Building Bridges to Solomons Island

By Robert J. Hurry, Museum Registrar

When founded in the 1860s, Solomons Island was separated from the mainland by over 500 feet of open water. Today, it is connected by a 20-foot long concrete bridge called the tidebox that allows tidal currents to flow between the Patuxent River and the Narrows of Back Creek. Many first-time visitors don't even notice the bridge as they travel south on Solomons Island Road past Our Lady Star of the Sea Church and onto the island itself. Of course, access to this tract of land was not always so easy.

In 1865, when Isaac Solomon purchased Sandy Island, its northern end was separated from the mainland by an expanse of open water. To its west was the Patuxent River, and the east and north were bordered by an arm of Back Creek called the Narrows. Soon after he began to develop his island, Solomon built a causeway across the Narrows to provide a land route to the mainland. Oyster shells and other fill materials were used to construct a low causeway topped by a roadbed.

Although the causeway was a great convenience for travelers during good weather, it was built just above the tide level in an exposed location. Storm-driven waves and tidal surges wreaked havoc with the causeway, often making the passage dangerous and unsafe. The Baltimore Sun reported in November of 1877 that Dr. Virgil Lawrence was returning to his home on the island on horseback from a professional visit on the mainland when he attempted to cross the submerged causeway during a strong gale. The local physician's horse shied, breaking the saddle girth and throwing him into deep water where he drowned. This tragic accident and other incidents alarmed locals who were concerned about the causeway's safety and reliability.

The northwestern edge of the island along the Patuxent River was prone to erosion caused by storms that threatened the roadway and adjacent Solomons Methodist Church cemetery. In the late 1880s, efforts were made to protect the area with a wooden sea wall. The work involved driving a line of heavy pilings that supported four-inch-thick white oak planks to form a barrier. The void behind the bulkhead was backfilled with oyster shells to reclaim some of the lost land. The sea wall helped reduce erosion on that section of the island, but the low causeway remained unprotected and vulnerable.

A safer and more reliable connection to the mainland became necessary when the area north of the island was subdivided for development. In 1890, the trustees of Emma Sedwick’s estate subdivided 42 acres of her Clare’s Point Farm into 87 building lots to create the Avondale community on the east side of the public road. As building lots were sold and developed, Avondale residents began pressing for a reliable means of accessing...
Teamwork and Planning Makes It All Happen

I’t’s long been said that the sum of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and nowhere is that statement truer than at the Calvert Marine Museum. Indeed, one of CMM’s biggest “parts” is its mighty volunteer corps, which is essentially a small army of dedicated individuals who come together in varied and unique ways to benefit the museum and help make every guest’s visit a good one.

To recognize their accomplishments, we gather in the museum’s Harms Gallery each March to honor those who volunteered during the previous calendar year. Unfortunately, for the past year and a half COVID-19 restrictions made hosting an indoor volunteer recognition event impossible. We did our best under the circumstances, holding a drive-through thank you party and several other outdoor events to express our gratitude. However, COVID made it very difficult to show our volunteers the appreciation they deserve.

I was therefore very pleased that we were finally able to come together, indoors and in-person, to celebrate our volunteers and their many contributions. A few weeks ago, we held a very belated recognition night to honor volunteers from calendar years 2019 and 2020. CMM volunteers make the biggest difference in the world and bring so much talent and energy to the museum. Being able to acknowledge their hard work and dedication was simply wonderful! This year we were also pleased that County Commissioners Mike Hart, Earl “Buddy” Hance, and Chris Gadway were able to join us. The commissioners came away with a greater sense of what our volunteers contribute, and each shared very positive comments in the days after the event.

Looking back, our summer began with a bang as CMM welcomed thousands of visitors and hosted another highly successful Sharkfest event. A new micro-exhibit and new mezzanine exhibit opened in June and early July, respectively, and we concluded the summer with a visit from the tall ship Pride of Baltimore II on Labor Day weekend. In between, it was all about toy boat building, kids’ programs, lighthouse tours, fossil field programs, public sails on the Dee of St. Mary’s and Wm. B Tennison, and all the other programs and events that make the warm weather months at CMM so wonderful.

Behind the scenes is often where teamwork and collaboration are happening the most. For instance, if you’ve been out to the recently opened Dunkirk District Park playground, you’ll see a few features that look rather familiar. Over the past 18 months, we collaborated with Calvert County Parks and Recreation to place several play features that are modeled after two CMM icons, the Wm. B Tennison and Drum Point Lighthouse. Soon, we will install new permanent signage at the playground which will enable visitors to learn more about the history of the real Wm. B Tennison and Drum Point Lighthouse and will serve as a nice advertisement for the museum in the northern reaches of the county.

