For nearly a hundred years after the Civil War, the waters of the Chesapeake Bay teemed with pirates. But these pirates didn’t sail the seven seas, and they weren’t after gold doubloons or jewels. These pirates commanded oyster dredge vessels and were out to make as much money as possible stealing oysters out from under the boats of tongers. These pirates aggressively defied authority and the harvesting rights of fellow oystermen, leading to a series of bloody conflicts known as the Oyster Wars that pitted northern dredgers against southern dredgers, tongers against dredgers, and oystermen against marine police.

Throughout history oysters have always been taken from their beds sparingly, hand-picked or harvested by tongs, long wooden shafts with a kind of rake and basket at the bottom. Shafts could be anywhere from 7 to 24 feet long and wielded by a one or two man crew on a small vessel. Tongers were naturally limited to gathering oysters from shallower beds as they could only reach as deep as their longest tongs. Oysters in deep water were unreachable.

Then in 1808, a New England invention changed everything: the dredge. The oyster dredge is a large net with teeth that is dropped over the side of a vessel and dragged along the bottom of the river or bay, indiscriminately gathering everything in its path. Dredging is the most efficient way to harvest oysters, as each lick of the dredge scrapes over large swaths of oyster beds and is capable of holding nearly 300 pounds of oysters. It quickly gained immense popularity, because for the first time, men could easily harvest almost limitless bushels of oysters in the untouched deep-water beds. But the excess didn’t last long. In a

Continued on page 3
from the
director

By Jeff Murray

Embracing a Brighter Future

Happy New Year and greetings from the wheelhouse of the Calvert Marine Museum! Following a 2021 that was full of COVID-19 ups and downs, we find ourselves in the midst of a fight with the Omicron variant. By the time you read this I am hopeful that Omicron may have already receded and that we are looking at a 2022 that has both promise and potential. I am grateful that vaccines and booster shots are making such a big difference for so many.

For the past six months our team has been planning a robust schedule of programs and events in 2022 with the expectation that large gatherings in both indoor and outdoor spaces will be possible. To kick things off we welcome back the Maritime Performance Series this spring! Come join us once a month February through April for a unique musical experience inside the Exhibition Hall’s Harms Gallery. February brings a brand new event—Universal Copralite Day! What is copralite, you may ask? Well, our Paleontology team knows all too well that it’s fossilized poo! In March we host the ever popular Ottermania event, and April will hold youth educational opportunities and the beloved Fossil Egg Hunt celebration. With so many projects and such ambitious plans for the future, we need a dedicated and talented individual who can lead our fundraising team and its efforts to make those dreams a reality. I am therefore delighted to announce the recent hiring of Bonnie Barrett as CMM’s new Director of Development!

With many projects and such ambitious plans for the future, we need a dedicated and talented individual who can lead our fundraising team and its efforts to make those dreams a reality. I am therefore delighted to announce the recent hiring of Bonnie Barrett as CMM’s new Director of Development! Some of you may know Bonnie, as she is a Calvert County native and was previously a Regional Vice President for Community Bank of the Chesapeake. She also happens to be a longtime CMM volunteer who is very familiar with the museum and who, as a board member for several local non-profits, led large and small fundraising efforts. I am confident she will be highly successful, and I invite you to welcome her as she assumes the senior leadership position in the Development office on January 24.

Throughout the pandemic, our board has served as consistent fundraisers, stewards and advisors—it’s an understatement to say that we simply couldn’t do the good work we do without their support. As happens every year at this time, some board members are required to leave the board once they’ve served for a number of years in accordance with the bylaws. This year, January 1 marked the conclusion of the tenures of some remarkable and influential individuals. I cannot possibly thank or offer enough gratitude to properly honor the achievements of Steve Clagett, Marianne Harms, and Nancy Wieck—we will miss their leadership and contributions immensely. However, a new year also enables us to seat four brand new board members, and I am delighted to begin working with them as partners in our collective efforts to make CMM the best museum it can be.
few years, New England oyster beds were completely depleted, leaving northern watermen just scraping by.

Spurred by new developments in canning and increased railway service for freight, the Maryland General Assembly took advantage of the post-Civil War oyster boom and passed a law in 1865 that allowed Maryland residents the use of oyster dredges in the Chesapeake Bay for the first time. Dredging quickly caught on. In 1884, 15 million bushels of oysters were taken from the Chesapeake Bay, an increase of over 11 million bushels in 1858, when only hand tonging was legal. Dredging was a hugely profitable business for the watermen who adopted the technique. An oyster dredge captain earned a third of the season’s profit, with vessel maintenance and crew splitting the remainder. In a good year, a captain could pocket nearly $2,000, or $1,500 more than the typical yearly salary for most Marylanders. In 1872 H.C. Rowe, a Connecticut businessman, made his fortune when he dredged the Chesapeake Bay and set sail for London with 3,000 bushels of oysters in the belly of his steamship Sâlsette. The oyster crop in England and France had been destroyed by disease and over-harvesting, and oysters were being sold in this market at record prices. Rowe sold off his catch at $30 a bushel and made $90,000 almost overnight ($2.4 million in today’s money).

