

# THE WILDFOWLER

FEBRUARY 2018

A PUBLICATION OF THE ATLANTIC WILDFOWL HERITAGE MUSEUM AND THE BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD

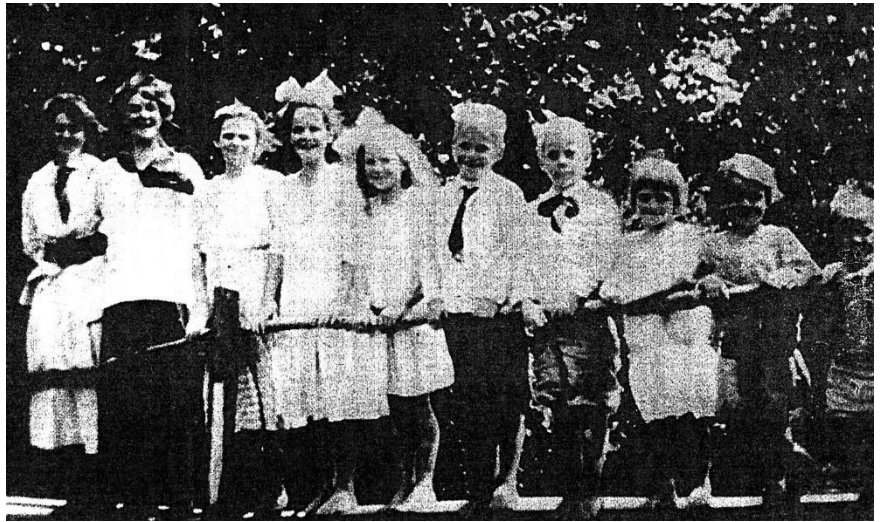
***Elizabeth Mottu deWitt March 24, 1901- September 2, 1971***

***Julia Coppe'e deWitt August 22, 1902-May 22, 1991***

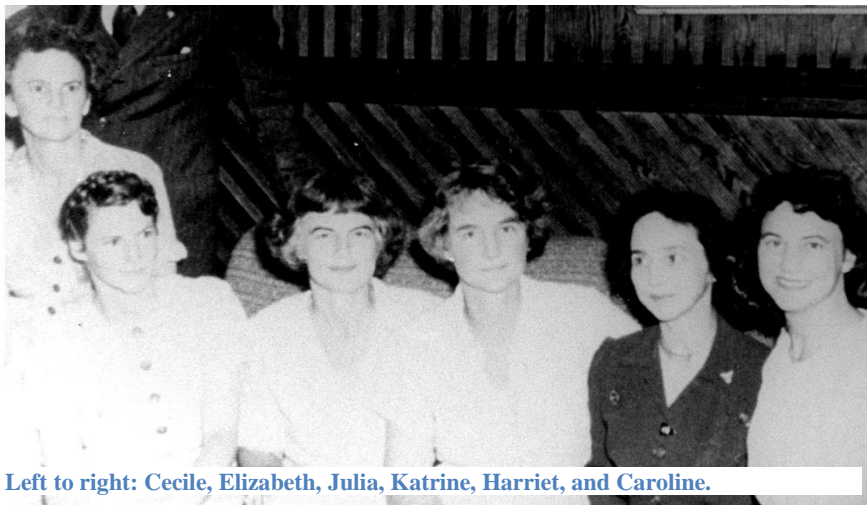
*Lynn Hightower*

From the archives of the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum, The Virginian –Pilot, and Past editions of The Wildfowler,

Elizabeth and Julia were the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> children born to Cornelius and Cecile deWitt. In 1909 they were excited to be moving to Virginia Beach with their five brothers and sisters. While living in the deWitt cottage three more children were born; bringing the number of children to total ten. Within in just a few months of the birth of their youngest brother Peter, their father, Cornelius, passed. This created some hardship for the family; but, fortunately the cottage and land were paid for before Cornelius' death. The next ten years were difficult and their mom was strict about attending school. Then tragedy struck again. Mom became gravely ill and died in 1923. It was now left to Elizabeth (22 years old) and Julia (21 years old) to take care of the remaining seven children. Cecile the oldest daughter had married Frank Bowman Hastie, an officer in the Army Corps of Engineers and moved with him to Washington, DC. Under



