"FISHLIGHTERS ON THE BAY"

~ Pound Netting in Calvert County ~

The preparation of a new publication describing the fishery activity at Calvert County's Flag Ponds during the first half of the twentieth century is currently under way in the Maritime History Department. This is a cooperative project between the Battle Creek Nature Education Society (BCNES) and the museum. Funding for publication is through a grant from the Maryland Historical Trust, with additional financial support from BCNES. The author of the work is Harry C. Knott who is a part-time park technician at the county's Flag Ponds Park, administered by the Natural Resources Division, and located on the Chesapeake Bay just south of St. Leonard. During the several years that he has worked at the park, Mr. Knott has had many inquiries about the earlier history of the area, and has also met some of the men or families of men who once fished there. The publication, when available later this year, will not only serve as an important guide for park visitors, but will also provide information about an aspect of commercial fishing on the Chesapeake Bay that has not been as well documented as has crabbing and oystering. The history of commercial fisheries is, of course, one of the museum's maritime interests – featured especially in the exhibits of the museum's J. C. Lore and Sons Oyster House. (The term "fishtlighter" in the title is a local name for the skiff used in collecting the fish from the pound nets.)

Pound netting is an ancient form of fish trapping, practiced long before the Europeans arrived in North America. A well-known drawing of fishery activities by Native Americans in the Albemarle Sound in the late 1580s shows distinctly a form of trapping then in use that is similar to the more recent pound netting. The drawing on this page shows how modern pound nets are set up in shallow water to trap fish. This type of commercial trapping was developed extensively by American fishermen in the nineteenth century, but did not actually reach the Chesapeake Bay until the final quarter of that century. As a form of commercial fishing, it is much more effective in gathering large quantities of fish than hook-and-line fisheries or even some forms of seine fisheries. Pound fisheries are especially effective in the relatively shallow waters of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, requiring little skill – but much work! – from the fishermen.

Although pound netting was, and still is found all over the Chesapeake Bay, the most active area in Calvert County was centered at Flag Ponds. Here the fishermen were able to work on their nets and to establish a camp from which to operate – conditions not so readily found elsewhere in the county. Mr. Knott talked to many of the men and women who worked there, learning much about their methods and particularly about their lives. It is these recollections that form the real substance of the book. Also important, however, is the information about the economic side of this fishery – the size of the catches, where they were sold, how they were delivered, and how much money was involved. Mr. Knott reports, for example:

Fish prices were in a decline. Roe shad was selling for 34 cents a pound in April 1925. By March 1941 it had dropped to 18 cents a pound. On May 22, 1939, Capt. George Todd caught and sold 5,400 pounds of croaker for which he was paid only $13.50, just a quarter of a cent per pound.

It is fortunate that record books from the J. C. Lore company, now in the museum's archives, can provide useful information for researchers.

When the new book is completed, information about price and availability will be published in the Bugeye Times and in the local newspapers. In the meantime, pay a visit to the Flag Ponds Park just off of State Route 2/4 on your way to Solomons. The park is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily from Memorial Day until Labor Day, but only on weekends (same hours) for the remainder of the year. There is an entrance fee per vehicle. In addition to exhibits relating to its pound-net fisheries history, the park has nature walks, a fishing pier, and a beach.
Board of Governors' Column
By RoxAnne Riddle Cumberland, Chairman

With the new year ahead, let me take the opportunity to give our readers a brief description of our governance structure. The museum's Board of Governors consists of seventeen persons, two of whom are ex-officio: a county commissioner and the museum director. As members go off the board each year they are replaced by new members who serve for a term of three years. Members may be reappointed for a second consecutive term after which they must go off the board for one year. All members, except the museum director, are appointed by the Commissioners of Calvert County. The names of the current members are listed in an article in the Winter 2001/2002 issue of the Bugeye Times.

I am honored to have been chosen to serve as a chairman of the board for 2002. I am looking forward to streamlining and modernizing the governance procedures and bylaws. I am also looking forward to working closely with the other board members so that their varied and unique talents will best benefit the museum. We are all very proud of our excellent director, Doug Alves, the staff, and especially the volunteers, and look forward to providing even better exhibits and programs for the year 2002. Future columns will spotlight the inner workings of the museum. Special thanks are due Calvert's own musical trio "Sofistication." The group, one of the highlights of the spectacular Calvert Artists Showcase, named our museum as the beneficiary of their charitable funds.

The board is very interested in any thoughts or suggestions the members of the Calvert Marine Museum Society may have. Please feel free to contact me directly by e-mail at Roxy7553@yahoo.com, by fax at 301-855-9236, or by a call to me at the museum, 410-326-2042.

