



Growing oysters for a cleaner Bay

Spring 2018

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

TOGA Annual Meeting Informative and Young Writers Were Terrific

A large crowd gathered at the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences Watermen's Hall Auditorium on January 13th for the Annual TOGA Membership Meeting. The more than 120 people included oyster gardeners, VIMS representatives, and middle school writing contest winners with family and friends.

The business meeting included a wrap up of a very busy TOGA year. Highlights included:

- Participating in more than 30 outreach and educational events;
- Hosting five major events, including the Spring Fair at Gwynn's Island, Volunteer Appreciation Party, Float Workshop, Oyster Tasting at the Good Luck Winery, and the Annual Meeting;
- Publishing a flyer for new or prospective waterfront home owners;
- Conducting the Master Oyster Gardeners course;
- Co-hosting the 5th Annual Stratford Hall Wine and Oyster Tasting;
- Receiving notification that the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (license plates fund) recommended funding TOGA for \$5K for 2018-2019;
- Continuing to work on the experimental oyster habitat at Camp Kekoka;
- Developing a new short history of the oyster in the Chesapeake Bay, designed for educational outreach events and museums.

Goals for 2018 include:

- * Promoting the grow-out of native unselected spat for reef restoration to ensure genetic diversity in the wild oyster stock;
- * Continuing to grow the shell recycling program and reef project at Camp Kekoka;
- * Building an educational kiosk at Camp Kekoka and have it featured on the Virginia Oyster Trail;
- * Increasing volunteer participation;
- * Building permanent information displays at the Deltaville Maritime Museum, featuring the Oyster History of the Chesapeake Bay.
- * Reviving the Northern Neck Oyster Fair;
- * Continuing to provide at least 30 educational events in the area.

In addition to the Treasurer's Report (TOGA continues to do well financially, thanks in part to our excellent Treasurer Charles Yarbrough), there was an election of new officers and Board members. They are the following:

President: Terry Lewis
Vice President: Brian Wood
Treasurer: Charles Yarbrough
Secretary: Jennifer Palazzo
At-Large Board Members: Robert Morgan, Brian Ingram, Terry Halkyard, Lou Castagnola
Past President: Mike Sanders (not elected)
President Emeritus: Jackie Partin (not elected)
President Emeritus / Engineer: Vic Spain (not elected)
VIMS Liaison: Karen Hudson (not elected)

A very informative education program was presented by Karen Hudson, VIMS Shellfish Aquaculture Specialist. She talked about the



state of aquaculture in the Old Dominion, which is doing extremely well. Most in the audience didn't realize that Virginia is the largest producer of clams in the U.S. Many people are working hard to have Virginia also be the largest producer of oysters, but we have a way to go.



Joey Matt and Karen Hudson at Annual Meeting

The bright and well-spoken Joey Matt, this year's recipient of the TOGA Endowment at VIMS, presented a fascinating talk about his research into why there has been high mortality at some of the commercial oyster aquaculture sites.

A highlight for many of the attendees was the presentation of the four winners of this year's TOGA Middle School Writing Contest. All four read their essays. They did a fantastic job on their presentations. See the separate article in this newsletter for more details on these remarkable students.

The meeting finished with a scrumptious buffet with numerous delicious oyster dishes and other goodies brought by the TOGA members.

This was another excellent TOGA membership meeting. If you weren't there, please plan to join us next January 12th for some education, good camaraderie, and great food!

Congratulations to the Winners of the TOGA 2017 Youth Writing Contest "Consider the Oyster," announced at the January 13, 2018, Annual Meeting.

Middle School Writing Contest!!!

TOGA "Consider the Oyster"
 Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association \$150, \$100, \$50 cash prizes plus outdoor oyster gear for winners

For details check out www.oystergardener.org

Peoples Community Bank

The winners were:

First- Brennan Lane, Midlothian Middle School, Chesterfield County

Second- Sydney McClelland, Trinity Lutheran School, Newport News

Third (tied)- Hudson McMinn, St. Clair Walker Middle School, Middlesex County

Third (tied)- John Broccoletti, Virginia Beach Friends School



Student Essay Contest Winners and Judges

L to R: Judges Bobby Morgan, Sue Morgan, Writers: Hudson McMinn (3d place), Sydney McClelland (2d place), John Broccoletti (3d place), Brennan Lane (1st place), Jennifer Dixon of Sponsor Peoples Community Bank, Judge Terry Lewis
 Judges not shown- Ann Wood, Brian Wood, Mary Ann Lewis