Left to right: Cecile, Elizabeth, Julia, Katrine, Harriet, Cornelius, John, Caroline, Paul and Peter



Left to right: Cecile, Elizabeth, Julia, Katrine, Harriet, and Caroline.

the very best of circumstances it would have been difficult caring for the other children; but this was just six years before the beginning of the Great Depression. To make ends meet, during the depression, the two sisters devised a plan to rent out some rooms and turn the deWitt cottage into a boarding house. They charged close friends and family \$1.50 a night or \$7.00 a week for a bed and breakfast. Neither Elizabeth nor Julia ever married or had their own children. They devoted their lives to caring for their younger siblings.



## ***Upcoming Guild Events:***

02/06/2018 Back Bay Wildfowl Guild  
Membership Meeting 7:00pm, Social 6:00pm  
Program: Jack Cox  
Carver from Elizabeth City, NC

02/20/2018: Board Meeting  
6:00 pm

02/27/2018 Dine Out for The de Witt  
5:30pm – 8:30pm Raven Restaurant  
1200 Atlantic Ave.

03/10/2018 Back Bay-Knotts Island Waterfowl Festival  
Saturday 9:00am-6:00pm  
Creeds Ruritan Barn 1057 Princess Anne Rd  
**We need Volunteers**

03/17/2018 Ruritan Barbeque and Craft Fair  
Saturday 11:00am-6:00pm  
Creeds Ruritan Barn 1057 Princess Anne Rd  
**We need Volunteers**

03/20/2018: Board Meeting  
6:00 pm

03/19/2018 Dine Out for The de Witt  
5:30pm – 8:30pm Rudee's Seafood Restaurant  
227 Mediterranean Ave

04/17/2018: Board Meeting  
6:00 pm

05/01/2018 Back Bay Wildfowl Guild  
Membership Meeting 7:00pm, Social 6:00pm  
Lucky Oyster Celebration  
Fall and Winter Raffle Drawing

05/15/2018: Board Meeting  
6:00 pm

## **Save these Dates**

Dine Out for The de Witt 04/10/2018  
Lucky Oyster May 1, 2018



# DECOYS WANTED

WE BUY WOODEN OR CANVAS DUCKS, GEESE, SWANS & SHOREBIRDS...  
WHAT IS YOUR DECOY WORTH? IT COULD BE WORTH THOUSANDS!

WE WILL PAY YOU **CASH** FOR ANY OLD DECOYS AND HUNTING ITEMS



**FREE** DECOY IDENTIFICATION  
AND EVALUATIONS  
*of Single Decoys or Entire Collections*  
BY MARK CROMWELL  
**(757) 721-2746**  
*Member North Carolina Decoy Collectors Assoc.*

## FIRST ANNUAL FALL & WINTER RAFFLE

November 1, 2017 kicked off our First Annual Fall and Winter Raffle. We have some great prizes; two shotguns one of which is valued at \$3,000.00. One of Harvey Ackiss' World Class Carvings and four of Al Brandtner's World Class Carvings. More than \$12,000.00 in total prizes. You can see all of the prizes on page six of this newsletter. Tickets are \$5.00 each or five for \$20.00. All proceeds go to the operation and sustainability of the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum. Please send the following information to everyone in your email list or post it to your Facebook page! Tickets can be purchased online at [www.awhm.org/annual-affle](http://www.awhm.org/annual-affle) or at the Museum in person or by emailing the director at [director@atwildfowl.org](mailto:director@atwildfowl.org). We will also accept checks via snail mail.

