

The Wildfowler

FEBRUARY 2006

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Tom Beatty

We've said goodbye to 2005 and happily ushered in 2006. I hope the past year was a good one for you and your family and hope this year will be even better. Here at the Museum, December turned out to be a very busy month. The Birding Club did their annual reception for the VSO (Virginia Society of Ornithology). As usual the event was very well attended and the birders from throughout Virginia were totally impressed with the Museum and the hospitality extended to them by the members of the Birding Club. I really appreciated those members who volunteered their time to set up and brought food for the reception.

A special thanks to those who stayed and entertained the visitors and later helped get the Museum back into condition to receive visitors the next day. Likewise, to those who helped put together the annual Christmas dinner and auction, again thank you. Without the donated items for the auction, the covered dishes and the help individuals provided to arrange and decorate the Museum, the dinner and auction could not have been as successful as it was. It really is an enjoyable evening and everyone attending seems to be in the Christmas spirit. It is special having the dinner at the deWitt Cottage but because of the limited space we can't accommodate everyone who would like to attend, but we try to have some new attendees each year. I would be remiss if I didn't thank the Raven Restaurant, Wal-Mart and Atlantic Garden Center for their continued support of the Christmas dinner. Their donations over the years have really made the social hour and dinner and decorations throughout the Museum something to behold.

Included in your newsletter is the form for your membership for 2006. I ask that you take a few minutes and fill out the form and return it along with your check. Your renewal dollars go to the direct support of the Museum. As a reminder membership is \$25-regular, \$35-family and \$200-corporate. We have tried to keep the renewal form as simple as possible. It's our way to keep current on addresses, phone or e-mail changes. When you renew and all information requested is accurate, just mark the form "no change".

On February 2, 2006, the Birding Club is planning an open house for the Carolina Bird Club from 7-9 pm. We expect 25-30 North Carolina birders to attend what will certainly be an enjoyable and educational time. The group has several local trips planned and I'm sure our birders will assist in providing some other unique birding areas and directions.

As we enter 2006 our active membership is the highest it has been since 2000. With the increase in members we look forward to more activities and innovative ideas on how we can further increase our membership roles and spread information about the Museum. If you have ideas or suggestions, please come to the monthly Guild meetings and let us know. Some of our current activities include the Wood

Continued on next page

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Feb 6
General Guild meeting,
6pm social, 7pm meeting/
program (Speaker Mike
Steed), AWH

Feb 10-11
East Carolina Decoy Show,
Washington, NC

Feb 11-12
BBBC birdwalk, Outer
Banks & Lake Mattamus-
keet

Feb 14
Museum Management Com-
mittee meeting, 1:30pm,
AWHM

Mar 6
General
Guild meeting 6pm
social, 7pm meeting/pro-
gram (Speaker Roe Terry)

Mar 13
Board of Directors meet-
ing, 7pm, AWHM

Apr 7-8
East Coast Decoys Collec-
tors Swap, Best Western,
St. Michaels, MD

Apr 8
BBBC birdwalk, Stumpy
Lake & Nature Conservan-
cy area (Blackwater)

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Back Bay Wildfowl Guild
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Continued from front

Duck Raffle (more in the next newsletter), monthly birdwalks, summer picnic, fall Wildfowl/Wildlife Festival (October 7-8, 2006), and the annual Christmas dinner and auction. We hope to schedule at least one youth carving class and possibly a novice carving class for adults. Most of these events require volunteers and no experience is necessary. I think once you get involved in a project or event, you'll find the members to be friendly and helpful. We look forward to seeing you soon.

On a sad note the January 25, 2006 edition of the Virginian-Pilot announced the passing of Katrine de Witt. The obituary was quite lengthy and portrayed a long and active life. She was the oldest of the remaining de Witt children and was well known for her teaching and community involvement throughout this area. Our deepest sympathy goes out to the immediate family and relatives.

