



Growing oysters for a cleaner Bay

Spring 2021

<http://www.oystergardener.org/>

2021 TOGA Annual Meeting

I would like to start by thanking **Karen Hudson** our Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)



**2021 TOGA President
Doug Schaefer**

advisor for her continued support to TOGA during this year of virtual living. Without her support TOGA would not have been able to conduct half of our efforts. The 2021 Virtual TOGA Annual Meeting would not have occurred without her.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a

huge effect on TOGA as in the rest of the world. But with the lemons we tried to make lemonade. 2020 started with our Annual Meeting at VIMS where we had a turnout of 140 people for the Writing Contest winners and our annual business meeting. We were able to meet face to face for our volunteer appreciation party in March. We conducted our first public TOGA education event at Good Luck Cellars on 14 March, after which COVID Restrictions shut down all public events in the state of Virginia.

Thanks to Karen Hudson and Celia Cackowski we were able to complete the first ever virtual Master Oyster Gardeners Course graduating 26 new MOGs. We started selling Oyster Floats and Cages by appointment and were

able to conduct two successful float sales events at Williams Wharf in Mathews, and Good Luck Cellars in Kilmarnock late in the year. No surprise, after our 2nd Good Luck Cellar event COVID Restrictions again shut down all public events.

TOGA completed both Oyster History and Oyster Gardening Exhibits at Williams Wharf and the Deltaville Maritime Museum. Replacement of the Oyster Dock at Camp Kekoka made progress with both a Dock Replacement Account setup within TOGA (first donations already deposited) and building permits all applied for. On a sad note, we mourn the death of Madison Boyd on April 12, 2020; his concern for young people led to TOGA's demonstration Oyster Garden at Camp Kekoka. His leadership inspired environmental stewardship in kids of all ages. On the administrative side our TOGA website and Facebook page were updated continuously. And we received many generous corporate and individual donations. We were also successful in receiving a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (CBRF). We conducted our 8th Annual Middle School Writing Contest and were very pleased with both the number and quality of the entries. TOGA commends Carina Pallo, First Place; Jordan Sadeg, Second Place; and Hunter Owens, Third Place; for their winning essays. TOGA would particularly like to commend Mr. Terry Lewis for his leadership of TOGA as he moves to our Past President position on the Board of Directors. Terry has served as President for 4 years, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 (longest single tenure). His leadership role with our Grant Funding requests over the past

4-5 years was especially noteworthy. His annual written submissions and follow-up reporting to CBRF were successful because of his ability to craft our requests to be both "relatable" and "on-target". The grant funding TOGA received represented a substantial portion of our annual income which in turn allowed us to make significant contributions on behalf of Oyster Gardening and Oyster education for years thru our outreach with educational materials and museum exhibit. His personal support to TOGA has been instrumental to both its success and longevity over the past 4 years. Thank you, Terry, for your service to us.

--Doug Schaefer, MOG

Recognition of Past TOGA President Terry Lewis

In January, Terry Lewis of Gloucester stepped down as President of the Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association (TOGA) at the non-profit organization's virtual Annual Meeting. Lewis served as President of TOGA from 2017 through 2020. He will continue on the TOGA Board of Directors as Past President and mentor to the new president, Doug Schaefer of Wicomico Church.



Terry's leadership boosted TOGA's growth and impact on local communities as he led annual grant and funding requests and partnerships with VA's Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, C&F Bank, Seaglass Wines, Bacardi, Grey Goose, Devil's Backbone, local museums, and others. During his tenure, these efforts generated nearly \$20,000 annually. He led the TOGA effort to place educational displays at regional museums and parks.

As a former executive in public affairs, Lewis had a knack for informing and encouraging the Tidewater public to participate in oyster cultivation. He originated the TOGA Middle School Writing Contest "Consider the Oyster" in 2014, a popular program which recognizes the efforts of young people to participate in promoting oysters. It annually rewards winners with generous monetary awards. He also led the organization in preparing articles for local newspapers, state handbooks, training courses, exhibits, and other publications.

