



FALL

2010

## NEWSLETTER

**\*\*FLOAT WORKSHOP\*\***  
**SEPTEMBER 18, 2010**

### **TOGA FLOAT BUILDING WORKSHOP**

On September 18th from 10AM to 1PM, TOGA will hold its annual Oyster Float Building Workshop. This will be the best opportunity this year for oyster growers to acquire the seed, materials, and information needed to get started in growing their own oysters. For those who are currently growing their own oysters, it's an opportunity to discuss with vendors the various types of seed available, different float techniques, and learn about changes and advancements in the area of growing oysters. This event always has a large turnout, so if you are interested, be sure to complete our registration form to register to build a float, and *send your seed order directly to the vendor.*

This year we will be offering three devices. In addition to the traditional Taylor float, we will help you build a flip float and an inexpensive flip float lifter. If you are not familiar with these devices, please go to [www.oystergardener.org](http://www.oystergardener.org), Devices and Designs page, and click on the [Taylor Float](#), [Flip Float](#), or [Download Mobile Oyster Hoisters](#) links on that page. Taylor floats will cost \$75, Flip floats \$40, and the flip float lifter \$45. *\*You must be a member of TOGA to build a float!\**

Vendors of seed and oyster-growing equipment are invited to attend. We request that vendors planning to attend notify Steve Wann at (804) 642-3797 or [sailsw00@gmail.com](mailto:sailsw00@gmail.com) and provide contact info and descriptions of items offered.

Also at the workshop we will be asking you to fill out a survey concerning future float-building workshops. The questions concern whether we should have a workshop in the spring as well as the fall, what devices you would like us to offer, your preference for locations, input on what facilities might be available for conducting workshops, your comments, etc. The survey is included at the end of this newsletter and will also be posted with a link ([float workshop survey](#)) on the TOGA website with an email address for your response. Please complete the survey whether or not you are coming to this year's Float Workshop.

Due to TOGA's need to purchase adequate materials to build enough floats, it is beneficial if you can get your application form and payment in early. All applications to build floats or hoisters must be received by September 11<sup>th</sup> so that we can be assured of having enough pipe, wire, and materials for everyone to build the devices that they need. Information on the latest growing

techniques and the various types of seed will also be available, along with “expert” advice. Everything you need to start growing your own oysters will be available, so be sure to join us on September 18<sup>th</sup>. As usual, this event will take place at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), Gloucester Point, at their hatchery under the Coleman Bridge. For further information call Steve Wann, (804) 642-3797. Steve can also be reached at sailsw00@gmail.com.



### **MASTER OYSTER GARDENER REFRESHER COURSE UPDATE**

This year’s MOG update was, as usual, a huge success. There were twenty-seven MOGs as well as two TOGA members who had not attended a MOG course.

The session began with a presentation by Dr. Roger Mann, Director of Research and Advisory Services. The topic was "The Realities of Oyster Restoration". In short, he reported that restoration requires the return of ecological function and stability. Surplus production could be harvested but it must be surplus only. Restoration is about structure, and unless there is upward accretion of oyster shell, to provide habitat, restoration cannot succeed. But reef accretion must be in a stable equilibrium, with formation and dissolution of oyster shell in balance.

Dr. Mann’s conclusion was that increased commercial oyster aquaculture is likely to result in the most successful restoration effort.

Mr. Bob Fisher presented a fascinating update on various "Cownose Ray Projects". Most striking was a video of cownose rays pursuing and eating oysters. We learned that, indeed, they can eat oysters growing in clumps, they just have to work at it more. Efforts to increase ray consumption proceed, as well as using ray skin for leather. The photos of 5 million rays arriving in the Chesapeake Bay, however, did not convince anyone that the population is even possible to control.

Dr. Stan Allen, Director of the Aquaculture Genetics and Breeding Technology Center gave an excellent update on "Oyster Breeding Programs" at VIMS. The development of disease resistant strains of oysters has resulted in a number of hybrids that may be available for aquaculture. Dr. Allen believes that future work should be concentrated on the development of strains of oysters with other traits, such as better growth, better shell shape, or “meatier” oysters, that will do well for commercial aquaculture in different parts of the Bay.

