Leadership Amid Crisis and Uncertainty

By Jeff Murray, Director

Blessed are the flexible, for they shall bend but not break – museum colleague in Muncie, Indiana

2020 was off to a running start, and the museum’s 50th Anniversary year was shaping up to be one of our best ever. Right out of the gate, we hosted a fabulous opening event for the brand new, three-story tall Maritime History Gallery mural “Life on the Patuxent” and had one of our wildest Maritime Performance Series concerts in memory when the band Wylder performed to a packed house in the Harms Gallery. Our new lecture series, “Maryland in the Age of Sail,” was delighting some of the largest lecture crowds in recent history, and in early March we celebrated the artistic abilities of Calvert County youth with the opening of an exhibit dedicated to Youth Art Month. Meanwhile, our Exhibits Team designed and installed a new photo and video exhibit dedicated to five decades of CMM’s institutional history and was in the middle of preparing two additional exhibits for installation later this spring. Other staff and volunteers were planning and preparing for a whole host of spring, summer, and fall events.

And then came COVID – 19.

Within the span of 72 hours, Calvert Marine Museum went from a speed that Mario Andretti would be proud of to a nearly full stop. Like many other museums and public institutions around the country, we closed our doors to the public for an indefinite period on March 14. This decision was absolutely the right one, and our closure remains necessary due to the ways in which this virus spreads so quickly from person to person. However, the three days prior were a complete whirlwind, with information and messages changing almost by the minute. At many points over the course of those three days I wanted to put out a public statement to give the most up-to-date information and provide reassurance to our constituents, but the situation was changing at such a rapid pace that I felt that anything we released might be out of date within a matter of minutes.

Taking a dynamic and engaging museum like CMM from a quick stride to an unplanned halt in a very short time frame is a bit like being forced to fully test the brakes on your car when you haven’t done so in quite a long time. Staff members and volunteers were very responsive and understanding, and they each stepped up to the plate to make sure their own programs and events were taken care of and that any related issues were sorted out quickly. One way to find out exactly how much is happening at the Calvert Marine Museum on a daily, weekly, monthly, even hourly basis is to try and unwind all of the activities that are on the calendar in the days, weeks, and months ahead.

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Imagine being the first paid employee of a young fledgling museum. Like so many things in life, it was a serendipitous combination of circumstances that brought me to this institution. My high school biology teacher sought out a mentor for each of her students and paired me with Dr. Frank C. Whitmore, Jr., a vertebrate paleontologist at the Smithsonian Institution. When a fossil whale skull dredged up by an oysterman was shown to Joseph C. Lore, Jr., then president of the Calvert County Historical Society, he contacted the Smithsonian to get the fossil identified. Dr. Whitmore agreed to assist and, while investigating the specimen, Lore asked him for a recommendation of a director for a new museum. Whitmore called the University of Michigan where I was finishing up my doctoral thesis and, as they say, the rest is history.

At the same time, far-sighted individuals such as Tom Rymer and Bernie Fowler were contemplating how Calvert County could effectively utilize the new tax revenues being generated by the recently completed Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant. Among the many ideas considered was developing a tourism program to bring in “outside dollars.”

In a case of perfect timing, the Historical Society persuaded the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners to invest some of their new funds to designate the abandoned Solomons School property for the new museum, pay for a director, and provide a small budget to renovate the old schoolhouse. The heating system was shot and there was no air conditioning — a necessary requirement to maintain museum collections. Jim Buys, a member of the society’s Museum Committee, helped me remove the radiators and old furnace and a new HVAC system was installed. Jefferson Patterson, for whom Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum is named, put up funding to pay for a new entrance and portico to make the old school look more like a museum and to facilitate visitation.

As the de facto tourism director as well as museum director, funding was available from the state tourism office to hire a secretary. Gladys Bowers was hired and frequently kept a hammer in her belt to help put up sheet rock as well as answer the phone and send out letters. Once the community realized the museum effort was underway, folks rallied around. One man and his son sanded all the floors. A sheet rock man did all the spackling, among many other donations, all without charge.