Known for his wit and outgoing personality, Mr. Lewis developed a bubbling partnership with local beer club brew masters to produce an oyster stout beer which is served at TOGA's annual volunteer recognition party. Although the brew is a highlight of the event, some say it ruins both the beer and the oysters. Terry continues to be an inspiring and humorous speaker at TOGA and other venues, promoting oyster gardening, oysters, and improving the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Terry says "I hope I can continue to make contributions to TOGA's successes in the future." He surely will.

--Carl Zulick, MOG

Note of Appreciation

Special Thanks to Karen Hudson and Celia Cackowski of VIMS for their support and assistance in helping TOGA with its first ever virtual Master Oyster Gardener (MOG) class last fall and it's first ever virtual Annual Meeting in January. Despite being held virtually to maintain health safety protocols associated with the COVID 19 pandemic, these events were a tremendous success continuing the outreach of oyster education and allowing TOGA to meet its member obligation in providing an annual meeting forum to approve new By-Laws, Business matters, Officer elections, and other matters.

As acknowledgement of Karen's and Celia's efforts, TOGA donated \$1000 in December, and \$1000 in January to the **VIMS Foundation Marine Advisory Program Outreach Fund** on their behalf.

-- Brian Ingram, MOG

Area Youth Have Strong Showing in Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association and C&F Bank Middle School Essay Contest

The more than 50 Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association (TOGA) members who attended the virtual Annual Membership Meeting on January 9th were delighted by the extraordinary Middle School students who won the TOGA and C&F Bank essay contest this year. Because there were exceptional essays submitted from across the State, the judges decided to recognize five winning essays.

Winners of the contest were:

Carina Pallo, 8th Grade, Home School, Richmond - 1st Place

Jordan Sadeg, 6th Grade, Thomas Hunter Middle School, Mathews - 2nd Place

Hunter Owens, 6th Grade, Thomas Hunter Middle School, Mathews - 3rd Place

Shyanne Carlton, 7th Grade, Peasley Middle School, Gloucester - Honorable Mention

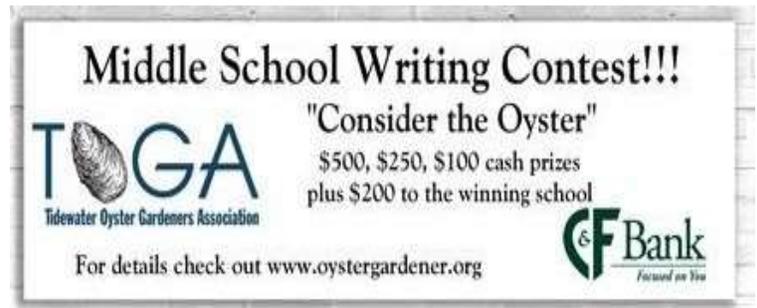
Aiden Major, 8th Grade, St. Claire Walker Middle School, Locust Hill - Honorable Mention

To read these outstanding essays or to see these talented young people reading their essays go to www.oystergardeners.org, and click on Youth Writers 2020. Awards this year were \$500, \$250, and \$100 for the top three essays. Each of the Honorable Mention essayists will receive \$50. In addition, each of the winning essayists will be awarded a TOGA t-shirt and cap, and the top three winners will receive an oyster grow out float. The school of the first-place winner also receives \$200 to spend on educational aides. Because Ms. Pallo is home schooled the check will be sent to her mother.

"This year we had an extremely competitive contest with essays submitted from across the State of Virginia," said Terry Lewis, Past President of TOGA and chairman of the contest. "All of these award-winning writers should be very proud to receive their awards, as should their area communities."

"Because of the Covid pandemic we held our annual membership meeting virtually. More

than 70 people signed up for the zoom call. It was an exceptional meeting, with information from the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences TOGA Endowment winner about her research on oysters, and a discussion about the importance of safely handling oysters for consumption. TOGA extends a special thanks to VIMS for arranging this virtual meeting," Lewis said.



