During its first two years of production, in 1946 and 1947, M. M. Davis & Son, Inc., shipyard of Solomons, Maryland, manufactured and delivered over 800 of its stock twenty-foot Cruis-Along family cruisers. Company president George H. Townsend marketed these popular plywood boats as an affordable means for the entire family to enjoy recreation on the water. In subsequent years the company expanded its manufacturing plant and workforce to increase its product line to appeal to a wider audience of consumers. It announced in January 1948 that it had completed a 22,500-square-foot addition to its boat-building plant to increase production capacity, thus allowing the company to keep up with consumer demand and to diversify the Cruis-Along product line. Three new sister cruisers joined its popular twenty-foot model in 1948.

Destined to replace its original stock model, the Cruis-Along Special 21 provided an extra foot of cockpit space. The same cabin layout of the original model was maintained, but a hanging clothes locker increased its convenience. This boat also featured chrome-plated fittings, bronze rudder, and folding windshield as standard equipment. In lieu of the standard forty-five-horsepower Gray Phantom engine, the buyer could opt for a sixty-one-horsepower Kermath Sea Jeep motor to bring the speed to twenty-five miles per hour. The real innovation in 1948, however, was the introduction of the twenty-three-foot Cruis-Along Deluxe model with a new and improved hull configuration and cabin layout. Motor Boating magazine reported that noted naval architect Fred K. Lord designed the Deluxe 23 and a model hull was tank tested at the Stevens Institute of Technology prior to being put into production. In addition to two full-length berths, toilet, sink, icebox, running water, and a self-bailing cockpit, the Deluxe model was designed to appeal to those wanting an open boat that could be used for fishing and work-boat service or for pleasure where accommodations for cruising were not needed. Depending on the inboard engine selected, the Utility 21 could speed from twenty-five to twenty-eight miles per hour.

The real innovation in 1948, however, was the introduction of the twenty-three-foot Cruis-Along Deluxe model with a new and improved hull configuration and cabin layout. The Deluxe 23 and a model hull was tank tested at the Stevens Institute of Technology prior to being put into production. In addition to two full-length berths, toilet, sink, icebox, running water, and two hanging clothes lockers in the roomy cabin, the self-bailing cockpit was extended to ten feet in length and the boat’s beam expanded to seven feet, nine inches. This extended cockpit allowed room for two fishing chairs and a stowage locker under the aft seat. The deluxe hull was sheathed with one-half-inch marine plywood fastened to white oak frames spaced nine inches apart and the sturdy, streamlined boat also featured a permanent cockpit windshield. A more powerful ninety-two-horsepower Chrysler Ace engine allowed speeds of twenty-eight miles per hour.

These moderately priced Cruis-Along models were a popular draw at the 1948 National Motor Boat Show held in the Grand Central Palace in Manhattan. Regarding the show, Time magazine stated that “the real crowd pleasers were mass production models like M. M. Davis & Son’s 21-ft. Cruis-Along ($2,440),...,” and the New York Journal-American newspaper concurred: “The Cruis-along critter, a baby-blue and white beauty, is one of the prize catches of the show for the average pocketbook.” The Davis company exceeded its 1947 National
What’s New in Education

by Sherrod Sturrock

The education department is in full planning mode for the upcoming season, while simultaneously juggling a busy schedule of school fieldtrips, Saturday programs, overnights, and public programming.

Our First Free Friday initiative has proven highly successful, and we invite you to drop by to check it out, if you haven’t already done so. The Sunday Girl Scout programs are completely filled, and our overnights are also filling quickly. The Family Overnight in January was so successful that we have scheduled another on April 12. We have posted our summer camps on the website, and I encourage you to look them over and reserve your child’s spot quickly. This year we are trying some different formats: three-day camps and the Bay Trek Saturday Seminar for middle schoolers are two examples. We have provided a list of camps with dates, grades, topics, and fees for your information.