Terry Lewis, MOG

The winning essay by Brennan Lane



Brennan Lane reading his essay at the Annual Meeting

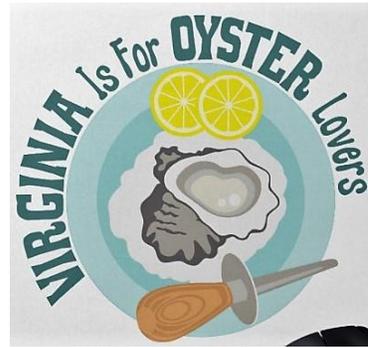
Consider the Oyster: The Meteoric Momentum of a Modern Mollusk

Like a modern-day Lazarus, the Virginia/Eastern Oyster or *Crassostrea virginica* has risen from pitiful proportions to a state of rebirth and resurgence in the churning waters of the

Chesapeake and its tributaries. Today, Virginia is the leading East Coast producer of oysters, but it was not without incredible effort from scientists, conservationists, watermen, oyster gardeners and other, everyday heroes of aquaculture who were determined to bring an industry back from the brink of extinction.

To illustrate the roller coaster ride of the oyster industry, recognize that by around 1900, Virginia had taken her rightful place as the leading harvester of oysters in the nation, producing about 7 million bushels a year. In its heyday, though, in the time period of 1875-1885, the Chesapeake Bay actually produced as much as 20 million bushels of oysters annually. In shocking contrast, in the 1990's less than 20,000 bushels of oysters were produced annually. This decline can be attributed to pathogens, parasites, poachers, and pollution, the putrid "P's" of oyster peril. In particular, pathogens or diseases like *Perkinsus marinus* or "Dermo," and *Minchinia nelsoni* or "MSX" decimated the oyster population, leaving the legacy of this mollusk in doubt and making 2014's reported harvest of 40 million single oysters almost a miracle of Virginia's determination.

Losing the Virginia oyster legacy would have been tragic. First, Native American people, including Virginia's indigenous people, counted on this nutrient rich food source. It is no wonder that today's popular Paleo diets that often boast the benefits of the food choices of ancient ancestors regard oysters highly with their boost of Vitamins A and B12 and absence of ethics concerns in raising and harvesting them. Moreover, although a Virginia history student might learn about tobacco as a "green gold" that saved the colonies, in fact, oysters saved the people of the first permanent English colony even earlier in time. Jamestown leader John Smith, faced with a starving population of men with little survival skills, sent a band of colonists to live off of oyster beds for nine weeks. In fact, when the first English colonists arrived in Virginia, the Commonwealth's waterways teemed with towers of oyster beds and reefs like manna from heaven in the Bible or like food appearing in the classic *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*. Actually, at least one chapter of the history of oysters in the Chesapeake Bay reminds me of another cinema favorite of mine, *Pirates of the Caribbean*. In the late 1800's, oyster harvesting became so popular and profitable that oysters became Virginia's "white gold." There were oyster "pirates," or thieves, oyster wars were fought and oyster patrols were deputized in one of the most dramatic and little-known aspects of the history of the Chesapeake Bay that is never taught in schools.



Today, the idea of Virginia without her oysters is unthinkable. These bivalve mollusks have been the subject of careful tending so that vulnerable spat can grow in recycled shells, prepared

boxes, protective cages and restricted areas and with other means to produce profitable and tasty entrees and/or ecosystem boosters. Further, Virginia is known to produce eight distinct varieties of oyster flavors, more than the five main flavors of Life Savers candies. In fact, oysters are life savers in many ways. They have spawned an entire tourist attraction known as the Oyster Trails, help make Virginia a restaurant destination and create festivals that put Virginia on the map. More importantly, the *Crassostrea virginica* is capable of bestowing one of the greatest gifts to Virginia: the gift of clean water. At its peak, the Chesapeake Bay oyster population could filter the bay in less than 10 days' time. Increasing oyster abundance can return the Commonwealth's waterways to a more pristine state. Given the great value of *Crassostrea virginica*, I have already taken steps to urge our Governor and administrative resource heads to consider naming the oysters as Virginia's official food, and Virginia's General Assembly members are next on my list for my letter campaign. If I have learned anything from the resurgence of the Virginia oyster industry, it is that being tenacious pays off. Most oysters are capable of growing pearls, and it all starts with a bit of grit. The "pearl" that is today's Virginia oyster aquaculture can attribute its success to the grit of men and women who continue to champion the oyster as an organism, an industry and an environmental partner that deserves to survive and thrive.

