



WATCHGANDER

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 6 JUNE 2001 JOHN L. CLAYTON JR. EDITOR

NJDCA HOT NEWS AND REMINDERS

DON'T MISS THE UPCOMING MEETING ON JUNE 26TH AT THE MANAHAWKIN ELKS AT 7:00 P.M. THIS WILL BE OUR LAST MEETING BEFORE THE SUMMER BREAK. BEER, WINE OR SODA WILL BE ON THE CLUB, SO COME OUT AND BRING A FEW DECOYS TO SELL OR SWAP. THE STICKUP WOODDUCK ON THE COVER OF *DECOYS NORTH AMERICAS ONE HUNDRED GREATEST IS* ON DISPLAY AT THE TUCKERTON SEAPORT UNTILL SEPTEMBER.

THIS MONTHS DECOY CONTEST WILL BE **RED HEADS**, SEPTEMBER WILL BE SHOREBIRDS AND OCTOBER WILL BE WIDGEON.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE

June 30th Tuckerton seaport's 1st annual carving and decoy show sponsored by the Barnegat bay decoy and bayman's museum and the long beach island wood carvers; to be held at the Tuckerton seaport in Tuckerton, nj. Contact butch kraus (609) 492-1134 OR E-MAIL J.T. CAHILL@shorenetworks.com

JULY 22 ANNUAL SUMMER DECOY AUCTION BY TED HARMON OF DECOYS UNLIMITED TO BE HELD IN HYANNIS, MA CONTACT TED HARMON (508) 362-2766 FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

JULY 26-27 ANNUAL SUMMER DECOY AUCTION BY GUYETTE AND SCHMIDT TO BE HELD AT THE CLIFF HOUSE IN OGUNQUIT, MAINE CONTACT GUYETTE AND SCHMIDT (207) 778-6256 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

2001 MEETING DATES

JUNE 26, JULY AND AUGUST (NONE) SEPTEMBER 25 OCTOBER 23, NOVEMBER 27 DECEMBER (NONE) 7 PM AT THE MANAHAWKIN ELKS



decoy contest winners

Congratulations to all the recent winners.

This site is currently under construction and will return in September improved and expanded.

May winners along with June will be posted at that time.

the newsletter is looking for anyone interested in contributing to it. we would like to have any information you have found about decoys or carvers. we will even help you write it.

JOHN CLAYTON EDITOR
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PICNIC REPORT

REPORTS HAVE COME IN ABOUT THE GREAT TIME MEMBERS HAD AT THE SECOND ANNUAL NJDCA CLUB PICNIC AT THE BUTLERS.

THE WEATHER WAS PERFECT AND THE FOOD EVEN BETTER. I WAS TOLD THAT THERE WERE ENOUGH DECOYS AROUND TO TALK ABOUT AND THAT RUSS ALLEN, BROUGHT THE BIG TUNA, THAT WILL SOON ADORN THE TOP OF ONE OF THE SEAPORT BUILDINGS.

ALL ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR. THANK YOU PETE AND MARGARET FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY.

For sale

Model 870
 Remington Magnum
 Shotgun with 28" full
 barrel, 24" Hastings barrel
 with all screw in chokes,
 Slug barrel in good shape.
 Dick Gove 609-652-1906

WANTED
 GUN POWDER TINS
 Shotshell boxes
 Old photos
 CALL
 JOHN CLAYTON
 732-255-6291

Wanted
Any information on
Grover Clevel and
Regarding
hunting and fishing
John Clayton
732-255-6291

H.V. vs. H.M.

Expert Opinions on How to Tell the Difference.

Manahawkin, April 27, 2001. As a post Manahawkin show event we hit the road in search of sage decoy historians, dealers and carvers with the sole purpose of setting to print an article designed to assist the intermediate and beginning collector in the differentiation of the works of the venerable Harry Vinuckson Shourds (1860 – 1920) and his son, Harry Mitchell Shourds (1890 - 1943). The following is the result of our research. Out of respect for privacy we are not providing the names of the panelists and will leave the reader to form their own opinion.

We first telephoned one of the direct descendents, also a living legend as a carver, and asked the lead question “How do you tell?” After a thoughtful pause, as if recalling his days on grandfather and father’s knees, he softly said, “Well...Granpops were older!”