We are also fully engaged in planning our annual events. We kick-off the season on May 10 with the Solomons Maritime Festival. This event offers something for everyone in your family, from your toddler to Grandma and Grandpa. Don’t miss this family celebration of Southern Maryland culture. On June 21, we Celebrate Summer in two ways: fun summer activities for kids, and a “Bay Smarter” workshop for adults who own waterfront property. If you own, or may someday purchase land in the Critical Area, this workshop would be highly beneficial for you. It will also offer information for any homeowner on how to be a better steward of the environment. And on July 12 there’s Sharkfest! — one of our most popular events.

Summer Camp Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entering Grade</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Fee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Hiking Through History</td>
<td>June 30 – July 2</td>
<td>9am - 2pm</td>
<td>$50 Members / $60 Non-members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Bay Trek Saturday Seminar Series</td>
<td>Saturdays: July 26, Aug 23/29</td>
<td>9am - 2pm</td>
<td>$20 per day / Members / $30 Non-members</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Bay Trek Summer Overnight</td>
<td>August 15-16</td>
<td>5pm – 9 am</td>
<td>$50 Members / $35 Non-members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Summer Center for Paleontology*</td>
<td>June 23-July 2</td>
<td>8:30 am – 3 pm</td>
<td>See note</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>What Flotsam Your Beach?</td>
<td>July 14-19</td>
<td>9am - 2pm 11-12</td>
<td>$70 Members / $80 Non-members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>Strange Creatures of the Deep</td>
<td>July 28-Aug 1</td>
<td>9am - 2pm</td>
<td>$70 Members / $80 Non-members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wonderful Wet Water</td>
<td>July 28-30</td>
<td>9am - 12 noon</td>
<td>$40 Members / $50 Non-members</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Wonderful Wet Water</td>
<td>July 7-9, July 21-23</td>
<td>9am - 12 noon</td>
<td>$40 Members / $50 Non-members</td>
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</table>

* This camp is offered in partnership with the Calvert County Public Schools and the Maryland State Department of Education. For information and registration contact Tom Harten at 410-535-2960, or e-mail harten@calvertnet.k12.md.us. Applications available from www.marylandpublicschools.org/summercenters.

BUILD A CANOE OR SKIFF

The museum is now offering the opportunity to build a sixteen-foot wooden canoe or a twelve-foot rowing skiff on a schedule to suit the builder. With the “Build a Canoe by Appointment” program, you provide dates of two consecutive Saturdays and you will be put on the calendar. Scheduling is now through December 2008. Simple hand tools and guidance from experienced instructors will enable you to assemble a boat, ready to paint, at the end of your second Saturday. Class hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. each Saturday. Friends and family may join in, including children ten years and up in the company of an adult.

A fee of $600 for CMM members and $650 for nonmembers includes all materials necessary to complete one canoe and paddles, except paint. The fee for the twelve-foot rowing skiff is $950 for members and $1,000 for nonmembers; for an additional $800 you can have a sailing version, including sail, spars, daggerboard, and rudder.

Financial assistance is available to qualified applicants from the Melvin Conant Memorial Youth Fund, established in 2004 to encourage young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to participate in programs offered by CMM’s Patuxent Small Craft Center.

For details and scheduling contact George Surgent at 410-586-2700 or gsurgent@comcast.net.
MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

FIFTH ANNUAL SPRING BASKET BINGO EXTRAVANGAZA

Happy Anniversary to the Society’s Basket Bingo Extravaganza! On Saturday, April 26, the Society will hold its five-year anniversary Spring Basket Bingo Extravaganza at the St. John Vianney Family Life Center. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. and games begin at 6:00 p.m. This will be our biggest and best bingo event yet. Over $15,000 in prizes will be up for grabs. All baskets will be filled, and more surprise games will be added to this anniversary-edition bingo.

Tickets are $20 each and can be purchased by calling Melissa Carnes at 410-326-2042, ext. 17. Everyone must have a paid admission including all children; no admission to anyone under the age of 6. A prize list and flyer now available on the museum’s website www.calvertmarinemuseum.com.

COUNTRY STAR DIERKS BENTLEY COMING TO SOLOMANS!