2018 MIDDLE PENINSULA SPRING OYSTER FAIR

The **TOGA-sponsored Annual Spring Oyster Fair** will be held April 28 at the Gwynn's Island Civic Center, 1996 Old Ferry Rd, Hudgins, VA 23076. Directions and the program follow.



Directions- Many mapping services do not accurately direct you to the Civic Center. When



you cross the bridge to Gwynn's Island, you will be on Cricket Hill Rd. Keep straight onto Old Ferry Road for 1.6 miles, then turn right, still on Old Ferry Road and after

150 yards, the Civic Center is the white building on the right with a horseshoe driveway in front.

9:00 AM – Registration begins with coffee, fruit, breakfast rolls, etc.

9:00 to 10:00 – Vendors of **oyster gardening equipment, spat and supplies** are invited to display their wares for sale. Spat availability is uncertain at this time due to the cold winter. Normally, spat are larger this time of year because they were spawned in the previous fall. This is also a good time to question Master Oyster Gardeners and vendors about your gardening issues.

10:00 to 10:10 – Remarks by TOGA President Terry Lewis including a preview of upcoming events.

10:10 to 11:00 – We are happy to announce that our keynote speaker will be Dr. Jim Wesson (VMRC retired but still active).



Jim (aka The Oyster Wrangler) will share his knowledge and experiences after over two decades leading the oyster repletion program on Virginia's public oyster grounds.

Please think about questions you may have for Jim.

11:00 to 11:20 – For new oyster gardeners, Vic Spain will discuss **How to Get Started Oyster Gardening**. Details include how to get spat (oyster seed) and when best to deploy, equipment needed (on display) and how to maintain it, how many per cage, how long to harvest, sanitation, how to get help, helpful

literature, etc. Experienced gardeners should feel free to skip this portion.

Messages from vendors

Lynton Land – Diploid seed, mostly 3/8", 1/2" and 5/8". Contact info - (804) 453-6605. Physical address is 125 Airstrip Lane, Ophelia 22530, Lynton Land <lsl@vabayblues.org> and <JandL@nnwifi.com>

Chesapeake Bay Oyster Co. – We should have both gear, floating and bottom cages as well as oyster seed, most likely carry over from last year, Jon Quigley <jonq@bayoyster.com>

Eastfield Farms (Peter Perina) – 5 different mesh sizes of starter and grow out bags. Flip float kits. Foam floats. Shell bag netting.

PO Box 275, Mathews, VA 23109, 804-725-3948, <eastfields@rivnet.net>

Oystermama's Bay-bies – Triploid seed and bags. Judith Ambrose <oystermamasbaybies@yahoo.com>

Vic Spain, MOG

When to Plant Your Oyster Garden

Back in the beginning, TOGA Master Oyster Gardeners were taught by Dr. Stan Allen of VIMS to plant new oyster gardens in the fall. There were very good reasons for this advice.

- Oyster hatcheries are dependent on water temperature to induce oysters to spawn. If the temperature is too cold, they just won't do it until the water warms up. That meant that spat could not be obtained until June, usually.
- Wild, native strains of oysters in the Chesapeake Bay are susceptible to two oyster diseases. These diseases, Dermo and MSX, are oyster parasites, and although they do not affect humans, they may kill a large proportion of native oysters. These two oyster diseases are more active in warm waters, so the diseases are worse in the summer time. Therefore, oyster spat tended to get infected their first summer, and their life span was shortened by a year if they were planted in the Spring. By planting them in the Fall, they avoided this exposure to the diseases and were able to get a good start growing for many months before they were exposed to large numbers of the parasites.

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science has developed a number of strains of oysters that are now highly resistant to these diseases.