This fall, we continued to get back to normal with the return of our largest autumn event, Patuxent River Appreciation Day. The following month, we will host the annual On Watch memorial ceremony to honor our veterans. Additionally, the Paleontology Department is hosting a new in-person lecture series which complements the recently opened Sharks! Sink Your Teeth In! exhibit. Fall also brings some great weather, and I invite you to come take in the boat basin marsh walk which has recently been upgraded with brand new interpretive signage.

In winter, we are set to tackle some additional infrastructure projects, with the area immediately under the Drum Point Lighthouse to receive specific attention. The entire deck under the lighthouse, as well as the deck on the boat piers, will be replaced. We will also replace deteriorated bulkhead façade boards and cross-brace our pier pilings to ensure their continued longevity. Work on the Lore Oyster House siding project should conclude by the end of the year, after which next steps in the restoration of this building (roof and windows) will be considered.

As we examine our plans for the remainder of the year and into 2022, we have much to look forward to! In November, Calvert County second graders return to the museum as part of the county’s CHESPAX environmental education program. The holiday season brings the Solomons Christmas Walk and our members-only Noon Year’s Eve event. Live indoor music returns when the Maritime Performance Series resumes in January, and big-name outdoor music with national acts returns when the Waterside Music Series resumes next summer. The Development Committee and staff are also planning a robust 2022 Bugeye Ball fundraiser on April 2. There are so many reasons to come to CMM today or plan to visit in the near future. I can’t wait to see you here! 🎉

By Jeff Murray
Building Bridges to Solomons Island  Continued from Page 1

Obliged to undertake the project, they looked for another contractor and in late July newspapers report the bridge contract was awarded to local builder and blacksmith Charles L. Marsh. Marsh arranged with George P. Ross to supply materials from his sawmill and in early August his crew began driving pilings to support the bridge. The pilings elevated the road deck to allow the tidal currents to flow unimpeded. The builders made good progress and the structure was nearing completion and useable by pedestrians in early September. To the relief of local citizens, the bridge was complete and open to traffic in mid-September.

The new bridge and its wood-decked approach ramps created a structure nearly 500 feet in length. The September 13, 1895, edition of the Baltimore Sun proclaimed, “The convenience of the massive wooden bridge will stimulate business between the island and the mainland.” Finally, Avondale residents could safely cross the Narrows to visit the island’s post office, bank, public school, churches, stores, and other businesses.

The 1895 bridge was a great improvement over the shell causeway that it replaced and a convenience to travelers that would prove reliable for years. But the low-lying roadway south of the bridge was still vulnerable and continued to pose problems during times of storms and tidal surges. In the spring of 1896, for example, the Calvert Journal reported that heavy rains and high tides washed two large holes in shell road just south of the bridge, making it nearly impassable. Problems with flooding and erosion of the low lying shell road along the Patuxent River side of the island continued to plague local residents for the next decade.

In an exposed location and subject to the vagaries of weather, the bridge was showing its age and in need of repairs within a decade of being built. In early 1905, Charles L. Marsh was hired to make repairs to the deteriorating bridge.

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In 1906, the state of Maryland authorized the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County to issue bonds to borrow up to $3,000 for the construction of a new bridge to replace the failing 1895 structure. In the spring of 1906, the commissioners authorized the construction of an improved bridge supported on concrete piers. With John Mackall as the superintendent and Benjamin Woodburn overseeing the work crew, construction began in early October and the last concrete pier abutment was completed by late November. To commemorate the occasion, a bottle containing the date and names of the Calvert County commissioners and bridge workmen was imbedded in the concrete. The wooden superstructure was completed and the bridge was open to the public in early January of 1907. The workmen then removed the 1895 bridge structure.

Concrete piers provided a firm foundation, but time and weather caused deterioration to the second bridge’s wooden superstructure. By 1910, newspapers reported that Nathaniel Sollers was hauling timber to make repairs to the bridge. Two years later, the Calvert Gazette reported that a storm and high tides again destroyed the low lying roadway south of the bridge.

In 1912, the Maryland State Roads Commission developed a plan to re-engineer the public road by stabilizing the northwestern shoreline of Solomons Island and elevating the roadbed. In 1913, at a cost of $15,000, a 1,120-foot concrete sea wall was installed along the shoreline south of the bridge, the roadbed was raised, and road was resurfaced with oyster shells and graded from the bridge to the steamboat wharf. But later that year, T.P. Evans wrote in a letter published in the August 30 issue of the Calvert Gazette that the bridge was unsafe and complained about the dangerous condition of the decking. He stated “that a heavy man would break through were he to step between the supporting girders.”

In 1914, the Maryland State Roads Commission published a notice to contractors for proposals to extend the sea wall north to the mainland. The Calvert Journal reported in May:

"We are informed that the specifications cover the work of connecting the island to the mainland which will be done by constructing sea walls and filling in between them for a driveway, except a span of about 20 feet which will be bridged."