On Saturday, May 24, Cumberland and Erly, LLC, and Prince Frederick Chrysler/Jeep/Dodge kick off the Calvert Marine Museum’s 2008 benefit concert series with country music sensation Dierks Bentley. Special guest – to be announced. Gates open at 6:00 p.m; showtime is 7:30 p.m. Tickets are $50 for premium seats and $40 for reserved seats; service charges are additional. For tickets and information call 1-800-787-9454. There are no refunds or exchanges. Food and drinks will be available, and coolers are not allowed.

Best known for hits such as “Long Trip Home” and “Every Mile a Memory,” Dierks has emerged as the hottest young star in country music. With two Platinum albums – 2003’s DIERKS BENTLEY (with the #1 debut smash “What Was I Thinkin’”) and 2005’s chart-topping MODERN DAY DRIFTER (with the back-to-back multi-week #1 hits “Come a Little Closer” and “Settle For a Slowdown”), combined with a long list of honors, Dierks has established himself as one of the most acclaimed artists in music today. In just one year, he jumped from winning the 2005 CMA Horizon Award to a 2006 CMA Male Vocalist of the Year nomination. He also won the ACM Top New Artist Award in 2004 and went on to receive a nomination for the 2005 ACM Top Male Vocalist Award.


For additional information, please visit the CMM website at www.calvertmarinemuseum.com. To reach a staff person, or to become a museum member, please call 410-326-2042, ext. 16, 17, or 18.
ART IN CALVERT COUNTY SCHOOLS

The museum and the Calvert County Public Schools have an on-going program to promote art in the public schools, with an emphasis on bay themes, and to exhibit student art efforts from various schools several times during the year.

Tiles of the Chesapeake was displayed in January and February in the museum lobby. Two large panels featured 110 hand-made, six-by-six-inch tiles by fourth grade students at Mutual Elementary School in Port Republic, Maryland. The students worked with local ceramic artist Parran Collery in an artist-in-residency program, coordinated by Elleen Kane and funded by Mutual’s PTA, the Maryland State Arts Council, and Target. Mutual School’s art instructor Beth Beighley helped coordinate this display.

FIRST FREE FRIDAY

The First Free Friday offering has been so successful that it will now be made a permanent museum activity. To the left, the Sea Shantey Sing Along led by Myron Peterson on February 1 drew a rousing crowd; to the right, Glenda Fields, “The Story Lady,” enthralled visitors on March 7. (Note: there will be no First Free Friday on July 4.)

BEATLEMANIA...

In two sold-out performances on January 19, the performers of “Beatlemania Live” captivated audiences in the CMM auditorium. Authentic costumes accompanied music from the different Beatles eras, re-creating the images of live Beatle concerts.

WINTER 2008 ACTIVITIES

Although a less busy season of the year, there were still significant activities at the museum, with a few shown here.
ANNUAL APPEAL 2007-2008 DONORS
Thank You for your support!

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WAR COMES TO THE CHESAPEAKE
War of 1812 Speaker Series

Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum (JPPM) and the Calvert Marine Museum (CMM) have “joined forces” to present a five-part lecture series to highlight the War of 1812 North American Grand Tactical. The Grand Tactical is an annual event that alternates between historic sites in Canada and the United States and is the largest War of 1812 Reenactment in North America.

Friday, May 16: William S. Dudley, former director, U. S. Naval Historical Center, will present The Onset of War on the Chesapeake: 1812-1813; 7:00 p.m., JPPM (guest speaker for the annual meeting of the Friends of JPPM, but open to the public).

Thursday, June 12: Charles H. Fithian, curator of archeology collections, State of Delaware, will present Hearts of Oak: The Royal Navy in the Chesapeake Campaign, 1813-1814; 7:00 p.m., CMM.

Thursday, July 10: Ralph E. Eshelman, maritime historian and paleontologist, will present Battlefields, Skirmishes, and Encampments: Remnants of the War of 1812 in Maryland; 7:00 p.m., JPPM.