TOGA and C&F Bank are again sponsoring the contest for 2021, which is open to all Middle School Students in Virginia. Theme of the contest is Consider the Oyster, a wide-open subject concerning anything to do with oysters. Prizes for the next contest will again be \$500, \$250, and \$100 for the top three essays, plus other oyster gear. More information about the upcoming contest and all of the winning essays can be found at www.oystergardeners.org.

– Terry Lewis, MOG

The Winning 2021 Youth Paper By Carina Pallo 8th Grade, Home School, Richmond

Thinking about Oysters



Have you ever thought about oysters? The most you've probably thought about them is as food, or pearl producers, not filter feeders that help the Chesapeake Bay. You probably haven't thought about how these amazing creatures are suffering and their populations are in decline. Well, I'm going to help you think about oysters and understand what's really going on with them in the Chesapeake Bay.

First, here's a little bit about the scientific side of oysters. They are filter feeders. This means they take water in through their gills and trap particles that are then sent to their mouth. In doing this, they eat particles floating in the bay, thus cleaning the bay, decreasing the amount of small floating debris. Some of the particles that they feed on are photosynthesizing algae that, when in large blooms, can be harmful to other organisms. Oyster reefs also provide an important habitat for many creatures. Thus, oysters help the water quality, as well as creating homes and improving the quality of life for many of the plants and animals that live in the Chesapeake Bay.

While the oyster's filter feeding ability is amazing, it has partially sealed their doom. With an increase of factories and farms along the banks of the bay comes pollution. Chemicals from factories and plants, as well as fertilizers and pesticides from farms, are a big problem for oysters. When they filter feed, they filter in the good, healthy sediment and particles, as well as man-made chemical waste. Also, harmful algal blooms thrive with all of the nutrients from the fertilizers, taking oxygen from the bay and killing many animals. This is a major problem that is causing oyster's decline.

This decline of the oyster population also minimizes the ability to fish for oysters. Oyster fishing has been a part of the Chesapeake Bay community since the early settlers. Because oysters were so popular, especially in the 19th century when they were viewed as a cheap snack, the oyster reefs became almost barren. In some cases, dredges demolished them, leaving the surviving oysters with nowhere to live. To address this problem, regulations have been put in place to protect the oyster population by making sure oysters are not overharvested.

But as the population is declining, there are much less oysters available to fish. More and more oyster fishers are put out of business due to the lack of oysters. This impacts the economy of the Chesapeake Bay community greatly. The loss of jobs for oyster fishermen

means that there are more unemployed people in the communities. This also impacts the fishermen on a personal level, due to the struggle to get a job to support themselves and their families. Even oyster fishermen that are still afloat are struggling.

All in all, the decline of the oyster population has hit the Chesapeake Bay hard. It has impacted it on an ecological level, with more sediment buildup and algal blooms, as well as an economic level. The entire oyster fishing industry is on the fringe just because people didn't notice what was happening to these seemingly unimportant creatures. Take time to consider the oyster, and maybe you can help save our bay.

Native American Link

I did a "virtual lecture" on oysters for a student who teaches at UVA Charlottesville. One of his students sent this after I had talked about Native Americans and sustainable practices.



A typical Native American oyster deposit, or midden, dating to about 1,000 years ago. Archaeologists are finding clues to sustainable oysters harvesting in these remains.

Torben Rick, Smithsonian Institution

To copy this link, please go to <https://www.oystergardener.org/newsletters> and copy electronically from the Spring 2021 Newsletter, then paste in your browser. <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2016/07/28/487618421/oyster-archaeology-ancient-trash-holds-clues-to-sustainable-harvesting>

-- Lynton Land

Menhaden are Filter Feeders Too!