With riches like that being made, it is no surprise hundreds of new dredge boats flooded the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Many New Englander oystermen, looking for a good living after their local oyster beds had been picked clean, recognized that Maryland was the place to be and swarmed south. Louis Sayer, a Baltimore writer in the early 20th century, described the sight of a vast dredge fleet in Breton Bay, St. Mary’s County: “As we turned into the Bay at nine o’clock that night, I thought we were approaching the lights of a city, but when we got deep into the bight, I found we were anchored among a fleet of five hundred vessels whose anchor lights I had taken for a settlement.” But there were no restrictions on the size and number of oysters allowed to be harvested until the 1890s, and soon the bay’s oyster beds were not producing as well as previous years. It did not take long for the dredgers to notice the smaller yields and even smaller paychecks, and quickly they turned their attention to the shallower waters where the tongers made their living.

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Tongers did not respond kindly to the increased competition of the dredge boats and looked to the Maryland General Assembly for help. In response, the Assembly passed laws prohibiting dredgers from harvesting in tonging waters, prevented dredging at night to try to decrease poaching in secret, and finally, created the Maryland Oyster Navy to ensure these new laws were respected. But from the beginning the Oyster Navy was undermined from all sides, by lawmakers who refused to give them enough men and supplies to police the waters efficiently, to the lawyers and judges who, seeing valuable political support in watermen, waived fines and forgave infractions, and by some of the watermen themselves, who, armed with rifles and cannons, fought back. These were the pirates, dredgers who poached with impunity and believed their claim to the riches of the Chesapeake superseded all others.

Lawlessness and anarchy abounded on the Chesapeake Bay and the organization meant to help quell the violence was an active participant. Captain Hunter Davidson, leader of the Maryland Oyster Navy, believed the best way to enforce laws and deal with pirates was with a heavily armed force. Each vessel of the Oyster Navy was outfitted with a Hotchkiss Rapid Firing Gun and the patrol boat Mary Compton was crowned with a howitzer. They quickly developed a murderous reputation, though they were not nearly as lethal as the pirates.

Deaths on the water were seldom investigated, and pirates took advantage. Swepson Earle, Maryland’s conservation commissioner lamented, “Three killings a week created no civic resentment, while many weeks during the oyster season marked the departure from this life of as many as five or six men.” Men were found chained together with their skulls crushed, riddled with bullets, or most frequently, found frozen and blue, washed on shore or pulled up in fishing nets.

Many of these bodies were the remains of immigrants, tricked or kidnapped into service aboard a dredge boat. Oystering was difficult, painful work, especially for those hand-winding the windlass to pull the heavy dredge nets onboard. It did not take long for local watermen to start refusing to take jobs as crew on dredge boats, so captains got creative. Shipping agents were employed by dishonest captains, men stationed at ports in New York or Philadelphia who convinced immigrants fresh off the boat to take jobs aboard dredge vessels. The new crew member was given a train ticket, the agents a $2 commission. The cost of both was taken out of the immigrant’s paycheck without consent.

Sometimes captains resorted to even more dishonest means to obtain crew. Skulking outside Baltimore taverns and bars, they kidnapped, or shanghaied, drunk foreign or Black men,
compelling them to work the dredge’s hand-winder for weeks or months at a time. They were treated abysmally, forced into work with beatings and threatened with guns. The work itself was grueling, and broken bones from the hand-winders were common. The enslaved crew was locked below deck at night to prevent escape, given no bedding, and just enough food to prevent starvation. Those who refused to work were killed mercilessly. At the end of the season, these men were “paid off with the boom,” or told to stand on deck where the captain would suddenly bring about the boat, causing the boom to swing around and hit the man with such force he fell overboard, usually unconscious, where he drowned.

But immigrants and Black people were not the only men forced to work on dredge boats. In January 1889, the police boat E.B. Groome engaged in a two-hour long gun battle with pirate dredgers where James Castus, the first mate of the dredger T.B. Schall, was injured. When the police ran out of ammunition, they retreated. That night, fueled by revenge, 14 dredgers found the E.B. Groome and crept aboard. They hijacked the police crew and forced them at gunpoint to work the windlasses onboard pirate dredges for several days. They were released in a small skiff and the E.B. Groome was found later, several miles away, stripped and abandoned.

Deadly skirmishes were so common in the Chesapeake that “...for a time,” Paula Johnson writes in Working the Water, “the whump of the cannon and the crackle of small-arms fire became as familiar as the rattle of the oyster dredge on deck.” Gus Rice, a former drifter on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, acknowledged leader of the oyster pirates of the Chester River and captain of the pungy J.C. Mahoney, organized watermen against the Oyster Navy, even going so far as carrying out a failed plan to murder the captain of the Oyster Navy, Hunter Davidson, in January 1871. Seventeen years later, in 1888, Rice fired on a ship that appeared to be a police vessel in the dark, foggy night. It was not the Oyster Navy, but the Corsica, a pleasure boat filled with women and children. Though no one was harmed, Rice had magnified the target on his back. The Oyster Navy redoubled their efforts to catch him, and sailed the police steamship Governor McLane up the Chester River, intent on arresting as many pirates as possible. The pirates lashed together 12 dredge boats fortified with large iron plates and engaged in a deadly battle with the police. Gunfire erupted from both sides and the McLane rammed into the dredge boats several times, finally sinking Julia H. Jones and Rice’s J.C. Mahoney. Although over a dozen prisoners were taken, Gus Rice was not among them, and to add insult to injury, a number of shanghaied crewmen secretly locked in the pirate vessels drowned when the ships went down.