Certain strains of these resistant oysters are being used to develop triploids. Triploid oysters have an extra set of chromosomes and so are not fertile and cannot spawn. They grow rapidly and are not very susceptible to the oyster diseases. These are the oysters that are traditionally used in large part by commercial oyster growers. Since they are not as susceptible to the diseases, they may be planted in the spring. In addition, their rapid growth makes them get to market size before they die of the diseases.

So, what do oyster gardeners want to do with their oysters? The answer to this should be the deciding factor in what spat to buy and plant and what time of the year the garden should be planted.

When we ask oyster gardeners why they want to grow oysters, there are usually two answers. The first is that they like oysters and want to eat them, and the second, is that they want to help with the goal of restoring a healthy population of oysters to the Chesapeake Bay.

If your main goal is restoration of the Bay, you will not want to grow only Triploid Oysters. They do not reproduce, so although they do filter water, they will not put more oysters into the Bay. The oysters you plant should then be diploid oysters, ones with the normal number of chromosomes, and which have not had their genetic apparatus altered to make them more resistant to disease. This alteration could leave the oysters lacking in vital properties that would make them successful in reproducing oysters that will help restore the oyster populations.

It has now been shown that oyster populations are local. That is, where the oyster grows in the Bay results in slightly different oysters in different waters. That's why they taste different, if you eat your oysters raw. Oysters that are planted in similar waters to where they grew up will be healthier and more productive than if they are planted in water that is different.

So, if your main objective is to eat your oysters, you will plant triploids and grow them to eating size and then plant more. Teach other people and your kids to eat oysters. **This is good.**

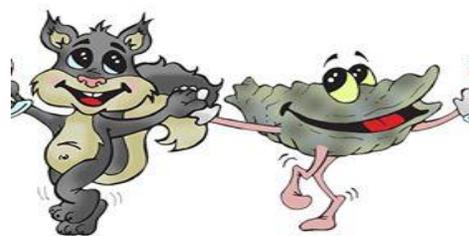
If you want to help restore the oyster population to the Bay, you will plant some native, wild oysters that have not been manipulated in the laboratory, and you will choose oyster spat whose parents grew up in waters like yours. That means the salinity should be similar as well as mineral content, oxygen concentrations and factors that we don't even recognize between water from different creeks and rivers. When they are of a good size, place them on a nearby reef where they may have some protection or donate them to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, which may be able to find a good spot for them. This path is necessary for real oyster restoration. **This is good.**

The big thing is that you can do both. Plant some for eating – triploids – and some for restoration – diploid native, wild oysters. Just mark your floats and bags and other containers, so you know which is which! **This is the Best!**

Jackie Partin, MOG

Stratford Hall 2018

This year's festival will be held Saturday, September 15 and Sunday, September 16.



Stratford Hall
WINE & OYSTER FESTIVAL

We started working with Jon Bachman in January to make this year's festival even better than last year's record-breaking event. The popularity of this event has grown not only with the attendees but also the TOGA volunteers. While we already have some people, who signed up at the annual meeting, we **always** need more. Please save either the 15th, the 16th or both to join in. It is a great way to blend multiple aspects of the TOGA goals while enjoying

various wines, beers, crafts and learning about other non-profits across the region. For some it could be a trip "north" to perhaps see and experience a part of Virginia yet unexplored by you.

The addition of a mid-day (11 am to 3 pm) volunteer time slot last year proved to be very popular with TOGA volunteers. It enabled us to better handle critical peak periods. Weather is always a factor but given similar conditions, Saturday has shown to have the highest attendance. Thus, we hope to encourage more Saturday volunteers this year. Please access the TOGA website <http://www.oystergardener.org/stratford-hall> to access this year's volunteer form.

Even if you have been unable to participate in the past or had to miss last year, please consider it when making plans for this September. We look forward to another successful festival and encourage your participation in order to have a strong showing from TOGA.

Laura Todd, Brian Wood, MOGs

TOGA Volunteer Party Is May 5 - Don't Miss the Fun and Great Food

The fifth annual TOGA Volunteer Appreciation Party will be May 5 at the Piankatank Community League building near Gloucester, VA. If you have volunteered to help TOGA in the past, or if you are planning to volunteer this year, please plan to attend!