We all know oysters are filter feeders and help 'clean the bay' but how many of you are aware that Menhaden are filter feeders too? A couple hundred years ago there were trillions of

Menhaden schooling through the Bay waters, toothless with mouths



open, filtering plankton, cellulose and plant detritus (their food source) at an individual rate of about four gallons a minute. The water was clearer, allowing sunlight to penetrate the shallows where grasses grew. Grasses oxygenate the water and provided cover for young crabs and small fish. Menhaden were (and still are) the primary food source for most species of predatory fish as well as numerous species of waterfowl like osprey and eagles.

Today, there is a for-profit, foreign owned company operating out of Reedville that is harvesting 30 to 50,000 metric tons of Menhaden out of our Bay and coastal waters yearly. A theoretical, sustainable 90% of the population. This whole industry started after man nearly depleted the Atlantic and then the Pacific of Whales for lamp oil! They switched to harvesting this oily, high protein fish, Menhaden. Today, these Menhaden are ground up and reduced to fish meal, chicken feed and other by-products.

History has a way of repeating itself and we can clearly see it with the decline of rockfish and bluefish in the Bay. If we really want to improve water quality in the Bay, we need to re-employ



MENHADEN

the most important fish in the Bay

greater numbers of what nature has to offer, Menhaden!

--Tscharner D. Watkins III, Oyster Gardener

Westmoreland State Park Oyster Program

Westmoreland State Park has asked TOGA to assist them in creating an Oyster Garden to enhance educational opportunities at the park.

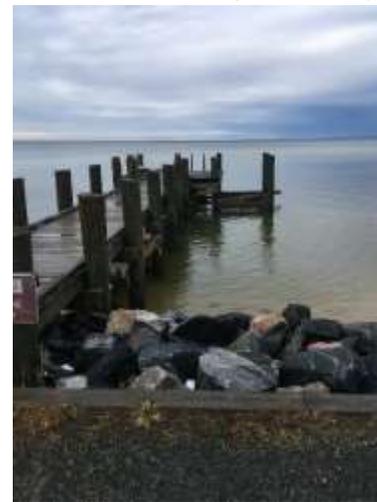
As part of TOGAs mission, we are pleased



to work with the Park to show young people the ways that Oysters can be gardened in Chesapeake Bay.

Located on the Potomac River in the Northern Neck (Six miles northwest of Montross, just off Route 3), the park offers many opportunities for family fun. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the park hosts 300,000 annual visitors making it one of the five busiest Virginia State Parks. Fossil collectors enjoy hunting for ancient shark teeth along the Potomac. Offshore breakwaters are great for fishing. Birding enthusiasts find the park an excellent site for spotting American bald eagles, ospreys, kingfishers, great blue herons, common terns, green herons, and gulls, as well as wintering waterfowl.

The Westmoreland State Park Oyster Program will be incorporated into the nature programs which see nearly 40,000 program participants



yearly. They have requested that TOGA provide in water floats and supplies for an Oyster Garden located at the pier near the boat house. They are also looking for resources and material for Oyster educational experiences for

children and families. They would like to put an Oyster education exhibit in the park's Discovery Center. It is largely used for

environmental education to teach visitors about nature and the various ecosystems in and around the park. They are also requesting assistance to create outdoor Oyster Gardening educational signage for the dock near the oyster garden. This would be like our TOGA Oyster Gardening Museum displays.

The park has nine full-time employees, but adds more than 60 staffers in the summer, and would like TOGA to conduct a Float Building Workshop at the park during the first two weeks of April. This would allow both Park employees and Park volunteers to become familiar with the various oyster floats they will be using and learn how to handle repairs and maintenance. We also have two TOGA members living in Westmoreland county who are also Park Volunteers. Sue Borra sue.borra@gmail.com and Eric Hentges erichentges@gmail.com will be the TOGA liaisons with the Park for the Oyster Program. Please contact them about participation or information about this project.

