with a draw knife and spokeshave. The heads are made of white pine and were also cut out on a bandsaw and whittled with a pocketknife.

The bodies are consistent although they do show subtle differences in length, breadth and depth as can be expected



Broadwater’s draft card from World War II



Canvasback showing the inlaid head attachment. While this technique was commonly used in Maine, it was almost unheard of on the Upper Bay

with hand chopped birds. In most cases the breast is broad, and the bodies are wide and flat with a low chine. The bottom on the more recent works is somewhere between slightly rounded and a shallow “V” shape design, while the early examples tend to be flatter underneath. Regardless, each configuration allowed for a very stable decoy that worked well on big water providing greater visibility at a distance. When viewed from the side profile, some are thinner, and are likely his earlier efforts. Neck shelves are absent and the tail tapers gradually from just aft of mid back and mid belly to form a tail. The taper flow is quite linear, so not a paddle tail like Heverin or Dye, even though the tail forms from the center of the body. The bottom tail cut is slightly more abrupt than the top cut, and the tip of the tail is cut square at the end. Tool marks are visible on all parts of the bird, as Broadwater did not utilize sandpaper.

While Broadwater’s decoy heads do not show the fineness of a Pryor or Henry Lockard head, they are competent and built to last. His earliest works show heads with a bit of a “Roman nose” and tool marks throughout and generally not well finished. On the later birds, Bill took some time to round out the back of the head and throat and left a flat area on the side of the head and neck. Typical bill delineation was cut in along with a small “V” at the top of the bill. No nostrils or mandibles have been observed in the examples I have handled, but heads are attached with a wooden dowel or possibly long finish nails with a dowel used to fill the channel between the nail head and the top of the decoy head. Of interest is some Broadwater decoys, including the

coot, have inletted heads made in a comparable manner to those fashioned in Maine. One example in my collection has carved wing delineation that was done with a small gouge. Ballast weights vary but exhibit the typical Upper Bay sand cast design on the later birds, while the earlier models wear a lead strip weight. Each style was affixed with a single nail at each end.

Some of the earlier, more rudimentary examples by Broadwater have surfaced that still wear original paint. The paint application is quite interesting, and Bill showed a bit of artistic bent that is somewhere skewed between impressionistic and realism but leaning towards the former. He painted the duck with white lead and while still tacky, applied the black breast and tail paint and some random light brush strokes that indicated wings and side pocket feathering. In addition, he pulled from the black paint at the front of the tail and back of the neck onto the white back and created a nice, blended feathery look. The wing speculums were present with the typical black slash marks that were more or less, carefully applied.

Several examples of Broadwater canvasback decoys bear the brand, “JAB”, along the ballast weight. All these examples were repainted by Charlie Joiner, of Chestertown, sometime in the late 50s. I was initially told that the brand was for James A. Baines, an attorney from Easton. Research failed to uncover any evidence of this gentleman, so the search continues to identify the brand owner and what connection he had with Broadwater.



1940s canvasback showing the “JAB” brand and Charlie Joiner’s signature and repaint date of 1950



Canvasbacks pair from 1940s and Joiner repair. Broadwater made very few hens. Collection of David Farrow.

My greatest take away after studying Broadwater decoys is that they were built tough, and I have yet to see one with a neck crack or broken bill. Cap'n Bill knew what he was doing and despite not being as stylish as some of his contemporaries, his decoys held up to tough use and were utilitarian tools that fit his personality perfectly. John Cole also wrote, "Cap'n decoys are not pieces of art, but their reputation for effectiveness and the fact they were made on Town Point were my motivation to seek an example for my collection". Cole was a neighbor to Broadwater on Town Point.

Cap'n Bill has been described as a rugged built, physically strong man who could outwork men half his age. A life spent outdoors doing tough work, kept him young even into his late 80s. I have yet to speak with anyone who knew him that did not mention his physical prowess, quick wit and propensity for figures.

After retiring from his caretaker job with Carpenter, Broadwater and a couple of other men built Two Rivers Yacht Basin on the Bohemia. To cut down on costs, he went to Baltimore and procured hundreds of heavy wooden crates that were made to ship pickles and turned the planks into decking along the docks. Bill ran the Basin until he "retired" again in 1968, when they sold the marina to Jose' Aguliar. Bill was a true "triple threat"; having extraordinary aptitude for mechanical theory, the ability to manufacture, repair or invent whatever he needed and, most importantly, a strong work ethic.

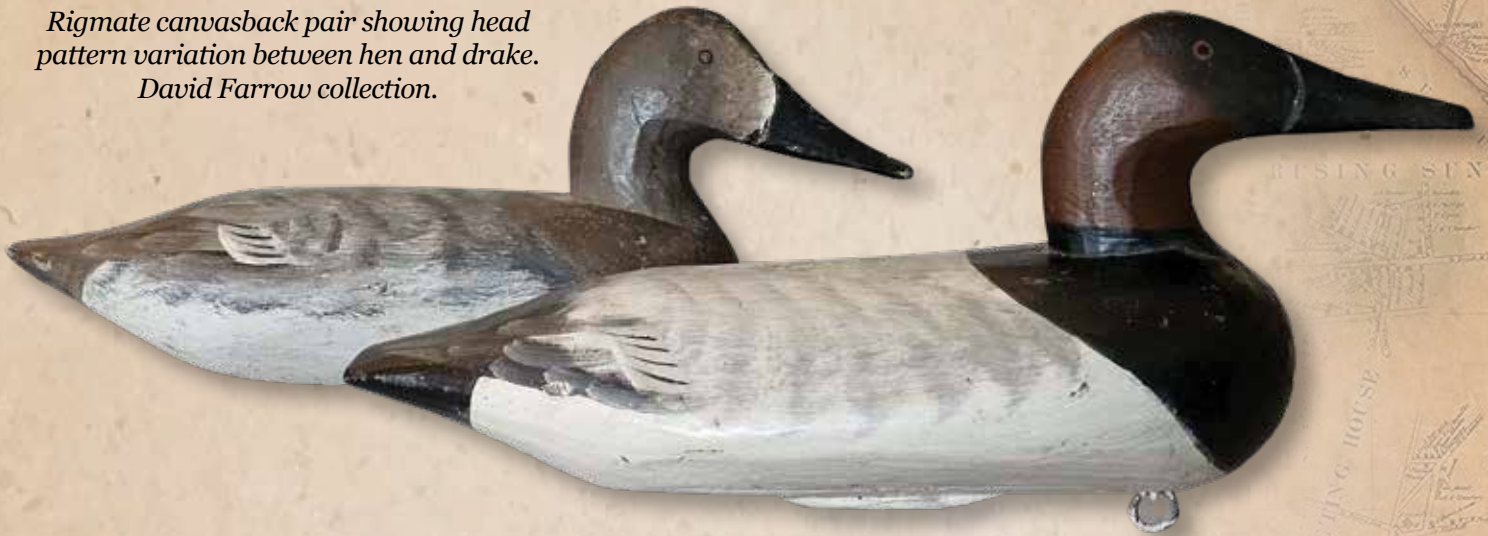
Broadwater's vocational life that was multifaceted. In addition to fishing and farming, Bill served in the US Army in World War I, possibly as an ambulance driver, or field

hospital worker. He was a long-time caretaker of Carpenter's large estate, a hunting guide, and a building contractor, he built a marina on the Bohemia River and ran it for several years. Cap'n Broadwater was considered one of the top boat mechanics on Upper Bay. Despite having an 8th grade education, Broadwater was well versed in all things mechanical, and I would venture to guess that he could do math in his head.

We do know that Bill Broadwater was a social man and had many friends. Among them were John Francis Schaefer, of Chesapeake City, who owned Schaefer's Canal House, a restaurant and official depot for exchanging ship pilots skippering large vessels that transversed the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. Schaefer was the front man in the endeavor while his sister ran the business. John had an "office" and entertained many friends most every afternoon, discussing politics, sports, news, off color jokes, and, of course, gunning in the old days. A bottle of Seagram's Seven was in a prominent spot on Schaefer's desk and drinks were poured with full hospitality. Bill was known to frequent the place well into his late 70s and was usually there on Mondays as he took Helen to her weekly hairdresser appointment in Chesapeake City.