The 560-foot sea wall included the 20-foot bridge span that we now call the tidebox. The contract for the work to extend the Solomons sea wall was awarded to the Stobaugh Contracting Company of New York at a cost of $10,760.50.

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The next report in the *Calvert Gazette* was on October 3, 1914: “Mr. Fred Taylor, of Sollers, who has the contract for filling in and building a bridge at Solomons commenced work this week.” His contract called for putting 5,000 cubic yards of fill behind the new sea wall. A final report on this work appeared in the *Calvert Journal* on January 23, 1915:

The old wooden bridge connecting Solomons with the mainland is now a thing of the past, as we are enjoying a beautiful State road now in its place. The work of blasting with dynamite the old cement pillars of the old bridge still continues, the broken mass being used as a protection to the road against the tide.

A half century after Isaac Solomon purchased the island in 1865, it finally had a safe, reliable, and permanent connection to the mainland. Within a few years of the completion of the concrete sea wall and state road, a few enterprising local businessmen took advantage of the opportunity afforded by the new causeway. Harry Woodburn and Joseph Lore built their seafood packing houses along its east side on pilings over the water of the Narrows. In time, by dumping their oyster shells overboard into the Narrows, they created land where there was once open water. Today, all of the buildings on the east side of the public road from the tidebox to the Solomons United Methodist Church lot are built on discarded oyster shells and other fill material.

Additional road construction work undertaken in the vicinity of the tidebox included the 1958 bulkheading and filling project that created the area along the west side of Solomons Island Road that now includes the public parking areas, Watermen’s Memorial Park, a few waterfront businesses, and the boardwalk.

**AROUND THE Boat Basin**

Earlier this year, Crandell Construction performed a structural evaluation of the bulkhead and decking under and around the Drum Point Lighthouse. They determined the bulkhead is stable and will last for another 15 – 20 years! However, the decking underneath the lighthouse needs to be replaced. In November, Crandell will begin construction to remove the existing decking boards and replace them with marine-grade lumber. This project will take a few months as supply chains are backlogged and weather is unpredictable. The lighthouse will close for a short period of time to accommodate the decking near the stairs. By spring, everything will be up and running again!
Aquarists: Jacks of All Trades

The staff that care for the live animals at CMM are known as aquarists. To be an aquarist, it helps to have a wide variety of knowledge and skills. While a complete and thorough understanding of chemistry, biology, nutrition, animal behavior, disease prevention, and treatment are required for the proper care of the animals, it’s also beneficial for aquarists to have some basic carpentry, plumbing, and electrical skills. Some larger aquariums and zoos have separate departments with dedicated staff to handle most of those non-animal issues. However, at CMM and many other smaller facilities, each aquarist is expected to do much of the building and mending on their own, so having some technical skills is important.

Tailoring the water in which an aquatic animal lives to mimic its natural environment requires maintaining proper water chemistry parameters like pH, salinity, and oxygen levels, as well as minimizing the buildup of harmful waste products. Much of this is accomplished by various life support components, such as pumps and different kinds of chemical, biological, and mechanical filters. While aquarists are not expected to have the knowledge and skills of licensed electricians or plumbers, understanding things like how pumps work is helpful when identifying and troubleshooting problems.

Many aquarium systems operate like swimming pools, except with fish or otters swimming in them instead of humans. There are various types of filters to maintain, along with monitoring things like temperature and ozone levels. Ozone gas is sometimes used to clean and disinfect water because it consists of a very unstable oxygen molecule O₃ (with three atoms of oxygen unlike the O₂ we breathe that has only two). The extra oxygen atom breaks free from the O₃ and attaches itself to waste particles in the water making them easier to filter out. Ozone can also disinfect water by attaching to and destroying the molecules that form the cellular structure of bacteria and protozoans. If incorrectly applied, however, ozone can be harmful to fish and other aquatic creatures. For this reason, aquarists must closely maintain and monitor the devices that produce and distribute the ozone.

Many of the animals at the museum prefer temperatures below 68°F so these colder tanks are maintained by water chillers and heat exchangers. All of our aquarists must ensure that these complicated systems are functioning properly for the safety and well-being of the animals.

In addition to ensuring that the aquarium systems are running properly and efficiently, we also need to focus on the health of the animals. Ensuring that they receive proper diets and being able to spot signs of illness are critical skills for an aquarist. It can be tough to mimic the diet most animals eat in the wild because we aren’t able to feed them live foods. It would be impossible for us to keep the amount and diversity of live food items necessary to support even our modest-sized animal collection. Further, live foods can introduce parasites and diseases, while freezing foods kills these potentially harmful organisms. For these reasons, it is more practical and safer to provide them foods that have been frozen. They are purchased from commercial seafood suppliers and all are restaurant quality. Some of the foods we provide include capelin and smelt (which are small species of fish), shrimp, scallops, and clams. River otters are known for eating crayfish in the wild, but these are hard to acquire so we feed them shrimp as a substitute. Lots of other animals like shrimp too, including our skates and rays. Sea stars will eat many things, but we discovered they really thrive and grow when fed thawed little neck clams. Almost all our animals get some type of vitamins to supplement their daily diets. Believe it or not, there are specially formulated vitamins for fish, reptiles, and more!