Sunday, August 17: Christopher T. George, author of the book Terror on the Chesapeake: The War of 1812, will present Americans in the Defense of the Chesapeake; 3:00 p.m., CMM.

Thursday, September 11: Donald G. Shomette, historian and underwater archaeologist, will present “A Commander of Capacity and Influence”: The Chesapeake Flotilla Men and the War of 1812 on the Patuxent; 7:00 p.m., JPPM.
Motor Boat Show record, realizing $1,750,000 worth of business, with three-quarters of its projected production of the new Deluxe 23 model subscribed to during the eight-day show.

In 1949, M. M. Davis & Son, Inc., dropped the hyphen from the Cruis Along name in its advertising, and it also dropped its original twenty-foot model in favor of the more popular twenty-one-foot cruisers. The new model line was introduced in an impressive four-page advertisement in the January 1949 issues of Yachting and Motor Boating magazines. The magazines also reported an innovative introduction to the Cruis Along line: the Cruis Along Converter 21. This model was unique because it offered the buyer the option to purchase the sturdy twenty-one-foot cruiser hull and identical cabin for nearly $1,000 less than her fully equipped sister cruiser, the Special 21. The versatile Converter allowed the buyer to use his own outboard motor or to install an inboard engine at any time. According to the Davis advertisement, the boat was “For the man who wants cruiser comfort and outboard economy,” and was affordably priced at $1,850. Each Converter model had its engine beds installed and shaft logs bored to allow the owner to convert to inboard power at a later date. It also featured as standard equipment a steering wheel and cables, as well as throttle controls, to enable the owner to operate an outboard motor from the standard pilot’s position. The Converter was touted as performing well with outboard motors of seven-horsepower and up. The buyer could also opt to have the yard install an inboard 45-horsepower Gray Phantom engine and inboard power kit for an additional $775.

Company management changed in late 1949 when George Townsend retired for health reasons after serving twelve years as president of the firm. On October 20, 1949, he sold controlling interest in the company to George H. Mettier and William Hamilton, but Townsend remained on the board as chairman. Gates Harpel, former president and general manager of Century Boat Company for seventeen years, was brought in to run the yard, while J. Barnes Lusby, associated with the shipyard for thirty-four years, provided continuity to the organization by guiding the design and construction of the boats as vice-president.

In 1950, the M. M. Davis & Son, Inc., advertising theme was “You Belong in a Cruis Along.” The model year marked an overhaul and update of the Cruis Along twenty-one-foot line. The Converter 21, the versatile and innovative model introduced the previous year, was less popular than anticipated and was dropped from production, and the open Utility 21 model, introduced in 1948, suffered the same fate. The Special 21 was redesigned with a more streamlined cabin top to offer more headroom below, while a completely outfitted Deluxe 21 model was introduced in 1950 with the same hull and cabin configuration as the Special. As a less expensive alternative to the fully equipped Deluxe 23, the Special 23 model was also introduced.

Cruis Along provided a much wider selection of engines in its four 1950 models than it had before. Speeds ranged from twenty-three to twenty-eight miles per hour for the twenty-three-foot models and twenty to twenty-seven miles per hour for the twenty-one-foot models. Prices were kept competitive with the Special 21 model selling for $2,445 and the Deluxe 21 priced at $2,690. The Special 23 was $3,210 and the Deluxe 23 was priced $3,530.

The following year, Cruis Along Boats continued to modify its line of cruisers while maintaining competitive prices. In 1951, the hull lengths of their models were lengthened to twenty-two feet and twenty-four feet and additional amenities were added. The 1951 models were described as “complete vacation homes afloat” by company president Gates Harpel. According to Motor Boating magazine, C. Hatfield Bills, an industrial designer in the marine field, redesigns the interior cabin spaces with attention to home convenience. The four new models ranged from the Special 22 at $2,690 to the Deluxe 24 at $3,890. Depending on the engine, the deluxe model could speed up to thirty miles per hour. The option of Philippine mahogany planking rather than five-ply marine-grade plywood was offered for the first time in 1951.