The day was ended by a presentation by Ms. Jackie Harmon, of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. A plea was made for help in collecting empty oyster shells for use in spat-on-shell projects. We also saw a photo of a concrete reef ball which is being used to set spat for reef restoration efforts. There is a great shortage of oyster shell for reef restoration, and collection sites for pickup of oyster shell are being established to try to collect as much as is possible for these efforts.

*Jackie Partin, MOG*



## **OYSTER FAIR AND ANTIQUE BOAT SHOW**

On September 11<sup>th</sup> TOGA is pairing up with the Reedville Fisherman's Museum on a dual event, the Oyster Fair & Antique Boat Show.

The Oyster Fair will start at 9AM at the Bethany Methodist Church meeting hall with speakers to lecture on various oyster topics in and around the Chesapeake Bay. Lectures will include topics for the new oyster gardeners to the advanced oyster gardeners.

Vendors for oyster wares as in oyster cages, oyster floats, oyster seed and other miscellaneous supplies are welcome. Please contact Brian Wood [awood45858@aol.com](mailto:awood45858@aol.com) for details.

For advanced oyster seed sales from Middle Peninsula Aquaculture send in the attached form below by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Oysters will be available for pick up on the day of the fair. Please refer any questions on what seed to choose to any of the Master Oyster Gardeners listed on TOGA's website: [www.oystergardener.org](http://www.oystergardener.org).

Also part of the boat show will include vendors of nautical items, nautical flea market and food vendors. For more details on the Antique Boat Show visit <http://www.rfmuseum.org/index.html> This should prove to be a wonderful all day affair for all.

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### **OYSTER SEED (SPAT) ORDER FORM**

**\*\*This order form is for Spat pick up at the Reedville event only\*\***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Bag(s) Low salinity Diploid @ \$25.00 ea (will spawn when mature)

\_\_\_\_\_ Bag(s) DeBy Diploid @ \$25.00 ea (will spawn when mature)

\_\_\_\_\_ Bag(s) Triploid @ \$30.00 ea (sterile, will not spawn)

(Each bag contains approximately 1,000 spat)

Will pick up at Reedville Fishermen's Museum

**Order closing date: September 1, 2010**

Make check payable to Middle Peninsula Aquaculture (MPA) or pay at pick up.

Mail order to:

Middle Peninsula Aquaculture

P.O. Box 769

North, VA 23128



\*\*\*\* **HOLD THE DATE**\*\*\*\*

On Saturday November 20, 2010, TOGA will sponsor the following event with Kelsick Market in Gloucester:

**Virginia Half-Shell Oyster Tasting**  
**Featuring Oysters from the Rappahannock to the York**

A limited number of tickets will be sold which would entitle the ticket holder to sample three or four oysters from each of five to eight local growers. In addition, you will have the opportunity to take part in a taste evaluation designed by VT and VIMS to describe differences in oyster tastes.

This has never been done here before, and we are proud to be participating.

TOGA Members are asked to volunteer to help with this event, in particular, shucking oysters, and will be able to taste for themselves. Watch for a future mailing which will give you more information about the event.



### **SANCTUARY OYSTER REEFS VS. SPAT-ON-SHELL**

For many years VIMS has employed “shellstrings” at many stations throughout the Chesapeake Bay to monitor the setting or “strike” of oysters. The “shellstrings” consist of 12 oyster shells, each about 3 inches in size, drilled through the center and strung concave side down on heavy wire. The string is deployed 0.5 meters off the bottom and retrieved and replaced with a new string weekly. The number of spat attached to the smooth underside of 10 shells is counted under a microscope and divided by 10 to get the number of spat per shell for the standardized weekly period. Some of the data are on-line at [www.vims.edu/mollusc/publications/mepubamr.htm](http://www.vims.edu/mollusc/publications/mepubamr.htm) and the remainder can be accessed at the VIMS library.

For each week, data from all stations in the Great Wicomico River were added together and are presented in the following table showing the total strike for each week between mid June and late September for 35 years. Weeks of the highest strike are in bold face type. There are a lot of data! Two things are obvious: (1) there are good years and there are bad years, and (2) the time of maximum strike can't be predicted, but usually occurs in July  $\pm$  one week.

