EXHIBITS AT CMM

Although a museum has a number of purposes and carries them out through various curatorial, educational, and research programs, most visitors to the Calvert Marine Museum think first about its exhibits. Over the twenty years of its existence in Solomons, the museum’s growth in land, buildings, staff, and members has seen a parallel development in its exhibits. Few visitors or recent museum members know of the evolution of the exhibits for which this museum is noted. A review seems appropriate on this twentieth anniversary.

The museum opened its first building in 1970 on Solomons Island with an exhibit in the 960-square-foot quonset hut-like building. The limited space was well used to display the maritime artifacts and fossils that had been collected to form the basis for creating this museum. Space limitations, however, restricted the displays. It was not until the Solomons School was obtained and renovated that CMM was able to begin planning a series of exhibits to bring its three themes—maritime history, estuarine biology, and paleontology—before the public in a meaningful way. When the school building opened in 1975, the maritime history theme was presented in the large double room to the rear of the first floor and in the hall leading from the lobby. These maritime exhibits were the work of museum staff.

The next special exhibit area was that entitled “Life of the Waterman,” a room in the northeast corner of the first floor. It is described in the spring 1976 issue of the Bugeye Times:

This room promises to be the museum’s most popular. Its use of audio-visual aids, life-like mannequins, and water-simulated habitats will offer an exhibit that is esthetically pleasing utilizing modern exhibit techniques.

Following soon after this indoor exhibit was the construction of the outdoor exhibit in the Small Craft Shed, opened in 1977. A year later—on June 24, 1978—the Drum Point Lighthouse was dedicated and opened as a museum exhibit.

Even more elaborate than the “Life of the Waterman” was the exhibit on the “Fossils of Calvert Cliffs,” designed to present the paleontology theme. Begun in 1977, this exhibit was not completed until the summer of 1979, with the official dedication in September 1979. Located in the northwest corner of the first floor, the exhibit was described as “the largest of its kind on Miocene marine fossils.” It was described further in the Bugeye Times:

Highlights include a 7 x 10-foot photo mural of Calvert Cliffs; a half scale model of the largest true bird ever to live on earth, PELAGORNIS, a false-toothed bird which had a wing span of 18 to 22 feet; and a 10 x 22-foot mural depicting the 12-million-year-old Calvert Sea and the animals which lived in it. Several fossil whale and porpoise skulls, shark teeth, crabs, shells, and other Miocene fossils are on exhibit.

During 1977 space in the basement level was developed for exhibits of diving gear, sport fishing equipment, a small aquarium and hands-on room, and in 1981 became the location for the important exhibit “War on the Patuxent: 1814.” This special exhibit was developed largely from three years of research work carried out by CMM and Nautical Archaeological Associates to search for the scuttled flotilla of vessels from the War of 1812 in the Patuxent. Preparation of the exhibit was possible in part through a matching grant from the Maryland Committee for the Humanities, which also supported the preparation of a catalog of artifacts. Other developments on the basement level included the model making/wood-carving shop, later converted to a paleontology preparation laboratory when the

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A NEW EXHIBIT:
Charting the Chesapeake, 1590-1990

Keep your calendars open for Saturday evening, August 11! That evening museum members are encouraged to attend an opening reception for a special exhibition, Charting the Chesapeake, 1590-1990. This exhibition will feature original nautical charts of the Chesapeake Bay on loan from The Huntington Library Collection of The Maryland State Archives. These charts have seldom been displayed to the public.

Among the exhibit highlights is a 1590 chart by the English artist John White, who was a member of the 1585 expedition to establish the Roanoke colony. White's map is the first to identify the bay by its present name. Other items of interest include: a 1689 chart by John Thornton, the earliest chart of the bay accurate enough to be used by navigators; a 1776 chart by St. Mary's County pilot Anthony Smith, which was used by both British and American naval forces in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812; a beautifully colored chart by William Heath, one of the first charts to include harbor insets; and an 1832 chart by one of Maryland's only cartographers, Fielding Lucas, Jr., of Baltimore. Charts produced by the U.S. Coast Survey will also be displayed, including an 1846 chart of Annapolis Harbor, the first of the bay produced by the survey. Modern charts containing a wealth of highly accurate information will provide a contrast to the artistic manuscripts of the past.