Tom



Donna Grigolite made the cake for our annual Christmas party

NEW MEMBERS

Sam Esleeck (Virginia Beach)
Shep Davis (Virginia Beach)
Ron & Vivien Rutledge (Alexandria, VA)



Raffle tickets for a full-size decorative Wood Duck carved and painted by Al Brandtner will soon be available

GUILD MEMBER OF THE MONTH

For January-February I'd like to acknowledge one of the Guild's elder statesman and most frequent visitor to the Museum – Winfred E. Jester. Win is in, among other things, the decoy business – buying, selling or swapping. He makes frequent trips to the Eastern Shore in search of decoys to put on consignment here at the Museum. Every Wednesday, almost exactly at opening time, Win appears with his bag of decoys and most recently a box of cookies. He spends 2-3 hours relating stories of his past adventures to Archie Johnson and I or to any visitor who might come within earshot. Not an "official" volunteer, Win has done his share to promote the Museum by taking brochures and articles about the Museum to many acquaintances throughout the area. When visiting family or business keeps him away, Archie and I agree it turns out to be an uneventful Wednesday.



Donna Drozda at the January BBBC meeting while she was demonstrating how to use oil pastels.

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DONATIONS

Tommy Deary-monetary
Stuart & Betty Chaplain-monetary
L.Clay Camp (Carrie S. Camp Foundation- monetary
Mary Reid Barrow-monetary

Ira & Bev Abbott- decoys
Tom Costello- monetary & youth carving class
Shirley Atwood- birding books
Skip Margiotta- decoys & shotguns
Bill & Betty Koopman- Christmas wreaths and giftshop items
Bill DeLoatch- Blanks and patterns

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Lynn Hightower was the speaker for our January meeting, he gave a presentation on the history of the show over its first 27 years. Lynn then gave a progress report on the 28th annual show to be held on October 6th & 7th 2006. We are fortunate to have Lynn at the helm of our show, which is a rich and important part of the heritage of our guild and museum.

A special "Thank You" to Pete Taylor for his service on the Board. Pete has stepped down and is concentrating on being the carving competition chairman for our upcoming show.

At the November Board of Directors meeting the following officers were elected for 2006:

President: Herb Verhaagen, Vice President Ken Wilson, Secretary: Ira Abbott and Treasurer: C.J. Burns. We also welcome our new board member Stuart Chaplain who was voted in at the November general guild meeting.

Our presenter for February is Mike Steed. Mike has been carving decorative decoys for 10 years. His birds have earned him a first place in the Ward World Championship. Mike is one of our carvers on weekends and I've enjoyed watching him work and just chatting with him on several occasions. Mike is currently working on a Canvasback and a Cinnamon Teal.

—Herb

BACK BAY BIRDING CLUB

It's a brand new year with brand new birds for the BBBC. At the beginning of each year the BBBC looks back at all the birds we saw the previous year. Last year (2005) we saw 173 different species of birds which is exactly one species higher than 2004. The birds that stand out on the list for 2005 were ones never before seen by the BBBC such as: Ring-necked Pheasant, Loggerhead Shrike, Veery, Blue-winged Warbler, Yellow-headed Blackbird and Painted Bunting. Who knows what birds we will see this year! If YOU are curious....why not join us?

The BBBC had it's first quarterly meeting of the year on January 11th. We enjoyed listening to Donna Drozda and making our own "bird art" under Donna's direction. We decided to change our regular meeting dates to the 2nd Wednesday of the quarter (Jan, Apr, Jul & Oct).

The first birdwalk for the BBBC (January 15th) was at Mackay Island NWR with Kendal Smith leading us into the refuge that is closed to the public during the winter months. Kendal always knows where to find great birds and he didn't fail us this year. We saw the resident Bald Eagle on the nest and also hunting. When the Eagle hunts all the wildfowl rise up and fly...what a sight! Of course we always enjoy the Snow Geese and we saw too many to count! The Tundra Swan were present and so graceful when they fly! I am still compiling the list of birds we saw and it is around 40 different species.

The BBBC needs help getting the 2006 birdwalk schedule together. This year members are asked to choose a month of the year (excluding Jul & Aug) and plan a trip of their choice for the club. We are looking for volunteers for Jun, Sep, Oct and Nov. Please contact Karen (e-mail bbbcbirdwalks@aol.com or phone 757 468 6997) if you are interested. The BBBC has a notebook that stays at the Museum that contains brochures of places to bird from 4 states. Why not stop by the Museum, take a look at the book, find a place YOU want to go to see birds and plan a trip for the club?

—Karen



Parking is available at the Raven Restaurant across the street and the Newcastle Motel next door for members during meetings and gatherings at the cottage.