The building had six rooms, three on each side with a hallway down the middle. We turned two of rooms into one large room for the maritime exhibits and the center room on the west side into the entrance lobby. Volunteers such as James Leroy “Pepper” Langley and Frankie Dare, both retired M.M. Davis shipyard workers, used their carpentry skills to help prepare the rooms. A wooden frame and deck of a sailing vessel was constructed to support the wall removed between the two rooms. Judge Perry Bowen cut some pines on his property, sawed them in his mill, and delivered them in his truck. “Pepper” and Frankie did the rest.

Jack and Carl Williams of Williams Marine Company, along with many volunteers, removed one of the sets of windows on the back wall so the five-log canoe Carla Sue could be lifted by crane and placed under the deck beam. Norm Riker, another former Davis worker, helped scavenge original siding from the abandoned M.M. Davis shipyard to recreate a shipyard work shed. Trunnels, post drill, workbench, you name it, all came from the shipyard. Frankie and George “Rip” Van Winkle, another talented...
volunteer, reconditioned all the exhibit cases from the temporary museum building on the island and made new cases as needed.

Other volunteers such as Dorothy Ordwein made jewelry from fossil shells and shark teeth. The local newspaper donated post cards and the local bank donated prints of the Drum Point Lighthouse and Calvert Cliffs. All were sold in the “Ships Store” to help supplement needed funding.

Joseph C. Lore, then in his seventies, scraped, sanded, and painted the old school flag pole so the American flag could be raised during the dedication ceremony. The entire project was a grass roots effort by the community. The new museum was dedicated on June 29, 1975, one year after my arrival as the director. Only half of the original six class rooms were open, but we were off to a good start.

The following year the “Life of the Waterman Room” opened, including a slide program with music provided by Tom Wisner, poet laureate of the Chesapeake. The “Fossils of Calvert Cliffs” exhibit opened the year after that and a changing exhibits room completed the main floor.

Meanwhile, the Drum Point Lighthouse had been moved to the museum in 1975 and restored. The dedication took place July 4, 1978. Governor Blair Lee and Comptroller Louis Goldstein were among the dignitaries present.

Melvin Conant, an early devotee of the museum, offered to establish an advisory board. Members included Dr. Melvin Jackson, Curator of Maritime History at the then National Museum of History and Technology; John Sands, Chief Curator of Collections at the Mariners’ Museum; and my old mentor, Dr. Frank C. Whitmore, Jr., vertebrate paleontologist, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. This group made significant contributions to the professionalism of the young upstart

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institution which enabled the museum to obtain accreditation by the American Association of Museums in 1981.

A seminal turning point in the Calvert Marine Museum’s effort to research and document the history of the Patuxent River came on February 12, 1979, when a meeting was held at the Library of Congress. Present were representatives of the American Folklife Center, the Maryland State Folklorist, Maryland Historical Trust, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Endowment for the Arts, Nautical Archeological Associates, Inc., and the Calvert Marine Museum. From this meeting came a three-pronged plan: 1) conduct an oral and pictorial documentation of the commercial fisheries of the river; 2) conduct a comprehensive underwater cultural resource survey of the river; and 3) create exhibits and publish on this work. Funding from the Maryland Historical Trust and U.S. Department of Interior resulted in a comprehensive and systematic survey of the Patuxent’s underwater cultural resources.

Phase two was initiated in 1980 with the successful grant proposal to the National Endowment of Humanities, which resulted in the Patuxent River Folklife & Oral History Project conducted in 1981 and 1982 and directed by Paula Johnson. Phase three resulted in Working the Water: The Commercial Fisheries of Maryland’s Patuxent River, published by the Calvert Marine Museum and University Press of Virginia in 1988. From this effort, Paula Johnson became the first curator at the museum: Curator of Maritime History. The 1979 and 1980 cultural resource survey of the Patuxent resulted directly in the publication of numerous other books on the Patuxent River by Donald Shomette, as well as a traveling exhibit.