Members can take a special tour of the exhibit with guest curator, Russell Morrison, donor of The Huntington Collection to The Maryland State Archives, at the opening reception. The following day, Sunday, August 12, Dr. Peter Guthorn, noted historian and author, will present a lecture on “Charting the Chesapeake” in the museum’s auditorium. Funding for the exhibition is provided by a grant from the Maryland Humanities Council. Watch for details in the local papers and a separate invitation to the opening reception.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL WATER- SIDE MUSIC FESTIVAL

Despite a rainy morning and threats of rain during the afternoon and evening, the annual WaterSide Music Festival was enjoyed by an audience of over 750 devoted fans of “Schooner Fare” during that group’s third appearance at the museum. As in past years, this concert was sponsored by Zahniser’s Inc., and produced by a special events committee chaired by Ellen Zahniser. The proceeds from the concert will benefit the programs of CMM, notably the estuarium exhibit currently being developed.

MUSEUM DUES . . . MUSEUM ADMISSIONS

Membership renewal letters sent out during May advised museum members of the new membership dues structure beginning in July 1990. Individual memberships have been increased from $12.00 to $15.00 a year; family memberships, from $15.00 to $20.00; and contributing memberships, from $25.00 to $35.00. Benefits in the other membership levels have been restructured. Increases—the first in several years—are needed to meet increased costs, but also come with the new incentive of no-cost admission to the museum when the new admission charges become effective in January (see below). If you want to check on the status of your membership, call the membership office on (301) 326-2042, Monday through Thursday.

Beginning on January 2, 1991, there will be an admission charge to the exhibits of the Calvert Marine Museum. This charge will be $3.00 for adults and $2.00 for children and seniors. Included in the fee will be the exhibits in the exhibition building, the boat basin and small craft shed, and—when they are open from May through October—the Drum Point Lighthouse and J. C. Lore Oyster House. There will be no charge for access to the museum store, the changing exhibit area off of the main lobby, or the Discovery Room. Most importantly, however, there will be no charge for members of the Calvert Marine Society who present their valid membership cards. (Individual members, of course, will be admitted singly, but members in the family and higher categories will be able to include resident family members without charge when they visit the museum. Certain membership categories will also receive admission passes for guests.) The museum facilities will be open without charge on the first Tuesday of each month. Call the museum (326-2042) for more information, especially for charges for groups and guided tours.
RALPH E. ESHELMAN: AN APPRECIATION

When Ralph Eshelman retires on June 30, he will leave behind a notable record of accomplishment during seventeen years of service. While he did not originate the museum—being appointed some four years after CMM's founding in 1970—he did play a major part in its direction and in bringing the museum to its present status as an institution recognized nationally for both programs and professionalism.

Soon after the museum started under the auspices of the Calvert County Historical Society, the directing committee of that society recognized the need for a professional director. The county agreed to fund and hire a director, and began a search for a suitable candidate. They found in Ralph Eshelman a young man with varied experience in museums, with educational credentials appropriate to the job, and with interest in tackling the development of a small and rather localized museum.

His high school education in Washington, D. C., was followed by a bachelor of science degree from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, a master of science degree from the University of Iowa, and the doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Michigan. While earning his degrees, Ralph continued an association with museums that began while he was still in high school when he volunteered in the Department of Paleobiology at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. At SUNY he assisted in its Museum of Geology; at Iowa, at its Museum of Natural History; and at Michigan, in its Museum of Paleontology. Although paleontology was his primary interest, his skills and general interests were broad enough to encompass the three themes of the Calvert Marine Museum. After his appointment his professionalism directed him toward courses and seminars to hone his skills in directing a museum. All who have worked with Ralph or have dealt with him in museum matters have appreciated his broad range of interests and skills.