This year, as in the past 4 years, TOGA will supply plenty of local and delicious unshucked and shucked oysters for your enjoyment. We ask you to bring the fixings for your favorite oyster dish, and you can prepare them for others to share at the party. There are stoves and ovens at the facility. If you don't have a favorite oyster dish, please bring a side dish or desert to share with your TOGA volunteer friends. TOGA will also provide soft drinks and adult beverages.



TOGA members know how to eat good food!

For the third year we will have a special highlight! TOGA has partnered with some local brewers who have offered to make "oyster stout" before the party so we can all enjoy it on May 5th. Additionally, they'll have a demonstration on how to brew this special beer at the party - so if you like it you can do it at home.

Address of the Piankatank Community League is 11888 Harcum Road, Gloucester, VA. The party will start at 1:00 and end about 4:00.

So, mark your calendar now to attend this terrific party. Please RSVP to Terry Lewis no later than April 30th so he has time to acquire appropriate supplies. His email is lewistmn@msn.com or call 804-693-2687.



Jackie Partin sharing a story with fellow TOGA members at last year's party

This party is a great time to swap stories and meet some of your fellow TOGA members. We look forward to seeing you and thanks for volunteering.

TOGA Board Members

Oyster Stout Group Brew

For the third year, TOGA is joining members of the CASK (Colonial Ale Smiths and Keggers) for a group brew of beers using oysters as a featured ingredient.

Last year this included homebrew examples of oyster stout, which is available locally plus an oyster porter and oyster saison which would be hard to find anywhere.



On April 14, the TOGA and CASK volunteers will meet at the Hayes home of Joe Crandell, member of both CASK and TOGA, to brew beer and enjoy oysters. The brewers bring their brewing equipment, ingredients and bottles of their homebrew and other favorite beers for all to sample. The TOGA'ers bring homegrown oysters for the brewers to include in their recipes and for everyone to enjoy: steamed, fried, on the half-shell and as oyster stew.

For the TOGA Volunteer Appreciation Party, the brewers will bring a keg of one of their beers for everyone to sample and will also do a demonstration brew of an oyster beer at the party. At this writing there is still space for a few more TOGA'ers. If interested, please contact Terry Lewis at lewistmn@msn.com
Joe Crandell, Brewer

Northern Neck Wine & Oyster Fair May 12, 2018

On May 12, 2018, the Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association (TOGA) and the Good Luck Cellars Winery will again team up to sponsor Wine & Oyster event at the beautiful winery location on 1025 Good Luck Road, Kilmarnock, Virginia. This fair begins at noon and goes until 4PM. It will



include different choices of raw and cooked bivalves from the two local growers Great Wicomico Oyster Company and Morattico Creek Oysters. Each grower will bring special recipes to whip up and tempt the fairgoers.

Plus, there will be various oyster spat and different caging and accessories for sale by vendors. A raffle will be held at this event featuring oyster-related items such as cages, oyster knives, apparel and accessories. At noon, Vic Spain, Master Oyster Gardener, will give a talk on "Oyster History in the Chesapeake Bay," and "How to Get Started Oyster Gardening."

For the full vineyard experience, people will be able to visit the comfortable Good Luck wine tasting bar and lounge where knowledgeable and friendly servers will keep pace with the crowd. Favorite bottles can be brought out onto the large, covered veranda with many tables overlooking the fair fun. The public is invited to join in on this festive activity.

Brian and Ann Wood, MOGs

LUCEE

(Longwood University Camp for Environmental Exploration)



Longwood University and Westmoreland County Public Schools (WCPS) have already started planning for the third year of the highly successful LUCEE (Longwood University Camp for Environmental Exploration). LUCEE is a collaboration between the university and county school system offering a day camp for rising 4th-6th graders at Longwood's Hull Springs Farm*, located just outside Montross. The camp pairs Longwood students with certified teachers from WCPS to lead the 8-day camp. This year's LUCEE has been set for July 16-19 and July 23-26.

Last year's curriculum was developed by Longwood Liberal Studies major Taylor Banty and focused on sparking a child's interest in science "naturally." The lesson plans featured

hands-on demonstrations and activities, mostly outside of the classroom, in the midst of Hull Springs' bounty of natural and cultural assets.

