

# SHOWSTOPS

## Chesapeake Wildfowl Expo Salisbury, Maryland October 22-24, 2004

THE ANNUAL CHESAPEAKE Wildfowl Expo sponsored by the Ward Museum in Salisbury, Maryland was moved back several weeks in the month this year, to coordinate with an Autumn Wine Festival that was held locally. The parking lot filled Friday and Saturday for the buy, sell and swap, causing museum director to comment that "vendor participation was half again more than last year." So maybe the wine was a draw? As in years past, most of the Friday activity was between dealers.

On Friday evening Zeb Barfield, who hosted a decoy auction at the show for the first time this year, held a small reception to preview the 200 plus lots for his Saturday sale, scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. Most birds offered were in the low-end range with a smattering of good lots in the mix. A good crowd arrived on Saturday and they tire-kicked their way through the buy, swap and sell prior to the sale, but once the auction got underway, the parking lot activity all but died. Vendors in the parking lot, with birds on their table, had trouble participating as potential bidders, which hurt the auction results as these dealers, a solid core of bidders, usually drive prices fighting over inventory.

Most who participated in the auction felt the birds "sold cheap," with many buyers seizing the opportunity to fill boxes with old birds. So in many ways, the auction lessened the parking lot action, and the parking lot responsibilities of the dealers kept the auction process low.

Time will tell if auction consignors were pleased with the results. My opinion is that the decoy auction is a positive addition to the weekend's activities, however the schedule needs to change so that it complements the show without conflicting with other events. My vote would be for a Friday afternoon preview and an early Friday evening auction.

The highlight for collectors is the Old Decoy Contest, and this year there were 32 collectors with 82 entries competing for honors in ten categories. What makes this competition unique is that the judging is handled by the members who enter the categories – if you don't have a decoy in the contest, you've got no vote. This year a Canada goose by Townsend Godfrey that



*Henry Stansbury brought his usual assortment of Eastern Shore decoys to the Ward Museum's Chesapeake Wildfowl Expo.*

was entered by Dick Gove won Best of Show. We're pictured the winning entries on the facing page.

A crowd gathered in the main entry room of the museum on Saturday evening for an Eastern Shore "Pig Picking" dinner that included two 120 pound behemoths and all the fixings. A Lem Ward redhead was raffled to a lucky decoy enthusiast. Other than the conflicts in the timing of the auction, many expressed positive comments about the expanded weekend. So let's say the components were great, they just need to tweak the sequence.

-- Jim Trimble

## Canadian Decoy & Outdoor Collectibles Association Show Oshawa, Ontario, Canada October 23-24, 2004

FOR THE FIRST TIME, *Decoy Magazine* headed north of the border to attend the annual Canadian Decoy & Outdoor Collectibles Association show, held at the Holiday Inn in Oshawa, Ontario, just outside Toronto. After a visit to the Toronto harbor area to let rush hour traffic pass, we checked into the hotel on Friday evening to prepare for the Saturday room to room activity.

As the day wore on Saturday we were beginning to wonder if we were the only collectors who showed up for the buy, swap and sell, as only a sporadic number of rooms scattered haphazardly about the hotel began to open and little in vintage decoys appeared to be available. But finally a handful of souls began to arrive. After a brief business meeting by the membership, about 40-50 collectors sat down for a group din-



*Marshall Purner tempts a collector with this high-head oversized Upper Chesapeake Bay black duck.*

JIM TRIMBLE PHOTOS

ner in the restaurant and eventually most wandered up to Jim Stewart's room, where he was hosting a social and signing copies of his recently released book, "County Decoys," which features the gunning lures and wildfowl decoratives of Prince Edward County, Ontario.

On Sunday morning as we arrived in the ballroom to set up we were pleased to see a busy crowd of dealers and collectors arranging their tables and checking out the inventory. Along with copies of the 2004 issues, we brought along numerous back issues featuring articles on Canadian makers, which proved to be a good idea as we literally sold out of them by noon. We're not sure if the positive response was due to this being our first show, but in addition to about ten new Canadian subscriptions, we nearly sold every book and magazine we brought along.