This was an exciting time for the museum. In 1979, the Calvert Marine Museum acquired the J.C. Lore & Sons oyster house and the Wm. B. Tennison with funding from a National Maritime preservation grants program and matching funds from Calvert County Government. In the same year, staff began working with Cambridge Seven Associates, Inc., on a master plan for the museum. Central to the plan was creation of a boat basin to enlarge the limited waterfront and construction of a new exhibition building and aquarium. Total cost was estimated at over three million dollars. Thanks to an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant, Judy Allen, who had been most recently with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, began as the Development Officer in mid-November.

The funding plan was a three part venture — one third of the funding from Calvert County Government, one third from the State of Maryland, and one third to be raised by the Calvert Marine Museum. It took three separate appropriations from the state to meet their share, much of that thanks to Senator Bernie Fowler and Comptroller Louis Goldstein. The National Endowment for the Humanities approved a Challenge Grant of $150,000, for which the museum raised $450,000, for a total of $600,000.

In 1981, I took a Fundamentals of Museum Management course at the Smithsonian Institution, taught by Holman “Jerry” Swinney. Among the many things I learned was the concept of the “Three-Sided Pyramid.” A museum should strive to have

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three equal parts: collections, research, and education. People come to museums to see real objects, not just photographs, replicas, or written descriptions. A museum must collect and care for the objects that fall within the mission of the institution. Research is important to properly document the objects. Without proper research, the object may either lack appropriate context or lead to misinformation, which is worse than no information. Once the research is done, then the context of the object can be presented in the form of exhibit labels, publications, etc. This interpretation is how the public can learn about and appreciate the objects. Taken together, these objects present a story. The story helps visitors to better understand and appreciate what they are seeing. I used Swinney’s Three-Sided Pyramid as a fundamental principal of the Calvert Marine Museum.

The Master Development Plan had three phases: 1) creation of the boat basin; 2) construction of a new exhibition building; and 3) renovation of the 1925 Solomons School for library, archives, collections, exhibits shop, and offices.

The boat basin was dedicated in the spring of 1984, thanks to a generous grant from the Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development Board, with matching funds from Calvert County Government. Hagner Mister, former county commissioner, played a key role in securing this grant. The Exhibition Hall was opened in January, 1989, with the dedication of the Learning Center and Discovery Room. In November, the Maritime Patuxent: A River and Its People exhibit was dedicated. Planning was underway for the paleontology and estuarine biology exhibits, but they opened under Doug Alves, the second director, who will cover these aspects in his Bugeye Times contribution.

When I retired as the first director of the Calvert Marine Museum in May, 1990, which was almost 16 years to the day from when I first came to the museum, I wrote a farewell in the Bugeye Times. This excerpt summarizes the support the museum had received from its members, friends, businesses, Calvert County Board of County Commissioners, and so many others, all of whom make what the museum was and is today.

As long as this broad-based grass-roots support continues, the museum has a bright future … I sincerely thank each and every one of you for your friendship, time, generosity, and unfailing support. If success breeds success, I owe any success this museum has had to you its supporters. Your continued support of the museum and its new director … will maintain our strong foundation so necessary for continued prosperity and growth.
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I can tell you that it took cooperation from every department, and it gave each of us a new appreciation for the many ways that we and our colleagues around the institution engage with and positively impact our local and regional communities.

Once the dust had settled with respect to our closure and it had become apparent that the county would remain open to employees for the foreseeable future, I took action to reduce the risk to CMM staff members and their families. Most staff members who can telework are now doing so, with some teleworkers also coming in for a few hours here and there to continue critical functions that can only be performed in the office. Front line staff who would normally serve our visitors and customers directly have been offered alternative work if they want it. For all of us who remain on campus, we have restricted our movement so that we stay within the primary building we work in unless absolutely necessary, and we are holding meetings either virtually, by phone, or in larger rooms that allow for at least six feet of space between each attendee.

