



Issue 1 Spring 2014

The Maritime Messenger

Newsletter of the Havre de Grace Maritime Museum

Preserving the Boyer Shad Shack

Welcome to our newest members!

**Melissa Kuzma
Gus and Penelope Brown
Bruce and Sharyn Pringle
Allan Svcarina
Edward Crutchfield and
Nancy Ray
Pamela Wexler
Tammy Huth**

Upcoming Events:

Secret Garden Tour and Garden Mart

Saturday, May 17 (Tour 12-5 pm, Mart 10 am-6 pm). Tour Havre de Grace's most beautiful private gardens and shop for plants and unique garden-inspired crafts. Admission Fee.

Summer Concert Series

Wednesdays, June 4-August 13 (7-9 pm). featuring regional, national, and international folk and maritime artists. Free (suggested donation).

One of only a handful of surviving Chesapeake Bay Shad Shacks is now a Crown Jewel in the collection of the Havre de Grace Maritime Museum. Known by many different local terms around the bay, shad shacks, fishing arks, shantyboats, etc., were ubiquitous along the muddy shores a century and a quarter ago and served as temporary, floating homes for fishermen during season. But as their utility waned, so, too did their numbers. Fortunately, one that had survived as an outbuilding was donated by the Boyer family soon after the Maritime Museum was established in the early 2000's. But it, too, has been suffering the effects of nature.

Happily now, the Boyer Shad Shack is receiving a well-deserved rehab, thanks to the financial support of several Museum members, and to the efforts of Museum member and volunteer, Ron Hendrickson. Ron is a mechanical engineer who happens to live in a 200+ year-old house, and so brings a very appropriate set of skills and enthusiasm to the project.



Starting last August, Ron opened up the fore and aft sections of the hull (there's no telling which is which) to find a great deal of rotted lumber. But appropriate restoration is difficult to determine because, during its years of active use, probably between 1890 and 1940, a shack like ours was built by a fisherman and then fixed up from season to season. Pieces were replaced and modifications were made to satisfy the changing needs of the occupants. What, then, is original? To what configuration should it be restored?

(Continued on page 4)



Bawdy Sing-along Night at the Museum

There was anticipation in the air at the Havre de Grace Maritime Museum as the suggestively attired “Bawdy Crew” took the stage on April 5th. The quartet, assembled by Dr. Stephen D. Winick, is comprised of professional musicians in their own right: Jennifer Cutting, keyboardist, is the bandleader and primary composer of OCEAN Orchestra, an award-winning folk group, and is an ethnomusicologist who holds a Master’s degree in her field. Winick, a singer and storyteller who also collaborates with Cutting’s OCEAN Orchestra, holds a Ph.D. in Folklore from the University of Pennsylvania and regularly teaches classes at universities throughout the East Coast. Singer Riki Schneyer has a 26-year career as a psychotherapist under her belt, but has performed her music and toured for many years, in addition to being a self-taught painter. Rounding out the group is guitarist Craig Williams, a seasoned performer of saucy folk and maritime songs, both alone and with his two groups, Ironweed and The Pirates Royale.



The group regaled our audience with hilarious impersonations of retired “ladies of the night” and sailors alike, combining their raunchy humor with fanciful ballads of debauchery, many of which were new, yet some reprises of old favorites, such as their ribald rendition of “Blow the Man Down.” With their flair for the more explicit realities of the seafaring life, along with props and costumes, the group soon had audience members simultaneously blushing and splitting their sides in laughter at their antics. During the intermission, beer, wine and refreshments were served in keeping with the spirit of the evening. There was a great turnout, the main gallery packed with concertgoers. Musically speaking, the quartet harmonized excellently with each other, compelling the rest of us to sing along with them in some parts as they led the chorus. The showmanship exhibited by all the members spoke to their dedication in researching the background of their subject matter as well as the amount of practice that it no doubt took to fine-tune their act. It was certainly a memorable event for all who were there, and a brilliant opportunity for our museum, as we seek to host future events and reach out to the community at large.

-Juliette Moore

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Thank you to our recent donors!

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Hours:
April 1-October 14
Wed- Sat: 10am - 5pm
Sun: 1pm-5pm

October 15-March 31
Sat: 10 am - 5 pm
Sun: 1pm-5pm



Volunteer of the Season: Cynthia Leffler

Each year the Gardens de Grace Club conducts the Havre de Grace Garden Tour and Garden Mart and graciously donates the proceeds to the Maritime Museum's educational programs. Cynthia has been volunteering ever since the club's founder and leader, Carolyn Colburn, admired her garden and featured it in a tour. Now each year Cynthia donates her time, money, and talent to organize the event.

Both Cynthia and her husband Roger have deep roots in Havre de Grace. Cynthia's feelings for her home town are apparent when she speaks about it. "I love Havre de Grace and I always promote it where ever I go, and where I work. I think it's a great small town." Of her work with the Gardens de Grace Cynthia smiles, "I like volunteering and I like to garden, so the combination of the two was a perfect fit".



President's Letter

Winter is over, and the unexpected spring monsoons are hopefully behind us. Our museum hours are back to our full time schedule—we are open for visitors Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. Our Board and our volunteers were busy over the winter with many projects: installing new artifacts and educational materials in several exhibits, and relocating the historically important Bald Friar's rock petroglyphs and the Cecil Hill family's ancient axe head into the main gallery. Our Exhibits Committee will be installing about a dozen new exhibits over the months ahead, many new to us from recent donations.

