

THE WILDFOWLER

JUNE 2021

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

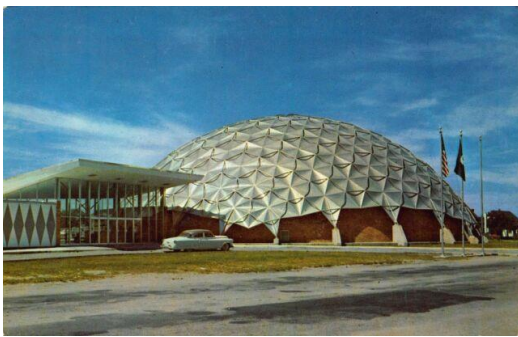
Back Bay Wildfowl Guild Memories:

Back Bay Wildfowl Guild or Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum; Confused?

We are often asked, here at the museum, what is the differences between the Back Bay Wildfowl Guild and the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum. So we thought we would try to answer that question in this edition of the Wildfowler. The Back Bay Wildfowl Guild came first. It was originally organized in 1974 after Fletcher Bryant, Jim cook, Bill Dekker and Lee Scarborough came home from the Ward Foundation Museum's World Carving Championships in Salisbury MD. On the return trip, they discussed the possibility of producing a similar type of show here in Virginia Beach to reflect the work of local artist, woodcarvers, and photographers.



Sixteen men showed up for the first organizational meeting that formed the nucleolus of the Back Bay Wildfowl Guild. The group elected Fletcher Bryant as its first president and decided to produce a show to raise funds in order to establish a waterfowl museum in Virginia Beach at sometime in the future. They then set out to grow their new organization into several hundred very talented artist, woodcarvers, and photographers.



The first Mid-Atlantic Wildfowl Festival was held in October of 1976, 45 years ago at the Alan B. Shepard Civic Center (the old Dome). The show occuppied all of the Dome and spilled out onto the parking lot under several very large tents. The charter members worked closely with the City of Virginia Beach to produce the first festival. They personally underwrote the contract for this event that was very successful. With the initial and subsequent successful annual festivals, they were convinced that one day the fruits of their labor would be realized in a waterfowl museum.

To establish a credible presence in the community, the Back Bay Wildfowl Guild, contributed \$10,000 (the largest single donation at the time) to the fund raising efforts of the Virginia Marine Science Museum. Fletcher Bryant, Bill Walsh, and Larry Lambert met with the new Marine Science Museum Director, Mac Rawls. They convinced him that wildfowl were an important part of the Chesapeake Bay estuary system. This led to the development of the Carver's Shack, a Guild funded exhibit depicting old working decoys being hand carved by our, now deceased brother, Charlie Seidel, who was the Museum Carver in residence for more than 30 years.





The festival moved from the Dome to the newly finished Pavilion Convention Center in 1981. Attendance for the show reached its maximum in 1988, when Dave Butz, a member of the Super Bowl Champion Washington Redskins appeared as a carving exhibitor. Dave learned to carve decoys from his uncle. More than 10,000 people attended that festival.


Our break came in 1992 when an article appeared in the Virginian Pilot, stating that the deWitt cottage was being purchased by the City of Virginia Beach and the Virginia Beach Foundation was to be responsible for the renovation of the building. The city was undecided on the use of the building but possibilities included a tea house, a Garden Club home, a home for special guest of the city, or a second police precinct. Fletcher Bryant, after reading the article, discussed the idea of a waterfowl museum with several council members and found them receptive. It was decided to appear before City Council with a plan for the museum. City Council also heard from several other organizations that sought the cottage for various uses; but, they voted to allow the Guild to occupy the cottage, a 20 year dream was about to be realized.




A curatorial committee was appointed by the board of directors of the Guild to develop a story line for the museum. They would also design, supervise and construct all exhibits. The Guild would assist the Virginia Beach Foundation with their effort to convert the 100 year old cottage into a waterfowl museum, gift shop and home for the Guild. The Guild pledged \$55,000 toward the renovation efforts of the Virginia Beach Foundation that proved to be the stimulus for the fund raising efforts. After many months of planning, renovating, stocking, and collecting exhibit materials the Guild had its dream come true; we have a home and museum. The City of Virginia

Beach maintains the building while the Guild operates the museum and gift shop. The Back Bay Wildfowl Guild moved in to the house in 1995 under the name Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Center. It was renamed Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum a few years later.

Next month we will explore the history of the deWitt Cottage itself.



**Free Decoy
Identification and
Evaluation**
By Jeff Tinkham
Past President of The Atlantic
Wildfowl Heritage Museum
Call (757) 724-7131 or
jeff@tinkhamlaw.com







Upcoming Guild Events:

06/07,14, 21, 28/2021: de Witt Garden Club

9:00 am, at the museum

Meets every Monday

We are a hands on Garden Club

So bring your gloves and tools.