One of the worst aspects of having to close under these circumstances is the fact that we are unable to have our volunteers on-site every day. The CMM volunteer corps is something that makes this place so special — many individuals giving freely of their own time and working together alongside our staff to make positive things happen. To be without our volunteers leaves a definite void in the hearts of our staff members and also means that certain projects must be put on hold or altered temporarily. Meanwhile, the staff continue to work very hard while adjusting to this new normal. As I write this, educators are filming new programs that can be broadcast virtually on our Facebook page and on the museum’s website, our marketing specialist is scouring the museum looking for new content to share with you, and the exhibits team is churning out panels for a new exhibit. Everyone continues to work, whether from home or on campus, and we all are playing an important role in continuing to move the museum forward.

I want to thank recently retired directors Sherrod Sturrock and Doug Alves, along with the wonderful volunteer members of our Board of Governors, for placing the museum in such a strong position to weather a crisis like this. Their leadership, and the sound decision making and practices they put into place, will allow us to maintain ourselves well until the virus has passed. I assure you that we will be very ready to open and serve the public again as soon as it is safe to do so.

There are many things that will change and that we as a society can learn from as a result of this pandemic. I take solace in knowing that we will make it through this together, one day at a time, and that we will be much better informed when we’re able to look at things in hindsight once the danger is no longer part of our daily life. In the interim, wherever you find yourself to be right now … be safe, be well, be good to your family, stay connected to others via technology, and if at all possible, stay home! I look forward to seeing each and every one of you when we re-open to the public.

Paleo NOTES  By Stephen Godfrey, Curator of Paleontology

Once again, this year, Dr. Bretton Kent (University of Maryland) has donated a large portion of his fossil shark tooth collection to the Calvert Marine Museum. We are thrilled to have this important research collection as an addition to our holdings.

This local Miocene sperm whale tooth was donated to the Calvert Marine Museum by Sue Jones in honor of her late husband William Philip Jones. He was an avid collector of all things natural. Although we have a few teeth like this in our collection, we don’t yet know what the skull of this sperm whale looked like — it has yet to be found.

Photos by S. Godfrey
As regular visitors to the museum will no doubt be aware, most of the exhibits in the estuarine biology section depict various habitats in and around the Chesapeake Bay. A few of the exhibits, however, serve to illustrate various adaptations that aquatic creatures depend upon for survival, while another section examines the impact that non-native species have on ecosystems (hint — it’s almost always bad). In this issue, I wanted to write about a couple of venomous fishes featured in the adaptations and invasive species areas: scorpionfish and lionfish.

While the two species may look very different, they are in fact closely related. Both are members of the family of fishes known as Scorpaenidae. There are over 200 species of fishes in this family worldwide, found mostly in tropical and temperate seas. The one thing they all have in common is the ability to inflict very painful, and in rare instances, fatal stings. They have glands containing venom along, or at the base of, the spines that form their dorsal, anal, and pelvic fins. The fin spines have a shallow channel through which the venom flows. This is a completely passive system. In other words, they do not have the ability to pump the venom out through the spines, as a venomous snake would do with its fangs. Instead, pressure from an outside source, such as a person’s foot while stepping on a scorpionfish, forces venom out of the gland, along the channel of the spine, and into the unfortunate person’s foot. These fishes use the venom strictly for self-defense.

The species of scorpionfish we have on display is native to shallow waters from Cape Cod to Brazil, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. It is not likely to be found in the Chesapeake Bay; however, it is possible that you could encounter them when fishing in the Atlantic near the mouth of the bay. The first thing you will notice about scorpionfishes is their extraordinarily effective camouflage. The fish’s entire outline is broken up by an irregular, neutral colored surface that usually matches their surroundings almost exactly. Often our visitors do not even notice them in the exhibit until one of them moves!

