



**QUARTERLY**  
Fall 2004



Dude Schooner Promotions • Trade During the Quasi-War



**QUARTERLY**  
Fall 2004

Volume 2 Number 3

**Editor**

Michael Valliant

**Graphic Design**

Rob Brownlee-Tomasso

**Contributors**

Cathy Connelly,  
Kerry Wargo Clough,  
Pete Leshner, Melissa McCloud,  
John Miller, Rachel Rébert,  
Lindsley Rice,  
Leigh Ann Schaefer

**Photography**

Rob Brownlee-Tomasso,  
Rachel Rébert

**Illustrations**

Eric T. Applegarth

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum  
Navy Point, P.O. Box 636  
St. Michaels, MD 21663-0636  
410-745-2916 ♦ Fax 410-745-6088  
www.cbmm.org ♦ editor@cbmm.org

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum is a private not-for-profit 501(c)(3) educational institution. A copy of the current financial statement is available on request by writing the Controller, P.O. Box 636, St. Michaels, MD 21663 or by calling 410-745-2916 ext. 238. Documents and information submitted under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are also available, for the cost of postage and copies, from the Maryland Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401, 410-974-5534.

**On the Cover**

Blind Industries student Sarah Weinstein readies herself to rivet planks together in the CBMM Boat Yard, under the guidance of Museum shipwrights. Sarah and nine other students from Blind Industries and Services of Maryland, took part in the Lighthouse Overnight Program and Boat Yard as part of a five-week camp to build life skills. See page eight for a full story.

## President's Message



The late Robert H. Burgess, undisputed “dean” of the Chesapeake, was known to hold up an artifact—say from a long-lost Bay schooner—and ask, “Can you imagine what this saw in its day?”

Burgess already knew the answer. His life’s work of collecting artifacts of the Bay’s vanishing maritime culture was based on very real experiences of working the water on sailing vessels that are now gone. Commercial sailing vessels of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—schooners, sloops, skipjacks, pungys, bugeyes—were more than artifacts to him: they were a part of his way of life. He knew their names; he sailed on many of them. He knew where they were born, where they grew up, where they last sailed, who sailed them, and where they vanished—either broken up for scrap, left to rot in a shallow salt marsh, or lost in a storm at sea.

“Can you imagine what this saw in its day?” What a wonderfully telling statement from the Bay’s most renowned curator. Such a question releases the imagination, gives license for it to wander. . . and to wonder.

Artifacts at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum do the same thing. Our permanent exhibits of Bay artifacts form the core educational experiences of our visitors. People come here to learn the stories of this place and its people through the objects and artifacts that we collect, organize, and interpret. As Bob Burgess knew so well, the best exhibits entertain and educate visitors in a way that books, lectures, or classes cannot.

Educating through exhibits is our primary way to reach our audience. It’s something we do every day of the year, unlike a one-time class or special event. Our exhibits reach the most people, are the most visible part of our program, and they create a public product that brings together our research, oral histories, collections, and scholarship in new and interesting ways.

The Museum demonstrates a history of innovation when creating new exhibits for our visitors—from moving the now 125-year-old Hooper Strait Lighthouse to Navy Point, to building our Oystering on the Chesapeake exhibit around the skipjack *E.C. Collier*. Developing and presenting these exhibits to the public are, in short, the reason we exist as a museum.

As we move forward with the construction of our upcoming At Play on the Bay exhibit, our staff is working on all fronts. From construction, to exhibit design and fabrication, to collecting the final artifacts and vessels, to marketing and creating communications and publications—it takes a comprehensive effort to create a new exhibit that allows our artifacts to “speak” their stories.

When we open At Play on the Bay in 2005, you will see the newest example of our focus on improving the quality of our visitor experience through the highest quality exhibits about the Chesapeake Bay’s history and culture. Many of the artifacts in At Play on the Bay come from the 40s, 50s, and 60s—not that long ago. Can you imagine what they saw in their days?

John R. Valliant  
President

[jvalliant@cbmm.org](mailto:jvalliant@cbmm.org)



# Contents

Moving Day—The Owens cruiser *Nomad* is transported to its new home in the At Play on the Bay exhibit building on Navy Point.

## Departments

To the Point	8
Profile	11
Events Calendar *	C 1-4
From the Chairman	22

\* Events Calendar is a special pull-out section that can be found between pages 11 and 12.

## Features

### Folk Art Gone Afowl 3

When is a decoy more than a duck? When it is carved from a skipjack mast, made from the newell post of a vanished hotel, or if the carver lies inside it. By Pete Leshner.

### Racing Workboats 5

CBMM Quarterly continues its exploration of the Bay's changing culture from work to play. Curator Pete Leshner looks at racing oyster dredgeboats and Chesapeake Appreciation Day.

### Carefree Days Under Sail 12

CBMM intern Jonathan Olly examines the post World War II promotion of Bay schooners from working boats to dude cruisers and how these tourist vessels were marketed and promoted.

### Peril on the Sea 17

Intern Cynthia Nuara traces the journey of Baltimore schooners *Hunter* and *Fly* to the West Indies at the turn of the nineteenth century. This Quasi-War story and the spoliation claims that followed are told through correspondence in the CBMM collection.