The show committee takes pride with their annual decoy displays, and this year they featured the wonderful decoys of John R. Wells and the varied carvings of central Ontario, including Tullys, Sorbys, Petersborough Canoe decoys and many others. There was also a standout display of fish carvings, models and effigies, most Canadian.

Gary Guyette of Guyette & Schmidt, who exhibited and accepted consignments for upcoming auctions, gave a talk around noon on the market value of Canadian decoys and their opportunities for the future. Gary spoke about buying his first Canadian decoy, a Markham rig redhead in excellent original paint, for \$65 over 25 years ago, a decoy that would sell for well over \$10,000 today, and expressed an opinion that Quebec decoys are still under the radar and represent a value purchase for today's collectors, egging the audience to



# WARD MUSEUM OLD DECOY COMPETITION

❧  
**BEST OF SHOW**  
**New Jersey Decoy**  
Townsend Godfrey Canada goose  
DICK GOVE COLLECTION



**Chesapeake Bay Black Duck**  
*(not Ward brothers)*  
Leonard Pryor black duck  
WILL FRENG COLLECTION



**Red Knot Decoy**  
Obediah Verity red knot  
TIM SIEGER COLLECTION



**Bufflehead Decoy**  
Harry V. Shourds bufflehead  
BILL DOGGART COLLECTION



**Eastern Shore of Virginia Decoy**  
Ira Hudson black duck  
JOHN CLAYTON COLLECTION



**Preening or Sleeping Decoy**  
Shang Wheeler black duck  
TIM SIEGER COLLECTION



**Ward Brothers Puddle Duck**  
Ward brothers mallard pair  
LARRY LARAMY COLLECTION



**Goldeneye Decoy**  
Ward brothers goldeneye pair  
VANCE STRAUSBURG COLLECTION



**New York Decoy**  
Frank Kellum herring gull  
ALAN HAID COLLECTION



**Decoy by Unknown Maker**  
Ontario standing black duck  
JOHN CLAYTON COLLECTION

take advantage of this opportunity. We spotted a dainty blue-winged teal from Verdun, similar to the work of Bill Cooper, on the table of Max Hoyos. We couldn't resist it and brought it home.

We enjoyed our first visit to this largely Canadian show (there were a handful of others from the States), and hope to return next year. We think the "block" of rooms could be better arranged to accommodate the Saturday evening wanderers, but would be hard pressed to find a more enthusiastic bunch than those who arrived for the show.

## Waterfowl Festival

Easton, Maryland

November 12-14, 2004

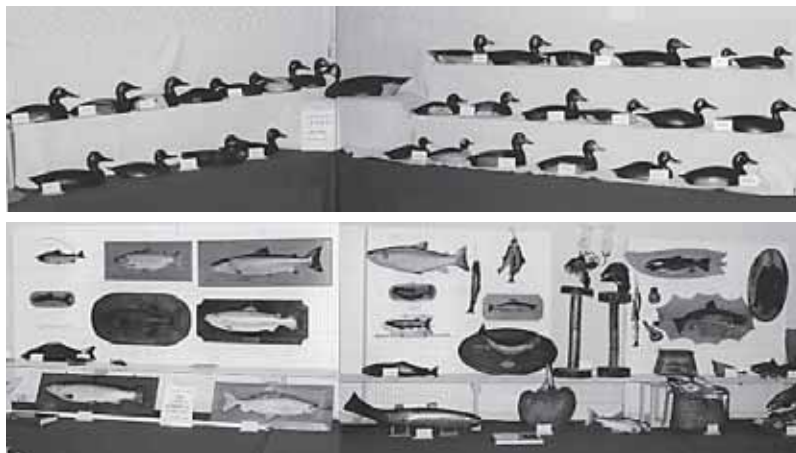
THE WATERFOWL FESTIVAL, held throughout the town of Easton, Maryland, has become nearly a weeklong event for decoy enthusiasts. The week starts on Tuesday with an auction preview by Guyette & Schmidt at the nearby Talbot County Community Center, followed by a two-day auction on Wednesday and Thursday. On those same three days dealers and tailgaters congregate in the side parking lot for a buy, swap and sell meet. Then the audience moves to the Easton High School where even more exhibitors set up for a three-day weekend show. It's the highlight of the fall decoy season.