RK (Bob) Fears, a retired sheriff and arson investigator on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, was very close to Broadwater in his early days. He was third cousin to Bill and his grandfather, RK Fears, Sr. was Broadwater's closest friend. Bob recently told me that Broadwater took him under his wing as a boy, teaching him everything from gunning and fishing to pile driving and dock building. Bob gunned on Demi-John Island many times as a boy and has fond recollections of the great gunning there. He reiterated that

*Rigmate canvasback pair showing head pattern variation between hen and drake.
David Farrow collection.*



“Uncle Bill” could do anything with his hands and was exceptionally smart. This mentorship continued until Broadwater’s passing. Bob relayed an interesting story about a bet he took, as a young man, from John Schaefer during one of the afternoon “Happy Hours” at Schaefer’s office. John bet Bob five dollars and a pint of whiskey that he would not scale the arch on the Chesapeake City bridge that spans the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. Uncle Bill didn’t try and stop him, and he scampered up there and completed the task. He didn’t know that his mother was watching from below until later, when she said, “I never know what you will do next” and shook her head.

Except for Bill’s time serving in France, the Broadwaters spent their lives on and around the Bohemia River on Town Point Neck. They did occasionally spend a month or two sailing one of Carpenter’s boats down the coast to Florida for some rest and relaxation, enjoying the warm weather.

Of interest to decoy collectors is the friendship that Broadwater shared with fellow decoy maker, Miles Hancock, of Chincoteague, Virginia. They gunned together on several occasions and discussed decoy making. Whether or not Hancock influenced Broadwater in using cottonwood to make his decoys is unknown at this point.

When I first learned of a “decoy maker from Hack’s Point who was a Native American” years ago, the name Bill Broadwater surfaced. While his WWII draft card has Broadwater listing himself as “White,” despite having another choice, “Indian”. I have spoken with several people who knew Broadwater, and all thought he was Native American. His granddaughter remembers hearing that he

had some Native blood but had nothing official to prove or disprove the theory. At this point, further research is necessary and ongoing.

Much like the man himself, Broadwater decoys were the epitome of utilitarian and sturdy. While they lack the gracefulness of a Jim Holly or Scott Jackson decoy, the writer is confident that big piles of ducks were killed over them. Bill taught himself to make decoys and designed them to last. With a lack of formal training and having basic tools, he did what he always did and figured it out on his own. The rugged, hand chopped look and the man that Bill was make his decoys very collectable. They tell of a place in time where life was simpler and, in many ways, better.

Less than a year after Helen’s death, Broadwater passed away on March 29, 1988, a few days shy of his 92nd birthday. He and Helen are interred at St. Augustine Cemetery, close to their beloved Town Point Neck.

Many of us find unknown decoys both fascinating and frustrating. The writer has the same feelings about the lesser-known makers whose fame has been marginalized, usually for lack of available information. Broadwater falls squarely into this category, but conversations and research will continue as his legacy as a decoy man deserves our best efforts.

The writer would like to thank the following people for their assistance in crafting this tale: Lynn Mahaffy, Ph.D., Larry Ortt, Tim Cole, RK Fears, Jack Manning, Chad Tragakis & Sam Van Culen.

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On Opening Day, Decoy Enthusiasts Enjoyed Lunch Overlooking the Susquehanna Flats Along with a Massachusetts Decoy Discussion Digestif

By Michael Daley



Jon Deeter (L), Steve Harmon (C), and Judy Harmon (R) participate in an information sharing session with the audience. Judy's three favorite decoys from the collection on the table in front of her.

Saturday October 12, saw Maryland's regular duck hunting season begin in the state's eastern zone. Ducks and geese darted across the Susquehanna flats, shotguns blasted and the air temperature reached 78 degrees. The second floor balcony of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum was the perfect spot for a bite of lunch.

The City of Havre de Grace was busy enjoying their annual Oktoberfest Folk Festival at nearby Concord Point Park. That did not stop Mayor William Martin from joining the museum's officers, directors and staff that morning to welcome Cape Cod resident Judith A. Harmon and several members of her family to the museum.

Judy's husband Ted Harmon passed away in May of 2023. His wife is auctioning a major portion of their collection during 2025. More than 150 of their magnificent Massachusetts decoys have been on display at the museum since August. The auction

firm Guyette and Deeter of St. Michaels, MD will sell these decoys in several locations across the country during 2025.

The Cape Cod family's private tour of the museum, guided by President Mike Tarquini came prior to the public welcoming reception. The family marveled at the 24-foot long wall of display cases exhibiting their more than 150 Bay State decoys and water fowling artifacts. It was the first time they saw the bulk of their collection exhibited together. This display is one of the finest, if not the best ever seen in this museum.

A very enthusiastic group of about 60 carvers, collectors, dealers, historians and writers traveled to Havre de Grace. They came to the museum from locations in Maryland and from multiple states including at a minimum Delaware, Iowa, Massachusetts and New Jersey. We deemed Rick Sandstrom from Iowa to be the furthest traveler in the room.

President Tarquini warmly welcomed us all. Both Mayor Martin and Pat Vincenti, Harford County's Council President and Havre de Grace Decoy Museum's Past President gave wonderful welcoming remarks to the Harmons from the City, the County and the State.

Then, personal greetings, conversations with and amongst the family and a lite lunch began in the museum's second floor exhibition gallery. Most attendees dined outside on the museum's lovely balcony overlooking the historic Upper Chesapeake Bay's Susquehanna Flats.

Most assuredly, all the folks in attendance did not just come to meet Mrs. Harmon. She is a very knowledgeable woman when it comes to decoys, especially those from Massachusetts. They were here to learn from her during a post-luncheon discussion about one of the most outstanding privately owned regional antique decoy collections ever assembled. The digestif to our lovely lunch was the panel discussion following our terrific social time on the balcony.

The final event of the day actually began about 10 minutes early. I had the pleasure of moderating this group of five Massachusetts decoy experts. In addition to Judy Harmon, her son Steven Harmon served on the panel. Jon Deeter, an owner of the auction company Guyette and Deeter added depth to the array of speakers along with two of his firm's employees, Bill Lapointe and Chris Michaud. Both of these men live in the Bay State. They formerly worked for Ted and Judith Harmon's auction company, Decoys Unlimited, Inc. They now work for the St Michaels, Maryland auction house Guyette and Deeter.

The conversation began with introductions. Prior to the start, Mrs. Harmon selected three of her favorite decoys from the display cases. This is how we kicked off our panel's discussion. The first decoy she picked was a feeding yellowlegs shore bird. The Harmons used this decoy as the logo for their auction house, Decoys Unlimited, Inc.

While a sentimental favorite, this decoy also serves as a great metaphor for Massachusetts antique decoys. Mrs. Harmon told us the logo bird was one of three survivors from a larger group. The owners of a Cape Cod inn that formerly served as a rooming house catering to gunners acquired their property along with the decoys as family descendants. These newly minted innkeepers got into the habit of bestowing a decoy upon their favorite guests as they checked out. There were only three of the original multi-shorebird rig remaining when Ted came upon them.

As is the case with many of the finest Bay State antique decoys, the makers are often unknown or at best, difficult to ID. This



Old friends catch up at the Harmon event

is due to the limited amount of remaining documentation and very few examples with solid provenances. The early thinking on the maker of these three birds led Ted and others to think it came from the north shore.

Judy told us that initially, Lynn resident Fredrick Melville Nichols (1854-1924) got credit as the most likely maker of these very special carvings. Later Ted's research led him to believe the maker was actually John Thomas Wilson (1863-1940), an Ipswich carver. As with many fine antique Bay State shorebirds, there is some disagreement among collectors on this bird's maker. The Harmon Collection Exhibition Catalogue produced by Guyette and Deeter indicates this research is not yet fully resolved.

The second of the three decoys Judy chose to talk about was a Joseph Whiting Lincoln (1859-1938) drake wood duck. This duck's story involves a retired federal law enforcement agent. The "former-fed" contacted Ted more than 30 years ago upon purchasing a Cape Cod home that came with a collection of decoys. This very original drake wood duck is one of only three known to exist. There is a famous photo of Mr. Lincoln holding one of the three.

According to Judith, this decoy story also has a taste of Massachusetts colonial history. It turns out the owners' wife was actually a "witch". Judy further qualified the woman's credentials "... she was a religious witch, not the other kind." As such, the husband preferred to greet visitors when the misses was not at home.