At Calvert Marine Museum's annual Board Dinner on December 19, Director Doug Alves (left) and new CMM Board of Governors' chairperson RoxAnne Cumberland (right) thanked departing chairman, John Simpson (center), for his years of service to the CMM board. Others awarded for service included George Tilghman, John Smith, and Commissioner Robert Swann. CMM also welcomed new members, Marshall Gibson, Jack Pappas, Mike Hewitt, and Kirk Swain to the 2002 Board of Governors.

IN MEMORIAM

In the past two months the museum community has noted the loss of several individuals associated with the museum. Volunteer Eleanor Prince died at age 90 after an illness of several months. Mrs. Prince served for many years as a museum docent, conducting tours for school groups, and for nearly ten years performed weekly water chemistry tests, along with Ruth Showalter, for the Estuarine Biology Department. They were honored for this work in 1998 by a CMM Group Achievement Award and by the Governor's Award for Service and Volunteerism. Robert Steiner, CMM staff member and volunteer, died suddenly at his home. His service with CMM started in 1998, first in the museum store and then at the admissions desk. He also served as a volunteer on the information desk.

Less directly associated with the museum was Clarence E. Davis who died in late February. He was the grandson of Marcellus M. Davis who established a local shipyard in 1885 and later took his son Clarence as partner. The shipyard, still bearing the Davis name until the 1950s, is the subject of a museum publication, The Last Generation, by Geoffrey M. Footner.
FAMILY DISCOVERY DAY ACTIVITIES

Mark your calendar for May 4 for a number of interesting family activities at the museum during the annual Family Discovery Day. See the enclosed calendar for more details.

Treasures from Your Attic!

One of the May 4 events is the Volunteer Council's biennial yard sale from 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., this year to help the Small Craft Guild as well as to purchase a fax/copier machine for the Development Office. Please let your family, friends, and neighbors know about this event! In order to be successful, of course, members are urged to donate articles for sale. Acceptable items include (all in good condition, but no clothing, please): small appliances, baby items, boating equipment, fishing gear, small furniture, jewelry, kitchen goods, linens, plastic items, paperbacks (no hardbacks), sporting equipment, tools, toys, and similar salable items. Donations may be brought to the Education Department, or call Annie Michnowicz (410-394-1438) who will arrange to meet you at the museum's storage site at Calvert Marina. The yard sale committee is Annie Michnowicz, Marcia Swiecinski, and Nancy Worster. Your "treasures" are needed to make this sale a success!

Chesapeake Antique Engine Show

CMM's second Chesapeake Antique Engine Show will be held on May 4 and 5 in the museum parking lot (which will be closed for parking) and will be open to the public without charge. Exhibitors from around the East Coast will be displaying a diverse collection of outboard and inboard gasoline engines, antique marine steam engines, and runabouts and classic boats from the early twentieth century. The hours are Saturday, May 4, from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., and Sunday, May 5, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. 🎶

WATERSIDE CONCERTS
BRING DOWN THE HOUSE

Winter's been rocking at the Calvert Marine Museum with recent crowd-pleasing performances by Deanna Bogart and Good Deale Bluegrass.

On February 9, Bogart, a local favorite, brought her sultry blend of blues to the museum's sold out auditorium. With her piano, saxophone, and band in tow, Bogart put on a performance that brought the grateful audience to its feet. It's no wonder Bogart has earned 18 WAMMIES (Washington Area Music Awards).

Good Deale Bluegrass took to the stage on Saturday, March 9. Fast becoming the premier bluegrass band in Southern Maryland, the Good Deale Bluegrass Band had the CMM crowd cheering to their fast and furious authentic bluegrass stylings. 🎶
SIRENS & SIRENIANS

The Making of a Full-Size, Life-Restoration of a Miocene Sea Cow

The centerpiece of the new exhibit on “Sirens & Sirenians” in the museum’s lower exhibit hall is the full-size restoration of a Miocene sea cow, *Metaxytherium crataegense*. This sculpture will hang over the center of the exhibit and will certainly attract a good deal of attention because of its position and size - over eleven feet long. The sculpture was made in the museum's exhibit fabricating shop during a period of several months in a process described here. (A panel in the exhibit describes the process in greater detail.)

Making a mold.

Skip Edwards works with a template in forming the life-size sea cow from a block of foam.

Volunteers Sandy Younger (center) and Richard Rogers (right) assist Skip Edwards (left) in applying epoxy to the nearly finished sea cow.
Working from photos of living sea cows and preserved specimens in the collections of the Smithsonian’s National Museum, and with fossil bones in the CMM paleontology collections, a half-model was sculpted in clay. A miniature three-dimensional model was then fashioned from a small block of foam from which a latex mold was made to cast a plaster-of-Paris replica.

