In January of 1942 there were about 260 people living in the community of Solomons, Maryland. They were watermen, boatbuilders, canner workers, and farmers raising families in a quiet, rural town at the extreme end of a two-lane road that ran south through Calvert County. You could look across the Patuxent River and see St. Mary's County, but if you wanted to get there you had to take the ferry at Solomons or Benedict or go up the road to Upper Marlboro and back down the other side. It was a drive that took you many miles out of your way, so people didn't tend to motor through the area casually. And Solomons wasn't on the way to anywhere else, so there wasn't a lot of tourist traffic. Those who did come to visit found Solomons full of character and charm. The people here were self-sufficient and got along just fine without interference from the rest of the world. No one was getting rich, but people were surviving, and life was relatively peaceful.

Suddenly, in March of 1942, the United States Navy realized the advantages of this wonderful river in southern Maryland called the Patuxent. It was wide and deep, had protected harbors, and lots of open sandy beaches. It was exactly what they were looking for as a site for their new Amphibious Base, needed to get troops ready for the upcoming assaults in Africa and Europe. So the Navy came to Solomons — the little town on the Patuxent! The Navy purchased 117.59 acres of land for the Amphibious Base and construction and training began immediately.

By Karen E. Peterson, Curator of Education

Not everything went smoothly at first. Navy officials in Washington weren't concerned with the town or the effects of their "arrival" on it. They were focusing on the river and its harbors — line at places like the bank, and the increased demand for goods and services resulted in shortages, which caused prices to skyrocket. And there was a tremendous strain placed on the water system, so people in town often were left high and dry while the Navy got all the water it needed. Farmers were left short-handed at harvest time because their workers were drawn away to the better paying construction jobs in town, and the watermen were losing oyster beds and fishing grounds as a result of the Navy's activity in and around the river. The world had been turned upside down for the residents of Solomons.

But what about the men who were sent here? How did they feel about being sent to this quaint little fishing village? Was it paradise or was it the end of the earth?

Recently the Calvert Marine Museum was visited by some of the officers and their wives of LCS(L)3#1/7 — one of the many ships and crews that were trained for battle in Solomons. This particular crew was stationed here during the summer and fall of 1944. During the course of the day I had the opportunity to hear their version of what Solomons was like in the 1940s. The men didn't have too much to say about the town itself. "Being at the Amphibious Base was a lot like boot camp — lots of strict discipline, not much free time, and few amenities. When we did get leave, most of us headed to D. C., where we knew we could find something to do." They did remember the long, "wiggle-waggle bus ride" down from Washington, D. C., but they knew they would only be here for a short

Continued on page 6
NEW STAFF AT CMM

The museum's new curator of exhibitions is Thomas E. Ewart, III — more familiarly "Tom" — who began his duties in July. Tom is a native of Florida who completed his education at the University of South Florida in Tampa, with graduate work at the University of North Florida, Jacksonville, and the Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond. His fifteen years of experience in the fields of graphic and exhibit design have included a boat to its collection — space constraints and maintenance costs make for a conservative approach to small craft acquisition. But when retired waterman Webster Poe of St. George Island in St. Mary's County offered his nineteen-foot "bateau" to CMM, the decision to accept was relatively easy. The boat was built in 1983 by Francis Goddard of Piney Point, and probably represents the last of her type to be built in Southern Maryland for working the water.

It is not very often that the museum adds a boat to its collection — space constraints and maintenance costs make for a conservative approach to small craft acquisition. But when retired waterman Webster Poe of St. George Island in St. Mary’s County offered his nineteen-foot “bateau” to CMM, the decision to accept was relatively easy. The boat was built in 1983 by Francis Goddard of Piney Point, and probably represents the last of her type to be built in Southern Maryland for working the water.

The bateau was the traditional sailing craft of the Bay, and was built in all its glory at Solomons, the “Bateau Capital of the World.” Membership dues are used to fund special museum projects, programs, and printing of this newsletter. Address comments and membership applications to:

Calvert Marine Museum Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 97
Solomons, MD 20688
(410) 326-2042
FAX (410) 326-6691
TDD (410) 535-6355
Printed on Recycled Paper.