Approximately sixty children from the Westmoreland County Public School District were engaged in the 2017 camp, which offered an environmentally-focused, educational supplement to the summer. For the past two summers, volunteers from the Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association (TOGA), have provided a live oyster demonstration showing how oysters work to clean the waters of Virginia. The children were all very interested in holding the live oysters and discovering other creatures living in the tanks with them, including an American eel and juvenile blue crab, as well as barnacles and other small creatures that live on the oysters and hide among their shells. This year's TOGA will be working to train additional Longwood students to conduct the demonstration.

*Hull Springs Farm was bequeathed to the Longwood University Foundation by Mary Farley Ames Lee, a 1938 alumna of Longwood College. The property is used as a "living laboratory," and features a wide variety of outdoor "classrooms" providing education through experience.

Sherry Swinson (Hull Springs Farm Executive Director), Laura Todd (MOG)

Spring Oyster Float Sales Event Deltaville Maritime Museum "Holly Point Market Day"

June 23, 2018 9 AM to 1 PM

287 Jackson Creek Rd, Deltaville, VA 23043

This event is a great opportunity to get more oyster seed (spat), floats, cages, new devices, bags and new crab pot cord. MOGs will be available to discuss with you the latest ideas in raising oysters to clean the Chesapeake Bay / tributary rivers and for scrumptious eating. The TOGA Spring Oyster Float Sale is June 23, 2018, at the Deltaville Maritime Museum.

No experience is necessary! For people who wish to get started raising their own oysters, this will be the best opportunity this spring to get the information, materials, supplies and baby oysters (spat / seed) to start their oyster

gardening. At the TOGA education tent, you can talk with MOGs about oyster growing techniques, float types, and get your questions answered. **What you need is available here! Just add salt water.**

The TOGA Pre-Built Floats and Devices are available at this workshop. Pictures and descriptions of these products are on our website www.oystergardener.org. Please use the Registration Form to order these Pre-Built Floats and Devices so the products can be available for you to pick up at this workshop. Please assist TOGA by returning the Registration Form **by June 16, 2018**. The Registration Form is at the end of this newsletter and is also available on our website www.oystergardener.org.

This event is one of TOGA's primary fund-raising activities; all proceeds from the "Build Your Own" floats and apparel sales will benefit TOGA {501 (C) 3 Charity}. The TOGA VIMS Fellowship receives all proceeds from the "Pre-Built Floats and Devices." Your support and donations are appreciated.

In recent years, the popularity of Pre-Built Floats and Devices has risen greatly. Last year the "Build Your Own" floats were done on workdays for Pre-Built Floats and was very successful with participants learning how to build four types of floats. This year the "Build Your Own" floats will be done on the workdays only. By participating at a workday, you get \$10 off on each Bottom Cage, Taylor and Flip Float that you purchase and/or \$5 off each Downunder.

The workdays will be planned from mid-May to mid-June; they will be posted on the TOGA website calendar and a Chimp Mail will be sent out. All workdays are at 136 Arrowhead Drive, Weems, VA 22576 starting at 10:00 AM. They include a "bring a dish" lunch, and Costco large hotdogs are provided.

Please email your attendance at "Build Your Own" to Charles. All volunteers to help build floats are welcome; please let Vic Spain or Charles Yarbrough (emails on registration form) know your plans.

Charles Yarbrough, MOG



Laura Todd, MOG, grilling hotdogs for one of the 2017 Float workdays



Lunchtime at Float workdays are a TOGA favorite

History and Gardening

On a chilly Friday afternoon (Feb 23, 2018) many folks attended a Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association (TOGA) lecture at the lovely Hull Springs Farm – Longwood University facility at 3434 Mount Holly Rd., Montross, VA.

The Hull Springs Farm website states that it “is a living, breathing outdoor classroom for educational events, research and other

programs,” including the hosting of a special speakers’ series on environmentally important topics. On that February Friday, the Hull Springs people provided a most comfortable lecture hall for the well-received TOGA presentation.

The tag team of Brian & Ann Wood (both TOGA Master Oyster Gardeners – MOGS) showed their slides on the history of the Chesapeake Bay oysters and ended up with the most up-to-date activities going on in the commercial and private oysters gardening world. With a most receptive and interactive audience, this was not only a fact-filled 2 hours, but also quite fun for all. Their presentation covered a large time span from the travel logs of Captain John Smith mentioning the enormous and dangerous Bay oyster mounds to the drastically dry years of no oysters for the past few decades (and the varied reasons why) to the current revivalist atmosphere where every dock on the Bay can be an oyster improvement ground. TOGA has seen so many really positive changes and this experience resonated with people’s own observations. Plus, there were many samples of oyster containment devices (Taylor float, Downunder cages, and bottom cages all obtainable through TOGA events) for the spectators to touch and question.