## DINE OUT FOR THE deWITT

**Dine out for the deWitt** Continues on **February 27, 2018** at Raven Restaurant 1200 Atlantic Avenue. This is the program where you take your spouse out to dinner and the restaurant donates a percentage of what your meal cost to the museum. Easy peasy; you go out to dinner with your friends, family, or potential new museum member and the museum receives a nice donation. What a great opportunity to introduce potential new members to our organization. Please invite your friends and family to join you! So let's see how many people we can pack into the Raven. Please help us make this a very successful event!



THE FASTEST RECORDED FLIGHT OF A DUCK WAS 100 MPH,  
WHILE FLYING AWAY FROM A PREDATOR.

DUCKS HAVE MORE THAN 12,000 TINY MUSCLES  
JUST FOR FEATHER CONTROL.

DIVING DUCKS CAN DIVE TO MORE THAN  
200 FEET IN SEARCH OF FOOD.





## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the new president along with new members of the Board of Directors of the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum we have already seen a new direction and leadership beginning to take shape. Our investments are showing profits and along with proposed fundraisings, things cannot look brighter for the future of de Witt Cottage and the museum.


After requesting a meeting with Mr. Dave Hansen, City Manager; Lynn Hightower and myself met with him on January 30<sup>th</sup> in his office. After discussions on duck hunting and affairs of the city we discussed long range planning and becoming solvent. My first question to him was, "Are you going to recommend reduced funding for the museum this year?" Mr. Hansen stated firmly "No, I am not doing that this year".

We provided a one page report of the museum on projects completed, how we have invested in the de Witt Cottage thereby protecting the city property and saving taxpayers money. The report provided our financial analysis and how we intend to aggressively pursue that growth. Mr. Hansen was impressed with our follow up and stated he was impressed with our presentation last year during the city's budget process and public hearing. We discussed three major projects we wish to pursue:


1. Install shutters (historically correct) to all windows in the cottage. I explained this will save additional tax dollars thereby relieving city staff from boarding up the cottage for storms and protecting the property.
2. Constructing the Gazebo (historically correct) on the property, we explained the structure would benefit weddings, anniversary's and food vendors and bring back the nostalgic appearance of the property.
3. Bring back the Mid Atlantic Wildfowl Festival (MAWF) to the oceanfront as once held in the Old Dome. We stated the possibility of the MAWF appeared to be impossible because it was cost prohibited due to the city high rate of renting the conference center on 19<sup>th</sup> street. Mr. Hansen stated he would allow a three step cost proposal, the first year we would be charged a low rate, second year a slightly higher rate and finally the third year a final rate. This would allow us to develop a plan, organize sponsors and create a venue attracting a greater audience, especially the younger generation. And more importantly make the de Witt Cottage and museum a destination for tourist and locals alike. I cannot agree more. We must think outside the box if we wish to survive, by developing a wider range of interest to the younger generation will be our saving factor.

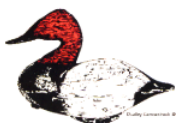
As an example we need to contact sponsors such as gun manufacturers, hunting boat manufacturers hunting apparel retailers (Bass Pro, Gander Mountain, Cabelas) hunting apparel manufacturers (Orvis, Real Tree, Banded, etc.), the list goes on.

Will the event be Friday, Saturday and Sunday? Possibly a Hunters Feast one day entreating guests. As you can see there is an opportunity for us to expand, however EVERYONE, especially the Board Of Directors need to take this opportunity seriously and perform 100% if this proposal will be successful. Mr. Hansen has even volunteered to sit on this committee, what better opportunity can there be for the City Manager of the City of Virginia Beach to give us full support. The future of the de Witt Cottage and museum looks bright, let's make it happen!