Lionfishes are also ambush predators and while they don’t appear to us as well camouflaged as their scorpionfish cousins, their long fins do serve to help them hide among branching soft corals that abound in their tropical habitat. Like the scorpionfish, lionfish will also wait quietly, and suck in unsuspecting prey, but they can also use their long fins to herd prey into crevices where they are easier to catch.

Lionfish are native to the tropical Indo-Pacific and have been imported for the tropical fish hobby for many years. Scientists believe that at some point beginning in the late 1980s some of these fishes were accidentally or intentionally released into Atlantic Ocean. In the years since, they have proliferated and are now found throughout the Western Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea. Because of their voracious appetite, they are a major threat to native species. In an effort to contain the spread of lionfishes, aggressive removal programs have been enacted in some areas.

The scorpionfish’s camouflage not only serves to hide it from predators, it also makes it a far more effective predator itself. Blending in perfectly with its surroundings, scorpionfish lie in wait for smaller fishes or crustaceans to pass. When its prey is within reach, the scorpionfish suddenly opens its enormous mouth, creating a vacuum effect, sucks the unsuspecting fish right in, and swallows it whole. This entire process from the start of the mouth opening, until the prey disappears inside can take as little as 1/150th of a second!

Poisonous or Venomous; which is correct?

You may have noticed that throughout this article I used the term venomous rather than poisonous. The distinction lies in the method of delivery. Venomous means that toxins are injected into a victim by means of spines or fangs, while poisonous means that the toxins are eaten, absorbed, or inhaled. Therefore, it would be incorrect to say that a rattlesnake is a poisonous snake since it is not toxic to eat. It and the fishes we have just discussed are correctly referred to as being venomous. On the other hand, toxic mushrooms are said to be poisonous since the toxins enter our bodies by eating them.

(Photos by Perry Hampton)
Preservation of Drum Point Lighthouse

By Mark Wilkins, Curator of Maritime History

Drum Point Lighthouse is an iconic symbol of Solomons and the centerpiece of the museum—you can't miss it nor should you! Built at Drum Point in 1883, it was moved from its original site to the museum’s waterfront in 1975. Its screwpile foundation design originated in England, where this type of lighthouse was first devised and erected in 1838 on Maplin Sands on the river Thames. But the cottage portion is all American and has a charm and utility all its own. The lighthouse is one of the museum’s most recognizable and popular attractions.

Knowing that the roof needed attention, my predecessor, Richard Dodds, began the laborious process of gathering information and material on repairing or replacing the roof. Options ranged from complete replacement with the tin alloy that was originally used for standing seam roof construction to stripping its many layers of paint and recoating the original roof with an elastomeric paint that is augmented by a woven membrane (like fiberglass cloth). This proprietary product, called Acrymx, is what we chose as the most desirable option as it preserves the original roof.

Bids went out all over Maryland, and the winning bid was submitted by Colossal Contractors from Baltimore. They will begin June 1, 2020, and complete the work by August 31. In preparation for the roof restoration, all textiles and certain other potentially vulnerable artifacts will be removed from the interior of the lighthouse. The lighthouse will remain closed to the public during the restoration.

The preservation process involves erecting scaffolding around the perimeter of the lighthouse, extending from the deck to the soffit of the roof. The entire area will be covered in plastic to keep stray particulates from impacting the surrounding environment. Next, each roof panel will be stripped, chemically, to bare metal. As the original paints were most likely lead-based, this potentially hazardous material will be carefully removed from the property. A state certified environmental agent will be on site periodically to ensure that safety protocols are being followed. After a panel is stripped, it will be primed to seal the metal and prevent it from rusting. Work will progress to adjacent panels until all have been completely stripped and primed. The top or color coating will be applied last, and will be a period-correct dull brick red. When complete, the new coating should last decades without any maintenance.

After the roof project is complete, we will turn our attention to the interior of the lighthouse and focus on restoring the lantern room, which needs re-painting and repair. Other aspects of the interior that require attention will be addressed at this time.
Adapting to Change

As we emerged from the winter months with excitement and enthusiasm for spring programming, we discovered our educational plans needed to be drastically altered. Educators across the country, in schools and museums, had to revamp their lessons to provide educational material to virtual platforms almost overnight. With the help of our Communications and Marketing Coordinator Anjelica Eitel, our department trained on the GoPro camera to bring you stories, crafts, tours, and resources through social media.