Guests take time out to enjoy lite fare



Michael Daley (L) with a Joe Lincoln drake wood duck, Joe Engers (C) with a feeding yellowlegs shorebird, and Mike Tarquini (R) holding an Elmer Crowell hen golden-eye. These represented Judy Harmon's favorite three decoys from the entire collection.



Visitors mill around the Harmon Exhibit

Mrs. Harmon recalled Ted paid as much as \$40,000 for the Lincoln drake. "It was a lot of money for us at that time", she said. Ted additionally found about 200 Joe Lincoln slat goose decoys in the "fed and witch's" newly acquired barn that day. Ted sold most of the Lincoln slat decoys to a Cape Cod doctor in Falmouth.

The third and final decoy on Judith's favorites list is an Anthony Elmer Crowell (1862-1952) golden eye hen. This one has a good story also. She recalled that a notable Massachusetts political family had a home in either Chatham or Orleans. The large home suffered a burglary during which many valuable decoys disappeared. The police on the Cape always alerted Ted when thefts of decoys occurred.

Annually, we enjoy three very large summer flea markets in the Town of Brimfield in the western part of Massachusetts. As it turned out, just after the theft, Ted was at one of the Brimfield shows and he found the decoys. He alerted the local police and almost all of the birds came back home to the Cape. For his troubles, Ted got this early, flat bottom, hollow, custom ordered Crowell golden eye with the so-called "compass brand" of the Smith family. Estimated to be c. 1912, this hen is from early in his career, it does not have Mr. Crowell's brand.

As the panel's moderator, I had it easy, and did very little. The conversations continued, driven by several questions and comments from the attentive audience. We learned that Ted was colorblind. We learned Mr. Harmon's life as a full-time decoy dealer began in 1969 when he left his father's successful painting business. He quit his job at 33 with a wife, two young boys and a mortgage on a small Hyannis home. Mrs. Harmon told us her mom brought groceries for the young couple in the beginning. Finally, we learned the Harmons held their first Decoys Unlimited auction at the Talbot County recreation facility in Easton, MD during 1986.

Bill Lapointe told us he was a few years behind Judy in school and was an active collector. He began as an employee with the Harmon's company around the middle of the first decade in the new millennium. Chris Michaud reported he joined the Decoys Unlimited team for the 2010 Summer Sale. He was familiar with Judith's late auctioneer brother.

Chris served as a computer pioneer in the business as auction houses moved to the internet. He apologized for the early Decoys Unlimited internet messes on Invaluable. Both of these men worked on the exhibition catalogue prepared by Guyette and Deeter for the Harmon collection. The document was available to attendees that day. Guyette & Deeter still has them for sale. This catalogue is a "must-have" for any decoy collector's library.

As the conversations moved along, Mrs. Harmon commented, "...when it comes to decoys, we are all only caretakers, I will be sad to see them go." She also noted others now have a turn to enjoy caretaking her family's decoys for a while. She further shared that she still has her personal collection of chickadees and "other things".



Rick Sandstrom NADCA - speaks to the crowd



Rick Sandstrom (R) with Jim Pierce (L), Judy Harmon (LC) and Michael Daley (RC).

One story she told later in the discussion was about a cottage in the dunes of Chatham. One day a chimney popped through the sands of a shifting dune. Upon excavation, Ted got involved because inside the dune shack was a rig of goose decoys made by Seabrook, New Hampshire's decoy maker George Boyd (1873-1941). The Harmons have one goose from that Boyd rig.

Mrs. Harmon told us of a call Ted took from a wealthy Boston area family named Talbot. The woman's father was a deceased doctor that specialized in women's health. Family members and their friends of all ages now frequently used her summer home in Chatham. The former owner's daughter wanted to protect the "so-called valuable decoys" on the premises before they disappeared.

The decoys Ted found were remarkable. There was a rig of over a dozen George Boyd yellowlegs in a sack by the furnace. In the cabinets of the upper level, there were three sets of Elmer Crowell minis. The family had a set of 25 mini shorebirds, a set of 25 mini songbirds and a set of 25 mini waterfowl.

During this story, the audience also learned a little about a pair of prolific Massachusetts folk artists from Judy's and my home town of Barnstable. Ralph Eugene Cahoon, Jr. (1910-1982) was born on the Cape in Chatham. His wife and business partner was the former Boston resident Martha Farnham (1905-1999). The Cahoon family lived in the Village of Cotuit. They made very whimsical pieces of folk art. Ralph's paintings sometimes bring six figures at local auctions. Ralph and Martha painted on everything including sailor's valentines, walls and furniture. They used many mediums. Martha even used crayons. Their subjects were frequently sailors, whales and mermaids.

Ted was also a flat art collector and dealer. He immediately knew what was on the wall of that home. Judy told the audience that the family had a Ralph Cahoon painting that



The crowd listens to Judy Harmon discuss the collection

was done on commission for the good Dr. Talbot. This piece of folk art featured a Cape Cod doctor giving birth to a mermaid's baby.

Some in the room that day knew Ted very well; others had never met him. As Judy and her fellow panel members conversed that afternoon, we all began to know Ted and Judy intimately. Their knowledge and love of decoys, especially those from Massachusetts was very evident for the almost 75 minutes we all enjoyed together.

While the public can still view a portion of this unique collection of fine and rare Massachusetts decoys at the museum, the collection is being sold at several auctions in various states during 2025 by the St, Michaels, Maryland auction company Guyette & Deeter. Sooner is better than later if you have not yet visited the museum to see this special collection.

Workshop Window

By Cindy Currier

Rich Moretz
(Havre de Grace, MD)

In this installment of Workshop Window, we feature the workshop of carver, Rich Moretz. Rich started carving decoys at the young age of 12, and taught himself by watching other carvers. He produces mostly antique-style folk art pieces. His shop is located at the back end of an attached garage at his home in an approximately 15x20 area. He completes all aspects of decoy making in this space. You can see Rich and his carvings at several decoy shows and competitions in the area and beyond. Please enjoy this visual tour!



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"I've Never Worked a Day in my Life"

Robert 'Bob' White

By Mike Tarquini

Tullytown is a borough in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. It is located in the Delaware Valley, the valley through which the Delaware River flows. This region is commonly referred to as Greater Philadelphia or the Philadelphia metropolitan area. It is made up of counties located in Southeastern Pennsylvania, South Jersey, Delaware, and the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

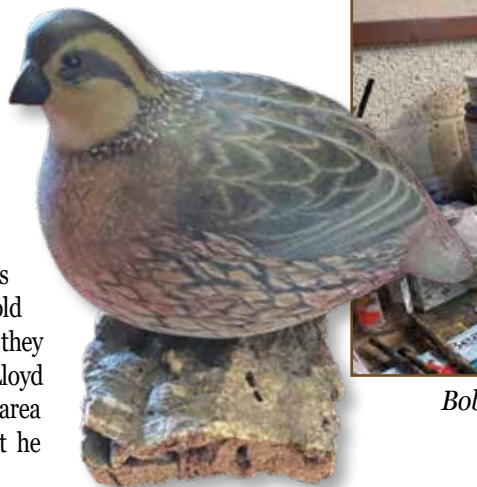
With an estimated 2024 population of 2,200 residents, Tullytown is best known for its charming rural atmosphere, historic sites, and small-town feel. For decoy collecting enthusiasts, it's best known as the home of Robert "Bob" White, arguably one of the most talented and influential contemporary waterfowl decoy makers producing his birds in the Delaware River style.

Robert "Bob" White was born on August 9, 1939 in Trenton, NJ as the youngest of four children to James and Helen White. Bob's siblings included two sisters, Charlotte and Joan, and one brother, Jim, who was nine years senior to Bob. Despite their age difference, Bob was heavily influenced by his brother. In fact, Bob refers to Jim as his early decoy making inspiration and recalls he and Jim going to the local trash dump to salvage cork insulation from discarded ice boxes. Jim taught Bob to glue layers of cork together, shape decoy bodies, and whittle heads from available scrap wood. Bob began to fashion decoys for his own hunting use in 1953, at the age of thirteen.