**Free Decoy  
Identification and Evaluation**  
By Jeff Tinkham  
President of The Atlantic  
Wildfowl Heritage Museum  
Call (757) 721-7131 or  
[jeff@tinkhamlaw.com](mailto:jeff@tinkhamlaw.com)





### FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

Tuesday, February 6, 2018 will be our first General Membership Meeting of the New Year! This looks to be a very special meeting as we have a very talented carver and painter coming from Elizabeth City, NC to demonstrate some of his skills for our membership. His name is Jack Cox. He is a world class carver who is highly respected by all of his peers and I know he will teach us all a great deal. His picture is shown below:



If you miss this meeting, there won't be another General Membership Meeting until May 1<sup>st</sup> when we celebrate spring at the lucky Oyster Restaurant.

We are currently running our new Fall and Winter Raffle that will become an annual event. I need your help in promoting this online event. Simply send this link [awhm.org/annual-raffle](http://awhm.org/annual-raffle) to all your email contacts or post it to your Facebook page. Asking your friends and family members to please purchase a \$5.00 ticket. That is five dollars for a chance at \$12,000 worth of prizes. First Prize is a \$3,000 Beretta Shotgun (seven major prizes). For more information see the flyer in this newsletter (page 6) or go to our website [awhm.org](http://awhm.org).

We had a wildly successful **Dine out for the deWitt** at IL'Giardino's Restorante. We had just over 100 people in attendance! We actually had a couple drive down from Fredericksburg, VA to have dinner and then came to the museum on Tuesday to visit. Many of you took the opportunity to invite friends and family, thank you! Now let's turn them all into new members.

I hope to see each and every one of you at the **Dine out for the deWitt** on **February 27, 2018** at the Raven Restaurant 1200 Atlantic Avenue (across the street from the deWitt Cottage). 5:30 – 8:30pm Please make you plans now to attend and Please bring some guests with you! I will see you there!



Prize #2



Prize #1



Prize #3

Prize #4



Prize #5



Drawing to  
be held

May 1, 2018  
at 8:00pm

Tickets available online at  
[awhm.org/annual-raffle](http://awhm.org/annual-raffle)

All proceeds benefit the  
Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage  
Museum in the deWitt cottage a  
501 ©3 Non-profit.

## Annual Fall & Winter Raffle

Prize #6



Prize #7





## Invaders from Canada

Or..... a pleasant trip to Maryland by Jim Mehne

Dawn broke cold and gray over the gently rolling farmland of the Maryland countryside on a recent Monday morning. Actually, it was unseasonably warm and sunny, but this was a hunting trip for waterfowl, and the best stories never start that way. For some reason waterfowling and suffering bad weather have been linked for centuries. In truth, most waterfowl don't fly in truly foul weather. "**Fowl**" weather is rarely foul, if you know what I mean.

Four members of the museum board plus one son and one cousin met at the north end of the Chesapeake Bay on Maryland's Eastern Shore for a few days of goose hunting. Our host, Bill "Cody" Clark, owner of Goosehaven Farm near Chestertown Maryland, was standing next to a large, hot wood stove. He greeted us warmly. We quickly reviewed the plan for the day's hunt and left for the blind where we were met by none other than David Coleman, four-time National goose calling champion. We've been fortunate to have him call for us on several previous (and highly successful) hunts. David uses a tube call and learned its use under the tutelage of Kentuckian Harold Knight, creator of the tube call and a partner in Knight and Hale game call company, located in Cadiz, KY. Back in the day I hunted frequently in western Kentucky and met Harold in the 70s when he was a barber, amateur call maker, and hunting guide. He helped me bag my first wild turkey, the feathered one, not the bottled variety. But that's another story.

To watch geese turn from their intended flight plan and swing into our decoy spread was a true delight. Time after time call man Coleman brought geese in over the decoys with his talented calling. No, not every flight would turn our way, but in short order we had our first day's limit and reluctantly packed up our gear. It's always a pleasure to spend time in a blind with old friends, literally and figuratively, but a morning spent with champion caller (and all-around good guy) David Coleman is, without a doubt, a memorable day.