Aquarists: Jacks of All Trades

By Linda Hanna, Aquarist

Aquarist Linda Hanna working on a life support system (Photo by Rae Dera)

Aquarist Rae Dera preparing an otter enrichment activity. (Photo by Linda Hanna)

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Daily observations of all our animals is very important since our charges can’t really tell us when they aren’t feeling well. We need to observe and be able to spot changes in their behavior or appearance. Discolored patches on fish may indicate a fungal infection. Thinning fur on the otters could be a sign of a vitamin deficiency. Changes in appetite could signal any number of potential health problems. Attention to detail is an extremely important trait for aquarists.

Some of the more fun duties include collecting specimens that we display at CMM. We take our Seahawk boat out to go seining or fishing to some of our local areas to obtain the live specimens. Sometimes we do transports of the animals and travel to other facilities to trade or loan animals. A handful of our creatures are bred in-house like many of our seahorses. We also regularly attend professional conferences to keep up with the latest advances in our field. From fish tank filtration to otter enrichment, there are always topics that address situations specific to the aquarium world!

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the diverse life of an aquarist! 🎊

Aquarist Lori Mason collecting specimens. (Photo by Perry Hampton)

Sharkfest 2021 was a resounding success with over 2,000 visitors enjoying the exhibits and activities! The event featured the opening of the new Sharks! Sink Your Teeth In! exhibit, a live shark tank in the Corbin Nature Pavilion, a shark cage photo op, the shark pedal boat in the basin, and lots more! 🎊

(Photos by Doug Hood)
As we near the end of another very active Atlantic hurricane season, we remember the vessels and seafaring men and women that navigated through rough waters. One of the most memorable tales of local legend and lore is that of the steamboat *Express*. From humble beginnings in New England, *Express* found a home in the Mid-Atlantic during the mid-19th century. The history and transformation of this steamboat mirrors the rise of steamboat transportation along the eastern seaboard. Steam technology changed travel and industry in the Chesapeake Bay region. Steamboats could operate on a reliable schedule regardless of wind and weather. Travel experiences on board steamships appealed to the broader population. Ships adorned with elegant dining rooms and elaborate carvings elevated the passenger experience. The opportunity to stroll along the top deck with cool breezes and stunning vistas enhanced their journeys.

The *Express*, built in the 1840s, was a less ornate steamboat than many of her contemporaries. During her early career, she operated in Connecticut and New York along the Hudson River. After suffering extensive damage from a collision with the *Empire of Troy* in 1845, the *Express* began to expand her geographic reach and provided excursions between Boston and Plymouth. After a brief sojourn in Philadelphia, she was lengthened 25 feet and decorated with a carving of a horse and rider on her wheelhouse to symbolize her name. Shortly after the *Express* returned to New York, Anthony Reybold purchased the vessel and moved her port to Baltimore. While in Baltimore, Reybold had her lengthened again.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Reybold created the Patuxent Steam Express Company to compete with the Weems Line monopoly. Locally, the Southern Maryland region flourished with the advent of the steamship. The watery highway between Baltimore and the Patuxent and Potomac Rivers bustled with steamships transporting cargo and passengers. Most notably, steamships traversing the Chesapeake are remembered for transporting hogheads of tobacco, barrels of seafood, and crates of fruits and vegetables.

Steamships were not without problems. Their wooden construction made them vulnerable to fire and in need of constant maintenance. Unfortunately, *Express* burned dockside after arriving in Baltimore and again underwent a massive

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reconstruction resulting in a vessel over 200 feet long yet maintaining her original beam of 23 feet. Once reconstructed, Express was promptly appropriated by the U.S. Quartermaster Department for use as a Union transport. Upon her release from federal service in early 1865, Reybold sold her to the Potomac Transportation Company of Baltimore, but before she was delivered, tragedy and misfortune found Express again. Ice caused her to sink off Hilton Head, South Carolina. She was raised and repaired but her superstructure was significantly weakened by this incident. Express traveled a route between Baltimore and Washington and points beyond for the next 13 years.

