



QUARTERLY
Winter 2003-2004



Yellow Fever • Tough Times for Skipjack Crew



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On the Cover

Flooding caused by Hurricane Isabel temporarily turned the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum into an extension of the Chesapeake Bay. The morning of September 19 the Miles River flowed over Navy Point and into twenty-three of the Museum's buildings.

President's Message

The Boy Scouts aren't wrong when they say always "be prepared." Having a plan and being ready for the worst helped the Museum minimize the impact of Hurricane Isabel. And the hard work of dedicated staff and volunteers during and after the storm helped us come through without losing any artifacts or vessels in the collection and to reopen the Museum in only seven days.

Not every museum has an emergency preparedness plan. It is a precaution that no one hopes to ever have to use—and that some museums can not effectively put into play. We found out the week of September 15 that our plan works. Well.

Museum staff spent the week battening down the hatches (pardon the maritime pun)—securing our floating fleet, lifting computers and files above the probable flood plain, preparing the buildings and grounds, and going over emergency operating protocol. Thursday night, as the storm hit, our apprentices made rounds on Navy Point, checking and re-securing our boats.

The Friday floods were worse than we could have anticipated. Those who lived on the Chesapeake Bay in 1933, and saw the most devastating storm to hit the Bay in the last hundred years, say the flooding Isabel caused this year was the worst they have seen. All of Navy Point and almost all of Mill Street were underwater. Friday afternoon, when the water receded, we began to assess the damage.

Despite the flooding, or actually because of it, the week that followed September 19 was an inspiring time to work at the Museum. Everyone from our fundraisers, our curators and education staff, our Boat Yard, to our operations, accounting, and communications teams, worked to help get the Museum re-opened. The week was affectionately dubbed "Buildings and Grounds Fantasy Camp," complete with daily course offerings led by instructors Mark Adams and Kenny Hill, our Superintendent of Grounds and Groundskeeper.

Responding to the flood damage brought our diverse staff together with a common purpose and created a sense of stewardship that has endured beyond Isabel. Sometimes trading computers and cell phones for work gloves and shovels isn't such a bad idea. Once in a while, anyway.

John R. Valliant
President

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Had it up to here!—(L-R) CBMM staff John Valliant, Mark Adams, Scott Ray, Kenny Hill, Rachel Rébert, and Jan White began post-Isabel clean-up efforts early Friday, September 19.

Departments

To the Point	8
Volunteers	11
Events Calendar *	C 1-4
Profile	12
The Tale End	22

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

Features

Working Sail on the Chesapeake 3

Louis J. Feuchter is the archetypal Chesapeake Bay artist. The acquisition of eleven of his paintings bolsters CBMM's extensive collection of Feuchter's work. By Pete Leshner

At Play Q&A 5

So what's this new exhibit all about? Find out how At Play on the Bay began, how it's different from any exhibit the Museum has done before, and what you'll find inside.

The Darker Side of Commerce 13

Yellow Fever was the "prevailing epidemic" of the eighteenth and nineteenth century ports along the Bay. Thousands died as physicians tried to determine what caused the fever. By Peggy Haile McPhillips and Benjamin H. Trask

"The Natural Thing to Do" 18

For generations working on the water has been a foregone conclusion—the natural thing to do. Today, with sparse oyster harvests and few working skipjacks, these are tough times for those who depend on oysters for their living. By Bill Thompson

Steamboats are rare in Feuchter's paintings, but they dominated the Baltimore waterfront near his home. This one, paired with a skipjack, was probably an excursion steamer like the ones that took day trippers to Tolchester Beach.