I must add the morning was marked by an unusual event. Circling geese suddenly flared in panic as a mature bald eagle streaked over the decoy spread directly in front of our blind. The eagle was in close pursuit of our geese. We did not see the conclusion of the eagle's hunt but it was a thrill to have a close-up view of one of nature's most skilled hunters in action.

## THE SECOND DAY

The weather changed dramatically overnight. William M. "Bill" Walsh stood stoically at the upwind end of the generously bushed blind, squinting into the almost gale force wind bearing down from the Northeast. The wind brought sporadic rain drops which stung his face and saturated his neat, close cropped beard. "THIS IS IDEAL" he stated calmly, but with authority. The hunters accompanying Bill strained to hear his words, almost lost in the howling wind of the approaching storm.

Turning his back to the building weather, Bill faced the other hunters and ensured that they were prepared for the day's hunt. He patiently explained to the new guy how the geese would swing around into the wind and present a sporting shot. Kentuckian Thomas V. "Cousin Tom" Haile, a veteran Deer Hunter, was along for his first goose hunt. As the rain increased in intensity, Cousin Tom was not at all certain how "IDEAL" things were looking. Wayne "triple B" Jarman sat with his high quality Gore-Tex rain parka hood pulled down low over his face, which was clean-shaven, tanned, and relatively dry. "Things will be a lot more "IDEAL" when I see geese swinging in here," Wayne commented dryly. To Wayne's right was Lynn "high bridge" Hightower who was attired in an equally nice hooded parka. High bridge Hightower sat hunkered down at the far end of the blind, trying to stay dry. "Let me know when the killing starts" he told Wayne.

"Load up" barked our Guide for the second day, Shane "son of Cody" Clark. Up and down the long, well bushed blind, hunters busily stuffed magnum shells into the magazines of their 12 gauge shotguns. The metallic clanking noise of rounds being chambered resounded throughout the blind. As if on cue our guide commenced calling into the ominous dark gray sky. "Behind us!" Triple-B Jarman silently gestured with his weathered, somewhat wet hand.

Suddenly geese appeared out front of the blind, dropping from the ominous sky like winged phantoms. "Shoot!! SHOOT!!! exclaimed our guide. His third entreaty to shoot was drowned out by the thunderous roar of five shotguns blasting into the dark, grim sky. Empty shell casings rattled to the floor of the blind as four big Canada geese (aka Canadian Invaders) plummeted to the damp earth below, never to return to the tundra. I commented to Wayne about my feeling of melancholy about the birds not returning to the North this spring. With a grin Wayne said "well, they will look good when they arrive on my dinner table, if not the tundra." He always makes me smile. I then complemented "Cousin Tom" on his quick, effective, well placed shot. "Close range - I would have been embarrassed to miss that shot" he commented



enthusiastically, glad not to be embarrassed in front of the other water fowling veterans.

Without warning a strange fog bank wafted across from Hightower's end of the blind. Flying just ahead of the fog a group of geese came straight in. Wayne saw them first and poked me awake. On the signal we arose in unison, unleashing a fearsome volley. Several survivors split to the left; a single large gander broke right. This proved to be a bad decision since he crossed directly in front of Hightower. Lynn swung on the bird and dropped it cleanly at about 45 yards, one of the longer (successful) shots of the day. Everyone in the blind loudly complimented him since he was wearing big earmuffs to protect what hearing he has left.

Numerous groups ranging from five to twenty geese circled our well concealed blind throughout the morning, unwilling to commit, a hunting term meaning to approach the blind within gun range. Upon occasion a few unwary birds would pass by too close and they would be added to the slowly growing pile which would eventually turn into our legal daily limit of two birds each.