On October 22, 1878, Express left Baltimore at 4 p.m. and made her way south with Captain George Barker in command with 32 passengers on board. He knew of an approaching storm from the south, as storm signal flags were flying from prominent buildings in Baltimore. However, Barker felt that the Express could skirt the storm before it became dangerous. Barker noted uneasily that the southern sky was dark with low clouds and thickening overcast. He also noticed the surf felt different below his vessel — not the usual short chop but long swells more characteristic of the ocean. The wind and rain intensified as he passed Cove Point, and, by 2 a.m. it had reached gale force. The swells grew in size and ferocity as they broke over the weak superstructure of the steamer. By the time she reached the mouth of the Potomac at around 5 a.m. — a treacherous intersection in any weather — she struggled to maintain headway in what was now a full-blown hurricane. Her position was somewhere between Point-No-Point and Barren Island. Her anchor was set but the chain quickly snapped. Shortly thereafter Express was hammered by a series of mountainous waves that caused her to broach. The captain stated that “the seas boarded the steamer by the forward gangplank and ran clear aft to the wheelhouse, badly straining the joiner’s work and filling the fire and coal rooms.”

Her upper works disintegrated quickly, and passengers and crew were left to save themselves as best they could.

As luck would have it, the storm stranded the Clyde Line steamer Shirley on shoals near Barren Island — not far from the foundering of the Express. Two boats from the Shirley were able to rescue 10 of those struggling for their lives from the Express. Captain Barker and two others were rescued by the schooner Samuel T. Waite. In all, 15 people survived the disaster.

Lore surrounding the Express tragedy has lived on in St. Mary’s County through the years. The most notable being the ghost story involving Captain and Mrs. Randolph Jones of Cross Manor. Legend has it that as Captain Jones was sitting in his parlor with relatives passing the time until his wife would arrive on the Express from Baltimore, a fierce storm raged outside. The storm shook the house and he heard a knocking at the front door. Peering through a window he saw a figure that resembled his wife on the front porch motioning for him to open the door. When he opened the door, no one was there. When Captain Jones reported this strange occurrence, he realized he saw a vision of his wife at precisely the same time the Express sank. Mrs. Jones was never seen again.

Recently, Calvert Marine Museum acquired three unique ship models generously donated by broadcast journalist Ted Koppel of Cross Manor in St. Mary’s. One of those models was that of the Express steamship. While steamships may have vanished from the Chesapeake Bay, their prominence and popularity is well documented and remains a fascinating chapter in maritime history. The Express captivates our imagination with her storied past and tragic demise.

Sources:
“Loss of the Express,” St. Mary’s Beacon, October 31, 1878: 2
Holly, David C., Chesapeake Steamboats, Vanished Fleet (Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1994)

¹ St. Mary’s Beacon, October 31, 1878, page 2
It is wonderful when a fossil tells an extra story. Take, for example, the Miocene baleen whale partial ulna shown in Figure 1. The first story told by this fossil is that, based on its size and shape, we know it is one of the flipper bones from an extinct filter-feeding whale. Unfortunately, because this was the only bone from the animal found, we don’t know exactly to which species of extinct whale it belongs.

This bone preserves numerous linear gouges (the markings on the bone seen next to my fingers in photo on left) that tell the extra story. They were made when a Miocene shark bit down forcefully on the flipper of the whale and shook its head violently back and forth (illustration below). Some kinds of sharks, such as tiger sharks, thrash about like this when they are feeding on something that is too large to swallow whole, and a whale carcass would be just that. The head-thrashing helps the teeth cut through and remove smaller chunks of tissue that the shark can then swallow. Thin gouges on appendages, like the ones shown here, are thought to be the result of scavenging rather than active predation. There is no evidence of healing on the bone surface, offering additional evidence that the whale was likely already dead when the Miocene shark started biting down on its flipper. However, another mystery remains—the identity of the shark. We cannot tell what species of shark produced these bite traces, but they certainly appear too small to have come from the megatooth shark, *Otodus megalodon*.

Markings like this on fossil bone are an example of one of many different kinds of trace fossil. Trace fossils document the activity of a once-living animal (in this case a hungry shark). Because there are a number of finds like this known in the fossil record, they have been given a trace fossil scientific name, *Linichnus bromleyi*. People rarely think that the behavior of an animal can be preserved in the fossil record. And yet, here is a great example of an animal behavior that lasted only seconds (i.e., the shark biting and thrashing its head), yet preserved for millions of years on this whale fossil limb bone.
From boats to bugs to blue crabs, the CMM Education Department has you covered! With varied research interests, museum educators developed learning opportunities for visitors in our lobby that included hands-on interactions related to the Chesapeake Bay. This year we investigated the impact of the Brood X cicada’s life cycle, explored microscopic zooplankton that float in the bay, experimented with sail design, and learned about blue crab reproduction.

Ayla Anderson, one of our newest Education team members, developed a cicada program that introduced families to fun facts about these amazing insects. She presented cicada specimens, coloring pages, citizen science handouts, and “It’s Time to Scream!” buttons. Ayla’s favorite fun fact is that the loudest recorded cicada scream was 120 decibels — which is as loud as a leaf blower!