Eventually, bloody skirmishes became less frequent as the oyster population dwindled and fewer oystermen worked the water, but the Oyster Wars dragged on well into the 20th century. It was only in 1959 when Berkeley Muse, an unarmed dredger operating illegally, was caught in a spray of bullets and killed by Maryland Natural Resources Police. Maryland and Virginia worked together to bring an end to the deadly feud over oysters.

The Chesapeake Bay Oyster Wars were fought for nearly a century, fueled by greed and men who held themselves above the law, believing that the riches of the Chesapeake Bay were theirs for the taking, no matter the cost. After all, as the Chesapeake folk saying goes, “Get it today! Hell with tamar! Leave it til tamar, somebody else’ll get it.” 🌊

Oyster Navy steamship Governor McLane, CMM P-00475.
Fishes are among the most diverse groups of animals on Earth and provide excellent examples of many kinds of adaptations. Fishes come in seemingly endless varieties of shapes, sizes, and colors. They can be flattened top-to-bottom or side-to-side, round as beachballs, or as long and thin as javelins. They can be dull and drab or display colors so vibrant and intense as to outshine a Vegas neon light show! There are known to be over 34,000 different species of fishes in the world and not surprisingly they make up the bulk of the animals displayed in the museum’s Estuarine Biology aquariums.

The next time you come to the museum take a close look at some of the fishes and see if you can discern anything about their habits from their appearance. Are they brightly colored, or drab and mottled? Do they have stripes or spots? What kind of body shape do they have? Do they appear to be smooth and streamlined, or do they look more like an overstuffed couch? Are their tails broad or thin and deeply forked? In most cases you probably won’t be able to get a good look at their teeth, but if you could, those would tell you a great deal about how they make their living in the world. Once you have made a list of some of those characteristics think about how they might help that fish find its next meal, avoid becoming someone else’s next meal, and live long enough to reproduce and perpetuate its species.

Speaking of teeth...

Sharks provide great examples of how different kinds of teeth help them deal with different kinds of prey. There are known to be around 400 different species of sharks in the world’s oceans and they eat all kinds of different things. Some sharks like the famous great white, prey on large animals like whales and elephant seals that are too large to consume in one gulp so they must bite off pieces small enough to swallow. They have relatively flat teeth that are serrated on the edges that allow them to cut through muscle and bone to take these big bites.

(Left): White shark teeth are broad and flat to cut off pieces of flesh from large prey. (Right): Sand tiger shark teeth are long and thin to hold on to small slippery fishes. (Photos by Perry Hampton)
Sand tiger sharks, on the other hand, have teeth that are long, slender and pointy; the ideal shape for snagging and holding on to small, slippery, fast moving fishes that form most of their diet. Many other sharks eat small crustaceans and mollusks, so they need flat molar-like teeth to crush those animals’ hard shells.

Cue shameless plug for the museum:
Incidentally, you can learn more about sharks, the types of teeth they possess, and how those compare to their extinct ancestors, by visiting the museum and checking out the very informative exhibit created by our Paleontology team: “Sharks! Sink Your Teeth In!”, now through the end of 2022.

Time to get in shape—or not...
Next let’s think about how body shapes might benefit fishes (or how they can compensate for “less than ideal shapeliness”). Fishes that swim fast for long distances, like tuna generally have very smooth, football or teardrop shaped bodies with thin, deeply forked tails. Tuna are the marathon runners of the marine world and migrate across the vast ocean basins. They need to be fast to catch prey, but they also must be able to swim as effortlessly and efficiently as possible. Their streamlined shape provides for a smooth, laminar flow of water over their bodies that reduces drag.

We don’t have any tuna at the museum because they are too big to be kept in any of our exhibits, but we do have lookdowns displayed in the Skates and Rays exhibit near the front of the building. Lookdowns share many of the same characteristics as tuna, but their bodies are very narrow (we call this “laterally compressed”), which affords them an added measure of maneuverability. Those thin tails are just the right shape to provide propulsion without increasing drag. If tuna are like marathon runners, some other fishes like barracuda might be compared to sprinters. They need to accelerate quickly over short distances to catch prey. They are less concerned about drag over those short distances so they have wider tails that can give them a good strong push for quick bursts of speed.

At the other end of the spectrum are fishes like seahorses and striped burrfish. Nothing about the body shapes of either of them screams speed. Instead, seahorses rely on dull colors and a mottled appearance to camouflage themselves in their natural habitat of seagrasses. Striped burrfish are almost spherical with tiny fins, making them look somewhat like an over-inflated Thanksgiving Day parade balloon. They can swim faster than seahorses, but that’s about it. And like the seahorses, burrfish rely more on camouflage since they aren’t going to outswim many potential predators. Stripes and irregular patterns of spots help to break up their outline making them harder to spot and track. Additionally, they have lots of sharp spines sticking out everywhere and the ability
to inflate their bodies with water when threatened, making themselves look like a large round, spiky balloon. Hungry predators usually think twice about trying to swallow them.

