

The Broadside



The voice of The Mathews Maritime Foundation

Museum Located at 482 Main Street, Mathews, VA Mail to PO Box 1201, Mathews, VA 23109 804-725-4444

on the web at www.mathewsmaritimemuseum.com

Upcoming Foundation Events & Activities...

Tour de Chesapeake Bike Day is on Saturday, May 15. The Foundation is once again hosting a refreshment/rest stop at Horn Harbor Marina in Pt. Haywood. There is preparation starting the afternoon before when supplies are picked up at Thomas Hunter Middle School that requires a pick up truck, and that evening cutting and bagging fruit, which takes place at Nancy's house. Saturday morning set up, welcoming the bikers and offering refreshments, and then returning things to the school also requires volunteers.

We welcome your participation on this day when hundreds of visitors come to our county and we get to show off our beauty and friendship. Home made baked goods are an extra way to extend our hospitality, and should be pre-packaged in "baggies" appropriate for a small serving (perhaps 2 cookies per bag). Assuming shorter shifts are easier on our bodies and schedules, any time you can give would be appreciated. Please call Nancy Lindgren at 725-4382 if interested..and THANKS!

Community Yard Sale on Saturday, June 5. The Mathews Maritime Foundation will take part in the Community Yard Sale. While our "theme" may be nautical items, we will welcome any of your items, pre-marked with suggested price, as donations that will benefit

our Foundation. We would also ask that, if possible, you assist by "manning" the sale for at least an hour. Please call Nancy at 725-4382 if you anticipate donating items, or are willing to help--and THANKS!

Museum Renovations to begin...

As reported in our December newsletter we have obtained a ten year lease on the building we call our Museum. The lease allows us to renovate the interior to our specifications. We expect to begin renovations in mid May.

The plan is to open up the interior space to allow for larger objects to be displayed as well as giving us a big area that can provide ample meeting space. We will make the building handicapped accessible along with proper toilet rooms, a small kitchen area and other necessary items to make this building more usable.

Most of the work will be done by volunteers. We hope to keep the renovation costs down by utilizing some materials salvaged from demolition as well as items donated to the cause.

Work will be done a phase at a time allowing for uninterrupted operation, with cost and work scheduling to be determined as it goes along. Once we complete a phase, we can move displays into the newly renovated area and move on, or if necessary stop until we can.

Much of the work to be done will have to be evaluated as demolition is completed and we

Keeping the Past in the Present Preserving it for the Future

determine what will be involved in the renovation.

Croxton Brothers Donation...

James and Michael Croxton of Hartfield, VA. presented a program at the Foundation's speaker meeting Feb. 18th. about growing up on and working the local waters, and of building model replicas of deadrise work boats. During the meeting Michael Croxton announced that he wished to donate to the Foundation a model he made of the workboat *IVA W*. At 3 feet 4 inches long, it is a striking representation of a bygone era. According to James Croxton, the *IVA W* was once a "crab drudge" and was later converted into a floating B & B with the addition of a second tier.



Pictured here at the Mathews Maritime Foundation Museum standing in front of the model of the IVA W are: Left to right, James Croxton and his wife Alice Croxton, Barbara Croxton and her husband Michael Croxton, who built and donated this model. (Photo by Dennis Crawford)

Oral History Project Off to Good Start...

Nancy Lindgren reports that the long anticipated "Oral History Project" was finally begun in December 2009. The goal of this project is to interview people who have earned their living in some way related to the water, so that they and their work will be documented as an important aspect of the rich maritime history of Mathews. This is especially important as the in-

dustry of fishing is changing rapidly and fewer men are going into this way of life. The interviews will be added to our displays, put into our archives and may even be made into a documentary.

Foundation Director Bronwyn Hughes, a professional film maker and co-organizer of the Mathews Film Society, has offered to assist us in videographing interviews with individuals in Mathews who have built boats, worked the waters of the Chesapeake Bay, or have been in the Maritime services (Navy/Merchant Marine). We appreciate her willingness to help, her expertise, her advice, and her smile as we embark on this journey together.

Nancy's first interviewee was retired Menhaden Captain Robert Roland Hudgins who is full of knowledge about working on the waters and providing implements for local (as far away as Maryland) watermen. We were most fortunate that he had been commissioned to build a small oyster dredge so he described the making of it as he showed us how he attaches the "S" hooks and then "sews" the bag with line making knots...remember the macramé plant holders?? His garage is filled with photos of many boats built in Mathews and he has stories to tell about each of them and the men who worked on them. He has always been a man I can go to with questions or problems and his ready smile and words of wisdom and support are much appreciated--we even tried to get Janice involved as she has been at his side for all these years.

Edward Diggs, Master Boat Builder, was our next person to interview. His innate skill of building by "rack of eye", rather than plans, was probably instilled by his father, who he started working with in his youth, and was fostered by Alton Smith with whom he worked for many years. He has built boats for people as far away as New Jersey, but many in Mathews are delighted to say they own a boat built by Edward Diggs. While no longer building work boats (though he has built several "LAST" boats!), his attention to detail has been turned to scale models of them, as well as rocking work boats for his grandchildren when they were born. He took us

into his workshop to see the hand tools he still uses as he feels more comfortable with them than power tools...thus making a truly "hand made" boat of function and beauty.. The Foundation honored Edward at Heritage Day in 2007 for his skill and we thank him, and his lovely wife Louise, for inviting us into their home for his participation in our Oral History project.