06/15/2021: Board Meeting

In person at deWitt Cottage

6:00 pm

06/20/2021 Father's Day

07/04/2021: Independence Day

Friday through Monday July 5th

07/12, 19, 26/2021: de Witt Garden Club

9:00 am, at the museum

Meets every Monday

We are a hands on Garden Club

So bring your gloves and tools.

No July Board Meeting

08/17/2021: Board Meeting

In person at deWitt Cottage

6:00 pm

09/07/2021 (Tuesday) Back Bay Wildfowl Guild

Membership Meeting, 7:00pm, Social 6:00pm

Speaker: TBA

9/12/2021 - de Witt Event Professionals Open House

Time: TBA



Save these Dates:

6/20/21 - Father's Day BBQ & Picnic - in partnership with VB Wedding Company.
Ticket required. 1:00 - 8:00 pm, Call the Museum for more information.

Sunday, 10/17/2021 AWHM Fall Barbeque & Oyster Roast
This will also be a Back Bay Wildfowl Guild Homecoming and Reunion

11/19/21 - Gingerbread House Exhibit - Preview Party

11/20/21 - 12/18/21 - Gingerbread House Exhibit open to the public

Tuesday, 12/07/2021 5:00pm until 9:00pm

AWHM Christmas Party
At Virginia Beach Wedding Company

12/11/21 - Photos with Santa & the Red Truck,
and Holiday Craft Fair - Time: TBA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It looks like summer is here AWHM Friends!

1. Happy post Memorial Day to everyone, I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday weekend and that you took a moment to reflect and remember those service members who gave all and did not return home. I also want to wish everyone a happy Father's Day. I am enjoying my venture into fatherhood with my new son. I am enjoying all of the extra hours of sleep, the relaxing hours by the pool, and not a single care or worry in the world. NOT! "I have learned that raising children is the single most difficult thing in the world to do. It takes hard work, love, luck, and a lot of energy, and it is the most rewarding experience that you can ever have." —Janet Reno
2. Our new gift shop is up and running with a collection of consignment items from local artist, photographers, and woodcarvers. We have been seeing above average attendance and gift shop sales since we reopened on April 1st. This is a big improvement over the past year where we were closed eight of the last twelve months. Thank goodness we are finally able to open to our community. We are praying for a much better summer.
3. Our financial status and outlook remain good. Through a series of Paycheck Protection Loans, SBA loans, and a series of grants we have been able to survive the pandemic.
4. Martha Davenport, our volunteer events coordinator, has done a great job booking a number of events this summer and into the fall. It appears that we have about a dozen events before Christmas. This has created a new revenue stream for the museum and we are grateful for Martha's hard work. We are adding two new restrooms to the museum to make our venue more attractive.
5. In the fall we hope to start construction on a brand new gazebo similar to the gazebo the deWitt's had on the property in the 1920s. The gazebo will also make our venue more attractive and allow us to conduct a number of outside events all year long.

We have much to celebrate but also still face some challenges. As always, I thank each of you for your continued support of the AWHM and the Back Bay Wildfowl Guild. If you would like to become more involved, we always welcome volunteers at the museum. If you can't give of your time, we greatly appreciate any financial gift you feel so moved to pledge to the museum. All gifts are tax deductible. Please contact Lynn for more information. All for now. As a reminder, I welcome your feedback, questions, or comments and look forward to seeing you later in the year at our next Guild meeting.

Cheers.

Jason Seward (hudsonoutdoors@gmail.com)

President



GALLUP BROTHERS PEG HEAD COOT

The Gallup brothers (Paul, Dick & Bruce)

Paul Gallup owned The Premier Millworks Company located on Birdneck Road in Virginia Beach in the 1940's.

All three brothers participated in making the coot decoys. The lathe machine made the spindle head patterns for the heads and the bodies were chopped from juniper fenceposts. A nail was added to support the canvas on the bill of each coot.

All three brothers built cabins on stilts out in front of Davis Landing on Ships Cabin Road on Back Bay where they hunted.



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.



MUSEUM DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The deWitt Cottage was suppose to celebrate her 125th birthday on September 22, 2020. We all know what happened in the preceding March with the pandemic outbreak that prevented us from having this celebration. So, we are planning a large celebration here at the deWitt cottage on October 17th 2021. It will be our annual Fall Barbeque and Oyster Roast. In addition, we will be having a Back Bay Wildfowl Guild homecoming and reunion. It will also be the 46th anniversary of the Back Bay Wildfowl Guild and the 26th anniversary of the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum.