There are fish, like the scorpaenid, that don’t move around much at all and are content to sit quietly on the bottom, waiting patiently for their food to come to them. These are the real couch-potatoes of the marine world and their rounded, flattened appearance belies that fact. What they lack in swiftness, however, they more than make up for with other adaptations. In fact, scorpionfish possess some extraordinary advantages.

In fact, scorpionfish possess some extraordinary advantages. Their bodies are covered with all kinds of frilly, feathery, and scaly projections creating some of the most elaborate camouflage of any animal on earth, making them all but invisible to prey and predators alike. However, even the best camouflage won’t help much if they are moving about, so they have developed the habit of lying motionless on the bottom waiting for unsuspecting prey to swim along. This is a behavioral adaptation that complements their effective camouflage. When food presents itself, they can pounce and swallow it in the blink of an eye — less than 1/70th of a second!

For added protection from potential predators, they are blessed with a series of venomous spines on their dorsal (top) and pectoral fins. These can inflict an extremely painful sting to anyone or anything careless enough to step on, handle, or try to eat them.

Colors and Patterns

Color patterns like stripes (lengthwise), bars (vertical lines), and spots break up a fish’s outline and help to confuse potential predators.

Countershading is a method of camouflage utilized by many fishes in which the top of the fish’s body is dark colored, while the undersides are light colored. When viewed from above, the fish tends to blend in with the dark background of the deep water. Conversely, when viewed from below they blend in with the lighter background of the sky. This is a technique employed by many pelagic species of fishes like sharks and tuna, as well as other marine animals like dolphins, whales, and penguins.

At first glance, the lionfish displayed in our exhibit highlighting their role as invasive species do not appear to be very well camouflaged. In fact, their large, reddish, showy fins seem to almost shout “Here I am! Watch out or I will sting you with my venomous fins!” Below about 10 feet, however, water filters out the red color making those parts of the fish appear almost black, more so as the depth increases. The fish that appears so vibrant and obvious to us in a brightly lit aquarium will be almost invisible when cruising among the gently waving seaweed and soft corals in their normal deeper water habitat. Lionfish, like their more sedate cousins the scorpionfish, are ambush predators, so their cryptic coloration comes in handy while they’re waiting for small fishes to come along.

Physical adaptations must be paired with appropriate behaviors to be successful. Behavioral adaptations aren’t always as easy to observe and a thorough discussion of them would be beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that in most cases, like the afore mentioned scorpionfish, physical and behavioral adaptations working together are necessary to be effective. Another example would be the silvery, reflective appearance of fishes like sardines or mackerel that makes them hard to see in open water, but it’s especially effective at confusing predators when the fishes join up in schools of thousands in synchronized swimming patterns. This is an example of the axiom; “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Neither adaptation would be nearly as effective without the other.

Next time you visit the museum, another aquarium, or even with fishes you have caught, take a moment to think about why they might look the way they do.
“I really don’t know why it is that all of us are so committed to the sea, except I think it is because in addition to the fact that the sea changes and the light changes, and ships change, it is because we all came from the sea. And it is an interesting biological fact that all of us have, in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean, and, therefore, we have salt in our blood, in our sweat, in our tears. We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea, whether it is to sail or to watch it we are going back from whence we came.

- John F. Kennedy

Many people love to be out on the water, look at it from the shore, or swim in it—but what are the reasons we do? Is it the sound, smell or sight of its timeless swells? Whatever it is, it strikes a chord in almost every human being on some level. Many have tried to express what the water means to them and interestingly, what they say is also very telling about each individual. Some express wonder, others trepidation—it ranges the gamut. The following statements made by writers, past presidents, and explorers capture the wonderment of the water.

Herman Melville introduced the idea of the magnetism and connection we have to the sea in Moby Dick: "...we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans...the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all." President John F. Kennedy commented on the inextricable biological connection we share with the sea (see quote at left).

We as human beings are forever tied to the sea as we came from it, we embody its chemistry, and interacting with the sea strengthens our connection.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR), famously noted in one of his fireside chats that “To reach a port we must sail. Sail, not tie at anchor. Sail, not drift.” FDR’s quote comments on the deliberate and often dangerous ‘voyage’ we all must undertake to reach a desired goal. In the context of the Great Depression, this call to perseverance and ability to endure hardship is especially relevant and understandable.

The notion of the difficulty of the voyage during the age of sail has been described by Christopher Columbus as: “The sea will grant each man new hope, and sleep will bring dreams of home...” What is meant by this somewhat cryptic statement? Is he saying that solace can only be found in our dreams as the voyage itself is so uncertain and dangerous?
All water, from the smallest creek to vast oceans, invokes various moods depending on the prevailing weather, sometimes gentle and sometimes ferocious. William Shakespeare wrote regarding the North Atlantic: “When the sea is. Hence! What cares these roarers for the name of a king?” Basically summarizing man’s inability to compete with the fury of the sea, and by extension, the natural world. A king might reign supreme on dry land, but at sea he is powerless!