Our new Executive Director Emily Hauser has "taken the helm" and is "learning the ropes" (to abuse two nautical metaphors) and has been developing our environmental education curricula, classes, lectures, programs and digital/interactive exhibits. We have just submitted our permit application to the City to finish our ground floor space as our new environmental center...Yes, we raised the funds! Over \$100,000 over two years, including a State grant of \$50,000 with support from Mary Dulaney-James, State Delegate to the Maryland House of Representatives. We are still actively fundraising to install an elevator and to equip our center with laboratory equipment and classroom supplies and to develop interactive digital exhibits.

Last year we experimented with the development of a regular series of intimate maritime and folk music concerts in our main gallery. The generous and talented Janie Meneely (you know her as "Calico Jenny") has been bringing us terrific music this last year and has put together our new summer concert series—twelve acts on Wednesday evenings this summer—check our website and Facebook page.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank you for your belief in us and in our mission to educate the public about our maritime heritage, by presenting innovative and timely educational and entertainment programs.

Thank you again...We look forward to seeing you soon.
Bruce Russell, President



Museum to Start Environmental Center Programs This Summer

I'm excited to be writing the first Environmental Center update as Executive Director of the Maritime Museum! I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to be a part of the museum, and use my estuarine science background to help establish the Center. Since I started in January, we've been working hard to develop curricula, seek funding, and plan construction for the Center, which will house a classroom, an exhibit gallery, a laboratory, and of course the outdoor laboratory supplied by our own wetland.

Renovations on the ground floor of the Museum—which will house the Center by this fall—have only just begun. However, summer is the perfect time to learn about Upper Chesapeake Bay conservation and ecology! We are planning a variety of activities and events for children and adults in the community, designed to promote Bay education, conservation, and stewardship.

There will be a series of 1 to 3 hour "labs" for children, where we will use hands-on and creative techniques to explore all kinds of aspects of Bay science. From plankton to using indicator species to assess ecosystem health, kids will learn about the inner workings of the Bay they may not have thought about before. We are also scheduling evening lectures featuring experts in fields such as wildlife biology and ornithology. A new class is under development, which will teach marine navigation. Please check our website regularly for details on upcoming events!

-Emily Hauser, Executive Director

Shad Shack, continued from page 1

There is strong evidence, for instance, that the barge hull was significantly expanded in size fairly late in the shad shack's existence. To return it to its "original" size would have been costly, and would compromise the strength of the remaining structure. It was decided, therefore, to preserve the larger barge hull by adding internal reinforcements and replacing rotted wood and rusted fasteners. To help shed rain water, Ron also installed flashing and replaced decking planks. He then repaired the rotted cabin siding, and replaced broken windows and missing cedar shakes on the roof. Just before the arrival of winter weather, he gave the exterior a new coat of paint. Ron is now looking forward to tackling the interior, with the goal of returning it to the way it may have looked when two or three fishermen shared the shelter on the banks of a bay tributary during shad season.

So, big thanks to Ron Hendrickson, and to Carolyn Colburn, Jack Davis, Leslie Kaufman, The Ricci family, Bruce Russell and others who have contributed toward the purchase of materials to save our jewel. Watch future newsletters to follow the progress, and to learn about our plan to give the Boyer Shad Shack a shelter of its own!

- John Haug



Help conserve the Upper Chesapeake Bay Heritage!

Volunteer

We are currently seeking volunteers to work in reception, grounds maintenance, boatbuilding, and landscaping. Visit our website for an application.

Donate

Donations are used to keep the museum open, add new exhibits, and provide programs for the community. Or, you can specify that your donation go toward a project that is meaningful to you.

Join

Become a member of the museum and enjoy being a part of preserving our past well into the future! Visit our website for instructions on joining.

The Museum Needs Your Help!

The Havre de Grace Maritime Museum just acquired a 1600 pound 36" bronze fog bell from the US. Coast Guard. The bell will be installed next to our flagpole adjacent to the ground floor entrance to the Museum. The bell was cast by the McShane Foundry, Baltimore, Maryland, likely in the early 20th century and installed adjacent to a lighthouse.



By the 1820s, the lighthouse fog bell became the preferred method to signal ships in fog or heavy weather. Initially, the lighthouse keeper or his assistant rang the bell by hand. By the 1850s, the U.S. Lighthouse Service (now part of the U.S. Coast Guard) automated bell striking by employing machinery governed by clockwork, pushing against a large paddle atop the bell.

We need your help! The bell as shown above is badly weathered and is need of some repairs, cleaning and polishing. The McShane Foundry (still casting bells) generously offered to restore the bell to "look like gold" and repair the mounting bracket for a discounted price of \$1590 (normally \$2600). We have already raised \$450. In-kind support is being provided by three local companies/individuals who are donating time and materials to erect the platform that will display this incredible artifact.

We need your support to raise the remaining \$1140. Help us to "shine!" Thank you.

Museum Open House a Success

Thank you to all of you who came out to the Museum Open House in April. It was great to see some new faces and to catch up with many long time friends of the museum!