The reasons for the unpredictability of oyster strike are unclear and many theories abound. The timing of strike is probably related to temperature and the rate of temperature rise. But rather than expending resources trying to catch wild strike, gardeners are much better off relying on hatchery-raised oysters, which are more disease-resistant than wild strains. Catching wild strike will be a matter of luck. Oysters prefer a clean substrate for attachment but the abysmal water quality that now characterizes the Chesapeake Bay promotes the rapid development of “slime” (biofilms). Forming rapidly, certainly within a week, the thick slime precludes a shell that has been in the water for more than about a week from attracting strike (see my article in the January 2008 Bay Journal at [www.bayjournal.com/article.cfm?article=3256](http://www.bayjournal.com/article.cfm?article=3256)).

The rapid development of slime is also one reason why the construction of “sanctuary reefs” is not the best option for trying to improve native oyster populations, in my opinion. Not only is the construction of “sanctuary reefs” extremely expensive, they have not been shown to be sustainable. The oysters planted on them grow and die, and the amount of new strike is far less than was planted in the first place, so the reef is doomed to disappear. A much better use of resources would be to establish hatcheries to provide larvae for “spat-on-shell.” Watermen could bring in clean shell and get “spat-on-shell” in return to plant on their oyster grounds and to harvest. Oysters deployed in this manner would be much more widely dispersed than would be true of a few isolated “sanctuary reefs.” If an oyster shell goes into the water without spat attached to it, the shell is wasted because it is very unlikely to ever attract strike. Unfortunately, isolated sanctuary reefs rather than widely distributed spat-on-shell seems to be the strategy that EPA and other federal agencies favor as we all strive desperately to “clean up the Bay.”

*Dr. Lynton S. Land, PO Box 539, Ophelia VA 22530*  
*JandL@nnwifi.com*

[www.VaBayBlues.org](http://www.VaBayBlues.org)

***GREAT WICOMICO SPAT SET***

	17- Jun	24- Jun	1-Jul	8-Jul	15- Jul	22- Jul	29- Jul	5- Aug	12- Aug	19- Aug	26- Aug	2- Sep	9- Sep	16- Sep	23- Sep	
2008	222	<b>402</b>	230	18				6								1
2007		8	<b>287</b>	165			1	80	39	17	3	1				
2006		<b>130</b>	85	79	25	<b>107</b>	1	3	53			1				
2005		4	4													
2004								1								1
2003										<b>17</b>	2					
2002	12	<b>104</b>	22	<b>143</b>	63	21	11	3	13	6	4	2	3	1		
2001									1	1	2	1	1			
2000									1	4		<b>8</b>	1			
1999											6		4	2		2
1998										1		1				
1997																
1996							1	5	<b>7</b>	2						
1995							1	1	1	1						
1994																
1993				1	1		1	1	1	1						
1992			2	4	4	1										
1991		4	5	7	4	2	<b>10</b>	9	2	3	3					
1990			1	32	<b>109</b>	59	46	34	7	1	1	1	1	1		1
1989	3	<b>24</b>	7	6		2	<b>16</b>	9	5	3	2	3	1			
1988		0	1	9	<b>34</b>	<b>28</b>	0	1	3	4	4	3	1			
1987		0	11	21	<b>91</b>	<b>75</b>	11	0	4	3	2					
1986			8	<b>73</b>	26	15	37	25	12	9	3					
1985				1	2	11	<b>74</b>	4			1					
1984					1	3	3	1	1	1	1	1			1	
1983										2	1	<b>30</b>	23	<b>33</b>		1
1982			<b>101</b>	<b>101</b>	31	<b>91</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>190</b>	24	27	18	28	6	2		6
1981				1	5	<b>78</b>	<b>101</b>	31	13		1	1	4	4		2
1980				17	<b>34</b>	<b>48</b>	18	9	2	7	9	4	2	1		
1979				2	9	<b>29</b>	1					1				
1978								1		1	2	2		1		1
1977								1	1		2	2	4	1		
1976							1			1						
1975					1	1	1						1	1		
1974					2		<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>		5	1		2			1



### **OUTREACH SCHEDULE (as of July 21)**

Check out the TOGA Outreach Schedule for the remainder of 2010. Periodic updates and the latest information are reflected on the TOGA website: [www.oystergardener.org](http://www.oystergardener.org).