Nancy and Bronwyn have scheduled interviews with Charles Lee Forrest, Arnold Ripley, Tommy Owens, Captain Jack Stillman and others. The list of individuals who need to be included in this project is by no means complete. We welcome suggestions for individuals to be added to our list. Call Nancy Lindgren 725-4382.

Recent Donations to Our Collections...

Bob Lewis, son of Captain John E. Lewis has given, on loan, several items of maritime significance. His father, at age 32 was the youngest Merchant Marine Master of Oceans on any of the Liberty Ships engaged in the Normandy Invasion. The items loaned to the Museum include the sextant that Captain Lewis used on his Liberty ship along with a lifeboat flare gun and an oil painting. The painting, of



his ship, was done by a French officer on a sister ship anchored nearby and presented to Captain Lewis as a thank you for helping to liberate

France and the French citizens from Nazi occupation.

As an aside, it is interesting to note that all six of the Lewis brothers from Hallieford, Mathews Co. VA.; John E. Lewis, Guy Lewis, Maynard Lewis, Elbert Lewis, Woodrow Lewis, and John F. Lewis; served as deck officers during wartime. Of these six, three held Master of Oceans (Unlimited Tonnage) Licenses.

Member Pat Almond has donated a Pelorus made by the Lionel Co., the company that makes toy trains, for the Navy in WWII.

More Model Cases Needed...

Curator Dennis Crawford is asking for volunteers to build display cases for three boat models recently donated to the Museum.

Cases are needed for: The "Iva W" she is 3' 4" long, 1' 2 1/4" wide, and 2' 9" high; The "USS Missouri" at 2' 8" long, 4" wide, and 7" high; and a Flat Bottom Skiff at 1' long, 4" wide, and 2" high. These dimensions are approximate. Case would need to be larger than that but it gives an idea of the scope of the project. Give Dennis a call at the Museum (725-4444) if interested in building a case.

CD Player Needed...

Dave Machen recently transferred the Whistle Signals of the steam boats of the Chesapeake Bay onto a CD. We now need a CD player so that these signals can be heard by those visiting the Museum. If you have one and wish to donate it to the Museum please give us a call (725-4444).

Thanks Go To...

Spring has brought the beautiful bloom of daffodils at our museum that were donated by Brent and Becky's Bulbs and planted by two of our favorite volunteers, the always willing, and active, octogenarians (mentioned only as an incentive to the rest of us!) Mary Ellen and Stan Cath. Mary Ellen is the baker of the delicious banana bread at our Speaker Meetings too. We thank them, and ALL volunteers, who are the backbone of our organization.

50th Donor Boat Sold...

Since its inception in June 2004 the Foundation's Boat Donor Program has generated \$63,790.00 in revenue. Our most recent sale on April 9 of a Watkins 27 sloop is the fiftieth boat sold from this program. Proceeds from boat sales help to fund the various programs and educational activities the Foundation makes available to the Mathews community.

To view boats in our inventory go to www.mathewsmaritimemuseum.com and click on "Boats for Sale".

Deep Water Boat Slips Available...

We have available at our Gwynn's Island Boat Shop deep water slips for rent. Seasonal or annual rental rate is \$60.00 per month with a Mathews Maritime Foundation membership at the \$250.00 Friend of the Foundation level. Call Pete Hall at 804-693-9335 for details.

Family Boat Building 2010...

We have suspended Family Boat Building for 2010 in order to concentrate our boat building efforts on the restoration of our deck boat *Peggy of New Point*. Interested in helping with this project? Give us a call at 804-725-4444.

MMF-RCC Partnership...

We have entered into a partnership with Rappahannock Community College and their Workforce Development Office to share our Gwynn's Island Boat Shop space to provide a venue at which their marine trades education courses can be taught.

This partnership will benefit both organizations. We have a facility (boat shop building, marine railway and slips) that can provide students with a feel for how a boat yard operates and a number of boats that could be made available for students to work on to gain experience in all aspects of boat repair and maintenance. RCC has a suitable inventory of tools and equipment for restoring these boats that will be moved to the Boat Shop.

Peggy Quilt Raffle Winner...

The drawing for the Peggy Quilt was held on January 21 at our regular monthly speaker meeting. Our speaker that evening, Debbie Steinberg, Associate Professor at VIMS, drew the lucky winner, Diane Fletcher of Mathews. We wanted to picture Diane with her quilt in this issue but we could not get her to sit still long enough.

Our thanks to all who took a chance on this beautiful quilt and to Barbara Lewandowski for handcrafting and donating it to the Foundation for this raffle.



Pictured is quilter Barbara Lewandowski with Peggy Quilt.

Dates to mark on our calendar...

- May 15 - Tour de Chesapeake
- June 5 - Community Yard Sale
- June 26 - Boat Sale at MMF's Gwynn's Island Boat Shop
- July 8-9 - Kids Kayak Camp - 1st Session
- August 5-6 - Kids Kayak Camp 2nd Session
- Sep 10-11 - Mathews Market Days
- Sep 25 - Mathews Maritime Heritage Day Celebration at Horn Harbor Marina