Good weather blessed the tailgaters in the parking lot, a 50-50 proposition these last few years, and the action was pretty steady, particularly in the mornings before the auction started. Many in the crowd were pleased with both purchases and sales.

The prices at auction remain strong, as buyers bid over \$2.7 million for the nearly 900 lots sold, including six lots that topped \$100,000, led by a Nathan Cobb Jr. swimming brant for \$241,500. Jackson Parker provides full coverage and analysis of the sale on page 40.

The high school is only one of many exhibit venues at the festival, but it's the one that has all the old decoys for sale, and it's where *Decoy Magazine* has exhibited for over 25 years. Generally the show opens to a crowd on Friday morning, but due to a constant frigid downpour the day seemed a bit subdued. In fact the numbers seemed down for the entire weekend, yet everyone we spoke to was pleased with the sales results. Some claimed it was their best festival and many said they had a good show by the end of Friday. Hey, good inventory doesn't stay on the shelf too long.

Each year the show committee organizes an Artifacts Display at the high school with about ten volunteers exhibiting decoys. This year's display, coordinated by Kim Newcomb, included a nice display of New Jersey decoys by Sarah Megargee, a



*Decoys by John R. Wells and an assortment of fish carvings were among the items on display at the Canadian Decoy and Outdoor Collectibles Association show in Oshawa, Ontario.*

fine selection of shorebirds by Bob Gerard, and the largest group of early Madison Mitchell puddle duck decoys, all from the collection of Bruce Baynard, that we've ever seen.

By the time Sunday rolls around most of the dealers, many who had been in Easton since Tuesday, are pretty ducked out and anxious to pack it up and hit the road. We hear that next year the auction will move to Cambridge, and we understand that an inside room will be available for "tailgating" adjacent to the auction. We wonder if it will have an effect on the show?

## Milwaukee Decoy Show

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

December 2-4, 2004

EXHIBITORS FROM 12 STATES showed their support for the revived Milwaukee Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show on December 2-4, 2004 at the Manchester East Hotel in Glendale, Wisconsin, a suburb of Milwaukee. Over 50 exhibitors showed decoys in their rooms on Thursday and Friday and additional collectors took tables in the atrium on Saturday. Feedback from attendees, exhibitors and organizers labeled it a success.

The Friday night auction grossed over \$30,000 with ten lots exceeding \$1000 each. The highlights included a Harold Haertel cork-bodied ruddy duck at \$2090 and a 1933 Enoch Reindahl oil painting of a pinecone hanging from a branch at \$1650, the latter to an astute local collector. An extremely rare 1930s flying mallard by Clare V. Wells of Milwaukee brought \$1705 from a canny Iowa collector, while a Frank Resop mallard sold for \$1320, the same price paid for a choice Mason Challenge mallard. All prices include a 10% buyer's premium.

A much-admired duck skiff, ca. 1910, bought in but was later sold privately with proceeds donated to the Wisconsin Wild-

fowl Association by consignor Dave Uihlein.

The National Evans Decoy Collectors club held their first meeting on Friday afternoon, and later announced a plan to issue a regular newsletter. If interested in getting on the mailing list, contact Ed. Wojchiechowski at (920) 982-2960 or email [decoy@athenet.net](mailto:decoy@athenet.net).

After the auction the show provided a hospitality suite with plenty of conversation and copious food and refreshments, including mountains of smoked chicken and smoked brats from Mike Valley and various dishes by Ed Seebach, whose meatballs were a particular hit, disappointing those who showed up too late to sample them.