Volunteers to help are always welcome. Please contact Dave Turney at [dn.turney@yahoo.com](mailto:dn.turney@yahoo.com) or Vic Spain at [vicspain@rocketmail.com](mailto:vicspain@rocketmail.com).

<b><u>Event</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>TOGA Coordinator</u></b>
Rotary Club	Aug 4	Irvington Wminstr. Canterbury	Vic Spain
Mathews Market Days	Sep 10-11	Mathews Courthouse	Rolf Zierow, Dave Turney
Hampton Bay Days	Sep 10-12	Downtown Hampton	Julian Cox, Brian Lockwood
Oyster Gardening Workshop	Sep 11	Reedville	Brian Wood, Lynton Land
Canon Environ. Fair	Sep 15	Newport News	Ben Smith
TOGA Float Workshop	Sep 18	Gloucester, VIMS	Steve Wann, Bob Buckner
N. Neck Land Conservancy Boots, Bids, & BBQ	Sep 19	Roanoke Farm Heathsville	Nick Ferriter, (Jay & Earline Walker)
Mathews Maritime Heritage Day	Sep 25	Horn Harbor Marina	Rolf Zierow
Nat'l Estuaries Day	Sep 25	York River State Park Williamsburg	TBD
West Pt Crab Carnival	Oct 2	West Point	Bob Buckner, Brian Wood
Fun Fest	Oct (TBD)	White Stone United Methodist Church	Nick Ferriter
Urbanna Oyster Festival	Nov 4-6	Urbanna	Jim & Sarah Renner
Garden Club of VA Conservation Cmte	Nov 5	William & Mary	Curt Bluefield
Chesapeake Bay Days	Nov (TBD)	Mathews 6th Grade	Rolf Zierow
Oyster Tasting	Nov 20	Gloucester	Jackie Partin



**NEW IN THE TOGA NEWSLETTER!**  
**CHECK OUT OYSTER RECIPES FROM TOGA MEMBERS.**

***Chinese Oyster Stew***

This is a light, low calorie, delicious and easy to make (other than shucking a pint of oysters) Oyster Stew.

1 pint fresh shucked oysters w liquor  
1" thinly sliced ginger root  
2 teaspoons soy sauce  
2 quarts of Swanson's Chicken Broth  
1 bunch of scallions  
¼ teaspoon white pepper

Start with combining Oysters and liquor with sliced ginger and soy sauce with low heat until oysters plump up. Add chicken broth, scallions cut in half (trim roots), and pepper. Simmer until scallions become soft.

That's it! Enjoy! -- Brian Wood MOG

***Mike's Super Oyster Stew***

**Ingredients**

1 quart oysters with liquor (smaller oysters - "standards" - are better)	
2 medium potatoes, diced	1 teaspoon salt
1/4 pound butter	½ teaspoon white pepper
~½ cup chopped onion	1 tablespoon worchestershire sauce
~½ cup thinly sliced celery	1/8 teaspoon thyme
~½ cup diced green peppers	1/4 teaspoon sweet basil
~½ cup thinly sliced carrots	1/4 teaspoon dried chives
~½ cup cooked yellow corn	~½ cup sliced mushrooms
1 quart half-and-half	8 strips crisp cooked bacon (optional)
1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk	red pepper (optional)

