

# THE WILDFOWLER

FEBRUARY 2022

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

## *Back Bay Wildfowl Guild*

### **Salute to Heroes**

*By Martha Davenport*



Call us Crazy; but we are going to do it again! Way back in November of 2020 we ran a contest to recognize our local pandemic heroes. We wanted to thank our doctors, nurses, EMTs, fire fighters, law enforcement officers and our veterans. So, we gave away our beautiful venue by the sea to four deserving applicants.

It was so well received by our winning couples we have decided to open up the contest again. This time we are opening it up to all of Hampton Roads and only one winner will be selected.

In 2020 with COVID-19, our idea of heroes changed, and we think of the daily heroes; those that make a great impact on the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Virginia Beach. We are speaking to the Nurse, Emergency Medical Technician, Police Officer/Sheriff, Fire Fighter, and those serving in our Military. The Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum and the historic de Witt Cottage (circa 1895) are saluting these daily heroes who continue to protect our community through this pandemic. One lucky bride or groom (from these professions) will be selected from Hampton Roads to have their wedding at the historic de Witt Cottage. The rental fee will be completely waived. Terms and Conditions apply.

On February 1, 2022, we will begin accepting entries from those who are currently employed in each of these professions working or living in Hampton Roads. Entries will close on March 31, 2022 at 11:59 pm. A total of 1 winner from the entries will be selected by a panel of judges.

The winner will be notified by April 10, 2022. We want to recognize these hardworking and deserving individuals. They are our heroes. Every day they do their job of saving lives, protecting people from harm, keeping our community and nation safe and secure. So, in 100 words or less, we ask them to tell us about themselves and how they are most deserving of this award. Submittal must be 100 words or less. Go to [www.thedewittcottage.org](http://www.thedewittcottage.org) to enter and for more information. No purchase or monetary commitment necessary. We look forward to opening our doors to these special individuals and wish everyone the best of luck.





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

02/07, 14, 21, 28, 2022: de Witt Garden Club  
10:00 am, at the museum

Meets every Monday

Bring your work gloves and tools

02/15/2022: Board Meeting  
6:00pm in-person and Virtual

02/10/2022 10:00am  
Pocomoke Middle School  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science  
OFG Education

02/16/2022: Surfrider Foundation  
Ocean Friendly Garden Volunteers  
Come out and help clean the gardens

03/07, 14, 21, 28, 2022: de Witt Garden Club  
10:00 am, at the museum

Meets every Monday

Bring your work gloves and tools

03/15/2022: Board Meeting  
6:00pm in-person and Virtual

Daffodils, Decoys and deWitt  
April, date to be determined

## **Save these Dates**

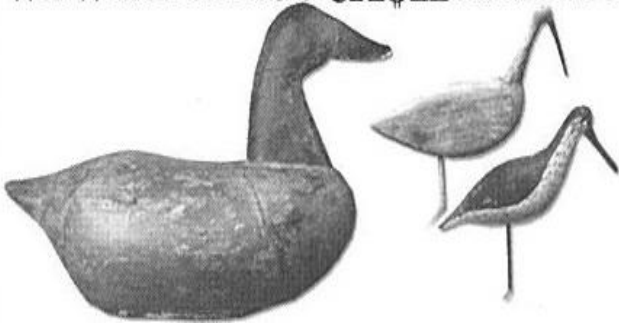
Tuesday May 3, 2022 Lucky Oyster Virginia Beach, VA 5:30pm-8:00pm



# 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' SHELF

**John W. Austin July 11, 1891 – April 11, 1981**

By Mark & Margie Cromwell



Born on Hatteras Island, NC where his father William Riley was the lighthouse keeper. At an early age of 6 months John's father was transferred to the Corolla lighthouse.

John grew up in Corolla Village and became a waterman and market hunter at a young age. During his market hunting days John sold waterfowl to the owner of a steamboat named "Comet" who would buy ducks and geese for the market.

After the war John became a waterfowling guide in the 1920's and 1930's as well as Postmaster of Corolla, a job he held until

1959. John made his own decoys and became an accomplished decoy carver. His decoys were durable and sturdy and had a very appealing look.

John starting carving in his early teens and maintained a personal rig of over 500 decoys which were needed for him to market hunt. John made decoys for various clubs that he guided for near Corolla, NC such as the Lighthouse Club, the Whalehead club and the O'Neal Lodge in Seagull.