When Jeff Nikolaus isn’t leading programs or aboard the Wm. B. Tennison, his passion is getting kids interested in STEM topics through the dynamic world of wind and sail. Jeff presents multiple hull and sail designs for visitors to mix and match based on their purpose and environment. Different scenarios create different needs for sail design and rigging. Visitors test out their hypothesis and find out if their vessel is rigged for success.

Sabrina Tolbert recently joined our team with an extensive background in biology. Her program focused on microscopic animals, or zooplankton, that float throughout the Chesapeake and provide an important food source for many other creatures. The species of zooplankton that were mentioned are all larval stages of animals that will grow into something larger that many of us are familiar with. Examples include blue crabs, horseshoe crabs, and sea stars, all of which can be found right here at CMM!

Blue crabs are a favorite in the Chesapeake region for many reasons and Vincent Turner has become our department blue crab expert. Vincent shared his knowledge by developing a discovery activity that features four cards explaining the developmental stages of the blue crab, the anatomy of the adult blue crab, molting stages and signs, and blue crab reproduction. There are 16 color photos to go with the information on the cards. Vincent also presented a miniature crab pot and blue crab model used in conjunction with the cards.

Be sure to stop by our Education Station in the lobby on your next visit. Fun facts, enthusiastic educators, and hands-on activities await!

By Rachelle Green, Deputy Director

Calvert Barn Quilt Trail

The Calvert Marine Museum is thrilled to join the Calvert Barn Quilt Trail initiative supported by The Arts Council of Calvert County. This trail consists of 20 squares on the county’s ever-growing art-lover’s trek. With picturesque waters behind it, the “Storm at Sea” square hangs on the Small Craft Building next to the museum’s Exhibition Hall. The square’s design is one of the earliest American quilt patterns, depicting the rolling waves of a stormy sea by the illusion of its geometric arrangement. It is a poignant reminder of what faced those early explorers who settled in the Chesapeake Bay region, and a ready reminder for us today to keep a healthy respect for our natural world.

Exhibit Carpenter Maia DiLorenzo secures CMM’s new barn quilt square to the Small Craft Building with assistance of Bill Sells. (Photo by Rob Hurry)

Calvert Barn Quilt Trail

Bugeye Times
Volunteer SPOTLIGHT

By Sherry Reid, Volunteer and Events Coordinator

On Tuesday, September 21, the annual Volunteer Recognition Awards dinner was held at CMM. Due to COVID-19, the March 24, 2020, Volunteer Recognition was canceled and, with so many restrictions still in place, we postponed the 2021 event until September. The celebration covered the awards and accomplishments of our volunteers for 2019 and 2020.

The evening began with our Master of Ceremonies, Director Jeff Murray, announcing the number of 2019 logged volunteer hours was 30,547. That equates to $830,892 of in-kind service based on the 2019 volunteer value per hour as set by the state of Maryland. Later in the program, the 2020 logged volunteer hours was announced as 12,385. That equates to $353,467.90 of in-kind service based on the 2020 volunteer value per hour. Of course, the museum was closed for four months in 2020 and, without vaccines available to all of our volunteers, many waited until later in the year to resume their volunteer work.

Congratulations to the following volunteers who were nominated by the staff for the 2019 Volunteer of the Year Award: Christa Conant for volunteering in many areas of the museum including the paleo prep lab, Discovery Room, Cove Point and Drum Point Lighthouses, Lore Oyster House, and with CMM’s Estuarine Biology team – both behind the scenes and at the skates and rays exhibit. Lynne Pickering volunteers behind the scenes in the Museum Store unpacking and pricing new shipments. She also lends a hand at the museum’s concert series. Bill Prochownik works with the Paleontology Department in the field, at the Paleo Pad, and on special projects like installing the dust extraction system in the paleo prep lab. The 2019 Volunteer of the Year is Christa Conant.

Congratulations to the following nominees for the 2019 Rookie of the Year – George Leah.

Bill Prochownik works with the Paleontology Department in the field, at the Paleo Pad, and on special projects like installing the dust extraction system in the paleo prep lab. The 2019 Volunteer of the Year is Christa Conant.

Congratulations to the following nominees for the 2020 Volunteer of the Year Award: Ellen Curran came back to volunteer as soon as CMM reopened. She provides reliable support for the Museum Store with positive energy and a smile on her face. She also stepped up and helped the Administration staff by answering phones so the staff could take lunch breaks. Miranda Shaw has been volunteering since July 2019 while going to school full-time at the University of Maryland, College Park. As a member of the library team, she’s taken on several projects in the archive’s administration and collection management. Taylor Swanson has been volunteering in the paleo prep lab, testing different preparation techniques on a variety of specimens. Taylor also assists with educational content, creating original video content on the preparation of the partial Squalodon (fossil dolphin) skeleton. Autumn Walls began volunteering with the Education Department at the skates and rays exhibit one day a week. She is very dedicated and we frequently hear visitors mention her by name. Autumn’s engaging presence at this exhibit surely contributes to a positive guest experience. The 2020 Volunteer of the Year is Ellen Curran.