We then turned to one of South Jersey’s better known makers of modern folk art – also known as “The Duck Doctor”- with the question. “I’ve made a ton of ‘em – I have the patterns which I keep locked away with my secret merganser collection. I could tell you all manner of technical detail but doubt if your readership would comprehend the finer points. Say, have you seen my latest “*Hoosier Daddy*” carving?... come on in.”

A few miles to the south we stopped in what seemed to be one of the most eclectic and secluded oyster museums unknown to mankind; there in the neat as a pin basement workshop we managed to steal the carver away from e-bay just long enough to ask the question. “I have a ton of ‘em on order.” With that he clammed up, to coin a phrase, and went back to his work.

We had to track down our next historian five hours to the south on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, where we found the former brant cum shorebird expert working on this NJDCA newsletter. Our first question, of why the President of a New Jersey based club was in Maryland, met with a cold stare. We knew we hit a nerve when we asked the penultimate Shourds question and were told simply, “I read the tags.”

As long as we were in the vicinity we tucked into Oxford in a vain attempt to find the other Jersey expatriate, but were met at the door by a delightful woman who allowed as how our man was out back in the doghouse and had dozed off after his cocktail and milk-bone hors d’oeuvres. We understood, as it was reminiscent of Easton shows past.

On the way home to our beloved South Jersey we made one final stop at *Keepers* where we were fortunate enough to find the absentee proprietor, just back from the St. Charles event and packing for several months of fishing and other decoy venues. When we popped the question we were shocked at the reply this usually well informed collector gave. “The damn things are all alike up there,” he said. “Real birds with countless shapes and patterns are found right here – why Job’s and Mitchell’s are as different as treated and untreated telephone poles.” Perplexed and somewhat disgusted we hit the road.

Days later, and back on the trail to the answer, we returned to the little port town on the banks of the Nacote Creek. There in his trademark Carharts and leaning against a big Ford diesel we managed to talk with our next expert. “The “M’s” are generally worth less but not always, anyway it’s all bullshit, but I’ve got two or three of each in the shop and I’d be glad to sell any at \$25,000 apiece, and mister you can’t lose.”

Eight miles up the Mullica from this last stop, on its lower bank, we were fortunate to catch our next palaverer just off an airplane from distant lands. “Well V is the 22nd letter of the alphabet and M is the 14th letter – or is it the other way round, I forget!”

Heading north up the shore we found our next interview at the Conectiv power station in West Creek – just returned from yet another Guyette auction. (or was it a Frank auction?) It seemed he had the beginnings of a cauliflower ear from the phone work – it must have hurt. Our question was an easy one for this long-time dealer. “It all depends on what my client wants,” says he. We were outa there !!!

A stones throw from the sub-station was a merry old woodworkers shop – funny how all these artisans keep their workplaces tidy. Suspended as usual, our jovial gentleman agreed to give an opinion. “Hell, the kid never carved a day in his life – most of what is passed as Harry M. are really my early works. When I was young I often came to these parts from the Delaware and sat on the old man’s knee – not only did I learn some carving; I also came to know the difference between kind and ornery. I chose the former!”

Heading up Route 9 to Barnegat – the home not only of many old-timers but also the busy shop known locally as *The Sneakbox*. We knew we had found the place when we noticed the pristine example of the classic sneakbox in the diminutive but perfectly landscaped yard. This long-time dealer acknowledged the question and was quick with his view. “Most of what’s called Shourds are actually Chris Sprague’s work – I’ve got some in the shop – mind your step.”

The Parkway north wasn't bad and while we were told that exit 90 would take us to the heart of Brick and our next interview, we were also advised to look for our man's big rig at the gin mills and go-go joints along the way. We did indeed find the little fella just wiping his shirt from a fresh pizza spot and stuffing dollar bills. We thought we heard the dollar bill recipient ask, "Can't you do better, Shorty?" We had no choice but to listen. "Look," he said, "I sit on 'em – if the heads feel good – kinda roundish – they are V's, if the heads hurt, kinda like a proctologists exam – why they are M's for sure."

Well, dear NJDCA reader - we had run our string of experts – not knowing too much more than when we had set out; however, we resolved to revisit these characters and more when we tackle our next assignment: **Why are there two Jay C. Parker's buried in Parkertown and is one really Liberty Price ???**

BY WILL DICKER
ROVING REPORTER
FOR THE WATCHGANDER