Recent Acquisitions

Webster Poe used her for crabbing and oyster tonging until poor health and declining harvests forced him to retire. Various items of gear used in the bateau were also donated, in addition to a collection of tools and equipment having to do with gillnetting, poundnetting, crabbing and oystering. The boat will be moored in the museum’s boat basin and undergo some repairs to the deck in the spring.

Other fisheries-related acquisitions include a gillnet and set of oyster nippers, from retired Solomons waterman James B. Bradburn, and three antique fishing rods and tackle box donated by Raymond C. Short.

There have also been other noteworthy donations: two oyster plates, formerly on loan from John Sands; a quarterback from the pungy schooner J. S. Smith, given by Walter Lawson; and a collection of unusual tools used in servicing lighthouse navigation aids, donated by Francis W. Smith.

An addition to the museum's archives was a 1943 copy of the Beachmaster, newsletter of the U.S. Amphibious Training Base, once located in Solomons, from Caleb K. Drenning. Our own “Pepper” Langley donated several items relating to the early history of the Administration Building when it was the Solomons school and he was a young student — a satchel and two pairs of athletic shoes. “Pepper” also donated drawings, sketches, and logbooks pertaining to his career.

CMM recently acquired, through donation, a large and significant collection of fossil specimens from the Chesapeake Bay region. The fossils were collected over the past several decades by the late William Holliman, Jr., who owned a cabin at Scientists Cliffs in Port Republic. Roger Bentley of Silver Spring, a close friend of the late Mr. Holliman, brought the specimens to our attention. Highlights of the Holliman collection include an impressive assortment of sharks teeth, several bird bones, and some beautifully preserved shells from the Rice’s Pit locality in southeastern Virginia. These additions bring CMM’s fossil collection to nearly fifteen thousand cataloged specimens — the largest museum fossil collection in Maryland.

Tom and his wife Renee are currently living in the Cove Point area, enjoying the bounties of Southern Maryland. Renee is a science teacher at Piccowaxen Middle School in Charles County, and when Tom’s not working he pursues his other interests in folk music, guitar, and old-time fiddle tunes.

Other staff changes: Diane L. Milgrim is the newly appointed assistant manager of the museum store; Helen “Pat” Fink is now an “if-and-when” exhibit interpreter, in addition to being the paleontology cataloger; Tom Ostertag has dropped his assignment as an interpreter, but it still an admission clerk; and seasonal interpreters Carin Stringer and Marah DeMeule have left CMM to return to school.

Photo by Richard Dodds

Bugeye Times

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C. Douglass Alves, Jr., Director
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Other contributors to this issue:
Michael Gottfried, Richard Dodds,
Maureen Baughman, Layne Bergin

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TENNISON A NATIONAL LANDMARK!

The county was recently notified by the National Park Service that the museum’s buyboat, the Wm. B. Tennison, “...has been found to possess national significance in the history of the United States,” with the result that the Secretary of the Interior designated it a National Historic Landmark on April 19, 1994. Landmark designation recognizes nationally significant sites and encourages their owners to preserve them. Selection involves a careful evaluation by the National Park System Advisory Board, in accordance with the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The Tennison was added to the National Register of Historic Sites in 1979, but the designation as a national landmark is a more significant recognition of the vessel’s importance to Chesapeake Bay maritime history. She was built as a sailing bugeye in Oriole, Maryland, in 1899 by Frank Laird, with the hull made of nine logs — “chunk-built” — instead of the more traditional frame-and-plank construction. The vessel was converted to power in 1908-09 and became an oyster buyboat. In 1978 the Tennison was purchased from the J. C. Lore and Sons Oyster Company for use by the museum as a tour boat, approved by the Coast Guard to carry forty-five passengers. She is the oldest Coast Guard-licensed passenger vessel on the Chesapeake Bay and reputedly the second oldest in the United States.

A commemorative bronze plaque recognizing the Wm. B. Tennison will be unveiled at a ceremony in the coming months. This new honor to the old vessel will remind passengers of her wonderful history as she cruises in the years ahead toward her centennial in 1999.