Aside from learning the basics of making decoys to support his hunting habits at an early age, Bob was an avid swimmer, earning four varsity letters at Trenton High School. Bolstered by Bob's athletic prowess, Trenton High School's swim team earned a state championship during his senior year. Bob served as captain of the swim team. To this day, at 85 years young, Bob visits the local YMCA several times a week and swims laps keeping himself fit for his other activities. Bob graduated high school in 1957.

In the late 1950's, Bob visited Swick's Sporting Goods, a small Trenton neighborhood business operated out of a private residence, where he purchased twenty-seven old decoys for \$2 each carved by John English and painted by John Dawson to outfit his personal hunting rig. This was the first time Bob purchased carved decoys for his own use while hunting. Previously, Bob made all of the decoys required for his hunting rig. It was after this experience that Bob realized that decoys could readily be purchased.

Soon after, Bob met Lloyd Johnson of Point Pleasant, NJ. Johnson was an avid decoy collector who had the financial means to purchase decoys from anyone who presented an opportunity. He tasked several people to find decoys that he could purchase. Those that searched for decoys were referred to as "pickers." Johnson incentivized his pickers to scour localities near and far for old decoys, offering them twice the amount they paid for them. Bob's job as a picker for Lloyd Johnson was to work the Delaware River area and purchase all of the old decoys that he



Bob White's decoy shop is inside an old buggy barn that stands behind his Tullytown, PA house.



Bob White's collection of vintage decoys.



Bob White's work bench inside his decoy shop.



Bob White's paint bench located in the basement of his home.



Bob White draw knifing a body.



Bob White painting a shore bird peep.



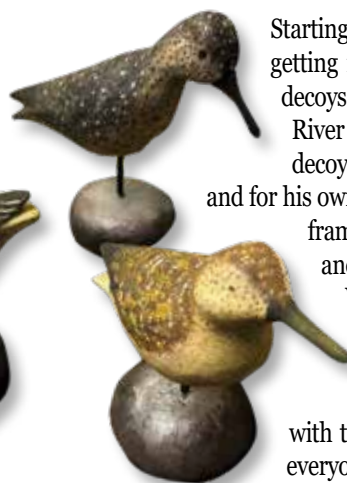
Bob White's turkey beard collection.

could find. It was then that Bob realized that people actually collected decoys as well as using them for hunting. Early decoy collectors such as Lloyd Johnson, Bill Mackey, and Johnny Hillman made old decoys what they are today; they did it for the money, but they also loved collecting them as well.

As Bob searched for decoys along both sides of the Delaware River, he discovered there were countless sheds loaded with old decoys that once served local old-timers when they hunted the meadows and marshes along the river. As the Delaware River was dredged deeper, the spoils filled the surrounding meadows and marshes, allowing for an expansion of the steelworks in Trenton. The filling in of the meadows and marshes served to destroy the waterfowl habitat, putting many local hunters out of business and rendered their decoys expendable. Bob says, "I sure got an education from those old-timers as I listened to their stories about the way it used to be."

Bob turned to the New Jersey National Guard after completing high school in the hopes of finding a potential career path. Little did Bob realize that his career path had already begun to take shape without being influenced by his upcoming military service. Once Bob completed his active duty training, he was talked into going on a blind date where he met Pauline Livingni, whose family owned and operated a floral shop business in the Bristol, PA area. After a courtship period, Bob and Pauline were married in October, 1961 despite being complete opposites. Bob lives for the outdoors, being an avid hunter and fisherman, while Pauline would just as soon stay inside the house. Bob is known for saying, "he married a hothouse flower and not a wildflower." Bob and Pauline lived in Bristol, PA for about seven years after marrying. As of this writing, Bob and Pauline have been married for sixty-three years and have lived in Tullytown, PA for fifty-six of those years.

At the encouragement of Pauline's father, Bob learned to become a florist and joined the Livingni family business. Despite enjoying his time as a florist, after twenty-three years, Bob and Pauline were looking for the next challenge in their lives. Again, that next step was right in front of them, full-time decoy making. At this point in time, Bob's hobby of decoy making overtook his interest in the flower shop. Bob was very hesitant at first to make the leap from operating a successful floral business to making decoys for a living, but it was actually Pauline who finally encouraged and enabled him to do so.



Starting with the early 1970's, Bob was getting more and more into carving decoys. He carved in the Delaware River style. He was still picking decoys for those in search of them and for his own collection. During this time frame, Bob visited Crisfield, MD and befriended Steve and Lem Ward. The Ward brothers also encouraged Bob to pursue his passion as a full-time decoy maker. So with the encouragement of almost everyone around him, in Bob's own

words, “I became a professional decoy maker in 1981.” Once Bob made his decision, he embraced decoy making and pursued it with a passion. Bob was certain that he was the only carver in the Delaware River region during that time who carved decoys as a primary source of income. Bob White made decoys from 1981 until 2007 when he retired from full-time carving work. He continued to make decoys but it was more as a hobby and not as a primary means of financial support. Bob recalls selling a collection of about fifty vintage decoys in 2007, the proceeds from which became the 401K that supports his and Pauline’s retirement.

Today, Bob White still carves, making predominantly decoys to hunt over and the fun stuff. During my visit, Bob was finishing up some shorebird peeps destined for a Christmas gift for a friend’s wife. Just as he started, Bob again carves and paints for the fun of it and not for necessity.

Bob White’s collection interests are old Delaware River decoys, with those made by John English being his favorites. In Bob’s opinion, the refined, smooth flowing classic lines of an English decoy places them at the top of his list. As a result of his relationship with the Ward Brothers, Bob collected a few Crisfield, MD birds as well. As he built his collection, Bob solidified his relationship with Lloyd Johnson (for whom he once acted as a decoy picker in his early days) and looked at him as more of a mentor. Bob notes, “the one thing about the old-timers in the decoy industry is that they had nobody’s style to copy. They had to craft their birds as they thought they should look.”

Bob felt that the contemporary decoy carvers have a bit more of an advantage. There are an abundance of different styles to study and develop one’s own style. Bob White has always loved vintage decoys, and it is from them that he made most of his money. He is however quick to say that the vintage decoys are limited in number and will allow the contemporary birds to fill the gap for collectors.

As Roderick Taylor, author of two articles in 2005 on Bob White in *Hunting & Fishing Collectibles Magazine*, once said, “When people think of Delaware River decoys, it’s Bob White they think of first. It’s not just his knowledge, that makes him unique, it’s his extraordinary integrity.”

Bum Phillips, the famous Head Coach of the Houston Oilers, once said about Earl Campbell, “I don’t know if he is in a class by himself, but I do know that when that class gets together, it sure don’t take long to call the roll.” This quote is fitting to describe Bob White as well.

Perhaps, the most insightful quote about Bob White came from Bob himself, “I can’t say enough about how good the floral and decoy businesses have been to me. Meeting new people has been the best part of it. I can honestly say that I have enjoyed it so much that I have never worked a day in my life.”

The author would like to acknowledge and reference two articles that appeared in *“Hunting & Collectibles Magazine”* in 2005 by Roderick Taylor as well as an article that was published in the Summer edition of the *“Canvasback Magazine”* (Havre de Grace Decoy Museum) in 1986 by Allen E. Linkehorst.



Bob White showing off his favorite decoy, a black duck (circa 1880) carved by John English.



Pauline’s stuffed Bob White bear that she created and proudly displays in their home. The apron and hat were crafted from Bob’s actual garments.



Bob White uses a rasp to round up the body.



A note of encouragement from friend Lem Ward, written on the bottom of one of his Ward brothers decoys.



Bob and Pauline White

The Long Wait

By C. John Sullivan, Jr.