Through several steps, a series of plywood templates were developed to be applied to a large block of foam that would form the basic structure of the full-size sea cow. This foam block has the advantages of being lightweight and easily shaped, but it is inherently a rather weak material. An aluminum tube was used within the foam block -- actually two pieces of foam bonded together around the aluminum tube -- for stability and to provide a structure for the later additions of the head, tail, and flukes.

The plywood templates, representing the body contours at different points, were fitted at their proper locations on the foam block. Excess foam between the templates was removed and the block shaped to the desired contours. A variety of tools were used to measure and shape the foam. Some, such as saws, rasps, and files, were available commercially, but museum staff fabricated many special-need tools. These included scorps – thin metal blades attached in wooden handles – and texturing rollers. Various shapes and sizes were needed.

After the main body was completely shaped, additional blocks of foam were added, with aluminum pipes and sheeting reinforcements, to allow the shaping of the remaining parts of the body – head, tail, and flukes. When fully complete, a thick bread-dough-like epoxy was applied to the foam for strength and to create the “skin.” Texturing tools were pressed into the epoxy, before it hardened, to simulate living dugong skin. Glass eyes were set in place with epoxy glue. During the final steps the outer “skin” was painted with multiple layers of translucent color to match that of a living animal, and coarse whiskers and other skin details were added to enhance the life-like appearance. Considerable effort was involved in moving the full-sized model from the exhibit fabrication shop to its place high above the exhibit.

This sculpture is but one of the many interesting features of this unusual exhibit. Be sure to plan a trip to CMM in the next few months to enjoy “Sirens & Sireniains” which opens on April 6.

Jimmy Langley (right) and Tommy Younger (left) help Skip Edwards (top) hang the completed sea cow sculpture in the new exhibit.

Stephen Godfrey (left) and Skip Edwards apply finishing touches to the sea cow.
GIVING OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND AT CALVERT MARINE MUSEUM

Opportunities abound for those who would like to help preserve the unique historic structures and vessels cared for by Calvert Marine Museum. From the Wm. B. Tennison's second century as a working boat, to the Patuxent Small Craft Preservation Center's dual goals to protect our wooden boat heritage and pass on valuable preservation skills, these worthwhile giving avenues embody much of Southern Maryland's history and pass its symbols intact to future generations.

At the CMMS Development Department, we have a detailed "Giving Menu" that illustrates each museum fundraising project. Included are the Small Craft Preservation Center, the Wm. B. Tennison fund, endowments for both the Drum Point and Cove Point lighthouses, education projects and changing exhibits. For those who prefer to support special events, Waterside Music Series and the Bugeye Ball are favorites. Ongoing CMM operating expenses for teaching programs and volunteer services are always good places to invest in the museum community.

Calvert Marine Museum and the Calvert Marine Museum Society, Inc., can facilitate the donation process for our many supporters by offering guidance and advice about specific targets. We are grateful to receive outright gifts of cash, donated insurance policies, bequest designations, gifts of stocks or bonds, and donations via designated trust funds. Each can be faithfully earmarked for your favorite CMM beneficiary, or given for general and ongoing museum project costs.

Please get in touch with Lee Ann Wright at 410-326-2042 ext. 17 or Vanessa Gill at ext. 18 for more information or to pick up your giving menu. Your contribution will be gratefully acknowledged through a specially negotiated means of recognition. Our written verifications will assure its tax deductibility. 

"WINTER LIGHTS": A CELEBRATION OF CHESAPEAKE BAY LIGHTHOUSES

The highlight of the museum's winter season was the fifth annual lighthouse day, January 19, 2002. Despite uncertain weather, quite a number of exhibitors and visitors came to CMM to celebrate the bay's lighthouses. Activities included displays from several lighthouses, a living history presentation, book signings, and tours of both the Drum Point and Cove Point lighthouses.

Visitors and exhibitors enjoy the celebration of "Winter Lights" in January. CMM photo by Bob Hall

Tours of the Drum Point Lighthouse were popular. CMM interpreter Tom Lewis is at the left. CMM photo by Bob Hall

One of the popular exhibits was the Concord Point Lighthouse, Havre de Grace. CMM photo by Bob Hall
Bubbles Gets Big Support
from our Smallest Members

The Year End Appeal has exceeded our annual goal by over $2,000, thanks to wonderful members like you, as well as a surprising group of new donors.

Many young supporters have emerged from the list of Year End Appeal donors, young donors like the Happell kids and Nicholas Perry have picked up their piggybanks and shaken-out whatever they could find to help Bubbles. The response from the youngest members of the museum has been tremendous and we'd like to commend the parents for teaching their children the value of their support.

Bubbles, as well as the rest of us at the museum are anxious to get this project underway, but we want to remind everyone that this project will require a great deal of planning as well as a lot more public support. The Year End Appeal is just the first step in a long fundraising effort and we are still accepting donations for this project.