The development of the Calvert Marine Museum during the past sixteen years has been possible through the efforts of a great number of people: County Commissioners, board members, staff, volunteers, donors, and funding agencies. But much of the credit must go to Ralph Eshelman for his leadership and his vision of what CMM should be. When he arrived in 1974 steps had already started to convert the 1925 Solomons School for museum use and to move the decommissioned Drum Point Lighthouse from its site on Drum Point. Committee minutes of 1974 and 1975 chronicled the decisions that faced the new director, providing both challenges and opportunities. These challenges were dealt with quickly, resulting in the opening of the larger museum building in June 1975 and the relocation of the Drum Point Lighthouse to CMM property within a few months.

That larger property presented opportunities was recognized in the decision to hire Cambridge Seven Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to create a master plan to develop and enlarge museum facilities. By 1979 that plan was presented and accepted by the county and museum boards, while at the same time the Calvert County Historical Society turned over its leadership role to the county which agreed to provide financial and administrative support for an increasingly popular and well known museum.

With a firm support structure in place, Ralph turned to the task of obtaining professional recognition, achieved when CMM was accredited by the American Association of Museums in 1981. Next was the implementation of the Master Development Plan, the first phase of which—the creation of the boat basin—was started in 1983 and completed in 1984. Construction of the new exhibition building was next, requiring several years of effort to obtain funding from the county and state, and then several more years for construction. During this period there was a successful effort to obtain non-county funding for the third development phase—renovation of the 1925 Solomons School—an effort which saw the first major success in raising private funds amounting to nearly $500,000. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, this construction phase has not been completed before Ralph's retirement, although planning has been under his direction. Ralph has also developed through the museum staff a five-year plan for future directions, and this plan has also been generally accepted by the museum's Board of Governors. Not only has Ralph Eshelman led the museum to its present state of excellence, he has planned well for its future.

The major initiatives listed above are far from the complete listing of all that Ralph Eshelman has accomplished. Space and facilities were expanded by the purchase by the county of properties to the north of the school house, adding nearly three acres to the museum campus. The J. C. Lore Oyster House was also purchased and developed into a major museum exhibit on the seafood industry. Among the many significant additions to the museum's collections, one of the best known is the buyboat Wm. B. Tenneson. Ralph developed programs for research and publication, resulting in an extensive underwater archeological survey of the Patuxent River and the establishment of the Calvert Marine Museum Press. Underwater archeology brought to the museum a number of significant artifacts from the river to document the importance of the Patuxent during the War of 1812. The press issued a book on the subject, authored by a museum research associate. Other research associates have documented log canoes, naval installations in the Solomons area, the history of local shipyards, and the history of bay steamships. Ralph himself has written and lectured extensively on the geology and paleontology of the area, and has encouraged similar work by others. His fourteen years as a research associate with the Department of Paleobiology of the National Museum of Natural History,

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CMM paleontologists Michael Gottfried and Craig Defample led a fossil field trip to Calvert Cliffs. (CMM photo by Michael Gottfried)

The "touch tank" was a popular feature of Patuxent River Family Discovery Day. Two young visitors are getting to know a fiddler crab. The girl on the right is holding a toy boat she made earlier in the day at another Discovery Day activity on the grounds of the museum. (CMM photo by Paula Johnson)

Fish printing was another popular activity at Discovery Day. Here a youngster prepares a special synthetic fish prior to printing its image on a T-shirt. (CMM photo by Paula Johnson)
Summers 1990

Volunteers Enjoy Washington, D. C., Trip

May 9 was the day of the volunteer spring trip: Canal boat "cruising," the Sackler Museum of Asian Art, a rooftop luncheon, and Edgar Hoover's gardenias. All enjoyed the sights and the opportunity to be together. The photo shows the group in front of the U. S. Botanic Garden building. Thanks are due to the many community businesses for the door prizes that added to the fun. (CMM Photo)

SUMMER PROGRAMS OFFERED

Starting on Wednesday, July 4, and running through August 19, the museum will be offering programs on a Wednesday through Sunday schedule. From 1:00 to 1:30 p.m. on these days, the program offered will be on small boat development on the Chesapeake. From 2:30 to 3:00 p.m., there will be a guided walk through the museum's salt marsh. These programs will complement the present tours of the Drum Point Lighthouse. Since space on these programs will be limited, visitors are asked to sign up in person at the Information Desk on the day of the program or tour. Weather conditions or conflicting events may affect the schedule.