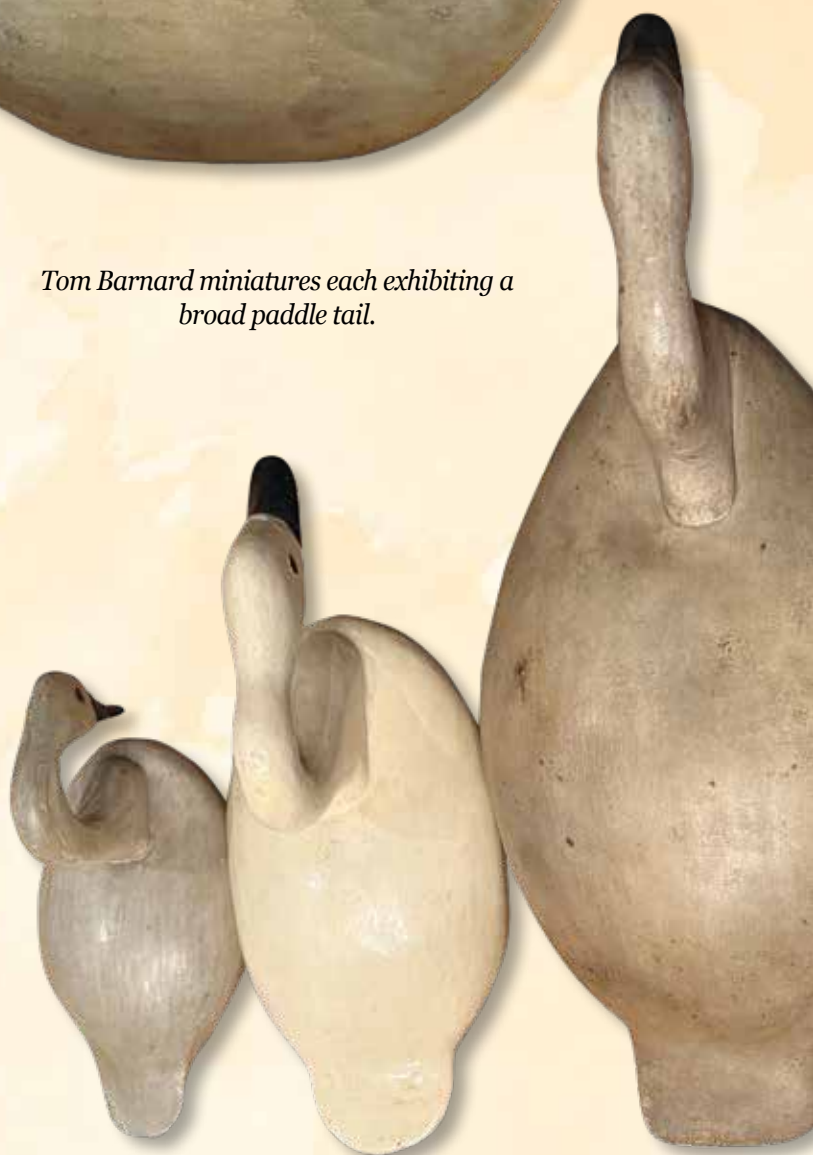
Thomas Barnard miniature flying canvasback pair finally join the flock.

Many years ago in an exhibition of those things that we cherish, my dear decoy friend, Henry A. Fleckenstein, Jr., exhibited a miniature swan decoy. The attribution which Henry inscribed on the underside of that little decoy read as follows: Capt. Jesse Poplar, Havre de Grace, MD, c-1890. Several years later, through my friendship with members of the family of Charles Nelson Barnard, I was presented with the opportunity to purchase a group of miniatures. The miniatures were little swan and a pair of flying canvasbacks. The similarity between the little swan and the one in Henry's collection left no doubt that these miniatures were all carved by the same man, Thomas Barnard, Charles Nelson Barnard's older brother. Henry did not initially agree with my attribution, but when I showed him the grouping, it settled any question that Henry may have had, and he agreed with my opinion. The little swan had been used along with other miniatures under the Barnard family Christmas tree. The flying canvasbacks wore metal wings with scalloped back edges to represent separation of the wing feathers. The diminutive birds wore thin metal wire attached to the middle of their upper backs and hung on the lowest branches of the Christmas tree.



When I first saw the group of miniature decoys in the Barnard family home in Havre de Grace, they were stored in a metal can. The can had initially been used to preserve some food preparation item and had been repurposed for the storage of these precious Christmas ornaments. At some point, the old metal can had been painted a light cream color with two decorative black bands. When I opened the tin and retrieved the first miniature swan, a sensation of excitement ran through my body causing my hands to actually tremble. Each of the swan was carefully wrapped in paper towels. The smell of time wafted from the can as I worked my way through several layers. As I moved my hands, carefully extracting layer after layer, I picked up two swan with bodies identical to the others but with their necks reaching toward their breasts. Thomas Barnard had created this one pair to replicate something that he must have observed in nature, for no other miniature carver of this era had attempted such a pose. Finally, as I reached the bottom layer of the old can, I felt something very different. I sensed thin pieces of metal attached to little wooden bodies. I lifted out a pair of tiny flying canvasbacks, with their metal wings scalloped on the rear edges and the decoys in perfect condition. I completed the transaction and took the group of miniatures home with me. I quickly moved the group of miniatures into a glass-topped country store counter display piece, where they adjusted to their new home out of that old metal can. The group rested comfortably in that display case for several months. After a period of many months, I received a phone call from a member of the Barnard family; a dispute among the family was about to go to court over the distribution of

Tom Barnard miniatures each exhibiting a broad paddle tail.





the miniature decoys. I was summoned to appear before an arbitrator handling the proper ownership of the Barnard family miniatures. I was asked if I was willing to return the pair of flying canvasbacks to settle the dispute. I agreed, and the pair was returned.

Time heals all wounds, they say, but I had missed that pair since the day they left me. Years passed, and after at least 40 years, I was contacted by the executor of the estate of the man, now deceased, to whom I had returned the miniature canvasbacks. I received a phone call and was asked "Are you the John Sullivan who purchased a group of miniatures owned by the Barnard family?" I replied that yes, I was that John Sullivan. I was asked to pay the Barnard family home a visit. I drove to Havre de Grace to the home where those miniatures had resided since they were made. After I arrived, my senses were refreshed when out came that old tin can. I picked up the can and removed the lid. I extended my hand into the can and found that same old scent, the feel of the paper towel, and finally the miniatures in my hand just exactly as I had remembered them. They were just as pristine as when I had first held them. It may seem odd, but for that family, just having them back was all they had needed for those many years; I doubt that the miniatures had ever been out of that container since being returned. But now they are reunited with the miniature swan. Only true collectors will understand, but seeing those diminutive birds alongside of their kind gives me great satisfaction and a sense of peace knowing they are reunited.



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Whit Robinson
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Connor Schneck
Scott Schneck
Samuel Schroeder
Dan Schurman
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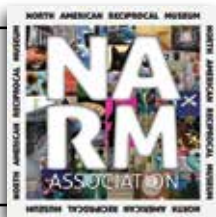
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Two Dabblers

The Northern Shoveler
& Green-Winged Teal

By John Hughes



*Green-winged teal drake
Scott Moody*

CANVASBACK NATURALIST

Each edition will feature a natural history topic relating to the mission of the museum. The author, **John E. Hughes, Jr.** is a retired science teacher from the John Carroll School (1972-2015). His subject areas included Chesapeake Bay Studies, Ecology (freshwater and marine) and Environmental Science. As a naturalist, John helped to develop natural history programs for a myriad of environmental organizations and schools. As a field educator and canoe guide, he led trips throughout the Eastern United States (especially the Southeast), Central America and the Caribbean. He presently serves as a member of the Museum's Board.

As a life-long student of natural history (modern nature study), I have been fortunate to have witnessed many forms of wildlife and their interactions with one another and their environment. As a life-long student of science, I have been able to explain these observations from an analytical methodology which yields the objectified facts and determinants of outcomes. Blending these two perspectives together has really given me a personalized interpretation of natural phenomena rooted in hard science explanation. In a sense, I feel I have the best of both realities synthesized in my mind as I go about a variety of out-of-door activities in the great cosmos around me. I also feel it has enhanced my abilities as a naturalist, a science educator, and a field trip leader and canoe guide. Hopefully, it gives my students a much better understanding and a more complete picture as to what I hope they're learning.

One of my favorite areas of natural history study is bird life and its relationship to its environment. My first fascination with avian fauna began when my grandmother gave me a present of the Blue, Red, Green, and Yellow Golden books of birds. She encouraged me to get busy studying and to start appreciating nature with my friends and relatives. That's when it began at about five or six years of age, and since then I have traveled throughout the hemisphere discovering various unique environments and the wildlife within them, especially birds. Of particular interest to me have been waterfowl, ducks, geese, and swans and their relationship to wetland habitats. Two dabbling ducks I have greatly enjoyed observing are the northern shoveler and the green-winged teal. Common throughout the northern hemisphere, they are ubiquitous in the Chesapeake Bay's fresh and brackish water environments, in particular, marshes and tidal mudflats. It is fascinating to watch these ducks and their feeding behavior in the shallows or exposed tidal flats around the bay. It is also fun to get caught up in their style and efforts at meeting their nutritional needs.