Congratulations to the following nominees for the 2020 Group Achievement Award: Administration Office Volunteers cover the front office. They greet and assist guests, answer phones and 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 and rays exhibit, and the Discovery Room touch tank. Paleontology Quarry Crew Volunteers not only go out and look for fossils, they also quarry them from the cliffs and bring them to the museum to be prepared in the paleo prep lab. The 2019 Group Achievement Award winner is Administration Office Volunteers.

Congratulations to the following volunteers who were nominated by the staff for the 2020 Volunteer of the Year Award: Ellen Curran came back to volunteer as soon as CMM reopened. She provides reliable support for the Museum Store with positive energy and a smile on her face. She also stepped up and helped the Administration staff by answering phones so the staff could take lunch breaks. Miranda Shaw has been volunteering since July 2019 while going to school full-time at the University of Maryland, College Park. As a member of the library team, she’s taken on several projects in the archive’s administration and collection management. Taylor Swanson has been volunteering in the paleo prep lab, testing different preparation techniques on a variety of specimens. Taylor also assists with educational content, creating original video content on the preparation of the partial Squalodon (fossil dolphin) skeleton. Autumn Walls began volunteering with the Education Department at the skates and rays exhibit one day a week. She is very dedicated and we frequently hear visitors mention her by name. Autumn’s engaging presence at this exhibit surely contributes to a positive guest experience. The 2020 Volunteer of the Year is Ellen Curran.

Congratulations to the following nominees for the 2020 Group Achievement Award: Even with a shortened schedule in 2020, the Garden Guild still made the museum grounds beautiful. They couldn’t wait to get back to the museum to begin working again. Year after year, their work is admired and enjoyed by staff, visitors, and their fellow volunteers. Stephen Groff and Marcus Jones are avid fossil collectors who have donated numerous specimens to the permanent collection and have volunteered at

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CMM for years. They were recently honored by having a fossil cobia (fish) named for them after finding part of its skull along Calvert Cliffs. Museum Store COVID-19 Volunteers Ellen Curran, Peggy Smith, Lynne Pickering, and Mary Krauss served as one of our frontline teams during the pandemic. They took on the daunting task of ensuring visitors to the store were wearing their mask properly and sanitizing their hands before entering the store. They also made sure the store did not exceed capacity limitations. With hidden smiles, they entertained visitors who were waiting to be invited into the store and ensured all felt welcome and safe.

Patuxent Small Craft Guild Pedal Boat Building Team designed and constructed two wooden pedal boats in 2020 to celebrate the museum’s 50th anniversary. These vessels replaced the plastic pedal boats that visitors used for many years during many museum waterfront activities. Both boats were completed and test launched by the team in late 2020. The 2020 Group Achievement Award winner is Museum Store COVID-19 Volunteers. Thank you to all our volunteers who give so much of themselves to help make CMM the very best it can be. We couldn’t do it without each and every one of you!

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM for FRIENDS WITH DISABILITIES

In September, CMM teamed up with the amazing folks from Calvert County’s Park and Recreation Therapeutic Recreation Services to present our bi-annual Night at the Museum for Friends with Disabilities. Visitors enjoyed a fun, relaxing, and welcoming Friday evening touring the museum and grounds. Among the highlights was the opportunity to board the Wm. B. Tennison for one of three cruises.

Friends Jenny Haydin, Connor Porecki, and Xavier Green take an outdoor break during the event. (Photo by Kathleen Porecki)

Pride of Baltimore II & Labor Day Weekend Events

The Pride of Baltimore II is a reproduction of a typical early 19th century Baltimore clipper, vessels famous for their success as privateer ships during the War of 1812. Its mission is to promote historical maritime education, foster economic development and tourism, and represent the people of Maryland. Pride of Baltimore II visited Solomons during Labor Day weekend. In conjunction with National Park Service Star Spangled Banner Trail, Destination Southern Maryland, Calvert Marine Museum, and Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, it was a weekend full of programming related to 19th century maritime history! Pride of Baltimore II welcomed visitors for deck tours and public sails while Calvert Marine Museum hosted a variety of programming. This exciting weekend was a wonderful introduction to tall ships and local history for many visitors!

Historian Michael Kent gave a wonderful lecture on Black privateers and the role they played in the War of 1812 and beyond in Southern Maryland. (Photo by Rachelle Green)

Pirate Day was a huge success with lots of friendly marauders roaming the museum, singing shanties, and looking for treasure. (Photo by Rachelle Green)
ARRIVALS, TRANSFERS, AND PROMOTIONS:

After serving in an interim capacity, Kim Zabiegalski was officially appointed the new Director of Retail Operations in August. With her 17 years of experience as the Museum Store’s Assistant Store Manager, Kim’s promotion ensures that she and her team will continue the tradition of offering quality merchandise to support the programs and projects of the Calvert Marine Museum. They look forward to welcoming you to the Museum Store and providing excellent customer service throughout your retail experience.

