

THE WILDFOWLER

OCTOBER 2020

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

Back Bay Wildfowl Memories

Something old, something new for de Witt Cottage Restoration

December 27, 1992 by Mary Reid Barrow

The historic de Witt Cottage is emerging from the rubble of renovation and restoration with its character intact. Drive by the historic house at 12th Street and Atlantic Ave and you'll be surprised at the difference 40 decorative wooden brackets can make. Although the windows on the last remaining resort strip cottage have not yet been replaced and the restoration of the interior has hardly begun, it's suddenly obvious what the future holds for the wonderful old oceanfront landmark.



Mary Reid Barrow

The exterior renovation and painting, except for the windows has been essentially completed for a while, but the results of the effort weren't so apparent until last week. That is when the Back Bay wildfowl Guild arrived to hang the remanufactured wooden brackets. Over the fall several members of the Guild hand carved 40 reproductions of the original brackets that hung where the cottage's porch post intersect with the roof. When the guild members hung their handiwork in place on the freshly painted and restored porch for a moment what was a cold winter Saturday seemed like a warm summer day.

The cottage was beginning to look once again like it did when it was the beloved home of the de Witt family for close to 100 years. The white old-fashioned Victorian brackets lent a jaunty air to the sparkling Gray and Green porch that almost wraps around the house. With the brackets in place it is easy to imagine lazy vacationers rocking away on the porch.



Someday, summer tourist once again will walk under those brackets and across the porch floor. When the restoration is complete, the cottage will be the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Center, a showcase for historic decoy carvings as well as art and photographs. The cottage now is owned by the Virginia Beach Foundation, a nonprofit community group, which is supervising the restoration. When construction is complete, ownership will be turned over to the city and the Back Bay Wildfowl Guild will operate the museum. That is why the Guild has taken such a special interest in the restoration.



“Guild members also have special talents when it comes to carving decorative wooden brackets,” said John Ballio, Virginia Beach Foundation board member and renovation chairman. “To have someone make these brackets you'd have to go to a custom wood shop and they charge a lot of money because it is so time consuming.” Ballio said. “But I knew the Guild had a good deal of expertise. If they could carve a pintail ducks feathers they could carve these brackets.”



So guild president Judy chambers and members Ira Abbott and Don Harris went to work to copy the original brackets, down to every curve in their scrolled shape and

openwork carving. Chambers pre-drilled each bracket for hanging and painted all 40 of them bright white. Then that winter, Saturday Chambers Ballio and Guild past president Fletcher Bryant hung the brackets in a chilly nor'easter. Ballio was on the mark, the brackets look like the real thing. The cottage, one of 13 properties in Virginia Beach listed in the National Register of historic places, is beginning to look once again like the grand dame of oceanfront cottages that it always was.



**Be Safe Remember to
Wear your Masks!**



Do you have a young adult looking for work?

Do you have a student home from college?

Do you know someone that is looking for work?

College Hunks Hauling Junk is looking for a Mover/Driver/Team Lead to join our Virginia Beach team. As a Mover - Junk Remover, you are the first point of contact for clients on the job, and will educate clients about pricing and services, SAFELY operate the junk truck at all times, help train new hires and more. Excellent earning potential including hourly pay plus tips. We are hiring immediately for part time and full-time opportunities. Contact Parke Atkinson at parke.atkinson@chhj.com or call 757-702-5296.





Upcoming Guild Events:

10/ 05, 12, 19, 26/2020: de Witt Garden Club
10:00 am, at the museum
Meets every Monday
Bring your work gloves and tools

10/20/2020: Board Meeting
7:00 pm Virtual

11/02, 09, 16, 23, 30/2020: de Witt Garden Club
10:00 am, at the museum
Meets every Monday
Bring your work gloves and tools

11/19/2020: Board Meeting
6:00 pm

Be sure to get your raffle tickets at awhm.org/shop

No. 001	NAME _____	2020 WILDFOWL HERITAGE RAFFLE	Drawing will be held at the 125th Anniversary Celebration on October 11, 2020 @ 4pm at the historic deWitt Cottage 1113 Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach VA 23451	100
	ADDRESS _____			
	EMAIL _____			
	PHONE _____			
Tickets: \$10.00 each or 3 for \$25.00		BENEFITING THE ATLANTIC WILDFOWL HERITAGE MUSEUM		

Raffle ends Saturday October 10, 2020 at Midnight

MUSEUM HOURS CHANGING

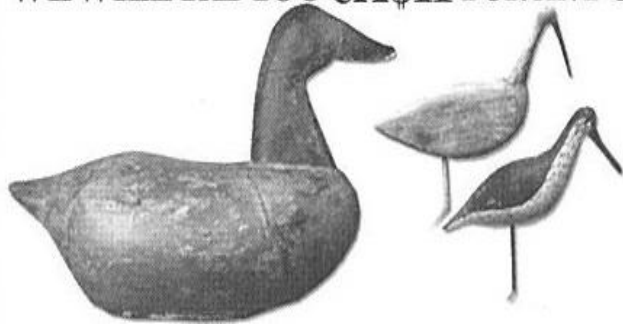
**BEGINNING ON THURSDAY OCTOBER 1, 2020 THE ATLANTIC WILDFOWL HERITAGE MUSEUM
WILL ONLY BE OPEN ON FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY UNTIL SUNDAY MAY 30, 2021**



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.