In addition to our new avenue of creativity, we are also using the Benning Education Center as our department headquarters. Typically full of students, the center is now bustling with innovation and crafting as we use this time of closure to create and revise programs, research content, and prepare for summer camps.

We are also utilizing this time to cross train the educators with the Estuarine Biology Department. We work closely with the biologists for programming content throughout the year — we thought it would be great to gain a deeper understanding of their regular daily routine. The benefit is two-fold. First, we continue to develop our knowledge of ecology, and second, we now have more staff available to lend a helping hand.

Educators will also be helping in the Exhibits and Maritime History Departments. We are completely immersing ourselves in our own museum environment to enrich our understanding of content areas. We look forward to seeing you soon and hope that everyone stays healthy!

HERstory: Celebrating Southern Maryland Women

As the museum celebrates 50 years of education and research in paleontology, estuarine biology, and maritime history of the Chesapeake Bay region, we are creating an exhibit highlighting women who have made significant impacts in these fields and throughout Calvert County, Southern Maryland, and the state. The exhibit will be timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote in the United States. Like the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame, the exhibit’s mission is “to honor Maryland women who have made unique and lasting contributions to the economic, political, cultural, and social life of the state and to provide visible models of achievement for tomorrow’s female leaders.” Each department submitted nominations for prominent women who have made contributions in their respective fields. We have assembled the profiles of 19 women that will be featured throughout our galleries in small vignettes or profiles — researched and compiled by staff from all areas of the museum. From Margaret Brent to Margaret Dunkle, we invite you to share in the accomplishments and triumphs of Maryland women during this very important celebration of the 19th Amendment.

To enhance public outreach, we are creating virtual exhibits, including one based on HERstory. Watch the CMM website for this and other upcoming virtual museum experiences.
Volunteer Tyler Bell installs bluebird nesting boxes near the Corbin Nature Pavilion. (Photo by Rob Hurry)

The skipjack Dee of St. Mary’s waits to have her bottom cleaned and repainted in preparation for the 2020 sailing season. (Photo by Rob Hurry)

Volunteers Tom Younger, George Leah, and Sandra Younger install the CMM 50th Anniversary photograph wall in the Maritime History Gallery. (Photo by Rob Hurry)

Wylder kicks off the 2020 Maritime Performance Series in January. (Photo by Doug Hood)

Vocalist Diane Daly, a local favorite, performs to a sellout audience in the Harms Gallery in February. (Photo by Doug Hood)
Youth Art Month

Public school students from across Calvert County participate in this year’s Youth Art Month exhibit. (Photo by Rachelle Green)

Families and friends attend a reception in honor of the students’ artwork. (Photo by Rachelle Green)

String quartet from Patuxent High School performs at Youth Art Month. (Photo by Rachelle Green)

Guests use a checklist to find hidden images during the public unveiling of Tim Scheirer’s “Life on the Patuxent” mural. (Photo by Rob Hurry)

Waterside Music Series: The Sounds of Solomons

New exhibit set to open spring of 2020!

Join us as we tell the story of a small fundraiser that evolved into an event that attracts thousands of guests to enjoy the music industry’s top talent. It is a celebration of the remarkable support from the people, businesses, and volunteers of our Southern Maryland community on behalf of the Calvert Marine Museum.