EDITH MARSH HARRISON
1905-1994

The museum lost a long-time friend and loyal supporter through the death of Edith Marsh Harrison in Baltimore on July 17. Mrs. Harrison provided the museum with a direct link to one of the two most important Solomons shipyards of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—the shipyard of James T. Marsh, builder of many bugeyes and other vessels at the location on the end of Dowell Peninsula at Mill Creek. James T. Marsh, a trained shipwright, arrived in Solomons in the early 1870s at a time when the demand for oyster vessels was beginning to grow. The shipyard continued for over forty years, with the work taken over by two of Marsh’s sons, most particularly John Henry Marsh who carried it on after the elder Marsh’s death in 1908. John Henry married a local woman and began his family, with daughter Edith born in 1905. By 1917, however, the shipyard closed and family moved to Baltimore. But they kept in touch with their Solomons friends and relations, so Edith maintained an active interest in the area.

Edith Marsh Harrison has provided the museum with shipyard artifacts and information — oral, written, and photographic — during the past years, increasing significantly our limited knowledge about the early history of the Patuxent area. An excellent example of her museum involvement was with the return of the one-hundred-year-old Marsh-built bugeye Little Jennie to Solomons in the summer of 1986, an event which she used as an occasion to recount the significance of the boatbuilding by her father and grandfather, adding a personal touch to this important event. She also provided CMM with some informal notes on Solomons as she remembered it, and in 1992 wrote and published a family history, entitled Descendant of a Chesapeake Shipbuilder: A Family Genealogy, containing family photographs and an extensive genealogical chart.

Edith Marsh Harrison was a real advocate for the Marsh legacy at Solomons, a legacy which the museum has emphasized in its exhibits and publications. Her contributions to the museum have enhanced the record of Solomons which the Calvert Marine Museum is striving to preserve and present to visitors. She will be missed by her many local friends.

The museum has also just learned of the deaths of two more friends and supporters. Mrs. Katharine “Kitty” Buey, who died in late August, was an early associate who served as secretary to the museum’s governing committee during the 1970s. She donated several important items for the Drum Point Lighthouse. Mr. Harry Jones, resident of Charles County, who died suddenly in mid-August, was noted for his encyclopedic knowledge of Chesapeake Bay steamboats. He was of inestimable help to writers and researchers on the bay’s history, and he provided CMM with photographic documentation.

CAN YOU HELP WITH HURRICANE SUPPLIES?

Staff teams met recently to plan and carry out hurricane-preparedness strategies. To help safeguard the museum’s collections and property, donations of the following would be helpful:
- generator
- propane camp stove
- staple guns, staples
- extension cords
- hand-held six-volt lanterns
- cellular phones
- cable pullers
- tarps
- nylon, manila, and polypropylene line
- plus any storm-related supplies or material

Please call George Nichols at (410) 326-2042 if you can help with any item.
First viewing of the otters at formal opening on June 25.

Photo by Richard Dodds

Some of the "campers" at CMM's summer camp.
Photo by Richard Dodds

The museum had a wide variety of events this summer, most of which involved the museum's artifacts and exhibits. Museum attendance reached new highs, thanks to the arrival of the new river otter exhibit. Since the otter exhibit opening on June 25, the museum has set new attendance records. The otters—now eighteen months old—have adapted to their new home and are entertaining onlookers with their playful behavior. They are very attracted to and curious about visitors, especially children.

A program for the Young Salts - dorso
Activities

of activities this past summer, including projects for the younger members. One highlight during the summer was the fin ring toss largely to the river otters.

Shark Fest on July 23 — Marilyn Force (left) making shark hats.
Photo by Richard Dodds

Shark Fest on July 23 — Sandy Roberts (left) explains the jaw structure.
Photo by Richard Dodds

The otters will be exhibited throughout the year, except on winter days when the weather is unusually cold. Plans are being developed to add interpretive signage to the outdoor exhibit next spring, with graphics that describe the otter’s natural history and behavior. If you haven’t yet seen this exhibit, plan on a trip this fall to CMM. (Ken Kaumeyer)
REMINISCENCES WITH THE WIVES AND CREW

Continued from page 1

The Commanding Officer seemed to resent the presence of these women and so did little to make life pleasant for them, but fortunately the townspeople did not feel the same way. The general reception by the town was warm, which surprised these women, because they felt like such intruders. It seemed to them that the people were pleased to be making money — both through the jobs brought in by the Navy and from the wives of the sailors who appeared to be "easy pickings." The only place the townspeople seemed to be annoyed by their presence was at the post office, which was "down the dirt road in a little building at the far end of the island." It was plenty big enough for the town's regular mail, but was strained under the weight of the extra Navy mail. Although the locals all had their own individual boxes, the Navy wives called at the counter. This was a slow process, sometimes causing delay and lines. But the mail always got through, and according to these women, nothing was ever lost.