– Sue Borra, Oyster Gardener and Volunteer at Westmoreland State Park

Good Luck Cellars Shelluva Good Weekend

TOGA is planning on have a shelluva good time at Good Luck Cellars on 24 and 25 April 2021 — oyster dishes, wine pairings, and live music are what's in store.

IMPORTANT NOTE: With COVID-19 restrictions/concerns still present there may be limited seating with social distancing outdoors.

• Saturday 24 April winery hours are 11-6 (glass and bottles sales). Salty Bob's Oyster & Seafood Co (Food Truck) service will be on site.



There will be a variety of music (1960s to now) performed from 2-5. Tidewater Oysters Gardener Association (TOGA) will be on site for those interested in learning about process of growing their own oysters. There will also be Oyster spat suppliers depending on availability.

And Fat Spat Collection is joining us too; they sell apparel that highlights the area where we live along with the men and women whose livelihood is made from working on the water.

• Sunday 25 April winery hours are 12-5 (glass and bottles sales). Salty Bob's Oyster & Seafood Co (Food Truck) service will be on site. There will be a variety of music from 1-4pm. Tidewater Oysters Gardener Association (TOGA) will be on site for those interested in learning about process of growing their own



oysters. There will also be Oyster spat suppliers depending on availability. And Fat Spat Collection is joining us too;

they sell apparel that highlights the area where we live along with the men and women whose livelihood is made from working on the water.

We have plenty of green space, so feel free to bring your own chair(s)/table to sip back and relax steps away from the wine pavilion.

– Doug Schaefer, MOG

Deltaville Maritime Museum and Holly Point Market Event

TOGA will be holding its annual sale and educational event at the Deltaville Maritime Museum during the museum's Holly Point Market on Saturday May 22nd from 9 to 1 pm. The Museum is



located at 287 Jackson Creek Rd, Deltaville, VA 23043.

TOGA will provide educational materials and personal consultation with Master Oyster Gardeners who will work with both prospective oyster gardeners and those who may have advanced questions about their own oyster gardens.

Toga will be selling Taylor, Flip, Tidal Tumbler, Down Under, and Bottom cages/floats and bags. Hats, shirts, aprons, and other TOGA logo materials will be on sale. To ensure we have your float order available, please order by May 8. See order form below.

See <https://www.oystergardener.org/devices-and-designs> for a description of our floats and devices. Our new spat tubes are described below. TOGA accepts checks or cash.

Local spat vendors will be selling Triploid and Diploid spat. Some spat vendors require cash. Toga subscribes to Commonwealth of Virginia Covid 19 guidelines, and ask that masks be worn and social distancing practices be followed to protect our volunteers, members, and the public at all events.

Come and enjoy the park, waterfront, vendors



and artisans at the market, and see TOGA's newest outdoor exhibit at the pier adjacent to the museum's historic 62.8-foot, 9 log buy-boat, the F.D. Crockett, built in 1924.

--Carl Zulick, MOG

Spat Tubes for Tidal Tumblers

At our fall 2020 float sale at Williams Wharf Landing, we became aware that there was a shortage of spat bags and that was a problem for oyster gardeners trying to start new spat. So, TOGA was fortunate to find a local supplier who sold us a badly needed supply of the bags. Brian Wood suggested the idea of "spat



tubes" to make it easier to grow spat in the popular Tidal Tumblers. Over the winter of 2021 we experimented with prototypes of spat tubes.

Of the 11 shown, we have decided that we will build tubes like the two on the far right, see next photo.



These spat tubes are 9 inches in diameter, 24 inches long and will conveniently fit inside a Tidal

Tumbler. On the left is a fine mesh version for new spat, and on the right is a medium mesh model for spat about 3/4 inch and up.

Once your spat reach about 1.5 inches, you can remove the tube from your tumbler and grow out the young oysters in any of your



tumblers or cages. If you have tumblers with lids that are difficult to remove, we can retrofit one of the lids to make it easy to take off and replace, like in the next

photo. The cable ties are reusable. We will retrofit your lids for free at one of our float sales.

