



QUARTERLY
Winter 2005-2006



Crab Dredging in Virginia • Captain John Smith



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On the Cover

Detail from the watercolor painting, "A Stormy Sky" by artist and illustrator Leonard W. Vosburgh (1912-1998). Also called "Stiff Breeze," the image depicts two Maryland watermen sailing their double-ended skiff full of crabbing gear under reduced sail.

President's Message

As you've read in the Chairman's letter, I am stepping down as President of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. I have accepted a new position as President of the Grayce B. Kerr Fund in Easton.

I feel honored to be one of only two Executive Directors (now called President) that the Museum has had in its forty-year history. I am proud of the prominence and stature that the Museum has achieved in my nineteen years here. No one is more aware than I am that this success comes from the work we have done together—the staff I have worked with, the Board of Governors, our volunteers, our donors, and you, our members.

With confidence, I can tell you that the Museum is positioned to continue its success well into the future. Our leadership, behind Chairman Jim Peterson, has outlined an exciting strategy, in the form of our newly adopted Long Range Plan, to help us realize our vision to be a premier museum, excelling in communicating to the public the history and culture of the Chesapeake Bay.

I have served with Jim Peterson in his various capacities as a Board member for more than eight years—an association for which I am professionally and personally grateful. I have told the Chairman and the Board that I will continue



to serve as President until my successor is appointed. This will allow time to search for, and select, the right person to lead the Museum for perhaps the next twenty years.

Jim Peterson and I want to assure you that this process will benefit the Museum. Transitions are times of opportunity and growth. A transition like this is ultimately less about particular people, and more about the health of the institution. The Museum is the strongest we've ever been—trends in membership and attendance are up, our campus and visitor experience are continually improving, and you are about to see some remarkable programs with our changing exhibits.

As we stated in our annual report: we have grown, but our mission remains the same. It has been my great pleasure to have played a part in the Museum's success, and now in seeing it continue to grow.

John R. Valliant
President

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Visitors to the At Play on the Bay exhibit enjoy a vintage hydroplane built by Larry Lauterbach.

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“Loose Mainsheet” captures Vosburgh’s illustrative story-telling ability at its best. CBMM collection.



Vosburgh, himself a decoy collector, shows wonderful attention to detail in this watercolor of a group of sports going out on a skipjack towing hunting boats carrying decoys. CBMM collection.

(Opposite) “Easing away from the Dock” shows a ram schooner being nudged away from the warehouse. A steamboat passes in the background. In spite of the carefully observed detail in this image, the name on the ram is fictional. CBMM collection.



The figure of this hunter heading home with his prey is more impressionistic than many of Vosburgh’s more carefully laid-down paintings in which people appear as characters in a story. The looser brushstrokes here are more evocative of the cold grey morning and the movement of both the hunter and the wind through the marsh. CBMM collection.

VOSBURGH

By Lindsley Rice, *Curator*

Returning from a 1958 visit to Colonial Williamsburg, Leonard Vosburgh and his wife Alberta first visited the Eastern Shore. They became regular visitors to the Pasadena Inn in Royal Oak, Maryland, and Vosburgh began to paint Chesapeake scenes, at first for his own enjoyment. He started to sell some of these images when, as he remembered it, “the few grew into many—so many, we did not have room for them all.”

Born in Yonkers, New York, Leonard Vosburgh made his living as a book illustrator—primarily of children’s books set in America’s past. Vosburgh was prolific in his field; he died in 1998 with illustrations for 90 books and numerous magazines to his name. A graduate of the Pratt Institute and the Art Students League, Vosburgh studied under impressionist painters and illustrators Walter Biggs and Harvey

Dunn, who also taught N.C. Wyeth. Dunn’s style was more dramatic and realistic, while Biggs depicted romanticized subjects in broad, colorful strokes. Vosburgh’s painting seems to draw from Dunn’s preference towards depicting everyday activities of the middle and working classes, but tinged with the idealism of Biggs’ more impressionistic work.

Although often containing carefully observed details of Chesapeake people, craft, and environment, the images Vosburgh painted were not truly drawn from life. Like his book illustrations, Vosburgh’s Chesapeake paintings depict an imaginary world—with fictional people and vessel names. It is nevertheless a world which reflects the artist’s love for this place and for a romanticized past, from around 1870 to 1930, which he described as seeming “a more stable and gentler time.”