**Instructions**

1. Drop oysters and liquor into 2 cups salted, boiling water, in 2-quart pot. Leave no more than 5 minutes; edges of oysters should be "curled".
2. Remove oysters and cook potatoes in same liquid until cooked (firm, but not "crunchy" or "mushy").
3. Saute onion, celery, green pepper, carrots and corn in butter in large pot (one that stew will be cooked in).
4. While cooking vegetables, begin adding salt, pepper, worchestershire sauce, thyme, basil and chives. [Herbs and spices can be adjusted to individual tastes; rosemary adds a different dimension to the flavor.]
5. Once vegetables are cooked (firm, but not "crunchy" or "mushy", onions should be "cleared"), reduce heat, add oysters (and any juice in their bowl), potatoes (and about ½ cup of the liquid they were cooked in), half-and-half, evaporated milk, and mushrooms. Heat slowly, to below boiling. **DO NOT BOIL!** If you see the first bubble indicating boiling, most likely the stock will curdle, separate and become "grainy". Throw it out and start over! Let stand to blend flavors. [I often make this the day before I intend to serve it, to let the flavors mature.]
6. Garnish with crumbled bacon before serving or serve bacon with stew for individual garnishing.
7. Red pepper can be used for a more spicy stew. Try without red pepper before deciding whether or not to use.
8. To re-heat stew, use low to medium-low heat. **DO NOT BOIL**, stir often!
9. Makes about 10 hearty servings.



# OYSTER FLOAT WORKSHOP REGISTRATION

To be held at:

The hatchery at VIMS at Gloucester Point

10AM to 1PM Saturday, September 18, 2010

Registration Form **MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 11, 2010!**

**NO EXCEPTIONS!**

I plan to build \_\_\_\_\_ (number) Taylor (“traditional”) floats at \$75 per float.

I plan to build \_\_\_\_\_ (number) “flip floats” at \$40 per float.

\_\_\_\_\_ (check) I plan to build a simple “flip float lifter” at \$45 (limited to 1 per family).

NOTE: You must be a member of TOGA to build a float. Membership application form is included on this page. Payment for floats (and membership, if necessary) must accompany this form.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel.: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to TOGA and mail to: 8218 Hell Neck Road, Gloucester, VA 23061

For more info, contact Steve Wann at (804) 642-3797 or at [sailsw00@gmail.com](mailto:sailsw00@gmail.com)

If you need info on the various types of floats, please see our website [www.oystergardener.org](http://www.oystergardener.org)

and click on “Devices & Designs”. Also under Devices and Designs, click on Download Mobile Oyster Hoisters.

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## TOGA Membership Renewal or New Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. : \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Body of Water Where Oysters Are Grown: \_\_\_\_\_

Send membership check for \$10.00 to TOGA, 8218 Hell Neck Road, Gloucester, VA 23061

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**YOU MUST BE A MEMBER OF TOGA TO BUY OYSTER SEED!**

Oyster seed may be purchased from Middle Peninsula Aquaculture and picked up at the workshop.

Oyster seed orders should be made by September 11, 2010.

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## OYSTER SEED (SPAT) ORDER FORM

**\*\*This order form is for Spat pick up at Oyster Float Workshop only\*\***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Bag(s) Low salinity Diploid @ \$25.00 ea (will spawn when mature)

\_\_\_\_\_ Bag(s) DeBy Diploid @ \$25.00 ea (will spawn when mature)

\_\_\_\_\_ Bag(s) Triploid @ \$30.00 ea (sterile, will not spawn)

(Each bag contains approximately 1,000 spat)

Make check payable to Middle Peninsula Aquaculture (MPA) or pay at pick up.

Mail spat order to: Middle Peninsula Aquaculture, P.O. Box 769, North, VA 23128

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Additional vendors may be present, but we cannot guarantee adequate stocks of specific types of seed!

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Our newsletter was paid for by funds  
generated from the sale of Chesapeake Bay  
license plates.

***FLOAT WORKSHOP SURVEY***

Please complete even if you are not attending the 2010 workshops.

Would you like TOGA to hold Float Workshops at different or additional dates or locations? Yes No

Where and when? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there other products or services you would like us to consider? If so, please list them on the next line:

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you know of facilities, including indoor shops, where future workshops could be held? If so, please list them on the next line:

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any other changes or suggestions you have for future Float Workshops?

Would you be willing to help at the next Workshop? Yes No

Your name and Contact info: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to TOGA at 8218 Hell Neck Road, Gloucester, VA 23061, or email your survey response to:  
[sailsw00@gmail.com](mailto:sailsw00@gmail.com).

Thank you for your input!

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