Tracey Neikirk joined the Museum Store staff as an Assistant Store Manager in August. She is a recent transplant to Calvert County from Smithfield, Virginia. She grew up in Poquoson, Virginia, where she worked at the Isle of Wight Museum and developed a love for all things Chesapeake Bay. Being new to the Southern Maryland region, she is excited to explore the area and our local culture.

Recently retired after 34 years with the Department of Defense, Tammy Kieber joined the Museum Store team as Assistant Store Manager in September. She enjoys time with friends and family, kayaking, golfing, and hunting for beach treasures. An avid traveler, Tammy has a hard time turning down new adventures.

We welcomed Bonnie Farmer in September as the museum’s new Marketing and Communications Coordinator. She has a degree in Communications – Marketing and Advertising from the University of Alabama. Her achievements include working as the Assistant Director of Development at the Virginia Stage Company and most recently as the Advertising Assistant with Southern Maryland This Is Living Magazine. Bonnie regularly volunteers in our community and enjoys visiting the museum with her family. We are excited to watch her creative spirit and enthusiasm for CMM in action!

Rae Dera stepped down as Assistant Store Manager in September to serve as interim aquarist. As an experienced volunteer and former intern with the Estuarine Biology team, Rae has hit the ground running! She is excited to spend more time caring for the critters.

DEPARTURES:

Aquarist Dottie Yunger left the museum in late August to accept a position at the Maine State Aquarium, a small facility at Boothbay Harbor. Dottie began work as an Estuarine Biology volunteer and intern before becoming a full time aquarist in 2018. Throughout her tenure at CMM, she was a vital part of the Estuarine Biology team and made many significant contributions to its success. She will be missed by the museum family and the larger community where she also served as pastor of the Solomons United Methodist Church. We are very excited about her new opportunity in Maine and wish her every success.

Claire Eder joined us in July 2021 as the museum’s Events and Facilities Coordinator. We knew her time with us would be brief, but she was determined to stay busy as she waited for security clearance for her new position with the Department of Defense. Prior to moving to Southern Maryland, she was the Event Manager at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. Claire was a perfect fit for our museum! During her time with CMM, she managed the Cove Point Lighthouse Keeper’s House, booked all wedding and event rentals, and developed new operating procedures for more efficient and effective property management. We are sad she is leaving, but thrilled for her new adventure in Norfolk, Virginia.
Discover Your Museum Store!

By Kim Zabiegalski, Director of Retail Operations

The Museum Store staff are very excited about upcoming events this holiday season, including the wildly popular Museum Store Sunday! As the busy summer season winds down, we have had time to focus on new custom-made items. Working around various supply chain issues, we are collaborating with phenomenally talented small entrepreneurs, artists, and jewelers to showcase their creations.

Museum Store Sunday takes place on November 28, and CMM will extend the event to Monday, November 29, to provide an extraordinary shopping experience with fewer crowds. We will showcase an incredible assortment of unique gifts inspired by the beautiful Chesapeake Bay. Through partnerships with our vendors, we have developed many exclusive items sure to delight that special someone on your list. CMM members save 25% all day and will draw a coupon at checkout for the opportunity to increase their savings to 30%, 35%, or 40%, or be the lucky member who gets their entire purchase for FREE! Tell your friends and neighbors about Museum Store Sunday — we’ll treat non-members to 20% off their purchase.

We would also like to introduce you to two new team members, Assistant Store Managers Tracey Neikirk and Tammy Kieber. Please stop by and say hello to these fabulous women.

With the holidays quickly approaching, it is time to start that wild and wonderful sport we call shopping. Come in and see our newest offerings before the holiday rush while we are well stocked. We anticipate a busy season and hope to see you soon! 🎄
**Give the Gift of Membership**

A gift membership to the Calvert Marine Museum is a great idea for friends and family any time of year, but especially for the holidays. Share this hidden gem with your favorite people! A museum membership offers opportunities for friends and loved ones to discover the remarkable world of the Chesapeake, where the ocean meets the rivers to form the largest estuary in North America.

Membership is a gift that will offer lasting memories and first-hand experiences all year long! Give us a call and find the gift membership level that’s sure to be a perfect fit! Contact Lisa Howard at 410-326-2042 x8063.

**Don’t Miss Out – Update your email address today!**

Almost all of the museum’s communication with members is done through email. Please make sure your current email address is on file with the membership office. Update your information today by calling Lisa Howard at 410-326-2042 x8063.

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**Save the Date**

**Celebrate the Night in Black & White**

**Bugeye Ball**

Saturday, April 2, 2022

Calvert Marine Museum
Solomons, Maryland