Dabbling Ducks

Dabbling ducks are a subfamily of waterfowl which include mallards, black duck, widgeon, gadwall, baldpate, garganey, shovelers, and teal. There are over 36 species found throughout the world, and they are the most common and abundant of ducks in North America. They have a strong association with freshwater environments, specifically marshes, river shallows, and tidal mudflats. They are also known as surface-feeding or puddle ducks and are noted for their tipping style of feeding as compared to other ducks which dive underwater to feed. Many times, dabblers can be found grazing in post-harvested agricultural fields.

Dabbling ducks are noted for fast flight and maneuverability and vault directly out of the water rather than running along it to get airborne. They walk well on land because of feet located more centrally on the overall body. Dabblers are poorly adapted for perching although some can be observed on tree branches near the water. They swim with their tails held clear of the water and their hind toe is unlobed. They have broad, flattened bills lined on the underside with lamella. On their wings they possess very colorful, iridescent speculums. Male birds are much more colorful than the females. These birds are ground nesters whose nests are built in close proximity to



Northern shoveler hen • Ralph Hockman



Green-winged teal hen • British Waterfowl Association



Northern shoveler drake • Ralph Hockman



Northern shoveler wing • Ralph Hockman

Comparative Information Chart on Northern Shoveler & Green-Winged Teal

	Northern Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>	Green-Winged Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>
Size	Medium size puddle duck Length: 17-20 inches Wingspan: 27-33 inches Weight: 1.5 pounds Females slightly smaller	Smallest of all puddle ducks Length: 12-16 inches Wingspan: 20-23 inches Weight: .71 pounds Females slightly smaller
Bill	Long flat bill, broader at tip Shovel shaped, 2½ inches Largest size bill of all puddle ducks Drake: black; Hen: orange "spoonbill" of all puddle ducks	Moderate size bill About 1¼ inches Narrow Drake: blackish gray, dark; Hen: grayer
Eye color	Drake: bright yellow; Hen: less bright yellow, thin dark stripe	Both drake and hen: dark eyes
Leg and foot	Both sexes: orange	Both sexes: gray
Voice	Fairly quiet, Drake: "took-took" Hen: flat quacks	Fairly vocal, Drake: "preep, PREEP, preep, preep", Hen: quack, "kre-KEE-kee-gago"
Range	See map insert (North America)	See map insert (North America)
Habitat	Freshwater ponds, lakes, shallows, sewage and agricultural impoundments, fresh to brackish marshes, mudflats	Freshwater ponds, lakes, rivers, fresh to brackish marshes, mud- flats, agricultural fields
Flight	Swift fliers but slower than teal	Fast and twisty, tight compact groups
Migration	To breeding grounds: late March to April; to wintering areas: late August to September	To breeding grounds: February to April; to wintering areas: Late September to November
Courtship/ Bonding	Later than most ducks, mid-December, Drakes: very territorial until hatchings; sexual maturity: 1st year	Begins in late September, drakes abandon female at incubation; sexual maturity: 1st year
Nesting	Short grass, close to water: 50-100 yards	Thick vegetation, very close to water: average 65 feet
Eggs	Average: 10.1 eggs	Average: 8.7 eggs
Incubation	25 days	21-23 days
Independent	39-40 days	34-35 days
Diet	Aquatic plants, duckweeds, seeds, insects, mollusks, crustaceans, small fish, plankton. Will not feed on agricultural land, only water	Generalized and opportunistic forager: duckweeds, algae, corn, wheat, rice, seeds, fish eggs, crustaceans, insects, worms, insects
Population	1955-1990: 1.5-2 million; 2024: 2.99 million	Early 1960s: Less than 1 million; 2024: 3 million
Problems	Reproduction impairment from selenium exposure, loss of habitat, especially breeding, climate change	Loss of habitat, climate change

water. They are long distant, seasonal migrators with clearly pronounced breeding and wintering grounds. They are also highly gregarious birds, and many are quite vocal.

Lamella

Lamella are a membrane or thin layer of tissue or bone within the body of an animal which are like the teeth of a comb and act as sieves. In dabbling ducks lamella are small comb-like projections inside of the bills that act as a filter to trap food and expel water and mud. They are packed close together in the upper and lower bill and help the duck to strain the water for small seeds, bugs, plankton, and other bits of food. These are not teeth. Lamella also allow birds to preen their feathers. Green-winged teal have about 130 lamella and northern shovelers have close to 400. Most ducks have far fewer lamella.

Personal Observations of Northern Shoveler and Green-Winged Teal Feeding Styles

It's midweek on a mild mid-October day at Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge just outside of Smyrna, Delaware. It's an overcast gray morning with a slight breeze coming out of the southwest. I'm sitting in my car with birding buddies Greg Kachur and Dave Lewis leaving refuge headquarters and working our way to Raymond Pool. They have finished their detailed discussion of the past baseball season particularly the efforts of the Baltimore Orioles. I don't have much to add to their conversation but as we begin to curve leftward to this first pond, I'm eagerly anticipating some puddle duck sightings. First however, we see two peregrine falcons, on a dead snag on the right where a small tidal gut enters the Leipsic River. As we try to edge closer, they've had enough of us and dart away over the salt marshes in rapid flight. As we look to the left, Raymond Pool is covered with avocets, yellow legs, egrets, herons, peeps, dowitchers, and hundreds, possibly a thousand puddle ducks. Greg is in luck, as at least half of these ducks are his favorite, the northern shoveler.

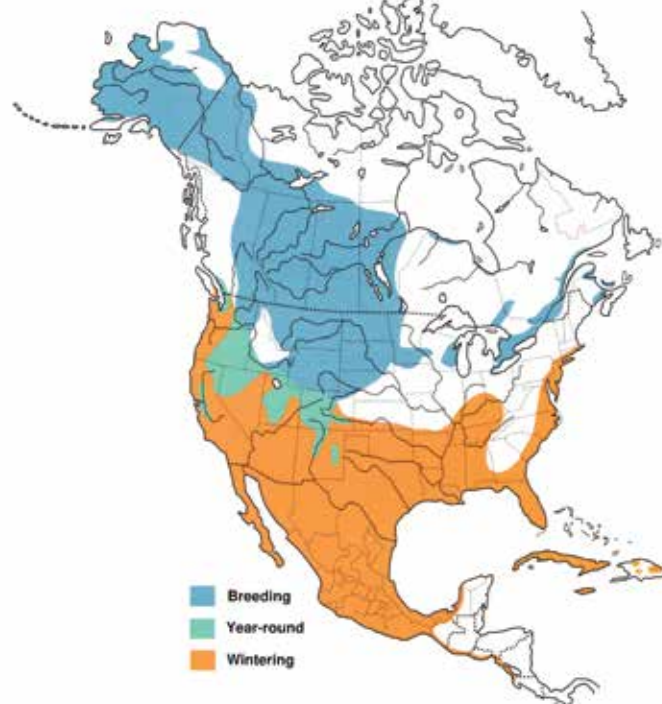
We turn the car off and sit and watch as the myriad birds do their thing. Of course, we fill in our species checklist immediately but now we have time to watch and study the feeding behavior of all the birds, but especially the northern shoveler. These beautiful dabblers with their huge "spoonbill" are extremely active in feeding in this shallow, highly productive pool. They do not dive, nor do they really dabble, but instead they glide across the surface with their huge bill slightly submerged in the water as they push forward. Moving the bill from side to side, they are actually straining the water for a favored variety of food. Both tiny animals and plant parts are being grazed upon as they strain the water through their lamella-filled bills. The food supply is too small for the three of us to witness, but the shovelers convince us that it is abundant. Sometimes recently bonded pairs swimming together work through the water. At other times, larger groups seem to almost be cooperatively herding their prey in front of them. They are all sieving food particles by way of their vigorous head movements. Over thousands of years, natural selection has evolved up to 400 lamella in the massive bill of this



Northern shoveler lamella • Jonas Waldenström

Northern shoveler range map

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Green-winged teal wing • Scott Moody

Green-winged teal range map
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Green-winged teal feeding
 George B. Salter Memorial Grove



Northern shovelers feeding
 Ralph Hockman

species, enhancing its proficiency at feeding and surviving. By closely observing the shovelers' efforts, we witness how nature has worked in both structural and behavioral adaptations to yield a successful species.