TOGA wishes to extend its gratitude to the Hull Springs Farm – Longwood University administrators for this wonderful opportunity to share a much beloved topic with the public.

Ann Wood, MOG

Did you lose oysters to the freeze of January 2018?

I had a number of messages from members asking if their oysters would die from freezing. On January 7, 2018, temperatures in Gloucester dropped to 1F and in Montross, -7F. We experienced high winds and blow-out tides.

The ice played tricks at my place in Gloucester. One Downunder cage was lifted on top of the thick ice sheet and was clear of ice and snow.

Those oysters died. Others were covered with ice and snow. Those survived.



Taylor floats frozen in the ice

If you would like to report what you experienced and whether or not you lost oysters, please email me at vicspain@rocketmail.com. I will summarize in the next newsletter.

There was a similar event in February 2015. The results are summarized in the Fall Newsletter of 2015. Old newsletters can be found at <http://www.oystergardener.org/newletters>. (Note- the link is correct despite the spelling error.)

Vic Spain, 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?idn=m=CB>

Fall Newsletter Deadline

All articles for the TOGA Fall Newsletter are due August 4, 2018. Please submit to Vic Spain, vicspain@rocketmail.com or Kathy Haurand, kathaurand@aol.com



Calendar of Events – Spring 2018

Contact the Event Coordinator if you would like to participate

April

April 26- Earth Day at Fort AP Hill- Event Coordinator: Bobby Morgan, bobsue_morgan1970@yahoo.com
Fort AP Hill, 10am-2pm

***April 28 - Spring Oyster Fair-** Event Coordinator: Vic Spain, vicspain@rocketmail.com
Gwynn's Island Civic Center, 9am- 12:45pm

May

***May 5 - TOGA Volunteer Thank You Party-** Event Coordinator: Terry Lewis, lewistmn@msn.com,
Piankatank Community League, 11888 Harcum Road, Gloucester, 1pm-4pm

***May 12- Wine and Oyster Fair-** Event Coordinator: Brian Wood, awood45858@aol.com, Terry Halkyard,
terryhalkyard@hotmail.com, Good Luck Cellars, Kilmarnock, 12pm- 4pm

May 20 - GoWild!- Event Coordinator: Brian Wood, awood45858@aol.com, Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge
Hutchinson Tract, Tappahannock 11am-4pm, www.rwfriends.org

June

***June 7, Master Oyster Gardener Refresher Course-** Karen Hudson, khudson@vims.edu and Terry Lewis,
lewistmn@msn.com, VIMS Gloucester Point, details and program TBD

***Jun 23, Spring Oyster Float Sales Event,** Brian Ingram, bandbingram@gmail.com, Charles Yarbrough,
caspery@verizon.net, Deltaville Maritime Museum "Holly Point Market Day," 287 Jackson Creek Rd, Deltaville,
VA 23043

July

July 16-19 and July 23 - 26, Hull Springs LUCEE, Laura Todd, lauratodd.nc@gmail.com, Sherry Swinson
(Hull Springs Farm Executive Director), swinsonsd@longwood.edu

August

August 4 – Fall Newsletter Deadline, Vic Spain vicspain@rocketmail.com, Kathy Haurand,
kathaurand@aol.com

September

***September 15-16, Stratford Hall W&O Tasting,** Laura Todd, lauratodd.nc@gmail.com, Brian Wood,
awood45858@aol.com

September 28 - 29 - Guinea Jubilee- Terry Lewis, lewistmn@msn.com, Abingdon Ruritan Club, Guinea
Road, Gloucester, 3pm-6pm Fri. and 9am-5pm Sat.

October

***October 6 – Float Workshop-** Event Coordinator: Charles Yarbrough, caspery@verizon.net,
Venue TBD, 10am-2pm

2019

***January 12 – 2019 Annual Meeting-** Event Coordinator: Terry Lewis, lewistmn@msn.com,
VIMS Gloucester Point, 2pm-4pm

The above events are planned as of this printing. Expect updates in the fall newsletter.