The recreational boating business is seasonal, with most sales occurring in the spring and early summer months. From 120 to 150 workers were employed in manufacturing Cruis Along boats for about seven months of the year. Since the yard also maintained its marine railways and repair facilities, a smaller number of workers were engaged in hauling, repairing, refitting, or outfitting both pleasure craft and work vessels the remainder of the year, providing year-round employment to the most skilled workers and ensuring an influx of capital to the company during the off-season.

Cruis-Along Deluxe 23 moored at Lake Titicaca, Bolivia.
Despite the success and profitability of the popular Cruis Along line, the M. M. Davis & Son, Inc., management made an unusual business decision in late 1951 when it accepted a contract with the U. S. Navy to construct two 144-foot minesweepers. As a consequence, Cruis Along production was suspended and all facilities were devoted to defense work in 1952. Davis historian Geoffrey Footner suggests this decision cost the company its competitive edge by allowing other manufacturers to gain a foothold in the market for affordable family cruisers.

In 1953, the Davis yard continued to fulfill its contract to the U. S. Navy. By August, one of the minesweepers was nearly complete and the other was to be delivered to the government in October. While completing its government obligation, the yard had nearly $1,000,000 tied up in these vessels and took out a mortgage to finance the contracts. To provide much needed capital, the Davis yard resumed Cruis Along manufacture on a small scale in 1953, but only two Cruis Along models were advertised that year. Using essentially the same hull designs as the 1951 boats, both were deluxe models. The Deluxe 22 and the Deluxe 24 could reach speeds of twenty-eight and thirty miles per hour, respectively, and each offered new styling and other improvements, such as ventilating windshields in the flying bridge.

The completion of the government contracts allowed the company to retire its mortgage, pay off its other debts, and placed it on a firm economic footing. As a consequence, 1954 witnessed a resurgence of the Cruis Along when three new models were introduced. Replacing the earlier Cruis Along Special and Deluxe models were the new Buccaneer, Vacationer 22, and Express 26. These streamlined models were completely new and set a high standard for the industry. Noted naval architect Eric J. Steinlein drew upon his vast experience as well as the latest marine engineering principles in designing these models. The Cruis Along Vacationer 22 featured a new hull design called the Super-Hyplane hull that, according to Motor Boating magazine, “combines the best features of the round bottom type hull with the fast planing of the V-bottom hull.” By adding an extra foot of beam and extending the cabin headroom by six inches, the Vacationer provided comfortable family cruising. With two removable berths added to the two permanent berths, four could now sleep aboard. Depending on the engine, the Vacationer 22 model’s speed ranged from twenty to thirty-four miles per hour.

A nineteen-foot clinker-built inboard utility and fishing boat named the Buccaneer was also introduced in 1954. Sporting a glossy black painted hull, its lapstrake construction made for a rugged fishing and family party boat that was comfortable, seaworthy, and fast. The Buccaneer could sleep two in its small cabin and, depending on the engine, could speed from twenty-five to thirty-five miles per hour. The Cruis Along Express 25 cruiser with its mahogany planking on oak frames also featured the Super-Hyplane hull. Renamed the Express 26 by March 1954, the cruiser could sleep four and provided more roomy comfort than the Vacationer model and it featured such amenities as a fully enclosed head, completely equipped galley, and plenty of locker and stowage space. Respectable speeds of twenty-two to thirty-four miles per hour were possible, depending on the engine selected.

Significantly, 1954 proved to be a year of transition for the Davis company. In addition to introducing an entirely new and modernized line of Cruis Along models, company management and ownership changed again during the year. Gates Harpel, after five years at the helm of the company, retired in February 1954 due to his wife’s ill health. Vice president Bernard P. Lankford, in charge of sales, was named the new company president, while Barnes Lusby continued as general superintendent and manager of construction. Perhaps the biggest and most far-reaching change in 1954, however, was in company ownership. George Townsend, after eighteen years as chairman of the board of M. M. Davis & Son, Inc., announced the sale of his remaining stock and interest in the company in August 1954. Upon his retirement, Townsend stated “I am most happy to have sold my entire interest to my faithful employees.” The proud new owners were a group of twenty Davis employees who also secured the stock of all outside interests. According to the press release announcing the transition, “This employee-stockholder organization has one objective in mind and that is to steadily improve Cruis Alongs in order to best serve the boating public.”