On three Sundays during August a canoe course will be offered that will instruct the students in the basics of canoeing and will entitle the student to receive Red Cross certification. This program will be on August 5 and August 12 from 10:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., and on August 19 from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Canoes, life vests, and paddles will be provided. The cost will be $30.00 per student for museum members and $35.00 for non-members. Enrollment is limited to students sixteen or older and should be reserved by calling the museum before July 27.

DONATIONS SOUGHT

The Education Department is seeking the donation of a surf pole with reel in operating condition. It is also looking for a member who might have an IBM or compatible computer with hard drive that might be donated. Call Craig DeTemple at the museum for further details.

At the May 20 reception, Cam Harris and Carmen Sanders unveiled the original watercolor from which the museum's twentieth anniversary poster was printed. The artist, Robert Picard, and his wife, Mrs. Harris, donated the painting to CMM. See page 6 for more details about the poster. (CMM photo by Paula Johnson)
ESHELMAN . . . (Cont. from page 3) is expected to bring shortly to CMM a joint agreement with that institution.

Beyond his interests in paleontology, Ralph was one of the founding members of the Solomons Environmental, Archaeological, and Research Consortium (SEARCH), an organization to coordinate the efforts of the four principal research organizations in the Patuxent region. Support of the county’s educational programs have been pursued through SEARCH and more recently through CHESPAX. Ralph’s participation in cultural and scientific organizations has been impressive: Maryland Historical Trust, Maryland Humanities Council (2nd vice-chairman), Maryland Arts Council, Maryland Cultural Heritage Museums Committee of the Maryland State Division of Historical and Cultural Programs, Governor’s Advisory Committee on Maritime Archaeology, National Maritime Alliance (vice-president), National Maritime Preservation Task Force of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, American Association of Museums, International Congress of Maritime Museums, Council of American Maritime Museums (president), Forum of Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museums (chairman), American Association for Quaternary Environment, Society for Historical Archaeology, Society of Mammalogy, Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, Explorers Club, and Washington Paleontological Society. His professional accomplishments have been recognized by the Society of Sigma Xi, Society of Sigma Gamma Epsilon, Outstanding Young Men in America (1981) and Who’s Who of Emerging Leaders in America (1990).

Despite all these activities, Ralph has managed many personal interests; camping, canoeing, skiing, scuba diving, and traveling from the Andes to Pacific Islands. He now lives at Preston Point with his wife, Evelyne, and son, Erich. He hopes to be able to spend more time now at his property in Nova Scotia, as well as traveling, consulting, and research.

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS AND POSTER

The calendar in this issue gives details of the events for September 28 through 30 in celebration of the museum’s twentieth anniversary. First of these events will be the “Bugeye Ball” on Friday evening, September 28, but there will be other events during the weekend. A separate invitation to the “Bugeye Ball” will be sent to members later in the summer, and local newspapers will report on the other planned events.

The museum is offering for sale a special commemorative poster. The four-color poster depicts the Drum Point Lighthouse and the skipjack Maggie Lee in the museum’s boat basin. It was produced in conjunction with Carmen’s Framecrafting of Solomons and artist Robert Picardat, A.S.M.A. These posters are available in the museum store, open seven days a week from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Posters pencil-signed by the artist are $35.00 plus tax; unsigned posters are $25.00 plus tax. Proceeds from the sale of the poster will support the museum’s new aquarium exhibition, currently under construction.