<http://www.localendar.com/public/MikeSanders> and at the Major Annual Events Page at <http://www.oystergardener.org/>

Also, look for our Chimp Mail to all TOGA members.

(* indicates a major TOGA-sponsored or co-sponsored event).

TOGA Oyster Survey

TOGA is partnering with the **Chesapeake Bay Foundation** and many other **scientific and environmental organizations** to put billions more oysters in the Chesapeake Bay region. In an effort to quantify TOGA's contribution to the ecological improvement of the Chesapeake Bay, we are asking our members to share data about their oyster gardens.

Your participation completing this survey is greatly appreciated!

Kathy Haurand, MOG
Jennifer Palazzo, MOG

Please reply by April 30, 2018. Thank you!

Snail mail to:
Kathy Haurand
136 Arrowhead Drive
Weems, VA 22576

Or email to:
kathaurand@aol.com

Or complete online at oystergardener.org. Under the **MORE** button, click on Member Oyster Data Survey

How long have you been growing oysters? _____

How many cages do you have? _____

What types (sterile triploids, fertile diploids or both)? _____

Approximately how many spat of each type do you plant each year?

What do you do with your shell from harvested or dead oysters?

Comment _____

Oyster Float Registration Form

Deltaville Maritime Museum

“Holly Point Market Day”

9 AM to 1 PM, June 23, 2018

Please mail this Registration Form to TOGA, P.O. Box 2463, Gloucester, VA 23061
Or email this Registration Form to vicspain@rocketmail.com or caspery@verizon.net

Name: _____ Email: _____

Telephone: _____ Mailing Address: _____

**This Registration Form MUST BE RECEIVED BY JUNE 16, 2018
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	_____	\$75	Shuck Table
_____	\$65	Flip Float	_____	\$45	Bender 42 inch
_____	\$55	Bottom Cage	_____	\$50	Bender 50 inch
_____	\$45	Downunder			

**Payment for floats, devices will be collected at the TOGA tent.
Your Floats and Devices will be available for pick-up at the TOGA tent.**

Build Your Own Floats

*By participation at one or more TOGA workdays, prior to this TOGA Event.
The dates of the workdays will be on the TOGA website calendar and sent out by Chimp Mail.*

I would like _____ (quantity) Taylor Float with Top at \$100 per float

I would like _____ (quantity) Taylor floats at \$85 per float

I would like _____ (quantity) Flip Floats at \$55 per float

I would like _____ (quantity) Bottom Cages at \$45 per float

I would like _____ (quantity) Downunders at \$40 per float

For more about this event, or workdays, please visit our website <http://www.oystergardener.org>
Or contact Charles Yarbrough at caspery@verizon.net OR Vic Spain at
vicspain@rocketmail.com

Join TOGA or Renew your Membership

NOTE- If you received this newsletter in the mail, please check the year by your name on the address label. If it is 2017 or earlier, then 2018 dues are now due. Dues are per calendar year. 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. Please use the form below to join or update your membership. You may also use it simply to update your information. It is important that your mailing address and email address are correct as that is our primary way of communicating with members. And for your benefit, please open your TOGA email. You may also share this membership form with a friend.

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
- Membership is \$15.00 for one year, individual or family. This ensures that you will receive regular newsletters and notice of upcoming events.

Please fill out membership form below and send to TOGA, PO Box 2463, Gloucester, VA 23061 with a check for \$15.00 membership dues, payable to TOGA. If you want, you can make an additional donation to support TOGA's educational activities. You may include it in the same check. Or you may go to <http://www.oystergardener.org/#!join-toga/c1rtd> and join online and pay dues using paypal.

TOGA Membership Form, Please Print Legibly

Please enclose dues (\$15 per year per family) and return to TOGA, PO Box 2463, Gloucester, VA 23061

Amount submitted \$ _____ Comment _____

Check: _____ New member, _____ Renewal, _____ Update Info Only, _____ Additional Donation

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, and Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Body of water where oysters are grown _____

Comment _____

A Look Back At 2017



Annual Meeting



@ Tides Inn



Volunteer Party



Spring Fair



Float Building



Fall Fair



Stratford Hall



Camp Kekoka

**PO Box 2463
Gloucester, VA 23061**

Return Service Requested

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage **PAID**
Yorktown, VA
Permit # 33