COLLECTOR'S SHELF

John W. Austin 1891-1981 Born on Hatteras Island

John's father, William Riley Austin, was the lighthouse keeper, he transferred from Hatteras Island to Corolla, NC.

In Corolla, John at an early age became a market hunter and waterman.

Later he served his country as a soldier in World War I. After the war in the 1920's and 30's John opened a fish house and he became a commercial fisherman. In the fall and winter he was a waterfowl guide.

John was an accomplished decoy carver. His style varied over the years and in my opinion the angular sloping head is the best I've seen on an Austin decoy.



John Austin made decoys for the Whalehead Club and the Lighthouse club.

In the photo (above right) are a pair of Blackheads that were purchased from the Austin family.





2020 Ducks Unlimited Members Photo Contest - OVERALL WINNER
STEVE LESSEL
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania



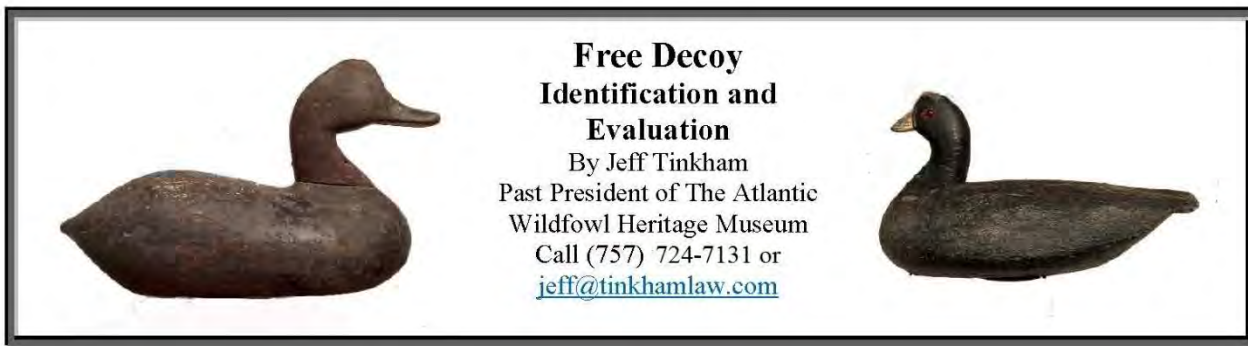
LEFT: Waterfowl Austin Moffet
Loveland Colorado

RIGHT: Waterfowl Runner-up
Linda Grenzer Tomahawk, Wisconsin



BELOW LEFT: Best Retriever
Edward Wall Brandon, Mississippi
RIGHT: Runner-up Retriever
Luke Mocherman Louisville, Kentucky





FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

Just seven months ago, in what now feels like a different lifetime, most of us went about our days making a series of low-impact decisions and not thinking twice about them. Grabbing a salad off of the Harris Teeter salad bar? *Don't mind if I do.* A quick plane trip to see your grandchildren in California? *They will be so happy to see us!* Getting together with friends for a basketball game or a few drinks in a bar? *Why not?* Shaking hands and planting an innocent kiss on a cheek? *Of course, those things are expected, right?*

And then came the Coronavirus. It took a while, and many confusing and contradictory press conferences, before people really started to understand the magnitude of the novel coronavirus and Covid-19, the disease it causes. But now, most of us (hopefully) are more familiar with the concept of public health and having to assess our own actions in terms of how they could impact the rest of the population. We are faced with a lot of the same decisions from our pre-corona lives except now, even the most mundane activities have turned into moral dilemmas. Whether it's trying to decide if you should visit a sick family member, order delivery, or take a trip to the grocery store; we now have to think through the potential implications of many of our totally normal, everyday actions and decisions in a way we never had to before, because of how they could affect others. This is called moral fatigue, and it is exhausting.

Many of us are not accustomed to having to consider severe possible consequences resulting from normally mundane errands and tasks. Of course, the moral fatigue is taxing in itself, but we also have to keep in mind that making any type of difficult or ethically complex decision is stressful, even under the best circumstances. It is not only the frequency at which we are now making tough choices: the decision-making process itself can be mentally and emotionally exhausting when there is not a clear choice. Making these types of decisions feels like a "no win" situation: No matter what you decide, there will be positive and negative consequences. The struggle to come up with the best answer, knowing that there may be no 100-percent 'correct' one, can leave many feeling frustrated and exhausted. This is coupled with the anxiety associated with not knowing if things will worsen and not knowing when this situation will end.