One towns person in particular is remembered quite fondly by this group. The Reverend Harry L. Pafl, rector at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, befriended all of these strangers and helped them adjust to this unfamiliar territory. He helped them overcome the language barrier — they all remember not being able to understand one word of what was said to them when they first arrived — and introduced them to some of the local food. The women described sitting on his porch eating crabs — and not being sure that they really wanted to!

Looking back on their time in Solomons, the wives and crew of #117 felt that it was all a great adventure — but not one they would wish to repeat. It helped make them who they are and helped make Solomons what it is. And now it's going to happen all over again, but this time on the other side of the Patuxent. With the closing of the base at Warminster, Pennsylvania, there is going to be a sudden influx of military personnel to Lexington Park in the not too distant future. Although the area is somewhat better able to accept new residents, the news media are already talking about housing shortages and the strain on the water supply!
HOLIDAYS ARE COMING!

The beginning of fall brings with it the reminder of the holidays that are to come. CMM is already planning for this season, with several traditional events and new items in the Museum Store.

Events open with the Solomons Christmas Walk on December 9 and 10, during which Solomons is aglow with luminarias to light the way to the area’s merchants who hold “open house” to start the season. Participating in this event is the Museum Store, open during the evenings of December 9 and 10. On those two evenings, museum members will be entitled to a 20 percent discount on most items and 10 percent on books – a real incentive to visit Solomons and the store during the Solomons Christmas Walk!

Members are invited to their own Yule Party from 5:30 until 8:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 11, complete with the traditional carols, Santa, hayrides, holiday goodies, and the Weems Steamship Line eggnog toast. But remember, the party is limited to “members only.” To treat family and friends to this event and a year of museum enjoyment, consider a gift membership. A holiday card will announce your gift and you’ll receive a confirmation. Call the membership office for more details.

As in past years, the rooms inside of the Drum Point Lighthouse will be decorated for the season, a treat that members will enjoy. Lighthouse tours are scheduled for weekends throughout December (see calendar).

Shopping at the Museum Store this fall and during the yule season has a triple benefit: you’ll find a large selection of interesting gifts, members have a 10 percent discount (with an extra discount on December 9 and 10), and you’ll be supporting the museum with your purchases. The store manager has stocked some exciting new items, so you’ll be sure to find something for everyone on your shopping list. There are beautiful throws depicting colorful scenes of the outdoors. Or perhaps you’ll be interested in a “Treasure Jest” – the detail in these little keepsake boxes is tremendous. The children’s corner is fully stocked with all of their favorites. Christmas ornaments and cards are also stocked.

THE MUSEUM’S YEAR-END APPEAL
An Opportunity for Unrestricted Support

The end of the calendar year is the traditional time for the appeal for unrestricted giving to the museum. Members will receive during October a letter outlining the need for these unrestricted funds and will be urged to use this opportunity to provide their support.

Although there is no specific goal for the Year-End Appeal, the need continues to grow from year to year. Undesignated funds meet those unexpected expenses that have not been foreseen during the annual budgeting process. Funds in earlier years helped increase the museum’s collections when significant items were offered; unanticipated expenses during the preparation of exhibits were funded; and much-needed, but unbudgeted capital expenses were met.

Please consider thoughtfully the request in the Year-End Appeal letter when you receive it this fall. All of your tax-deductible gift to the Calvert Marine Museum Society will benefit the museum. Names of givers will appear in next spring’s issue of the Bugeye Times. Please be as generous as you can.

Books always make welcome gifts, and the store has a wide selection, including various books published (or copublished) by the museum: Merle Cole’s Cradle of Invasion (1984, reprinted 1994), describing the assault training that was conducted on the Dowell Peninsula at the Naval Amphibious Training Base during World War II; Paula Johnson’s Working the Water (1988), with text and photos of the local maritime industries and the museum’s collections of maritime objects; Geoffrey Marsh Footner’s The Last Generation (1991), the story of the Davis family and the shipyard with their name; “Pepper” Langley’s reminiscences in his I Remember (1990); and research associate David C. Holly’s Tidewater by Steamboat (1991), recalling the era of the Weems Line on the Patuxent and other rivers. (David Holly also has a new book published by Tidewater, entitled Chesapeake Steamboats, available in the store.) Remember, the store honors VISA and MasterCard.