John Austin made several styles of decoys in his lifetime. The photo shows a drake redhead that was purchased from an Austin family member.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Friends of the AWHM,

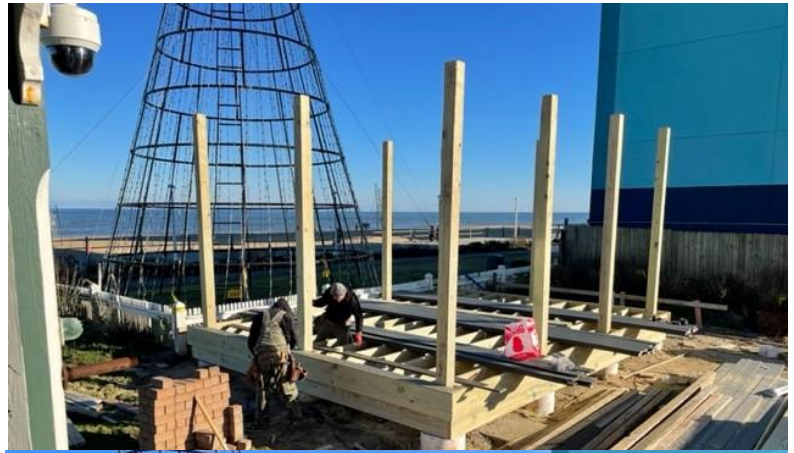
Construction of the gazebo in our garden area is well underway and we anticipate completion this Spring. We are also working to update some of the exhibits that are beginning to show some age. With these improvements, we have the ability to provide more activities to the cottage, and these events will bring more visitors into the museum and the gift shop. Events are being planned and more information will be provided as they develop.

I encourage all of you to stop by and see the improvements being made at the cottage. I also encourage you to remain active and enjoy the venue you have helped create and to encourage your friends to become members.

Cheers.

Phil Davenport

President



## FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

Happy Valentines Day to Everyone,



The curation committee of your Board of Directors is working hard to find some new and stimulating exhibits for Spring of 2022. We wish to thank Bill Hall of Bloxom, VA for allowing us to borrow his collection of Miles Hancock decoys for the last two years. We also would like to thank Mark and Margie Cromwell for the loan of their collection of Mark McNair wood carvings for the past two years.

We are excited to announce our first program for 2022 will be on February 10, 2022. We have 20 Pocomoke Middle School Students arriving from Pocomoke, Maryland, to see our Ocean Friendly Garden and to learn about Surfrider Foundation's Ocean Friendly Garden Program. The seventh graders will be educated in Conservation, Permeability of soil, and the Retention of runoff. The CPR for garden integrity.

In July 2021 we were recognized by The Surfrider Foundation as an **Ocean Friendly Garden**. That certification is the whole reason we are able host groups like the one coming from Pocomoke Middle School. In January we were certified as a **Pearl Business** by The Lynnhaven River Now Foundation. All of this is possible because of the hard work of three people; Tom & Jacky Richards and Martha Davenport, we call them the deWitt Cottage Garden Club. If you would like to volunteer for the deWitt Cottage Garden Club, please contact the museum director at [director@atwildfowl.org](mailto:director@atwildfowl.org) or by calling 757-286-3092

The start of the New Year is like starting a new chapter in the book of your life. It's the chance to reflect on the past 365 days while also setting goals to propel you towards happiness. Maybe in the past year you survived a pandemic, helped a cherished family member or friend, enjoyed a vacation, or simply spent time with loved ones—whatever it may be, now's the time to cherish the memories you made, and think about what could make the next year even better. 2022 kicks off a new opportunity to grow our membership. We have some exciting plans to reach out to our community and invite them into our organization. But the best recruiting tool for new members is you! By reaching out to people you know and encouraging them to join, you can have a positive impact on the growth of our organization. If every member can find a new member to join we can double our current membership in 2022!

Lynn Hightower  
Director

	<p><b>Free Decoy Identification and Evaluation</b> By Jeff Tinkham Past President of The Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum Call (757) 724-7131 or <a href="mailto:jeff@tinkhamlaw.com">jeff@tinkhamlaw.com</a></p>	
---	--	---