The second day was periodically punctuated with strange changes in the weather. Cold, driving rain changed to partly cloudy skies and then to bright sunlight, followed by the previously mentioned fog bank which rolled across the field like a scene out of some weird science fiction movie. Then the wind ceased and the fog dissipated leaving us with partly cloudy skies and an unsettling stillness. The normally constant movement of geese slowed. Then it became slower yet. Slow times in the blind promote storytelling and we shared some moments of days gone by, of old hunting companions no longer present, and fond memories of days afield from five or six decades ago. I found this to be the best part of the long, dismal second day. Thankfully we reached our legal limit of geese by noon and packed up our gear quickly, glad to have this one behind us. It was a long day. Did I mention that?

During the trip we utilized the services of a local butcher shop/goose plucking operation. Prominently displayed on their business card was a line proclaiming "fast, clean and courteous service!" We

found this statement to be less than accurate. The lady handling the administrative paperwork mandated by Maryland law proved to be the rudest person we encountered while in Maryland. I was going to say she was originally from New York but that would be an unpardonable slur on the citizens of that city. One of our party failed to enter some obscure detail in the correct column, drawing this "lady's" ire. To politely paraphrase her words, she threatened to perform a colonoscopy with her foot on the unfortunate hunter. I can only add the foot in question was clad in a large, masculine looking, blood spattered tennis shoe liberally covered with goose down. On second thought, I will add the services performed by the men in the shop was indeed fast and efficient. I think they were afraid of the lady in the tennis shoes; the shoes were masculine in appearance. Did I mention that?

On a happier note, we enjoyed several wonderful meals while in the Chestertown area. The waitresses all put up with an exceptional amount of humorous banter and good-natured joking. These fellows are all generous tippers. We all made it home without incident; the

Maryland Highway Patrol coverage was skimpy. I saw maybe 30 radar set-ups the entire trip. We plan to return for another hunt the week of the Martin Luther King holiday in January, 2019.

Anyone interested in hunting at Goosehaven Farm, (conveniently located near the clean, hospitable Holiday Inn in Chestertown, MD) next season may contact Bill Walsh.

Special thanks go to Russell Walsh who provided intelligent advice on alliteration, assonance, adjectives, and even some adverbs to help make this story flow. Russell is an extremely optimistic guy and a pleasure to share a blind with in good or bad weather.

**SPECIAL DISCLAIMER:** No Eagles were harmed during the hunt or while writing this story.

That's the story and I'm sticking to it! J.M.





### **Cousin Tom's First Goose Hunt**

(and first poem, I think!)

The noble hound stood at the ready  
My feet yet cold, my hands unsteady  
Through peering eyes in morning mist  
Some left the blind to take a piss.

Our guide called out-yet wait a moment  
Here yet come three, our pile to foment.  
No hunters these, their watch now erring  
Took time to show their pluck and daring.

The geese could scarce be but amused  
These human hosts seem but abused.  
They watch and wait, they think well hidden,  
But we know where, and we ain't kiddin.

As geese it seems to us great sport  
To feign approach but then veer off.  
Their upturned face of consternation  
Soon turns to anger and frustration

The fact we see them, where now waiting,  
O'er fields of decoys and furtive baiting.  
"It's the dog, it's the blind,  
I fear to lose my mind "

We look around at sky and ground  
To understand how we've been found.  
What movement in our blind now fails us  
Perhaps the coffee out our thermos.

We seek in vain to yet discover  
What keeps our prey yet in a hover?  
They come but leave e'er e'en one shot  
Their scheming flight leaves us with naught.

Our feelings of comradery,  
Of happiness and revelry  
Soon give way to postulation,  
Threats and desperate accusation.

"It's Lynn, It's Wayne, No Bill or Russell "  
The whole thing made quite a rancorous tussle.

Twixt men at one time friendly allies  
Their anger and frustration sallies.  
And now midst all their ire and anger,  
The blind now fills with common rancor.  
Jim and Tom their story telling must abate  
E'er returning geese may be too late.