Reflecting on the shores around us, we connect to the people that made their living on the water and thus began this thriving community along the Patuxent River. Fostering our relationship to the water is a core value at the Calvert Marine Museum. It permeates our exhibits, programs, and experiences here and celebrates those creatures that live in it, past and present, and those that engage it on the surface (boating, fishing, yachting). It is our hope that everyone who visits the museum will make a personal connection to the water in some shape or form, whether it is the direct approach of taking a cruise on one of our boats, or in a more contemplative setting such as viewing the wonderful living creatures in our Estuarine Biology Gallery or imagining the majestic megalodon swimming the ocean depths thousands of years ago!

Sources:
1 Herman Melville, Moby Dick, Chap. 1, pg. 4, 1844.
2 JFK speech made at the America’s Cup dinner, Newport RI, Sept. 14th, 1962.
3 FDR fireside chat broadcast to the nation April 14, 1938.
4 William Shakespeare, The Tempest, Act 1, Scene 1.
The paleontology collection at CMM has grown significantly since its inception. The collection currently contains over 100,000 cataloged specimens. As a result of this growth, the paleontology collection has outgrown its tiny room in the Administration Building. Now the collection also occupies the old antique store, known as the Paleo Pad, and has expanded into unused space in the Administration Building. As large collections are expected to come to the museum in 2022, more storage space was required. The Paleontology Department acquired 10 brand new Viking museum cabinets to house incoming collections and provide a bit of breathing room.

The receipt of these cabinets inspired the collections team to write a sonnet about them.

Shall I compare thee to a wealth of space?
Thou art more lovely; ever more capacious;
Rough winds annoy the dear crab carapace,
Wreak havoc on the bivalves, carbonaceous:

Sometime too cruel the air's condition bloweth,
And often is their white complexion dimmed;
So, every fossil must we harbor, stoweth
Ensure the plaster's set, the foam is trimmed;

But thine eternal space shall never fade,
Nor lose possession of a single inch;
Nor shall our fossils be deprived of shade,
New cabinets yield storage in a pinch;

So long as man can breathe or eye can see,
So long live these collections, in thee.
MM Education staff ended a very challenging year with great winter break programs! During the week between Christmas and New Year’s, we enjoyed seeing so many guests participate in the winter break programs. There were three days of activities for the public and we ended with a Noon Year’s Eve celebration for our Calvert Marine Museum members to show our appreciation.

We began with “Winter Birds of the Chesapeake,” where guests discovered the many birds that winter, locally. Using binoculars and bird identification cards, visitors explored the marsh walk and museum grounds recording what they found—buffleheads, loons, and bald eagles are just a few. The children played a migration game and made pine cone bird feeders that they took home to assist wintering birds in their own neighborhoods.

Winter is the time for harvesting oysters. Understanding the oyster and having the right tools allowed oystermen to succeed. During the “Chesapeake Oyster” program, guests examined the oyster’s anatomy from “Rock E. Feller,” a giant oyster model made by one of our volunteers, and learned about the oyster dredge boats. Maryland’s state boat is the skipjack, the preferred dredge boat by many oystermen. They needed a boat that was easy to construct, inexpensive, and could navigate the Chesapeake Bay’s shallow waters. Children had fun making their own skipjack models to take home.

“Blizzards and Bones” rounded out the public programs and was the most popular day. Children not only learned how to excavate the local famous Miocene Epoch (8-20 million-year-old) fossils, but also practiced the process.

We are looking forward to programs, events, and summer camps in 2022!

By Lori Cole, CMM Educator

(Far left): Example of a toy skipjack made over winter break at CMM.
(Left): Explorers searched for winter birds of the Chesapeake along the Marsh Walk with this handy birding tool kit, consisting of a bird identification guide and binoculars.
(Right): Participants made pine cone bird feeders to hang at home for our winter birds!

A student from Evergreen Elementary carefully uses tools to excavate fossils from clay for “Blizzards and Bones” day.
It’s a strange thing to think of the world without Bernie Fowler in it. He was such a mainstay of life in Calvert County - a fixture at important community events, always smiling, always reaching out his hands in greeting or pulling friends in for a quick hug. He was a constant presence and a good friend to the Calvert Marine Museum. His commitment to and interest in CMM spans the entire history of the institution.

Much has been written about Bernie’s contribution to the life of Calvert County through his many years of public service. He was a man who lived his beliefs every day: love of God, love of family, love of country. Over the years, Bernie and I collaborated on many projects, efforts that intensified after I became deputy director and then director of the Calvert Marine Museum. Together, we worked to refocus Patuxent River Appreciation Days (PRAD) on the plight of the river. The museum hosted a State of the River Summit on Friday to kick off the event calvertmarinemuseum.com/DocumentCenter/View/809/Bugeye-Times-Fall-2014?bidId=, which continued for several years. He could always be seen during PRAD wearing his signature wade-in attire—overalls, white tennis shoes, and straw hat replete with an American flag tucked in the band. One year we created a life-size cut-out as a “Wade in with Bernie” photo-op, which he enjoyed enormously.