Until some sort of end is in sight, there are ways to help cope with moral fatigue and the stress of these higher-stakes decisions. Recognize and acknowledge that we are in a truly unprecedented situation and that these decisions are tough. Talking with supportive friends and family can be really helpful in terms of processing feelings, normalizing fears and doubts and talking through decision-making. Do not overwhelm yourself with too many decisions at once. Break it up into one day at a time. Anxiety has a way of making everything feel urgent.

Coronavirus has devastated all 501 c3 organizations like ours. It would really be a huge help if everyone would simply pay their 2020 dues. Thank You.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am so glad; for a number of reasons, to see the end of this Summer and the beginning of Fall. I pray that the new season finds each of you well and safe. Now that the summer tourist season has ended we can look forward to cooler temperatures and hopefully a slowdown of activity. In fact, the museum is actually going into hibernation. The museum will only be open Friday Saturday Sunday 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. This is an effort to protect our members and our staff. When Memorial Day 2021 arrives we will operate seven days a week 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. We pray that Memorial Day will signal the end of our coronavirus nightmare.

Our gift shop space is now vacant. Unfortunately, the Shore Gallery Gift Shop at the de Witt was unable to sustain their operation through the pandemic. We are disappointed to see Sean and Kathleen Rooney leave the cottage as we valued their partnership while they were there. Please visit and patronize their Retail operation that is ongoing in the Hilltop North Shopping Center.

The plan going forward by the board of directors is to fill the vacant space with the museum carvers. We will be moving them into the center of the old gift shop where they can be the center attraction for our museum. This will take some dedicated planning and effort over the winter to be prepared for the 2021 summer season. We will surround them with local art on consignment and for sale. This consignment opportunity will be offered to our active members first.

After 25 years of service our old handicap lift chair has given up and died. The museum director has installed a brand new one so that we can comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 or ADA regulations. Please visit the museum for a free demonstration ride.

We still have a number of 2020 Wildfowl Heritage Raffle Tickets for sale you can purchase them online at awhm.org and click on Shop or click on the following link: <https://atlantic-wildfowl-heritage-museum.myshopify.com/collections>. There are some really great prizes in this raffle. With enough support this fundraiser will allow us to survive the pandemic. So please get your tickets today, raffle ends October 10, 2020 at midnight.

I want to thank board member Jeff Tinkham, also our lawyer, for his efforts in getting the city to renew our lease on the de Witt cottage. Because of Jeff's efforts, we will now be the tenants in the de Witt cottage through noon of October 22, 2025. Jeff is an excellent business attorney, thank you Jeff!

Martha Davenport, our Activities Coordinator, has brainstormed a great Fall promotion for our venue at the de Witt. We will be giving away, for free, 5 events at the de Witt cottage museum and grounds to local heroes. We will give one event each to a law enforcement officer, a fireman, a nurse, an EMT, or person in the military. There will be a press release on this soon, so be watching our social media and website for more information.

Cheers,

Jason W. Seward



BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jason Seward, President Parke Atkinson, Vice President
Jim Mehne, Secretary Larry Davenport, Treasurer
Jim Briggs Mark Cromwell
George Powell Tom Richards
Jeff Tinkham Phil Davenport
William Walsh, Jr., Curator
Fletcher Bryant, President Emeritus

MUSEUM CARVERS

Monday Elaine Polizos
Tuesday: Open
Wednesday: Roy Carlson & Ed Morrison
Thursday: Open
"The Boathouse Boys" Carving Club: Al, Jamie, John, Pete
Friday: Susan Moritz
Saturday: Open
Sunday: Open

Carvers are not demonstrating due to Covid-19

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

Tuesday: OPEN
Wednesday: OPEN
Thursday OPEN
Friday: OPEN
Saturday: OPEN
Sunday: OPEN
Museum Grounds: Jacky & Tom Richards, Martha Davenport

MUSEUM STAFF

Lynn Hightower, Director Joe Leo, Operations Mgr.

MUSEUM CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Telephone: 757.437.8432
Facsimile: 757.437.9055
Website: www.awhm.org
Email: director@atwildfowl.org

You can now pay your dues online at awhm.org !

Please understand that we depend on every dollar to operate the museum. If you have not paid your 2020 dues, please give serious consideration to sending them into the museum right away. Beginning March 1, 2020, any listed member who has not paid their dues will receive an invoice from the museum director requesting payment of their annual dues

2020 DUES

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

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



**BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD
2020 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM**

NAME: _____ AMOUNT PAID _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ [CELL] _____

January 1, 2020 kicked 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!