By 1954 the leadership and thoughtful planning of George Townsend and Gates Harpel had combined with the talent of a skilled and seasoned workforce to place M. M. Davis & Son, Inc., on a firm economic footing. The name and reputation of the company was recognized nationally as the manufacturer of the popular and competitively priced Cruis Along family cruisers. The transition to employee ownership and management heralded a new and exciting chapter in the story of M. M. Davis & Son, Inc., and its Cruis Along fleet.

Sources: This article has been developed from correspondence and other items in the CMM archives and from periodicals in the museum’s library. Photographs are from the CMM collections. A copy of the article with specific citations is available upon request to the editor.
SPOTLIGHTS ON VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

VOLUNTEERS

Nominees for the Volunteer of the Year Award

By Sherry Reid

Please join me in congratulating the following volunteers for receiving nominations for the Volunteer of the Year 2007.

Janet Addiss volunteers in the museum store. She has also taken on the responsibility for the hospitality suite during the large special events. Janet not only does the shopping and cooking for the volunteers and staff but she is in the hospitality room all day feeding the troops. Harry Childers is a member of the Volunteer Council Executive Board and also volunteers in the Discovery Room and in the Skates and Rays exhibit. It is a pleasure to watch him engage and entertain the visitors with his vast knowledge of the “critters.” Christa Conant is well versed in many areas of the museum. She is always willing to be at the museum all day for special events, from set up to clean up. Christa is always there when you need help with any task. Bob Hall is the man behind the camera who makes sure that all of the museum activities are captured on film (or digitally). He takes great pride in his work and does a wonderful job. Chuck Kohls is a new volunteer who hit the ground running. He has taken the time to learn and gain experience in many areas of the museum so he is ready when a volunteer is needed in just about any capacity. Bill Lake is always busy in the boat shop doing restoration, working with boat building classes, or anything else that needs to be done. He also helps behind the scenes in the Estuarine Department and is a big help to the Education Department for programming. Shirley Mihursky is our “Jack of all trades” and is up for any task that comes along. She is always available to lend a hand and stands at the ready for the next challenge. Bob Platt always likes to take on the big projects in the Paleo Department. He took it upon himself to catalogue the entire comparative osteology collection which was no small task. He works independently and is very generous with his time.

The winner for the Volunteer of the Year Award will be announced at the volunteer recognition event on May 1.

Congratulations!

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

MARATHON GIRL

CMM aquarist Laura Magdeburger ran in the fifteenth Annual Walt Disney World Marathon on January 13, 2008, in Orlando, Florida, along with 18,000 other runners. She did it with the help of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s Team in Training program, training for over four months prior to the event, running over 250 miles, and losing about ten pounds. Laura’s personal goal was to raise $3,800, which she far exceeded with help from fellow employees, CMM volunteers, and friends, bringing in a total of $6,100! Laura reports that the 26.2-mile course was not easy, despite the training, but she felt very proud after she crossed the finish line.

GREEN TEAM

Laura was also part of a museum team honored in December by the County Commissioners for their willingness to go “above and beyond” to develop a recycling program at the museum. The team, led by Tim Scheirer, also included Lori Cole, Linda Hanna, Mindy Quinn, Sherry Reid, and Rachel Reese.

OTHER STAFF NEWS

There have been several staff changes in recent months. John Nance now fills the position of paleontology collections manager, replacing Helen “Pat” Fink who retired in December. Also in paleontology, Wanda Florence may now be found in the paleo prep laboratory in the exhibition building. Meeting the public in the education department is Helen Mote, a part-time exhibit interpreter, and Lori Mason has returned to CMM as an aquarist, replacing Kate Perry.

CALVERT MARINE MUSEUM

P.O. Box 97
Solomons, MD 20688