In 2014 Richard Dodds, then Curator of Maritime History, and I attended the annual Patuxent River Wade-In on the second Sunday in June. During the program, Bernie presented his faded overalls, shoes, and hat that had been worn for 26 consecutive Wade-Ins, to the museum’s permanent collection. You can see them today in the River to Bay exhibit, along with historic pictures of Wade-Ins through the years.

As time passed, Bernie wanted to find an appropriate home for memorabilia from his long and productive life in public service. It seemed only natural that he would turn to the Calvert Marine Museum. Richard Dodds and Robert Hurry, museum registrar, worked closely with Bernie to inventory and catalog the hundreds of documents, photographs, and artifacts he had saved, and then to help distribute them to the right homes. His work on the environment remains part of the museum’s permanent Maritime History collection.

One component of that project was an effort to capture many of Bernie’s remarkable stories. We partnered with Maryland Sea Grant College and Watershed Productions to video record five in-depth interviews about his early life, political career, advocacy for education, land use planning, and environmental issues. Colleagues familiar with his efforts served as the interviewers and Michael Fincham did the video recording and editing. The interviews are available at: calvertmarinemuseum.com/495/Bernie-Fowler-The-Oral-Histories. The range and scope of his experience is quite remarkable, as was his accurate recall of people, places, and events.

I asked him what—of all his many accomplishments—he was proudest of. He answered without hesitation, the Pleasant Peninsula Plan. During Bernie’s time as County Commissioner, development pressures were building due to the completion of the Thomas Johnson Bridge and the recently opened Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant. To get support for that plan, Bernie enlisted every citizen he met to participate in the process, partnering with then State Senator Tom Rymer, to convince some skeptical locals of the need for more government oversight of local land use. It was both courageous and prescient. The shape of Calvert County today owes a great deal to their far-sighted vision.

Bernie will be remembered as a man who stood up and fought for what he believed. CMM is honored to play a role in preserving and celebrating his legacy. He and Betty were committed to making Calvert County a good, safe place to live and he spent his entire life working to that end. If anyone has earned the title of local hero, it would be Bernie Fowler. The world is a better place for Bernie's having been in it.

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Bernie Fowler with his life-size cut-out at PRAD.

Sherrod Sturrock, Bernie Fowler, and Richard Dodds presenting Bernie's Wade-In overalls, shoes, and hat for the museum's River to Bay exhibit.
WINTER 2021-2022

Volunteer UPDATE By Sherry Reid, Volunteer and Events Coordinator

Reflecting on 2021

It is time to reflect on another year gone by. Life at CMM began to get back to some normalcy in 2021. The major annual events, such as Solomons Maritime Festival, Sharkfest, PRAD, and Solomons Christmas Walk, were able to take place but these events brought with them a lot of the challenges. We had to figure out ways to make these events safe for our staff, volunteers, and visitors alike. While these events weren’t quite the same as usual, we were able to make it work. Of course, we couldn’t have done it without the help of our awesome volunteer family. They are the best of the best and always ready to lend a helping hand.

In fiscal year 2021, our volunteers logged 15,937 hours which equates to $433,486.00 worth of in-kind service. That is quite the accomplishment since our hours of operation were limited in FY21 and the pandemic was still a huge concern for everyone. We are looking forward to the day that COVID-19 is just a memory and all our volunteers are again ready to mix and mingle with the public. Until then, many of our volunteers are working on projects at home, which is such a huge help to the staff. I would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year. Just think of all the great things our CMM volunteer family will do in 2022!

Veterans Program

Since the pandemic began, the Calvert Marine Museum has been making monthly deliveries of snacks and other items for the veterans at Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. All the items were donated by CMM staff, volunteers, and Board of Governors. A few months after the museum began the deliveries, we were joined by friends, family, and the local community as well as the members of the American Legion Post #274, their Ladies Auxiliary, and the Sons of the American Legion. With the members of these organizations, along with individuals throughout our community continuing to support the program by pooling our efforts, we have been able to continue making the day a little brighter for our veterans at Charlotte Hall.

We are happy to welcome aboard another major supporter of this program, making it possible to continue the great work and increase our veterans programs. Thank you, Thomas Bird and The Bird Barkman Financial Strategies Group, Wells Fargo Advisors, for your generosity to our military programs. Of course, Charlotte Hall snack deliveries is not the only military program we sponsor, but it is one that happens every month. The picture shows just how much was taken to Charlotte Hall at the beginning of December to help make the veterans’ Christmas merry and bright! Shopping for next Christmas has already begun — we just love the bargains this time of year. Our other military programs, both past and present, include Wm. B. Tennison cruises for Vacation for Vets, the “On Watch” Memorial Service that takes place the Sunday before Veteran’s Day each year, hosting the American Legion #274 for their Wreaths Across America opening ceremony, and sending packages to the troops.

A huge thank you to staff, volunteers, and Board of Governors at CMM, the members of the American Legion Post #274, Ladies Auxiliary, and Sons of the American Legion, and Thomas Bird and The Bird Barkman Financial Strategies Group, Wells Fargo Advisors, for all you have done to support our veterans. Together we are making a difference. 