Show organizer Bob Bradley said they plan to show several higher end decoys for next year's auction at the National Antique Decoy Show in St. Charles, Illinois in April.

For information about the 2005 show, contact Bob Bradley at (262) 241-4546 or e-mail [rbrad@ameritech.net](mailto:rbrad@ameritech.net). For auction consignments contact Jim Wierzbka at (262) 238-0282 or e-mail [hoke4me@aol.com](mailto:hoke4me@aol.com).

-- Tom Bosworth

## 17 annual Core Sound Decoy Festival

Harker's Island, North Carolina

December 4-5, 2004

THE DECOY ENTHUSIASTS who showed up on Harkers Island, North Carolina for the 17th annual Core Sound Decoy Festival were greeted by pleasant, warm sunny weather and a handful of decoy collecting opportunities. If they left after dark, they were certain to be amazed at the dazzling and traditional display of Christmas lights that brightened this barrier island getaway.

Over its many years this show has evolved and grown into three separate yet cooperating locations: the high school, the

original sight of the show; the New Museum, whose creation largely benefited from funds raised at the early shows; and the headquarters building of the Core Sound Decoy Carvers Guild, the organization that started the show and still manages the original location.

There are now virtually two separate shows, although a shuttle bus runs between them, at the high school and the museum, with the high school comprised more of decoy dealers and guild members and the museum, although it has a decoy presence, more heavily weighted with local historical societies and contemporary craftsmen. The Guild, with the cooperation of the Carolina Decoy Collectors Association, holds an auction at its building on Saturday afternoon, with a handful of decoy dealers tailgating outside.

*Decoy Magazine* exhibits in the library at the high school, just down the aisle from Jack Dudley, the local historian - decoys and other trivia included - who seems to pump out more books, almost a new one every year, than any writer in the Tarheel state. We also generally share space in the library with an artifacts display, which provides collectors a nice opportunity to check out some choice Carolina birds that would otherwise not be offered for sale. We're not sure why, but of the five or six available tables set up for the display this year, only one was ever used. C'mon guys, we want to see some decoys!

The largest display at the high school is in the gym, which holds about 40-50 tables, split between old decoy dealers and contemporary carvers, mostly Guild members. Exhibitors with old decoys included David O'Neal, Bud Coppedge, Ron Davis, Mark Cromwell, and Bea Berle. A couple of Julian Hamilton's family members were selling some of the last of his decoy collection. The high school also hosts a carving competition, which draws a big turnout, a loon calling competition that's gotten national acclaim and retriever demonstrations.

On Sunday morning we slipped over to the museum early for a look at the still fairly new building. It is an impressive structure with lots of exhibition space. There are some decoys on display, including a collection of Bob McGaw miniatures that a local donated to the museum, but it appears to be used as more of a cultural museum than a decoy museum. Yet we did spot a group of mini roothead Canada geese made in the 1950s by a fellow named Joe Mason, identifying a heretofore "unknown" sitting on the shelf. Since we poked around before the show opened that morning, we can't report on the activities that took place there.

The Saturday afternoon decoy auction at

the Guild building has been going on for a few years now. The preview opens at 10 a.m. and a handle of dealers set up outside the sale, figuring most of their customers will come by the auction and saving themselves the bother of staying for the entire weekend's show. Generally the auction includes about 100 lots, and every now and again something good pops up. This year most of the attention was given to a couple of silhouette decoys by Mitchell Fulcher, with Dick McIntyre the successful bidder. With the preview opening so late, and the auction in the middle of the afternoon, it's impossible for exhibitors to check out the merchandise or offer a bid, which is a bit frustrating for those interested in participating, although we hear that may change for next year.

On the way home, winding through Eastern North Carolina and onto the Delmarva Peninsula, we realized we had just completed another year's circuit of decoy shows. And just when the year is about over, it's time to make plans for the next.

## ***On the Move?***

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