If you would like to use a spat tube as a stand-alone spat grower (not inserted in a tumbler), we can add a floatation device similar to the floats on the regular tidal tumblers. See the float order form. You may also order cages or send questions by email to Vic Spain (vicspain@rocketmail.com) or Carl Zulliick (czulick@verizon.net).

--Vic Spain, MOG

Dues for 2021

If you received this newsletter in the mail, please check the year by your name on the



address label. If it is 2020 or earlier, then 2021 dues are due. If you believe there is an error, please

contact Vic Spain at vicspain@rocketmail.com or 804-642-6764. Annual membership is \$15 (per family) and are for one calendar year, not 12 months from payment date.

Members...

- Receive newsletters with the latest oyster gardening information
- Participate in educational events sponsored by TOGA
- Learn about innovations in oyster gardening techniques
- Benefit from the expertise of hundreds of others interested in growing oysters

Please use the form at the end of this newsletter to update your membership. You may also use it simply to update your information. It is important that your address and email address are correct as that is our primary way of communicating with members. You may also share this membership form with a friend.

Newsletter News

The newsletter is published 3 times a year and is mailed to all TOGA members.

Full color copies of this and past newsletters may be seen on the website

at <http://www.oystergardener.org/newsletters>.



The deadline for the next newsletter is August 27, 2021. Any TOGA member who wishes to submit an article for the newsletter may do so prior to the deadline date. Articles will be printed as space allows.

Email to either Vic Spain at vicspain@rocketmail.com and/or Kathy Haurand at kathaurand@aol.com

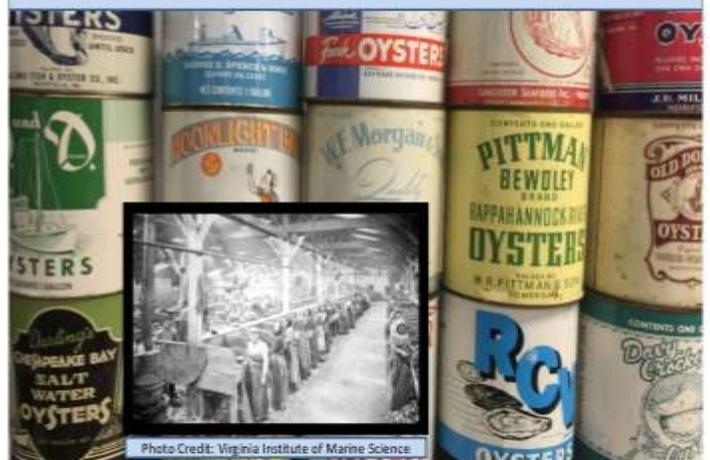
--Kathy Haurand, MOG

Our newsletter and many of our activities are funded by the sale of **Chesapeake Bay license plates**



<http://dmv.virginia.gov/exec/vehicle/splates/info.asp?idnm=CB>

Virginia has a rich history in the oyster shucking business.



TOGA 2021 Events

as of 15 March 2021

Covid distancing requirements still in effect

Tentative? 10 March 21, Cople Elementary School Oyster Education Day - Event Coordinator: Mike Sanders, sndrsmich@gmail.com , Cople Elementary School 7114 Cople Hwy, Hague, VA 22469

17 Apr 21 Heathsville Farmers Market Earth Day – Event Coordinator: Sue Stiff, SASTiff@aol.com , Historic Rice's Hotel / Hughlett's Tavern, 73 Monument Place, Heathsville, VA 22473, 9AM – 1PM

24, 25 April 21 Wine and Oyster Fair – Event Coordinator: Doug Schaefer, subiceguy@hotmail.com , Good Luck Cellars, 1025 Goodluck Rd, Kilmarnock, VA 22482, 11AM-4PM (both days)