Enjoy rare behind-the-scenes photos, performer memorabilia, backstage stories, and hundreds of images of the people that come together to reveal the special mix of homegrown magic that makes our Waterside Music Series a success. 🎫
Volunteer Nan Suydam shows her quilt to Curator of Exhibits Carey Crane and Director of Promotions Vanessa Gill. Nan designed and crafted the quilt using concert T-shirts donated by Doug Alves. The quilt will be featured in the Waterside Music Series exhibit. (Photo by Rob Hurry)

Staff and volunteers join forces to install a model of a shark above the lobby and Museum Store. (Photo by Anjelica Eitel)

George Surgent draws plans for the lighthouse tender that the Patuxent Small Craft Guild volunteers plan to construct. (Photo by Anjelica Eitel)

Calvert County Census 2020

Be Counted — Shape Your Future — Starting with the 2020 Census

The goal of Calvert County census outreach is to obtain a complete count of Calvert County residents in the 2020 Census by promoting self-response to the 2020 Census questionnaire.

The 2020 Census will count all residents, of every age, where they live and sleep most of the time on April 1, 2020. Your personal information is private, secure and protected by law, which makes participating in the census an easy, safe and important way to help provide vital resources for our community for the next decade.

For each adult, child and baby not counted, we miss out on about $18,250 per person in federal funding over the next 10 years. Ensuring that everyone is counted once, only once and in the right place is vital to planning for public health and safety, schools, transportation projects, funding public programs and ensuring equal representation in Congress.

The 2020 Census will ask how many people are living or staying at your home on April 1, 2020; whether the home is owned or rented; your telephone number; the sex, age and race of each person in your home; whether a person in your home is of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin; and the relationship of each person in your home.

Most households will receive an invitation to be counted in mid-March. Respond online, by phone or by mail. Learn more at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/Census.

For questions or assistance, please contact Sarah Ehman, public information program manager, Calvert County Department of Communications & Media Relations at sarah.ehman@calvertcountymd.gov or 410-535-2003. If you live outside of Calvert County, or for more information about the U.S. Census, please visit https://2020census.gov/
Nominees for 2019 Volunteer Awards

Congratulations to all of the nominees. The winners will be announced at the Volunteer Recognition dinner (postponed, date to be determined).

Volunteer of the Year 2019:

Christa Conant can be found in the Paleo Prep Lab, Estuarine Biology behind-the-scenes, at the Skates & Rays, Discovery Room, one of our lighthouses, or even at the Lore Oyster House.

Lynne Pickering volunteers behind the scenes in the Museum Store, unpacking and pricing new shipments. She also helps with some of the concerts.

Bill Prochownik works with the Paleontology Department in the field, at the Paleo Pad, or on special projects, like installing the dust extraction system.

Group Achievement Award 2019:

Administration Office Volunteers cover the front office. They greet and assist guests, answer phones, provide information to callers, sign for packages, and so much more. Exhibits Education Volunteers interpret exhibit areas of the museum such as the Drum Point and Cove Point Lighthouses, Lore Oyster House, Skates & Rays exhibit, and the Discovery Room touch tank. Paleontology Quarry Crew Volunteers not only go out and look for fossils, they quarry them from the cliffs and bring them to the museum to be prepared in the Paleo Prep Lab.

Rookie Volunteer of the Year 2019:

George Leah volunteers with the Exhibits Department upgrading exhibits, helping to put up new exhibits, and finding solutions to problems that arise with exhibits. He is like the Energizer Bunny.

Taylor Swanson works with the Paleontology Department either in the Paleo Prep Lab or assisting with cataloging the museum’s collections.

Welcome Maia DiLorenzo

The Exhibits Department is pleased to announce that Maia DiLorenzo is joining CMM as our new Carpenter/Preparator. Maia is a graduate of the prestigious Bennett Street School’s Preservation Carpentry program. In addition to performing her exhibit fabrication duties, Maia’s experience in building trades, preservation, and restoration will prove an asset in advising on, directing, and performing repair and maintenance of CMM’s historic structures.

Maia recently served as a project field manager for HistoriCorp, a nonprofit committed to saving historic structures located in remote areas of the United States. In this capacity, she was responsible for project planning, and training diverse groups of volunteers and students of up to fifteen people. These skills will prove to be valuable in successfully working within CMM’s established volunteer support and museum affiliate programs.