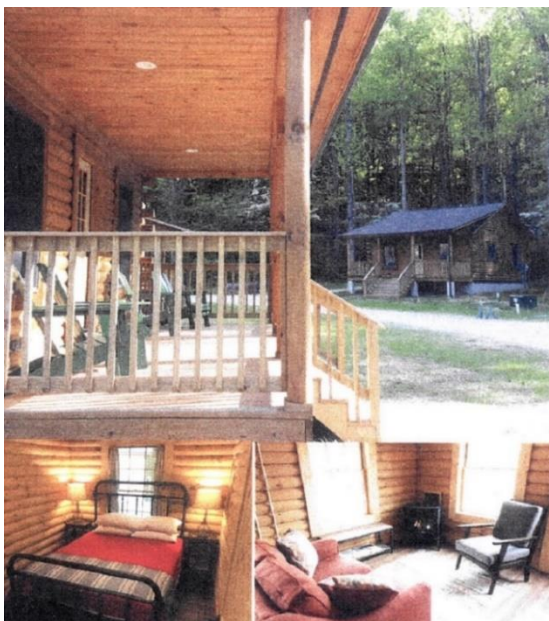
I wish to thank Pastor Ray Bjorkman and Kara Leigh Sakis, both from Beach Fellowship Church, for conducting a beautiful "Celebration of Life" for our members at the historic deWitt Cottage on Tuesday evening, May 25th. We have had such terrible loss in the past year. We dedicated two brass plaques in our sculpture garden for Alice Walsh and Joshua Ramsay. We also installed seven bricks into our memorial walk. We hope to make this an annual event.

The Museum has started its summer schedule and will now be open seven days a week, 10:00am – 5:00pm, Monday through Sunday. We have continued the Antique Decoy display, in our main gallery, on loan from Bill Hall of Bloxom, VA on the Eastern Shore. Please come and visit with us!

The garden is just starting to bloom into its full glory. A lot of hard work has been put in by the members of the deWitt Cottage Garden Club. The gardens have been cleaned up, expanded, and had new plants added. If you have any desire to garden, please consider joining the deWitt Cottage Garden Club. It is an opportunity to learn how to garden in a hostile, saltwater environment from Master Gardeners.

As we come to the end of our fiscal year, June 30, 2021, we anticipate that we will end the period with a nice surplus this year. This is the fourth consecutive year in a row we have accomplished this task, and it is a direct result of the hard work your Board of Directors has invested. I would like to thank each one of them for their continued support.

If you have not paid your membership dues for 2021, please consider doing so soon. All memberships now run from the date you last paid your dues for 365 consecutive days. For example, if you paid your dues on January 6, 2021, then your dues for 2021 will not be due until January 30, 2021. I promise to help you stay current and in good standing.



 **Beech Grove Cabins**
ROSELAND, VA

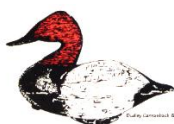
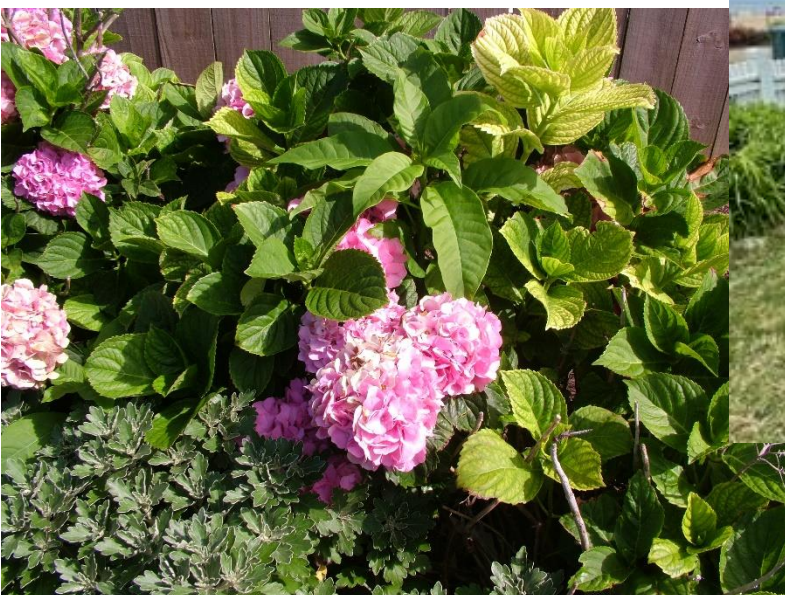
Close to everywhere you want to be!
Four fully-appointed, 2 bedroom, 1 bath log cabins.
Located 0.8 miles from Devils Backbone and 3.5 miles from the entrance to Wintergreen Ski Resort.
5 miles from mile marker 13 on the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Appalachian Trail.

WWW.BEECHGROVECABINS.COM

97 Stars Hollow
Roseland, VA 22967
off of Rte 151 in Nelson County

Reserve your getaway cabin today!
Your hosts, Bill and Becky Evans





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

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 yet paid your 2021 dues, please give serious consideration to sending them into the museum right away. Beginning January 1, 2021, Membership cards will have an expiration date. Each member will receive an invoice from the museum director requesting payment of their annual dues after the expiration date. Memberships run for 12 consecutive months from the date annual dues are paid

2021 DUES

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

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



BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD 2021 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

NAME: _____ AMOUNT PAID _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ [CELL] _____

January 1, 2021 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