PSCG Volunteer Tony Pettit, and Curator of Maritime History and CMM Boatwright Mark Wilkins (and family), along with the Kirbys from Asbury take the draketail out for a spin. The Alpheus Sewell draketail (pictured), is a workboat that was built at Broomes Island in 1936 for Sewell’s son Clarence, and donated to CMM in 1989. The PSCG completed the renovation of the boat in 2000.

Staff from CMM Ladies Auxillary and Charlotte Hall pose next to the mounds of Christmas goodies delivered to the veterans.

By Sherry Reid, Volunteer and Events Coordinator
With the "On Watch" monument behind him, NAS Commanding Officer Capt. John Brabazon addresses the crowd during the Nov. 7 ceremony honoring veterans of yesterday and today. (U.S. Navy photo by Donna Cipolloni.)

Captain Rachel Dean, of Solomons Island Heritage Tours, lets young visitors get and up close look at a live blue crab during Patuxent River Appreciation Day (PRAD). (Photo by Robert Hurry.)

The Volunteer Council sponsored a yard sale Oct. 16 on the PNC Waterside Stage that raised over $4,000 for the Drum Point Lighthouse. (Photo by Bonnie Farmer.)

Volunteer Ed Bahnuik shows how the steamed wood bends to fit a candy cane mold during a new demonstration at the Patuxent Small Craft Guild.

Goodies delivered to Charlotte Hall Veterans Home during the holidays.

The Museum Store was a donation location for Toys for Tots and filled almost four boxes for the drive. (Photo by Bonnie Farmer.)

Judy Angelheart with CMM's otter mascot greeting guests at Solomons Christmas Walk. (Photo by Bonnie Farmer.)

Jack, Mattie, and Bonnie Farmer pose for a family photo op with Santa at Solomons Christmas Walk. (Photo by Patti Snyder.)
PROMOTIONS:

In November, Rae Dera was selected to fill the open aquarist position in Estuarine Biology, which was vacated by Dottie Yunger in August. Since 2017, Rae has been extremely helpful to the Estuarine Biology Department serving alternately as a volunteer, intern, and temporary employee (on two occasions!). During that time, she has accumulated a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience in professional aquarium operations. Rae’s background as a licensed veterinary technician with over 20 years of experience provided her with a solid understanding of animals and their needs. Rae’s energy and enthusiasm for the museum and our animals is boundless! We are thrilled to have Rae as a permanent part of the Estuarine Biology team!

ARRIVALS & TRANSFERS:

Bonnie Barrett joined CMM as the new Director of Development on January 24. A Calvert County native, Bonnie has served for the past ten years as the Senior Vice President in charge of business development for Community Bank of the Chesapeake. She has a wide range of fundraising experience, having served on various local boards including Calvert Hospice, Calvert County School Foundation, the Friends of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, and the Rotary Club of Prince Frederick, among others. She is also a longtime volunteer at CMM and very familiar with our programs and institutional history. As Bonnie put it, “A lot of my own family history is located right here in this museum.” We are delighted to welcome Bonnie and confident that her skill set and local knowledge will be assets for both the Development Department and the museum.

We also welcome a new Museum Store Sales Associate, Susan Cox Groff. Susan and her family have been members of Calvert Marine Museum for 20 years. She brings 35 years of customer service and sales experience from working for large companies and small businesses. Susan is an electrician on the side, and the mother of Stephen Groff (Paleontology intern). Stop in and say “hello”!

DEPARTURES:

Phil D’Agostino retired from a career with Calvert County Parks and Recreation and accepted the Customer Service Attendant position at the Calvert Marine Museum. We were fortunate to have him for over two years. However, since it is called retirement, he found his dream position at Chesapeake Hills as an Instructor of Golf. If you play, you may see him on the links.

Vincent Turner This winter we said goodbye to Vincent Turner, one of our part-time education staff members. Vincent started at CMM in the summer of 2019 after he graduated from St. Mary’s College with a degree in History and a minor in Museum Studies. During his time at CMM, Vincent developed a WWII interpretive video and a military history tour for the Wm. B. Tennison. Vincent’s passion for history led him to pursue his master’s in Historic Preservation at the University of Maryland. We wish Vincent the very best!
Discover Your Museum Store!

By Kim Zabiegalski, Director of Retail Operations

The last few months have been a whirlwind! We had a fantastic time during Museum Store Sunday, watching our members save 25–40% off! We have been busy finding beautifully made gifts for our Christmas shoppers, such as new jewelry pieces and handmade scarves. As a Museum Store exclusive, we are offering a limited number of otter art works created by our very own Chumley, Calvert, and Chessie Grace!

While the future of the supply chain seems uncertain, we continuously search for exciting and new products. We look forward to serving as your go-to store for unique gifts in the New Year!

Clockwise from top left:
Chart Jewelry offered Museum Store shoppers unique, individually designed gifts for the holidays.
One of the lovely displays at the Museum Store.
The otter-ly amazing artists, Calvert, Chessie Grace, and Chumley posing for their artwork display.
Otter art made a big splash at Museum Store Sunday and was one of the most popular items during December.
Stephen L. Clagett, a retired District Administrative Judge for the District Court of Maryland, served as the CMM Board Chairperson for the last three years. He has been instrumental in successfully guiding the board and the museum through the pandemic and has been a major supporter of CMM fundraisers and events throughout the years. Through his service on every board committee and his leadership as co-chair of the Bugeye Ball, Judge Clagett was deeply involved in the planning of and acquisition of resources for several major infrastructure projects and improvements.