Starting the car, we proceed to Bear Swamp Pool on our left where a pair of sandhill cranes has been spotted quite often in recent days. Seeing these cranes here is exciting because we normally spot them much farther south in Georgia and Florida. In the wetlands behind the grazing cranes, Canada geese and a few swans are seen as a large mature bald eagle flies overhead. The weather is getting grayer, and it almost feels as though rain is upon us. However, looking to the left at an exposed mudflat from a draining tidal gut, we see hundreds of teal, mostly green-winged, with a solo pair of blue-winged mixed into the group. These small birds all seem to be engineering new flow channels in the mud as they waddle forward with their neck, head, and bill pushing through the substrate feeding on a variety of animal and plant material. What had been formerly submerged now has given way to a teal banquet ground. Again, as with the shovelers, an unseen, abundant food supply is giving the green-wings all they need. With a bill that is half the size of the shoveler and possessing only half the lamella, the teal obtains nutrition in a slightly modified method to the shoveler. Each bird does its own bidding, plowing through the mud, and they almost appear as frenetic whirligigs on a pond's surface as they "dredge". Their movements never seem to stop until a northern harrier soars low over their heads. All motion stops and then begins again once the marsh hawk has passed.

The day continues with many other sightings, and Greg and Dave agree with me that it has been a fun, learning experience. By taking the time to observe rather than just listing, we have been able to focus our observations on feeding strategies employed by these two different dabblers. Consideration of their physical adaptations (lamella) has enabled us to have a better understanding of why they feed the way they do: the teal with their head and bill thrust forward into the mud and the shovelers in the shallows with their bill's side-to-side motion, allow both to fulfill their nutritional needs. It is also revealed that two different species can have diverse feeding styles without being thrust into competition for resources while using the same basic habitat. As students, John, Greg, and Dave have learned today that we can blend science and natural history perspectives and get a more complete understanding of the two dabblers at work. Through our more intense efforts at gaining field data on the birds and more than counting numbers of individual species, we have gained greater insights and details about these particular ducks ... and oh, by the way, we counted 77 different species that day before the rains came!

Sources: *The Birds of North America - Green-Winged Teal*, Kevin Johnson, 1995. *The Birds of North America - Northern Shoveler*, Paul J Dubowy, 1996. *Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America*, Frank Bellrose, 1976. *The North American Perching and Dabbling Ducks*, Paul A Johnsgard, 2017. *The Crossley ID Guide-Waterfowl*, Richard Crossley, 2017. *Ducks of North America*, Michael Harrell, 2023. *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: 2024*

Green-winged Teal & Northern Shovelers



Northern Shoveler
Earl Blansfield

SHOTS **From the Wild**

**Are you a photography enthusiast who loves snapping pictures of the local wildlife?
If so, submit your shots from the wild to wildlifephotography@decoymuseum.com.
Only high resolution photos will be accepted. (i.e. at least 2,500 pixels wide and 300dpi)**

Green-winged Teal
Earl Blansfield



Northern Shoveler
Earl Blansfield



Green-winged Teal
Ralph Hockman



Green-winged Teal
Earl Blansfield

Northern Shoveler
Ralph Hockman



Northern Shoveler
Ralph Hockman

Green-winged Teal • Rob Bruch



Green-winged Teal
Rob Bruch



Northern Shoveler
Ralph Hockman



Northern Shoveler
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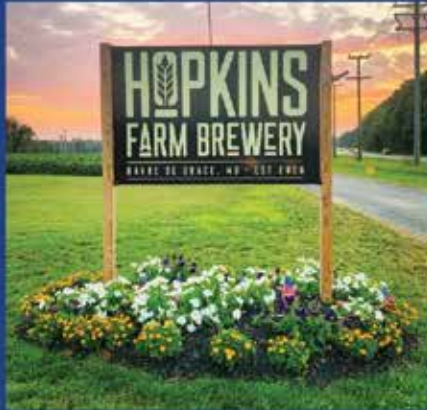
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Decoy Club News

Upper Bay Decoy Collectors Club hosts Joe Engers to present the "Wonderful Variety of Delmarva Decoys"

By Mike Tarquini

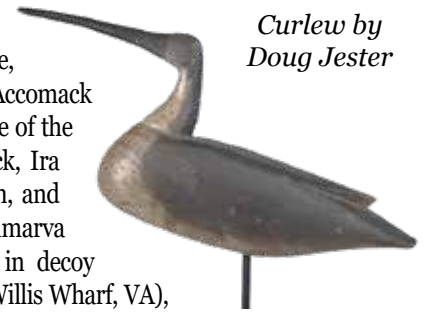
On October 18, 2024 Joe Engers (Decoy Magazine) treated a group of approximately thirty guests to a presentation of "The Wonderful Variety of Delmarva Decoys". This special event was held at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. Joe shared the many styles of decoy making found throughout the Delmarva peninsula. Decoys and their makers from Perryville, MD to Smith Island, VA were featured in his presentation.

Perryville, MD's Taylor Boyd and Charlestown, MD's John Graham and Wash Barnes canvasbacks joined Leonard Pryor's (Chesapeake City, MD) preening mallard drake to round out the representatives from Cecil County. Kent County, MD was well represented by Rock Hall carvers August Heinefield, John Glenn, and Jesse Urie. Kent Island's Jim Cockey's bluebill stood proud for Queen Anne's County, MD. Talbot County's Ed Parsons' bufflehead pair represented Oxford, MD. Dorchester County was represented by Ed Phillips (Cambridge, MD) and Joe Travers (Vienna, MD). Somerset County has produced some of the most well known decoy makers on the Delmarva peninsula with the likes of Travis Ward, Lem and Steve Ward, Noah Sterling, Lloyd Sterling and Lloyd Tyler. Captain John Smith (Ocean City, MD) represented Worcester County with a preening pintail.

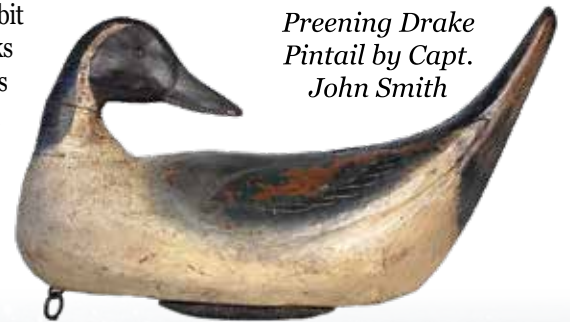
As one crosses the Maryland / Virginia state line, Chincoteague Island can be found in Northern Accomack County. Chincoteague Island has produced some of the most prominent carvers such as Miles Hancock, Ira Hudson, Doug Jester, Dave "Umbrella" Watson, and Charles Clark. The Southern portion of the Delmarva peninsula, Northampton County, is also rich in decoy making history with the likes of Charlie Birch (Willis Wharf, VA), Eli Doughty (Hog Island, VA), Walter Brady (Oyster, VA), Nathan Cobb and Nathan Cobb, Jr (Cobb Island, VA). Alma Fitchett and Robert Andrews represented (Smith Island, VA).

It has been said that a decoy show can be held with only carvers from the Delmarva peninsula and fill an average sized event space. The Delmarva peninsula is certainly steeped in rich waterfowling history and decoy making.