Maia’s interests outside of work include hiking, fly fishing, traveling, swimming, boating, reading, historic architecture, volunteering, home improvement projects, digging in the dirt, playing cards, and hosting dinner parties.

Staff UPDATE

Estuarine Biology volunteers received the 2018 Group Achievement Award.
Discover Your Museum Store!  By Maureen Baughman, Director of Retail Operations

WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF:
Laughter
Making new friends
Integrity
Kindness
Chocolate
New experiences
Conservation
Family

We believe we can make a difference.

We believe we can make a difference.

Membership

By Lisa Howard, Membership & Development Associate

Renew Your Membership Today!

Don’t Forget to Renew Your Membership! Museum members receive many benefits. Museum members are the backbone of our operation. Thank you for your continued support of our work. We look forward to seeing you this summer. Keep an eye out for your membership renewal notice. We don’t want to lose touch. Please make sure your current email address is on file with the Membership office. Please call Lisa Howard at 410- 326-2042 x16 to update your email address today!

News from the CMM Society
In January, the Calvert Marine Museum Society introduced “Nights at the Museum”—a new series of exclusive behind-the-scenes experiences, available to sponsors, donors, and members supporting the museum at the Bugeye Society level and above. The goal of these smaller scale, private events is to thank those who play a significant role in the annual and long-term success of the museum with opportunities to step behind the curtain and truly connect with the many different facets that make up this exciting place.

The first Night — “Making a Mural” — celebrated the completion of the larger-than-life artistic masterpiece, titled “Life on the Patuxent.” For just over three years, CMM Exhibits Technician Tim Scheirer worked tirelessly with the assistance of several local interns to construct and paint a mural that highlights the museum’s three themes: paleontology, estuarine biology, and maritime history of the Chesapeake Bay region. Many of the staff, volunteers, and donors featured in the mural joined us for the afterhours unveiling of this piece of art which was “brought to life” for a truly immersive experience.

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The focal point of the mural, a seafood spread and long wooden picnic table, was replicated for guests to dine on the same feast featured in the mural. The motorcycle found driving down the road was available for photo ops, and the “biggest fan t-shirt” featuring former Board Member Bob Pfeiffer's smiling face was worn by his friend and musical partner Eric Skow, who performed live throughout the evening. Some guests also joined in the fun by wearing the same outfits they wore in their mural portrait. Several donors who contributed to the mural, including Wanda DeBord and Nancy Wieck, spoke about the reasons they choose to support CMMS and what the museum has meant to their families. The evening was undoubtedly a Night to remember, and the perfect way to kick off this new series.

In early March, CMMS held its second Night — “Sailing Through History.” The event coincided with the fifth installment of “Maryland in the Age of Sail,” a free lecture series led by CMM Curator of Maritime History Mark Wilkins. Prior to the lecture, supporters who signed up for the VIP Experience were treated to a personal tour of the Paul L. Berry Reference Library and CMM archives. During the tour, Mark Wilkins and CMM Deputy Director Rachelle Green linked the evening’s lecture with some never before seen artifacts preserved in the museum's collections. The group then gathered in the Maritime History Gallery for a private cocktail hour before taking their reserved seats for the evening’s lecture. This memorable experience, and others like it to come, are designed to give attendees a chance to dive deeper into the museum and explore the areas that they connect with the most.

Due to COVID-19 and the temporary closure of CMM, our next Nights at the Museum — like all events at the museum — are currently on hold. While some of our Nights, like The Music of Maritime, will sadly be canceled for this year, we anticipate that other events like Dine with the Otters and the Backstage Tour will be rescheduled. Once more information is available, and we can all start making plans to resume “life as normal,” we will share details about these rescheduled dates. Until then, take a quick look at the list of complimentary experiences that are available for those giving at the Bugeye Society level and above. If you are interested in supporting the CMMS at this level, or already do, and would like to tentatively sign up for an experience, please email CMM Membership & Development Associate Lisa Howard at Lisa.Howard@calvertcountymd.gov.