Marianne Harms finished her third tenure on the board. During this term she skillfully served on the Development and Budget and Finance Committees, aiding the museum’s successful navigation of the financial turbulence caused by the pandemic. In addition to helping make possible the renovations which included the Harms Gallery in 2014, she also personally intervened in 2017 to assist with the museum’s acquisition of important property on its northeast boundary which was about to be developed. In 2019 and 2020, she was instrumental in opening doors for the museum to receive two state legislative bond initiatives of $250,000 each, both of which will help fund the new State Paleontology Center. Her dedication and love of the museum combined with her connections and business savvy made Marianne a highly respected and effective member of the board.

Nancy K. Wieck, a retired Financial Program Manager for the Department of the Navy, wrapped up her second term on the board. During her first term she served as board Secretary and helped guide the museum through the 2008 recession and back to a thriving and renewed facility, playing a key role in raising $750,000 in private donations for the museum’s 2014 capital campaign. In her second term she served on the Development Committee during the pandemic and in 2020 spearheaded her own “50 Miles for 50 Years” challenge, an event that served as both a highly successful fundraiser and as a celebratory event for the museum’s 50th anniversary. At a time when group gatherings simply weren’t possible, this personal challenge served as a means for museum supporters to come together virtually in order to work on their own health and fitness during the fall, while supporting CMM. Participants were invited to complete 50 miles of activity at their own pace, which could mean walking, running, biking, hiking, swimming, or even skipping. Nancy also developed strong relationships with museum and development office staff members, keeping both sets almost continuously supplied with home baked cookies and other goodies that she made.

Happy New Year! As I reflect on 2021, it’s been an exciting, yet challenging year at the museum! It has been great getting to know our members and I look forward to meeting many more of you during 2022. Keep your eye on our website (www.calvertmarinemuseum.com) and your email for information on events that are exclusively for members. Some of the special members only benefits include:

- Noon Year’s Eve Party
- Invitations to special openings
- Early access to concert tickets
- Special member discount days in the Museum Store
- Members’ trips in the Fall/Winter (send me your ideas so I can start planning this year’s trips!)

It is going to be an exciting year that you will not want to miss! If you ever have any questions or concerns about your museum membership, or just want to introduce yourself and say hello, please call me at 410-326-2042 x8063, email me at lisa.howard@calvertcountymd.gov or just drop by — my door is always open. Here is wishing all our members and friends a happy and prosperous 2022. I look forward to seeing you at the museum!
Save the Date
CELEBRATE THE NIGHT IN
Black & White
Bugeye Ball
Saturday, October 15, 2022

Calvert Marine Museum
Solomons, Maryland

Engaged over the holidays?
Dreaming of a waterfront wedding?

Schedule a venue tour of the Calvert Marine Museum to find out more!

Call or email today,
410-326-2042 ext. 8066 or CMMRentals@calvertcounty.md.gov

Calvert Marine Museum presents
2022 Maritime Performance Series

Join the Calvert Marine Museum for the 12th Annual Maritime Performance Series. This series promises an eclectic mix of traditional music ranging from sweet harmonies, jazz, folk tunes, and foot-stomping jigs. We have four amazing performances scheduled for Winter/Spring 2022 and include a range of musical genres.

Bob Zentz
April 29
Bob Zentz is a singer, song-writer, and story-teller who is known to play dozens of instruments including banjos, accordions, and the hurdy-gurdy. His music repertoire spans the genres of folk, traditional, Celtic, and maritime music and beyond. From schools to concert halls, festivals to fairs, museums to libraries, and everywhere in between, Bob is dedicated to a life of presenting, performing, and introducing traditional music and its derivatives to those who are already fans...and those unaware of its existence.

All performances 7:00pm – 9:00pm in the Harms Gallery.
Doors open at 6:00pm
Beer, Wine, Soda, & Water available for purchase.
Tickets:
$20 Online
$25 At Door

Online registration begins December 1st

Diane Daly
January 28
Diane Daly is a vocalist of moody contrasts and evocative depth. Certainly, one who cannot be pigeonholed into one particular style. Diane has spent her career exploring a world of music from the strictest classical solos to avant garde cabaret

Claude Bourbon
March 25
Ready for a unique and talented take on a wide range of musical traditions? Claude Bourbon is known throughout Europe and America for amazing guitar performances that take folk, Spanish, and Middle Eastern stylings into uncharted territories.

Chrysalis
February 25
Chrysalis, featuring Jody Marshall on hammered dulcimer and piano and Jim Queen on fiddle and guitar, serves up plenty of toe-tapping fun with lilting jigs, rollicking reels, and happy hornpipes from traditions on both sides of the pond. The duo's far-reaching musical proclivities treat audiences to a repertoire ranging from Bach to the Beatles, and even an American songbook standard or two!