AMONG THE MUSEUM STAFF

The staff of the museum continues to grow as it expands its programs and services. The most recent major position added to CMM is that of the curator of paleontology, filling out for the first time the professional coverage of all the three themes of the museum. Appointed in April to this new position was Michael D. Gottfried, a doctoral candidate from the University of Kansas. Mike will curate the paleontology collections, but will also spend a great deal of his time in the months ahead in planning for the paleontology exhibit to be installed in the exhibition building.

A new director of development—Ms. Patricia Tower—was appointed in June, replacing Kay Musial who served in that position for three years. Tricia comes to CMM from the Baltimore area where she has worked in several development positions. She will live in St. Mary’s County.

Visitors to CMM this summer may meet several new seasonal interpreters in the Drum Point Lighthouse, the J. C. Lore Oyster House, or in the Discovery Room. These new staff members are: Laura Dowell, Deborah Mohler, and Elizabeth O’Neill.
model making/woodcarving shop moved to a separate building in 1986.

The estuarine theme was presented in the center hall of the building in 1980, and in early 1981 the building lobby was redesigned as a simulated steamboat wharf, including the museum store in this space.

The growing success of CMM brought to it more and more items for its collections. With space in the schoolhouse completely utilized, the next major exhibit focused on a new space—the J. C. Lore Oyster House. This building on Solomons Island was acquired by the museum in late 1979 and provided the ideal site for an extensive exhibit on the seafood industries so vital to the history of the area. With funds obtained from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Maryland Humanities Council, museum staff members developed an extensive exhibit in a perfect setting, utilizing many of the original rooms in the oyster house to depict the facets of the industry central to the exhibit. "Seasons of Abundance, Seasons of Want: Making a Living from the Waters of the Patuxent" was without doubt the museum's most ambitious exhibit up to the time of its formal opening in July 1984. An exhibit on Southern Maryland boatbuilding was opened on the second floor of the oyster house somewhat later.

With the groundbreaking in the summer of 1986 for the museum's new exhibition building, all efforts were directed toward planning for exhibits in that building. When the building opened in January 1989, only a small temporary exhibit was in place, but work was under way on the first of the three permanent exhibits, this one devoted to maritime history. By November 1989 the exhibit "Maritime Patuxent: a River and Its People" was in place and open to visitors, the work of a team of consultants, designers, and fabricators led by museum staff members. This exhibit has been described in detail in the winter 1989/90 issue of the Bugeye Times. The two other major exhibits in the new building—the estuarium and the paleontology exhibits—are yet to come, with work well along on the estuarium.

In this brief history is has not been possible to describe the many small exhibit efforts nor those temporary exhibits that have appealed to many of the museum's visitors. Not only have the museum's exhibits grown in size, but they have increased in quality. Credit is due to the support of the Calvert County government for providing the space and staff for the museum's exhibit program; to such funding agencies as the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Maryland Humanities Council for significant financial support; to museum members and supporters whose contributions have also helped these efforts; and, most importantly, to the museum staff members whose creativity and competence have produced exhibits with both appeal and relevance. Twenty years have shown great strides in the exhibits program at CMM; the years to come will see further accomplishments.
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT—
Drum Point Lighthouse Cleanup

The Volunteer Spotlight this issue shines not on an individual but on a group of volunteers: more than twenty volunteers and staff who gave “all hands on deck” for the Spring Lighthouse Cleanup on April 7. This was a most important effort to prepare the lighthouse for visitors for the coming year. Thanks are due to Roy Rogers of Solomons, the Prince Frederick Bakery, Country Foods Warehouse of California, and the Prince Frederick IGA for generously donating food for the cleaning crew.

In the tradition of the U.S. Lighthouse Service, J. Linda Williams makes the brass gleam on the original fresnel lens. (CMM photo by Paula Johnson)

Marianne Bernard and young son Michael scrape and sand walls and later volunteered with repainting of the 1883 cottage. (CMM photo by Paula Johnson)

Volunteer Coordinator Layne Bergin tackles the dishes in the lighthouse kitchen. (CMM photo by Paula Johnson)

Paul Adams works on peeling paint and “blacken” both of the lighthouse coal stoves. (CMM photo by Paula Johnson)