GIVE A CMM'S MEMBERSHIP THIS HOLIDAY!

UPDATE ON ANNMARIE GARDEN

The gift of a thirty-acre tract of land to Calvert County on the Dowell Peninsula, with one thousand feet of waterfront on St. John Creek, was reported to members in the fall 1993 issue of the Bugeye Times. This beautiful tract, a gift of Francis L. Koenig (also a museum supporter), will be developed into a sculpture park named Annmarie Garden, in honor of Mrs. Koenig. Although much of the general planning and layout has been completed, the garden is not yet ready to be opened to the public.

An Artsfest ‘94 was held at the garden on September 24, featuring demonstrations, the sale of art, and musical performances, but with a special ceremony to unveil “The Tonger,” a sculpture by Tony Mendez, a model of which was pictured in last year’s Bugeye Times. Museum members will be kept advised of future progress on Annmarie Garden, an important cultural addition to the local area.
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT —

BILL LAKE

Estuarine Biology Volunteer

How does someone get into volunteering at Calvert Marine Museum? In the case of Bill Lake, a volunteer recruitment flyer picked up at the 1992 PRAD festival did the trick. Bill had considered volunteering for about a year and was, he says, "looking for a little diversion."

It's possible he got more than he bargained for. A mechanical engineer retired from government contract work for the Navy, Bill has become a valuable member of the museum's estuarine biology team. Putting in a full day each week, Bill handles most of the routine tank maintenance of the aquariums in the Estuary Patuxent exhibit. This means cleaning glass, agitating sand layers so that debris is lifted and filtered, backwashing and changing filters, and cleaning the feature tanks. He may also change 15 to 20 percent of the water volume of the tanks each week, based on water chemistry testing done by teams of volunteers. Bill usually works independently but joins in with such special projects as changing a pump or the recent sterilization of the turtle reserve tank.

This behind-the-scenes volunteer also donates his talents in design work. By installing mechanical gauges on the upper level holding tanks for the distribution system, Bill made it possible to tell how much water is in the tanks without the previous climb up a fifteen foot ladder. Says estuarine biology curator Ken Kaumeyer: "Bill is the perfect volunteer. Not only does he come in every Tuesday and start our weekly system maintenance, but he keeps everyone supplied with freshly steamed crabs. He provides a substantial amount of valuable assistance and we all enjoy working with him."

Bill Lake has helped the museum in another way. In a 1993 evaluation survey, Bill commented frankly on the deficiencies of the general volunteer orientation he received. He felt that for most of the museum departments, volunteer opportunities were not readily apparent. As a result, procedural changes were made. Now, based on preliminary interviews, new volunteers are assigned to available positions on a trial basis. There is a chance to experience the work and responsibilities to find the best match to their talents and availability. Once there is a successful placement, the volunteer is recommended for orientation. Although the system is somewhat slower, it allows for a better fit between volunteer's interests and services and the museum's needs.

Bill is at home with his wife Ann in St. Leonard, unless there is a University of Maryland game to attend. He is a life member of the Terrapin Club and a member — and former president — of their M Club for earning a letter playing undergraduate varsity basketball.

Bill recently decided he would like to add another day of volunteering. Working with CMM boatwright Jack Krolak, Bill has been assisting with the revamping of the Marie Theresa as a "playscape" for visitors. Along with Patuxent Small Craft Guild volunteers Al Lavish and Mike Young, he is helping with the long process of the Sewell draketail restoration. He doesn't pick the cushy jobs. Says Bill, "I enjoy it. I wouldn't be here if I didn't."

For information on how you can join the museum's volunteer crew, please contact volunteer coordinator Layne Bergin at (410)326-2042.

VOLUNTEER COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING HELD

Members of the CMM Volunteer Council gathered September 22 for the annual business meeting and election of officers. Coming on board for the new term: Buck McClellan, president; Dan Grosso, vice-president; Cindy MacArthur, corresponding secretary; Paul Berry, recording secretary and treasurer. The meeting concluded with a slide program highlighting volunteer involvement throughout the year and "afternoon tea" refreshments.