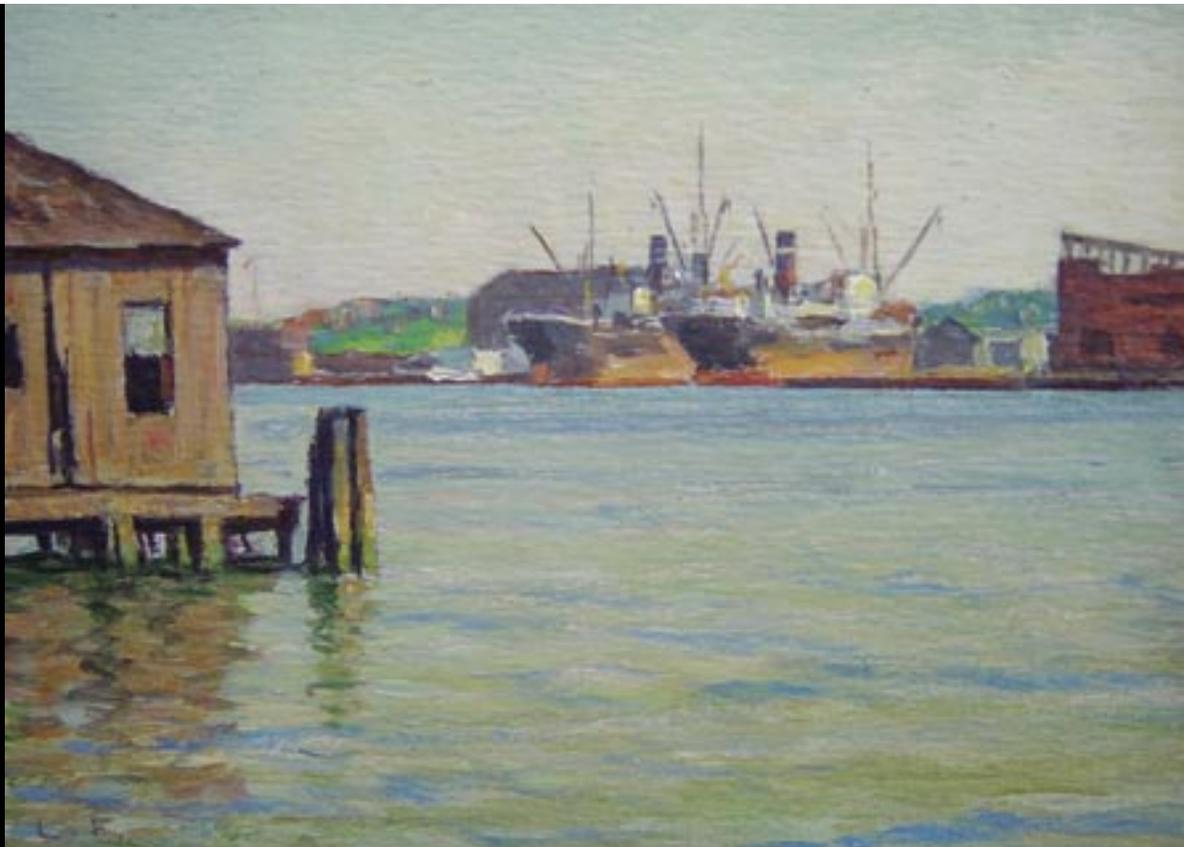
Working Sail on the Chesapeake

By Pete Leshner, *Curator*

Baltimore native Louis J. Feuchter (1885-1957) was arguably the finest marine artist from the Chesapeake region working in the first half of the twentieth century. Today he is best known for his paintings of Chesapeake Bay sailing vessels and placid Eastern Shore creeks and rivers, but he was just as interested in landscapes and animals. The Museum has a huge collection of his pencil sketches in addition to a sampling of his masterful watercolor works and a few oil paintings. In fact, works by Feuchter count as one of the chief strengths of the Museum's collection.

Some recently acquired oil paintings and other works have further bolstered that strength. Eleven oil paintings by Feuchter are each executed on an intimate scale—just four by six inches in some cases. Feuchter was a very prolific artist, but he sold few of his own works during his lifetime, choosing instead a reclusive lifestyle. In fact, when he died, most of his paintings remained in the house for decades with his younger brother, Walter, who parted with them sparingly. These eleven paintings did not remain in the house, but were given to another brother, William Feuchter, and remained prized possessions of the family until they came to the Museum this year.

The industrial Baltimore waterfront was a familiar scene to the artist, but he only occasionally painted it, preferring more pastoral rural settings for his marine paintings.





Vacation trips to the Eastern Shore earlier in his life provided Feuchter with suitable backgrounds for much of his maritime art, such as this setting with a small skipjack.

Captured in Art

Louis Feuchter received formal training at the Maryland Institute in Baltimore and began his career with Baltimore silversmith Samuel Kirk and Sons. Later he did ornamental plaster work with the firm of T. Milton Oler until the Depression put him out of work. Most of his maritime paintings date from the 1930s to the end of his life. Although he spent a great deal of time on the Baltimore waterfront, sketching the schooners and other baycraft that visited the harbor, his favorite settings were the more pastoral Eastern Shore waterfronts, where he had vacationed in his working years. He spent time at a summer guest house in Neavitt and later at Wade's Point Inn, both in Talbot County, which provided him with ample subjects for his art.

The Museum would like to thank the following patrons for helping to underwrite this significant acquisition of original Feuchter paintings: Richard H. Kimberly, Charles L. Lea, Jr., Juliette C. McLennan, Robert A. Perkins, Mr. & Mrs. Norman H. Plummer, Joseph W. Sener, Jr., H. C. Bowen Smith, Henry H. Spire, and Joseph B. Stevens, Jr. We are continuing to collect works of Chesapeake Bay artists and photographers such as Feuchter, John Moll, Constance Stuart Larrabee, and others who documented the changing face of the Chesapeake.



The schooner Minnie May Kirwan (seen bow-on) and the "square-rigged" (gaff) bugeye Avalon are identified as the subjects of this work. Feuchter's boats are often identified, and he is noted for getting both the proportions and the details exactly right.