22 May 21 Deltaville Oyster Float Sales Event – Event Coordinator: Carl Zulick, czulick@verizon.net , Deltaville Maritime Museum, “Holly Point Market Day” 287 Jackson Creek Rd., Deltaville, VA 23043

Tentative? 16 May 21 Summer Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge Annual Go Wild! festival – Event Coordinator: ?????, Hutchinson Tract, 19180 Tidewater Trail, Tappahannock, VA 22560, 11 AM- 4 PM

24, 25 September 21 Guinea Jubilee – Event Coordinator: Ken Paugh, kenpaugh@gmail.com , Abingdon Ruritan Club, 8784 Guinea Rd., Hayes, VA 23072 3PM-6PM Fri. and 9AM-5PM Sat.

25 September 21 Northern Neck Land Conservancy's Boots and BBQ – Event Coordinator: Russell Mait, rbmait56@gmail.com , Montross VA 12PM – 4PM

2 October 21 Fall Oyster Float Sales Event – Event Coordinator: Brian Ingram, bandbingram@gmail.com , Williams Wharf Landing, 1039 Williams Wharf Rd. Mathews, VA 23109 10AM – 1PM

16 October 21 TOGA Volunteer Thank You Party – Event Coordinator: Terry Lewis, lewistmn@msm.com Piantatank Community League, 11888 Harcum Rd., Gloucester, VA 23061, 1PM – 4PM

13, 14 November 21 Wine and Oyster Fair Float Sales - Event Coordinator: Doug Schaefer, subiceguy@hotmail.com, Good Luck Cellars, 1025 Goodluck Rd, Kilmarnock, VA 22482 12PM – 4PM (both days)

15 December 21 Middle School Writing Contest Essays due, Event Coordinator: Terry Lewis, lewistmn@msm.com , See TOGA Website for Information at www.oystergardener.org

15 January 22 TOGA Annual Meeting, Sponsored by VIMS (Virginia Institute of Marine Science), 1370 Greate Rd, Gloucester Point, VA 23062, See TOGA Website for Information at www.oystergardener.org



When you login at smile.amazon.com, enter **Tidewater Oyster Gardener Association** as your charity.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you.

TOGA Membership Form

P.O. Box 2463, Gloucester, VA 23061

Date: _____ Please Check: _____ New Member _____ Renewal Annual Dues are \$15

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, and Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Body of water where oysters will be grown: _____

_____ Please check here if you use this form only to update your information (and not to pay dues)

Oyster Float Workshop Registration Form

Deltaville Maritime Museum

9AM to 1PM, Saturday, May 22, 2021

Please mail this Registration Form to TOGA, P.O. Box 2463, Gloucester, VA 23061

Or email this Registration Form to vicspain@rocketmail.com or Carl Zulick, czulick@verizon.net

Name: _____ Email: _____

Telephone: _____ Mailing Address: _____

**This Registration Form MUST BE RECEIVED BY May 8, 2021
for TOGA to have sufficient materials available for your pre-built float(s) and devices!**

Pre-Built Floats and Devices

*Please see our website <http://www.oystergardener.org/#!/devices-and-desgns/c2ir> for more information
about the various types of Pre-Built Floats and Devices.*

Qty	Cost Each	Description	Qty	Cost Each	Description
_____	\$110	Taylor Float with Top	_____	\$15	Top for Taylor Float
_____	\$95	Taylor Float, no Top	_____	\$65	Flip Float
_____	\$45	Bender 42 inch	_____	\$55	Bottom Cage
_____	\$50	Bender 50 inch	_____	\$50	Tidal Tumbler
_____	\$25	Spat Tube Insert, ___ small mesh, ___ medium mesh			
_____	\$8	PVC float for stand-alone spat tube _____			

Payment for floats, devices will be collected at the check-in table at the Oyster Float Sale.

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Gloucester, VA 23061

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U.S. Postage **PAID**
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Growing oysters for a cleaner Bay