For story telling is one thing,  
Their banter is most deafening  
Their joking we once thought was fun,  
But now my grip upon my gun,

Seems firmer, more intense to seize,  
I fear I'll dispatch both of these.  
Their stories, jokes and tales unceasing,  
My kindled anger knows no appeasing

Then Tom takes leave and out the blind,  
"If I don't piss, I fear I'll die"  
Just then the guide calls out to Tommy  
"Loose not your loins, call not your mommy."

"The birds have seen what you now carry,  
'Neath camo cloth and longjohns nary."  
If what Tom showed is all they've got  
Of these poor men, to fear, we've naught.

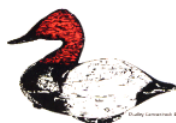
Tom zipped anon the pants he'd loosened.  
"Looks like a chance to go a goosin' "  
And so as afternoon breaks morning,  
The geese return, our rampart storming.

Our hunters now have had their rally,  
And finally met their daily tally.  
From depth's despair and apprehension  
Their skill has lifted all their tension.

These birds, whose lives as men we've taken,  
Have spirits not to be forsaken.  
For as God's creatures, we are one,  
When life on this Earth then is done.

Farewell, adieu, lose not your reason,  
For next year brings another season.

By Cousin Tom



## BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Al Henley, President	Wayne Jarman, Vice President
Jim Mehne, Secretary	Roger Shope, Treasurer
Mark Cromwell	Werner Seibel
Dan Neveu	Jason Seward
Tom Richards	Jeff Tinkham
William Walsh, Jr., Curator	
Fletcher Bryant, President Emeritus	

### MUSEUM CARVERS

Monday	Elaine Polizos
Tuesday:	Pete DiPietro
Wednesday:	Roy Carlson
	Ed Morrison, Herb Videll
Thursday:	Hank Grigolite
"The Boathouse Boys" Carving Club:	Al, Jamie, John, Pete & Charlie
Friday:	Susan Moritz
Saturday:	Gentry Childress & Ben Purvis
Sunday:	OPEN

## MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

Tuesday:	OPEN
Wednesday:	Archie Johnson 10a-2p
Thursday	Joe Leo 10a-2p
Friday:	OPEN
Saturday:	OPEN
Sunday:	OPEN
Museum Grounds:	Nancy Lekberg, Lori Bagley, Lois Stickles, Jacky Richards, and Lena Lindsay

### MUSEUM STAFF

Lynn Hightower, Director      Ann Smith, Gift Shop Manager

### MUSEUM CONTACT INFORMATION

ATLANTIC WILDFOWL HERITAGE MUSEUM  
1113 Atlantic Avenue  
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Telephone: 757.437.8432  
Facsimile: 757.437.9950  
Website: [www.awhm.org](http://www.awhm.org)  
Email: [director@atwildfowl.org](mailto:director@atwildfowl.org)

**You can now pay your dues online at [awhm.org](http://awhm.org) !**

*January 1, 2018 kicked off our Annual Membership Campaign. A lot of changes in the dues structure have been approved by the Board of Directors for the coming New Year. Each of you were mailed a brochure outlining the changes for the coming year. If you have any questions about the changes please call the Director at (757) 437-8432 or email him at [director@atwildfowl.org](mailto:director@atwildfowl.org) .*

### 2018 DUES

\$35/YR INDIVIDUAL  
\$100/YR BRONZE  
\$500/YR GOLD

\$50/FAMILY  
\$200/YR SILVER  
\$1,000/YR PRESIDENTS CIRCLE



## BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD 2018 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT PAID \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ [CELL] \_\_\_\_\_

*January 1, 2018 will kick off our Annual Membership Campaign. Each member is encouraged to find one new member to join the Back Bay Wildfowl Guild. Our very existence depends on growing the membership of the Guild. Please encourage everyone you know to become a member!*

***Please pass this newsletter on to any potential new member!***