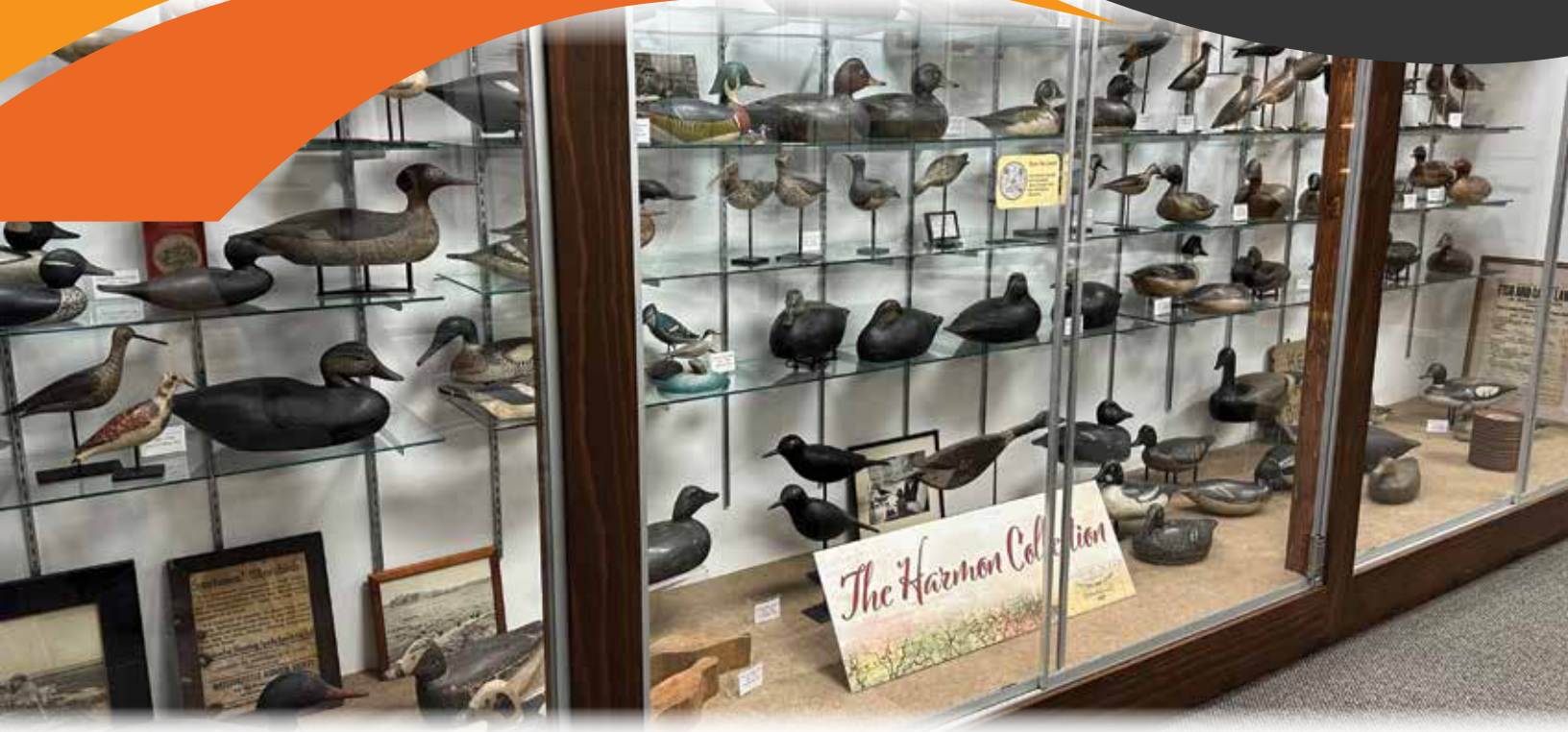
The Delmarva Decoy Collectors Association recently hosted an exquisite exhibit of Delmarva decoys at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. This exhibit featured 53 pieces. Special thanks to the Delmarva Decoy Collectors Association for sponsoring such a fine exhibit. The Delmarva Club has offered to sponsor additional temporary exhibits at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.



Curlew by Doug Jester



Preening Drake Pintail by Capt. John Smith



Havre de Grace Decoy Museum Partners with Area Decoy Collector Clubs and a Prominent Auction House to Present World Class Exhibits

By Mike Tarquini



As the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum strives to expand its service area, it has partnered with some regional decoy collecting clubs and a prominent auction house who have provided the Museum with “state of the art” exhibits that have resulted in new visitors from the areas represented in those exhibits.

The Potomac Decoy Collectors Association (PDCA) has sponsored

temporary exhibits at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum for over 25 years. During this long relationship, many exquisite exhibits have graced our shelves and treated our guests to many opportunities to view decoys from PDCA club members’ private collections that would otherwise not be available in the public space of a museum. As an example, the current PDCA exhibit features over one-hundred John “Daddy” Holly decoys. History shows that “Daddy” Holly was the pioneer of the Havre de Grace style. The partnership with the PDCA has fostered a close working relationship between the two entities that extends beyond the exhibits they provide.

In 2024, the Museum invited the Delmarva Decoy Collectors Association (DDCA) to sponsor an exhibit. In May, the DDCA treated all of us to “The Wonderful Variety of Delmarva Decoys” exhibit which showcased carvers and their work from Cecil County, MD to Northampton County, VA. This exhibit ran for approximately six months and was removed in early December. The Delmarva Club has offered additional exhibits for our consideration in the future.



After several discussions with the New Jersey Decoy Collectors Association (NJDC), the Museum was offered an exhibit of Bob White decoys which are made in the Delaware River style. Bob White is from Tullytown, PA, a borough in Bucks County, Pennsylvania that is sandwiched between Philadelphia, PA and Trenton, NJ.

Bob White began collecting decoys over 67 years ago and his enthusiasm has not dampened yet. Although Bob has been exposed to great decoys from all parts of the United States, he has remained loyal to the Delaware River style. A collection of Bob White decoys is currently on display at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum and will remain through late mid-June 2025.

Prominent auction house Guyette & Deeter has recently partnered with the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum to provide us with an opportunity to exhibit the Harmon Collection of Massachusetts decoys. This one of a kind collection will be offered for sale starting in the spring of 2025.

Partnering with regional decoy clubs has provided the Museum with opportunities to share decoy making styles outside of the Upper Chesapeake Bay style. As the Museum hosts exhibits from outside our region, we draw visitors from those regions allowing us to effectively grow our service area. We thank each of the local clubs and Guyette & Deeter for the opportunity to showcase the unique collections that they have brought us.



UPCOMING DECOY SHOW INFORMATION

January 25, 2025

**Susquehanna Flats Vintage Hunting
& Fishing Collectibles Show**

Level Fire Volunteer Company, Havre de Grace, MD
Info: Chuck Usilton (443) 252-0685

January 31 – February 1, 2025

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Decoy Show

The Oyster Farm, Cape Charles, VA
Info: Tommy O'Connor (757) 620-8520

February 22, 2025

**Upper Bay Decoy Collectors Club
Annual Decoy Show Honoring Jim Pierce**

Minker Banquet Hall, Perryville, MD
Info: Gary Armour (667) 365-0268

March 29, 2025

**New Jersey Decoy Collectors Association
Annual Decoy Show**

Stockton University, Galloway Township, NJ
Info: Clarence Fennimore (609) 405-4376

April 3 – 5, 2025

East Coast Decoy Club Buy – Sell – Swap Event

St. Michaels Inn, St. Michaels, MD
Info: Kevin Peel (410) 937-2218

April 22-26, 2025

**58th North American
Vintage Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show**

The Westin Chicago Lombard • Lombard, IL
Info: nadecoycollectors.org (586) 530-6586

May 3 & 4, 2025

43rd Annual Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival

STAR Centre, Havre de Grace, MD
Info: Mike Tarquini (410) 459-8487 • www.decoymuseum.com

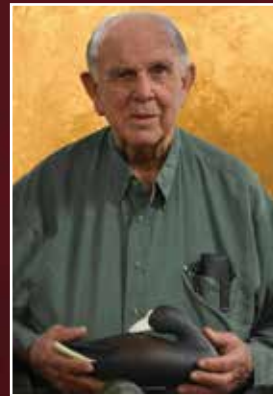
June 1, 2025

Annapolis Decoy Show (sponsored by PDCA)

Annapolis Elks Lodge, Edgewater, MD
Info: Chad Tragakis (703) 593-3024



Upper Bay Decoy collectors club



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9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.- Rain or Shine

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SHOW CONTACTS

Jaim Lloyd • Club President
609-703-6143

Clarence Fennimore • Co-Chairman
609-405-4376

John Shores • Co-Chairman
732-691-3278

Al Barker • Art Chairman
609-298-7459

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