We will progress with the utmost care and attention for Bubbles' continued comfort, so it will take some time before the addition is started. Please keep an eye open for updates on the progress of the addition and ways you can support this project.

We'd like to send a special thank you to the families of Eunice Harrar and Eleanor Prince for their generous support of the Year End Appeal through their memorial donations.

Director Doug Alves thanks 10-year-old Nicholas Perry for his recent donation to the otter habitat.

Society Snapshot
Welcome Mr. John Dean
to the Bugeye Society

We have 63 new members in the Society! Our new premium members include: SUSTAINING: Mr. John Baker, Mr. Michael Collins, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrisman, Mr. & Mrs. Peter Freeman, Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Luttrell, Mr. & Mrs. Julius Owens, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Schomburg, and Mr. & Mrs. Martin Sullivan.

PATRON: Heritage Printing & Graphics.

Taking Membership to A Higher Level are members who upgraded recently: Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hall • Mr. & Mrs. Robert & Julia Luckritz • Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Luvara • Mr. & Mrs. Brett Hansen • Mr. & Mrs. Donald Kilpatrick • The McDougall Family • Mr. Michael Travis • Mr. Mark Caggiano • Mr. & Mrs. Brian Forsyth • Dr. Lucia Gomez • Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Herbert • Mr. & Mrs. Paul Hoffman • Mr. & Mrs. Wendell Leimbach • Ms. Margaret Phipps

Yule Party 2001
Kindred Spirits Charms the Crowd

Over 400 members turned out December 9th to enjoy an evening just for them. Kindred Spirits put on a special interactive holiday performance "A Real Christmas" that entertained both young and old. The Patuxent High School String Quartet entertained the crowd with holiday music, and our special Santa Claus passed out prizes to all who graced his lap! A door prize was donated by the Museum Store.

Thanks to all those wonderful volunteers who helped make the evening memorable—we couldn’t have done it without you. Many exciting plans are already in the works for next year! Plan to be there!
It is not often that one requests solitude when volunteering. This is what makes Dave Peterson such a unique museum volunteer: his dedication, willingness to do a few, shall we say, unsavory (or unglamorous) type tasks, and his quiet, yet positive attitude while working on maritime history special projects. Because many of these projects are behind the scenes, Dave’s background betrays an interesting person who has much to offer to those in our museum community.

Since July of 2000, this handy volunteer has worked quietly on several projects for maritime history. When I first met Dave, he mentioned that he wanted to work with his hands, and he preferred to not have much contact with the public. It has been a perfect match (okay, that’s a bit too strong...we’ll settle for good pairing), working on Richard Dodds’s eclectic tasks. Those who are familiar with the museum properties will definitely agree that Dave has had an impact. During 2001 he was involved with the initial recovery and conservation of the original Drum Point Lighthouse screwpiles, and he helped repair and repaint the upper railings around this same lighthouse. At the Cove Point Lighthouse, he helped install a new flagpole, he removed and refinished the mahogany door at the base of the tower, started refurbishing the exterior addition to the keeper’s house, and made various repairs to the porch and floor. When asked which task was most memorable, Dave mentions an original ladder to the Drum Point Lighthouse that sat outside Richard’s office for several months. Dave finally took it upon himself to scrape off the encrustations that marred the outward appearance. Is it that this man just can’t say “no” to these somewhat unpleasant tasks? No, Dave definitely exercises his option to decline what he does not want to work on. It is the variety of the different assignments that keeps him coming back for more; that, and his love of lighthouses.

Perhaps it is Dave’s employment history that makes him want to work outside and use his skills on hard labor. For many years he worked as a statistician for the Census Bureau and then the Department of Agriculture. Before that, he was a diving and salvage Naval Reserve captain. His service took him to Vietnam, Pearl Harbor, and the Philippines. He said the water in the latter two places was fabulously, crystal clear. Vietnam was a different story. Though he wasn’t on the front lines, he worked on the deep-sea dive salvage and clean-up end of the war. Now his water activities are limited to snorkeling.

Though not a native of Calvert County, he has lived in Huntingtown since 1972. Coming from New York State, it was a dive school in Washington, D.C., that attracted him and his wife to the area. Not really wanting to live within the city, they chose the calm country of our fair county. He has three children, one who lives in Maine, and the other two within an hour’s driving distance.

When not commuting to the southern end of the county to “see how the other half lives,” Dave volunteers with the Optimists of Calvert County. You will not find him at CMM between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Instead, he is, once again, out in the cold, selling Christmas trees. He also enjoys working with the youth aspect of this community-service-minded organization.

So, congratulations, Dave! We really do appreciate all you do at the museum and hope that for many years you will continue working behind the scenes. We’ll try not to bother you too much. (Leslie King)

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CALVERT MARINE MUSEUM
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American Association of Museums

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