# Folk Art Gone Afowl

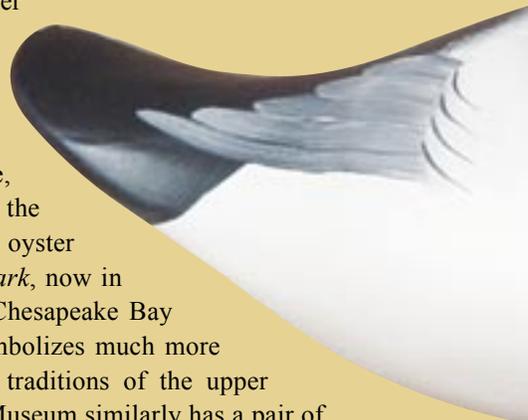
By Pete Lesher, *Curator*

Decoys are representations of something they aren't—a duck or shorebird, perhaps. But a number of recently carved duck decoys represent something more significant than the bird or waterfowl hunting culture on the Chesapeake. Instead, they commemorate a person, a place, or a historic boat that is meaningful to the carver or others. Duck decoys have not been officially adopted as a state symbol, like the rockfish, the Chesapeake Bay retriever, and the skipjack, although decoys are as just as evocative of Maryland and the Chesapeake in the popular imagination. Wooden decoys long ago underwent a change from tools of the hunter to decorative pieces. But a generation ago, who could have imagined a decoy fashioned from a piece of a skipjack, or a decoy used as a funerary urn?

Choosing a piece of wood from an historic object and carving it into a decoy (or anything else) both commemorates the historic object and gives the finished piece a significance beyond the representation of a bird. It is not unlike the venerable Wye Oak, which, after falling in a windstorm two years ago, had its salvaged branches made into a desk for the governor of Maryland. The Wye Oak had been the largest living example

of a white oak—another official state symbol—and in its afterlife as a piece of furniture, it continues in its symbolic role. Likewise, a decoy fashioned from the old mast of the 1886 oyster dredger *Rebecca T. Ruark*, now in the collections of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, symbolizes much more than the waterfowling traditions of the upper Chesapeake Bay. The Museum similarly has a pair of canvasback decoys fashioned from the old bowsprit of the 1901 skipjack *Kathryn* and a mallard drake cut from the old mast of the 1956 skipjack *Lady Katie*. These skipjacks, although still surviving, are honored in these decoys.

This idea is not entirely new. J. Newnam Valliant (1900-1974) of Bellevue, Maryland, carved commemorative decoys including one in the Museum's collections fashioned from the walnut newel post of the long-gone Sharp's Island Hotel. Valliant held an affection for this place, as the rapidly-eroding island was once his family's property and home. Walnut is a particularly hard and dense wood, thoroughly unsuited for a decoy intended to float in front of a duck blind, but this was considered too precious to use for hunting. Likewise, the wood for skipjack masts, though not as dense as walnut, would be unsuited for a working decoy, but that is not the point. Charles Jobes of Havre de Grace, Maryland, who



Joey Jobes carved this pair of canvasback decoys from the old bowsprit of the skipjack *Kathryn* and a mallard (center) from the *Lady Katie*'s old mast. Gifts of H. Russell Dize and Scott Todd.





*Charles Jobes carved this commemorative decoy from the dredge boat Rebecca T. Ruark's old mast. Gift of Wade H. Murphy, Jr.*

turned *Rebecca T.*

*Ruark's* old mast into eighty-two decoys, reported that he burned the carbide tips off the blade of his duplicating lathe while making the set. With the softer woods he ordinarily uses, a blade will typically cut about 2,000 decoys for him.

Jobes's younger brother, Joey, made the decoys from *Kathryn's* bowsprit and *Lady Katie's* mast. Joey Jobes actually pioneered this work in making old pieces of skipjacks into decoys, and he did the same for the skipjacks *Hilda M. Willing* and *Nellie L. Byrd*. The younger Jobes related that one customer did not seem to understand the added significance of a decoy made from a piece of a historic boat, telling him that she was not going to pay a premium when she could get one of his regular decoys for \$65. For others, however, it is worth more than the purchase price; it is a way to remember a favorite skipjack.

A newer application of this regional symbol is the commemoration of a duck hunter's life by inurnment in a hollow decoy. Imagine the surprise of the couple who found a decoy floating on Harris Creek when they picked it up and turned it over to read the carved inscription, "In this decoy lies the carver H. J. Waite 1939-2000." Harry Waite, who loved hunting on the waters of the upper Chesapeake Bay, also carved decoys. He made the hollow canvasback decoy for his cremated remains in

the 1970s and carved the inscription, except, of course, for the final date, which was added by his son. The decoy is made from sugar pine and was scorched with a torch to raise the grain, giving it a textured look. The decoy was cast adrift by family and friends gathered on the deck of Capt. Wade Murphy's *Rebecca T. Ruark* in September 2000. It was found adrift after a day or two, and when the finders contacted Waite's widow, they learned that one of his wishes was that the decoy be taken hunting. They arranged for this before donating the object to the Museum, and we accepted it with Mrs. Waite's consent.

Harry Waite's decoy memorializes the decoy hunter in a very personal way—both as a product of his workmanship and a container for his remains. Similarly, the Jobes and Valliant decoys are not merely decorative; they take on commemorative meanings because they were carved from special pieces of wood.

*(Left) A generation ago, J. Newnam Valliant had the idea of turning a salvaged piece of wood into a commemorative decoy when he carved this duck from a piece of the Sharp's Island Hotel. Gift of Mrs. J. Newnam Valliant.*

*(Right) This hollow canvasback decoy was carved by duck hunter Harry Waite to carry his cremated remains. Gift of William and Mary Kepner.*

